



Marriage Discovery Questions

It's best when these are done just one or a couple at a time - don't overwhelm!

Guidelines:

Creating an environment that welcomes intimate communication is extremely important, as these questions intentionally create vulnerability. There are empowering ways to talk and disempowering ways to talk. Empowering ways help you make a genuine connection; disempowering ways create walls of defense. As you ask questions of each other, keep these guidelines in mind:

1. Since these are for the purpose of discovery, when one person talks, the other doesn't correct or challenge. If you need more explanation or have a question, agree on a signal: Raise your finger, raise your hand, sneeze uncontrollably, pretend you're having a heart attack. Be dull or creative, but be courteous.
2. If one person says, "I'm not ready for that one yet," ask once, "Are you sure? I really want to know." But don't press. Take intimacy at a pace both of you can manage. It's OK to think about revisiting a topic, but some things require time and space, even with a loving spouse.
3. When one of you says, "I feel..." the other absolutely may not communicate (through words, looks, or body language) "Don't feel that way." A better response is, "What can I do (about me or the situation) to help you to not feel that way?"
4. When sharing how you feel, try to not assign motive - or tell the other how they feel. "I feel you don't care." Rather say, "I feel uncared for when you....."
5. No sarcasm towards the other. It's a weapon with a sharp point. And it doesn't help to say "I was just kidding." Usually sarcasm indicates that there's really some anger present.
6. Be aware of your nonverbal communication (facial expression and body language) - It often makes the wrong statement -- or it tells the truth when your words don't. Hold hands, make eye contact, and try to genuinely show your spouse that this time is important to you and you are truly present.
7. Unless loudness is a strong trait of your ethnic origins or spouse is hard of hearing, try not to raise your voice. It can easily shut down your partner's ability to feel safe or close.



Level One

- What are the three best memories you have of us together before we were married?
- What things that I do for you refresh you the most?
- Who are the heroes or people you look up to in the area of relationships?
- What was a favourite date with me? Why?
- What is your favourite story you like to tell about me?
- It would make me a better person if I were more like you in the way you _____.
- I feel that our relationship is unique in the following way:
- Something about me that you hope never changes:
- What are the most enjoyable things you like doing with me?
- In what areas should I feel more confident about myself?
- What outrages you most about the world?
- When do you feel most glad that you married me?
- Do I honour you around others? How?
- How did your parents discipline you through the years? Was it ever inappropriate? Was it too lax?
- Are you comfortable with the affection we show each other in public?
- What is the best compliment I could give you?
- Do I say "I love you" too much? Too little? Just enough? Would you prefer a different way to express my love?
- When you're daydreaming, what things do you imagine yourself doing?



- What are five different nights out we've never taken before? (an opera, a play, a hockey game) Let's pick one and, within the next month, plan to do it. Just so we can experience something unique together.

Level Two

- What do you think your spiritual gifts are? How can you develop them? How can I help you?
- Am I generally optimistic in your opinion or pessimistic? How do you feel about that? How does it affect you?
- How have you been affected by (choose the statement that applies): our waiting to have kids, not having children yet, or becoming parents early in our marriage?
- What would you like to do that we're unable to do now due to lack of money, time or ability? How can we dream together in that direction?
- Of everything you've done, what makes you feel most proud/satisfied?
- What words or actions on my part throughout the day or week really set the stage for a great time of lovemaking?
- Do you ever wish I were more spontaneous? More structured? In what way?
- What types of little gifts go a long way toward showing you how much I'm thinking about you?
- Name five things you have always been able to count on me for.
- If we were to read a book together, what kind would it be? Could we make the time?
- Do you believe being involved in church is important? What do you like most about our church?
- What can we do to grab 15 minutes of uninterrupted talk daily -- when we're both awake enough to pay attention?
- Recall and describe a time in our marriage when you felt especially alive and joyful?



- At what times do you need assurance of my love the most? How can I best express my love and support?
- What is your most favourite thing I have ever done for you?
- What do you think is the best aspect of our relationship?
- When do you find me most attractive?
- What is something I could do more or less of to help increase our marital satisfaction and commitment?
- In what ways have I helped you experience personal growth?
- What is something we did when we were dating that you would like to do again?
- Where is a place that we visited when we were dating, that you would like to visit again?
- Describe our dating before marriage, as if you were describing it to our grandchildren.
- Describe the thoughts or feelings you had just moments before our marriage proposal.

Level Three

- What attracted you to me? Is attraction still important?
- What could I do more of, to make it safe for you to share your thoughts or feelings with me?
- What could I do less of, to make it safer for you to share your thoughts or feelings with me?
- What are some of the distractions that are intruding on our friendship, and how might we protect our friendship from those distractions?
- Are you satisfied with how I make decisions about what to buy and what bills to pay?



