

MHC

MAKING HAPPY COUPLES

WHOSE FAMILY ARE WE VISITING

And Why Is This a Fight
Every Year?



NEW YEAR, NEW DATING STANDARDS

Learn How to do it

Why don't we heal together?

MEET STEPH AND CRAIG



IS PORN HELPING OR HURTING YOUR SEX LIFE?

Learn how to talk about it



VOL. 12



Lessons from One of My Favorite People

This year, life threw our family a curveball. My brother-in-law — one of my favorite people in the whole wide world — was diagnosed with a brain tumor. It's one of those moments that shakes everything you thought you understood about time, love, and what truly matters.

As scary as it's been, what's amazed me most is him. His strength. His perspective. His heart. Even in the face of something so heavy, he's been the one teaching us how to live — reminding us of what's really important.

Here are a few of the lessons he's passed on that I'll never forget:

1. **Don't leave for tomorrow what you can do today.** Life happens in a jiffy. Don't postpone the things — or the people — that matter. Tomorrow is never promised.
2. **Life isn't made of grand moments** — it's built in the everyday ones. The way we live day to day should be enough to make us proud if tomorrow never comes.

3. **We come here to experience life, not control it.** The good and the bad both carry lessons, and we have to trust that the universe has a bigger plan for us than we could ever design ourselves.

4. **Happiness comes from a grateful heart.** It's not about ignoring what's hard, but about choosing to see what's still good, even when life feels heavy. Gratitude doesn't change your circumstances — it changes your perspective.

His courage and grace have been the ultimate reminder that life isn't about waiting for everything to be perfect — it's about embracing it exactly as it is, finding beauty in the chaos, and love in the ordinary.

So this December, **I'm dedicating this issue to him** — and to everyone who keeps showing up for life, even when it gets tough. You are the real heroes.

With endless love and gratitude, Daniella





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In-Laws, Outlaws, and Everything in Between

How to Survive the Family Circus Without Losing Your Mind (or Your Relationship)

Hey, holiday survivors!

Let's be real—nothing tests a relationship quite like the in-laws. You can survive IKEA furniture assembly and 12-hour road trips together, but one passive-aggressive comment from your partner's mom about how you "don't peel the potatoes the right way" can send even the strongest couples into silent warfare.

The truth? Family dynamics don't magically disappear just because you're in love. But how you handle them together says a lot about the kind of couple you are. Ready to survive the family circus without turning on each other? Let's go.

Stop Playing "Perfect Couple" Theater

If you're walking into your partner's family gathering like it's a live audition for "Most Likely to Be Approved By Grandma," stop. Performing perfection only makes the cracks show faster. Be polite, yes—but be real. If you need a break, take it. If you disagree, handle it privately. You don't need to impress anyone who's already decided whether they like you.

Don't Let Family Drama Become Your Drama

You're a couple—not crisis control. When things get weird (and they will), remember you're not responsible for fixing decades of family baggage. Observe, nod politely, and retreat to refill your drink. The goal is survival, not sainthood.





Protect Each Other in Public, Process in Private

Rule of thumb: when you're in front of the family, you're a united front—even if your partner just left you hanging mid-conversation about your “weird job.” Defend each other in public. Debate later in private. Loyalty first, lectures later.

Stop Saying Yes When You Mean “Absolutely Not”

If you don't want to spend three nights sleeping on an air mattress in your in-laws' basement, say so. Boundaries aren't rude—they're self-preservation. The couples who last are the ones who can say, “We love you, but we'll stay at a hotel,” without guilt.

Laugh at the Chaos (Because You Can't Fix It)

There's no better bonding moment than that telepathic couple look that says, “Did that really just happen?” Humor is your secret weapon. Laugh at the tension. Whisper your inside jokes. The ability to turn awkward moments into shared comedy gold will get you through anything—especially family politics and bad casseroles.

You can't choose your partner's family—but you can choose how you show up together. Whether you're clinking wine glasses with the fun aunt or dodging unsolicited opinions from the know-it-all cousin, remember this: your relationship is your real home base.

So hold hands under the table, share smirks across the chaos, and remember—you're not just surviving the in-laws, you're winning the holidays.

New Year, New Dating Standards

A 2026 Relationship Reset

Hey future-focused babes — There's something about the end of the year that makes us reflect—on the love we've had, the red flags we missed, the lessons we finally learned, and the hope we still hold for what's next.

So let's turn those lessons into power moves.

This year, instead of setting vague resolutions like "date more" or "find someone," we're going deeper. We're talking intentional, emotionally intelligent, no-more-settling standards that align with the love you actually want (and deserve).

Ready to reset? Let's do it.

Why You Need Dating Standards— Not Just Dating Goals

Goals are about doing more.

Standards are about expecting more.

- A goal is: "I want to go on more dates."
- A standard is: "I won't invest in people who confuse me."

One will fill your calendar. The other will protect your peace.



2026 Relationship Reset Journal Prompt

Grab a notebook (or the Notes app. Reflect on these:

1. What patterns am I leaving behind in 2025?
2. (Ghost chasers, low-effort texts, breadcrumb energy... be honest.)
3. What feelings do I want my next relationship to bring out in me?
4. (Safe? Playful? Inspired? Grounded?)
5. What version of me do I want to bring into my next relationship?
6. (Confident? Boundaried? Curious? Clear?)

Let these answers shape your new dating filter. Because who you are while dating is just as important as who you're dating.



Your 2026 Non-Negotiables List (Steal These or Make Your Own)

Here's a sample list of standards to get you started. Adapt as needed, and remember: you're allowed to raise the bar midyear if you outgrow any of these.

