

Speak Another Language

Before you get too far into the Challenge, you'll want to make sure you're speaking love in a language your partner can understand.

Most people spend a lot of time trying to show their love by “speaking” in ways their partner may not appreciate. This is just what we did until we found *The 5 Love Languages* by Gary Chapman. His basic premise is that if you really want your partner to feel loved, you can learn how to speak your partner’s love language (even though you may selfishly want to speak your own). This was one of the first ideas that started us on a path of learning to communicate love to one another.

“ *Love is something you do for someone else, not something you do for yourself.*

- GARY CHAPMAN

TODAY'S TASK:

1. **Read our [synopsis of the five Love Languages](#) including the charts describing each one.** Most people have one or two languages that are important to them, even though many people appreciate them all from time to time.
2. **Determine your primary and secondary love languages** (physical touch, words of encouragement, gift giving, quality time, or acts of service). If you're having a hard time zeroing in on your love language, you can take this free test at [5LoveLanguages.com](#).
3. **Complete the questions on page 2.**
4. **Be sure to do the three things you listed, that speak in your partner's language.** For example: if they are a gift giving person, try to think of a little something you could give (or make) that shows you were thinking about him/her.

GO DEEPER:

Purchase Gary Chapman's book, [The Five Love Languages](#).

#1: Speak Another Language

40 MINUTES TO COMPLETE

Fold this page in half to fill your answers, then compare notes.

PERSON A

Your Primary Love Language:

Your Secondary Love Language:

Things that make you feel most loved:

List three things you could do this week that would make your partner feel loved:

1.

2.

3.

PERSON B

Your Primary Love Language:

Your Secondary Love Language:

Things that make you feel most loved:

List three things you could do this week that would make your partner feel loved:

1.

2.

3.

FOLD HERE

Make A Meal

Making a meal as a team requires at least a little bit of preparation and planning, and also some patience. How well can you work together in a small space?

When you're cooking a meal together, whether you're picking out recipes, putting together a grocery list, or preparing the meal, communication is the key ingredient.

Developing strong communication skills in the kitchen will strengthen your ability to communicate well in other areas of your life.



TODAY'S TASK:

- 1. Plan your meal together.**
Decide who will do what. If one of you is more comfortable doing the cooking, the other can help with pre-meal prep, or keep the work space cleaned up during the process. If you need meal ideas, here are [5 of our favorite recipes!](#)
- 2. Prepare your meal and enjoy eating it together!**
- 3. Read the questions from page 2,** and answer them when you've finished your meal.

Keep in mind, this doesn't need to be a fancy meal. Do whatever you have time to do. Whether it's marinara on pasta, or a seafood bisque with homemade bread, it's up to you and your schedule (and the ingredients you're able to pull together!). This task is more about working together in a shared space and less about gourmet ratings, or actually learning how to cook.

Define Your Common Dream(s)

Before you can work together in partnership, it helps to know what dream or goal you're working on.

Do you share any dreams together you'd like to turn into actual goals? If you're already working on something together, well done! If not, here are a few examples of common dreams some couples share:

- Raising kids together at home
- Community projects
- Building a business
- Long term travel
- One or more of the above?

Remember, a common dream or goal doesn't mean you're both working on the same thing all the time. Each of you can be doing your part, using your strengths, gifts and know-how to achieve that goal.



The cost of not following your heart, is spending the rest of your life wishing you had.

- UNKNOWN



TODAY'S TASK:

1. **Brainstorm your dreams.** On page 2, take a few minutes to write down one or two dreams you'd like to set as goals to achieve together in the next 3-5 years.

We're not asking you to solve the problems of the world in this task - just start thinking in terms of how you can talk about goal-setting together.

Task #3: Define Your Common Dream(s)

60 MINUTES TO COMPLETE

Dream #1:

Is it possible to make this dream into a goal?

What steps (that you're aware of) would you need to take to achieve this goal:

How long do you estimate it would take to achieve this goal?

Who can you ask for guidance?

Dream #2 :

Is it possible to make this dream into a goal?

List steps you would need to take to achieve this goal:

How long do you estimate it would take to achieve this goal?

Who can you ask for guidance?

PAGE 2

Say No

Are you ready to start pursuing your dreams together?

