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Date Eight of Gottman Eight Dates

John and Julie Gottman, psychologists and founders of the Gottman Love Lab, have been studying how to win at love for over forty years. After observing thousands of couples, they know the areas in a couple's life that cause the most struggle. Through these eight dates, they lead you through the essential conversations that will give you the best chance at a fulfilling and connected relationship.

The Date: Dreams

Conversation Topic

What are our deepest dreams? How do we help each other fulfill dreams? How do we dream together?

Preparation

Reflect on what honoring each other's dreams means to you. Complete the exercise called "Dream Levels" and be prepared to bring your circles with three dreams listed in them to the date. Write down the dreams you're drawn to, be prepared to tell the story behind each of your dreams, and share how it will feel to you to fulfill each dream.

Location

Find a place that inspires you and inspires your dreams. Have your date at dawn or at sunset where you can see the horizon. Anywhere with a beautiful view. Find a place that is inspiring or aspirational in some way.

Suggestion

If there is a place that is important to a dream you share (buying a house in a particular neighborhood or opening a bakery in a certain commercial district), then go to this place that is a part of your dreams for your date.

At-Home Options: Have the conversation on a blanket under the stars on your rooftop or in your backyard. Make a wish on a star as you discuss each dream.

Bring

You should bring your completed exercise and three dreams written in the circles. If you want, you can bring a piece of paper and pen and draw your own circles and write in your dreams. Be prepared to discuss both exercises. Bring an open mind and heart.

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Troubleshooting

- Refrain from contradicting your partner's dream; do not say it will never happen, question it, or belittle it.
- Don't immediately jump into practicalities until you fully understand the dream, because there's no faster way to kill it or cause your partner to close up. It may be impractical but don't say it.
- Remember that you can't know the future or what's possible.
- Do ask big questions to understand your partner's dream, including anything in their childhood that has given birth to this dream.
- Ask for the underlying meaning to any dream.

Open-Ended Questions for Your Date Conversation

After discussing your exercise, ask each other the following questions:

- Did you have any dreams for yourself when you were a child?
- Do you think your parents fulfilled their dreams?
- Did your parents support you in fulfilling your childhood dreams?
- Why is the dream in your innermost circle so important to you?
- Does it relate to your childhood history in some way? How so?
- Is there an underlying purpose for fulfilling your dream?
- How would you feel if this dream was fulfilled? If it wasn't?
- Tell me more about your two other dreams.

Affirming Our Future Together

Take turns reading this affirmation out loud to each other. Maintain eye contact while reciting.

"I commit to fully exploring and understanding your dreams and to doing one thing to support one of your dreams within the next six months."

Adapted from: *Eight Dates: Essential Conversations for a Lifetime of Love*. By: John Gottman, Julie Schwartz Gottman, Doug Abrams, and Rachel Carlton Abrams