



Creative Love

10 WAYS TO BUILD A
FUN AND LASTING LOVE

New York Times Bestselling Authors

JEREMY & AUDREY ROLOFF

A PDF COMPANION TO THE AUDIOBOOK



CREATIVE WAYS TO COMMUNICATE “I LOVE YOU”

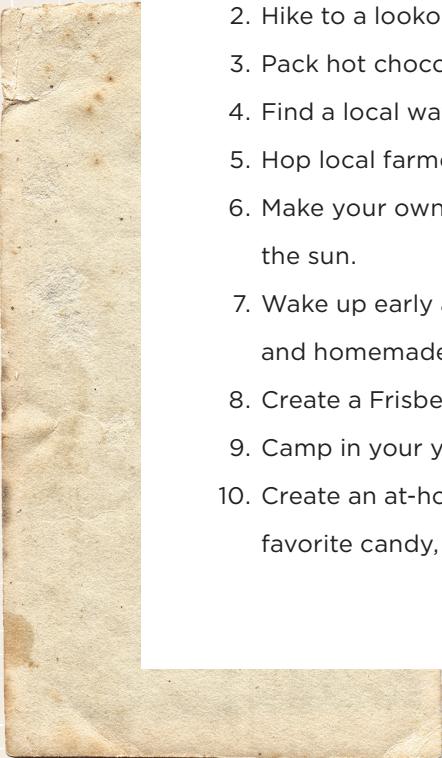
1. Make your own “mailbox affirmations.”
2. Send cards for every occasion.
3. Post something on social media that is a shameless brag about your beloved.
4. Send a ten-second voicemail or audio message in the middle of the day saying something you love about them.
5. Share a prayer journal or letter journal, passing it back and forth.
6. Sneak notes into unexpected places (in suitcases, in coat pockets, with morning coffee, with lunch, under a windshield wiper, etc.). You can even have someone else deliver the note for you, like a coworker or a friend.
7. Look in their eyes and say something simple, like “Hey, I like you.”
8. Text them a prayer for their day or call to pray for them over the phone.
9. Ask them when they felt most affirmed by you, and then genuinely repeat that affirmation as if saying, “I still believe that to be true.”
10. “Borrow” the words of a song or poem that resonate with how you feel or that represent a memory, and write those out in a note.





NOTHING VENTURED, NOTHING GAINED

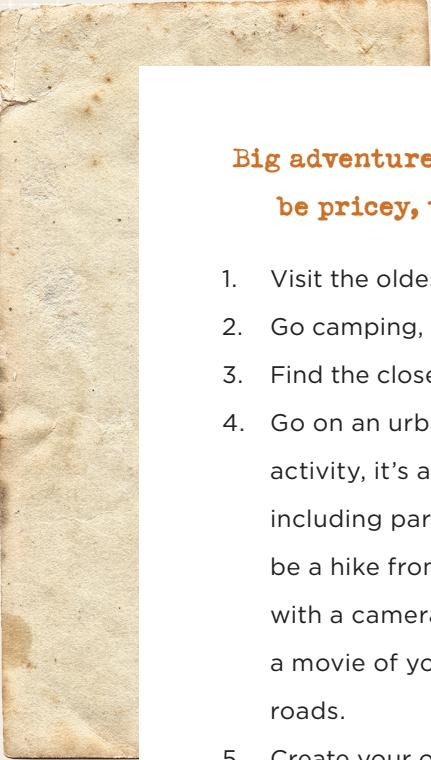
Mini adventures: \$ minimal cost; minimal travel

