

MHC
MAKING HAPPY COUPLES

SMOOTH AS A BUTTER!
Setting up your finances as a team

LET'S TALK ABOUT SEX, BABY!
5 tips to open up about sex

FINDING THE RIGHT MATCH!
What a Dating Coach can do for you

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TAKING THE PLUNGE
Starting to get intimate

THE GREAT CLOTHING SWAP
A Fun and Flirty Adventure for Couples

CONFLICT
It doesn't have to be a deal breaker!

ALI & SUMNER HOBART
Mastering Business and Pleasure!

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FROM HOMELESS TO HOTTIE
What to wear around the house

BE SELFISH!
How to prioritize self-care in a relationship.

THIS ONE IS MINE!
How to recognize a keeper.

FROM WAKE TO WEDDING CAKE
Meet Carla & Daniel

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YOUR LOVE LANGUAGE
According to your astrology sign

YOU ARE NOT KISSING ENOUGH
A big red flag

WHY DO MEN SPEND SO MUCH TIME IN THE BATHROOM?

WHAT NOT TO WEAR
When meeting The In-laws

DO YOU BELIEVE IN SUCCESS STORIES?
Meet Joel and

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"I'M A WATER SIGN!"
What does that mean for your relationship?

CROCS FOR A FIRST DATE?
Women's shoes men dislike the most

GETTING YOU READY TO BUY.
6 tips to keep in mind

PASSION, CREATIVITY AND ADVENTURE
Meet Esmeralda and

HOW MUCH SEX IS NORMAL?
Let's talk about it!

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WHAT REAL COUPLES TAUGHT US ABOUT RELATIONSHIPS

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Keep the cheer skip the stress!
Financial tips for holidays.

Heartbreak doesn't define you.
How you heal does

The real secret to satisfying sex!
It's not what you think!

CHANGING THE WORLD ONE HAPPY COUPLE AT A TIME!
Meet Daniel and Danielle

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SWIPE RIGHT SUCCESSFULLY.
Tips for dating apps

ROM-COM YOUR VALENTINE'S DAY OUTFIT!

UNLOCKING THE SECRETS TO BETTER SEX!

LAUGHTER, LOVE, & CALORIES
Meet Sophie & Ther

11 stories that changed how we think about relationships.

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HOW TO BUILD REAL CONNECTIONS

HOW YOUR ATTACHMENT STYLE SHAPES YOUR RELATIONSHIP

ESSENTIAL SKINCARE TIPS FOR COUPLES

SEX MYTHS THAT ARE HOLDING YOU BACK

Love without limits
Meet Aria Diana & Skye An

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SEXUAL WELLNESS 101
What Your Body Wants You to tell you

GHOSTING BREADCRUMBING?
Learn How to Handle Them

FINANCIAL RED FLAGS IN A RELATIONSHIP
What to Watch Before You Merge Money (or Lives)

A Prioritized Marriage
Meet Amberly & Joe Lambertsen

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WHY WE FAKE ORGASMS
And how to start talking about real pleasure

LOVE BOMBING OR GENUINE INTEREST?
How to spot the difference early on

TALK MONEY WITHOUT FIGHTING
Real strategies for calm, connected conversations

A story of faith, and forgiveness
Meet Ina & Kristy Annap

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QUIZ: Which relationship archetype are you?

DATING AFTER A TOXIC RELATIONSHIP?
Learn How to do it

NAVIGATE DIFFERENT SEX DRIVES
How to handle mismatched sex drives

How Two Therapists Built a Modern Family
Meet Ashley Ayala and Rob

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WHOSE FAMILY ARE WE VISITING
And Why is This a Fight Every Year?

NEW YEAR, NEW DATING STANDARDS
Learn How to do it

IS PORN HELPING OR HURTING YOUR SEX LIFE?
Learn how to talk about it

Why don't we heal together?
MEET STEPH AND CRAIG

WHY THIS ISSUE EXISTS

Over the past year, we sat down with real couples—at different stages of life, with different belief systems, family structures, and definitions of success.

Some are married, some are parents, some are entrepreneurs, healers, some are still figuring things out. We didn't interview them to tell you how a relationship should look, we interviewed them to notice something else: patterns.

What actually helps people stay connected.

What creates resilience.

What keeps relationships alive—not perfect, but real.

This issue isn't a rulebook.

It's a journal.

A place to observe, reflect, and take what resonates—without pressure to do it all.

Read it in order.

Skip around.

Come back later.

There's no "right" way to move through it.





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The Couple Snapshot

Together: 10+ years (3 dating, 7 married)

Life stage: Married, child-free, building businesses on the road

Vibe: Disciplined, faith-driven, quietly adventurous

"We didn't chase freedom randomly. We designed our life backwards."



WHY DON'T WE DESIGN OUR LIFE BACKWARDS?

Ali & Sumner Hobart

THE MOMENT THAT STUCK WITH US

It wasn't quitting jobs.
It wasn't selling everything.
It was one simple question, asked on a cold Ohio day after tasting a different kind of life:

"Why are we here... when we could work from anywhere?"

That question didn't just change where they lived.
It changed how they made decisions — about money, time, work, and marriage.

WHAT THIS COUPLE TAUGHT US

Freedom Without Structure Is Just Chaos

Ali and Sumner don't romanticize the digital nomad life.

They engineer it.

- Clear work hours
- Defined roles
- A hard stop at the end of the day
- One full day off — no exceptions

The surprise?

Freedom didn't come from less discipline.
It came from better discipline.

Working Together Only Works When You Divide Power

They don't "co-own" every decision.

- Sumner owns strategy, systems, and analysis
 - Ali owns people, logistics, and execution
- Less overlap = less friction = more respect.



TRAVEL REVEALS YOUR CONFLICT STYLE - FAST

Getting scammed in Kenya could've turned into blame, stress, or resentment. Instead, it became a mirror. Travel didn't create the challenge. It revealed how they already handled pressure.

PULL QUOTES WE CAN'T STOP THINKING ABOUT

"Travel forces you to either blame each other — or become a team."



"Money is a small part of success. Clarity is the real currency."



"We don't just work together. We protect our relationship from our work."

