



DATE *Night*

AT HOME

YOU MAKE MY DREAMS COME TRUE



This guide is produced by First Things First and is subject to copyright.

©2020 First Things First. All Rights Reserved.

WELCOME TO
YOUR

at home

DATE NIGHT!

ARE YOU AND YOUR HONEY JUST... SO DIFFERENT?

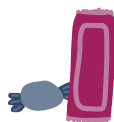
The truth is, being opposites can be WONDERFUL for your marriage. Choosing to maximize your differences and let them build your marriage up rather than tear it down can be challenging, but not impossible. This date night will give you a few examples of how you can do that!

SUPPLIES YOU'LL NEED:

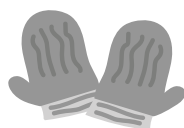


A ROMANTIC
SPOT WITH A FLAT
SURFACE
(CANDLES, PILLOWS, TEA, ETC.)

COTTON
BALLS
(AT LEAST 20)



2 WRAPPED
FOOD ITEMS
(PIECES OF CANDY,
GRANOLA BARS, ETC.)



2 OVEN MITTS



A
SPOON



A
BOWL



2 DECKS
OF CARDS
(INCLUDING
JOKERS!)



A TIMER

A PAPER
BAG
(SANDWICH OR
GROCERY)



GETTING STARTED

The key to enjoying this date night is actually treating it like a date night! So take a moment to gather up some blankets, pillows and candles, and set up a romantic space. Then answer these **Would You Rather?** questions below!

WOULD YOU RATHER...

Eat ice cream or cake?

Have a sweet or salty snack?

Stay up late or get up early?

Receive a gift or an experience?

Vacation at the beach or at a cabin?

Always dress up or dress down?

Watch an action or suspense movie?

Have pancakes or waffles?

ACTIVITY 1: LET'S GET UNWRAPPED

SUPPLIES NEEDED



The goal of this game is to unwrap the piece of candy as quickly as possible. There are two rounds with two different rules!

ROUND 1:

1. Set a timer for 30 seconds.
2. Decide on one person to put on one of the oven mitts. (Play Rock, Paper, Scissors if you can't decide!)
3. Using one hand each (one person with the mitt, the other without), work together to unwrap the item in less than 30 seconds!

ROUND 2:

1. Same setup as round 1, except this time you both have to put on an oven mitt!
2. Set the timer for 30 seconds and work together to try and unwrap the item as quickly as possible.

OKAY, SO WHAT'S THE POINT OF THAT?

It can be tempting to want our partner to be just like us. If you're a night owl and they're an early bird, you might want your honey to stay up late with you, while he or she wants you to get up early with them.

But you know what would happen if you forced each other to do that? You wouldn't get any sleep! And you'd both be cranky...

When one person forces the other to look and act just like them and start where they are, it actually keeps you both from achieving your goals! When you acknowledge your differences, you can use each other's strengths to the best of both of your abilities.

KNEE-TO-KNEE

Now turn, facing each other, and spend a few minutes answering these questions:

1. What are some of the main ways we are different?
2. How can we use these differences for good in our relationship?
3. How can we do a better job of playing to each other's strengths to better achieve our goals?

GIVE EACH OTHER A

smooch

AND LET'S KEEP THIS DATE
NIGHT GOING!

ACTIVITY 2: SPEAK NO EVIL

SUPPLIES NEEDED

**A PAPER
BAG**
(SANDWICH OR
GROCERY)



The goal of this game is to pick the paper bag up as many times as possible using only your mouth!!

HOW TO PLAY:

1. Open the paper bag and set it on the floor.
2. Decide on one person to go first.
3. Whoever goes first, lean down and pick up the paper bag using only your mouth.
4. When you successfully stand up, use your hands to tear off the piece of the bag your mouth touched (the bigger the bag, the bigger the piece you tear off!)
5. Take turns picking up the bag and tearing pieces off until you can't pick it up anymore!

OKAY, SO WHAT'S THE POINT OF THAT?

Differences in relationships can be a major launching point for negative communication. For example, if one of you is a bit of a neat freak and the other could care less, the neat freak might make a snide remark about how towels don't belong on the floor. It happens...

