

Connect
with
**Your
Spouse**
in 2023



Mark & Jill Savage

MarkandJill.org

The What

A healthy marriage
needs intentional

_____.



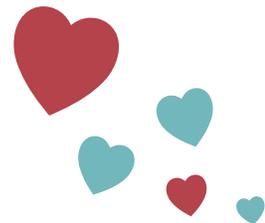
It doesn't
just

_____.



We need to create

_____ that foster connection.



Couples need a daily, weekly, and monthly rhythm of connecting
_____ to keep you tuned into each other's hearts and
working together as a _____.



The How

How you interact with each other is important. Here are some general principles for communication and connection:

- ✓ Use _____ decision-making to set aside time. Decide when you'll connect daily, weekly, and monthly and put it on your _____ !
- ✓ Move away from _____ like phones, TVs, and other electronics during your connecting times.
- ✓ Be a good _____. Use reflection, empathy, and validation when you're listening:
 - Reflection:** "What I hear you saying is _____"
 - Empathy:** "I can only imagine how _____"
 - Validation:** "That makes sense..." or "I can see _____"
- ✓ Keep the conversation _____ and focused on the present. This is not a time to resolve conflict.
- ✓ It's helpful if _____ is cleaned up before you connect.
Conflict clean-up looks like this:

"I'm sorry for _____.
I know it hurt/affected you this way _____.
Will you please forgive me?

I forgive you.
((HUG))



The When

You Have Three **“Connection Protection”** Opportunities:

1

The Daily Drip

of Dopamine That
Connects Your
Hearts

2

The Weekly Weld

That Tunes You Into
Each Other and
Helps You Operate
as a Team

3

The Monthly Move

Connection
Commitment
That Increases the
Fun You Have
Together





The Daily Drip of Dopamine That Connects Your Hearts

Connecting daily helps you move from decision-making and dishes to feelings and fun. Daily connections help you keep your marriage at the top of the priority list!

Here are a few tips for daily connection:



Set aside time each day to emotionally

_____.
15-30 minutes is all that's needed!



You can do the same

_____ at the same time every day or you can do different activities on different days.



Get in the habit of

_____,
"What can I do to connect with my spouse today?"



IDEAS

- Go for a walk
- Play a game together to wind down the day
- Meet for lunch
- Share your highs and lows of the day over dessert or your favorite hot drink
- Read a marriage book aloud together (alternate reading pages)
- Rub each other's feet and talk about your day
- Snuggle on the couch and watch a show you both enjoy
- Go to bed at the same time and snuggle and pray before you go to sleep
- Sit on the porch together and talk about the best and hardest parts of your day
- Take a bath together, light candles, and talk (or hot tub if you have one!)
- Watch a short video together about marriage

Note: *If you have kids at home, make sure they have a bedtime that allows you connecting time after they go to bed.*

BONUS CONNECTION OPPORTUNITIES:

- Text throughout the day
- .
- 10 second kiss when you come home
- .
- Holding hug
- .
- Hold hands when you can
- .
- Lovingly touch as you pass each other in the house

PRACTICAL NEXT STEPS:

- Tap into the Flirt Alert Resource we offer! MarkandJill.org/flirt-alert
- Get *No More Perfect Marriages* and read it together!





The Weekly Weld

That Tunes You Into Each Other and Helps You Operate as a Team

Having a weekly marriage meeting can be a helpful way for couples to stay connected, communicate openly, and work together towards common goals.

Here are a few tips for having a successful weekly marriage meeting:

- ✓ Set aside a _____ time each week for the meeting, and make sure to stick to it.
- ✓ Make sure you're both _____ and _____ .
- ✓ Keep the conversation _____ and focused on the present. This is not a time to resolve conflict.
- ✓ It's helpful if _____ is cleaned up before you have your weekly meeting.
- ✓ Use a marriage meeting _____ to steer the conversation in a helpful direction. (See Page 10)

By having a weekly marriage meeting, couples can stay on the same page and work together to create a strong, healthy, and connected relationship.

PRACTICAL NEXT STEPS:

- Pick up the *Marriage Meetup* Books by Bill and Pam Farrel markandjill.org/meet-up ▶
- Join No More Perfect Date Night to watch the Marriage Meet Up Conversation with Bill and Pam Farrel
- If healthy conversation is challenging for you, consider scheduling a coaching session with Mark and Jill! markandjill.org/marriagecoaching ▶



3

The Monthly Move Connection Commitment That Increases the Fun You Have Together

Having a monthly, fun date night with your spouse can be a great way to keep the spark alive in your relationship and to carve out quality time together.