I deserve someone who...

- Makes me feel emotionally safe, not anxious
- Communicates clearly (and doesn't disappear)
- Respects my time, space, and boundaries
- Supports my personal growth (not threatened by it)
- Has the capacity to give, not just receive
- Can sit with discomfort instead of running from it
- Takes accountability—not just says sorry
- Matches energy and effort
- Is kind to strangers, waiters, animals, and exes
- Actually wants a relationship (not "just seeing where it goes")

Make a mini vision board for your relationship goals:

Include images or words that reflect how you want to feel—not just how your future partner looks.

Think:

- A peaceful morning coffee
- Texts that make you smile instead of spiral
- The words "consistency," "fun," or "respect" in big bold letters

Visualizing love with standards helps rewire your brain to recognize it when it actually shows up.

2026 isn't about chasing the "spark." It's about building connection with people who light you up without burning you out. Who see your value without needing a PowerPoint presentation. Who meet your standards—because you finally believe in them yourself.

New year. New mindset. Same you—just louder, clearer, and way more emotionally aligned.

Let's go get what we no longer settle for.



Whose Family Are We Visiting

And Why Is This a Fight Every Year?

The power struggle behind holiday plans: control, guilt, and that one aunt who still calls you by your ex's name.

Ah, the holidays. A season of cozy sweaters, twinkling lights, and... emotional hostage negotiations.

Because nothing says "peace on earth" like two adults whisper-fighting in the car about whose family gets Christmas Eve.

This month in Lily's Love Lounge, we're unwrapping the truth behind one of the most common relationship arguments: where to spend the holidays—and why it's not really about the turkey.

It's Not About the Holiday, It's About the Power

Here's the truth: The "whose family" debate is rarely about logistics—it's about belonging, fairness, and control.

- One partner feels guilty for skipping their family's traditions.
- The other feels invisible because they're always the one compromising.
- Cue the tension, the guilt-trip texts, and the passive-aggressive "we'll just do our own thing then."

The deeper issue? Both partners are fighting for emotional validation. You're not arguing about whose mom makes better pie—you're arguing about whose roots get prioritized.

Why This Feels So Personal

For many of us, the holidays trigger more than nostalgia. They bring out childhood patterns, family dynamics, and emotional expectations we didn't even realize we were carrying.

You're not just trying to plan a trip—you're navigating:

- **Family guilt:** "You never come home anymore."
- **Unspoken expectations:** "Of course we'll do Christmas Eve at my parents'—like always."
- **Emotional baggage:** "Last year was a disaster, so this year has to be perfect."

When those forces collide, no wonder you both feel like pulling a disappearing act.

How to Survive the Holiday Tug-of-War

1. Decide What Actually Matters (and What Doesn't)

Is it the date that matters, or the people? If both families are local, rotate. If they're far apart, alternate years. And remember—holiday magic isn't date-specific. You can do "Christmas" on the 27th and it still counts.

2. Ditch the Guilt Gift-Wrapping

Guilt is not a love language. You're allowed to prioritize your relationship over family expectations. In fact, that's what healthy boundaries look like.

3. Team First, Family Second

You're a unit now. Even if you disagree, the decision should feel like it came from both of you—not one person surrendering. "We decided" is more powerful than "They convinced me."



4. Call Out the Holiday Saboteurs

That one relative who always brings up your ex? Smile sweetly and redirect: "Oh, Aunt Carol, you still remember him? Wild. Anyway, we're engaged now." Power. Move.

5. Make Your Own Traditions

The surest way to stop arguing about whose family's Christmas is better? Build one together. Pancakes in pajamas, matching socks, or a 2 a.m. movie marathon—create something that feels like yours.



Challenge of the Month

Before the holiday chaos begins, sit down and ask each other:

- "What does the perfect holiday feel like to you?"
- "What's one non-negotiable tradition you want to keep?"
- "Where can we compromise without resentment?"

Write it down. Make a plan. And this year, let "together" mean more than just showing up at the same dinner table.

Here's the thing, lovebirds: Holidays change. Families evolve. Traditions shift. What doesn't have to change is your commitment to each other. So the next time the "whose family" debate starts brewing, take a deep breath and remember—this isn't a competition.

It's an opportunity to build a new kind of tradition, one rooted in teamwork, laughter, and maybe a dash of rebellion.

Now grab a glass of mulled wine, hold your partner's hand, and toast to this: Your peace > everyone's expectations.



Why don't we heal together?

Meet Steph and Craig

Get ready to meet Steph and Craig, a couple whose love story reminds us that healing doesn't happen in a straight line—it happens side by side.

Their journey began back in 2011 when fate placed them on intersecting paths: Craig was a rookie police officer, and Steph had just started working as a 911 dispatcher. The connection was instant and electric. "We were definitely attracted to each other," they recall, "but there was more—and if you'd asked us back then, we probably couldn't have explained it. Today, it's clear to us that we were meant to be together and have been throughout many lifetimes."

In a nutshell

How long have you been together?

Together 14 years, Married for 10

Do you have kids?

Yes, we have four kids together. When we married in 2015 we each brought 2 from our previous marriages.

Where do you live?

East Tennessee, but we are originally from Utah

What do you do for work?

We're podcast hosts, content creators, and spiritually intuitive people who help others on their paths with our gifts and things we're passionate about.

A fun fact about you as a couple:

We have the same Moon in our birth charts.

What dynamics or rituals do you have that make you unique as a couple, and that you would recommend to others?

