



Connect Your Hearts While You're Apart

Video Transcript

Jill: Hi, welcome to this month's Double Date with Mark and Jill. Today, we wanna talk to you about connecting your heart while you're apart. And the concept of this, is that we need to stay connected throughout the day. We need to let each other know that we are thinking of each other, and so what we wanna do is give some ways to make sure that you are being intentional about connecting with each other, and inviting each other into your world in some way.

Mark: Yup. Friends of ours, Bill and Pam Farrel, have authored a book, *Men Are Like Waffles and Women Are Like Spaghetti*. And the premise of that book is that men create compartments, or boxes, like waffles, and they live in that box when they're working, they live in that box when they have their hobbies or interests, and they live in that box when they do nothing. They really do have a nothing box.

JILL: That's amazing to me.

MARK: Yeah.

[laughter]

MARK: She doesn't have one.

JILL: No, no. If I say to Mark, "What are you thinking about?" And he says, "Nothing," he means it.

MARK: Absolutely.

JILL: I don't understand that 'cause I don't ever think about nothing.

[chuckle]

MARK: And so women are like spaghetti because their life intermingles, it merges, it crosses over. It's like a big plate of spaghetti that it all fits together.

JILL: Right, and so what often happens, especially during the day, is that we get in our boxes, our

individual boxes, and then we don't think to connect outside of the box. And honestly, not only are men the ones that think in boxes. It's interesting in our marriage, I am more of a box person than Mark is, particularly when it comes to this issue. For instance, we can say goodbye in the morning, and then when I see him at 5:00 again, if we don't connect throughout the day, that doesn't bother me at all. I'm fine.

MARK: But it bothers me. Yeah.

JILL: It bothers him a lot, and he likes to stay connected throughout the day. And so that's one of the things that I have had to recognize, it's important. And what I found is, honestly, it is important for me. And even though I don't really feel like I have the need for it, it does have benefits to our relationship, so therefore it's valuable. So what we're gonna do today is we're gonna give you lots of ideas. We've got a nice little list. We're gonna share with you some different ideas, and our goal is not that you do all of the ideas. Our goal is that you simply start having some conversation about this, and then you maybe take one, two, three of these ideas, and begin to incorporate those. Now, here's the deal, the first thing that we really need to do is to talk to each other and to say, "Are you happy with how we're staying connected throughout the day? Is that something that... Would you like it to be more? Would you like it to be less?" Just having that initial conversation. These are things we don't always talk about, and we need to be intentional about talking about. So that's the first place that we want you to really have some discussion. Are you happy with where it is, and if you're both happy, maybe you just pick one thing to just change things up.

MARK: Yup. Okay, so let's look at our ideas, and we're hoping that they'll be helpful and generate ideas for you. Idea number one is a secret word. Now that word is to be agreed upon by both of you. It could be fun, it could be whatever word you decide, but that word gets either texted, or spoken, just to...

JILL: Or whispered.

[chuckle]

MARK: Yeah, just to let each other know that, "Hey, we're thinking of you."

JILL: Well, when I say whispered, because here we are talking about being apart, but let's just say you're at a family gathering, like extended family, it's the holidays, it's craziness, you're both wrestling different kids, you've been helping get the dinner on the table, all of that. You can become disconnected. And so if you just walk by with a little secret word that you whisper that just lets them know, "Hey, I'm thinking of you. I see you. I wanna stay connected to you even in the midst of this chaos." So that's how that can work.

MARK: Another idea is an agreed upon glance across the room. That maybe you're at that same event where everything's hectic and busy at the family event, but it's a way to grab the attention of your spouse to say, "I am thinking of you. I got my eyes on you."

JILL: Even a wink. And it may not be agreed upon. That may be that moment where you're not able to connect, and you actually catch their eye, and you give them that wink, or that smile, or something that just says, "Hey, I'm thinking of you." Alright, another one is using texting throughout the day. And this is one that we particularly use in the mornings. Mark and I are on

completely different daytime systems. I'm a night owl and he's a morning bird. And so I stay up late, but I'm able because I work from home. I'm able to wake up a little bit later. He loves to get up early in the morning, get a lot of work done. He's usually off to his job before I'm even out of bed.

MARK: Right. Yup.

[chuckle]

MARK: So she'll send me a text when she wakes up, and just say, "Hey, good morning," or, "I'm thinking of you," or even throughout the day she'll say, "Hey, how's my man? What's happening?"

JILL: Exactly, and so just using text for that. Now sometimes I also use a fun, little tool called Bitmoji. It's an app that you can have for a smartphone, where you actually make the Bitmoji look like you. And there's probably, I don't know, eight or 10 of them that say, "Good morning." And so I'll pick one of those and I'll throw that his way through texting, and so that's another way. I don't even have to type the words, I just open it up and send that to him, and usually it's a cartoon picture of me, but saying, "Good morning. I'm thinking of you." And so, an app like that can come in really handy. We've used the Bitmoji app, I just started using the GIPHY app. Now, neither one of these are Christian. They do have some edgy things on them, but you pass those by and 99% of what's on there is just fine. But it's a fun way to be able to communicate with each other. I love the GIPHY app because you can actually search for a phrase. If you want to send congratulations, you can search for that phrase and then you can find some fun little video GIF that moves and celebrates with you.

MARK: Yup. Another app we use is called the Couples app, real, original.

JILL: I think it's the Couple app.

MARK: The Couple app. Okay. Anyway, you can write notes, you can share list. There's just a variety of ways that you can interact with each other and, again, that's from your phone.