Here are a few tips for planning a successful monthly date night:

- ✓ Put a _____ date on the calendar. Then protect it!
- ✓ If you need childcare, make that a _____ agreement with grandparents, family members, another couple you exchange time with, or a paid sitter.
- ✓ _____ who plans the activity and get creative with your activities.
- ✓ Make an effort to put your _____ and other distractions away and focus on each other during the date.
- ✓ Talk and laugh together and make an effort to _____ with each other on a deeper level. Listen well.
- ✓ Keep the conversation _____ and focused on the present. This is not a time to resolve _____. It's helpful if conflict is cleaned up before you connect.

By setting aside time for a monthly, fun date night, you can strengthen your bond and keep the romance alive in your relationship.



PRACTICAL NEXT STEPS:

No More Perfect Marriages

Date Night[™]

Join our Marriage Community!

Our members get:

- A weekly email reminder to keep your marriage a priority
- A complimentary 30-minute marriage strategy session with Mark and Jill once a year
- Short videos to keep you learning about marriage
- More connecting conversation prompts and scripts
- Video interviews with marriage experts
- A new creative date night each month
- Access to a huge library of marriage resources
- A LIVE members-only Q&A once a quarter!

All this for only
\$24.99 a month!

www.NoMorePerfectDateNight.com/now-open



WEEKLY MARRIAGE MEETING

Guide

- ♥ One thing I appreciate about you... *(see sample script)*
- ♥ One thing that's weighing heavy on me right now is...
(respond with curiosity, empathy, validation, or prayer)
- ♥ One thing I'm excited about is ...
- ♥ Let's look at calendar together and talk through the logistics of this week.
Optional:
 - Is there anything on the calendar for the next few months we need to talk through?
 - Is there anything with finances we need to talk about?
- ♥ What's our plan for daily connection this week?
- ♥ What's our plan for lovemaking this week?
- ♥ Is there anything we need to do to make our upcoming date night successful?
- ♥ **Optional:** Pick a curiosity question from the list on the next page.
- ♥ Hold hands and pray together.



Sample script for expressing appreciation and sharing/listening deeper:

Talker: I'd like to share something I appreciate about you.
Would this be a good time?

Receiver: Yes, it's a good time.

Talker: One thing I appreciate about you is _____.

Receiver: Let me see if I got that. One thing you appreciate about me is _____.
Is that correct? Is there more about that?

Talker: Yes. When you do that I feel _____ (or When I see that in you, I feel _____).

Receiver: What you're saying is _____ (repeat what you heard).
Is there more about that?

Talker: Yes. When I was a child (share something about this trait that was either present or absent in your childhood.)

Receiver: (Repeats back) "Is that correct? Is there more about that?" If yes, let your spouse continue sharing and you reflect back. If not, "Thank you for sharing."

Talker: "Thank you for listening."

Give each other a full body holding hug. Just relax in each other's arms.



Curiosity Questions

To Use in Your Weekly Meeting or on a Date Night

- What's the greatest lesson you learned over the past year?
- What is your favorite memory of us?
- When did you first know you liked me?
- What's something impactful that happened to you that you've never shared with anyone?
- What would the perfect retirement look like for you?
- What do you love about your work? What do you like the least about your work?
- If you have a day to yourself, what would it look like to make it a perfect day for you?
- What is one action I do that makes you feel most loved?
- What's one of your favorite childhood memories?
- What's a hard memory from childhood?
- How did your father make you feel? How did your mother make you feel?
- How do I make you feel?
- When do you feel the most confident and when do you feel the most insecure?
- When do you feel closest to me?
- What makes you feel disconnected from me?
- What sexual pleasure do you most enjoy when we make love?
- What is the best kind of foreplay for you outside the bedroom? Inside the bedroom?
- One thing I've been learning about myself is ...
- What is a very real fear for you?
- In the past 24 hours, something I could have done better is ...
- As I move forward in life, I would like to become more ...
- One thing on my bucket list is ...

Remember the goal of these questions is curiosity and connection. You're learning about it each other and paying attention to each other's experiences and emotions. Even if you've heard something hard or difficult, keep defensiveness out of this interaction.

To make this safe and connecting, when your spouse is sharing your only responses are:

- Tell me more about that. (invitation)
- Thank you for sharing. (appreciation)
- That must have been hard. (empathy)
- I can only imagine how _____ that was. (empathy)
- That makes sense that you would feel that way. (validation)
- What I hear you saying is _____ (reflection)





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