TRY THIS AT HOME: THE “DEPARTMENT RULE”

15 minutes | No phones

Each of you answers:

- What am I clearly responsible for in our life right now?
- Where do I step in too much?
- Where do I need to trust you more?

Write it down. Compare notes. Adjust.

REFLECTION MOMENT

Take a pause. You can think about this, write it down, or talk it through together.

Is there something in our relationship that feels heavier than it needs to — simply because it’s not clearly owned by either of us?

The Question They Leave Us With

What would change if we stopped chasing freedom — and started designing it together?



A PATTERN WE’RE ALREADY SEEING

After just one interview, something became clear: Happy couples don’t just dream together. They design systems that protect their relationship.

Dreams are emotional.
Systems are relational safety nets.
Ali & Sumner built theirs — on purpose.

Why This Couple Matters in This Issue

They show that:

- Long-term love doesn’t get softer — it gets stronger
- Discipline isn’t cold — it’s protective
- Gratitude is one of the most underrated relationship skills

They remind us that romance isn’t just about sparks. It’s about choosing each other — intentionally — for decades.



Weston -



The Couple Snapshot

Together: 23 years
(22 married)

Kids: 4

Life stage: Married, parents,
entrepreneurs

Vibe: Disciplined, deeply bonded,
no-excuses love

"We don't let life happen to us. We
decide how we live it."

**WHY DON'T WE
BECOME WHAT WE WANT
TO SEE IN THE WORLD?**

Joel & Jessica Gandara

THE MOMENT THAT STUCK WITH US

Before the business, the kids, and the life they now lead.

There were two people, long-distance, sitting on a tiny condo balcony, talking for hours about a future that didn't exist yet.

What stood out wasn't the dream — it was the certainty.

They didn't talk about if it would happen.

They talked about what it **would look like**.

WHAT THIS COUPLE TAUGHT US

Gratitude Changes the Entire Tone of a Relationship

Joel immigrated with nothing.

Jessica survived cancer.

Those experiences didn't harden them — they grounded them.

They approach love, money, parenting, and business with the same mindset:

This is not guaranteed. Treat it accordingly.



Why this couple matters

They remind us that:

- Growth doesn't have to be dramatic to be real
- Rituals don't need to be complicated to work
- Calm is something you can practice together

Love doesn't always need a breakthrough moment. Sometimes it just needs five honest minutes.

TRY THIS AT HOME: THE NO-PUT-DOWN RULE

10 minutes | Ongoing practice

Make this agreement together:

- We don't insult
- We don't belittle
- We don't joke at the other's expense

Then ask:

"What does respect look like to you when we disagree?"
Write it down. That's your baseline.

REFLECTION MOMENT

Take a pause. You can think about this, write it down, or talk it through together.

Where do we let frustration turn into tone, sarcasm, or silence — instead of addressing what actually needs to be said?

THE QUESTION THEY LEAVE US WITH

What kind of relationship are we modeling — not just for our kids, but for ourselves?

A PATTERN WE'RE SEEING (COUPLES #1-2)

Different lives, family structures and different rhythms.
Same truth: Strong couples don't avoid pressure — they decide how to respond to it.

Ali & Sumner designed freedom.
Joel & Jessica designed resilience.
Neither happened by accident.



*Communication Only
Works When It's
Immediate*

They don't "cool off for days." They don't store resentment.

Their rule is simple:

- Say it
- Solve it
- Move forward

PULL QUOTES THAT DEFINE *THEM*

"We have one life to live — and we don't take a single day for granted."

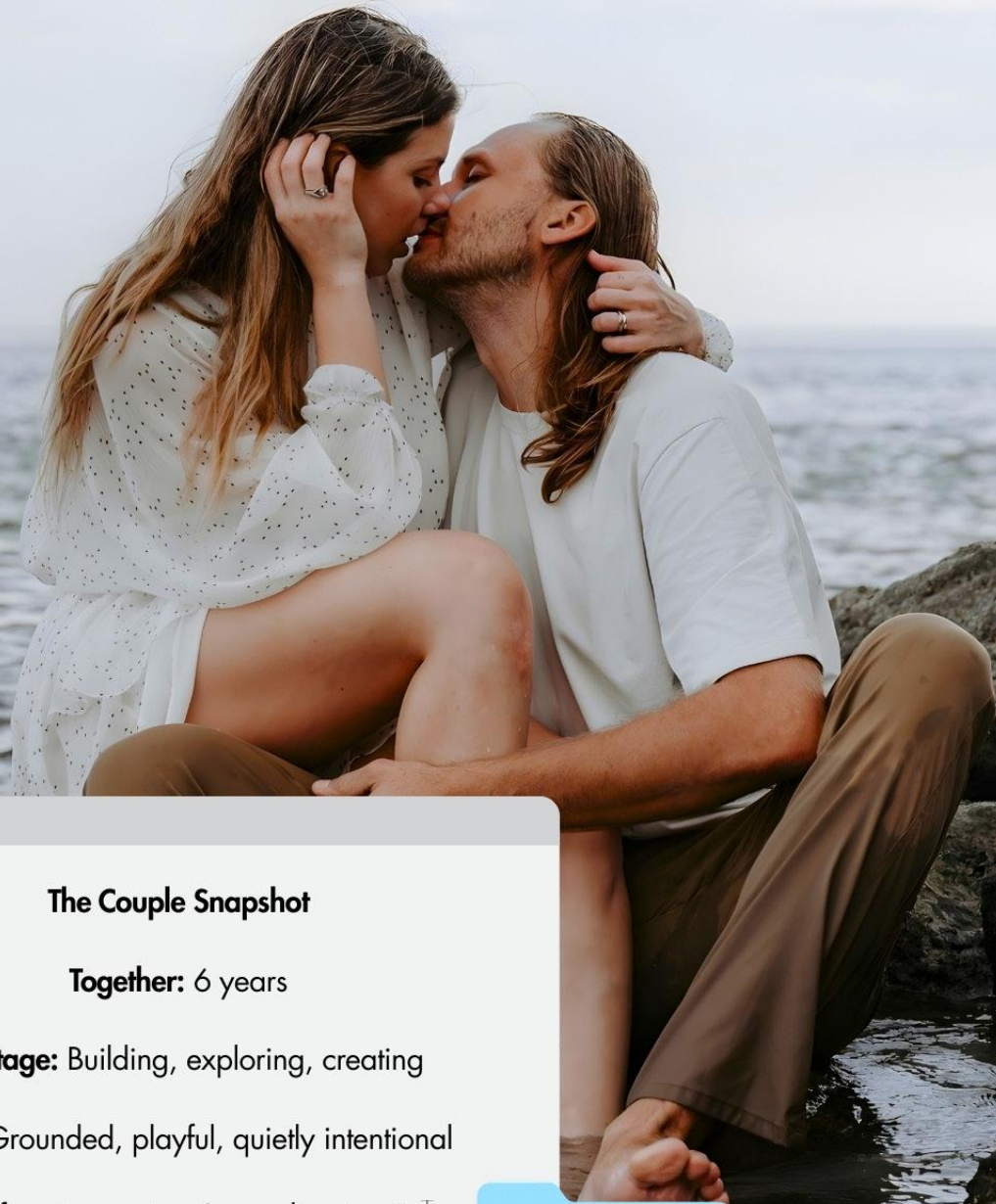
"We never put each other down.
Ever."

