

# Date Night

Curiosity, Resolve, Fascination, Understanding

By Ted Cunningham and Joshua Straub

## Curiosity - Discovering Something Brand New

### Curiosity Dates:

1. Take a two-hour drive with a picnic. Find a place that is new to both of you and picnic together. As you eat together, take notice to sights, sounds, smells, etc. that remind you of fond moments in your childhood. Go back and forth discussing these childhood memories together.
2. Plan an entire evening together unique to both of you. For instance, eat a food or at a restaurant neither of you have experienced. Do so on a mode of transportation you never have together on a date (if it's possible, perhaps ride bikes, take public transportation, or walk). Visit a site or do something together neither of you have ever been to nor tried (riding bumper boats, going to a museum, zip lining, fishing, etc.). Do so wearing clothes you normally wouldn't wear on a date but fit the curiosity of the date (athletic clothes if running or biking as your transportation, clothes of the 50's if going to a drive-in theatre, etc.). Be creative. Throughout the evening, discuss likes/ dislikes about the date, memories that come to mind based on what you're doing and where you go, and dreams that arise within you about memories you want to create together in the future.
3. Take a blanket & pillows and go outside. Lay down together looking up into the sky and watch the clouds. Describe what they look like. Build a story together around what you see in the clouds. Take a snack with you.
4. Bucket List Dinner—Go to a nice restaurant with a romantic atmosphere. Make your “couple's bucket list” of things you want to live out and experience together during the course of your life. You could even tier it based on season of life (i.e. while kids are in their teens, empty nest, etc.).
5. Create a fantasy suite. Make a plan to redecorate your bedroom (or another room in the house). Make it a place of relaxation. Go to a bookstore (or look on Pinterest) and find ideas on how to redecorate. Dream about what the room would look like for both of you and make a budget and plan. You can save costs by repurposing other furniture in the house. Make this room a place of respite and renewal for both of you. Perhaps include a part of the room for weekly massages together with massage oils and towels.
6. Attend a group class together with other couples to learn a new skill like cooking, painting, or dancing.
7. Take an evening together where you begin gathering information about your genealogies. Make phone calls to relatives who know about your family history and try to create a family tree of at least four to five generations past. If this exercise takes a few days, set up a date night where you order in and discuss your findings with one another. What are characteristics about your family you knew but never shared with your spouse? What did you learn you never knew before this? What are characteristics about your family history you want to carry with you into your marriage? What characteristics do you not want to be a part of your marriage and family lineage?

8. Go on a dinner date and throughout the evening play the game, two truths and lie. Continually go take turns throughout the date providing two truths about you and one lie. Have your spouse try to pick out the lie.
9. Research ahead of time a few strengths tests, personality assessments and spiritual gifts inventories. Here are some suggestions:
  - a. Elmer Towns Spiritual Gifts Test [http://www.elmertowns.com/spiritual\\_gifts\\_test/](http://www.elmertowns.com/spiritual_gifts_test/)
  - b. Strengths Finder 2.0 <http://strengths.gallup.com/110440/default.aspx>
  - c. Smalley Personality Test <http://smalley.cc/images/Personality-Test1.pdf>

(You could also find other free inventories online by doing a web search.) Take the tests together and then plan a lunch or dinner date to discuss the results together. As you discuss the results see if they resonate with your spouse. Take these results and use them to discover more about your passions and dreams both individually and together.
10. Dream dinner. Ask your spouse the question: If you could have dinner with anyone in history, who would it be and what would you eat? Create a date specifically around this theme. For example, if your spouse wanted to eat with Oprah Winfrey, find out some of Oprah's favorite food and prepare them for your spouse. Present your spouse with a gift from one of Oprah's "favorite things." Decorate the dinner table with a tablecloth donned with clippings from "O" magazine, etc.

### **Curiosity Questions:**

1. What TV sitcom or movie family best describes your real family growing up? What character or role did you play?
2. What is your favorite or fondest memory of childhood?
3. Describe in detail your most mischievous moment in childhood. What did you do? Who was there? Did you get in trouble?
4. Describe the group of friends you most associated with in high school. As you look back do you consider yourself a jock, techie, loner, etc?
5. What's your favorite or fondest memory of high school?
6. Describe your most mischievous moment in high school. What did you do? Who was there? Did you get in trouble?
7. What is one activity or task you were really good at or known for in high school?
8. If you could go back and give advice to yourself at 15-years-old, what advice would you give?
9. What is the grossest thing you have ever had to do?
10. What is one of the dumbest things you've ever done?
11. On the contrary, describe one of your most brilliant moments. What is one of the best decisions you've ever made that I may not be aware of?
12. What five words best describe how you see yourself?

