

FUN DATE

QUESTION CARDS

REMEMBER BACK TO WHEN YOU JUST STARTED DATING?

Passion was high. It seemed our life centered around those times together. We would dream about them, plan for them, bask in them, and rush toward the next time we could be together.

It was important that you looked good for the date. Not just your clothes, hair, make-up, and vehicle, but also in the way you came across. You worked hard at being the best you could be for the few hours you were together. You tried to pick activities that were enjoyable for both of you. You wanted your date to come away from that time together with positive feelings about you and themselves.

That's the basis for a **Fun Date**. After we have been married for a while, we often stop trying to be our best with our spouse. After all, they married us for better or for worse—right? To keep a marriage growing strong we need to have times when we honor our partner by truly dating them again. That's the purpose of the **Fun Date**. The **Fun Date** is successful if you both come away from it thinking, "I remember why I fell in love with you."

*To facilitate success on your **Fun Date**, there are some simple rules that are important to follow.*

1 Take the initiative

Don't wait for your spouse to initiate this activity. If it sounds good to you, jump in and make it happen. Too often we wait for our partner to read our mind and figure out what we want. If you think a **Fun Date** is important make it happen!

2 Plan ahead

Jumping in the car, looking at each other and asking "So, what do you want to do?" doesn't make for a **Fun Date**. This date takes some advance thought. Plan ahead and know what you are doing. Scout out the territory. Make reservations if necessary. Plan like it was a critical business meeting.



Need Date Ideas?

It's easy to get stuck in a rut of dinner and a movie. While any time together is good, research shows that active dates are the most effective in enhancing passion. If you are looking for a date idea, try visiting our website.

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3 Make it fun

Plan activities that are enjoyable. Sometimes that means doing something that's enjoyable for your spouse. Take her shopping and enjoy watching her have fun. Take him to a ball game and enjoy watching him get excited. Explore something new like ballroom dancing. Dinner and a movie can be a **Fun Date**, but don't get stuck in a rut. Get creative.

4 Ask your spouse out

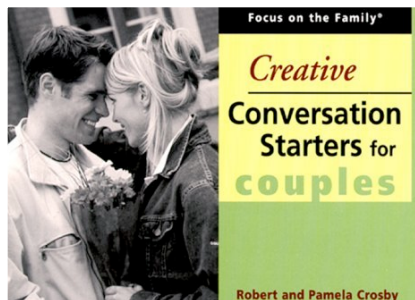
Once you know what you want to do, invite your spouse out. Sometimes it's fun to do this formally. Couples tell me stories of using cards, e-mails and "pretending to be anonymous" phone calls to invite their spouse out for the evening. The main point is to mark the **Fun Date** as special.

5 Don't go there!

Every couple has a set of topics or conversations that are well scripted and emotionally draining. These "problem areas" might be small disagreements or major sore spots in the relationship. One of the most important rules for a **Fun Date** is to *avoid the problem areas*. In your early dating you didn't talk about controversial subjects, in the **Fun Date** you don't either.

This is not the time to try to solve your marriage issues!

This is not the time to try to solve your marriage issues! Put those things in a box and place them on a shelf for a few hours. You're not denying them as issues, you just recognize that now isn't the time to try to make progress on them. I have had couples spend a few minutes before their fun date writing some discussion starters on a 3x5 card and carrying that in their pocket. When the conversation starts into one of those tense areas they quickly pull out the 3x5 card and read off a question. "So, how do you think the Braves will do this year?" They both laugh, recognizing they are intentionally changing subjects to a safer topic--but that's what they agreed to do.



Having trouble knowing what to talk about? There are a number of books that can help. Pick a few questions from a book of conversation starters. Use these questions when conversation lags or you find yourself in dangerous conversation territory. See our website for more ideas and comments from other couples.



An important subset of the "Plan Ahead" rule is to plan for the children. Traditionally this falls to your wife to manage. If you are planning the date, don't forget to set up babysitters for the kids. For many husbands this means getting a list (with phone numbers) of acceptable babysitters from your wife. With this in hand, start calling. Tell them you want to take your wife out and wanted to know if they would be available. If you need to leave a message remember to leave your work or cell number so they can reach you with their answer without calling your wife. This isn't always an easy step, but it can be an important step in making the date special for her.

6 Make it a tradition

One date doesn't start a trend. If you make this a biweekly tradition however you will see a noticeable change in your marriage. It's easy to get lost in the hustle of kids and careers and lose track of the importance of romantically dating each other. It's easy to focus only on the problems in our marriage and forget to set those problems aside so we can have fun renewing our love. Making a "**Fun Date**" a twice a month tradition will help make this a rich tradition.

Check out this related article on our website:
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