"We don't avoid hard
conversations.
We handle them."



WHY DON'T WE MEDITATE

Carla Stefanelli & Daniel Olivieri



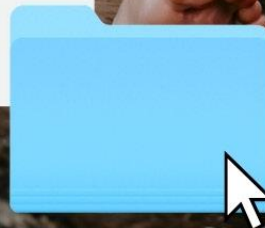
The Couple Snapshot

Together: 6 years

Life stage: Building, exploring, creating

Vibe: Grounded, playful, quietly intentional

"Different energies. Same direction." |



THE MOMENT THAT STUCK WITH US

They didn't bond over a deep conversation.
They bonded over wakeboarding bragging rights.
From a party... straight to the boat... no sleep... all confidence.
What stuck wasn't the sport — it was the instinct to play together immediately. Competition turned into admiration.
Fun turned into connection.

WHAT THIS COUPLE TAUGHT US

Differences Don't Need Fixing — They Need Respect

Carla seeks adventure and Daniel prefers caution.
Instead of forcing alignment, they practice:

- Clear expression
- Kind encouragement
- Mutual limits

Balance doesn't mean sameness — it means awareness.

Play Is a Legit Relationship Skill

Wakeboarding. Hiking. Dancing. Joking about their height gap.

They don't treat fun as a bonus — it's part of the glue.
Play keeps things light. Light keeps things honest.

STILLNESS IS THEIR SECRET WEAPON

They meditate together before bed.
No phones, no fixing, no planning.
Just presence.



TRY THIS AT HOME

5 minutes | Before bed

Sit or lie down together.
Close your eyes.
Breathe slowly.

One question (optional):

“What do you want to release from today?”

No responses required. Just listen — or don't speak at all.

PULL QUOTES



"Don't blame the other person for everything that bothers you."

REFLECTION MOMENT

Take a pause. You can think about this, write it down, or talk it through together.

Where could slowing down help us understand each other better—especially when life feels busy or uncertain?

THE QUESTION THEY LEAVE US WITH

What might shift in our relationship if we created space to slow down together?

A PATTERN WE'RE ALREADY SEEING

Different structures, goals and personalities. Same truth: Couples who last don't just talk — they regulate together.

Freedom (Ali & Sumner)
Discipline (Joel & Jessica)
Presence (Carla & Daniel)
Connection isn't one thing. It's layered.



WHY THIS COUPLE MATTERS

They remind us that:

- Growth doesn't have to be intense
- Rituals don't need to be complicated
- Calm is something you can practice together

Love doesn't always need a breakthrough moment.

Sometimes it just needs five quiet minutes.

The Couple Snapshot

Together: 9 years

Life stage: Entrepreneurs, creatives, explorers

Vibe: Passionate, supportive, fiercely independent — together

"We cheer for each other's dreams, even when they scare us."



**WHY DON'T WE
TURN OUR DREAMS
INTO PLANS?**

Esmeralda Chávez & Juan Acevedo

THE MOMENT THAT STUCK WITH US

Juan showed up to Esmeralda's birthday uninvited. Not with a big speech or a grand plan. Just presence, confidence, and a follow-up DM. That same energy shows up again and again in their story: They don't over-control or over-explain. They show up — and then figure it out together.

WHAT THIS COUPLE TAUGHT US

Support Doesn't Mean Interference

Esmeralda and Juan work side by side — but not on top of

each other. They:

- Share ideas freely
- Respect final decisions individually
- Avoid imposing their own way

The takeaway: Support isn't control, it's trust with boundaries.

Loving Someone Brave Means Managing Your Fear

Juan's extreme hobbies didn't come easy for Esmeralda. At first, fear led, then perspective shifted. She realized something powerful: Seeing your partner fully alive is sometimes worth being uncomfortable.



INDEPENDENCE CAN STRENGTHEN INTIMACY

They don't define themselves by what they don't have yet (kids, permanence, certainty).

Instead, they focus on:

- Freedom in the present
- Passion in their work
- Enjoying now without apology

They prove that commitment doesn't require sameness — or a fixed timeline.

TRY THIS AT HOME

The 5-Minute Wind-Down

15 minutes | Wine optional

Each of you answers:

- What's a dream I haven't fully said out loud?
- What's one small step that would turn it into a plan?
- How can you support me without taking over?

Listen more than you speak.

Reflection Moment: Pause for a second — this is a question you can sit with, journal about, or talk through together.

Where might letting go actually be more supportive than stepping in?

The Question They Leave Us With: What would change if we trusted each other's dreams without trying to manage the outcome?

A PATTERN WE'RE SEEING

Different countries, family structures and different risk tolerance. Same truth: Strong couples don't shrink each other to feel safe.

Ali & Sumner built systems for freedom.
Joel & Jessica built standards for resilience.
Carla & Daniel built rituals for presence.
Esmeralda & Juan built trust for independence.



WHY THIS COUPLE MATTERS

They represent modern love without guilt:

- Love that allows growth
- Support that doesn't suffocate
- Dreams that don't require permission

They remind us that sometimes the most loving thing you can say is:

"I trust you — go."

puzzle quotes

"Trust is the key to long-distance."



"We share ideas, but we respect each other's decisions."



