

Positive Communication

Telling others about positive events in your life is called capitalization.

- Capitalizing on good fortune has important interpersonal benefits.
- Telling others about positive events is associated with higher positive affect and greater life satisfaction.
- The response to capitalization attempts influences your feelings of well-being.
- Research has found that active and constructive responses from others, as opposed to passive or destructive responses, were associated with increased benefits, above and beyond the effects of sharing the news itself.
- Research has also found interpersonal benefits of capitalization. When a close relationship partner responds in an active and constructive manner, it increases the quality of the relationship quality, particularly intimacy.

Researchers Shelley Gable and colleagues have identified four main styles of responding to good news in a relationship:

1. Passive Constructive (PC)
 - Understated support.
 - Limp, underpowered and unenthusiastic response to good news.
 - 'Oh, that's nice'
2. Passive Destructive (PD)
 - Ignore the news and turn conversation in another direction often toward something that happened to you.
3. Active Destructive (AD)
 - Point out negative aspects of the event.
 - In response to a promotion: 'Oh no, more responsibility and more stress! Are you sure you're up to it?'
4. Active Constructive (AC)
 - Authentic, enthusiastic support.
 - Engage partner in describing the good event to you in detail.
 - Ask questions about the event.

Start by noticing how you respond. Next, practice the Active Constructive approach and watch the positive results.