

PICNIC

date

GROUND RULES

- ▶ **CONFLICT-FREE** No talking about money, kids, or anything that might cause an argument.
- ▶ **TECH-FREE** Put away the phones. Enjoy the outdoors! This picnic is your chance to escape.

STARTERS

- ▶ **HUSBAND:** Be the apple of her eye! Choose the main course for the picnic. You have three minutes to decide. Don't reveal your choice!
- ▶ **WIFE:** Be a peach! Pick the location of your picnic. You have three minutes. Don't reveal the location.
- ▶ **RULE:** Neither of you are allowed to talk during the three minutes. Mystery and suspense are crucial! Cue up your favorite playlist to enjoy on your date.

Once the three minutes are up...

- ▶ **HUSBAND:** Head to the location you plan to pick up your meal.
- ▶ **WIFE:** You have five tries to guess to where your husband is going. If you guess correctly before you arrive, he has to do one of the following:
 - ▶ Speak with an accent as he orders and pays for the food.
 - ▶ Dance for 30 seconds outside the food pickup.
 - ▶ Complete a 10-minute chore of your choice tomorrow.

MAIN COURSE

Once the food has been purchased ...

- ▶ **WIFE:** Head to the location you've chosen for your picnic.
- ▶ **HUSBAND:** You have five tries to guess where she is going. If you guess correctly before arriving, she has to do one of the following:
 - ▶ Sing a verse and chorus of the song of your choice.
 - ▶ Complete a 10-minute chore of your choice tomorrow.
 - ▶ Tell you, "You are the Top Chef of all husbands. You are completely in tune with my every thought. If only I were that in tune with you." Please refrain from the use of sarcasm, eye rolls, and deep sighs.

MAIN COURSE (cont'd)



Once you set up your picnic, make sure you look for ants. Nothing is more annoying at a picnic or in a marriage than ANTS. **ANTS stands for Automatic Negative Thoughts.** Most of our thoughts are automatic. When those thoughts are automatically negative, they are automatically damaging to our marriage. The great news is that you can crush those ANTS.

You can determine your thoughts instead of your thoughts determining you. Read about the ANTS; then tell your spouse the top two **YOU** struggle with the most.

Step 1:

IDENTIFY YOUR ANTS

1. **"ALWAYS" AND "NEVER" THINKING:** Using words like always, never, every time, everyone—making you feel doomed or stuck.
2. **FOCUSING ON THE NEGATIVE:** Only seeing the bad in a situation.
3. **FORTUNE TELLING:** Predicting the worst possible outcome in a situation.
4. **MIND READING:** Believing that you know what other people are negatively thinking, even though they haven't told you.
5. **THINKING WITH YOUR FEELINGS:** Believing negative feelings without ever questioning them.
6. **GUILTY THOUGHTS:** Using words like should, must, ought, have to—guilting yourself or others into changing.
7. **LABELING:** Attaching a negative label to yourself or someone else.
8. **PERSONALIZATION:** Assuming you are the cause of someone else's negative attitudes.
9. **BLAME:** Blaming someone else for your problems.

DESSERT

► **BOTH:** Think of the place your spouse would most likely want to have dessert. No talking! You have three minutes. Once you've decided, don't reveal the location. Countdown from three and shout your answers at the same time.

- If you both choose the same location, move toward that location.
- If you both choose different locations, move toward the place she picked. We know that's not fair. That's the point!
- As you have dessert, flirt. Think you don't know how? You do. At one time, you were so good at it, you talked the other person into marrying you. When the picnic is over, head for home and see where the night takes you.

Step 2:

IDENTIFY WHAT IS GREAT ABOUT YOUR SPOUSE

Below are fill-in-the-blanks for both of you to answer.

1. I think you made the totally right decision when you decided to _____.
2. The most beautiful thing that I have seen in you lately is _____.
3. The most excellent thing that has happened to us over the last few months is _____.
4. I just want you to know that I really appreciate the way we _____.
5. We'll still picnic together in 50 years because _____.

Step 3:

POST THIS VERSE SOMEWHERE YOU BOTH WILL SEE IT

"Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things."

PHILIPPIANS 4:8