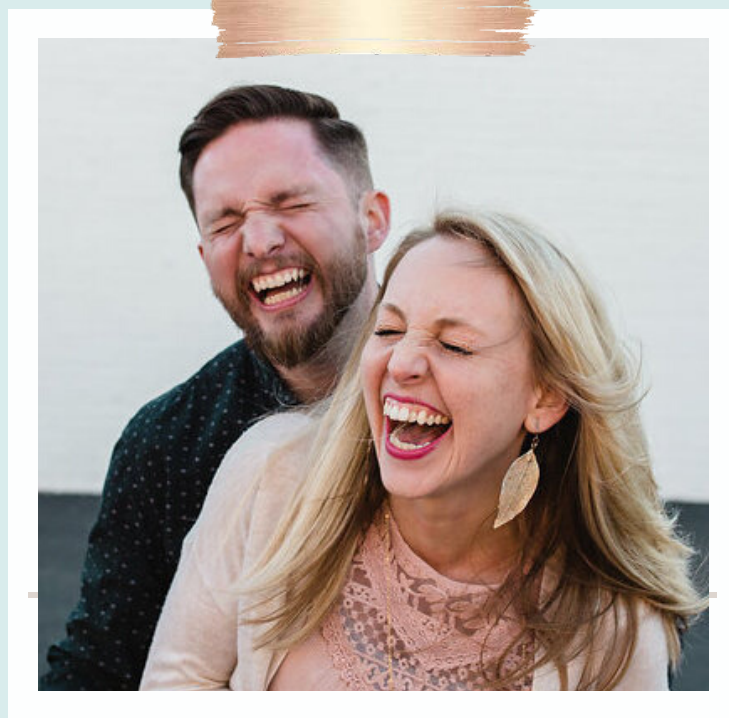


# *Reignite: 5-Day Marriage Challenge*



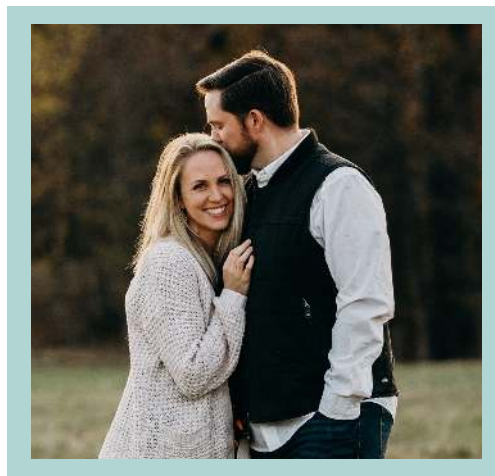
## Workbook

# WHAT TO EXPECT

## Welcome to the Reignite 5-Day Marriage Challenge!

My name is Beth Hoff. One of my biggest passions in life is to help build strong marriages and families. That's what led me to get a Masters in Counseling and spend 13 years as the Director of Marriage & Family Ministry at my church.

Marriage is an incredible gift, but finding time & energy to invest in your marriage in the midst of busy schedules, parenting and work can be really difficult! This challenge is designed to help you re-connect with your spouse and breathe fresh life into your marriage.



You can use this workbook alongside the 5 days of emails you'll be receiving from Favorite Families OR you can work through the challenge at your own pace using just the workbook. **Also, be sure to print a copy of the Weekly Marriage Check-In at the end of this workbook to use after the challenge is over to keep your connection strong!**

In order to have the greatest impact on your marriage, I encourage you to approach each assignment with passion, optimism, and commitment. The more you put into it, the more you will get out of it. Let's see what can happen over the next 5 days!

### Each day of the challenge will have 3 quick segments:

- 1. Transform Your Mind:** A simple, yet transformational marriage tip for you to be thinking about.
- 2. Activate Your Love:** A small, strategic demonstration of love for your spouse that you can do in 1 minute or less.
- 3. Share A Connection:** A 15-20 minute connection activity for you to do with your spouse to help deepen your relationship. (You're welcome to make it a whole hour if you have time, or you can do it in 15 minutes.)



# Day 1

## 1: TRANSFORM YOUR MIND: FRIENDSHIP

Dr. John Gottman is one of the leading relationship experts of our day. What I love about Gottman's work is that he looks at both the psychology AND the physiology of marriage to see what really makes couples work...or not.

In his 30+ years of study, he has found that the #1 biggest predictor of longterm marital success and happiness is this: The Quality of a Couple's Friendship.

