


# WELLBEING ACTIVITY



RELATIONSHIPS  
ACTIVE CONSTRUCTIVE RESPONDING



"The key is to keep company  
only with people who uplift  
you, whose presence calls  
forth your best."

Epictetus  
Stoic philosopher



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# Welcome

## INTRODUCTION

Putting positive psychology into practice begins here.

Welcome to your activity booklet, a dedicated resource designed to help you tap into the transformative power of meaningful connections in your daily life. Within these pages, you'll find the "Active Constructive Responding" exercise—a simple yet powerful practice that encourages you to engage with others in ways that deepen relationships and foster positivity. By actively and constructively responding to the experiences and achievements of those around you, you can cultivate a supportive environment that enhances both your wellbeing and that of your loved ones.

Crafted by experts in positive psychology and compiled by Work on Wellbeing, this booklet reflects our commitment to equipping individuals, workplaces, and communities with valuable tools for enhancing relational health. We invite you to approach this activity as a personal journey. Take time to practice active constructive responding, and discover how this intentional approach can enrich your interactions and strengthen your connections.

We'd love to hear about your experiences and how you're integrating this practice into your daily routine.

Let's embark on this journey together toward deeper, more fulfilling relationships!



## ACTIVE CONSTRUCTIVE RESPONDING

### Research

The manner in which we respond when others share triumphs directly builds or undermines relationships. Research into couples and intimate relationships suggests that supporting a partner when good things occur is as important in building a relationship as supporting them when bad things happen.

Research suggests that using Active Constructive Responding is a good way to convey understanding, validation and caring. It can increase the wellbeing of your existing friends and teammates, as well as help you make new connections and encourage closer, more trusting relationships.

What this technique, which was observed and codified by Shelly Gable, highlights is that giving enthusiastic and attentive feedback is very important in building positive relationships.

### Advice

Humans like talking about themselves, and this makes up about 40% of communication. A large part of this dialogue is also about good news. Make a mental note to be on the lookout for people's good news and use their good fortune to build stronger bonds.

Active Constructive Responding activity provided by Dr Aaron Jarden, adapted with additional information by Langley Group. © 2015 Work on Wellbeing. All rights reserved.

## ACTIVE CONSTRUCTIVE RESPONDING

### Goal

The goal of this exercise is to increase relationship bonds and improve the quality of your relationships through positive communication.

### Instructions

#### **TASK #1 - Consider your relationships**

Think about these questions:

- What 'positive relationships' do you currently have and with whom? Think about people in your personal and work life
- What do you need to do to care for these relationships on an ongoing basis?
- Who are the 'positive energisers' in your life and how do they have that effect on you?
- Which relationships do you need to consciously work on to improve?
- What small actions can improve your relationships?

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## ACTIVE CONSTRUCTIVE RESPONDING

### TASK #2 - Use Active Constructive Responding

Use the Active Constructive Responding technique wherever appropriate over the coming weeks. An active constructive response is essentially responding to other's good news with enthusiasm, energy and engagement.

	CONSTRUCTIVE	DESTRUCTIVE
ACTIVE	<p>Display enthusiasm, excitement, ask interested questions, reinforce positives, keep the conversation going, eye contact, smiling</p> <p>"That must feel fantastic"</p> <p>"What happened next?"</p> <p>"What is your plan?"</p> <p>"How are you going to celebrate?"</p> <p>"I will make sure there is an announcement"</p>	<p>Talk about the negative, devils advocate, find a problem, frown, look worried</p> <p>"I can't wait to see them argue over that!"</p> <p>"I have no idea where we are going to find the resources for that!"</p> <p>"That's a lot extra to be taking on"</p> <p>"I bet (someone else) will be upset"</p>
PASSIVE	<p>Smile, acknowledge, reassure, silence, no expression</p> <p>"That's great"</p>	<p>Disinterest, diversion, avoidance, no expression, little eye contact, turning away</p> <p>"Did you finish... (something else)?"</p> <p>"I had a call from... (someone unrelated)"</p>

There are four ways of responding to people. Active Constructive Responding has been shown to build relationships best.