13. I consider my two greatest strengths to be...
14. I consider my two greatest weaknesses to be...
15. Describe a time in your life you used one of your strengths to help another person overcome adversity. Discuss a moment perhaps nobody else knows about.
16. Describe a time somebody helped you through a time of adversity.
17. Name one person you admire and look up to. What character traits or qualities do you admire about them?
18. Reminiscing on your past skills and memories, name one life skill you would like me to learn and practice with you so you don't lose that part of you.
19. If you could dress me, what would I be wearing in public?
20. If you could dress me, what would I be wearing in the privacy of our home?
21. I feel especially loved when you...
22. Designing a romantic evening together would include what three elements?
23. My favorite season of the year is...because...
24. The part of each day I dislike the most is...because...
25. My favorite time of the day is...because...
26. If I could change one thing about myself it would be...
27. Keeping it light, what irrational or "weird" fear do you have? (For instance, you may have a fear of fishing hooks, clowns, or cracks in the sidewalk)
28. If you had a super power, what would it be? Why?
29. If you had one day to yourself to go and do anything you wanted, what would you go do?
30. If we could take a class together to learn something new, what class would it be?
31. What is the one item you would love to have or something you secretly wish I would do for you more but think it would be too selfish to ask?
32. What do you secretly wish you could do better?
33. Picture yourself getting out of bed in the morning. On the morning you just want to roll over and pull the blankets over your head, what's going on that day? Name the one biggest influence that keeps you in bed, not wanting to get awake to face the day.
34. Picture yourself getting out of bed in the morning. On the morning you cannot wait to begin the day and are out of bed with no reluctance, what is going on that day? Describe the day that gets you out of bed with no reluctance. Who are you with? What are you doing? Where are you going?
35. If you could spend the day with anyone in history who would it be? What questions would you ask him/her?
36. Describe your faith journey. Who was Jesus to you growing up? Did you go to church? What was that experience like?
37. How did you come to faith in Jesus?
38. Describe your relationship with Jesus. What spiritual disciplines help you connect with God the most?
39. When have you felt closest to God? What was going on in your life?
40. When have you felt the furthest from God? What was going on in your life?

41. I tend to turn toward God the most when...
42. I tend to turn away from God the most when...
43. What is your favorite book of the Bible and why?
44. If you were President for 30 days with no restrictions and could enact executive orders, what would you do for the country during this time?
45. What change do you need to enact in your life right now (i.e. exercise, prayer, eating differently, working harder, taking more responsibility, etc.)?
46. If you could pick my career path (with the education I currently possess) what would it be?
47. What is one wish you secretly have for me as your spouse?
48. What concerns do you have that I don't seem interested in?
49. If we were given \$100,000 with the stipulation that we had to agree together on how to spend it in its entirety, what we would do? (We can't split it and do our own thing).
50. What tradition(s) do you or have you held dear to you? Is there a tradition you wish we would either pick up again or start anew?
51. What is your fondest memory of the two of us together?
52. I sometimes secretly wish we could...

