The Expectations We Carry

10 Conversations About What Matters to Us

A Couple Conversation Guide



How to Use This Guide

We may care deeply for each other and still have different expectations.

For each conversation, take turns sharing what you would prefer and why. You may lean towards either option, fall somewhere in between, or have another preference altogether.

The aim is not to find the right answer, but to understand each other better.

1



Career Focus or Time Together?

When work gets busier and time together becomes limited, would you expect us to protect our usual time together, or be comfortable meeting less often for a period?

Supporting each other's ambitions includes understanding what each person needs when time together becomes limited.

2



Saving or Shared Experiences?

"If one of us wants to save more aggressively for the future, would you be comfortable cutting back on dates and holidays, or would you prefer to save at a slower pace so we can still enjoy these experiences together?

How we spend and save often reflects both the future we hope for and the memories we want to make today.

3



Couple Time or Personal Space?

When we have a free weekend, would you expect us to spend most of it together, or be comfortable keeping some weekends for our own friends, interests or rest?

Time apart can mean different things to each person; understanding those meanings helps us care for each other.

4



Regular Updates or Checking In Later?

During a busy day, would you expect us to exchange messages whenever we have a moment, or be comfortable catching up when the day is over?

A message may feel like a small gesture to one person and an important reassurance to the other.

5



Talking It Through or Taking Time First?

After a disagreement, would you prefer us to talk things through as soon as possible, or take some time apart before returning to the conversation?

We may need different amounts of time to settle, but knowing we will return to the conversation can offer reassurance.

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6 Living Arrangements



Where and how we live can shape our daily life, time together and our wider responsibilities.

- What are our preferences for living arrangements?
- What matters to us (e.g. proximity to family, space, cost, daily rhythm)?

Explore what each of you values, and how to find an arrangement that works for both.

7 Time Together



Beyond the busyness of life, how we spend time together affects our connection and sense of closeness.

- How much time together feels right for us?
- What kinds of time help us feel connected (e.g. daily routines, meaningful conversations, shared activities)?

It is not about a fixed amount of time, but about feeling valued and connected.

8 Money and Stewardship



Our views and habits around money can affect our decisions, security and even our sense of freedom.

- What are our attitudes towards saving, spending and giving?
- How do we hope to make financial decisions as a couple (e.g. budgeting, major purchases, supporting family)?

Talk about not just numbers, but also the values and hopes behind them.

9 Life Goals and Future Plans



As we look ahead, it helps to understand each other's hopes and aspirations for the years to come.

- What are our dreams and priorities for the next few years (e.g. career, home, family, personal goals)?
- How do we hope to support each other in these plans?

Our goals may not be identical, but they can complement and support each other.

10 Growing Together



A healthy relationship is not just about the present, but also about how we continue to learn, adapt and grow together.

- How can we continue to support each other's growth (e.g. emotionally, spiritually, personally)?
- What kind of couple do we hope to be in the years ahead?

Keep the conversation going beyond this guide. Your expectations and hopes can grow and change over time.

Considering Marriage?

Give these conversations more time and guidance through our Marriage Foundation Course. Explore your expectations, deepen your understanding of each other and prepare for life together.

Explore the Course ↗

Register your interest to receive the detailed course introduction (PDF) by email.