1. Have a picnic dinner.
 2. Hike to a lookout and hang a hammock.
 3. Pack hot chocolate thermoses and watch the sunset.
 4. Find a local watering hole or hot springs to play in.
 5. Hop local farmers markets.
 6. Make your own hot tub: get a kiddie pool and let it sit in the sun.
 7. Wake up early and watch the sunrise. (Bonus: bring coffee and homemade granola!)
 8. Create a Frisbee golf course.
 9. Camp in your yard or your living room.
 10. Create an at-home cinema: make popcorn, get your favorite candy, and build “recliner chairs” out of pillows.
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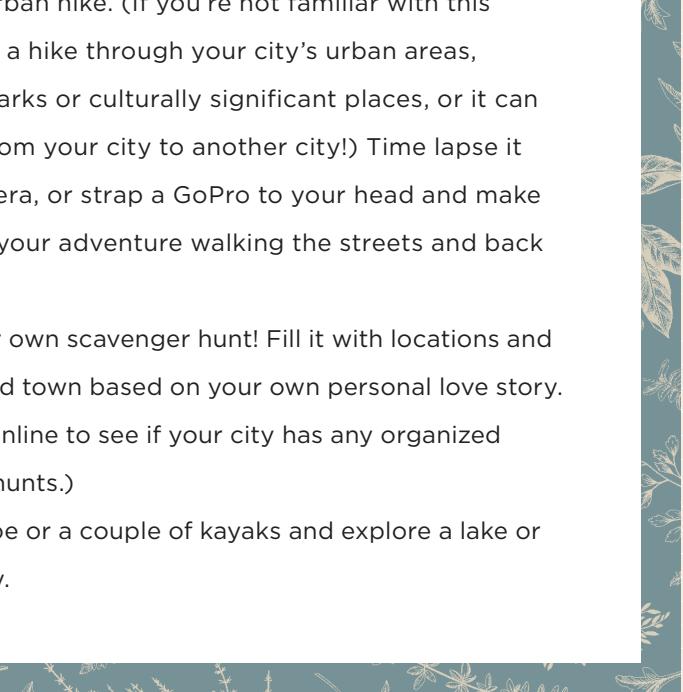
**Midlevel adventures: \$\$ some cost,
equipment, and creativity required; might
involve interactions with others**

1. Go for a bike ride or rent a tandem bike (and add a trailer if you have kids).
2. Take a dance or workout class.
3. Go to a U-pick berry or flower farm.
4. Search your city's hashtag on Instagram; find something awesome and go do it, then add your photo to the hashtag.
5. Go to a theme park or fair.
6. Float down a river on an inflatable tube.
7. Go geocaching or letterboxing.
8. Bake something together and deliver it to friends.
9. Take a day trip to a ski lodge (or another public place) just to people watch and eat greasy fries.
10. Take a local tour, go to a museum, or attend an open house.





Big adventures: \$\$\$ requires planning ahead; may be pricey, time consuming, or involve travel

1. Visit the oldest town in your state or country.
 2. Go camping, hiking, fishing, or exploring a natural area.
 3. Find the closest snow to you.
 4. Go on an urban hike. (If you're not familiar with this activity, it's a hike through your city's urban areas, including parks or culturally significant places, or it can be a hike from your city to another city!) Time lapse it with a camera, or strap a GoPro to your head and make a movie of your adventure walking the streets and back roads.
 5. Create your own scavenger hunt! Fill it with locations and clues around town based on your own personal love story. (Or check online to see if your city has any organized scavenger hunts.)
 6. Rent a canoe or a couple of kayaks and explore a lake or river nearby.
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Family Adventures: \$-\$\$\$ interactive; offers flexibility; requires more prep and packing

1. Go to a local Christmas tree farm or pumpkin patch.
2. Reach out to a local farmer or dairy to get a tour, see the animals, ride horses, or go for a mule ride.
3. Camp in the backyard and set up a backyard movie theater.
4. Split up and play walkie-talkie tag in your neighborhood. Half the family goes out and hides; the other half tries to find them with three clues via the walkie-talkies.
5. Build a giant slip-n-slide.
6. Play a game of “Bigger and Better.” Start with a penny, and offer it to someone in exchange for something better. Then whatever they give you, offer that for something better to the next person. Keep repeating until you end up with something worth keeping.





WHAT CAN YOU SHARE?

Is there an activity or date idea you've prematurely turned down because it was outside of your comfort zone? Are you missing out on an opportunity to grow in love because you were too stubborn to try something new? Take a risk. We dare you!

Take a Second Look

Which of your significant other's interests do you find it hard to get excited about? Pinpoint one of those subjects and consider doing the following:

- Watch YouTube videos about it.
- Learn the basic rules or guiding principles behind it.
- Read a newbie-friendly book about it.
- Find a person known for that activity and study them (like a musician, player, or famous spokesperson).
- Follow related accounts on social media.

Sit down with your partner and ask them some questions:

- What do you love about this?
- What are your favorite things about it?





- Who are your favorite people involved in it?
- What do you wish I knew about it?
- How has it shaped your life?
- How can we enjoy this together?

Make the Connection

Once you know a little more about the thing your partner loves, start to make connections. Ask yourself these questions:

- How does this interest reveal something that I already love about my person? Does it reveal anything new?
- How could this interest help me grow as an individual and help us grow as a couple?
- On the flip side, how could digging in my heels and holding on to my disinterest hurt or stifle our closeness?



