

## 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

### The Perfect Ending

#### Thinking Back

Reflect on your relationship and a time when you were in pain and your partner gave you Comfort.

Perhaps you were going through a time of loss or sadness and your partner came through with the Comfort of their presence—they listened and was "really there" for you. Maybe you were feeling disappointed, discouraged, or especially alone and they came through with words of compassion letting you know they cared.

Talk about these memories and celebrate the closeness that Comfort brings:

*I remember when \_\_\_\_\_  
and you \_\_\_\_\_.*

*Thank you for Comforting me then. I love you.*

**For example:** *I remember when I didn't get the job and you held me.  
Thank you for Comforting me then. I love you.*

#### Keep it up!

The next time that your partner experiences some kind of loss, sadness or difficulty—give Comfort. We can't keep the painful experiences of life from coming our way... but we can make sure that our partner doesn't go through these times alone!

Provided in partnership with:



## DATE NIGHT MENU

## Love Gives Comfort





## Appetizers

There is Good News

### Care Changes Things

Life is filled with challenges and losses, but there is good news. The good news is, when we experience another person's care during difficult times, the challenges of life don't seem so challenging! That's the importance of giving Comfort.

### Let's Talk About it

Sometimes we may feel uncomfortable receiving Comfort, even though we really need it. If that is true for you, talk together about what makes it feel uncomfortable.

How would becoming good at both **giving** and **receiving** Comfort benefit your relationship?



## Main Course

Being Vulnerable

### What Comfort ISN'T

Giving Comfort in consistent doses helps deepen the closeness and trust in your relationship. Giving something other than Comfort when your partner is hurting brings distance and even hurt to your relationship.

Responses that are **NOT** helpful include:

- ♥ **Giving advice:** Next time that happens, you might want to . . .
- ♥ **Trying to fix the situation:** Things would be better if you . . .
- ♥ **Facts and logic:** That's just the way that . . .
- ♥ **Criticism:** You're just being too sensitive. You don't need to overreact.
- ♥ **Pep talks:** Things will get better. Everything happens for a reason.

Talk with your partner about which of these responses you typically do. We all do these at times so don't be embarrassed. Try using these sentences to help share about where you may have not Comforted well:

- ♥ *The unhelpful responses I turn to the most might be \_\_\_\_\_.*
- ♥ *I remember I did this response when \_\_\_\_\_ needed my comfort.*

### What Comfort IS

In contrast, compassionate, Comforting responses will include:

- ♥ Listening to your partner's story and communicating concern
- ♥ Telling another person that you are hurting for them and are sad they are going through a difficult time
- ♥ Reassuring a person with your words and maybe even giving a gentle touch to show that you care

### Let's Talk About it

Tell your partner about a time when you were hurting and someone gave you a **Comforting** response. (You can tell about a time of receiving comfort from your partner or someone else.)

- ♥ Make this a time of discovery.
- ♥ Listen for what's meaningful to your spouse.

*I remember a time of pain or disappointment when \_\_\_\_\_ and I received a very Comforting response from \_\_\_\_\_ It made me feel. . .*

### Let's Practice it

Who are the people in your lives (friend, family member, co-worker or neighbor) that are going through a loss, struggle, or time of sadness? Perhaps someone you know has experienced a job loss, financial pressures, relationship challenges, health issues or the death of a loved one.

Next, work together to construct an email, or text that communicates care. Let this person know:

- ♥ You are thinking of them
- ♥ You are sorry they are experiencing this difficult time
- ♥ You care about what they are going through

If possible, send that text or email now.

You did it! You just **GAVE COMFORT** to another person.

### Let's Try it in Person

Take the next few moments and think about a time from your childhood that was painful. Perhaps you felt disappointed, rejected, unaccepted, left out, or hurt in some way. You might start your memory this way:

*I remember feeling \_\_\_\_\_ as a child, when. . .*

Take turns sharing your stories and giving Comfort to one another. Your words of Comfort might sound like:

- ♥ I'm so sorry that happened
- ♥ It makes me sad to know that. . .
- ♥ I feel a lot of compassion for you because. . .
- ♥ My heart hurt when I heard you say. . .

**Take turns giving Comfort and then receiving the gift of a closer relationship.**