- Are there issues we seem to have trouble discussing? Can we make note of them and think about why they are difficult and what we might do to help us communicate about them?
- What helps you grow closer to God? What things interfere with your spiritual life?
- Do I sometimes make a joke out of things you don't think are funny? How much does that bother you? Would you like me to change?
- When do you judge yourself the most harshly? How should I respond when that happens? Do I ever judge you harshly? If so, in what situations?
- Do I forgive you by my actions as well as my words? How does my response impact you?
- Does anything frighten/seriously concern you about the future?
- What are a few things your parents were right about after all? What were they wrong about?
- When we argue, is it about little things or big things? How do you feel about that?
- What experiences have you had that allow you to believe in a kind and loving God? Is that anything in the world that causes you to doubt this?
- Have I ever done anything to "crush your spirit" (take the wind out of your sails; put your emotions on hold; make you wonder if I'm the same person you married)?
- The best ways to remind me to pray for you and our family more often are...
- Do you ever sense that I sometimes put conditions on my love and affection for you? When do you feel the most insecure about my love?
- Name 10 things you think I'm really good at.
- Peace is a big theme in the Bible, yet the pressure most families face often make peace elusive. What could we do so our marriage and family experience more peace?



Level Four

- Among our married friends, what are some of the good things about their marriages you'd like to emulate?
- What do you think prevents couples from being best friends? What three things could we do to become better friends?
- What gives you the motivation to get up in the morning? Do I help or hinder your "zest for life"?
- Are there some predictable things about me that you love and are there some predictable things that I do that really bug you?
- It's normal to occasionally feel "trapped" in marriage. Has there ever been a time when you've felt this way in our marriage? What is going on when you feel this way?
- Is there any emotional "baggage" we've brought to our marriage that needs to be unpacked? Do you think the process will require professional help?
- Have you ever felt that one of us takes on an unfair measure of responsibility in our home (in areas like finances, emotional stability, household matters, parenting, faith)? Is this a consistent problem, or do responsibilities seem to shift only at certain times?
- Are you ever envious of what others have or are doing with their lives?
- When do you feel the most distant from me? Does that feeling cause you to want to draw closer, farther away, or stay where you are until the feeling goes away?
- What do you think were your top three expectations of marriage before we were married? How have they adjusted since marriage?
- What three things can we start doing to become better friends?
- Whose responsibility is it to keep up the courtship in our marriage? In what ways could I "court" you more?
- What do you think "marital intimacy" means?
- In what five ways can I inspire you to do and be your best?



- When I disagree with you, how can I best say so without making you feel stupid? Do I ever do that?

Level Five

- What do you think are warning signs that a marriage is in jeopardy?
- Does sex bring us closer together, or does closeness eventually lead to sex? Do you appreciate one over the other?
- Is sex helpful, comforting, difficult, or anxiety-producing for you when you are under stress at work? When you're grieving? Sad? How can our intimacy at those times be at its best for you?
- Do you think we could be more imaginative in regard to sexual expression? Do you have any suggestions or ideas?
- Finish these sentences:
 - Our love life gets boring when.....
 - New positions wouldn't help our sex life as much as.....
 - I find I most want to make love to you when.....
- What "unexpected" things might I do to spice up our relationship?
- What is the difference between emotional intimacy and physical intimacy? Which do we share more of?
- I would describe romance as:
- I believe you would describe romance as:
- Right now, the following obstacles block our way to making romance a priority in our marriage are:
- The three most romantic things you have done for me:
- I would like you to do more of these romantic things in the future:
- I would like you to do less of these romantic things in the future:



- In leading up to love-making, I appreciate when you:
- When we are making love, I become discouraged when:
- When we are making love, I like for you to:
- Think about last week. Can you remember something I said about you that was positive? Can you think of any negative words? Which kind stays with you the most?
- Do we honor God with the way we spend, give, and save our money? How could we do better?
- What past mistakes have I made that you believe I haven't apologized for, if any? What about these particular mistakes is hard for you to forget?

If You Have Children

- Are we showing enough affection toward each other around the kids?
- Do I honour you around the children? How?
- In what ways is our marriage a good example for our children?
- Are we being consistent in our discipline with each of our children? (Not are we disciplining each the same - since they are unique and often require different approaches)
- What have our children added to our lives?
- What about parenting did you expect? What did you definitely NOT expect?
- How would we want our children to describe our marital friendship?
- What do you like best about being a parent? What do you like least?
- Do you remember the wonder, the thankfulness we had when our children were born? What would it take for us to feel that way more often about our kids?
- What have you learned about yourself through being a parent? What have you learned about me as you've watched me as a parent?



- What five things could we do over the next three years to encourage our children to own their faith instead of “borrowing” ours? Schedule them into your calendars, if possible.
- Sometimes the thought of taking a weekend away from our kids is tough, and how about four to seven days away? What conditions have to be met in order for us to spend that much time alone? Let’s talk through these points:
 - How much money will we need? Where can we afford to go?
 - When can we both arrange time off from work?
 - Who do we trust to watch our kids for that long?
 - What can we tell each other so we don’t feel guilty about leaving our kids?