YEAR BOXES

We started making Year Boxes our first year of marriage, but you could make boxes for seasons, school years, or any period of time that speaks to the rhythm of your life as a couple. We literally have boxes that are labeled “Year 1,” “Year 2,” and so on, filled with mementos from that year. Our first couple of Year Boxes were just cardboard shoe boxes with Sharpie scribbled on top to indicate the year, and we later upgraded to some nicer storage bins with labels that look a lot more organized. These boxes keep our tangible memories organized so we can easily reflect on them while also keeping us intentional about what we put in the box because only so much will fit.

Here are some ideas of what you can include in your own box of memories:

- Concert or conference tickets
- Wedding invites
- Special cards or letters
- Certificates or accolades
- Birthday cards
- Christmas cards you received that year
- Hospital bracelets
- Menus or coasters from special restaurants
- Souvenirs from places you traveled
- Gifts you received but can't use and don't want to throw away
- Polaroid pictures or photos you've printed
- Newspaper clippings
- Special things your children made





PLANNING FOR SPECIAL OCCASIONS

Look at your calendar. What special day is coming up? Consider sitting down with your love and making some intentional plans together.

Ask Questions

- What does this holiday represent to you?
- What do you value most about this day?
- What do you love or dislike about this day?
- What's your favorite old tradition involved in this day?
- What two things would make this day the most fun and meaningful for you?

Dream Together

- What new tradition can we start together?
- Choose a “big thing” to do (like going on an adventure, trying something new, or going to an event) and a “small thing” (like enjoying a quiet moment, exchanging letters or cards, or making a special treat).
- What activities reflect or celebrate the values this holiday represents for the two of you?

If you're feeling inspired, consider grabbing a calendar and going through all the holidays together, or find our printable holiday calendar at www.theroloffs.com/pages/creative-love-resources.



Evaluation: This exercise describes the current state of conflict in your relationship.

- What scenarios tend to spark conflict in our relationship?
- What tendencies do we have that elevate tension to turmoil?
Do we resist taking time to cool off? Do we resort to blaming, criticizing, or raising our voices?
- When we fight, do we fight fair? When does it become unfair?
- What coping mechanisms do we use when we are overwhelmed?
Do we stonewall and shut down? Leave the room? Threaten or attack?
- What do we do well when we are in conflict? Can you remember a time when your partner did something to defuse a situation that you appreciated or that you saw was a wise way to handle a conflict?

Creation: This exercise helps you determine “rules” to create an ideal state for handling conflict.

- What parameters or boundaries can we set so our fighting is healthy and productive rather than harmful and destructive?
- In light of the coping mechanisms above, can you “decode” for your partner what you need in that moment? For example, if



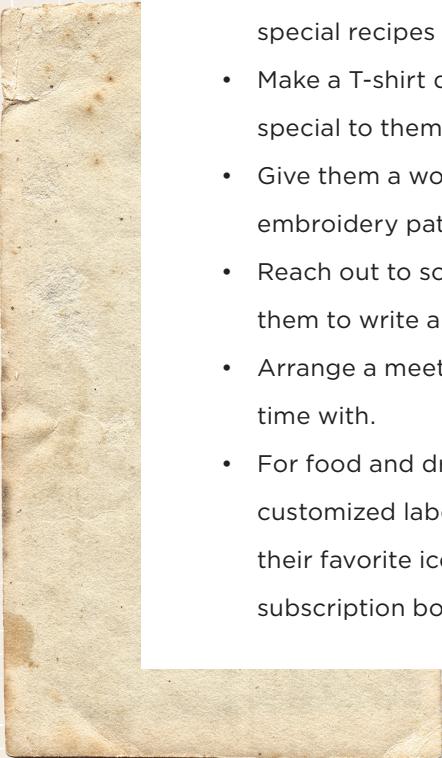
you leave the room, does that mean you really need space to process or that you want your partner to pursue you? How can you be clear in the moment about what you need?

- What can we do to speed the process of repentance, forgiveness, and reconciliation so we don't linger in hurt and dysfunction?
- Describe a healthy way you would like conflict to be worked out.





