

If you were to graph your marriage on a growth chart, your progress line wouldn't be straight up or straight down. It would go up and down. That's how marriage works, but hopefully your marriage is trending upward. If so, this date is for you. If not, this date is for you. Why? Because studies show that making time to be together on purpose for the purpose of fun, grows your marriage. So take a breath and enjoy this time of laughing, remembering, and imagining. Maybe this will start or continue to point your marriage in the right direction. Take this date step-by-step, but feel free to customize it to make it work for your unique *US*.

GROUND RULES

- Take a break from talking about the usual suspects, money, kids, in-laws. This is not a time to take care of checklists. This is time for your *US*.
- Flirt. Be considerate, kind, relaxed, and a great listener. Act as if you are still trying to win him/her over.
- As much as humanly possible, stay off technology. Only text or take a call if it is an emergency. Everyone and everything will be okay. (*People use to leave their homes all the time without phones, and they lived to tell about it.*)
- In many relationships, there is a talker and a non-talker. If you are married to a non-talker, when he/she talks tonight, they might not do it as well as you. So believe the best in them as they find the words.

GET READY



BEFORE YOU GO, PRINT OFF THE "FUTURE US" DOCUMENTS, THE LAST PAGE IN THIS DOCUMENT.



On the way to dinner, talk about your first date. And remember the goal is to enjoy the stroll down memory lane, not crash the recall car by arguing who remembers it best. And even if your first date wasn't so great, make fun of it. Making fun of things is almost always fun.

- What were you thinking when you were getting ready for our first date?
- Where did we go?
- What did we do?
- What were you most nervous about?

(Bonus points: If you got married within the last five years or so, and you are a social media guru, time hop back on your social media accounts to the time when the two of you started dating.)

Over your meal, we want you to play a little game called, "What if the IT COULD NEVER HAPPEN, happened?"

- The two of you are on a cruise ship that crashes onto a deserted island. It will be one week before you are rescued. You can magically make three things appear on the island. What are those three things?
- The two of you are snowed in for three days. You can do no work from home because . . . well, you just can't. What would you love to do for those three days? You each get to name three things.
- You can go back in time and talk to yourself:
 - in elementary school
 - in middle school
 - in high school

What would you say?

- You are flying through the Bermuda Triangle and your plane travels back in time. What year do you hope to land in? Who is there and what are you doing?



Take a couple of each other beside a height marker door strip in a convenience store or fast food restaurant. (What's a height marker door strip? It's an on the wall height chart next to the doors of many convenience stores and fast food restaurants.) Post your pictures using #mpdates.

KEEP IT GOING

End your time together over dessert and dreams. Okay that was hokey, but hang in there. Take some time to dream a bit about your future *US*.

Each of you fill out the Future US Document. Place your dreams in a fun box and set reminders to read them a year from now.

Take a couple of the two of you with your Future US documents and post using #mpdates. (Yes, this is an exception to the rule of staying off of technology.) Also use it for your phone and/or computer wallpaper to remind you that every *US* needs time for fun.

FUTURE US

What is one thing you want for our US in 5 years?

What is one thing you want for our US in 10 years?

What is one thing you want for our US in 20 years?

FUTURE US

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