"Patience is a fundamental virtue — for love and for life."





The Couple Snapshot

Together: 8 years

Kids: Daniel has a daughter

Life stage: Partners, founders, nomads

Vibe: Curious, intentional, playful by design

"We don't believe relationships are meant to be endured. We believe they're meant to be enjoyed."



**WHY DON'T WE
HAVE FUN?**

Daniella & Daniel

THE MOMENT THAT STUCK WITH US

There wasn't one defining moment. No single "this changed everything" story.

Instead, there were dozens — small, quiet, cumulative:

- Saying yes to a beach invite on a Sunday
- Solving travel problems without blame
- Taking one step forward even when it felt scary
- Choosing growth instead of comfort
- Choosing fun instead of autopilot

Their relationship wasn't built on a highlight reel. It was built on momentum.

WHAT THIS COUPLE TAUGHT US

Forward Motion Strengthens Relationships

Every time Daniella and Daniel moved forward — moving in, starting a business, traveling, redefining their lifestyle — the relationship didn't weaken. It expanded.

Fear didn't mean don't do it.

It meant pay attention and move together.

The Honeymoon Phase Is a Choice

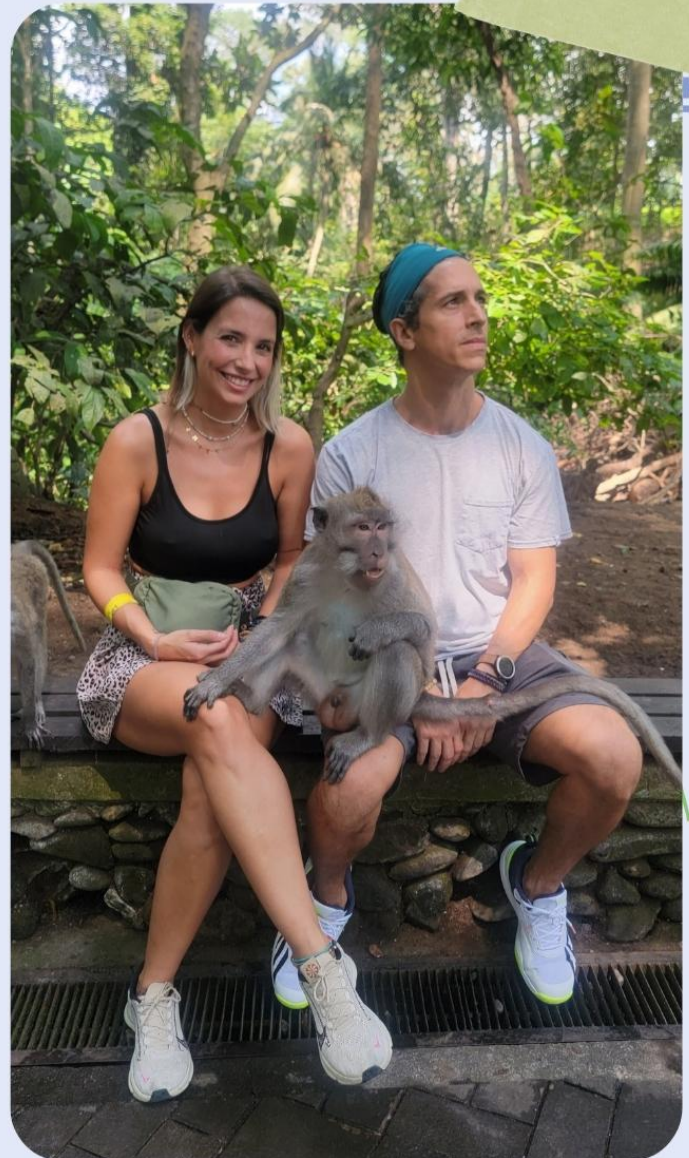
They reject the idea that passion fades naturally.

Instead, they practice:

- Dating on purpose
- Taking care of themselves for each other
- Making novelty intentional
- Treating attraction as something you maintain, not something you lose.

The spark didn't disappear.

It was protected.



PERSPECTIVE IS A RELATIONSHIP SKILL

When challenges show up, they don't ask: "Why is this happening to us?". They ask: "**What can we build from this?**" What you choose to focus on — especially in hard moments — quietly shapes the entire relationship.

PULL QUOTES THAT CAPTURE THEM

"Relationships are agreements."



"Every step forward brought fear - and also something better."



"Fun isn't optional. It's foundational."



TRY THIS AT HOME: THE “STILL DATING” AUDIT

Take a breath before answering. This isn't about fixing — it's about noticing.

Where could our routine use a little more fun right now?

The Question They Leave Us With

What happens when we choose joy on purpose — even when life feels full or messy?

A PATTERN WE'RE ALREADY SEEING

Different paths, values and definitions of success. Same truth: Happy couples don't follow one formula.

They design their own.

Freedom, discipline, presence, trust, and fun. None of these cancel each other out. They work best together.

WHY THIS STORY SITTS AT THE CENTER

This couple doesn't represent the right way to love.

They represent permission:

- Permission to question the script
- Permission to redefine success
- Permission to choose joy deliberately

They remind us that relationships aren't about reaching a finish line.

They're about deciding — again and again — how you want to live.



THE QUESTION THAT STARTED IT ALL

Why don't we... have fun?

Not because life is easy.

But because laughter, play, and connection make everything else lighter.

And maybe — just maybe — that's how you change the world one happy couple at a time.

The Couple Snapshot

Together: 5 years

Life stage: Engaged, building, exploring

Vibe: Spontaneous, intentional, joy-forward

"Every great memory started with a yes."

**WHY DON'T WE
SAY *YES*?**

Sophie & Thor

THE MOMENT THAT STUCK WITH US

Four months of dating before making it official. To Thor, that felt long, to Sophie, it felt right. That small disagreement says a lot about them: They don't rush to match timelines — they take time to align expectations. And when Thor finally asked Sophie to be his girlfriend, it wasn't casual. It was a floating lantern. On a lake, at a festival. Intentional doesn't mean boring, it means meaningful.

WHAT THIS COUPLE TAUGHT US

Saying Yes Builds Momentum

Their relationship rule is simple: Say yes to new experiences. New restaurants, new trips, new ideas, new risks. Fun didn't just happen to them. They created it — repeatedly.



