

# Strengthening Your Connection: An Imago Couples Therapy Worksheet

## Objective

To enhance communication and understanding with your partner using Imago therapy techniques.

## What to Know

Imago Couples Therapy aims to strengthen the bonds between partners by addressing underlying dynamics, fostering empathy, and enhancing communication. This therapeutic method recognizes that individuals bring their own histories, experiences, and emotional needs into relationships, which can shape their interactions. Developed by Harville Hendrix and Helen LaKelly Hunt, Imago Couples Therapy provides couples with tools to navigate challenges, reconnect emotionally, and build a more conscious and fulfilling partnership. There are four central concepts.

- 1. Focusing on Communication.** Communication serves as the cornerstone of any healthy relationship. Imago Couples Therapy emphasizes the importance of effective communication that goes beyond surface-level interactions. By learning to actively listen, reflect, and respond to each other's thoughts and feelings, couples can transcend misunderstandings and create a safe space for sharing.
- 2. Exploring Needs.** This model encourages partners to explore each other's needs, desires, and concerns. Often, unmet emotional needs from the past can resurface in current relationships. By identifying and understanding these needs, couples can work together to address them, fostering a sense of emotional support and fulfillment.
- 3. Strengthening Understanding.** Partners are drawn to each other for reasons that mirror unresolved issues from their past. Acknowledging this allows couples to move beyond the surface of conflicts and disagreements and explore the underlying emotional triggers. By gaining insight into each other's past experiences, partners can develop empathy and compassion, leading to a more profound understanding of each other's behaviors and reactions.
- 4. Building Connection.** The goal is to deepen the emotional connection between partners. By acknowledging and accepting each other's vulnerabilities, couples can create an environment of safety and trust. As partners learn to meet each other's emotional needs and provide support, the relationship evolves into a more intimate and nurturing partnership.

## What to Do

This worksheet offers couples a structured framework to engage in exercises that facilitate meaningful interactions and promote relationship growth. Do each of the five activities with your partner.

**1. Sharing Appreciations.** By expressing gratitude and positive feelings, couples begin the process of reconnecting on a positive note, fostering a sense of appreciation for each other's presence in their lives.

**Activity:** Take turns expressing genuine appreciation for each other. List at least three things you appreciate about your partner. This can range from simple gestures to character traits. Remember to be specific and heartfelt.

Partner A's Appreciations about Partner B:

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

Partner B's Appreciations about Partner A:

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

**2. Reflective Listening.** This exercise cultivates active listening skills, allowing partners to genuinely hear and validate each other's perspectives. It paves the way for more empathic and constructive communication.

**Activity:** Choose a topic to discuss. One partner will be the speaker, while the other will be the listener. The listener's role is to reflect what they hear without judgment, criticism, or advice. Switch roles after the speaker feels understood.

Topic: \_\_\_\_\_

Listener's Role: Reflect back what you hear, using phrases like "What I hear you saying is..." or "It sounds like you're feeling..."

Speaker - Express your thoughts and feelings about the chosen topic.

Listener - Reflectively listen and validate your partner's feelings.

Write about your experience.

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Topic: \_\_\_\_\_

Speaker - Express your thoughts and feelings about the chosen topic.

Listener - Reflectively listen and validate your partner's feelings.

Write about your experience.

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**3. Dialogue Exercise.** Partners engage in a structured conversation that encourages them to explore their feelings, vulnerabilities, and needs. This exercise promotes deeper understanding and collaborative problem-solving.

**Activity:** This exercise helps you practice deeper communication by sharing your needs and vulnerabilities. Use the following structure.

**Mirroring (Partner A):** Partner A shares a thought or feeling. Partner B mirrors back exactly what was said.

**Validation (Partner B):** Partner B acknowledges and validates Partner A's perspective without judgment.

**Empathy (Partner A):** Partner A imagines what Partner B might be feeling based on what was shared.

**Empathy (Partner B):** Partner B imagines what Partner A might be feeling based on what was shared.

**Solution (Joint):** Brainstorm a solution or compromise that considers both partners' needs.

Topic: \_\_\_\_\_

Mirroring (Partner A): \_\_\_\_\_

Validation (Partner B): \_\_\_\_\_

Empathy (Partner A): \_\_\_\_\_

Empathy (Partner B): \_\_\_\_\_

Solution (Joint): \_\_\_\_\_

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**4. Future Appreciation.** Partners express their desires for future actions that would nurture the relationship. This exercise reinforces the intention to support and fulfill each other's emotional needs.

**Activity:** Express appreciation for something you would like your partner to do in the future to strengthen your relationship. This can be related to communication, affection, support, etc.

Partner A's Future Appreciation for Partner B: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Partner B's Future Appreciation for Partner A: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**5. Scheduling Quality Time.** Setting aside dedicated time for enjoyable activities reinforces the commitment to spending quality time together, strengthening the emotional connection.

**Activity:** Plan a specific time during the upcoming week for an activity that you both enjoy. This could be a date night, a walk, a movie night, or any other activity that allows you to reconnect.

Scheduled Quality Time: Date/Time \_\_\_\_\_

Activity \_\_\_\_\_

After you do the activity together, write about the experience.

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Regularly incorporating these activities into your relationship can lead to improvements in communication, understanding, and intimacy. By using this worksheet, you can embark on a journey of self-discovery, empathy, and growth, fostering a partnership that not only survives but thrives through challenges and joys alike.

Remember that effective communication and connection take practice. Be patient with each other as you navigate this journey together. Regularly revisit these exercises to maintain and deepen your bond. Celebrate your progress and support each other's growth.

### **Reflections on This Exercise**

Describe how this activity strengthened the connection with your partner.

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

What was challenging about this exercise? Be specific.

\_\_\_\_\_

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Did anything surprise you about this activity? If so, describe.

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How helpful was this exercise? \_\_\_\_\_  
(1 = not very helpful, 5 = moderately helpful, 10 = extremely helpful)

What did you learn from this exercise?

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*Note: Imago Couples Therapy is a comprehensive approach developed by Harville Hendrix and Helen LaKelly Hunt. This worksheet is a simplified exercise inspired by their work. Based on the book: *Getting the Love You Want: A Guide for Couples* by Harville Hendrix Ph.D. (2007). Henry Holt & Co.*