It takes time to work toward any goal together, and it takes commitment from both of you to move forward. That's why agreeing to say "no" to distractions is critical.

“ *It's only by saying 'no' that you can concentrate on the things that are really important.*

- STEVE JOBS

The everyday demands of being a human being, living in a community with other human beings, can too often pull us away from what we're supposed to be about. Also, there are a multitude of distractions demanding our attention.

Are you spending too much time in activities that keep you from building your dream? Events that one or both of you feel obligated to attend? Social media, Netflix binging, or news addictions?

TODAY'S TASK:

- 1. Look at your calendar.** Using page 2 of this document, agree to decline an existing upcoming invitation or event that takes time away from working on your shared goals.
- 2. Say no.** Building a dream together takes time, so if you have an event on your calendar that isn't a "hell yes", it should probably be a no.
- 3. Personal goals.** There is also space on page 2 to fill in any personal goals you might like to set regarding how you spend your time with social media, tv, etc.

If it takes more than 30 minutes to decide what event to let go, take a break and come back to the topic another time. This isn't meant to cause tension between you, but to simply bring up the concept of time as a precious resource.

Task #4: Say No

30 MINUTES TO COMPLETE

Event or Activity in Question:

PERSON A

Do you have time for this event?

YES NO MAYBE

Would you regret missing it?

YES NO MAYBE

Would you feel relieved to miss it?

YES NO MAYBE

PERSON A

Personal Activity-in-Question #1:

How much time do you spend daily?

How much would you be willing to give up so you could spend it building your dream?

PERSON A

Personal Activity-in-Question #2:

How much time do you spend daily?

How much would you be willing to give up so you could spend it building your dream?

PERSON B

Do you have time for this event?

YES NO MAYBE

Would you regret missing it?

YES NO MAYBE

Would you feel relieved to miss it?

YES NO MAYBE

PERSON B

Personal Activity-in-Question #1:

How much time do you spend daily?

How much would you be willing to give up so you could spend it building your dream?

PERSON B

Personal Activity-in-Question #2:

How much time do you spend daily?

How much would you be willing to give up so you could spend it building your dream?

Listen

We live in a culture of talking over each other.

You don't have to look far before you find a conversation that sounds more like a competition. People just waiting until they can break in to say something without actually hearing what the other person is saying now. Um... that doesn't work very well in a home. At least, not for long!

“ *Most people do not listen with the intent to understand.
Most people listen with the intent to reply.*

- STEPHEN R. COVEY

TODAY'S TASK:

- 1. Draw straws, roll dice, or rock-paper-scissors to decide who gets to practice listening first.**
- 2. One of you gets to talk about any issue, goal, or whatever is on your mind.** Set a timer for 20 minutes. The other will practice listening and understanding them without making any comments, trying to fix the problem, telling their own story or side of things, or judging. This will be easier for some people than others!
- 3. When the first person is done, change roles and do it again.** The next one gets to talk about any issue, goal, or whatever is on their mind, for up to 20 minutes.
- 4. Keep track of your listening experience on page 2.**

Phone-Free Date

Time to relax and focus on enjoying each other!



TODAY'S TASK:

1. **Go out for a beverage or a meal together.**
2. **Here's the hard part: Leave your phones out of sight and silenced.**
3. **Enjoy each other's company!**

If you have little guys at home and can't get a sitter, get them involved in their own task (if possible), then find a space in your home where you don't normally hang out, and enjoy your phone-free date there.