In some ways, we've dedicated our lives and our relationship to healing together. We believe relationships are mirrors for us to heal through and we've been able to grow and evolve together in ways we never thought possible.

For our readers who might be interested in your resources, what is the best way for them to follow or reach you?

Our website stephandcraig.co or follow us on social's wherever you can find us.

“At the beginning of our relationship, there was a lot we had to navigate.”

But their love story wasn't a fairy tale—it was real, raw, and filled with moments that forced them to grow. Both were coming out of previous marriages, each with two children, and in 2014 they took a brave leap: they bought a house together and blended their families under one roof. “It was messy beyond messy,” they admit, laughing. “But it was also an accomplishment we're still proud of.”

Join us as we interview Steph and Craig and learn how love, loss, therapy, and deep transformation helped them build not just a marriage—but a safe place to be fully seen.

Let's rewind. How did your love story begin—and what drew you to each other in the first place?

We met in 2011 and immediately felt a strong pull to one another. At the time, Craig was a rookie police officer and Steph had just started as a 911 dispatcher. We were definitely attracted to each other but there was more—and if you'd asked us back then, we probably couldn't have explained it. Today, it's clear to us that we were meant to be together and have been throughout many lifetimes.

Was there a moment early on when you realized your relationship was going to require more than love to work?

At the beginning of our relationship, there was a lot we had to navigate. We were both ending marriages and blending our families—each of us brought two kids into the relationship.





In 2014, we bought a home together and moved everyone in under one roof. That in itself was a massive accomplishment—but it was also messy beyond messy.

You've said that marriage can trigger your deepest patterns. What was one personal pattern that surfaced for each of you?

We believe that relationships—especially our closest ones—reveal what still needs healing from our pasts.

Around 2017–2018, we began realizing this more deeply. Craig was fired in 2015, right after we got married, and that moment became a catalyst for both of us. It triggered old behaviors we'd used since childhood to protect ourselves. Unpacking those and learning to both give and receive love freely has been our shared lesson ever since.

What was the moment everything broke down—and what did rebuilding actually look like?

When Craig lost his job in 2015, everything started to unravel. We had just returned from our honeymoon, and within months, he was fired. It was terrifying. We hit rock bottom more than once, and it felt like our relationship might not make it. But those breakdowns forced us to rebuild from the inside out. We started therapy—individually and together—in 2020, and that's when everything began to change. Without that support, we wouldn't be where we are today.

"In order to heal together, we first had to heal apart."



You talk a lot about the masks we wear in relationships. What were yours?

Craig's biggest mask was pretending everything was fine. He avoided deep emotions most of his life, and underneath that mask was a lot of pain and sadness.

Steph's mask was being the people pleaser—the one who tried to keep the peace, manage everyone's emotions, and make herself small to be loved. Taking off that mask meant letting Craig see all of her—the messy, wild, and brilliant parts too.

Steph, what came up for you when Craig attended that men's retreat—and how did it shift your dynamic?

When Craig went to that retreat, I knew how important it was for him, but I also feared it might be the end of our relationship. It was one of the hardest moments of letting go. Looking back, I realize that in order to heal together, we first had to heal apart. Letting go gave both of us space to find ourselves—and that's what ultimately brought us back stronger.



Craig, how did watching Steph embrace healing influence your own growth?

There have been countless moments where I thought, I need to get my act together, or I'm going to lose her. Every time she leveled up, it forced me to take a hard look at how I was showing up. Her healing directly influenced mine.

You've experienced MDMA-assisted therapy. What surprised you most about that process?

The biggest surprise was how much compassion it created. It gave us a level of understanding for each other we'd never had before. We started seeing each other through the lens of childhood wounds—with reverence and patience. When one of us connects to those wounded parts, the other shows up with love and safety. It's become the foundation of how we love now.

How do you balance growing individually without growing apart?

That's something we've had to learn the hard way. For years, our codependency made it difficult to give each other space. But now, we trust that growth doesn't mean separation. We stopped measuring who was evolving faster and started walking together—side by side, no matter what.

What's your go-to method for navigating tough conversations without spiraling?

We start by checking our basic needs first: Are we hungry? Tired? Overstimulated? Once we're regulated, we can actually communicate. We also use a "pause button." If one of us feels overwhelmed, we pause the conversation—whether that's for ten minutes or a full day. The key is that whoever pressed pause is responsible for bringing it back up. That small system changed everything.

What tools or rituals have helped rebuild trust and emotional safety?

Communication and reflection. When one of us speaks, the other listens—then repeats back what they heard to make sure it's understood. It sounds simple, but that practice has changed our relationship. Feeling seen and heard is everything.





Your podcast is incredibly vulnerable. How do you protect your relationship from emotional burnout?

We didn't at first! We overshared everything and learned the hard way that boundaries are vital. Now, we're more intentional about what we share and what stays sacred between us.

If you could go back and give yourselves advice during your first year of marriage, what would it be?

Get into therapy sooner. Honestly, it would've saved us a lot of pain and confusion.

Lastly, if you could change the world one happy couple at a time, how would you complete this phrase: Why Don't We...?

Why don't we... Show up for each other like no one else ever has.

Steph and Craig's love story isn't just about staying together; it's about growing together, even when it hurts. From heartbreak to healing, from masks to authenticity, their journey reminds us that love isn't found—it's built, brick by honest brick. So, if you've ever wondered whether it's possible to heal in partnership, take a note from Steph and Craig: show up, stay curious, and keep doing the work—together.

