

## Welcome to your Date Night Experience!

### Congratulations on prioritizing one another— After all, your relationship needs you!

To get the most out of each date we have made the following suggestions:

#### ♥ Stay positive!

This is not the time to tell the other what he or she has done wrong.

Be future focused. Focus on what you want your relationship to be like in the future. Don't concentrate on past failures. (It's okay to remember past successes).

Talk about your relationship. Do not talk about your job, children, in-laws, etc., unless it's part of the topic of the date.

#### ♥ Give a gift of love.

Some discussion items will excite you more than others. On the less exciting ones, give a gift of love.

Participate enthusiastically!

Don't force it. If you get on a negative track, stop that discussion. Move on to another topic that you both feel good about.

#### ♥ If you get stuck, ask for help.

If an issue comes up that you can't handle together, talk to a marriage coach at a local church or counseling center.

#### ♥ Use good communication skills.

Be prepared for some surprises and new insights about each other. They can open new opportunities for growth and intimacy in your relationship. The following are several specific tips for a great date experience:

1. Be honest, yet never unkind.
2. Remember to start your sentences with "I" and let them reflect back on you.
3. Resist attacking the other or defending yourself.
4. Be specific and positive.



## Dessert

### Appreciation in Action

#### Let's make it real

End your Great Date Experience with a written expression of your appreciation. Take out a small piece of paper, even a napkin will do. Now take a few minutes to privately write out how grateful you feel about your partner, or how you plan to be more Appreciative.

These thoughts may get you started:

- ♥ *Recently, I have been very impressed when you . . .*
- ♥ *I don't ever want to take for granted the way you . . .*
- ♥ *I want to be more Appreciative to you because . . .*

After writing out your response, hold hands with one another and read the responses aloud to your partner. Be sure to say, "Thank you" for your partner's gift of Appreciation!

Provided in partnership with:



## DATE NIGHT MENU

## Love Gives Appreciation





## Appetizers

### Remembering the Little Things

#### First Memories

Think back to your dating years or the early stages of your relationship. Remember the “little things” that your partner did for you. What were some of those small gestures that made you feel special? Did he drive out of the way just so he could see you, or bring you flowers for no reason at all? Did she fix your favorite snack, or call just to hear your voice? Reminisce about those small gestures of early romance. Try to think of all the sweet, “sappy” things you did for one another as you began your relationship.

*When we were first dating, I remember when you . . .*

*I know it was a small thing, but I remember how you . . .*

#### Looking Deeper

Talk on a little deeper level, but still with celebration as your goal. Think again about those early gestures of romance and how you expressed your love in such small, but meaningful ways. Take the next few moments to appreciate one another for those “small things.”

Let your partner know what those demonstrations of love meant to you. Try these sentence starters:

- ♥ *When you \_\_\_\_\_, I was especially thankful, because . . .*
- ♥ *I know it was a small thing, but I was so Appreciative, because . . .*
- ♥ *Thank you for the times that you . . .*



## Main Course

### Be vulnerable and grateful!

#### Great Date Experience: Love Gives Appreciation

Appreciation of your partner means giving acknowledgment to the things they do, recognition for what they have achieved and thanks for effort given. It means going out of your way to praise your partner for what they do that’s “right”, rather than what they do “wrong”.

When Love Gives Appreciation, it means verbally telling someone, “Thank you.” The most meaningful words of Appreciation are specific. Appreciative words that really hit the mark are detailed and precise.

Take the next few moments and consider some of the things that your partner has done for you in recent days. Notice the small things. Carefully think about the daily routine and the activities that you might take for granted. Consider the actions and efforts that are done “right” and are going well. Now tell your partner how those actions make a positive impact on you. Be specific. Give details.

**For example:** *“Thank you so much for fixing lunch for me the other morning. Your help meant a lot to me because it made all the difference in my morning. I felt really supported. Plus, the sandwich was delicious!”*

#### Now it’s your turn:

- ♥ *Thank you so much for . . .*
- ♥ *I felt . . .*
- ♥ *It meant a lot to me because . . .*

#### Celebrate Receiving Appreciation

After your partner tells their story, be sure to celebrate with them. Don’t minimize or dismiss any experience of Appreciation. It’s one of the ways that we all feel loved.

Your celebrations might sound like:

- ♥ *That’s terrific, Sweetheart! I’m glad you felt Appreciated that day.*
- ♥ *Wow! I know that was important for you. I’m happy for you.*

#### Giving the Gift of Appreciation

Round out your entrée with a celebration of your partner’s accomplishments. Privately consider these questions and then celebrate these Trophy Moments together.

- ♥ *What is the most important thing that you have DONE with your life this far?*
- ♥ *What personal achievement brings you the most pride?*
- ♥ *What is one goal that you’ve set and reached . . . and are now proud to say, “I did it!”*

#### Share one or more of your Trophy Moments with your partner

- ♥ *One of the most important accomplishments that I have done so far is . . .*
- ♥ *The personal achievement that brings me the most pride is . . .*
- ♥ *I am proud to say that I set and reached the goal of . . .*

Now take the time to celebrate with one another. Make sure this no dismissal of your partner’s accomplishments. Don’t minimize or trivialize your partner’s achievements. Celebrate their moments with genuine care. Your words of celebration might sound like:

- ♥ *Yeah! I know that was a big deal for you. I’m happy you can look back on that with pride.*
- ♥ *That’s terrific. I am thrilled that you were able to accomplish something that meant a lot to you.*
- ♥ *I Appreciate how much that means to you and I’m glad you reached your goal!*