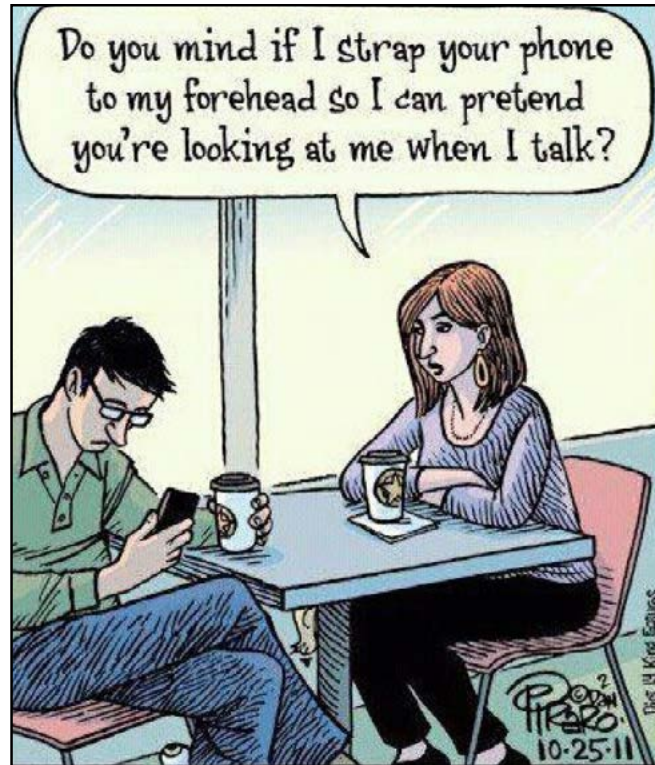
We used to wait till our kids were tucked in bed for the night, then had our "us" time. Just make sure to turn off devices and ringers so you can focus on each other!



GO DEEPER:

If you're wondering why your attention span is only just long enough to wonder why your attention span is not long enough, we recommend [**The Shallows: What the Internet Is Doing to Our Brains**](#), by Nicholas Carr.

(Also, reading a book is good for your attention span!)



Face A Fear

Everyone fears something, and depending on how big a fear that is, it can potentially hold you back from moving forward in both your relationship, and your shared goals.

“*Fear kills more dreams than failure ever will.*”

- UNKNOWN

Here are a few common fears that can keep even the most talented or skilled people from taking the steps to chase their dreams:

- **Fear of failure:** “No one in my family has ever done that. I can’t do it either.”
- **Fear of success:** “We need more research... I don’t have time to check that off my list.”
- **Fear of change:** “Where we are isn’t great but it’s comfortable. Don’t rock the boat.”

Here is a list of fears and other [mental, emotional, and spiritual roadblocks](#).

TODAY’S TASK:

1. **Get moving.** Put on some comfortable shoes and go for a walk.
2. **Define a fear.** Each of you should name one thing that might be holding you back from achieving your goals together.
3. **Jot down any interesting thoughts or ideas on page 2 when you return.**

We’ve navigated some of our hardest conversations on walks together. Sometimes just physically moving forward helps you mentally or emotionally move forward, too.

GO DEEPER:

“Punch Fear in the Face” by reading [Start, by Jon Acuff](#).

Show Me The Money

Most couples don't see eye-to-eye on finances, which is probably why many arguments are rooted in how they spend their money.

“ *Couples who want unity in their marriage need to be willing to depend on each other for accountability and support.*

- DAVE RAMSEY

If either one of you tend to fall prey to impulse buying, binging, or a mindset of denial with your cash, you're both going to experience some tough times ahead, which will make it even tougher to talk about and work through.

Sometimes, the hardest part is just starting the conversation. You probably will have some areas of disagreement regarding finances. Whatever those are, it's critical to find a way to compromise and work together towards achieving your financial goals.

TODAY'S TASK:

- 1. Read through the questions on page 2 together**
- 2. Answer the ones you can agree on or have a plan for.**
- 3. Circle the ones that need to be worked out.**

You don't have to have all the answers today, but it's a good idea to acknowledge the issues! If, however, you both have already sorted out all of your financial issues and have a working system in place, congratulate yourselves by dipping into your entertainment budget and treating yourselves to an evening out (optional!).

Disclaimer: *If you definitely don't have your money issues sorted out, and can't figure out how to agree to agree, you may want to speak with a financial planner or counselor who can help you recognize any destructive money behaviors, make some better decisions, and get on the same page. If you're thinking it's hard to spend money on a financial consultant, remember: pay now, or pay later!*

Task #8: Show Me The Money

45 MINUTES TO COMPLETE

Are you both aware today of where you stand financially?

Do you both have a sense of balance between getting your needs met and your bills paid?

Do you have an emergency fund? Do you agree on what constitutes an “emergency”?

How much do you feel comfortable spending without first checking with the other person?

What are your financial goals for one year from now? 5 years? 20 years?

How did each of you form your beliefs about how to manage money?

