

GREAT DATES #11

Find Something That Makes You Both Laugh

This is the second daily item recommended in The Love List by Les and Leslie Parrott. The first daily item was touch. Daily touch and daily laughter TOGETHER are two things they say will help keep your relationship alive and well.

Research shows that people with a strong sense of humor are less likely to experience burnout and depression and are more likely to enjoy life in general. They also have fewer symptoms of physical illness. Norman Cousins who wrote The Anatomy of An Illness says that laughter is inner jogging because every system in our body gets a workout when we have a good laugh. Twenty seconds of good laughter is equivalent to three minutes of exercise on a rowing machine. When we laugh, muscles release tension and our brain releases neurochemicals that are similar to a runner's "high."

Research shows that humor is not only important physically, but it is important emotionally. Humor is a valuable and much underrated coping mechanism. If we can find something humorous in the midst of our stress, the day will go much better. There is a quote I love by Henry Ward Beecher, "A marriage without a sense of humor is like a wagon without springs – jolted by every pebble in the road." Agnes Reppler says, "We cannot really love anybody with whom we never laugh."

The caveat, just like with touch, is that everyone has a different sense of humor. As couples, you need to learn each other's humor style. Some like slapstick, some have a dry wit, some want to belly laugh and others like a quiet chuckle and a smile.

NOTE: Sarcasm is not humor. It is anger coated with a layer of pointed humor and is always at the expense of the person on the receiving end.

If your relationship is doing well, teasing each other lightly may be okay. Even then, you need to know your spouse and not go there when it will not be received well. Sometimes later you can laugh at something together that is not funny in the moment.

NOTE: It is a rare person that likes to be teased in public and you need to check that out first. Extremely secure relationships might tease in public and even then, you need a signal when that is not okay.

ASSIGNMENT

1. See if you know what makes each other laugh. Clarify that even further with each other.
2. Does your marriage have a sense of humor readily available? Where would each of you rate your marriage with “1” being deadly serious and “10” being hilarious.
3. What are some things you both can do to bring more humor to the relationship?
 - Watch different styles of comedy
 - See who can find the funniest joke of the week
 - Observe funny things during your day and save them to share with each other
 - Subscribe to Readers’ Digest and read their funny sections
4. How can you seek out humor when you are the most stressed? What do you need from your spouse at those moments?
5. Do you have inside jokes as a couple?
6. Recall a time when humor in your marriage backfired. What can you learn from it?
7. If you have children, what are each of their styles of humor? My two-year-old granddaughter loves pratfalls and slapstick sorts of things. She will roll on the floor laughing and we all end up laughing. Third graders seem to go through the “knock-knock joke” stage.
8. Laugh about something tonight. Share something you appreciate about each other’s humor style.

FUTURE GREAT DATES

ONCE A WEEK...

August 21st - Do Something Active Together That Lifts Your Spirits

September 18th - Boost Your Partner’s Self-Esteem

ONCE A MONTH...

October 16th - Rid Yourselves of Harmful Residue

November 20th – Fire Up The Passion In The Bedroom

ONCE A YEAR...

December 18th – Review Your Top Ten Highlights of the Year

January 15th – Chart Your Course For The Coming Year