It's not about how often you fight or how "compatible" your personalities are, but across all types of couples, the ones with a core friendship were the happiest and had the lowest rates of divorce time and time again.

It's SO easy for us as couples, with our busy schedules and the demands of our kids, jobs and households, to slip into "business partner mode." This is something my husband, Michael, and I struggle with too. One of us gets home and we immediately jump into the "business" of our lives - "Did you pick up the kids from practice? Did you take out the trash? Did you pay the bills?" and the list goes on.

But the truth is, a healthy, thriving marriage is not built on a business partner model. It's built on friendship.

**So throughout the day today, I want to challenge you to be thinking about how you are being intentional to build and foster a quality friendship with your spouse. Don't let yourself slip into business partner mode. When you see your spouse for the first time in the morning or after work, be intentional to greet them with love and affection. Remember that you are best friends first. What do best friends do? They talk. They laugh together. They appreciate each other. They have fun together. No matter how urgent the business of life is, your friendship should always be more important.**

# Day 1: Friendship

## 2: ACTIVATE YOUR LOVE

Your small assignment for today is simple: Express gratitude toward your spouse. Simply say "Thank You" to them for something they've done. Be specific!

### Examples:

- "Thank you so much for working hard to support our family."
- "Thank you for doing the dishes, even though I know you're tired. It means so much to me."
- "Thank you for playing with the kids after dinner. I love to see you in action as a dad/mom."

Take a minute to write down 3 specific things you could thank your spouse for:

1. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_

**INDIVIDUAL CHALLENGE:** Thank your spouse for something specific today. You can do it in person, over the phone, or via text. Just be intentional to say thank you.

**BONUS TIP:** It's not a competition about who does more. The more we express appreciation toward our spouse, the more it increases our own positive thoughts toward them and the better it makes them feel as well.

# Day 1: Friendship

## 3: SHARE A CONNECTION

One of the most important elements of a healthy friendship is simply getting to know each other on a deeper level!

Even if you've been together for 10, 20 or 30 years, never assume you know everything about your partner. Especially since we all change over time and through each season of life. Instead of thinking you already know everything about your spouse, take the position of always being a student of your spouse. The more you pursue knowing them on a deeper level, the stronger your friendship will be.

**COUPLE'S CHALLENGE:** Take 15-20 minutes (longer if you like) to use some of the Conversation Starters on the next page and connect as friends!

(P.S. You don't have to do them in order, just pick your favorites.)

### TIPS TO MAKE IT HAPPEN:

1. Do it after the kids are in bed.
2. Do it over a meal.
3. Do it via FaceTime or Skype on a lunch break or if your spouse is out of town.
4. Do it over a cup of coffee.
5. Give the kids an activity to do (or a show to watch) and do it.

# 27 Conversation Starters

1. If you woke up tomorrow with no fear, what would you do?
2. If you could give your younger self one piece of advice, what would it be?
3. What is your all-time favorite book? (One fiction, one non-fiction)
4. If you could participate in one event from history, what would it be?
5. What is one thing you do that makes you feel fully alive?
6. What's something you did that you never confessed to your parents?
7. Who was your best friend when you were 9 and why did you like them?
8. If you could ask advice from any historical figure, who would you ask?
9. If you could go anywhere in the world on vacation, where would you go?
10. What's one of your earliest memories?
11. If you could have one superpower or incredible talent, what would it be?
12. What business would you open if you knew you couldn't fail?
13. If you could sit front row at any event, which one would you choose?
14. If there were a zombie apocalypse, which 5 people would you want on your team?
15. Which tv show character do you most relate to and why?
16. When you were a kid, what did you want to be when you grew up?
17. What has God been teaching you or showing you lately?
18. What's the scariest thing you've ever done? Would you do it again?
19. What's something about you that I "get," but most others don't understand?
20. What's the best advice you've been given recently?
21. What was the moment you knew you were in love with me?
22. If we could spend 24 hours doing anything in the world together, what should we do?
23. What would you like our lives to be like 5 years from now?
24. What's one activity you've always wanted to do together?
25. What's one positive effect our marriage has had on you?
26. What's your greatest hope for our marriage?



# Day 2

## 1: TRANSFORM YOUR MIND: SAME TEAM

What I want you to be thinking about today is the fact that you and your spouse are on the Same. Team.

This one concept has been one of the most influential in my own marriage with my husband. The first year of our marriage, we were starting to recognize that...maybe we didn't see eye to eye on everything after all. (Big surprise, right?)