Do you both feel like you are contributing equally to your family’s well being?... (“well being” isn’t just equal financial contribution, but would include all aspects of household responsibilities.)

Do you prepare a monthly budget and have a strategy for managing it?

Do you share your primary bank accounts? If not, why?

Do you both have access to some “fun money” you can each spend at your discretion?

PAGE 2

Name Your Strengths

You've been spending some solid time together... Have you noticed some of the tasks are easier or more difficult for one or both of you? This is because we all have our own unique set of strengths.

“ *I can do things you cannot, you can do things I cannot; together we can do great things.*

- MOTHER TERESA

As a couple, you are two unique human beings sharing life together – each coming to the table with your own strengths and skills. We think it's not only possible, but beneficial, to combine what you have together into something bigger than yourselves.

TODAY'S TASK:

1. Download and take a look at the [Clifton StrengthsFinder® Themes pdf](#).
2. Answer questions on page 2.

GO DEEPER:

To read about or watch indepth videos describing each of the strengths, go to the [Strengths Finder Summary page](#).

If you have extra time and really want to get serious, consider taking the [Clifton Strengths Finder Test](#) (cost is \$19.99 each, and takes about 30 minutes). This test will list your top five strengths (of the 34 they list).

Task #9: Name Your Strengths

40 MINUTES TO COMPLETE (more if you opt to take the Strengths Finder test)

PERSON A

What are your partner's greatest strengths?

How can their strengths move you closer to your shared goals?

How do you see your combined strengths working together, or pushing against each other?

If you took Clifton Strengths Finder test, what were your top five strengths?

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

PERSON B

What are your partner's greatest strengths?

How can their strengths move you closer to your shared goals?

How do you see your combined strengths working together, or pushing against each other?

If you took Clifton Strengths Finder test, what were your top five strengths?

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

Back Scratch Fever

Brace yourself... preferably against a wall.

Studies have proven, again and again, that physical contact is critical to human beings, so, it's time to get out your nail clippers and an emery board.

“ *Physical connection is critical to emotional intimacy. When there's no physical intimacy, it isn't long before the emotional intimacy goes, too.*

- KIMBERLY GRAHAM

TODAY'S TASK:

1. **Give each other a thorough back scratch (or back rub) before bed.** This is not meant to lead into anything else... and if it does, that's none of our beeswax. Seriously, you have no idea how therapeutic this is.

That's it.

You're welcome.

Task #10: Back Scratch Fever

15 MINUTES FOR BACK SCRATCHES. TAKE AS LONG AS YOU'D LIKE TO COLOR

Bonus fun: Color this with all the colors you imagined while you were getting a backscratch.



PAGE 2

Pick A Fight

We all know our relationships are only as good as our ability to communicate with each other.

And, when your journey together takes an unexpected path leading into thorns, you'll need to work together to get back on the best road.

“ *The best relationships aren't the ones without fights. They are the ones where you aren't afraid to fight because you know your partner will still be there at the end of it.*

- UNKNOWN

TODAY'S TASK:

- 1. Think of a sensitive issue, something that normally makes you argue.** Some examples might be: budgeting, chores, or disciplining children.
- 2. As you each prepare for this discussion, be thinking in advance about why that topic is difficult to discuss, and why you have differing opinions.** In other words, explain your anger or confusion (instead of expressing it). This can lead you to solutions instead of the same argument over and over.
- 3. Find a way to discuss it without actually getting angry.** You might start by holding hands, taking a deep breath, or telling a joke. You may also want to review task #3: Listen.
- 4. Answer questions on page 2.**

These may be obvious, but here's what not to do when you argue:

- No name-calling
- No swearing
- No silent treatment
- No walking away without agreeing to take a break

Please keep in mind, you don't have to resolve the issue in 30 minutes. This is only meant to help you have a civil conversation about it.

Eat Some Crow

Knowing how and when to say you're sorry is a skill that will serve you well for your lifetime. This one is a must-have, with each other, with your kids (or future kids), and with any relationship.

Seriously. It's pretty much game over if you don't get this one right. Seeing as you are human beings, you should have plenty of opportunities to practice often.

- “ *A good apology has three parts:*
- 1. I'm sorry.*
 - 2. It's my fault.*
 - 3. What can I do to make it right?*

- UNKNOWN

After nearly four weeks of this challenge, not to mention picking an intentional fight, there's probably something to apologize for by now.

