

10 CONVERSATIONS

WEDDING GIFT-BASKET

Jeremy John of London's A-Channel morning show asked me to assemble a wedding gift-basket based on my book, *The 10 Conversations You Must Have Before You Get Married (And How To Have Them)*. Below are the items along with explanations of where in the book they came from.

1. A nice bottle of wine, a nice bottle of single-malt Scotch, and the required stemware for both. W(h)ine time is 20 minutes the two of you set aside each day to sit down, have a favourite beverage, and talk to each other about your day. During this time you each share the personal details, the small setbacks or success that each day typically brings. In so doing, the two of you apply "relationship glue" to your partnership: the regular sharing of personal and intimate experiences.

2. A wall calendar. Rule 15 of "The 15 Rules Of Good Communication" is having a "How we doin'?" conversation every three to four months. How we doin' conversations are pretty much what they sound like: the two of you sit down at a predetermined time and place where you won't be distracted or interrupted and talk about what is working and not working between the two of you. Typically these conversations only happen when a couple makes a specific commitment to engage in this very effective and profoundly powerful relationship building tool and consequently scheduling these conversations on a well-displayed calendar dramatically increases the chances these conversations actually take place.

3. A pad of Post-its and a three-minute egg-timer. Sometimes what are supposed to be important discussions end up sounding more like monologues. To remind both members of a couple that they need to take turns when they talk there is the "power of the Post-it." When a topic becomes contentious, tear off a Post-it and pass it back and forth: whoever has the Post-it gets to talk for three minutes (hence the timer) while the other person focuses on listening. At the end of three minutes the Post-it get passed to the other person and their three minutes start. As silly as it might sound, this communication technique dramatically reduces conflict by forcing each person to be efficient and succinct while talking and focused and attentive while listening. The "power of the Post-it" is Rule 5 of the 15 Rules of Good Communication.

4. Gift certificates for selected movies. Learning about each other can be a lot of fun. One of the more enjoyable activities a couple can engage in is to watch movies that stimulate important relationship conversations. Each of *The 10 Conversations* chapters has a movie recommendation (sometimes more than one) and the movies have been specifically chosen for their potential to stimulate talks about an important relationship issues.

5. A copy of *The 10 Conversations You Must Have Before You Get Married (and How to Have Them)*

Any couple, regardless of the length of time they have been together, can benefit from the book, but I did write it from the perspective of helping couple as early in their relationships as possible. While it's never too late to get started on good communication, as my 7 year old explained to me many years ago, "sooner is gooder!"