

5 Ways to Stay Connected With Your Spouse in 2021

Couples have been stuck in the house together, working in the same space and everything in between during the pandemic.

The time they normally have away from each other for space is now nonexistent. Not to mention that most kids are doing school virtually, so finding ways to stay connected is important.

We used to have date night once a week, where we would go out and try new restaurants, watch a movie or try an activity that we both wanted to learn. This gave us something to look forward to week after week and kept the excitement alive knowing that we would have a child-free, work-free evening to connect and have fun.

Once the pandemic hit, our weekly date nights ceased as we waited and prayed with the rest of the world for restrictions to ease. Overnight, our home transformed into a co-working space, a school site for the kids and a church all in one. As time went on, we knew we couldn't neglect the time alone we used to cherish together and started thinking of intentional ways we could unplug and reconnect.

Here are a few ways we were able to bring date night indoors, save money and keep the passion alive:

1. **Plan an after-hours spa night.** When was the last time you had a good massage? If you have children, wait until the kids are asleep and transform your room into a top-notch massage parlor. Ease each other's stressors of the day with a massage, run a hot bubble bath, light candles, play soft music, dip chocolate covered strawberries and just relax. Enjoy the spouse of your youth and appreciate the time you have together.

2. **Take an online class of mutual interest.** The exciting thing about life is that God has given us many interests, which may or may not be the same as our spouse. Take some time to learn a new skill together such as a foreign language you both can practice learning, a dance class like salsa or tango, or buy two small canvases and try your hand at painting each other. Make it even more fun by recording your efforts so that you can look back on it later and have a good laugh.
3. **Recreate your favorite restaurant dish or dessert.** With many restaurants closed, we've missed out on the opportunity to enjoy the indoor dining experience, but that's OK! The recipe of your favorite restaurant dish or dessert can most likely be found online. Pull out the aprons and transform into chefs for the evening as you and your spouse bond over cooking your favorite meal. Set the table, light candles and enjoy your restaurant quality meal for a third of the price.
4. **Pencil in "me-time" to refresh and refocus.** If we've heard it once, we've heard it a thousand times that distance makes the heart grow fonder. Something special happens when we can retreat to our own thoughts and enjoy time with God, read a book we've been waiting to read or participate in an activity that allows us alone time away from our spouse and family. The time we used to get to process our feelings and emotions has vanished for most of us, but it is important for your mental health and the health of your marriage to schedule yourself "me-time." We can't pour from an empty well, so keeping yourself full is paramount.
5. **Recreate your proposal and vows.** Take a minute to think about your proposal and exchanging vows on your wedding day. It was probably two of the most memorable, exciting times in your life. Why not recreate the nostalgia? With marriages under spiritual attack left and right, it is

necessary to periodically go back and think about when God first brought you together, when things were fresh and new and to remember why you chose your spouse as a life partner. Thinking of their positive attributes can go a long way in mentally and spiritually recommitting to each other. Not to mention, if you didn't have the finances, the time or the amazing location to create a proposal in the way that you'd like, now is an opportunity to re-write an amazing experience.

God has brought us safely into the new year with another opportunity to put the focus and effort back into our marriages. Although the tips you read above are fun, simple and pandemic-friendly date ideas to maintain the passion and connection, it's important to remember that the ultimate way to connect with your spouse in the new year is to keep Christ at the forefront.

Even if you haven't been consistent in the past with praying with (and for) each other and reading the Bible daily, let today be the day that you start. Psalms 127:1a reads, "Except the Lord build the house, those who build labor in vain." Invite the Lord into your marriage, and allow him to build the amazing, purposeful marriage he planned for you to have. {eo}

Howard and Danielle Taylor are certified marriage coaches with the American Association of Christian Counselors, executive producers on the Christian Television Network, serial entrepreneurs and the founders of Marriage on Deck, a marriage media ministry that has served over 4,000 couples through teaching the fundamentals of marriage. The California couple has been named the Distinguished Couple of the Year in 2017, honored along with Grammy Award-winning Gospel duo Mary Mary, R&B veteran Dave Hollister and Gospel Recording artist Dr. Beverly Crawford. Their hands-on efforts in the community have granted them the Trailblazer Award for their Marriage on Deck work. The Taylors currently have a marriage workbook, The Fundamentals of Marriage; a marriage talk show Tuesdays and

Thursdays 3 p.m. PST/6 p.m. EST on CTN and an eight-part video bible study on Right Now Media, a global streaming library with 22k church subscribers and 3.5 million end users.

Read articles like this one and other Spirit-led content in our new platform, CHARISMA PLUS.