



HEART-TO-HEART
CARVERSACTIONS
WITH YOUR
SPOUSE

(1)

FINANCES

(2)

PARENTING

(3)

INTIMACY

(4)

IN-LAWS

(5)

CONFLICT RESOLUTION





HEART-TO-HEART
CARVERSATIONS
WITH YOUR
SPOUSE

“We need to talk”.

These can be the 4 most intimidating words for a spouse to hear, as they are often a precursor to a problem or conflict rearing its head in the marriage. But at the same time, research tells us that good communication skills play an important role in every healthy and happy marriage.

How can you keep positive communication flowing between you and your spouse even in your hectic, fast-paced lifestyle as you balance work, parenting and other responsibilities? Start in the car! Grab the precious moments in your daily drives, to connect with your spouse.

Asking a thought-provoking question serves as an invitation to your spouse to share their innermost feelings. Take the time to genuinely listen to what they have to say. There is a lot more to being married than talking about your children. The following are 5 areas we believe every couple should be talking about. Here are some conversation starters to give you a jumpstart:

(1)

FINANCES

Money and managing finances is one of the most common areas of disagreement for couples. However, it can be resolved if both parties are committed to communicating with each other. Remember that you are on the same team and agree that you both want a certain amount of security and a certain amount of freedom. The amounts may not be the same, but the goals are. Above all, emphasise the health of your relationship over the details of accounting. Understanding the deeper motivations behind both your spending habits is important.

CONVERSATION STARTERS:

Do you feel like we may need to get help setting up a household budget?

If we could take a day off work together and had a \$1,000 budget, how would you plan our day and spend the money?

What do you feel are luxuries versus necessities?

If you had a million dollars to spend on anything, what would you spend it on and why?

What is the one thing you feel we're spending too much on?

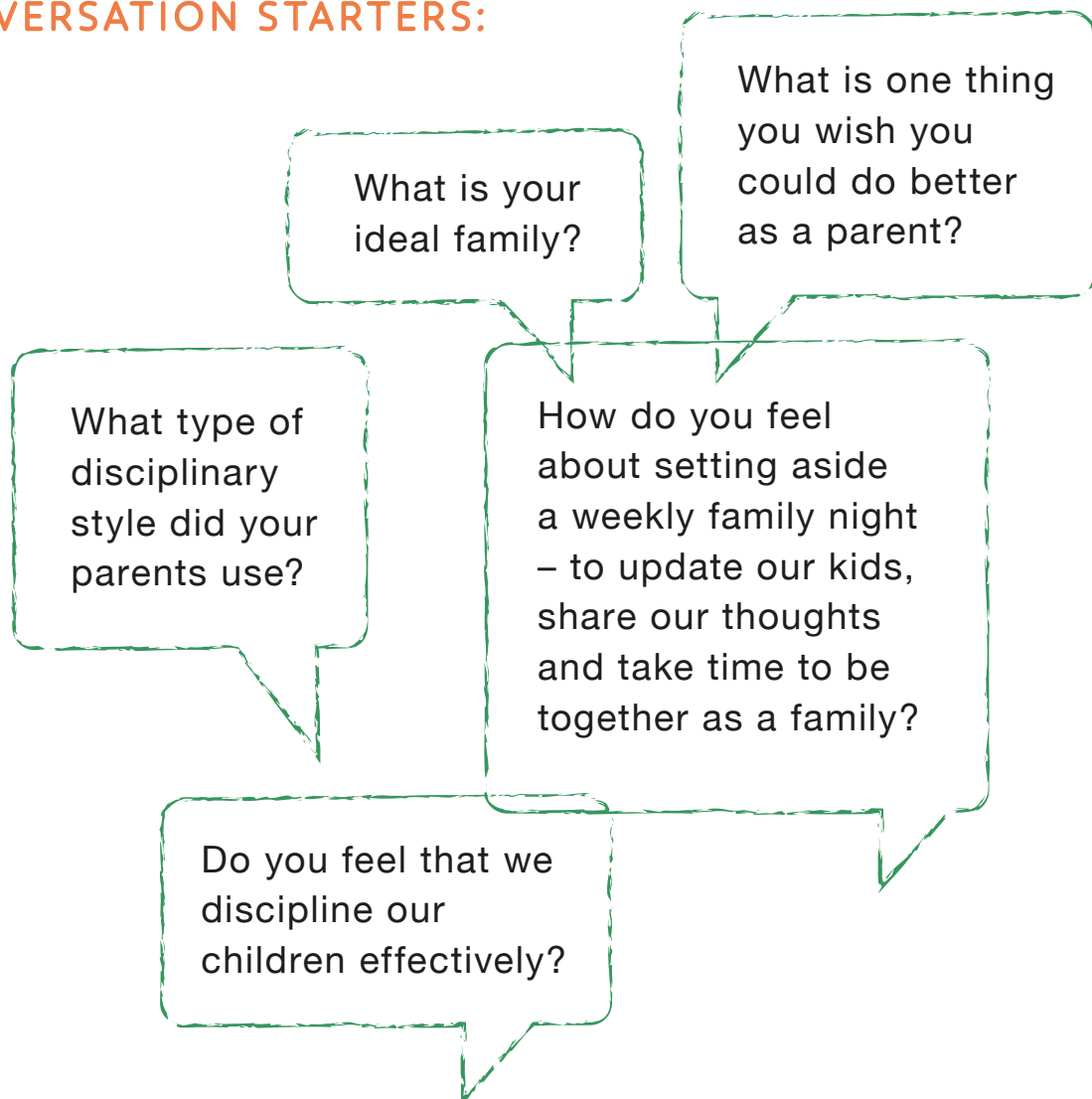
(2)