Is Porn Helping or Hurting Your Sex Life?

Let's be honest—almost everyone has seen porn. Some watch it occasionally, some more often, and for some, it's a private part of their routine. Porn can be exciting, educational, or just plain entertaining. But it can also complicate how we see sex, connection, and our partners.

So, is porn helping your sex life—or quietly hurting it? The answer isn't one-size-fits-all. Let's unpack the good, the bad, and the complicated.

The Upside: What Porn Can Actually Teach You

- Believe it or not, porn isn't all bad. When approached with awareness, it can:
- **Spark ideas:** It can introduce new positions, fantasies, and role-play scenarios that couples might want to explore together.
- **Help communication:** Watching something together can make it easier to talk about what turns you on (and what doesn't).
- **Normalize curiosity:** It can remind people that exploring desire is part of being human—and that there's no "right" way to enjoy sex.
- **The Key:** When used mindfully and as inspiration, porn can be a tool—not a teacher.

The Downside: When Fantasy Becomes Expectation

Here's where things get tricky. Porn is designed for stimulation, not education. It often portrays exaggerated bodies, instant arousal, and marathon sessions that don't reflect real sex. Over time, that can reshape how you think sex should look and feel. Some common side effects include:

- **Performance pressure:** Feeling like you need to "perform" instead of enjoy.
- **Unrealistic expectations:** Thinking every encounter should be cinematic or orgasmic perfection.
- **Detachment:** Focusing more on visual stimulation than physical or emotional connection.
- **The Check-In:** Ask yourself—does porn make you more connected to your partner, or does it leave you feeling disconnected afterward?



The Gray Area: When Porn Becomes a Problem

Watching porn isn't inherently harmful—but like anything, it can become an issue when it starts replacing intimacy rather than enhancing it.

Some signs it might be doing more harm than good:

- You're choosing porn over real connection with your partner.
- You need more extreme content to feel aroused.
- You feel shame or secrecy around your habits.
- Your expectations in bed are no longer aligned with reality.

If any of these sound familiar, it might be time to take a step back and reassess what role porn plays in your life.



Does porn turn you on, inspire you, or ever make you feel weird about real sex?

The Real Secret: Connection Over Comparison

At its core, sex is about connection—being fully present with yourself or your partner. Porn can add variety and excitement, but it should never replace the emotional and physical intimacy that real relationships bring.

If you use it, do it intentionally. If you avoid it, that's okay too. The goal isn't to judge—it's to stay aware of how it makes you feel.

Bottom line: Porn shouldn't define your sex life; it should enhance it, if it's part of it at all.

How to Talk About It With Your Partner

Conversations about porn can feel awkward—but they don't have to be confrontational. Keep it curious, not judgmental.

Try something like:

"Hey, I've been thinking about how porn fits into our sex life. What do you think about it? Does it turn you on, inspire you, or ever make you feel weird about real sex?"

You might find that your partner has similar questions—or that this opens up space to create your own "real life fantasy" together.

Mindful Pleasure Is the Best Kind

Porn, like any other tool, can be healthy in moderation and harmful in excess. What matters most is awareness. The more intentional you are with how you consume it—and how you communicate about it—the stronger your real-world intimacy becomes.

Because while porn might show fantasy, real connection? That's where the real pleasure lives.

No Rules, Just Layers:

The Cozy Knit Revolution of 2025

When the days cool down and crisp air arrive, it's time for your wardrobe to celebrate texture, warmth, and creativity. This season, the spotlight is on chunky knits and bold layering without the rules, oversized sweaters, XXL scarves, and mix-and-match volumes that are just as stylish for him as for her.

According to trend reports, chunky cable-knit jumpers and voluminous layering are some of the defining knitwear looks of winter 2025. At the same time, layering is getting a fresh twist: base layers of substantial texture, mid-layers of statement pieces, and outer layers that pull everything together.

Key Pieces & Styling Tips for Couples

The Chunky Knit Hero

For her: Go for an oversized cable-knit sweater in a neutral tone, charcoal, oatmeal or camel. Pair it with tailored trousers or a midi skirt to balance volume with structure.

WOOL CABLE-KNIT
JUMPER
- ZARA



For him: Choose a thick fisherman-style sweater in navy or forest green, or a chunky cardigan worn open over a tee and slim chinos.

Texture is everything; knits with ribbing, braids, or exaggerated stitches add interest.

Layering With Purpose

Start with a fitted base layer (like a light turtleneck or ribbed tee) to provide contrast.

Add the chunky knit or sweater as a mid-layer.

Finish with a statement outer layer; oversized coat, leather jacket, or longline wool. This layering structure works for both her and him.

A fun couple twist: coordinate textures but vary colors, one in camel, the other in charcoal; or one in knit and the other in leather.

XXL Scarves & Volume Play

A giant scarf is more than an accessory; it becomes a focal point. For her: wrap once, let ends drape. For him: toss it casually over one shoulder or tuck it under the collar of the coat.

Oversized sweaters + scarves = layered volumes that are intentional, not bulky. Encourage each other: "I'll go with the big scarf if you pick the chunky knit."



For her: XXL scarf & vest - Zara



For him: turtleneck & basic beanie - Zara



Coordinate, don't match

Wear the same palette but vary pieces (e.g., both in greys but she has a wool beret; he has a knitted beanie).

Swap a piece: Try each other's sweaters one day. It's fun, it's cozy, and it shows a shared style.

Layer date look: For a date night: she layers a chunky turtleneck under a slip dress with boots; he pairs a heavy knit under a blazer with tailored trousers. Same texture logic, different silhouettes.