For one, I knew the correct way to load the dishwasher properly and, for whatever reason, Michael did not. ;) There we were, standing in our kitchen fighting about how to stick a plate in the dishwasher....and it was getting pretty heated.

Then all of a sudden, we realized how ridiculous the whole scenario was. It was like I was on the red team, trying to score points against him and he was on the blue team trying to score points against me. The problem was that every time one of us "won," our marriage was the one that lost.

In that moment, we decided that we wanted to be on the SAME TEAM from there on out. Because the truth is, our connection is always more important than any problem, any obstacle, or any challenge that we face. When we were able to re-establish our connection, this time choosing to be on the same team, then instead of two opposing sides competing AGAINST each other, we became a powerful force working together to solve the problem or face the challenge together.

This is the key to healthy conflict resolution. Reminding yourselves that you are on the SAME TEAM and re-establishing your connection before solving the problem. **Be thinking, today, about how you can be on the same team with your spouse.**

# Day 2: Same Team

## 2: ACTIVATE YOUR LOVE

Your simple challenge today is to do something for your spouse that they would normally do. Do something to demonstrate to your spouse that the two of you are on the same team and have each other's backs.

### Examples:

- Do one of their chores for them (trash, dishes, laundry)
- Make them a cup of coffee or bring them one from a coffee shop
- Put gas in their car

Take a minute to write down 3 ideas of what you could do here:

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

**INDIVIDUAL CHALLENGE:** Choose one of the above and do it for your spouse. Don't tell them you're going to do it until it's already done. When they ask why, just tell them that you're glad you're both on the same team.

**BONUS TIP:** One of the most powerful mindsets we can have towards our spouse is that of serving them out of love and gratitude. If we only do things for them out of obligation or with an expectation that they "owe us" something in return, it will not only spoil it for them but taint our attitude in the process. Choose to do this with no strings attached.



# Day 2: Same Team

## 3: SHARE A CONNECTION

Having a shared history together is a key part of your connection. When you're feeling like you're not on the same team, one of the ways you can re-connect is reminding yourselves of what you've walked through together already.

**COUPLE'S CHALLENGE:** Take 15-20 minutes with your spouse today to talk about some of your favorite memories together, things that you've walked through and come out on the other side, or even some of your hilarious, embarrassing moments over the years.

**BONUS TIP:** If you need a little help, snuggle up on the couch together and look through photos and videos from throughout your relationship. As you do this, remind yourselves of all you've been through, good and bad, and that your investment in each other is so worth it. You're on the same team.

**BONUS RESOURCE:** How are you at resolving conflict in a healthy way in your marriage? When we're feeling hurt or angry, it's easy to resort to unfair fighting tactics like bringing up the past, using the "D" word (divorce), withdrawing or yelling at each other. But these just cause you or your partner to be defensive rather than vulnerable.

Check out the bonus on the next page to remind yourselves of what "fair fighting" and healthy conflict resolution really look like.

# Fair Fighting Guidelines

## BEFORE

- Don't run from it.** The longer you wait to address, the stronger and more emotional it becomes. Address issues as they arise.
- Choose your battles carefully.** Not every issue needs to be a fight. Is this a minor annoyance or a true hurt?
- Check yourself first.** If you're angry, take time to cool off first. Make sure you're in a place to have a calm, meaningful conversation.
- Identify the goal.** Your goal should be understanding and connection, not agreement or winning. Your relationship is more important than being "right."

## DURING

- Define the issue clearly.** Once the real issue is clear, it often takes care of itself. If you can't clearly define it, it's probably an emotional disconnect (see next one).
- Get to the root.** The root often has nothing to do with the presenting "issue" and everything to do with how it makes the person feel.
- State your feelings directly.** Avoid blame or accusation at all costs. Instead, use this communication formula: "In situation X, when you do Y, I feel Z."
- No name-calling, sore spots (sex, in-laws), criticism or bringing up the past.** These are tools for manipulation, not connection. They are not fair game.

## AFTER

- Keep a Same Team mentality.** When one person wins, your marriage loses. When you tackle the issue together as a team, you both win and your marriage is stronger.
- Don't leave without re-establishing connection.** Even if you don't agree on the issue, you can still validate your connection.
- Ask for and extend forgiveness.** Saying sorry is great, but asking forgiveness takes it to the next level. Own your part, however big or small.
- Express affection.** Hug. Kiss. Make love. Tell your partner "I love you" and "Thanks for valuing our connection enough to work through this together."



