



How to express appreciation to your partner

Cut out the card along the dashed line (6 by about 4 inches). Say one line, then stop and listen. Use your own words when they come.

Expressing appreciation

1. Name the specific thing they did.
2. Add the effort or the effect: "...and it made my morning easier."
3. Notice the invisible work, not just the visible tasks.
4. No "but" after thanks. Feedback gets its own time.
5. When you're thanked, say "That means a lot," not "It was nothing."

All the lines, and when to use them

Thanks for refilling my coffee before I woke up. It made the whole morning feel easier. (Small daily favors. The thing, plus the effect it had on you, is what turns a reflex "thanks" into appreciation.)

I noticed how patient you were with my mom today, letting her tell the same story twice. That meant a lot to me. (When you want to appreciate who they are, not just what they did. Pointing to the moment makes it believable.)

I realized you've booked every vet and dentist appointment this year. I hadn't said thank you, so: thank you. (Invisible, ongoing work. Naming it shows you see the planning, not just the visible tasks.)

Still thinking about how you showed up for me last week. I'm lucky. (A text in the middle of an ordinary day. Appreciation with no occasion attached can land especially well.)

Jordan spent all Saturday fixing Lily's bike, and she hasn't gotten off it since. (Said in front of friends or family. Public credit, said simply, can mean more than private thanks.)

Even while we were arguing last night, you didn't raise your voice. I noticed, and I appreciate it. (After a disagreement. Noticing good conflict behavior can encourage more of it and take some heat out of what is left.)

Ten years ago you moved across the country for my job. I still think about what you gave up. (Anniversaries or quiet evenings. Big, old sacrifices can fade from view unless someone says them out loud.)

Thank you for saying that. It means a lot that you noticed. (When you are the one being appreciated. Receiving it warmly, instead of brushing it off, keeps the loop going.)

Phrases to avoid

"Thanks, but next time could you...": The "but" cancels the thanks. If you have feedback, give it at a different time.

"Thanks for babysitting the kids.": Parenting your own children is not a favor. Thanking a co-parent for it can sound like you see their share as optional.

"Finally!": Sarcastic credit for something you wanted done sooner tells them the effort did not count. Just thank them.

"Thanks for everything you do.": Warm but vague, so it is easy to forget. One specific thing will stay with them longer.

If you are afraid of your partner, scripts are not the answer: call the National Domestic Violence Hotline at 1-800-799-7233 or text START to 88788. In danger, call 911.