## **Fascination: In Awe of Your Mate**

### **Fascination Dates:**

1. Join your spouse doing a hobby he/she loves (fishing, hunting, sports games, painting, spa day, hiking, opera, dancing, etc.). Become a student of that activity and learn to love what he/ she loves doing. Plan dates that include this activity and begin making memories together.
2. Do a movie, superhero style—Choose a superhero movie to rent or see in the theatre. Throughout the evening be sure to talk to your spouse about why he/she is your superhero, expressing your awe for all of the powerful things they do and are for you. To take this date up a notch, purchase some superhero attire (cape, mask, etc.) for one another to wear. When you get home, play make-believe.
3. Choose an activity one of you participated in during high school (band, wrestling, football, volleyball, debate, theatre, etc.) and schedule a date to a local event of that activity. Relive and share memories with your spouse and help them develop a deeper fascination with a part of your past.
4. Choose an activity your spouse may have little to no knowledge you are good at or experienced with (crocheting, changing oil in the car, tying flies, detailing cars, organizing, sewing, baking, etc.) and do that activity together on a date. (Taking a full Saturday to do this would be ideal). If it doesn't take long, take turns doing activities the other is good at and do them together. You may need to go together and get materials ahead of time as well.
5. Time capsule date—Take an evening together where you dine in and gather together all of your old love notes, pictures, wedding videos, cards and memories together. Reminisce by reading the cards, notes and looking at the pictures. Discuss what you loved about one another and memories you created. When you are finished looking back, create a time capsule of the present date and feelings you have for another. You can buy a journal, cards, use pictures or even write love notes/ honor lists to one another (whether you share them now or later is your choice). You can also create a timeline of significant events up to that point and describe how God has worked in your marriage. After taking time to log these memories place them in a shoebox or equivalent and place it in a safe place. Count either 10, 15, or 20 years from now and write on the outside of the box, "Open on (today's date plus # of years you choose)." Relive this same date on that same day all over again in the future.
6. Honor Date—If you can afford it, make reservations at an upscale restaurant of your choice. Prior to going out to dinner spend time making an honor list for your spouse. Begin writing down everything you can about what makes your spouse valuable and lovable. What do you cherish about him/her? Dress up for this date night. Make it classy. During dinner honor your spouse by revealing the list. Read them to him/her. After the date is over, begin adding to the honor list on a regular basis.

7. Take your spouse with you to work for half-day. Whether you work inside or outside the home, have your spouse join you doing your daily job.
8. Husbands, send your wife to get the beauty treatment that makes her feel most beautiful. After her treatment, pick out the outfit you think she looks most dazzling in and have someone take photos of you.
9. Find out your spouses' spiritual gifts and find an activity you can do together that will show off that gifting (e.g. hospitality—invite another couple over to dinner and watch your spouse shine).
10. Wives, attend a sporting event or activity your husband loves. Pick out his attire for the day, dress similarly and take photos together of your adventure. Have him teach you throughout the day the art and science behind the game or activity.

### **Fascination Questions:**

1. Early in our relationship (the first few dates), what kept you interested in me?
2. What was it about me that made you fall in love with me?
3. When did you first know I was “the one?”
4. What is it about me now that you love?
5. When are you infatuated with me?
6. What am I doing when you are most turned on physically by me? What am I wearing? What time of day is it?
7. What one action or behavior makes you stop and appreciate me even more?
8. What is your love language (physical touch, acts of service, words of affirmation, gifts or time)?
9. I feel most loved by you when...
10. I feel most safe with you when...
11. What gifts do you enjoy receiving?
12. When do you want me to spend more time with you?
13. I especially love it when you touch me...(i.e. in public, by playing with my hair, holding my hand, etc.)
14. When do you most appreciate my words of encouragement? What do you need to or enjoy hearing from me?
15. What chores/ responsibilities do you appreciate me doing the most?
16. At what times do you need assurance of my love the most?
17. I'll never forget the moment when you...(share a moment you felt closer to your spouse than ever).
18. When do you feel closest to me? What is going on in our relationship that makes you feel close? What am I doing?
19. When do you feel distant from me? (Or are least fascinated with me ☺)
20. How can I be more intentional at staying fascinating to you?
21. When have you been most fascinated by me?
22. Think back to when we first started dating. What has changed about what you look for and value in the date today?

23. Based on what you see in my actions and behaviors, what would you say are my priorities?
24. Do these priorities match what you wish for or see in me?
25. What one skill/ behavior do you see in me that you believe needs to be drawn out?
26. What five qualities do you most admire in me today?
27. My one fantasy or bucket list item I want to check off with you in the next six months is...
28. What three “simple things” in life do you cherish?
29. What do you want to be remembered for?
30. What makes you most fulfilled about being a man/ woman?
31. What is one charity your heart is most burdened for?
32. What is the most meaningful award you’ve ever received?
33. What did you do at work this week?
34. What do you consider to be your life’s greatest accomplishment so far?
35. What do you believe to be your greatest accomplishment at work?
36. Tell me what you do on an average day—the details.
37. When do you feel the most drained?
38. When do you feel most alive?
39. What is the greatest compliment you’ve ever received? From who?
40. When do you see me in my element?
41. What do you think I am most gifted at?
  