So let's say that each piece of the bag you tore off was a negative comment, an eye roll, or a passive aggressive note. It might start off seemingly insignificant and you both can stand up and move on pretty quickly. But the longer it goes on and the more it happens, the harder it gets to stand back up.

KNEE-TO-KNEE

Now turn, facing each other, and spend a few minutes answering these questions:

1. What are some ways that we negatively communicate about our differences?
2. How can we stop tearing each other down and build each other up instead?
3. What can we do to form better habits and retrain the way we think about each other's differences?

GIVE EACH OTHER A

smooch

AND LET'S KEEP THIS DATE NIGHT GOING!

ACTIVITY 3: COTTON BALL SCOOP



The goal of this game is to get as many cotton balls in the bowl in 60 seconds using a spoon in your mouth while your eyes are closed!

HOW TO PLAY:

1. Set your timer for 60 seconds.
2. Spread 20+ cotton balls on a table.
3. Place the bowl on the end of the table, too!
4. Choose one person to go first. (Don't worry, you'll both get a turn!)
5. The person going first must close their eyes (no peeking!) and put the spoon handle in their mouth.
6. The other person has to guide their partner (using only words) to pick up the cotton balls with the spoon in their mouth and place them in the bowl.
No touching!
7. When the timer starts, see how many cotton balls make it into the bowl!
8. After the 60 seconds is up, switch roles and play again. See who can get more cotton balls in the bowl!

OKAY, SO WHAT'S THE POINT OF THAT?

There's a good chance one of you was better at the listening and one of you better at giving instructions. And guess what? That's okay! In fact, it's a good thing! It can be easy to think to yourself, "This would be going so much better if I were giving instructions to myself..."

But that's not how the game works. And it's not how life works, either!

We all communicate differently and have different strengths when it comes to communication. **But different does not mean deficient!** Just because your spouse does things differently than you would doesn't mean either of you is wrong. It just means you have to work together to find the best solution for both of you as a team!



KNEE-TO-KNEE

Now turn, facing each other, and spend a few minutes answering these questions:

1. In what ways do we communicate differently?
2. How have you seen our communication differences impact our relationship, in both positive and negative ways?

GIVE EACH OTHER A

smooch

AND LET'S KEEP THIS DATE
NIGHT GOING!

ACTIVITY 4: BLOWIN' OFF STEAM

SUPPLIES NEEDED



2 DECKS
OF CARDS
(INCLUDING
JOKERS!)



A TIMER

The goal of this game is to get all of the cards off the Joker using only your breath!

HOW TO PLAY:

1. Set your timer for 30 seconds.
2. Find one of the Jokers from each of the decks of cards.
3. Set the Jokers face up on opposite sides of the table.
4. Place the remaining cards from each deck face down on top of their respective Jokers.
5. Start your timer.
6. Using only your breath, try to blow off all of the face-down cards that are on top of the Joker without blowing the Joker off the table!
7. If the Joker falls off, you have to start over.
8. First one to get all the cards off the Joker without moving the Joker itself wins!

OKAY, SO WHAT'S THE POINT OF THAT?

It can be so easy to let your differences stack up so high that it can seem nearly impossible to get on the same page, let alone have a good time together.

And when your differences are piled one on top of another (like that deck of playing cards) it can squash all laughter and joking in the relationship. But if you blow off some steam and stop letting your differences stack against your relationship, you can learn to laugh about them instead! When you dig through your differences and uncover your Joker, you'll be able to appreciate your partner in a whole new light!



KNEE-TO-KNEE

Now turn, facing each other, and spend a few minutes answering these questions:

1. Do you think we've let our differences stack too high?
2. How can we work together to uncover our Joker and be able to laugh about our differences?

GIVE EACH OTHER A

smooch

AND LET'S KEEP THIS DATE
NIGHT GOING!

THANKS FOR
playing
ALONG!

We hope you enjoyed this at-home date night! Spending quality time with your love is always a good idea, and we're so glad you chose to do that today.

The next few pages have some tools you and your honey can use to transform your differences in your relationship.

HAVE YOU EVER HAD A FIGHT THAT SEEMED TO COME OUT OF THE BLUE?