Playfulness and Professionalism Can Coexist

They're goofy, serious and disciplined. Instead of choosing one version of themselves, they learned to switch modes:

- Play hard
- Work focused
- Protect the relationship

That balance is why business never became the enemy.

TRY THIS AT HOME: THE “YES NIGHT”

One evening this month make one agreement:

- Say yes to an experience you’d normally overthink
- No optimizing, no planning too much

Ask afterward: “Would we have done this if we hadn’t said yes?”. That answer tells you everything.

REFLECTION MOMENT

This isn’t about being reckless.

It’s about noticing where comfort has quietly replaced curiosity.

Where have we been playing it safe out of habit — and what’s one small yes that could bring us closer?

THE QUESTION THEY LEAVE US WITH

What changes when we stop waiting for the perfect moment — and start saying yes to the one in front of us?

A PATTERN WE’RE SEEING

Different countries, industries and personalities.
Same truth: Couples who grow together collect experiences — not excuses. Freedom, resilience, presence, trust, fun, momentum.

Why Sophie & Thor Belong in This Issue

They remind us that:

- Joy is built, not found
- Alignment matters more than perfection
- Adventure doesn’t require a plane ticket — just a yes

Their relationship isn’t about doing everything.
It’s about doing something new — together.



Shared Vision Matters More Than Shared Dreams

Their dreams aren’t identical — and they don’t try to make them be.

What is aligned:

- The lifestyle they want
- The quality of life they’re building
- The way they define success

Alignment beats duplication.

PULL QUOTES THAT DEFINE *THEM*



"We always make each other laugh."

"Dreams don't have to be the same — the outcome does."

"Say yes. The rest figures itself out."



WHY DON'T WE PRACTICE LOVE

like **an art** form?

The Couple Snapshot

Together: Dating since 2012 | Married since 2015

Kids: Lots of plants babies

Life stage: Married, creative, intentionally non-monogamous

Vibe: Reflective, grounded, expansive

"More love is more love."

Aria Diana & Skye Arun

THE MOMENT THAT STUCK WITH US

Before they ever defined their relationship, they shared something quieter—and rarer: The ability to listen deeply. Raised in Quaker communities, both learned early on to sit with silence, to hear wisdom without rushing to fill the space. That shared language of stillness became the foundation of everything that followed. Their connection didn't feel like finding someone. It felt like recognition.

WHAT THIS COUPLE TAUGHT US

Non-monogamy wasn't a reaction or a fix—it was a continuation. Their relationship didn't break open. It expanded. What stood out most wasn't the structure—it was the mindset:

- Curiosity over control
- Growth over fear
- Intention over habit

Love didn't become less secure. It became more conscious.

2. Security Comes From Ritual, Not Restriction

Confidence in their bond doesn't come from exclusivity.

It comes from:

- Daily walks
- Silent mornings
- Creative vulnerability
- Gentle check-ins before and after dates

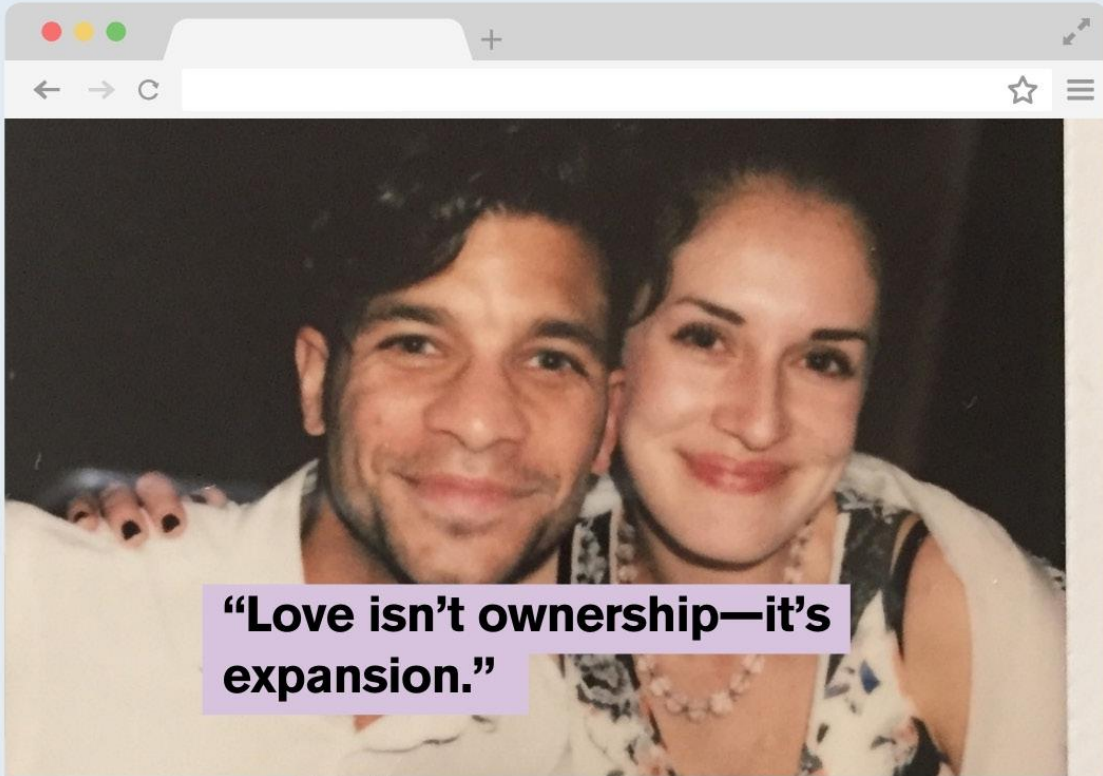
They don't cling. They re-choose each other—daily.



EMOTIONAL LITERACY IS A RELATIONSHIP SKILL

Jealousy wasn't avoided—it was examined, insecurity wasn't judged—it was regulated. They treat emotions as information, not threats. This is love that doesn't bypass discomfort. It learns from it.

PULL QUOTES



“We didn’t open our relationship. We grew into it.”