# Day 3

## 1: TRANSFORM YOUR MIND: LOVE LANGUAGES

Today is all about learning to speak your partner's language. You're probably familiar with Gary Chapman's concept of the 5 Love Languages. It's such a fantastic tool for building a healthy relationship.

When you learn how you and your partner both give and receive love, it can have an exponential impact on your marriage. But just because you know the concept of the 5 love languages, doesn't mean it's easy to implement in reality. In fact, a lot of couples have opposite love languages! So even if you read the book and take the quiz and KNOW each other's languages, it STILL may not come easily for you to love each other in those languages.

It's like when you study ANY foreign language. It takes time and practice. And as you learn a foreign language, it often feels very unnatural, clunky, and you may even feel dumb trying to do things that don't "flow" for you.

But the value of loving your partner in their language is incredible. In a healthy marriage, we need ALL FIVE love languages expressed on a regular basis, no matter what your top one is! But being able to love your spouse intentionally in their top languages is like the difference between depositing a \$10 bill in their love account vs. a quarter. So even if it feels like you're speaking a foreign language, I encourage you to keep practicing. It may never be your first language, but it will get easier and the investment into your partner is worth it.

**BONUS TIP:** When your partner makes an attempt at loving you in your language, be intentional to respond in a loving way, even if it wasn't exactly how you'd do it. The more acceptance they feel as they try to learn a foreign language, the safer they'll feel to try again. Give each other grace in the process.

# Day 3: Love Languages

## 2: ACTIVATE YOUR LOVE

Today's activation is to give your partner a 6-second kiss. Don't wimp out at 3 seconds, go for the full 6. It has a powerful effect on both your mind and your body. ALSO, be intentional to speak your spouse's love language in some way today.

### Examples:

- Hold hands or rub their back (Physical Touch)
- Do the dishes (Acts of Service)
- Look them in the eyes and ask them a meaningful question (Quality Time)
- Bring them coffee or their favorite snack (Gifts)
- Tell them 3 things you admire about them (Words of Affirmation)

Take a minute to write down 3 ideas of what you could do here:

1. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_

**INDIVIDUAL CHALLENGE:** Choose one of the above and do it for your spouse. No matter what their language is, also surprise them with a 6-second kiss!

# Day 3: Love Languages

## 3: SHARE A CONNECTION

Having a shared history together is a key part of your connection. When you're feeling like you're not on the same team, one of the ways you can re-connect is reminding yourselves of what you've walked through together already.

### COUPLE'S CHALLENGE:

- Take the Quiz: Each of you take the free online assessment for the 5 Love Languages at [www.5lovelanguages.com](http://www.5lovelanguages.com). Even if you've done it before, take a few minutes to take it again and see if your results are still the same or if your needs have changed.
- Compare Results: Talk with your spouse about your results and what things specifically you can do that have the greatest impact on them or make them feel the most loved. Share openly with them about what impacts you the most and what makes you feel most loved too.

BONUS TIP: One of the best things my husband and I have done is to be open with each other about our love needs. Instead of expecting your spouse to read your mind, agree to express your needs to each other and respond. For example, if my husband's having a rough day, he'll say, "Can I get a hug? That would really help me right now." And if I'm having a rough day, I'll say, "Can you tell me 3 things you love about me?" This way we are not only receiving love in our language, but our spouse gets to love us without having to guess at what we need and potentially miss the mark. We both win.

# Day 3: Love Languages

## What's HER Love Language?

Wife's PRIMARY love language is: \_\_\_\_\_

*Some of the most meaningful ways she receives love in this language:*

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Wife's SECONDARY love language is: \_\_\_\_\_

*Some of the most meaningful ways she receives love in this language:*

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

## What's HIS Love Language?

Husband's PRIMARY love language is: \_\_\_\_\_

*Some of the most meaningful ways he receives love in this language:*

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Husband's SECONDARY love language is: \_\_\_\_\_

*Some of the most meaningful ways he receives love in this language:*

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_



# Day 4

## 1: TRANSFORM YOUR MIND: SELF-TALK

We've all heard how vitally important communication is to a healthy marriage, right? But did you know that the **MOST INFLUENTIAL** communication shaping your marriage is actually not your communication with your spouse? It's the communication that happens in your head **ABOUT** your spouse, yourself, and your marriage.

