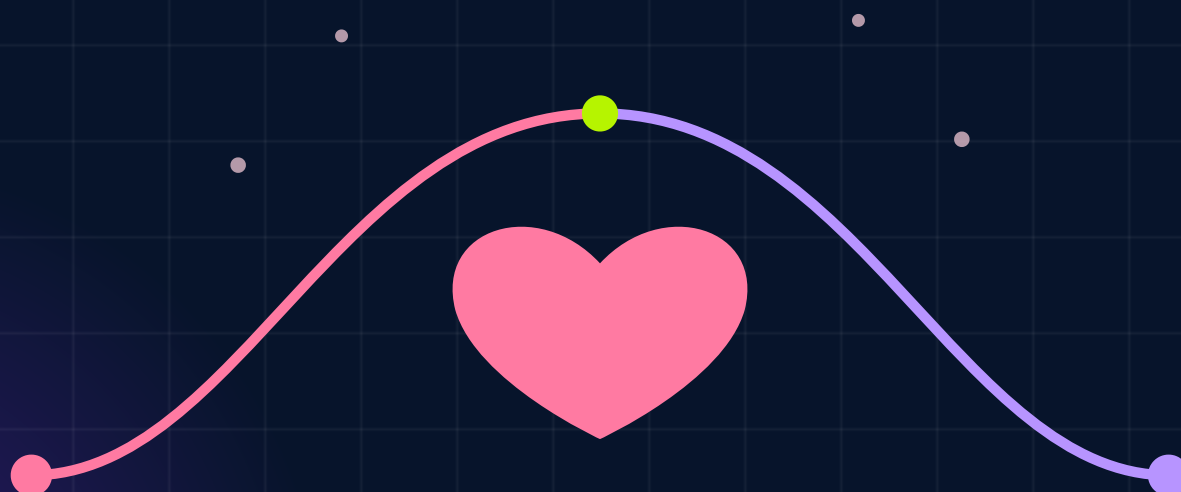


# Closer

The couples' workbook: 52 weekly conversations and small rituals that keep love strong.



**52**

weekly  
conversations

**104**

conversation cards

**52**

date-night ideas

**12**

"Open When" letters



# Closer

The couples' workbook: 52 weekly conversations and small rituals that keep love strong.

2026 edition · Large print · Printable

● THIS BOOK BELONGS TO

This book belongs to: \_\_\_\_\_

and: \_\_\_\_\_

We started on: \_\_\_\_\_



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This workbook is for couples who feel safe with each other. It is not couples therapy, counseling or medical advice. If you feel unsafe in your relationship, please read the note at the start of the book. Research findings are summarized in plain English; references are on the Sources page. All questions and exercises were written for this book.

FREE SAMPLE

# Inside this free sample

Two lessons and four weeks from Closer.

This sample includes the Welcome, Lesson 1 (turn toward), Lesson 2 (celebrate good news) and the first week of each season. The full workbook has six lessons, 52 weekly conversations, the weekly check-in and Repair Kit, and a printable toolkit with 104 conversation cards, 52 date-night cards and a lovely surprise.

GET THE FULL WORKBOOK

[skillnugget.com/course/closer-couples-workbook](https://skillnugget.com/course/closer-couples-workbook)

WELCOME

# Twenty minutes a week

How this workbook works, in five minutes.

Most couples don't drift apart because of one big thing. They drift because of a thousand small ones: busy weeks, tired evenings, conversations about logistics instead of each other. One day you look across the dinner table and realize you can't remember the last time you really talked.

This workbook is the antidote. **Twenty minutes a week. One conversation. One small ritual.** Over a year, those twenty minutes add up to 52 conversations you'd never otherwise have had, and a relationship that feels closer, warmer and more fun.

## How it works

- 1 Pick a regular time.** Sunday breakfast, a Wednesday walk, Friday after dinner. Same time each week makes it a habit.
- 2 Open this week's page together.** Read the main question out loud, and take turns answering.
- 3 Go deeper if you want to,** with the follow-up questions. You don't have to use them all.
- 4 Choose the week's ritual,** a small thing to do for each other before next week.
- 5 Write a line or two** in the notes boxes: something you learned about each other.

That's it. No homework, no scores, no therapy-speak. Just two people, paying attention to each other on purpose.

## The rules of the table

- ✓ **Curiosity over correction.** You're here to learn about each other, not to fact-check.
- ✓ **Phones away.** In another room, ideally.
- ✓ **Either of you can pass.** Any question, any time, no explanation needed.
- ✓ **No scorekeeping.** This isn't the place for old arguments. Keep a note and use the Repair Kit at the back another day.
- ✓ **Missed weeks don't matter.** Pick up where you left off. You're never behind.

## How the book is built

**Part 1** has six short lessons, about five minutes each, on what researchers have learned about couples who stay close. **Part 2** is the heart of the book: 52 weekly conversations in four seasons (*Know, Appreciate, Play and Build*). **Part 3** has the tools: the weekly check-in, the Repair Kit for hard moments, your story timeline, a shared dream list and a year-end review.

### A SURPRISE IN THE TOOLKIT

One of the files in your toolkit is called **Open When Letters**. Don't open it until you reach Season 2. It's best discovered together.

## LESSON 1

# Turn toward

The small moments that predict the big picture.