It happens to every couple! It can be confusing, overwhelming, and painful for everyone involved. And often times, it's caused by a whole lot of little differences between the two of you that go unaddressed. All those little things can add up really quickly, until one of you explodes! And it's never easy to clean up the mess.

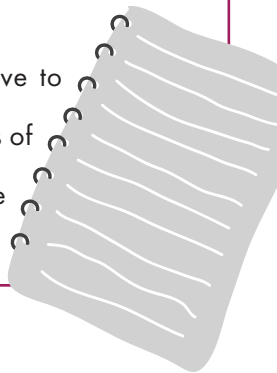
So here are a few ways you can tell if the small stuff is stacking too high and how you can keep it from toppling over:

1. YOU HAVE A "RUNNING LIST"

"And, they forgot to take out the trash, and that one time they didn't even introduce me to that person, and they've never bought me flowers!"

WHAT TO DO: Acknowledge that you have a list and think through each item as a sole instance. If they didn't take out the trash that one time, would it be so hard to forgive them? Nope.

But, when you add all the other small stuff to it, you have to convince yourself to forgive them and move on from a mess of hurt feelings that they probably don't even know they've created.



2. YOU START SAYING “ALWAYS” OR “NEVER”

Similar to the running list, if you find yourself thinking, “They never smile at me like that,” or “They always talk to their friends about their day before me,” then you’re painting your partner as a Bond villain whose purpose must be to “always ruin your life.”

WHAT TO DO: Set a rule in your relationship that “always” and “never” are not allowed to be used when describing negative things about the other person, whether in your mind or in conversation.

3. YOU AVOID YOUR PARTNER

Looking for other things to do after work so you don’t have to go home, prioritizing friends or family over them, or even just having a feeling of dread to be alone with them is a sure sign you’ve got some stuff built up that’s about to explode.

WHAT TO DO: As much as you may not want to, talk it out. If things have gotten too heated and tension is too high, seek the help of a certified counselor or therapist to mediate the conversation.



BUT WHAT IF
WE'RE

total

OPPOSITES?

OPPOSITES ATTRACT, RIGHT?

A lot of times, it can be fairly easy to understand a perspective that's only a little different than yours, but what happens when your spouse is TOTALLY opposite of you? Now that's a bit more of a challenge...

Here are 5 different examples of common areas where spouses can be completely different, for the good or the bad of the relationship. Take a sec and talk through each of them with your honey. Be honest with each other! You may think you already know all your differences, but now's your chance to better understand their perspective. Let's get it started!

NIGHT OWL VS. EARLY BIRD

- BOTH NIGHT OWLS BOTH EARLY BIRDS WE'RE OPPOSITE!

HEALTH NUT VS. WHATEVS

- BOTH HEALTH NUTS BOTH WHATEVS WE'RE OPPOSITE!

HOMEBOY VS. WILD CHILD

- BOTH HOMEBOYES BOTH WILD CHILDS WE'RE OPPOSITE!

TIDY TAYLOR VS. MESSY MANDY

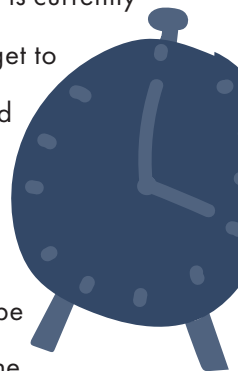
- BOTH TIDY BOTH MESSY WE'RE OPPOSITE!

OPTIMISTIC VS. PESSIMISTIC

- BOTH OPTIMISTS BOTH PESSIMISTS WE'RE OPPOSITE!

NIGHT OWL VS. EARLY BIRD

It's 10pm, and you're ready to clean the kitchen, finish that book you started last month and start a movie series marathon. Your partner, however, is currently getting ready for bed because they have a 5:30am workout to get to before their 7am meeting... In your head, WHO in their right mind would purposefully schedule things before 9am?? Bleh. If this hits home, it might feel like you're on opposite schedules sometimes.



