

Have you thanked your spouse today?: Felt and expressed gratitude among married couples.

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Abstract

Recent research has underscored the importance of gratitude to psychological and physical well-being (Emmons & McCullough, 2003), and has shown that gratitude can help facilitate the development of close relationships (Algoe, Haidt, & Gable, 2008). To date, however, little is known about gratitude among long-term married couples. The present investigation aims to examine the association between gratitude and marital satisfaction at both the individual and dyadic level. Furthermore, this study was designed to clarify the unique contributions of both feeling and expressing gratitude in marriage. Fifty couples (both husbands and wives) with a mean relationship length of 20.7 years participated in this study. Daily diary methodology was used to collect each individual's self-reported ratings of felt and expressed gratitude as well as relationship satisfaction for 2 weeks. Consistent with hypotheses, results indicate that

one's felt and expressed gratitude both significantly relate to one's own marital satisfaction. Cross-partner analyses indicate that the individual's felt gratitude also predicts the spouse's satisfaction, whereas surprisingly his or her expressed gratitude does not. Results are discussed in the context of relationship enhancement both at the individual and dyadic level.



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Keywords

Gratitude; Couples; Marriage; Flourishing relationship; Positive psychology

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