In the 1990s, psychologist John Gottman invited newlywed couples to spend a day in an apartment at his lab, and watched how they interacted in ordinary moments. He noticed something he called **bids**: small attempts to connect. "Look at that bird." "Ugh, my boss emailed again." A touch on the arm. A sigh.

Each bid gets one of three responses. Partners can **turn toward** it ("Oh, what's it doing?"), **turn away** (ignore it, keep scrolling), or **turn against** it ("Can you not, I'm busy").

Gottman followed the couples for six years. As he has reported, the couples who were still married at the follow-up had turned toward each other's bids about **86 percent** of the time in the lab. The couples who had divorced had turned toward each other only about **33 percent** of the time.

Love is built in the tiny moments when one of you says "Look!" and the other one looks.

## How to turn toward

- ✓ **Notice the bid.** Many bids are small: a comment, a story, a question, a sigh.
- ✓ **Respond, even briefly.** "Mm, tell me." "Ha, that's funny." "Oh no, what did he say?"
- ✓ **Put the phone down** for ten seconds. It's long enough.
- ✓ **When you can't, say when you can.** "I want to hear this. Give me two minutes to finish this email."

#### THIS WEEK

Each of you secretly count how many bids you notice from the other in one evening. Compare at the end of the week. Most couples are surprised how many they've been missing, and how good it feels when they're caught.

## LESSON 2

# Celebrate good news

How you respond to good news matters as much as how you handle bad.

We usually think the test of a relationship is how partners support each other through hard times. That matters. But research suggests that **how you respond to each other's good news** matters a great deal too.

In 2004, Shelly Gable and colleagues studied what happens when people share good news with their partners, something psychologists call *capitalization*. When people felt their partner responded in an **active and constructive** way (enthusiastic, interested, asking questions), they reported higher well-being and better relationships: more trust, intimacy and satisfaction.

## Four ways to respond to good news

Your partner says: *"I got picked to lead the new project!"*

| RESPONSE                       | EXAMPLE                                                              | EFFECT                |
|--------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------|
| <b>Active and constructive</b> | "That's amazing! What did they say? You've worked so hard for this." | Builds closeness      |
| Passive and constructive       | "Oh, nice." (back to the phone)                                      | Quietly deflating     |
| Active and destructive         | "Won't that mean even more late nights?"                             | Takes the joy away    |
| Passive and destructive        | "Did you pick up the milk?"                                          | Ignores it completely |

## How to be active and constructive

- 1 **Stop what you're doing** and look at them.
- 2 **Show real delight.** Let your face do it.
- 3 **Ask questions** that let them relive it: "How did you find out? What did you say? Who have you told?"
- 4 **Celebrate in some small way:** a high five, a toast, their favorite dessert.

Worries ("Won't it mean late nights?") can wait until tomorrow. Today, just be happy with them.

# Where we come from

What's a smell, sound or taste that takes you straight back to your childhood?

**GO DEEPER**

What was your house like when you were eight?

**GO DEEPER**

Who made you feel safest as a child?

**GO DEEPER**

What did your family do on Sundays?

**GO DEEPER**

What would your childhood self think of your life now?

**THIS WEEK'S RITUAL**

Cook or buy one food from each of your childhoods and eat them together.

**DATE IDEA**

Look through old childhood photos with a cup of tea.

**WHAT I LEARNED ABOUT YOU**

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**WHAT I LEARNED ABOUT YOU**

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Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Ritual done? ☐ Yes ☐ Not yet

# What I love about you

What's one thing you love about me that has nothing to do with what I do for you?

**GO DEEPER**

When did you first notice it?

**GO DEEPER**

What's something I do that makes you proud?

**GO DEEPER**

What would your friends say you love about me?

**GO DEEPER**

What do you think I love most about you?

**THIS WEEK'S RITUAL**

Leave three small notes for each other this week, each with one thing you love.

**DATE IDEA**

A dessert date: each of you says a toast to the other.

**WHAT I LEARNED ABOUT YOU**

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**WHAT I LEARNED ABOUT YOU**

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Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Ritual done? ☐ Yes ☐ Not yet

# How we play

What did you love to play as a child, and what's the grown-up version now?

**GO DEEPER**

When did you last laugh until it hurt?

**GO DEEPER**

What's something silly you'd love to do with me?

**GO DEEPER**

Are you more competitive or more cooperative?

**GO DEEPER**

What game would you teach our grandchildren?

**THIS WEEK'S RITUAL**

Play a game together three times this week: cards, a board game, a word game.

**DATE IDEA**

Game night with snacks and a ridiculous prize.

**WHAT I LEARNED ABOUT YOU**

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**WHAT I LEARNED ABOUT YOU**

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Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Ritual done? ☐ Yes ☐ Not yet

# Our home

## What makes a house feel like home to you?

**GO DEEPER**

What's your favorite corner of our home?

**GO DEEPER**

What would you change if you could?

**GO DEEPER**

Where do you dream of living one day?

**GO DEEPER**

What's one small change that would make home nicer this month?

**THIS WEEK'S RITUAL**

Make one small improvement to your home together this week.

**DATE IDEA**

Rearrange a room, then have dinner in it.

**WHAT I LEARNED ABOUT YOU**

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**WHAT I LEARNED ABOUT YOU**

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Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Ritual done? ☐ Yes ☐ Not yet