THE SOLUTION? Trying to find common ground is key! Maybe for the two of you, that means going to bed at the same time on the weekends or scheduling at least 3 days of the week where you're both awake a little early. The important thing is to be aware of each other's rhythms and not take it personally when one of you sleeps in or goes to bed early. Seek out ways that you can support each other's differences! If you wake up first, make the effort to bring them a cup of coffee. If you'd rather not be awake to see the sunrise, offer to do a chore the night before while your honey catches some ZZZs. It's not about getting "even" in all the things you do for each other, it's about awareness of each other's needs!

FOR THE EARLY BIRD TO ASK THE NIGHT OWL...

Does it bother you when I get out of bed without saying good morning?

Would you want me to wake you up just enough to connect, then let you keep sleeping?

If I were to stay up late with you, what would we do together? How would you feel about it?

How can we meet in the middle without making each other exhausted?


FOR THE NIGHT OWL TO ASK THE EARLY BIRD:

Is there something I can do at night that would help you and make you feel loved when you're awake in the mornings without me?

What runs through your mind when you're heading to bed without me? How can I better meet you in the middle?

Do you feel like your needs as an Early Bird are being met?

HEALTH NUT VS. WHATEVS



This might cause a little bit of strain at meal times and/or in routines. While one might only want to shop in the natural foods section and the other in the frozen food section, we can almost guarantee that you both actually just want the best for each other. The Health Nut is likely trying to watch out for their spouse's health and encourage healthier habits, while Whatevs only wants their spouse to enjoy the life they're living, eating good food and spending free time doing something other than exercise.

THE SOLUTION? If you're currently training for a marathon and your love is more interested in a movie marathon, it can be difficult to find common ground. Just remember that moderation is key to healthy living, so no matter what side of the spectrum you find yourself on, use each other's tendencies to keep you balanced. An evening of takeout and movies won't kill you. And it'll make your honey feel oh, so loved, too! On the other hand, some green veggies just might do you some good! Meet each other halfway. Your relationship will be healthier in the end!

FOR THE HEALTH NUT TO ASK THE WHATEVS:

Have I ever guilted you into having healthier habits?

Do you ever feel like I am putting my own health at a higher priority than our relationship?

What are ways I can encourage you to practice healthier habits without forcing you into it?

FOR THE WHATEVS TO ASK THE HEALTH NUT:

When you drag me to the gym and order salads for me, what is your reasoning behind it?

Are you willing to set up regular/scheduled lazy days or cheat meals? When and how often? And how will we communicate about them?

Do you ever feel like I don't care about my own health? How can I be better about showing you I care without compromising who I am?

HOMEBODY VS. WILD CHILD

If you're opposites, chances are that both people feel like their attitude is justified.

The homebody needs a night in and a break from the craziness of this world, while the Wild Child knows that life won't go on forever, so you might as

well live it up while you're here! So how do you make each other

feel loved if you're never together? Chances are, either one or

both partners feels left out and abandoned when both choose to do what they need without the partner.



THE SOLUTION? Find that sacred middle ground. It's important to establish your home as a safe space to be together and enjoy each other, but that's hard to do if one of you is never there. On the flip side, it's also important to establish your relationship in the "real world," where you'll run into people you know, see things you've never seen before and try new things together! The priority here is to be aware of your spouse's tendency and indulge them from time to time by making an effort to stay home or go out with them instead of only focusing on your personal preference.



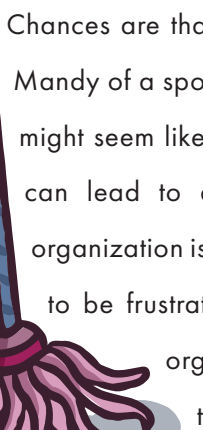
FOR THE WILD CHILD TO ASK THE HOMEBODY:

- Have you ever felt left out because I chose not to stay at home with you?
- What thoughts ran through your head?
- How can I be more aware of when you need me to stay at home with you?
- How can I better encourage you to come out with me?

FOR THE HOMEBODY TO ASK THE WILD CHILD:

- When I tell you I'd rather have a night in, what thoughts run through your head? (be honest...)
- How many nights a week are you willing to stay in together?
- How can I better encourage you to stay in with me?

