



Mind Your Marriage (& Similar Relationships)

Contributed by Aileen Reilly, JD, CPCC, ACC, ORSC-Trained

www.aileenreilly.com | aileen@aileenreilly.com

As Esther Perel, noted psychotherapist, author and TED speaker says, “The quality of our relationships determines the quality of our lives,” so it’s about time to start talking about attorneys and their marriages and partnered-relationships. Too often these most important relationships get sacrificed or pushed to the edge of life while you are busy showing up 100% at work. It doesn’t seem right that your clients and your firm and your practice group gets the best of you, while your spouse/partner and your family gets whatever is left over, essentially “the scraps.”



So, what can you do about it? Start by being more intentional about the time you do have in these relationships. Don’t spend date nights going to see a movie, where although you’re both entertained, there is no further emotional connection being formed, no conversation whatsoever. Of course that’s okay every once and a while, but if you’re like most couples who only have date nights once a month, it’s important not to squander that time.

Be intentional. That means two things. One, put those date nights on your calendar. Ideally, every week, your relationship should have time put aside to grow

together as a couple. Two, in advance, think about how you want to show up for the date — energized? tired? another thing “to do?” excited? curious? — and then do that.

The following lists contains fun date night ideas, together with fun questions and conversation starters. The key is to have fun. Don’t make date night an evening to talk about “all the things” in your relationship that need attention — kids, money, etc.. Schedule that for another time and place, and keep it out of the date night time. Date nights are for the two of you and for your relationship together. Your relationship together is the “glue” for everything else in your life. When your relationship is in a good place, everything else flows so much better, including your work.

FUN DATE NIGHT IDEAS (THAT DON’T INVOLVE ALCOHOL):

- Cooking Class
- Hiking
- Art Gallery Walk
- Comedy Club
- Zip-Lining
- Live Theater
- Kayaking
- Live Music
- Bowling
- Blankets and Star-Gazing
- Late Night at the Museum
- Long Walks
- Rock Climbing
- Trampoline Park
- Hotel Room
- Dance Lessons
- Arcade



- Coffee Shop and Board Games
- Any Festival
- Driving Range
- Mini-Golf
- Biking
- Random Open House Tours
- Painting Class
- Ice Skating
- Couples Massage
- Indoor Sky Diving

FUN CONVERSATION STARTERS:

- Ask Each Other [36 Questions](#) on the Way To Love
- Download Gottman Card Decks (a smart phone app) and ask each other questions.

GO HOME AND HAVE SEX

Needs no further explanation. Your physical relationship is an integral part of your marriage/partner relationship. When a couple isn't having sex or not having sex as frequently as they once did, it's often the sign of an emotional disconnect between the partners. Rather than ignoring the distance and watching it grow across time, work to get closer. Utilize the ideas above. And sometimes, you simply need to have sex, so that you remember why you like having sex to begin with. Sex begets sex. This is good for your physical relationship, for your emotional relationship together, and for your own release of hormones and stress-relief.

RESOURCES

Book Recommendations

- John Gottman, *The Seven Principles For Making Marriage Work*.
- Gary Chapman, *The 5 Love Languages*.
- Harville Hendrix, *Getting the Love You Want*.
- Amir Levine, *Attached: The New Science of Adult Attachment*.
- Marshall Rosenberg, *Non-Violent Communication*.
- Byron Katie, *Loving What Is*.
- Kerry Patterson, *Crucial Conversations*.
- Esther Perel, *Mating in Captivity*.
- Laura Vanderkam, *Off The Clock*.

Apps For Your Phone

- Gottman Card Decks (Love Maps, Questions/Conversations, Resources)
- 36 Questions To Fall In Love
- Danielle LaPorte's "Conversations"

Podcasts to Listen To

- Where Should We Begin (Esther Perel)
- Rise Together Podcast
- Marriage Therapy Radio
- Relationship Advice
- The Loveumentary

Follow on IG and FB

- @gottmaninstitute
- @estherperelofficialbetter

Email Newsletters

- **The Marriage Minute**
- **Five Love Languages**