



Perspective/Opinion

MCW Responds: What We Love About Our Partners

By Linda Nwumeh, M2

In this piece, Ms. Nwumeh outlines poignant themes and notable responses arising from the Transformational Time's Valentine's Poll...

First of all, we would like to sincerely express our appreciation to all who completed the recent Valentine's Poll! With 43 heartfelt responses spread out across students, faculty, and staff to the question asking which character strength or trait they valued most in their partner and why, love appears to be in the air at MCW.

Some might believe that kindness is a value commonly overlooked and taken for granted, but the results of the poll demonstrate that it was the most-valued trait for the largest number of poll-takers (9). Perhaps unsurprisingly, a close second was love, for which there were six responses. A notable response from a faculty member to the "why" for choosing kindness as the most valued trait lies below.

"I'm grateful that many of these character strengths shine through consistently in my partner's actions - and while it's easy to say "love," I'll go with kindness because of her generosity and habit of doing for others without any expectations of return."

This theme of valuing multiple traits from a partner was consistent when reading through the responses. Perseverance was the trait chosen by a staff member because it *"embodies will, tenacity, intelligence, optimism, and ingenuity all at once,"* while a medical student chose humor due to it being indicative of other positive traits such as humility, social awareness, and positivity. Still, another medical student declared humility as *"the king of all traits,"* arguing that those who display it also commonly display valuable traits like kindness, teamwork, and gratitude. Understandably, it is very difficult to choose just one thing a person loves about their partner.

There were also some who valued traits in their partner because of the potential for their own self-improvement through observation. One faculty member said, *"I am not as strong in kindness and I can learn from her as a result."* A medical student chose patience because *"It's a character trait that I struggle with myself, so it's nice to have the contrast and be able to self reflect on how I can improve."*

These insights are a great example of how differences between partners can be strengths and opportunities to grow. A faculty member who values the zest in their partner shares the story of how taking advantage of these differences turned out. *"My husband and I are a case of opposites attract, a homebody marries an adventurer. Through our 20 years of marriage, his 'zest' for pursuit of fun activities outside of work, family vacations, and pushing me to adventure outside my comfort zone, has been an amazing gift."*

Lastly, as heartwarming of a holiday as it is, I believe it's important to highlight that Valentine's Day is not a happy holiday for everyone. For some, it is a reminder of what is lacking or what has been lost. One medical student said that "existing" was the most valuable trait that a partner could have. In the space to explain why, there were simply two words: "I'm lonely."

So please, be kind to others. Continue to be yourself, as traits that you embody are almost certainly valued by others, regardless of whether this appreciation has been shared with you. And to the person who shared their loneliness with us, we want you to know that you are enough.

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