42. You light up a room when you...
43. How can I better show you that I am in awe of you?
44. When was the last time you felt proud of something you accomplished?
45. What do you believe is your greatest gifting or talent?
46. Do you feel like I take interest in what you enjoy?
47. What is something I do quickly or easily that you find hard to do?
48. As a team in marriage, where do you see me step up in an area you feel weak?
49. When was the last time you heard me say something you were really impressed by?
50. When was the last time you felt proud of me?
51. When do you see me best serving others in my spiritual gifts?
52. What would you say makes us fascinating together as a couple?



## **Resolve: Listening to the Emotions Behind Issues and Conflicts**

### **Resolve Dates:**

1. Setting—Put a big fluffy pillow in the middle of the floor, grab a bottle of wine (or your beverage of choice), turn cell phones, ipads and all technology to their off switch, turn the lights on low and simply talk to one another for 45 minutes. No bodily contact, just talking. Pray together that the Holy Spirit prepares the way for each person to hear and accept in love all that is said. The ground rules include no raised voices, rolling eyes or otherwise defensive gestures. All words should be spoken and received in love. Spend the rest of the time discussing 2-3 issues troubling each of you and why. Put a plan together for the best way to resolve these issues together.
2. Take a trip to nowhere—Life is hard! With all of the stress from planning and already over-packed schedules, sometimes we forget to take the time to really LISTEN to our spouse. This date requires no planning, packing or ideas. Just get into the car (don't forget to fill it up with gas) and start driving into the sunset/ sunrise together. Stop when you're hungry or thirsty. If there's an interesting site or town, pause and explore. So much of life seems to be about following the agenda. Allow this date to be about following your heart and recapturing the exciting sense of the unknown you felt when the two of you first started dating. While on your trip, ask your spouse questions from the resolve list. On your return home, resolve to rekindle the fire in your marriage and to fight for one another.
3. Go out for an ice cream date together. While you're eating your ice cream, discuss together what makes you want to "scream." What are the little foxes in your garden fighting against your relationship?
4. Fight the Tension—Resolving conflict and engaging in difficult conversation together can foster negative energy. Decide together to begin finding ways to channel those frustrations and conflicts appropriately until you're both ready for a healthy resolution. Use this date to find a common outlet for these energies. For instance, you may decide to get a gym membership for the both of you to work out at the same time. Or you could take a kick boxing class or karate class together. Go on a date to explore these options so that when you are in the heat of the moment, you can rely on this one common outlet to help you release some tension together.
5. Use this date to resolve to make one common issue in your marriage a common strength, not a point of contention. For instance, if money is a common conflict in your marriage, take a Dave Ramsey class together. Use this date to turn the issue (money, etc.) into an opportunity for both of you to learn, grow and be on the same team around this contention.
6. Go to a coffee shop or someplace cozy you both enjoy. Practice communicating together over a cup of tea, coffee, wine, etc. In particular,

practice working on discovering the underlying motivation during conflict. This is an exercise that will help you when conflict does come up in your relationship. Here's out it works: Take either a previously resolved issue in your relationship or discuss one that is relatively safe and practice communicating in the following manner: *I feel (negative emotions such as sad, scared, mad, confused, etc.) when you (describe behavior/ problem causing the negative feelings) because (your perception of the behavior and how it's affecting the positive emotions you really want).* If you are stating negative emotions you must include the underlying positive motivation behind what you want. For example, "I feel sad when you go golfing on the weekends because I really enjoy being with you and I'm afraid you don't want to spend time with me." *Finally, invite your spouse in to collaborate with you on a plan that works for both of you.* "Perhaps we could go on a date night together on Friday nights of the weekends you go golfing?" Practice this together on your date. If you're competitive, take a board game or cards as you practice. It will give you content 😊