Keep comfort in mind: These looks are meant to be lived in. Big sleeves, voluminous scarves, just make sure you can move, hug and walk comfortably.

This season, let your style tell a story of warmth and togetherness. Chunky knits and carefree layering aren't just trends; they're your shared comfort zone. Mix textures, play with volume, and let your couple style shine through every cozy layer.

Facial Wellness

The New Everyday Luxury

By: Itzel Vega

As the year comes to an end, there's no better time to slow down, recharge, and care for yourself, inside and out. In a world that moves too fast, the ultimate luxury isn't another designer piece, it's taking time to nurture your skin and your mind.



Facial wellness has become the modern ritual of self-connection, and it's no longer reserved for spas or special occasions. Today, both women and men are embracing daily moments of skincare mindfulness that refresh the skin, relax the mind, and redefine what self-care truly means.

The Rise of Facial Rituals

Facial massages, gua sha, and cooling tools have quickly become beauty staples around the world. Beyond aesthetics, these rituals encourage circulation, reduce puffiness, and relieve facial tension caused by stress or screens. The result? A natural glow, firmer skin, and a few quiet minutes that belong entirely to you.

Why It Works for Everyone

Whether you wear makeup or not, facial wellness supports the health of your skin barrier and muscles. For men, it helps prevent ingrown hairs, soften the skin before shaving, and tone facial contours. For women, it promotes elasticity, reduces fine lines, and enhances radiance. The benefits go beyond appearance; it's about how you feel when you look in the mirror.

Tools of the Trade

Gua Sha: The sculpting stone that improves lymphatic drainage and defines facial features.

Cold Rollers: Perfect for de-puffing and soothing tired skin in the morning.

Facial Massage: Stimulates blood flow and boosts collagen naturally.

LED Masks & Serums: The perfect modern pairing for an at-home spa experience.

A Shared Ritual

Couples are discovering that skincare can be a bonding moment, too. Sharing a nighttime facial massage or swapping favorite tools turns routine into connection. It's a small act of care that feels indulgent and keeps both of you glowing together.

The New Definition of Luxury

Luxury today isn't about excess, it's about intention. Taking five minutes each day to massage your face, breathe deeply, and let go of stress is a quiet revolution in self-care. It's where wellness meets beauty, and where taking care of your skin becomes an act of everyday love, for yourself, and for each other.



Holiday gift guide

FOR COUPLES WHO HATE
BORING PRESENTS




(a.k.a. the “What are we even doing tonight?” survival kit)
This year, skip the matching pajamas and give couples what they actually want—unexpected laughs, inside jokes, and a reason to put their phones down and play together. Whether you’ve been together 3 weeks or 13 years, these gifts are made to turn up the connection (and maybe the heat).

1

Talk for hours


240 questions. 5 categories. Endless surprises. This one’s perfect for road trips, lazy Sundays, or when you’re tired of only talking about your grocery list.

 Great for: Long-term couples, newlyweds, or anyone who loves a good story.

2

Spice it up


This intimacy card game takes you from flirty to bold with every round. With playful dares, spicy questions, and lighthearted challenges, it’s designed to build heat and connection—one card at a time.

 Great for: Couples who want to explore, laugh, and get a little daring.

3

Laugh together


Part trivia, part challenges, part “wait, what was that dance move?” This is the game for couples who love to compete, get silly, and laugh until their cheeks hurt (the face ones).

 Great for: Game night lovers, double daters, and TikTok-ready energy.

4

Why not?

With daring questions, dice rolls, and spicy surprises, this game brings adventure and fun straight to your living room. It’s the perfect pick when you want more than just dinner and a movie.


 Great for: Adventurous couples or anyone ready to shake things up.



5

Why don't we date?


Inside the box? Over 100 date night ideas designed to help you break the routine, laugh more, and make real memories—no reservations required.

 Great for: Couples in a rut, holiday staycations, or your favorite duo who never knows what to do.

6

Unfiltered

Each round? One wild scenario. Five possible responses. This 2-player game helps couples explore turn-ons, dealbreakers, kinks, and curious ideas without judgment. Just play, react, and see what surprises come up.

 Great for: Couples who crave deeper conversations and unapologetic honesty—with a sexy twist.

Blake Lively and Ryan Reynolds

Holiday Chaos with a Side of Humor

If there's one couple who make love and laughter look effortless—especially around the holidays—it's Blake Lively and Ryan Reynolds. Between their playful online banter, cozy family life, and shared sense of humor, the pair have built a relationship that feels refreshingly real in the midst of Hollywood perfection.

A Modern Fairytale (with a Twist of Sarcasm)

Their story began on the set of *Green Lantern* in 2010, though neither could have guessed they'd end up married just two years later. "We were friends first," Ryan once shared, "and that's probably the best way to start anything." Their friendship turned into a whirlwind romance, and in 2012, they tied the knot in a private ceremony in South Carolina.

But what really sets them apart isn't the glam—it's their ability to never take themselves too seriously. From trolling each other on social media to hilariously roasting one another during interviews, Blake and Ryan have mastered the art of keeping things fun. As Blake put it, "When you've found someone who makes you laugh like that, you don't let go."

Love, Laughter, and Christmas Cheer

The Reynolds-Lively household has become a kind of legend among fans, especially during the holidays. Between festive family photos, Ryan's dry humor about parenting, and Blake's over-the-top gift-wrapping skills, they somehow make chaos look charming. Ryan once joked, "We're just trying to keep our kids alive until New Year's. That's the real holiday miracle."