MESSY MANDY VS. TIDY TAYLOR



Chances are that Tidy Taylors often feel underappreciated. Since their Messy Mandy of a spouse doesn't listen to their pleas for organization and tidiness, it might seem like they're just not listening (or worse, completely ignoring). This can lead to a lot of hurt feelings and frustration. For Messy Mandy, organization is a skill that they were just not blessed with (which can lead them to be frustrated, usually due to the guilt they feel for not being who the organized spouse expects them to be). Repeated reminders to be tidy can make them feel overwhelmed and insufficient.

THE SOLUTION? Similar to the balance between the Health Nut and Whatavs, the Tidy Taylor and the Messy Mandy can find solid middle ground. It's important for each of you to recognize that your usual tendencies are merely part of who you are. But neither of you is totally right. Being organized or being messy shouldn't be hills to die on, and knowing that those hills will always be there is a big part of understanding that! Compromise really is key, so maybe only leave one cup by your bed or one pair of shoes by the back door. And maybe one or two nights a week of leaving the dishes in the sink for later or doing something not on the schedule wouldn't be so bad.

FOR THE TIDY TAYLOR TO ASK THE MESSY MANDY:

What are two things that I complain about that you have a really hard time remembering to do?

What's the best way I can help you keep things tidy without making you feel suffocated and/or unheard?

Have I ever made you feel like I don't care about you and your needs as much as I care about a tidy house?

FOR THE MESSY MANDY TO ASK THE TIDY TAYLOR:

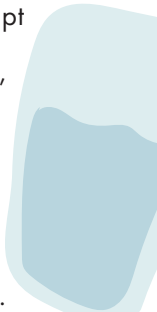
What is one small habit I can start with to help show that I care about you and your needs?

Whenever I forget to put my shoes away or fluff the pillows or (fill in the blank), what emotion does it evoke in you?

Besides just remembering to do those things, what can I do to help you feel more appreciated?

OPTIMIST VS. PESSIMIST

It can be hard to see through someone else's glasses when they're not on your face. And you don't have the same prescription. And you don't like their glasses... As an optimist, you might wonder why your partner can't just accept things as they are and choose to enjoy the moment. As the pessimist, you probably think that your partner needs a reality check. Neither of you quite understands why the other is the way they are, and you don't really want to know. You think your way is right, and it might get hard to listen to your partner's optimism/pessimism after a while.



THE SOLUTION? These two personality differences have been debated for ages. But neither is right or wrong. Even if you don't understand your partner's perspective, letting them know that you hear them and care about what they think is mega-important. If they ask for your thoughts and opinions, be open and honest with them. BUT don't try and convince them that your way is right or better, because in reality, it's not! As you share and listen to each other's thoughts and reasoning, be open to what your partner is saying. Try to see it from their perspective and determine whether your usual pessimistic or optimistic viewpoint needs to be refocused for an even clearer vision.

FOR THE OPTIMIST TO ASK THE PESSIMIST:

Have I ever made you feel bad for your perspective?

What can I do to give you some encouragement and positivity without making you feel like I'm telling you you're wrong?

What are ways you see my optimism affecting our relationship (or even just myself) negatively?

FOR THE PESSIMIST TO ASK THE OPTIMIST:

Do you ever feel like I'm just trying to rain on your parade when I speak my thoughts? How can I better communicate my viewpoint without making you feel like I'm turning you down?

What's an example of a time that my negativity affected your mood and/or our relationship?

How could I better show you the ways I'm trying to help us by thinking through all the negatives of a situation?

ALWAYS REMEMBER...

A great marriage is not when the "perfect couple" comes together.

It is when an imperfect couple learns to enjoy their differences.

LASTLY...

different

IS NOT
DEFICIENT!

Every person on the planet is unique, including yourself and your partner! But that doesn't mean that either of you is right or wrong. You're just different! When you change your perspective and train your brain to learn to celebrate and laugh at your differences, your relationship, your attitude, and your sanity will benefit. Never forget: different is not deficient!

LOOKING FOR MORE MARRIAGE RESOURCES?



@FIRSTTHINGSFIRST



@FIRSTTHINGSFAMILY



@FTFCHA

FIRSTTHINGS.ORG