



YOUR BEST MARRIAGE

AT-HOME ANNIVERSARY



MARRIED
PEOPLE

INTRODUCTION

Your anniversary is a big deal! You and your spouse made another orbit around the Sun . . . together. More important, each added year should strengthen the bond of your marriage by helping you to grow more connected. Unfortunately, life can get in the way of that. The daily grind can make your marriage feel ho-hum.

But your marriage is the most important relationship in your life. It's the most important commitment you've ever made. It deserves to be celebrated! No matter what. That's more than just exchanging cards and gifts. It means slowing down enough to mark the occasion—to appreciate where you started and how far you've come, and to dream about where you'll go in the future.

If you're in a season of life where it's hard to imagine getting organized enough to genuinely celebrate your anniversary, don't worry. Don't feel guilty. We've got you covered.

Your Best Marriage—At-Home Anniversary offers you a simple way to make the most of your big day.

PREPARE FOR THE BIG NIGHT

If you're going to do this right, it can't be spur of the moment. Give yourself a couple of days to work through these simple activities that will help you make the most of your anniversary.

Write a Letter

If you're a hopeless romantic, you're going to love this idea. If you're a little less on the demonstrative side, you may wonder what's the point. But trust us. This exercise will help to spark your connection with your spouse from the very outset of your anniversary date.

Step 1: Gather Your Thoughts

Jot down some thoughts in response to the following questions:

Think about the early days of your marriage.

- What are some of your fondest memories?
- What are the most meaningful challenges you overcame as a couple?

Think about your marriage right now.

- How has your relationship grown?
- What are some things you appreciate about your spouse that you didn't know about in the early days of your marriage?

Think about the future.

- What do you want your marriage to be in 10, 20, or 30 years?

Step 2: Write a Letter to Your Spouse

Now use the ideas you jotted down in Step 1 to write a letter to your spouse. Don't rush. Give yourself time to think, write, and edit. If you're uncomfortable writing, here are some tips:

1. Don't overdo it with flowery language. Your spouse married you, not Shakespeare. It's okay to sound like yourself (in fact, it's preferable).
2. Focus on your spouse and your marriage. That means you should use "you" and "we" a lot more than "I."
3. Make sure to talk about the past, present, and future of your marriage.
4. Let your spouse know what they mean to you and how much you love them.

Step 3: Read the Letter

That's right. Once you're finished writing, read the letter—not to your spouse, to yourself. How does it sound? How does it look? Does it say what you want to say? Run spellcheck, fix any errors, add anything thoughts you forgot to include.

Once you're confident you have a finished, polished version of the letter, fold it up and seal it in an envelope, and then write your spouse's name on the envelope.

Put the letter in a safe place until your anniversary.

Plan Your Dinner

So, here's the thing about an At-Home Anniversary: you probably don't have anyone to cook for you. That's okay. We'll just make cooking part of the fun.

At least a few days before the big day, have a conversation with each other about what you want to eat (you're making it, so keep your cooking skills in mind). Pick something you both love. Make it something special or meaningful, if possible—maybe what you ate at your wedding reception or on your first anniversary.

Have your recipe ready and buy the ingredients ahead of time.

PRO TIP: When you do your shopping, don't forget to buy a dessert. You could even buy a small "smash cake" from a bakery or grocery store to replicate the top layer of your wedding cake.

Gather Some Other Stuff

You're almost there! Before the big night, you'll need a few more things:

- Something nice to wear (it doesn't have to be a suit or evening dress but make an effort to look nice for your spouse. No sweatpants allowed!)
- Candles if you have them
- A tablecloth, if possible
- Your wedding album or video
- The song you danced to at your reception

THE BIG NIGHT

It's time to celebrate! But first things first: **Don't pressure yourselves to create a perfect evening. Your anniversary is supposed to be fun!**

Step 1: Create an Environment

Believe it or not, environment matters. It can help set the mood.

1. Banish the kids to another area of the house (if you have young children, wait until they're asleep).
2. Slap a tablecloth on that kitchen table and use some candles as a centerpiece.
3. Put on some relaxing music.

Step 2: Prepare Dinner ... Together

This shouldn't be a chore. It should be a shared activity, an opportunity to slow down, work together, and connect. If it helps, use this icebreaker to kick off the conversation while you cook:

What's one thing you're looking forward to tonight?

Step 3: Dinner

Serve the food, sit down, take a deep breath, and relax. It's time to enjoy a quiet, romantic meal together. You remember how to do that, right?

PRO TIP: If dinner didn't come out quite like you'd hoped, don't let it ruin your evening. Have a laugh over it. There's still value in the time you spent together making it. And, hey, you've made a memory for your future selves to enjoy.

While you eat, exchange the letters you wrote.

At this point, it's vitally important that you talk about something other than children, careers, money, or household responsibilities. If fact, you can use these questions to get the conversation going:

What's one thing in your spouse's letter to you that you most appreciated or found surprising?

What's one of your favorite memories from your wedding or reception? Why is it special?

In general, is life busier and more distracting now or when you first got married? What are some things you can do to better prioritize each other?

What would you like to do to celebrate your anniversary next year? What steps can you take to begin planning?

Where do you see yourselves in 10, 20, or 30 years? What does your ideal future look like together?

After Dessert

So, the meal is finished. If you're having a good time and can carry the laughter into doing the dishes together, go for it. If that's not your style, leave them in the kitchen sink until tomorrow morning.

To finish off the date, pick one of these two activities:

1. Move the furniture out of the way, put on the song you danced to at your wedding reception, and dance.
Enjoy a few minutes of quite romance. Play the song a second time, if you want.
2. Get out your wedding album or video, sit on the couch together, and relive the day you made your spouse the most important person in your life.

PRO TIP: There's no rule saying you have to pick just one. Do both activities, if you want.

That's it! We hope you've enjoyed your At-Home Anniversary. We hope it helped you to make the most of an important milestone in your marriage. Make it a priority to look forward to future anniversaries!

Finish the night however you want.

We're sure you'll think of something.