Your self-talk is powerful. Every time your spouse does or doesn't do something, your thoughts have the opportunity to lead you towards connection or disconnection within your marriage.

When something happens...your spouse forgets to take out the trash or you have a fight and your feelings get hurt...what thoughts pop into your head? In moments of anger or hurt, we can sometimes let our thoughts run rampant. "My husband is a jerk." "My wife doesn't love me." "Why did I marry this person?" and the list goes on. But every time we latch onto those thoughts, we are sabotaging our marriage.

As much as we'd like to control our partner and what they do or say, the truth is the only person we can really control is ourselves. And that is hard enough! So the next time something happens and your thoughts start to go wild, do this...

1. Stop and take a deep breath.
2. Ask yourself, are my thoughts right now leading towards connection or disconnection with my spouse?
3. Replace the negative thought with a positive one. (See activation on the next page.)
4. Pray for them. Ask God to help you see your spouse through his eyes.

The more you adjust your self-talk about your spouse and your marriage, the better you will feel about your marriage and the more likely you are to connect with your spouse. So today, be aware of your thoughts towards your spouse and be intentional to choose words of life.

# Day 4: Self-Talk Activation

In order to adjust your self-talk towards your spouse, it's important to identify the thoughts that may be causing you to disconnect from your spouse and start to REPLACE them with a new truth. Identify 3 primary thoughts about your spouse and create a phrase to tell yourself when you're struggling (see next page for ideas).

**Example 1:** My husband didn't take out the trash. He doesn't care about me!

**Example 2:** My wife refused my request for sex. She must not be into me anymore.

**Example 1:** He probably forgot or is having a tough day. I'm going to extend grace to him.

**Example 2:** She loves me, but may just be feeling tapped out from meeting the kids' needs all day. I'll try again tomorrow.

## Negative Thought

## Positive Replacement



# Day 4: Self-Talk

## 2: ACTIVATE YOUR LOVE

Honor your spouse in front of others. How we talk about our spouse to others is just as important as how we talk to them when no one is around.

Your challenge today is to give a toast to your spouse. If you have a family dinner, raise your glass in front of your family and give a toast to your spouse. If that's not possible, give a toast to honor them when it's just the two of you. Use your words to speak life over your spouse today.

### Example:

"I'd like to give a toast to \_\_ (Spouse's Name) \_\_. I love the way you \_\_\_\_\_. I'm so thankful that \_\_\_\_\_. After \_\_\_ years of being together, I wouldn't want anyone else by my side in this crazy adventure called life. Thank you for being \_\_\_\_\_. I love you."

Take a minute to write down some notes:

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**INDIVIDUAL CHALLENGE:** Give a toast to your spouse and honor them with your words today.

# Day 4: Self-Talk

## 3: SHARE A CONNECTION

Laughter is a powerful tool for connection. Studies show that even complete strangers who share a laugh together experience increased feelings of trust and positivity towards the other person. How much more so in a healthy marriage? Do. Something. Fun.

**COUPLE'S CHALLENGE:** Set aside 15 minutes today to do something FUN together!

**Here are some ideas:**

- Play a game together. Download the app “Heads Up” or “Catch Phrase” and play a few quick rounds together.
- Watch a funny video. Find a comedy special or watch some youtube videos (search things like "dogs who can't dog" or "people slipping on ice") and just throw your heads back and laugh together.

**BONUS TIP:** Be intentional to touch each other while you have fun. Snuggle up, hold hands, kiss, and let your connection deepen.



# Day 5

## 1: TRANSFORM YOUR MIND: PRIORITIZE

My friend, Jake Veach, once said, "If I wait until everything else is checked off my to-do list before I invest in my marriage, I'll never invest in my marriage."

There is ALWAYS something or someone demanding our time. Work, kids, laundry, grocery shopping, soccer practice, etc. If we wait until we have time or money to invest in our marriage, there's a really good chance we never will.

But if you choose to invest in your marriage FIRST, instead of last, every other part of your life will reap the fruit of that. In fact, one of the best gifts you can give to your kids is a healthy marriage! Being able to see their parents connected and in love gives our kids security and sets them up for a LIFETIME of knowing what healthy relationships look like.

**Here's the key:** The health and longevity of your marriage is not built in the big decisions. It's built in the small decisions you make every single day.