P A R E N T I N G

Parenting is a challenging yet incredibly rewarding journey for any couple. From the moment you carry your bundle of joy home from the hospital, both you and your spouse will find yourselves having to make a dizzying array of decisions that will impact your child's well-being.

As you navigate the roles and responsibilities of parenthood, having a strong understanding of each other's goals and aspirations for your family is crucial. Knowing and respecting one another's parenting views and style will create family harmony, and help you to present a united front to your children, creating a secure and loving environment for them.

CARVERSAION STARTERS:



(3)

INTIMACY

Experts emphasise the importance of emotional intimacy in forging a healthy marriage – it has been said that sex begins outside the bedroom. Poor communication, unmet expectations and resentment are factors that hinder genuine intimacy between spouses. It is important to remember that we can only understand our spouse's needs by spending time with them – the goal is to discover your differences, encourage one another and draw closer along your marital journey.

CARVERSAION STARTERS:

Which of my accomplishments are you most proud of?

What expression of affection from me makes you feel most deeply loved and understood?

Name 3 activities you'd like to explore with me this coming year.

What is your favourite way to spend time with me?

Which experience during our honeymoon was the most meaningful or memorable to you?

(4)

I N - L A W S

It's nice to live within driving distance of relatives, but the proximity can be both a blessing and a challenge! In-laws can be a great source of support to your marriage, but their good intentions can sometimes come across as meddling. How can you find that delicate balance between your independence and their involvement? Work with your spouse to respectfully and firmly set boundaries with both sets of in-laws. Having a deeper understanding of your in-laws will also give you insight into your spouse's character and personality. We are shaped by the families we grew up in after all.

CARVERSAION STARTERS:

Share one childhood experience with me that I have not previously heard of.

What is one area you feel we need to respectfully draw boundaries with our own parents?

How would you describe your parents' marriage?

Think of a time your parents apologised to each other. What do you think you've learnt from them doing so, especially in front of you?

What is one immediate and real way we can show greater care and concern to our parents?

(5)

CONFLICT RESOLUTION

Unresolved conflicts can put the brakes on even the most promising relationships. Couples need good communication in order to grow closer to each other - talking openly with each other is a learned skill that you will both need to constantly work at.

When communicating with your spouse, remember that your ears are your most important tools. All the talking in the world won't help if you can't truly see each other's point of view. Instead of telling them what you think about a problem or situation, ask what they think, and then listen until you understand. Talk calmly and caringly, until you come up with a working solution. Sometimes that means compromising; other times it means giving in altogether.

The solution you arrive at isn't nearly as important as your willingness to talk it through.

CONVERSATION STARTERS:

What is a recent example of how you compromised on an issue, making our marriage less stressful?

What helps you to cool off most in the midst of a heated conflict?

How do you feel about the way we resolve conflicts and disagreements in our relationship?

What is one area of our marriage that you would like to improve in the next year?

What is one piece of unfinished business that we may have (it may be in the area of finances, in-laws, parenting or anything else). What is holding you back from resolving or completing it?

Like what you just read?

Visit

WWW.FAMILIES.ORG.AU

to receive inspiration for
family life and practical insights.



This booklet is provided as an informational resource only. Use of this booklet by any person, group or organization is not an endorsement of that person, group or organization by Focus on the Family. This booklet may not be abridged or edited in any way, unless prior written permission is sought from Focus on the Family Australia.

Used under licence. Original works by © 2015 Focus on the Family Singapore. All rights reserved.