

## HOW TO STAY CONNECTED WITHOUT SHARED INTERESTS

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Do you and your spouse share interests or hobbies? If so, that's great! This relationship strength will help you stay connected and nurture your friendship throughout your marriage. But what if your interests don't converge? Are you doomed to drift apart? We don't think so. In fact, maintaining separate interests and your individual identity can be good for your relationship. ***It's all about balance.*** Here are some tips to stay connected when you don't share many interests.

### **Establish a daily connection ritual.**

If you're running in opposite directions due to busy schedules or to pursue separate hobbies, having a consistent time to connect daily can give you security. Maybe be sure you go to bed at the same time together every night or always drink a cup of coffee together in the morning. Whatever it is, find something that allows you to touch base, share about your day, and center yourselves as a couple. Be intentional with this priority.

### **Check-in regularly.**

Even if you're both generally satisfied with the time you spend together, don't assume that this is always the case. Individual and relationship needs change, so make it a habit to check in with each other to see if either of you crave some quality couple time. Checking in helps you to stay on the same page, which is especially helpful while moving through the seasons of life.

### **Go for quality over quantity.**

Balance doesn't always mean that you need to match the actual amount of time you spend on separate interests to the amount of time together. Instead, focus on the *quality* of time together. If you're fully present with each other, it doesn't have to take a long time. Figure out and talk about what helps you both feel in tune with each other.

### **Lean into what you do have in common.**

Maybe you don't share any specific pastimes, but you probably have a few things in common. Capitalize on those things. If you share a sense of humor, go see a comedy show or watch one on TV. Big fans of a certain band or musician? Go see them live. Both coffee snobs? Date your way through all the coffee shops in the city. Whatever things you have in common, make it special – let it be your thing.

### **Be open to trying new things.**

Just because you don't currently share interests, doesn't mean you never will. Keep an open mind when it comes to trying new things together or re-try an activity that previously didn't click. You never know when you'll find something you both love. Not only that but trying new things together gives you a burst of feel-good endorphins, like when you were first dating.

Some couples don't have lots of hobbies they enjoy together. If that's you, it doesn't mean there's something wrong. In fact, nurturing individual senses of identity alongside your identity as a couple can be a major strength. The key is to be cognizant of whether you feel balanced in your level of quality time and intentional about staying connected in other ways.