Still, their humor always comes from love. "I'm lucky to have a partner who's not only incredibly talented but also incredibly kind," Ryan shared in an interview. "She's my best friend, and that's really what makes everything work."

Balancing Stardom and Family Life

Together, they're raising four children while managing thriving careers—Ryan as a producer and actor (*Deadpool*, *The Adam Project*) and Blake as an actress, director, and entrepreneur. Despite their fame, they're fiercely protective of their kids' privacy. Blake explained it best:

"We want our children to have the same kind of normal childhood we had... to grow up feeling like kids, not public figures."

Their choice to keep home life sacred while sharing glimpses of humor and affection publicly has made them one of the most admired couples in the industry.

The Secret to Their Spark

If you ask them, it's all about laughter, teamwork, and a deep sense of gratitude. They don't hide their flaws—they celebrate them. "We're partners in everything," Blake once said. "The good, the messy, the funny—it's all part of what makes it work."

Blake Lively and Ryan Reynolds remind us that the best relationships don't come from being perfect—they come from being playful, patient, and willing to laugh through the chaos. Whether it's a prank, a holiday meltdown, or a moment of quiet connection, they prove that love, at its best, doesn't have to be polished. It just has to be real.



The Holiday Performance

Are We Faking the Perfect Couple for the Family?

It's the most wonderful time of the year... or so Instagram says. The lights are twinkling, the gifts are wrapped, and your partner just whispered through gritted teeth, "Don't start this here."

Welcome to the holiday performance — that unspoken pressure to look like the happiest couple in the room, even if you've been bickering about who forgot to pack the matching pajamas. Every December, couples everywhere slip into "presentation mode": smiling for family photos, exchanging polite kisses, and pretending everything's perfect while silently dodging the emotional landmines that come with family gatherings, money stress, and impossible expectations.

We post the highlight reel — the coordinated sweaters, the tree lighting, the "so blessed" captions — but behind the camera, many couples are just trying to survive the season without a full-blown argument in front of Grandma.

The Pressure to Be Perfect

Let's be real: holidays can feel like a relationship report card. You're surrounded by relatives who ask "When are you getting married?" or "When are you having kids?" while your friends are posting #CoupleGoals vacation photos. Suddenly, you're hyper-aware of every minor crack in your relationship and scrambling to patch it up with smiles and small talk.

But here's the truth — performing happiness doesn't make you happy. It just makes you exhausted. You spend so much energy trying to look like the perfect couple that you forget to actually be one.



The Silent Toll

This "holiday performance" can quietly breed resentment. You start avoiding honest conversations to keep the peace, brushing off tension instead of addressing it. By the time January rolls around, you're not just tired — you're emotionally drained. Because pretending everything's fine for three weeks straight is basically an Olympic event.

Drop the Script

Here's a wild idea: what if this year, you skipped the performance? What if you stopped worrying about what everyone else thinks and focused on what actually makes you feel connected? Maybe it's ditching one side of the family dinner to have your own cozy night in. Maybe it's agreeing that you'll both bail on the party early if one of you gives the signal (code word: "cranberry").

The holidays don't have to be a PR campaign for your relationship. They can be messy, real, and full of inside jokes that only the two of you get.

The Real Gift

The best thing you can give each other this season isn't a wrapped present — it's authenticity. The kind where you can say, "I love you, but I need ten minutes of quiet before your mom starts asking about our life plan again."

Because when the decorations come down and the noise fades, what matters most isn't how perfect you looked in the family photo — it's how real you were with each other.

So go ahead, drop the act. The turkey's not the only thing that shouldn't be stuffed this year.

What Kind of Gifter Are You?

Find your Love Language—and the Perfect Gift to Match It.

Because not everyone melts over flowers and jewelry. Some hearts beat faster for quality time, others for a perfectly worded Post-it note on the mirror. Take this quick quiz to uncover your gift-giving style (and your partner's!) — then check out our mini gift guide below for the ultimate holiday inspo.

01. When your partner surprises you with something, what makes you feel most loved?

- A. They planned a cozy night in with my favorite meal.
- B. They picked up something I mentioned wanting weeks ago.
- C. They tell me how much they appreciate me.
- D. They help me with something I've been too busy to do.
- E. They can't stop hugging or touching me.

02. You're shopping for your partner and can't decide what to get. You go for:

- A. Tickets to a show or trip to somewhere fun.
- B. A meaningful keepsake that reminds them of your relationship.
- C. A handwritten card or custom playlist of "your songs."
- D. A surprise home-cooked dinner and clean kitchen after.
- E. A couples massage or matching pajamas for cuddling.

03. Your dream date night looks like:

- A. Trying something new together — like a pottery class or sushi night.
- B. Exchanging small, thoughtful gifts over coffee.
- C. Saying "I love you" in 10 different ways.
- D. Running errands together and feeling like a team.
- E. Staying in bed all morning, no alarms, no rush.

04. When your partner forgets an important day, you're most hurt because:

- A. We missed the chance to spend time together.
- B. It feels like they didn't think ahead.
- C. They didn't express how they felt.
- D. I could've used their help that day.
- E. I missed the affection and closeness that comes with celebrating.

05. The best holiday gift you could get is:

- A. A weekend getaway just for two.
- B. A personalized gift that proves they really know me.
- C. A heartfelt letter or video message.
- D. A "day off" where they take care of everything for me.
- E. A cozy cuddle night with candles, snacks, and no interruptions.