7. Redemption Date—We've all had them—well-intended dates gone terribly bad. Tonight is your night to redeem that date. Think back to a night the two of you planned a wonderful evening together but it ended in conflict and chaos. As best as you can remember the evening, plan the date over again. Relive it, but redeem it. If you are really good and can remember the conflict, reminisce on what it was about and laugh at yourselves (if you can) on perhaps the pettiness of the issue or why the night went awry. Challenge yourselves to redeem the night in the memorable way possible.
8. Sometimes a get-away is all we need. Too often in marriage minor disputes build from the monotony, routine and everyday stresses of life, and it leads to major disagreement, distancing and disaffection. Yet we can't put our finger on one issue in particular. Pretty soon we find ourselves simply "doing life," but in our own little worlds. Take a weekend away. Get a hotel room for a night (or two if you can). Go to a resort where there are activities. If you have kids, get a baby-sitter. Go somewhere to simply get out of the house and break the routine. Use the weekend to listen to one another about the growing frustrations and resolve to put them to bed (figuratively and literally).
9. If you've had a difficult week working through a disagreement, plan a date that will be a total mood shifter. Go see a stand-up comedian, rent a comedy movie or even watch clips of your favorite comedian online with a glass of your favorite drink. Spend time just laughing together.
10. Resolving disagreements and talking through emotions can be draining and exhausting. Bring energy back into the relationship by planning a date night in. Put the kids to bed or have a babysitter take them out. Lock your bedroom door. Order dinner in and get candles, music, massage oils, snack food, a light movie etc. Start the night by giving one another a relaxing massage. Enjoy

some food together in a bedroom picnic. Watch a movie cuddled in bed. Enjoy one another.

### **Resolve Questions:**

1. When was the last good discussion we've had about our true feelings on an issue?
2. Do we talk enough about how we really feel when we have a disagreement?
3. How can I help you feel supported and heard when you are sharing your frustrations?
4. When sharing your frustrations, would you prefer an empathetic listener or a problem solver?
5. On a scale of 1 to 10, 10 being as honest as you can get, how honest do you think we are with each other?
6. What do you need from me to increase your honesty and openness with me?
7. Do you believe you have a hard time being direct about your feelings?
8. Do you believe I have a hard time being direct about my feelings?
9. Do you ever feel I don't express my true feelings to you?
10. Are there times you feel I withdraw from conflict?
11. Without getting upset or offended, and answering honestly (make sure you are emotionally ready to ask this question), what question would you like to ask me about our relationship?
12. What do I do that irritates you?
13. Take an issue, irritation, frustration or difference of opinion that has been divulged. Each spouse now take the other person's side of the issue and present it back to your spouse as if it were your issue, opinion or frustration.
14. When we are in the middle of a conflict, what do I do that pushes your buttons?
15. When do you feel misunderstood?
16. In your opinion, what is the dumbest argument we have ever had?
17. Is there anything in our married past I did or do that you haven't forgotten or divulged?
18. Are you holding onto anything the needs to be forgiven on your end or an apology on my end?
19. What has been the most difficult thing you've forgiven (any relationship)?
20. What has that forgiveness taught you about yourself?
21. What has it taught you about how you communicate your feelings?
22. What posture (body language, nonverbal communication, tone of voice, etc.) could I take during conflict that would help you feel less offended or defensive?
23. Is there anything my parent's do that offend you?
24. Are there times in our relationship you feel I wrongly blame you?
25. Are there times I wrongly accept blame to simply get over the conflict or issue?

26. What chores in our home do you most dislike? How would you like me to help you with them?
27. What chores/ responsibilities do you dislike doing alone and prefer my company?
28. What actions/ behaviors do I do on a day-to-day basis that nags you?
29. What do you think is a common issue that leads to nitpicking?
30. From your perspective, how could I help prevent these common annoyances that nag you and lead to nitpicking?
31. What 2-3 behaviors or habits of mine bother you the most?
32. What is it about those behaviors or habits that bother you? (Remember to think through underlying motivation here. For example, if it bothers you that your husband is consistently late coming home from work each night, it could be that the underlying motivation behind the frustration is not feeling valued or appreciated as a wife and what you do for him. Perhaps you feel as though he is rejecting your love by showing up when dinner is cold. And all you want is for him to accept your love).
33. Are there times I need to lighten up?
34. Do I take our issues or conflicts not seriously enough to you?
35. Do I make mountains out of molehills? (Do I turn minor inconveniences and disagreements into major arguments)?
36. How can I help us resolve minor disagreements before they become major arguments?
37. In a discussion, when do you feel yourself shutting down?
38. What emotions (i.e. fear, rejection, unappreciated, disrespected, etc.) in particular are you most afraid of in yourself (i.e. when do you find yourself getting increasingly defensive, withdrawing or aggressive because of your emotions)?
39. What emotions (i.e. anger, sadness, apathetic, etc.) in particular are you most afraid of when presented from your spouse (i.e. when do you find yourself getting increasingly defensive, withdrawing or aggressive because of your spouse's emotions)?
40. How can I help us turn a disagreement into a discussion?
41. When was the last time you hid your true feelings from me because you were afraid of my reaction?
42. Describe 2-3 legitimate fears you have and explain how they became fears.
43. When have we used humor in the past to resolve conflict?
44. Would you appreciate using humor to help ease tension during conflict?
45. What are humorous mannerisms I have that could help break the ice in a healthy way?
46. What do you consider inappropriate times to use humor?
47. Have I been sarcastic or manipulative in my communication with you?
48. Does technology get in the way of our communication and listening to one another?

