

GREAT DATES #4

STAYING CONNECTED THROUGH THE *HOLIDAZE*

Wow, what a challenge!! I imagine that each of you is feeling a little overwhelmed with Christmas at this point and that staying connected in the midst of the Christmas chaos, however wonderful, has not been easy. If at all possible, please set the stress aside tonight and clear some time to give the gift of “being fully present” to each other. (HINT: This means your thoughts and your attention and your head is not somewhere else. It means not being distracted or worrying about tomorrow's tasks. It means being here and now and focused on the person you are with. And this is much easier said than done!)

THOUGHTS FOR THE NIGHT

Holidays are rarely perfect, usually because humans are involved and we, unfortunately, are not perfect. Rather than expecting perfection for the entire holiday, aim for moments of joy. We can usually manage moments. We may even be caught unaware by moments that just happen and cannot be created. When those moments happen, take time to savor them and remember them and share them with each other. I will forever remember my youngest daughter's puzzlement the year she was 2 ½ when we were putting up the manger scene and I held up the angel and asked her what it was. (She knew everything else.) She finally said tentatively, “....a bird??” Twenty years later we are still calling our manger scene angel a “bird” and we still agree that we as adults don't fully understand what angels are!!

We also can depend too much on others to create our joy and happiness. If great-aunt So-and-So is on a tear, do not let her or anyone else steal your

joy. Take time to understand what brings you joy and take charge of making that happen as much as possible. Don't leave your enjoyment of the holidays up to chance. If your spouse is a part of your ideas, don't be afraid to ask for what you want.

Lastly, we all have traditions at the holidays. Sometimes those traditions get jostled or dropped and we have to flex and flow as our circumstances or our families change and grow. It might be time to experiment with something new this year in some areas of our holidays. If you need to grieve the old, do so, then turn and begin to experiment and celebrate the new.

ASSIGNMENT-choose which you want to talk about

1. Share with one another your idea of an enjoyable Christmas Eve and Christmas Day, even if it is not possible. When you look at a dream Christmas, then you can begin to tease out some parts of it that might be possible even if all of it is not. It also shares your dreams and wishes with each other, which reveals some of your heart to each other and helps you know each other better.
2. Is there anything special or new that you would like your spouse to do with you or for you this year? Is there something from your sharing about dreams that gives you an idea of something you could do for your spouse? (Don't tell them. Surprise them.)
3. Share with each other something your spouse brings to the family and to you that you would deeply miss if they were not there. i.e., what is something unique that each of you brings to the season?
4. Is there a time during the next few days when you can snuggle up together and share a cup of hot cocoa or dance to some Christmas oldies or whatever it is that you two do together to celebrate the two of you? If you don't do anything special, can you think of something that might be a new tradition?
5. Share one thing you need more than anything else from your spouse this season. Is it quality time together? Is it help with something special? Is it words of encouragement?

2009 DATES FOR YOUR CALENDAR

January 16th, 2009

February 20th, 2009

March 20th, 2009

April 17th, 2009

May 15th, 2009

June 19th, 2009

And every third Friday night thereafter!

MERRY CHRISTMAS

and

HAPPY NEW YEAR

to you and your families

from

Lisa and Kyle Brinkman

And Melody and Steve Fifer