Close the gap

A free one-page guide to the video "Why You Can Feel Alone Next to the Person You Married"

Loneliness is the gap between the connection you have and the connection you want. A ring can't close it on its own, but small, ordinary moments can help.

What the research found

> Married people were less likely to be lonely than the never-married. Still, about three in ten married adults 45 and older were lonely.
>
> AARP (2010), adults 45 and older

> In a study of older married couples, spouses in strained, critical, low-support marriages were the loneliest. Marriages with support were the least lonely, even when there was some criticism.
>
> Hsieh & Hawkley (2018), Journal of Social and Personal Relationships

> How partners responded to good news was more tied to the relationship two months later than responses to bad news.
>
> Gable, Gonzaga & Strachman (2006), JPSP

> In the randomized trials of programs to reduce loneliness, the approach that worked best changed how lonely people read others, rather than adding more contact.
>
> Masi, Chen, Hawkley & Cacioppo (2011), Personality and Social Psychology Review

Try it: the steps from the video

1. **Name the gap, not the person.** "I've been feeling far from you" invites a conversation. Pick a calm moment, not mid-argument.
2. **Check the story.** The short answer might be a hard day, not a judgment of you.
3. **Guard the small moments.** Dinner, the first minutes after someone walks in, a question at day's end. Phones away.
4. **Celebrate the good news.** "Wait, tell me how it happened" beats "That's nice" said while scrolling.
5. **Protect the support.** Where criticism has crowded out support, a counselor or therapist can help you both sort it out.

Phones away at dinner?

	M	T	W	T	F	S	S
Week 1	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Week 2	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Week 3	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Week 4	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Your plan

The gap I'd like to name _____

Our small moment to guard _____

One question I'll ask tonight _____

A friend I'll reach out to _____

Keep in mind

These are correlations, not a diagnosis of any marriage. US: call or text 988 any time. Not safe at home? National Domestic Violence Hotline: 1-800-799-7233, or text START to 88788.