49. Has your sexual desire toward me been hindered because of my inability to hear to you?
50. Have we used sexual intimacy in the past to sweep conflict under the rug?
51. How can we use sexual intimacy in a healthy way to resolve conflict?
52. How can we increase the amount of “interacting couple time” we have each day?

## Understanding: Validating Opinions and Feelings

### Understanding Dates:

1. Setting—Go to the lobby of a resort hotel or somewhere special that you don't usually go. Grab some hors d'oeuvres for nibbling and pick a subject where you and your spouse disagree. Each is then charged with defending the other's position like a debate club, where you have to present the "other" side. For a good end to the night, reserve a room and place the "Do not disturb" sign clearly on the door handle.
2. Pick a date where you do something your spouse has always wanted you to do, but never have (i.e. gun show, baseball game, spa, etc.). Really show your spouse that you value his/her hobbies, passions, opinions and feelings.
3. Plan a breakfast date, either at your house, a charming bistro or at a local diner. Make it your own "breakfast dating spot." Often the freshness of the day brings up new ideas, energy and attitudes that are gone by the end of a long day. Turn off cell phones and use this time to listen to one another. No fixing. No problem solving. Simply listen to what is going on in the other's life. If you can make this a routine weekly or monthly date, go for it. Simply taking the time to listen to one another on a regular basis will increase understanding.
4. Plan a 15-minute phone date every day for the 7 days. This "date" is different than hitting the speed dial to remind him to pick something up or to remind her you'll be late. Ink it into your calendar and make sure you are both in a space where there are no other distractions (screaming kids, noisy coworkers, checkout clerks, etc.). The goal is to give one another undivided attention. While on your 15-minute "date" each day, hold a meaningful conversation together unrelated to anything in your day. For instance, you could ask questions from the Understanding Questions or Curiosity Questions menu, or you could also ask questions like: "What popular notion do you think the world most has wrong?" "Describe your most embarrassing moment." "What do you think people misunderstand most about you?"
5. Husbands, allow your wife to pick the place and activity where she feels most relaxed (i.e. taking a walk, a favorite coffee shop, enjoying a glass of wine on the back porch etc.). On this date, focus on just listening. Allow your wife to talk and open up while you listen. Allow her to know that you're hearing her.
6. Wives, allow your husband to pick the place and activity where he feels most relaxed (i.e. fishing, walking through the woods, working on a hobby etc.). On this date, focus on allowing your husband to open up. Allow him to just talk and try not to offer your thoughts or criticize his. Just listen.
7. Take a drive together. Prior to leaving, find topics (social issues, theological/spiritual insights and questions, current events, etc.) you've never talked about before. Give each person 3-5 miles to tell his/ her opinion about that topic.

After those 3-5 miles, the other person gets to share his/ her perspective. Allow this conversation to continue into dinner, miniature golf or another activity that evening. Talk simply about issues and topics you've never really discussed together. Practice listening and validating the other person's feelings and point of view.