An active, constructive response is not about overdoing praise and positive feedback, as that can make people feel uncomfortable or patronised. We can concentrate on asking questions which encourage the person to talk about their good news and savour their positive emotions.

## ACTIVE CONSTRUCTIVE RESPONDING

### EXAMPLE

Suppose that a very good friend gets a promotion at work. Potential responding could be:

- Active Constructive Response: "That is really great. I am so proud of you. I know how important that promotion was to you. How do you want to celebrate?"
- Active Destructive Response: "That sounds like a lot of responsibility to take on. There will probably be more stress involved in the new position and potentially longer hours at the office"
- Passive Constructive Response: "That's good news"
- Passive Destructive Response: "What are we doing Friday night?"

Your task is to carefully listen to people you care about. When they report good events to you, respond actively and constructively to the good news reported.

### REFLECTION AND LEARNINGS

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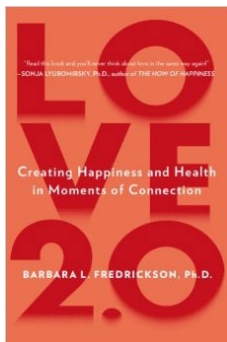
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## ACTIVE CONSTRUCTIVE RESPONDING

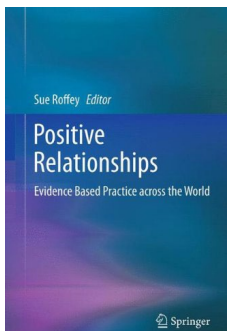
### More resources



#### **LOVE 2.0: FINDING HEALTH AND HAPPINESS IN MOMENTS OF CONNECTION**

by Barbara Fredrickson

We all know love matters. In this groundbreaking book positive emotions expert Barbara Fredrickson shows us how much. Even more than happiness and optimism, love holds the key to improving our mental and physical health as well as lengthening our lives.



#### **POSITIVE RELATIONSHIPS: EVIDENCE BASED PRACTICE ACROSS THE WORLD**

edited by Sue Roffey

Relationships are part of everyone's experience and their quality makes all the difference to our self-esteem, resilience and wellbeing. This book looks at the latest research and approaches to building positive relationships. Chapter on Positive Relationships at Work by Sue Langley.

### Further reading

Gable, S. L., Reis, H. T., Impett, E. A., & Asher, E. R. (2004). What do you do when things go right? The intrapersonal and interpersonal benefits of sharing positive events. *Journal of personality and social psychology*, 87(2), 228.

Langley Group Institute

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Where science meets  
life-changing growth.



Let's connect!

## ABOUT LANGLEY GROUP INSTITUTE

At The Langley Group Institute, we're dedicated to transforming lives with positive psychology and wellbeing science.

As an Australian Registered Training Organisation (RTO #40655), we offer government-accredited courses that blend learning with application. Our courses translate the latest science into actionable strategies you can immediately apply to your personal and professional life.

Our students join a community of like-minded people on a journey to better themselves and the people around them. You'll learn from an inspiring team of experts who help you get the most out of your experience, whether you're learning face-to-face or online.

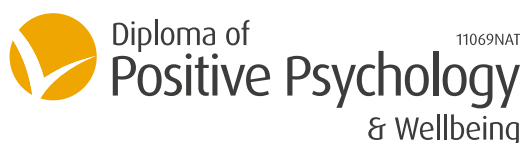
The best part of our courses lies in their impact. As you enhance your own wellbeing, you'll also gain the tools to influence those around you and create a ripple effect of positive change and transformation.

## OUR COURSES

Become the architect of your wellbeing with our [Certificate IV in Wellbeing Science](#).



Ignite personal growth and fuel positive change with our [Diploma of Positive Psychology and Wellbeing](#).



Find out more about our courses;  
click here:

[BOOK A CALL](#)

Or, if you're ready for a positive step forward,  
click here:

[ENROL NOW](#)

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