 **TODAY'S TASK:**

- 1. Think of something you should apologize for.**
- 2. Apologize. For real.**
- 3. Answer the two questions for each of you on page 2.**

Remember, a real apology doesn't start with, "I'm sorry if...". Leave out the "if" and just own it. Your relationship will rise or fall on having a little humility.

Cocktail Hour

Like many couples, you may have spent most of the day apart, doing your work, and fighting battles for the good of all mankind.

Make sure you take a moment to come back together again!



Sometimes, the most productive thing you can do is relax.

- MARK BLACK



TODAY'S TASK:

- 1. Set a time.** Set aside an agreed-upon amount of time together after work to talk about your day.
- 2. Fix a snack/beverage.** A beverage and a snack is nice, but whatever encourages you both to relax is fine.
- 3. Carve out a few minutes.** 30 minutes is deluxe, but if you have little kids, 10 minutes might have to be enough!

The point of this is not the amount of time spent, but the re-connection after being apart and having separate experiences all day.

Face Your Jekyll And Hyde

There are a lot of personality tests that offer interesting information, but the Enneagram really has given us some very helpful, and weirdly accurate insights about ourselves and how we relate to each other.



The Enneagram tells it 'like it is.' And our healing and maturing always begin with our acknowledging what's there.

- RICHARD ROHR



TODAY'S TASK:

1. Take this free online [Enneagram Personality test](#).
2. Read up on the numbers you scored highest on to see which one sounds accurate (this site has some excellent [descriptions of the numbers](#)). Unless the description feels both familiar in a good way, as well as uncomfortable, you probably haven't found your number yet.

The 9 indepth personality descriptions:

- | | | |
|---------------------------------|--------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| 1) The Reformer | 4) The Individualist | 7) The Enthusiast |
| 2) The Helper | 5) The Investigator | 8) The Challenger |
| 3) The Achiever | 6) The Loyalist | 9) The Peacemaker |

3. Answer the questions on page 2. We may only scratch the surface of today, especially if this is your introduction to the Enneagram. But, we would encourage you to dive deeper.



GO DEEPER:

We loved [The Enneagram: A Christian Perspective](#), by Richard Rohr, a Catholic Franciscan priest. His descriptions go deep.

WARNING: *Any time you learn a new truth about each other, it can be used in positive ways, but it can also be used as ammunition. When you know your partner's greatest strength, you can empower them. However, knowing their weakness (or shadow side) gives you an evil superpower. Use that power with great care, and never tear them down with it.*

Write A Love Letter

There are a million ways to show our appreciation for each other, and the written word is a powerful one.

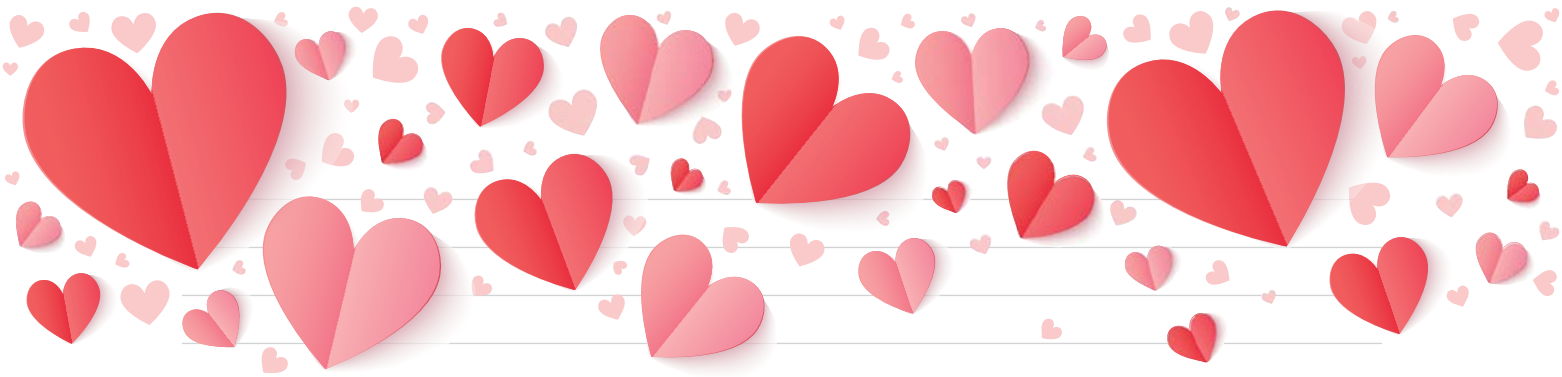
“ *A real love letter is absolutely ridiculous to everyone except the writer and the recipient.*