Results

A

Mostly A's: Quality Time

You value shared experiences more than fancy wrapping paper.

Gift Ideas: Weekend getaway, cooking class for two, game night sets like Talk for Hours or Why Don't We Date.

B

Mostly B's: Receiving Gifts

For you, it's all about the thought and meaning behind the present.

Gift Ideas: Custom photo book, engraved jewelry, matching mugs, or a personalized Spotify plaque.

C

Mostly C's: Words of Affirmation

You melt for meaningful words that remind you how loved you are.

Gift Ideas: A "Reasons I Love You" jar, love letters exchanged on Christmas morning, or a framed quote that represents your relationship.

D

Mostly D's: Acts of Service

Nothing says love like effort. You swoon when your partner does something thoughtful.

Gift Ideas: Breakfast in bed, "coupon book" of favors, DIY home spa setup, or taking over holiday chores.

E

Mostly E's: Physical Touch

You connect through closeness and affection — the more cuddles, the better.

Gift Ideas: Cozy throw blanket, couples massage, matching robes, or a "Fondue & Chill" date night.

For the ultimate couple move, take the quiz together. Compare results and pick one gift idea from each of your love languages — because the best presents come from understanding what makes your partner feel most seen.

Why don't we cook?



Prep Time:
10 minutes



Cook Time:
25 minutes



Servings:
**2 generous
bowls**



Total Time:
35 minutes

Cozy Carbs & Cuddles: Christmas Gnocchi Bake



Ingredients

- 1 lb gnocchi (store-bought or homemade)
- 1 1/2 tbsp olive oil
- 1 garlic clove, minced
- 1 cup tomato purée
- 1/4 cup heavy cream
- 1/2 tsp dried basil
- 1/2 tsp oregano
- 1/4 tsp salt
- 3/4 cup shredded mozzarella
- 1/4 cup grated Parmesan
- Optional: a handful of baby spinach or chopped basil for extra color

Your December Date Night Game Plan

- Start with Mulled Wine for Two while the Gnocchi Bake bubbles in the oven.
- Finish strong with Peppermint Mocha Tiramisu Cups and your favorite holiday playlist.
- Add cozy socks, soft lighting, and zero distractions. That's your perfect Christmas date night, sorted.

Because the holidays are meant for carbs, cuddles, and movies you've already watched ten times. This warm, cheesy gnocchi bake is your official excuse to cancel plans, open a bottle of wine, and stay in.

Instructions:

- 1** Preheat the oven to 400°F (200°C).
- 2** Heat olive oil in a pan, add garlic, and cook until fragrant. Stir in tomato purée, cream, basil, oregano, and salt. Simmer for 10–15 minutes until slightly thickened.
- 3** **Cook the gnocchi:** Boil in salted water until they float (about 30 seconds), then drain immediately.
- 4** **Combine & bake:** Toss gnocchi in the sauce, pour into a small baking dish, top with mozzarella and Parmesan, and bake for 5 minutes. Broil another 2–3 minutes until golden and bubbly.
- 5** **Serve hot,** right out of the oven. Eat straight from the dish if you're that couple.
Pro Tip: Add a pinch of red pepper flakes if you want a little "holiday heat."

Sip, Stir & Stay Warm



Prep Time:
20 minutes



Chill Time:
2 hours



Servings:
2-3

Mulled Wine for Two & Peppermint Mocha Tiramisu Cups

Ingredients for Mulled wine

- 1 bottle red wine (Merlot or Cabernet works great)
- 1 orange, sliced
- 1/4 cup honey or brown sugar (to taste)
- 3 whole cloves
- 2 cinnamon sticks
- 2 star anise

Instructions for Mulled wine:

- 1 Combine wine, orange slices, honey, and spices in a saucepan.
- 2 Heat on low until warm—never boil (we're making romance, not vinegar).
- 3 Let it simmer gently for 10–15 minutes so the flavors mingle.
- 4 Strain, pour into mugs, and garnish with an orange slice or cinnamon stick.

Ingredients for Peppermint Tiramisu

- 1 cup heavy cream
- 1/2 cup mascarpone cheese
- 2 tbsp sugar
- 1 tsp peppermint extract
- 1/2 cup strong coffee or espresso (cooled)
- 2 tbsp cocoa powder
- 1/2 cup crushed candy canes
- 8–10 ladyfinger cookies

Ingredients for Peppermint tiramisu:

- 1 Whip the cream, sugar, and peppermint extract until soft peaks form. Gently fold in the mascarpone.
- 2 Mix coffee and liqueur (if using) in a shallow dish. Dip each ladyfinger briefly—don't soak!
- 3 Layer ladyfingers, cream, and cocoa powder in small glass cups. Repeat layers until full.
- 4 Chill for at least 2 hours. Before serving, top with crushed candy canes for a festive crunch.

Serving Tip: Sprinkle extra cocoa on top and serve with espresso or hot chocolate. Or just grab two spoons and share one cup—romantic and efficient.

The Ugly Truth About Holiday Spending

(and Why Couples Need to Chill Out)

Let's be honest — the holidays have become a competition. Who bought the flashiest gifts? Who posted the prettiest tablescape? Who spent the most “to show they care”? Spoiler alert: no one wins that game. Every year, couples fall into the same trap — overspending to impress others and stressing about it until February. So, before you max out another credit card “for the vibe,” here's the tough love you didn't know you needed about money, love, and holiday expectations.

If You're Going Broke to Impress People, You're Doing It Wrong

You don't owe anyone a designer gift or a catered dinner to prove you're doing okay. Overspending isn't generosity — it's anxiety in a sparkly box.