TRY THIS AT HOME

The “Fill Your Own Cup” Ritual

Before a vulnerable moment ask yourself:

- What would help me feel grounded right now?
- What can I give myself before asking for reassurance?

Abundance starts internally.

REFLECTION MOMENT

This isn't about changing your relationship structure.

It's about noticing how you relate to love itself.

Where might love grow if I gave it a bit more room?

THE QUESTION THEY LEAVE US WITH

What happens when love is treated as something you practice—rather than something you possess?

A PATTERN WE'RE ALREADY SEEING

Different belief systems, relationship structures and different definitions of commitment.

Same truth: Thriving relationships are built on intention—not default settings.

Not one path. But many conscious ones.



WHY THIS COUPLE MATTERS

They challenge a quiet assumption: **That love must look one specific way to be real.**

Instead, they offer something richer: Love as a living practice, curiosity, and as an evolving collaboration. They remind us that relationships don't fail because they change. They fail when we stop tending to them.

The Couple Snapshot

Together: 21 years | **Married:** 16 years

Kids: 4

Life stage: Married, parents, spiritual leaders

Vibe: Grounded, honest, faith-led "Love isn't sustained by feelings. It's sustained by honor, forgiveness, and intention."



**WHY DON'T WE
FIGHT FOR
CONNECTION?**

Joe & Krissy Angelo

THE MOMENT THAT STUCK WITH US

Their story doesn't begin with romance.

It begins with chaos.

A cycle of partying, breaking up, getting back together, hurting each other—and repeating the same patterns so often that friends stopped wanting to be around them as a couple.

What makes their story powerful isn't that it was messy. It's that they didn't pretend it wasn't. The turning point didn't come from better communication hacks or relationship techniques.

It came when each of them—separately—decided to change who they were becoming.

Only then did the relationship change.

WHAT THIS COUPLE TAUGHT US

Marriage Isn't Maintained by Feelings

Joe and Krissy are direct about this: you will not always feel in love. What lasts instead are honor, respect, commitment, and choice. Love isn't the absence of conflict; it's the presence of values when conflict shows up. In their view, rhythms matter more than grand gestures.

Their relationship is held together by simple, consistent practices like daily check-ins that last 10–30 minutes, weekly dates, yearly getaways, and a shared understanding of the different seasons of life. When life gets chaotic, they don't abandon the rhythm—they adapt it and then return to it.



FORGIVENESS CAN REWRITE A STORY

Their marriage was transformed by forgiveness—real, costly forgiveness.

Not forgetting, minimizing or pretending it didn't hurt. Forgiveness became the doorway to rebuilding trust, friendship, and eventually a marriage rooted in something stronger than the past.

TRY THIS AT HOME: THE “TRUE NORTH” CHECK IN

15 minutes | Once a month

Ask each other:

- What season are we in right now?
- What feels heavy?
- What needs more attention?
- Are we aligned on what matters most this month?

Write it down. Revisit it. Adjust together.

REFLECTION MOMENT

This isn't about fixing everything at once.

It's about noticing where intention is missing.

Where am I waiting for feelings to do the work that choice and commitment need to do?

The Question They Leave Us With

What changes when we decide to fight for connection—daily, intentionally, and with grace?

A PATTERN WE'RE SEEING

Different lifestyles, belief systems and relationship structures.

Same truth: **Strong relationships aren't built by accident**—they're built by choice.

Freedom, resilience, presence, trust, fun, momentum, expansion, commitment. Each couple adds a new pillar. None of them stand alone.



WHY THIS COUPLE MATTERS

They remind us that:

- Love can start messy and still become meaningful
- Faith, forgiveness, and structure can coexist with passion
- Fighting for your relationship isn't failure—it's devotion.

They show that lasting love isn't about getting it right the first time.

It's about being willing to start again.

puzzle quotes

"We pour into others
out of overflow—not
leftovers."



"Feelings are warning
lights, not steering
wheels."



"Forgive fast."



The Couple Snapshot

Together: Nearly 15 years

Kids: 2 (16 months apart)

Life stage: Married, parents, educators

Vibe: Warm, intentional, real-life rooted

"You don't need a big reset—just one intentional choice at a time."



WHY DON'T WE CREATE THE MARRIAGE WE ALWAYS DREAMED OF?

Amberly & Joe Lambertsen



THE MOMENT THAT STUCK WITH US

From the very first night they truly talked, something quietly radical happened: They never stopped connecting. No skipped days, no “we’ll talk later”, or drifting into silence.

Fifteen years later, the ritual looks different—backyard deck time instead of long walks—but the intention hasn’t changed. Connection didn’t fade. It evolved.

WHAT THIS COUPLE TAUGHT US

Love Lives in the Ordinary

Their relationship isn’t built on grand gestures.

It’s built on:

- Tuesday check-ins
- Memes and reels
- Sitting together before bed
- Laughing through exhaustion

They remind us that romance doesn’t disappear—it just gets quieter unless you listen for it.

INTIMACY GROWS WHERE CONVERSATION IS ALLOWED

They normalized something many couples avoid: Talking consistently about physical intimacy openly.

The takeaway? Talking about sex doesn’t kill the magic. Silence does.

PRIORITIZING MARRIAGE IS A DAILY CHOICE

They challenge a common myth: That marriage can wait while you focus on kids, work, or survival mode. For Amberly and Joe, marriage comes first—not because kids matter less, but because everything works better when the partnership is strong. Foundation before function.

PULL QUOTES WE CAN'T STOP THINKING ABOUT

"Marriage doesn't have to be perfect—it just has to be prioritized."



"Start small. Laugh often. Choose each other—especially on the busy days."

"Feelings come and go. Intention stays."

TRY THIS AT HOME: THE “ORDINARY TUESDAY” CHECK -IN

10 minutes | Any night this week ask:

- What’s going well between us?
- What feels heavy right now?
- What’s one way I can support you this week?

No fixing. Just listening.

REFLECTION MOMENT

This isn’t about finding more time.
It’s about using the time you already have.

**Where have we been waiting for more time instead
of using the moments we already have?**

The Question They Leave Us With:

Why don’t we create the marriage we always
dreamed of—starting today?

A PATTERN WE’RE ALREADY SEEING

Different life stages, belief systems, and
definitions of success.

Same truth: Strong relationships are built through
repetition, not perfection.