- MYRTLE REED

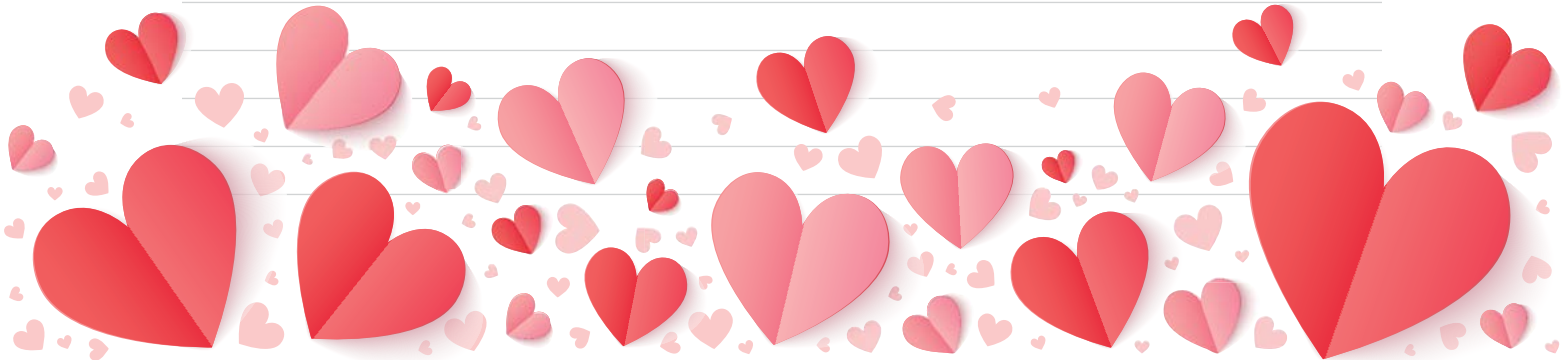
TODAY'S TASK:

1. **Print two copies of page 2.**
2. **On the day you plan to complete task #14, each of you should find a quiet place alone and write a love letter to your partner.** Dig deep, get romantic if you have it in you! Tell them why you love them! Describe what it was about them that made you fall in the first place!
3. **Then, hide the letter where you know they'll find it sometime this week!**

After you're both done, you can grin like silly kids at each other for awhile.



A large, blank area of the page consisting of horizontal white lines on a light background, intended for writing a message or letter.



Help!

We all have baggage, and when we're in a partnership, it becomes our partner's burden as well as our own.

“ *Everyone has baggage. Find someone who loves you enough to help you unpack it.*

- UNKNOWN

We all have stories or incidents from our pasts that still impact how we think and react to events happening today. There's no better way to describe it other than baggage: the weight we all drag behind, holding us back. And, the thing is, unpacked baggage just gets heavier and more cumbersome as we get older.

Talking openly about our baggage can quickly become overwhelming for many of us. No worries – you're not alone. We all have it. Our baggage affects all of us at different levels at different times in our lives.

TODAY'S TASK:

- 1. Name your baggage.** Each of you write down one of your struggles, and how you think it might impact your relationship on page 2. If you're new at this, start with something small.
- 2. Ask for help.** Take 20 minutes each to talk about one aspect of your baggage and brainstorm together one way your partner could help you carry, unpack, or otherwise deal with it.
- 3. Talk at whatever depth you can.** You should expect at least a little discomfort. You won't make any new progress without some vulnerability.

DISCLAIMER: *If anything about this triggers or frightens either of you, stop and think about getting some outside help (from a trusted friend, a spiritual leader, or professional therapist).*

Try A New Thing

We are connected to our partners not by some mystical, magical bond (well, maybe a little), but by all of the little connections we build daily between us. So, the more experiences you share together, the better!