Try This Instead: Redefine what “special” looks like. Real connection beats expensive gestures every single time. Swap pricey gifts for shared experiences, honest letters, or something handmade. Your wallet (and sanity) will thank you.

Stop Financially Competing With Other Couples

That couple who posts “his & hers” matching Rolexes? They're probably still paying them off. Comparison kills both your joy and your budget.

Try This Instead: Compete on peace, not price tags. Your relationship shouldn't be a highlight reel of spending — it should be a team working toward freedom, not flexing.



Holiday Debt Isn't a Love Language

Buying beyond your means isn't romantic. Debt creates resentment — not holiday cheer. The “I'll just put it on the card” mindset feels fine now, but financial stress in January hits harder than eggnog hangovers.

Try This Instead: Have a pre-holiday budget date. Set spending caps together. If you can't afford the “perfect” gift, remember: effort and attention beat interest payments every time.



Guilt Spending Is Still Emotional Spending

Ever feel like you have to buy something big because your partner went all out last year? Or because you missed last Christmas with family? That's guilt, not generosity.

Try This Instead: Talk about it. Set expectations upfront. Agree that the holidays don't have to be a financial performance. Give each other permission to not go overboard.

You Can't Buy "Holiday Spirit" (No Matter What Instagram Says)

A tree full of gifts doesn't mean you had a good year. Sometimes, the best holidays are the low-key ones — staying in, cooking together, skipping the chaos, and saving your money for something that actually matters to you both.

Here's the truth: the holidays are supposed to make you feel grateful, not broke. If your relationship is strong, you don't need to spend to prove it. The best gift you can give each other is financial peace — and maybe agreeing that love doesn't come with a receipt.

So this year? Skip the flex, ditch the debt, and focus on what's real: time, laughter, and not waking up to a maxed-out card on January 2nd.

Cosmic roles:

What Kind of Partner Are You According to Your Zodiac Sign?

By: Mariamely Leoni

Love is a dance—and astrology tells us what kind of partner you are on that dance floor. Are you the fierce protector, the steady builder, the emotional healer, or the visionary dreamer? Every zodiac sign holds a unique romantic role based on five astrological keys: your sign's symbolic animal, body part, element, motivation, and group interaction style.

Understanding these cosmic roles doesn't just help you love better—it helps you love smarter. By embracing your sign's natural tendencies (and spotting your partner's), you can unlock a deeper connection, greater self-awareness, and yes—more harmony in the chaos of coupledness.

Knowing your cosmic role isn't about fitting into a box—it's about understanding the essence of how you love.

Whether you lead, support, adapt, or inspire, there is magic in the way you show up for your relationships. Embrace your cosmic blueprint, and remember: your partner has a role too. The more you both honor your nature, the more harmonious your dance becomes.

So, are you the one who leads, adapts, or holds the emotional glue? Let's break it down sign by sign:



Aries – The Trailblazer

You lead with passion, courage, and a fierce sense of independence. Aries partners are bold, spontaneous, and direct. You initiate love like a warrior charging into battle—fearless and full of fire. Your challenge? Slowing down enough to truly connect.



Taurus – The Builder

You create stability in love. Taurus partners are reliable, sensual, and loyal, with a deep need for comfort and routine. You hold the relationship together like a strong, silent anchor. Your challenge? Embracing change and emotional flexibility.



Gemini – The Connector

You bring words, curiosity, and laughter into your relationships. Gemini partners are playful, expressive, and quick-witted. You thrive on mental stimulation and emotional variety. Your challenge? Staying present and grounded.



Cancer – The Nurturer

You lead with love and protect with empathy. Cancer partners are emotionally deep, sensitive, and intuitive. You hold the emotional world of the relationship. Your challenge? Letting go of the past and trusting vulnerability.



Leo – The Lover

You bring flair, loyalty, and generosity to love. Leo partners are expressive, affectionate, and protective. You give with grandeur and expect to be cherished. Your challenge? Embracing humility and sharing the spotlight.



Virgo – The Caretaker

You support your partner with acts of service and thoughtful details. Virgo partners are practical, humble, and quietly devoted. You nurture with organization and a desire to help. Your challenge? Letting go of perfectionism.



Libra – The Harmonizer

You balance, beautify, and negotiate in love. Libra partners are graceful, charming, and relationship-oriented. You bring diplomacy and joy to any union. Your challenge? Making firm decisions and embracing conflict when needed.



Scorpio – The Transformer

You dive deep and love intensely. Scorpio partners are passionate, loyal, and private. You create powerful emotional bonds that evolve over time. Your challenge? Allowing emotional transparency and trusting others fully.



Sagittarius – The Explorer

You bring adventure, humor, and a thirst for knowledge into relationships. Sagittarius partners are light-hearted, spontaneous, and philosophical. You expand love through experience. Your challenge? Committing fully to the here and now.



Capricorn – The Architect

You build love with discipline, intention, and long-term vision. Capricorn partners are dependable, driven, and emotionally reserved. You lead with quiet strength. Your challenge? Letting go of control and asking for support.



Aquarius – The Visionary

You love unconventionally and think outside the box. Aquarius partners are quirky, idealistic, and fiercely independent. You need space to grow and ideas to explore. Your challenge? Staying emotionally present in the moment.



Pisces – The Healer

You love with softness, depth, and intuitive care. Pisces partners are romantic, empathetic, and spiritually open. You create sacred emotional space in relationships. Your challenge? Setting boundaries and protecting your own energy.



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