

Dating as a Married Couple

Recently, my husband and I joined a small group at our church which centered is based on David and Claudia Arp's book, "10 Great Dates to Energize your Marriage." As you can imagine, all of the husbands in this group were there because us wives had strongly suggested they be present. The idea of the book is for each spouse to read a chapter, and then go out on a date together. Each chapter focuses on various marriage "issues," such as better communication, being an encourager of one another, and finding ways to be more romantic.

The first chapter of the book had some questions for each spouse to fill out. These questions encouraged you to remember when you first met your spouse and how you felt about them. On your date, you are supposed to discuss your answers. My husband and I had a wonderful evening remembering our courtship.

Do you remember your first date with your spouse? Chances are you do. Our first date was in a Japanese restaurant in Marietta. I remember the butterflies in my stomach as my future husband (not that I knew that at the time) told me about his Air Force experience while he was stationed in Japan. He loved Japan and said it was a far cry from his boyhood days in the tiny town of Presque Isle, Maine. Until he joined the Air Force at the age of 17, he lived in quite a Mayberryish town, unaware of what the "real" world was like. In fact, the first time he ate a Red Lobster was in Tokyo, Japan!

Being a food person even way back then, I was captivated as my date explained to me about the art of sushi and encouraged me to try numerous authentic Japanese dishes. I was extremely impressed when he conversed with the waitress in Japanese. He explained that he loved the Japanese culture and learned the language while stationed there for six years.

We stayed at that restaurant for hours, talking as if we had known each other our whole lives. I will never forget giving him my telephone number and hoping he would call. I had driven my own car---meeting him at the restaurant after work. Clearly smitten, I drove home from our date hoping and praying that he would call me the next day and ask me out again. I remember wondering what I would do if he did not feel the same way. I was terrified of the thought. Yes, I had it bad. When I arrived home, I heard my answering machine beeping. To my surprise and delight, there was a message from my future spouse. He thanked me for the evening and ended his message by telling me to have "sweet dreams." My husband says I made that up since he does not remember saying it. But he DID say it! We women never forget things like that, do we?

After almost 16 years of marriage, I can honestly say that my husband is still my best friend. Of course we have problems just like everybody else, but one of our biggest problems is making sure we carve out time to be alone together. The children, work, and other activities often threaten to overtake our lives and too often we tend to neglect our partner first.

Whether you are a newlywed or a couple that has been married for decades, I highly recommend the Arp's book! Valentine's Day is just around the corner, and this book would make a terrific gift for either spouse. If nothing else, the book may serve as a reminder to you and your spouse of the importance of dating. And who knows, you may just feel those butterflies again.