

5 Secrets for Stimulating More Meaningful Conversation – May 2025

LWCC Marriage Ministries Email for May '25

Greetings again from your Marriage Ministries Team.

And, Ok, let me admit to the fact that, yes, I did think that last month's email may cause some push-back for some of you. But I'm pleased to say that 'most' of the feedback I've had has been to the effect that it was a good wake-up call for some, and the email gave some of you a good 'opportunity' to have a much needed conversation. It would certainly seem that our intent with these emails worked for some of you, in that the topic gave you the opportunity to get something out there that was becoming more than a challenge and for that we on the Team are grateful!

So, this month I thought it was a good opportunity to follow the theme a little further - stimulating, we hope, some more meaningful conversation.

Imagine: It's the end of a busy week. You're out to a relaxing dinner with your spouse, and you're both thrilled to be spending some quality time together. A few minutes of companionable silence pass by until one of you pipes up about – what else – the kids. You both chuckle over their antics, then move on to talking about their upcoming appointments and swapping drop-off/pick-up duty on those days. Appetizers arrive, and you dig into those before changing the topic to this month's credit card bill.

If this sounds all too familiar, you're not alone. These practical, surface-level conversations are often what make up a good chunk of daily communication between spouses, and for good and obvious reason. They keep your household running smoothly and prevent logistical crossed wires, which can mean fewer unnecessary heated discussions over said topics. And if you have kids – well, you love them and talking about them brings you endless joy, so of course you're going to do that.

At the same time though, do you ever find yourself wishing your conversations were a little more..... meaningful? More playful and fun? More stimulating? Do you long for the days when deep discussions had you feeling closer than ever? We hear you. So let's look at five secrets to having more meaningful conversations with your spouse.

Stay connected on the mundane stuff:

It seems a bit counter-intuitive, but if you want to have better conversations, make sure you're communicating about the seemingly boring, day-to-day stuff, too. Most days, you're not going to have lots of exciting stories to share. Even if your biggest update to share is that you tried a new place for lunch and they got your order wrong. Staying in the know about the surface level stuff makes going deeper that much easier. Why? Because then you both have a wide context for each other's worlds, that you don't have to spend much time explaining, allowing you to dive into the more profound stuff instead. It's sort of like when you've fallen out of touch with a friend. You typically have to catch up on all the basic life updates first, before you can jump into the serious, emotional stuff. The same idea applies to your marriage conversations.

Be curious:

When you and your spouse have been together for a long time, it's easy to assume you know everything about each other. But people are continuously evolving, and that means there's always

more to learn about one another – and yourselves! Instead of assuming you know their thought processes, preferences, opinions, hopes, fears, etc., stay curious and ask questions to get you beyond the surface level answers. By the same token, be curious about yourself. If your spouse asks you an inquisitive question, be open to some self-reflection so that you can give an answer that sparks even more conversation, instead of shutting it down. This back and forth is key to growing together.

Create emotional safety:

In order to feel comfortable going deep and being vulnerable with each other, you need to have a sense of emotional safety and trust between you. This means you're not worried about being judged, criticized, shamed, or rejected for showing and sharing your true self. It means treating one another with empathy and kindness, and listening to understand each other better – not just when you're talking, but throughout all aspects of your relationship. When you both feel free to be your authentic selves with each other, the quality of your conversations will reflect this – whether they're silly, emotional, or reflective.

Get uncomfortable:

It's normal to have topics that you avoid talking about. Maybe they tend to make you feel self-conscious, or stir up other unpleasant emotions for one reason or another, or worse yet, lead to major confrontation. You can continue to tiptoe around these things, or you can learn to embrace the discomfort and face the issues head on. Sort of like pushing through the hard part of a workout or squashing your nerves before a big presentation - the discomfort pays off in the end. Maybe the way to handle it is to start by admitting to your spouse that you want to talk about something that has been difficult in the past; or that has caused emotions to get stirred; or that you want to see your relationship go deeper, and you therefore want break-through in being able to tackle conversations that have been difficult in the past - "Can you help me do this?" Not only will you feel closer and more connected, but you'll also gain valuable practice in working through issues that require those tough conversations. Perhaps you could ask each other - if you don't know it already - "Is there one area in our relationship that you find challenging?" And have that conversation.

Be intentional when you need to:

When everything is clicking between you, it feels like the conversation flows on its own. But sometimes, it can help to set some guidelines to steer the conversation in the direction you want. For example, on your date night maybe you make a rule of not talking about the kids for 20 minutes. Or seek out a resource that puts thought-provoking, relationship-focused questions at your fingertips - *eg. see the resource on the FamilyLife NZ website "Small Talk" questions.*

Surface-level discussions have a time and place in your marriage. But if you want to feel connected on a deeper level - perhaps akin to the level or type of conversations you had early in your relationship - then we hope these tips will not just stimulate some good thought on the issue, but encourage and help you reset the stage for success.

Blessings once again from your Marriage Ministries Team, Stan & Ronnie, John & Karen

(Adapted from an Article from Prepare/Enrich)