8. Do an early movie and then dinner afterwards. You can either rent the movie or go see an early matinee. Choose a movie that will ignite discussion. After the movie, make or go to dinner and spend the time discussing how the movie impacted you and your perspective on the issues it brought up. Use this date to practice listening to and validating your spouse's feelings and point of view.
9. Pick up your spouse from work for a lunch date. Ask what he/she worked on that morning. If it was a hard morning at work, or he/she is dealing with an issue, practice validating those feelings. Don't try to resolve the issue at work for them. Be a safe and supportive teammate, rather than nosy and meddling. It may encourage your spouse to share issues with you more often.
10. Take a Saturday or another day of the week and switch roles for a day (or a week if you're brave and want a more fulfilling experience). Do your best to work together but allow your spouse to take on the majority of the responsibility of the other spouse's chores for the day (or week). For example, traditionally speaking, if she typically does the cooking and watches the kids, then he needs to cook dinner and watch the kids. On the other hand, she should do everything he does around the house that day. Perhaps she mows the lawn, takes out the trash, washes the cars, etc. Schedule a date night either later that night or the next day. Discuss your experience with one another. What was it like being in the shoes of your spouse for the day/ week?

### **Understanding Questions:**

1. On a scale of 1 to 10, 10 being completely focused on my spouse's agenda and one being completely focused on my own agenda, where would you rate me?
2. Do you feel I try to validate your feelings and opinions or am I more concerned about my own feelings and agenda?
3. Do I try to fix your problems without listening to them?
4. Are you more comfortable turning to your friends or me for support when you need to talk?
5. On a scale of 1 to 10, 10 being a great listener, how good of a listener am I in our marriage?
6. When you express an idea or thought, do you feel heard?
7. When you tell me your opinion on a subject and I disagree, do you feel like I shut you down?
8. In conflict or communication, do you feel as though I try to see issues from your point of view?
9. Do you feel as though I value your opinions?
10. Do you feel as though I accept influence from you?

11. When was the last time I disagreed with you, but you still felt I validated you?
12. How can I be a better listener?
13. What, if anything, about listening to my feelings is uncomfortable for you?
14. How can I state my feelings and concerns in a way that helps you feel more comfortable and less defensive?
15. Describe the difference between validating someone's feelings and people pleasers who are pleasing someone?
16. Do you ever feel as though I judge you or your feelings?
17. Have you ever felt belittled for sharing your feelings or opinions?
18. What is your definition of respect?
19. Do you feel respected by me when you share your feelings and opinions?
20. How can I show you respect when discussing issues and conflicts so you don't feel judged, but heard?
21. In your own words, define intimacy to your spouse.
22. What are some unique and practical ways your marriage can begin to be more defined by your definition of intimacy?
23. In your own words, define empathy to your spouse.
24. What do you believe is the difference between empathy and sympathy?
25. How can I physically comfort you to help you feel understood when you are stressed? Sad and hurting?
26. Are there times you do not like being touched?
27. How can I touch you each day to help you feel special?
28. How can I emotionally comfort you to help you feel understood when you are stressed? Sad and hurting?
29. Are there times you just like to be alone? When?
30. Give me an example of a moment, or a cue, when you are stressed and alone but want me to come offer comfort.
31. Do you believe I pray for you enough?
32. How can I pray for and with you?
33. What Bible verses do you hold onto and want me to speak over you each day?
34. What words of affirmation can I say to you each day so you know I am for you and on your team?
35. What can I do to encourage you more each day?
36. What 15-minute activity can we do together each day to help you feel more connected to me (i.e. slow dancing in the living room, brushing your hair, rubbing lotion and a massage, walking, etc.)?
37. Do you prefer to spend quiet time alone or quiet time wrapped in my arms?
38. I want to be your best friend. What do you need from me as your best friend (or to become your best friend)?
39. Do you feel safe with me enough to share a painful situation from your past? If yes, can you share it with me now?
40. How do you feel most comfortable talking about your feelings? Walking together? Sitting together over coffee? Laying in bed? Doing an activity?



41. What do you need from me to help you feel safe?
42. When was the last time you felt afraid?
43. What is one issue from our past that is getting in the way of us connecting at a deeper level and understanding one another? Is there an unresolved issue that stands in our way?
44. What is one issue currently getting in the way of us connecting at a deeper level and understanding one another?
45. On a scale of 1 to 10, 10 representing complete trust and 1 no trust, how well do you trust me?
46. How can we build more trust with one another?
47. In terms of body language, what best communicates to you that I am listening and hearing you?
48. When was the last time I reacted to something and you didn't understand why?
49. When was the last time you felt I didn't understand what you were trying to express to me?
50. How can I better help you understand me?
51. In what 3 ways do you know I love you?
52. In what 3 ways do you know I protect you?
53. In what 3 ways do you know I understand your opinions and feelings?