

## **Conversations for Quarantined Couples**

*(Or Love in the time of Coronavirus)*

While these conversation starters refer to marriage frequently, they can be used by couples who are not married as well.

### **Living on an Oasis**

Your Sacred Story

Turning to One Another

Laughing Together

Caring for the Soul of Your Marriage

Your Marriage as a Lighthouse

### **Living on an Oasis**

During this time of quarantine and social distancing and working from home, couples find themselves living on an oasis. Strong loving relationships are intended to provide a couple an oasis of love and acceptance, a place of refreshment and renewal. At weddings, we pray for a couple *“that their home may be a haven of blessing and peace.”* (Book of Common Prayer, The Celebration and Blessing of Holy Matrimony)

But these days, home may not feel like a haven but instead the place where you are sapped and trapped. Stress can make us hyper-critical and sensitive to our beloved’s idiosyncrasies. Of course, financial and health concerns can become sources of deep and warranted stress.

The University of Virginia conducted a study on marriage and interviewed 3000 married couples, asking what factors made their marriage happy. Not surprisingly, acts of generosity ranked among the top five factors, but what was surprising was that husbands and wives reported being happily married not because their spouse was generous to them, but because they were generous to their spouse. The experience of being generous to the other had a stronger impact on the well-being of the marriage than did the experience of having your spouse do kind things for you. The benefits of generosity were particularly pronounced for couples with children at home.

Being generous to our beloved can reduce our own stress, too, combating feelings of isolation and depression, and the more directly we see our personal efforts impact someone else, the greater our sense of purpose and self-value.

We make our relationship/marriage/home an oasis of love and acceptance for ourselves and for our beloved when we ask,

**“What can I do today to make my beloved glad s/he is married/committed to me?”**

What a game-changer answering that question can be for a relationship.

Conversation:

Tell me about a time you felt especially glad:

- to claim me as belonging to you
- to be reunited with you
- to see that I appreciated something you did for me

What is one of the greatest acts of generosity you have received in your life from someone else (not me)? (The generosity may have included money but wasn't about money.)

Make a list of five to ten small things you could do for me that would make me feel cared for and appreciated. The tasks should be inexpensive, specific and require little time. (i.e.: Kiss me. Massage my feet. Bring me coffee. Ask me about my day. Call or text me during the day. Give me fifteen minutes of quiet space alone.)

*Each will be [to the other] like a hiding place from the wind,  
a covert from the tempest,  
like streams of water in a dry place,  
like the shade of a great rock in a weary land. Isaiah 32:2*