JILL: You can draw pictures, you can do a thumb kiss which sounds silly but if one of you is in another state or... It's just sometimes we have to put silly things into our relationship because we get stale, and so this is one way that we move beyond that. Another way to stay connected through the day, now this is actually when you come back together, is to just do a one minute hold hug. We just stopped hugging each other and this is just holding each other, and just hugging when you first walk in the door. And yes, I know, sometimes kids are crazy, if you have young kids, but just paying attention to more than that peck on the... A peck kiss, maybe a 10-second kiss. More than just a quick hug, a side hug, it's actually just kind of falling in and relaxing into each other's arms that reconnects you after you've been apart.

MARK: Yup, enjoying each other. Another item we thought of is called Vitamin F2. Vitamin F2 is flirt and fun. I love to flirt with Jill and I love it when she flirts with me. I also realize that we have gotten stale in our marriage and we have to re-acquaint ourselves with having fun.

JILL: And I will be the first to admit that flirting over the phone doesn't come naturally to me. I don't personally feel like I need it and so it's just not something that comes naturally to me, but I know he loves it and I know he needs it, and so therefore I have to value it. And so that's one place

where the Bitmoji app has really helped me to even be able to do that in a quick and easy way and not have to think about it. And so that's been helpful. Another way is to use wet erase markers and you can write a note, maybe sneak out in the night before and write a little note on your spouse's rear view mirror that just says, "I see you," or, "I'm thinking of you." You can write notes with wet erase markers on any type of glass or mirror and it will come right off. Use a little tool like that, that just says, "I'm thinking of you."

MARK: Yeah. Another idea is to work out together in the morning or in the afternoon, just whatever works for your schedule.

JILL: We used to do that before I dealt with a torn rotator cuff and a torn meniscus in my knee. We were actually doing kickboxing together and I was loving it. And that way we we're actually getting up in the morning and staying connected, and I do miss that one. Right now I'm still in recovery, not able to do that. Anyway that you can, even taking a walk in the evening, after dinner can make a difference.

MARK: Another idea is to surprise your spouse with flowers, or to surprise him with little gifts. That's a nice gesture.

JILL: You remember that couple in Auldey that week?

MARK: Yeah, that's right.

JILL: Do you remember that?

MARK: Yeah.

JILL: So we were standing in line at Auldey one time and this woman was in front of us. This couple was in front of us and she says, "Those flowers are really pretty, honey. I would love those flowers." And he said, "You've got to be kidding me. You told me don't ever buy you flowers. You don't want me to waste money on those flowers." And she was like, "I know, but those are really pretty and they're not very expensive." And then she realized she'd forgotten something, so she said, "Oh, I forgot this," and she ran to the back of the store. So I'd leaned into this guy and I was like, "She loves flowers but she doesn't want you to spend 40 bucks on flowers. But she wouldn't mind if you spent \$4.99 on flowers. And so she likes those flowers because they're pretty and they don't cost a whole lot." And it was so funny because he was like, "Women, I don't know when I'm ever gonna figure this out."

MARK: And I told him, "Dude, that's a lifetime journey."

[laughter]

MARK: "Just pace yourself."

[chuckle]

JILL: Love it. Love it. Another suggestion is reading a book together. This is obviously something that you do after you come back together, but you're on a daily basis staying connected. And we did

this after our crisis. There were a couple of books that were recommended to us on recovering from an affair. And so we began to read those books together, aloud. So he would read a section, or a few paragraphs and then I would read a section, a few paragraphs, and we were just reading aloud together and we did it in bed, before we would say goodnight. And so it was really neat to be able to do that. Now, it took us forever to read those books.

MARK: Right.

JILL: But we got through 'em.

MARK: Yeah.

JILL: And not only that, but we used them to launch discussions. We would read something and go, "Oh okay, let's talk about that for a minute, have you felt that way?" And it was really... It was really good for us because we weren't just reading and taking in, but we were talking through. And if you haven't read our book, "No More Perfect Marriages", that would be a great book to do reading aloud with because it would launch lots of discussions.

MARK: Yup. Another idea is pray together. Many times we struggle with that. It's uncomfortable and we have said many times to you that we have to work through awkward to get to a new normal. I personally struggle more than Jill does. She longs for us to pray together. I had to really work through that to become more comfortable with that.

JILL: Right. And so, sometimes you can even just start in bed. Like you'll say, read together and then you hold each other's hands, you turn out the light and pray together.

MARK: Yup.

JILL: Another way of connecting in the evening, again, is to just go outside and sit and stargaze together. Several years ago, we decided to take the plunge for a hot tub. And I'll tell you, that is because what we were finding, we had actually had the opportunity to borrow a hot tub, I know that sounds crazy, but we had the opportunity to do that and we found we had great conversations there. And so we realized, "Gosh, this is important for our marriage."

MARK: Yup. Another idea is to put your spouse's picture on your phone wallpaper. I actually... As a contractor, I had Jill's and my picture up in my work trailer, but I also have her picture on the back of my notebook that I work out of.

JILL: And then our final suggestion is just simply loop your spouse into your day. Mark remodels homes and so oftentimes when he finishes a job or he finishes part of a job, he'll take a picture of it and he'll send it to me so I can see what he's doing. Just a couple of weeks ago I went and spent the day with our daughter and our grandkids and I took our grandson to get his haircut. So I snapped a picture and I sent it to Mark and just said, "This is what I'm doing right now." It was bringing back some memories for me from when I used to take our boys to the barbershop. So, just loop your spouse into your day, to let them know what you're thinking, what you're doing, maybe snap a picture just to let them know, "Hey, this is what's happening."

MARK: Yup.

JILL: So hopefully, we've given you a ton of ideas.

MARK: Yup.

JILL: And that will at least get the conversation going for you and the most important thing for us to remember is to connect our heart while we're apart because if we don't work to stay together, then we will naturally pull apart.

MARK: Yup.