“ *Lack of connection with each other doesn't usually end a marriage overnight; more often, couples simply begin to drift apart. Different experiences during the day, parallel lives in the evening, and few points of connection mean that they begin to lead separate lives. And when one finally looks up and reaches out to the other they find that the love between them has died.*

- KATHERINE HILL

Right. So let's **NOT** do that!



TODAY'S TASK:

1. **Get your Google on.** Do a little research together: what are some activities neither of you have ever tried but always wanted to? (Ballroom dance class? Kung-fu session? Showtunes Karaoke?)
2. **Write a few ideas down on page 2 that seem fun.**
3. **Be sure to include the times and dates the activities are available.**
4. **Plan to try one of them on a later date night, and get it on your calendar!**

Finding new things you enjoy doing together builds common ground in your partnership. The more you enjoy doing together, the less space there is for the perils of life to drive wedges between you.

Get Sexy!

It's not rocket science. A healthy, active sex life can be a good barometer for how the rest of a relationship is working. It's also one of the first things to go when a couple is struggling.

“ *I would rather cuddle than have sex. If you are good at grammar, you'll get it.*

- UNKNOWN

TODAY'S TASK:

1. Create space for a sexual encounter. Be creative! (Hopefully, this isn't the only time during this Challenge)!

OR...

2. Create space to talk about it. If you're stalled out in this area, or if either of you aren't comfortable with this challenge, talk through why that might be. Do you both feel safe discussing it?

DISCLAIMER: *If anything about this triggers or frightens either of you, stop and think about getting some outside help from a professional therapist.*

“Wow! You Really...”

Today you'll be focusing on really letting your lover know just how much you appreciate them!

“ *Trade your expectations for appreciation, and the world changes instantly.* ”

- TONY ROBBINS

So often, when we're caught up in the chaos and stress of life, it's easy to strike out at the people closest to us. It's easier to criticize than to encourage. Today should be all about looking for the attributes you appreciate about your lover, and then telling them! There will be other days to sort out issues that need working on. Today we'll throw everything we've got at looking closer for the good in each other.

TODAY'S TASK:

- 1. Give compliments.** See how many sincere compliments you can give each other throughout the day today (aim for a minimum of 5).
- 2. Choose your weapon.** These can be face-to-face, by phone, text, email, or whatever works for your busy day.
- 3. Answer the questions on page 2.**

Agree To Better Health

Part of really loving someone else is taking care of yourself and your health.

“ *Being healthy is a way of life. It's not just about what you feed your body; it's about what you feed your mind and the social environment you keep. Make healthy food choices, exercise your body, and choose your friends wisely.*

- STEVE MARABOLI

How could you improve your health, together?

TODAY'S TASK:

- 1. Add a healthy thing.** Talk about and agree on one healthy thing you can add to your life together (like taking walks together 3 days a week, or eating two vegetarian meals a week, or...?).
- 2. You may be at different levels of fitness/health.** If so, each of you should decide individually what you are willing to improve on. If you're at similar fitness levels and diet, you could decide on doing or adding something together.
- 3. No pointing fingers!** The point of this is not to shame anyone, but to encourage both of you to better health, just a little at a time.

Of course this conversation will be vastly different from one couple to the next, and even between the two of you.

Also, if one of you is into health and fitness and the other isn't, don't get all judgy on your partner. Nearly everyone has at least a little room for improvement.

Reflect And Summarize

We hope the past 21 days have been eye-opening, constructive, helpful, and fun. On this last day, take some time to talk about your experience, and decide what's next.

“ *Without reflection, we go blindly on our way, creating more unintended consequences, and failing to achieve anything useful.*

- MARGARET J. WHEATLEY

Here you both are, after 21 days... what now? Take at least 30 minutes to jot down some notes, listing any new things you've learned during the Partnership Challenge.

TODAY'S TASK:

1. **Answer the questions on page 2.**

GO DEEPER:

Which tasks from this Challenge did you enjoy the most? Plan on adding them into your regular routine!

We'll be sending you a follow-up email asking about your experience. We hope you'll be willing to give us feedback on how to make the Challenge a better tool for couples who want a partnership-style relationship.