Freedom, resilience, presence, trust, fun,
momentum, expansion, commitment,
consistency. Each couple adds another pillar.



WHY AMBERLY & JOE MATTER IN THIS ISSUE

They give couples permission to stop waiting.
To stop believing love needs:

- More time
- Fewer responsibilities
- A calmer season

They show that connection can survive:

- Parenting
- Exhaustion
- Ordinary chaos

As long as it’s chosen—daily.

The Couple Snapshot

Together: 13 years |
Married: 11 years

Kids: 2 (ages 9 and 7)

Life stage: Married, parents, therapists,
builders

Vibe: Grounded, intentional, deeply
regulated

“Healing is contagious—
and it begins at home.”



WHY DON'T WE START WITH OURSELVES?

Ashley Ayala & Rob Ayala

THE MOMENT THAT STUCK WITH US

They didn't just fall in love. They learned how to stay regulated together. From meeting at their first clinical internship, to building careers centered on emotional safety, to navigating pregnancy complications, NICU stays, and the daily reality of parenting—Ashley and Rob didn't rely on chemistry alone.

They relied on practice, not perfection or constant agreement. But the daily choice to pause, name what's happening, and show up anyway.

WHAT THIS COUPLE TAUGHT US

Emotional Safety Is the Real Foundation

As therapists, they know something many couples don't learn until much later: Connection doesn't come from solving everything. It comes from feeling safe enough to be human.

Their relationship is guided by:

- Naming emotions early
- Taking timeouts instead of escalating
- Getting curious instead of reactive



Support sometimes means letting the other lead

When Ashley went all in on *The Modern Parent*, it required financial and emotional trust. Rob didn't micromanage the risk. He backed it.

That trust created space not just for success, but for balance—eventually allowing Rob to reduce his workload and be more present with the family.

Parenting Mirrors the Partnership

Doing generational healing work together forced them to look inward. They didn't want to recreate what they grew up with. They wanted to co-create something new.

That meant:

- Talking openly about triggers
- Examining childhood patterns
- Modeling regulation for their kids—and for each other

Their marriage didn't just survive parenting. It deepened because of it.

TRY THIS AT HOME: THE 30% RULE

Any day you feel off, say out loud: "I'm at about 30% today."
Then ask: "What do you need from me right now?"

REFLECTION MOMENT

What might change if we were more honest about our energy before frustration builds up?

THE QUESTION THEY LEAVE US WITH

Why don't we start with ourselves?

Because the healthiest families don't begin with perfect parenting. They begin with partners willing to pause, reflect, and grow—together.

A PATTERN WE'RE SEEING

Different professions, belief systems, family structures.
Same truth: The strongest couples do their inner work first.



Why Ashley and Rob matter in this issue

They remind us that:

- Love isn't just emotional—it's physiological
- Regulation is a relationship skill
- Healing doesn't happen in isolation

They show that when couples do their own work, it ripples outward—to kids, to communities, to generations.

PULL QUOTES THAT DEFINE *THEM*



"Sometimes one of us is at 30%, and the other fills in the gap."

"You don't need to do the same thing to be on the same team."

"Strong families come from strong, intentional partnerships."



WHY DON'T WE HEAL TOGETHER

Steph & Craig



The Couple Snapshot

Together: 14 years | **Married:** 10

Kids: 4 (a beautifully blended family)

Life stage: Married, parents, healers, rebuilders

Vibe: Raw, intuitive, deeply transformative

"Relationships are mirrors. If you're brave enough to look, they show you exactly where healing is needed."

THE MOMENT THAT STUCK WITH US

Two people, each coming out of previous marriages. Each bringing two kids. Choosing to live under one roof before the foundation was steady. They call it what it was: **"Messy beyond messy."** But they didn't run when it got hard. They stayed—and eventually realized something important: Love alone wasn't enough. Healing had to enter the room.

WHAT THIS COUPLE TAUGHT US

Love Will Activate Your Old Wounds—On Purpose

Steph and Craig don't believe relationships cause pain. They believe relationships reveal it.

Job loss, financial fear, blended-family stress, unprocessed childhood patterns... None of this broke their marriage by accident. It showed them what had been waiting to be healed all along.

Taking Off the Mask Is the Real Intimacy

Craig's mask: "I'm fine."

Steph's mask: "I'll make myself smaller so this works."

Healing began when those masks came off. Not in one conversation, but over years of therapy, reflection, and courageous honesty. Being loved fully required being seen fully.

GROWTH DOESN'T MEAN GROWING APART

For a long time, healing felt like a comparison: Who's evolving faster?, Who's "more awake"? That comparison almost cost them everything. What changed was simple—but not easy: They stopped racing and started walking side by side.



TRY THIS AT HOME

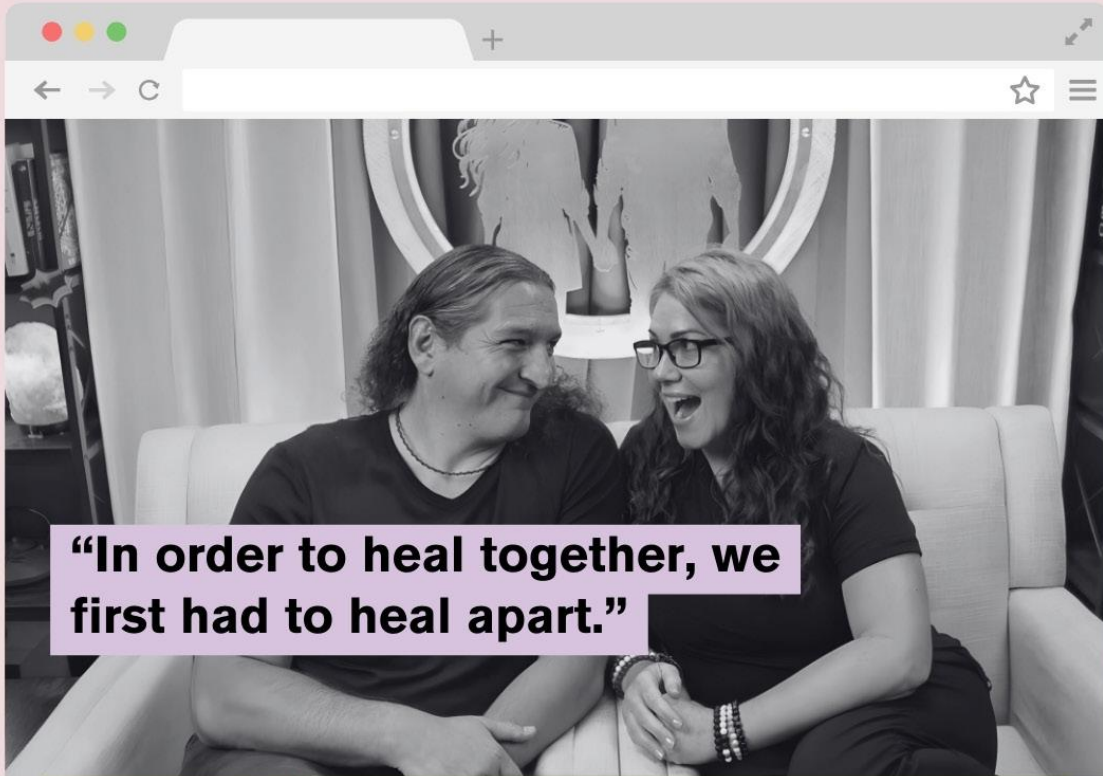
The Pause Button: Anytime emotions escalate make this agreement together:

