

The It Game

Directions - Decide who will be “It”. It will receive the positive strokes. Strokes are any acts of recognition and typically verbal in the It Game. They can be conditional (for doing something) or unconditional (for being).

1. One person gives It a positive stroke. This can be anything positive. Examples: I love being around you, I like your sweater, Thank you for taking out the trash today, You are delightful.
2. Then It says, “Thank you and further more. . . .” Then It strokes herself. Example: “Thank you and further more I like my sense of humor.”
3. Do this once or repeat as many times as you would like.
4. Then ask for a specific positive target stroke, that is something you would really like to hear, for example: “I would like you to tell me that I am precious to you” or “I would like you to tell me why you think I am a good mom.”

Example: *Partners turn toward each other and maintain as much eye contact as comfortable.*

Partner A: Would you like to play the It game?

Partner B: Sure, I will be It first.

Partner A: Okay, thank you for taking out the trash today.

Partner B (It): Thank you, and further more I love that I am a real teammate in our marriage.

Partner A: I think you are awesome.

Partner B (It): Thank you, and further more I know I am a good person.

Partner B (It): For my target stroke, I would like to hear you say that I am important to you.

Partner A: You are important to me.

Partner B (It): Thank you.

Then Partners switch roles and repeat.

The It Game was created by Vann Joines (<https://www.seinstitute.com>)

Why Play the It Game? “Couples who are in stable, happy relationships have a ratio of positive to negative interactions of 5:1, even while in the midst of conflict. In banking terms, imagine that a negative interaction is equal to withdrawing a nickel, but a positive interaction (i.e. a deposit) is only worth a penny. That means that in order to keep your Emotional Bank Account in the black, you have to put a lot more pennies to balance out the negative withdrawals.” <https://www.gottman.com/blog/the-positive-perspective/> The It Game is chance to increase positive strokes.