

Rituals of Connection & Celebration

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Marin Mommies presents a guest article by Dr. Michelle Gannon and Dr. Sam Jinich, clinical psychologists and couples workshop leaders.

If you are in a relationship, we hope that you will find these rituals of connection and celebration helpful with your partner. Also, you can use many of these rituals of connection and celebration with your children to build positive feelings of safe, close and secure attachment.

The more accessible, responsive and emotionally engaged (A.R.E.) you are with each other, the more you can keep your positive feelings of love alive, strong and fulfilling. Rituals of connection and celebration show each other that we matter, we are there for each other, we can count on each other and we are important to each other. When partners and family members engage in rituals of connection and celebration with each other, they report feeling a greater sense of closeness, positivity and happiness. The couples feel more securely attached and bonded with each other.

Rituals of Connection are actions that are created, practiced and designed to

build connection and closeness. Please consider the following rituals of connection.

- How do you say good morning to each other?
- Do you make it a priority to hug or kiss each other when you say hello and good-bye?

Research has found that 20-second hugs can help us manage our anxiety and mood. 20-second hugs help us release dopamine (feel-good hormone) and oxytocin (bonding hormone).

- Do you take the time to hug and kiss each other?
- Do you know what your partner's day looks like?
- How do you check in with them throughout the day?
- Do you text, call or email each other sweet, thoughtful messages?
- How do you reunite? Do you pause what you are doing to truly acknowledge each other?
- Do you share meals, exercise or evening activities?
- Do you have any evening rituals? Do you read together, watch a shared TV show, take a bath together and/or share any affection and intimate time?
- Can you and your partner count on each other to try to repair after conflict or tension?
- Do you share daily gratitude and appreciations with each other?

Discuss together ways that you can include more rituals of connection into your daily life to increase positive feelings of closeness and love. In many cases, a few changes go a long way to making each other feel more loved and securely attached.

Rituals of Celebration

So many of us parents focus more on the celebrations of our children than celebrations of our partner.

Please consider the following rituals of celebration:

- How do you validate, acknowledge or appreciate each other on birthdays, anniversaries and other special times?
- Do you celebrate each other's individual accomplishments? (i.e. work successes, athletic pursuits, accomplishments of personal goals)?
- Do you acknowledge and celebrate your relationship and family successes?
- Would you like your partner to celebrate with you more? Would they like you to celebrate with them more?

Please have a conversation with each other about how you can increase your rituals of connection and celebration when the two of you have some private, quiet time.

If you would like to learn more about creating and maintaining a positive, loving and securely attached relationship, please visit HoldMeTightWorkshop.com and

consider taking a Couples Weekend Workshop with Dr. Michelle Gannon and Dr. Sam Jinich. They are offering a Valentine's Day Hold Me Tight Workshop at The Lodge at Tiburon, San Francisco Workshops at Fort Mason Center, and Hold Me Tight Workshop is also led by them at Esalen in Big Sur.