- Choosing to foster a friendship with your spouse, instead of slipping into business partner mode.
- Choosing to greet your spouse with a smile and a kiss instead of a to-do list when they get home.
- Choosing to adjust your self-talk to give your spouse the benefit of the doubt, rather than letting your thoughts run wild.
- Choosing to speak their love language, even when you don't feel like it or it doesn't feel "natural."
- Choosing to set aside time to spend together, even if your schedule and budget are tight.

These are the little decisions, the small habits that you make on a daily basis, that make the difference between a thriving, love-filled marriage or a miserable co-existence. **So today, I want you to think about how you are shaping your daily habits and being intentional to turn towards your spouse in these small ways each and every day.** You won't regret it.

# Day 5: Prioritize

## 2: ACTIVATE YOUR LOVE

Start adjusting your daily habits to include small, simple acts of love towards your spouse throughout the day. They don't have to be long or intensive. The small choices add up to make a huge difference.

### Examples:

- Give them a 6-second kiss.
- Say thank you for something they did.
- Text them that you are thinking about them.
- Do something that speaks their love language.
- Share a laugh together.

Jot down 3-5 small things you will do today to express love to your spouse:

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_

**INDIVIDUAL CHALLENGE:** Do several small things for your spouse all throughout the day. It doesn't even have to take long!

# Day 5: Prioritize

## 3: SHARE A CONNECTION

Dating is one of the best things you can do for your marriage! A national survey reviewed by the National Marriage Project found that couples who spent quality time together at least ONCE A WEEK saw significant relational benefits across these areas: communication, fun, passion/intimacy, commitment and lowering stress.

Who doesn't want those benefits in their life?? The good news is that it didn't matter whether they went out on a fancy date, a cheap date, or had a date at home. The quality time together is what mattered. So get together with your spouse and schedule a date for some time in the next 7 days. (And even better, make it a habit every week, or at least once a month!)

**COUPLE'S CHALLENGE:** Your FINAL assignment is to plan a date!

**BONUS TIP:** Is childcare or budget an issue? We make time and find money for the things that are most important to us. Be creative! Find another family and swap baby-sitting for date nights. Use your eat-out budget to pay a babysitter and do a free or cheap date like hiking, going out for coffee, taking a walk, going to happy hour, etc. Or, you can even plan an at-home date!

*Need date ideas? Check out the ideas on the next page!*

# 12 Dates You Can Do At Home

Choose one of these to do after the kids are in bed or any time you have a moment to yourselves. Or be creative and come up with your own!

## Talking Dates

- **QUIZ TIME:** Take an online relationship or personality quiz and compare results. Talk about how the concept impacts your life and marriage.
- **BOOK CLUB:** Read (or listen to) the same book separately prior to your date, then brew some coffee or tea and discuss it together.
- **CONVERSATION STARTERS:** Search online for "date night questions" and take turns choosing various ones from the list to ask each other.
- **PHOTO REEL:** Snuggle up together and look back at photos and videos from throughout your relationship. Share memories and favorite stories.

## Doing Dates

- **TAKE A CLASS:** Find a free class on YouTube and "take a class" together in your living room. It can be dancing, language, art, balloon animals, etc.
- **MOVIE NIGHT:** Pop some popcorn and watch an old movie together, something you would have watched as kids or teens and reminisce.
- **PUZZLED:** Do a puzzle together and talk about life, love and your dreams for the future as you work together to put every piece in its place.
- **GAME TIME:** Pick your favorite board game, grab a deck of cards, or download a cheap app like "Heads Up" or "Catch Phrase" and have fun.

## Creative Dates

- **ROMANTIC DINNER:** Cook dinner together. Turn on some quiet, romantic music, pour yourselves a drink, and create a culinary masterpiece together.
- **PAINT NIGHT:** Pick up some basic supplies at a local craft store beforehand. Find a free painting or drawing class online and follow the instructions.
- **BUILD YOUR DREAM HOUSE:** Talk it through, sketch it on paper, shop online for furniture and details or peruse online real estate to find one already done!
- **ACT IT OUT:** Re-enact a scene from your favorite movie. Be silly. Come up with your own "costumes" and dive deeply into playing your roles.

# Weekly Marriage Check-In

What did we do well this past week that helped strengthen our marriage?

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What is one thing we can work on improving in our marriage this week?

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What did you admire or appreciate about your spouse this past week? Tell them!

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What will you do this coming week to help your spouse feel loved and promote connection in your marriage?

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Are there any unresolved hurts or issues we need to talk through?

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When will our "Date" or quality time this week be?

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When will we make love this week?

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What will we say NO to in order to make our marriage a priority this week?

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