

A Surefire Tactic to Win the War of Love in Your Home

It needs to be said that no relationship is perfect. You and your spouse can be together for six months, six years or 60 years, and there will be aspects of your marriage you will both need to work on. Relationships are work and are meant to move you toward being a better person. There will be constant disturbances and disruptions in your relationships with others; these conflicts are made to test your relationships. Will you face the challenging adversities in your life and relationships and grow from them? Or, will you let these challenges and hardships get the best of you?

In your marriage, it is most likely that your spouse has disappointed you at one time or another, and you have done the same to your spouse. I believe these disappointments are a part of life, and once you accept these ever-present conflicts and take them as an opportunity to grow with your spouse, you will be one step closer to winning what I call the war of love. But remember, as you take the steps towards growth and change within your marriage, there will be some ups and downs. Try to remember that it is not about winning all the battles but winning (and growing from) the war of love.

I fully believe in the power of the date as a way to win the war of love. Dating allows you to grow with your partner and face the challenges and disturbances of life as a united front, and it keeps your relationship vibrant and energized. Dating takes you out of your daily routine and allows you to have quality time with spouse. For most of us, the concept of dating might seem as though it's only for the beginning of our relationships. Dating and spending alone-time with your spouse may then be cast aside to make time for work, children, errands, and life itself, because it may no longer seem like an importance. In all reality, dating and dates makes a huge

difference in the quality of a marriage and intimacy levels.

So, what exactly is a date after the marriage vows? Before the kids, work and housework, dating was simply planning a specific time to spend anywhere from three to five hours together, and it is still the same—just a time devoted to you and your spouse. In order to grow even closer as a couple, I suggest developing a dating ritual. You will need to agree on its details before you get started. Keep in mind how often and how frequent you would like the dates to be; what time the date should be, whether it is a breakfast, lunch or dinner date; and whose turn is it to plan the date. It isn't as important when and where the dates are as it is that you and your spouse honor the dates and commit to the times you have agreed to. Although there are no rules to your dating rituals, I believe there are some topics, discussions and practices that should not be brought up, so avoid them at your next date. Try to steer clear from any problematic discussions; if you think a topic will lead to either you or your spouse becoming annoyed, it is best not to bring it up. Avoid money discussions, and do not use your date as an opportunity to run errands or do some shopping. Remember, dates are meant to spend time with and become closer to your loved one, not an excuse to argue, gripe and cross things off your to-do list.

Now that you have all the details planned and you and your spouse are date ready, you might ask yourself, *How do we make it happen it happen?* Before the gift of children, it might have been easier to find the time to spend with your spouse, but now, things are a little different. Finding a responsible and mature babysitter, or, as I like to call them, angel-sitters, is an important aspect of your dating ritual and your fight for the war of love. If you, like me, do not have family in the area, having a person you can rely on and trust during your separation from your children is key. You and your spouse should not spend the majority of your date worrying about the kids back at the home front. This time should be spent re-

getting to know your spouse.

The war of love is tricky and sometimes very difficult. There will be times in your marriage where it seems as though all you and your spouse do is bicker and argue, but remember that these moments should not dictate the rest of your marriage. Take the annoyances and arguments and all that is hard about your marriage and grow from them. Become a better spouse and learn to celebrate your spouse and the love you have for them for a lifetime, whether it is through the weekly date or through random compliments and "I love you"s. Celebrate the person you chose to spend the rest of your life with and love them no matter the battles you may face on your way to winning the war of love. {eoa}

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