

# *Date 2: Let's Communicate*

Communication is a crucial ingredient for keeping the marriage **knot tightened**. It is important to work toward communicating in positive and healthy ways. Create moments to bond through meaningful, life-giving conversation by appreciating each other, sharing needs and extending forgiveness.

Work in unity to keep this space protected and to draw close to one another. This might be difficult if there is tension or unresolved hurt in the relationship. Start where you are and ask God to help you draw toward one another. Try to rebuild trust and restore that "safe place" God designed for your marriage. Guard your conversation from moving in a negative way. Fight together against the enemy, not against each other. Decide now that this will be a time for good, healthy communication to share and listen to one another. **Tightening the knot** can often be hard work, but it is work that is worth it!

Read and work through this guide on your date to connect through healthy conversations.

## TIGHTEN THE KNOT



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## APPETIZER

# Tighten the knot by saying “I appreciate you”

We strengthen the marriage knot when we communicate love and value to each other. We often think great things about our spouse or assume they know we feel a certain way about them, but it's important to take the time to share these things to be sure they know.

### 1 LIST THREE AFFIRMATIONS/APPRECIATIONS FOR EACH:

- Describe something that you appreciate.  
(*ex: “I like it when you help me cook dinner.”*)
- Give a specific example.  
(*ex: “I enjoy time together—just the two of us, like last month.”*)
- Tell how it made you feel.  
(*ex: “I felt close to you, loved and appreciated by you. We were a team and it made me feel special.”*)

### 2 ALTERNATE TELLING ONE ANOTHER SOMETHING YOU ADMIRE ABOUT:

- Who they are as a person or a character quality you have observed in them
- What they have done, such as something they have accomplished
- How they have responded or handled a certain situation

## ENTRÉE

# Tighten the knot by saying “I need to share something with you”

Is there something that you are holding on to that is keeping you from connecting with your spouse or from keeping your marriage **knot tightened**? This could also be something that is heavy on your heart that you want to share with your spouse so they are able to walk alongside you. Ask God to help you use this time to not only share, but also receive.

It's hard to have two movies playing at the same time. In order to connect on a deeper level, we need to pause “our movie” and discover what is happening in our “spouse's movie.” Take the time to investigate, ask questions and find out what your spouse may be experiencing, perceiving or needing.

### 1 USE ONE OR MORE OF THE FOLLOWING EXAMPLES AS A GUIDE TO TALK THROUGH WHAT YOU MIGHT NEED TO SHARE WITH YOUR SPOUSE:

- I have a past hurt I am holding on to that I would like to share with you.
- I have something I am worried about or that is heavy on my heart.

### 2 CONSIDER ASKING SOME OF THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS IF YOU DO NOT HAVE ANYTHING SPECIFIC TO SHARE WITH YOUR SPOUSE RIGHT NOW:

- Is there anything I can do to help you feel more supported?  
(*ex: responsibilities around the house, prayer, checking in on me, etc.*)
- Is there anything I do or don't do that communicates to you that I am not wholeheartedly committed to our marriage?
- Are you satisfied with the frequency and the quality of our physical intimacy? If not, would you share what I/we can do differently?

## DESSERT

# Tighten the knot by saying “I'm sorry/ I forgive you”

The marriage bond is strengthened when we take time to apologize and forgive each other. We extend grace and forgiveness to each other because of the grace and forgiveness we have received from Christ. Making an effective apology is more than saying “I'm sorry.” Is there something you know that you have done to hurt your spouse? If so, use this time to apologize and bring healing to your relationship. Remember: When it comes to forgiving an injury, the depth of the apology should match the depth of the hurt.

### Use the following to guide you through a healthy apology:

- 1 Acknowledge what you've done or not done that has caused hurt. Be as specific as you can.  
(*ex: “I know I can get defensive or say hurtful words. Last week I told you to calm down and stop acting like a child when you were upset about plans changing.”*)
- 2 Tell your spouse how you think they must be feeling as a result of your actions.  
(*ex: “This must have made you feel dismissed, unloved, rejected, and hurt.”*)
- 3 Admit you were wrong to have acted like this. Whether the action or lack of action was intentional, the offender owns the behavior and how it can affect their spouse.  
(*ex: “I was wrong to treat you and our relationship with such disregard.”*)
- 4 Tell your spouse how you feel about hurting them. Validate their feelings and show empathy.  
(*ex: “I feel frustrated with myself for getting defensive when you were upset or disappointed. It makes sense that you were frustrated and caught off guard. You were looking forward to the weekend and my lack of understanding left you feeling alone.”*)
- 5 Ask for forgiveness and share the desire for healing. Let your spouse know you will give them the time needed to heal and your willingness to do what they need.  
(*ex: “I hope you will be able to forgive me for the hurt I have caused you and I want to help you to heal-as much time as you need.”*)

Give your spouse the time they need in order to fully absorb and respond to your apology. They may be ready to receive that apology and offer forgiveness. They may need some time and continued engagement from you to build a new, healthy connection before they can fully move forward with forgiveness. Be patient and provide a safe place for them to work and process through your apology.

Finish the date by praying together and asking God to help you communicate in healthy ways and continue to **tighten your marriage knot**.