

## Making Time for Connection During the Holidays

Stop for a moment and picture the most relaxing, intoxicating, romance inducing moment of your life. Take a deep breath and then slowly start to think about your typical holiday season. The two probably don't have a lot in common. We get it. Being a married, adult with or without children and navigating the holidays is hard enough and then 2020 happened.

This holiday is, was and is going to be stressful. It cannot be helped. But it doesn't have to be as stressful. Taking time to intentionally connect with our partners during the holidays is not only a great thing to do for your relationship it's also a great thing to do for your mental health. Strong connections with our partners give us a strong sense of security and make it much easier for us to withstand emotional and mental stress.

Making time for connection can help us to unplug from the constant stream of stress and chaos and tune into love. And no one is ever worse off for that.

Here's three tips for making time for connection this holiday season, and in the new year.

### **Connection Tip #1: Set Aside Time**

If you were to talk to a financial advisor about creating a retirement plan would you expect to be able to just save what's left? Probably not. They would likely tell you to schedule in savings contributions as if they were bills and treat them with as much intention as you would a bill.

The same is true for your relationships. If you are simply assuming you will have time to connect with one another, share a special meal or have a date night - you could be setting yourself up for failure.

Instead sit down with your partner on a Sunday or another time you are both free and collectively decide when you can schedule in time to be together. This can be time to cook a meal together while the kids are occupied or it can be a simple plan to take a walk together. The important thing is to plan time that you can connect. It is just as important as everything else you have going on, if not more so and you will both feel better because of it!

### **Connection Tip #2: Send a Text**

Here's the deal, you probably already text your partner on a regular basis but it's likely not about anything very exciting. Start a new text chain, or snapchat, or facebook messenger or whatever and strike up the conversation with your partner.

Don't talk about the kids, or dinner, or the oil change you're overdue for. Instead get to know one another with some of the countless ice breaker questions available online. *Bonus points for choosing racey ice breakers!* Or just send your partner a message during the day letting them know you're thinking about them. Them the person. Not them the partner who picks up the kids or them the person who takes out the trash.

If you aren't a texter the same works for email, or even handwritten notes. You can even sneak each other love letters throughout the week for an added blast from the past.

The point is to make time to chat. Even if just in a brief message and even if you're in the same house working from the same room.

That connection with your partner outside of their obligations to the family or role in the festivities is important and should be cherished.

### **Connection Tip #3: Have a Wrapping Party**

If you know you're going to have a few dozen presents to wrap - plan on wrapping them together, as the lamest date of all time! Pour some wine, light some candles and take advantage of the privacy.

We say a wrapping party but know this tip can work for any holiday themed task you have to complete during the next few weeks. It works with Christmas Card stuffing, post office trips, meal planning, or anything else you have to do. You can share wine, coffee or just conversation, but remember to connect. Share a laugh. Hold hands. Make eye contact.

Connection can be intimidating. Many people get caught up in the idea that dates have to be special. That connection has to be this big romantic thing. But that couldn't be further from the truth. Making a connection with your partner only takes intention and the willingness to be fully open. Sitting on the couch in food stained pajamas with wrapping paper strewn all over the floor sharing a laugh and a plate of the kids leftover chicken nuggets is just as valid as a night at the opera in a \$5,000 dress.

Don't let the craziness of the holiday season stop you from connecting with your partner. Instead, connect with your partner and turn down the craziness of the holiday season.