Knowing Your Partner

I've noticed this in my own life and in my work with couples. I change my mind, pick up new interests, and learn things that change how I see myself. Some parts of me feel much the same as they always have. I try to remember that my partner is changing in their own ways, too.

You can know your partner's favorite meal and still have no idea what's been on their mind this month. Stay curious about what matters to them now, even in areas where you think you already know the answer.

That has changed how I think about knowing someone. I want to keep finding out who my partner is now. Even when there's plenty of love between you, it's easy to miss what's changed if you haven't asked in a while.

Think about one way you've changed and one thing you'd like your partner to understand. Take turns sharing what you choose and asking one follow-up question.

Partner 1 · What did I learn that I want to remember?

Partner 2 · What did I learn that I want to remember?

Interview Your Partner

PARTNER 1 / TAKE TURNS ASKING

> Take turns interviewing each other. Use one page per partner or keep separate notes. Ask the questions first and write what your partner says. Each of you can pass on any question.

Strengths · What qualities in yourself do you value?

Likes · What has been making you happy lately?

Dislikes · What is one thing you'd rather avoid?

Stressors · What has been building up for you lately?

Triggers · What can make you feel overwhelmed quickly?

Calmers · What helps you settle when you're stressed?

What new thing did you learn about your partner?

Interview Your Partner

PARTNER 2 / TAKE TURNS ASKING

> Take turns interviewing each other. Use one page per partner or keep separate notes. Ask the questions first and write what your partner says. Each of you can pass on any question.

Strengths · What qualities in yourself do you value?

Likes · What has been making you happy lately?

Dislikes · What is one thing you'd rather avoid?

Stressors · What has been building up for you lately?

Triggers · What can make you feel overwhelmed quickly?

Calmers · What helps you settle when you're stressed?

What new thing did you learn about your partner?

What comes next?

In the full workbook, the next page introduces three kinds of conversation. From there, you'll practice mindfulness and try new questions that help you stay curious about each other.

Keep getting to know each other

Practice asking questions that make room for a fuller answer.

Make more room for connection

Find everyday ways to show appreciation and respond when your partner reaches out.

Slow down hard conversations

Notice when you're getting overwhelmed, ask for what you need, and practice coming back after a hurt.

Make a plan together

Use the Relationship Commitment Plan to pick one change to practice and decide when to check in with each other.

Continue with the full workbook

Pick up a copy of Pen & Partner and turn to Healthy Conversations on page 12.