- Either partner can press pause
- The person who pauses is responsible for reopening the conversation later

No abandonment, no escalation, just nervous-system safety.



PULL QUOTES



“Our breakdowns forced us to rebuild from the inside out.”

REFLECTION MOMENT

This isn't about blame.

It's about awareness.

What pattern do I keep running into—and what might it be trying to teach me?

THE QUESTION THEY LEAVE US WITH

Why don't we heal together?

Not perfectly.

Not pain-free.

But honestly, bravely, and side by side.

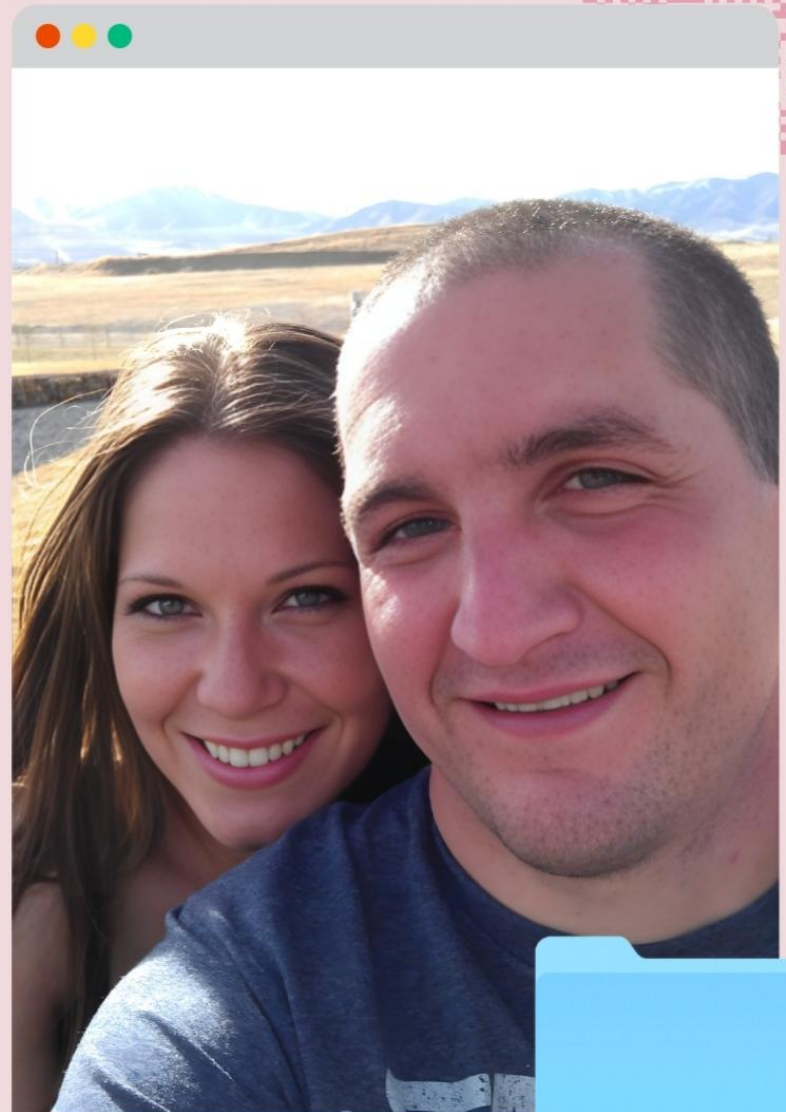
A PATTERN WE'RE ALREADY SEEING

Different belief systems, structures, tools.

Same truth: The deepest love asks you to become more honest with yourself.

Freedom, resilience, presence, trust, fun, momentum, expansion, commitment, consistency, healing, and integration.

Each couple added another layer to the map.



WHY THIS COUPLE MATTERS

They give couples permission to stop pretending that love should be painless.

They show that:

- Therapy isn't failure—it's courage
- Breakdown doesn't mean the end—it can be the beginning
- Healing together is possible—but it requires radical responsibility

Their relationship isn't polished. It's earned. And that makes it powerful.

WHAT ALL THESE COUPLES

have in common

After 11 couples, one thing is clear: There is no single formula for a happy relationship., but there are patterns.

Across different lifestyles, beliefs, and family structures, we kept seeing the same themes return—again and again.

HERE'S WHAT SHOWED UP:


- Intentional time
- Honest communication
- Emotional safety
- Shared responsibility
- Room for growth
- Willingness to repair
- Space for individuality
- Commitment to keep choosing each other

No couple had all of these mastered. Every couple practiced some of them. That's the point.

You don't need to become a different version of yourselves after reading this or overhaul your relationship.

If this issue offered you one thing— a question, a habit, a moment of awareness— that's enough.

Strong relationships aren't built all at once. They're built in small, intentional moments over time.



**WHY
DON'T WE...
KEEP CHOOSING
CONNECTION?—
OUR OWN WAY, AT
OUR OWN PACE.**



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