BUDGET-FRIENDLY GIFT IDEAS

- Find a first edition of their favorite book.
 - Frame your wedding vows (if you're married) or a special love note or memento.
 - Create a family recipe book; reach out to relatives to get special recipes to compile into a book.
 - Make a T-shirt quilt with T-shirts from places that are special to them.
 - Give them a work apron or cooking apron with a custom embroidery patch (Etsy is great for this).
 - Reach out to someone they respect or admire and ask them to write a letter or record a video for them.
 - Arrange a meeting with someone they want to spend time with.
 - For food and drink lovers, buy their favorite drink with customized labels (also easy to find on Etsy), have their favorite ice cream shipped to them, or get them a subscription box of their favorite consumable.
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- Find the coordinates of where you met, got engaged, or got married (or choose another special place), and have them engraved on jewelry or a leather key chain, or get them framed.
- Get simple, quick things you know they'll love: bring home their favorite dessert or get up early to get them their favorite coffee drink or pastry before they start their day.



DIY GIFT IDEAS

Here are a few DIY gifts we have made for each other over the years to get your creative juices flowing:

- Make a lantern lamp, a wooden bath tray, an essential oils organizer or shelf, or a hanging light-up sign with a mirror and picture.
- Create and organize a scrapbook, memory box, custom photo book (Chatbooks makes this super easy), or framed photo collage of all your photos together from that year.
- Make a giant kiss made out of Rice Krispies Treats.
- Frame your wedding vows, your family mission statement, a favorite quote, or lyrics to a special song.
- Make a movie or compilation of videos you've taken throughout the year (or spanning your whole relationship).



Giant Kiss Rice Krispies Treat

AUDREY: Credit goes to my mom for the delicious Rice Krispies recipe. I just added a creative flair to the presentation.

Ingredients

1 cup sugar	6 cups Rice Krispies
1 cup Karo corn syrup	$\frac{3}{8}$ cup semisweet chocolate chips
1 cup creamy peanut butter	$\frac{3}{8}$ cup butterscotch chips

1. Melt together sugar and Karo corn syrup on medium high heat.
2. Add in peanut butter. Stir until blended.
3. Turn off the heat and add in the Rice Krispies.
4. Line a large funnel with nonstick baking spray, then add the Rice Krispie mixture. Set it aside and let it cool.
5. Melt the chocolate chips and butterscotch chips in the same pan you used for the sugar and Karo corn syrup.
6. Once the Rice Krispies base has cooled and hardened, dump it onto a baking sheet or on wax paper and use your hands to shape it to resemble a Hershey's Kiss.
7. Then use a spatula to cover the kiss with the melted chocolate and butterscotch chip mixture. Let it cool.
8. Use a white strip of paper to write a message. Then place the strip of paper vertically against the top of the kiss.
9. Wrap the kiss in aluminum foil so that the paper is revealed through the top of the foil.





ELABORATE GIFT IDEAS

- Make a custom cologne/perfume (We love using essential oils).
 - Get tickets to Disneyland, a show, or a favorite band's concert, or a flight to a place they've always wanted to go.
 - Surprise them with a trip where they don't know the final location (Word of caution: make sure they like surprises, and consider whether they need to prepare beforehand!).
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- Buy a month of workout or dance classes, or get a membership to a studio or gym.
- Book a helicopter ride over your city.
- Fly someone in or coordinate for someone they don't see often to come to town.
- Make a boudoir book (for a wedding gift to your new spouse or for married couples).
- Plan a day full of their favorite things from beginning to end— favorite meals, drinks, people, places, hobbies, or activities.
- Reserve good seats at their favorite sporting event.
- Plan a spa day or whatever their version of pampering for a full day would be.



Gift Survey

JEREMY: Have you ever been nervous to give your person a gift because you think they might be disappointed or think it's a silly gift or not react the way you hope they will? Are you someone who “buys gift insurance”—saying things like “It’s okay if you don’t like it” before your person opens the gift? If so, we hope the questions below will help make you a more confident gift giver. Ask your love (and yourself) these questions so that you can give more creative, meaningful, life-giving gifts.

Ask each other (and take note!):

- Do you enjoy giving and receiving gifts?
- What is your love language and Enneagram number?
- What is the best gift you’ve ever received? Why?
- What is the worst gift you’ve ever received? Why?
- When do you expect or *want* to receive gifts and give gifts? (Birthdays? Anniversaries? Christmas? Valentine’s Day? Mother’s/Father’s Day? At random?)
- What does giving and receiving gifts look like in your family?
- Are you a “card for every occasion” person or a “gifts don’t need cards” person?
- How do you feel about surprises?

- Do you like others to be involved in your special day, or do you want to spend the day doing what you want or plan?

Questions to consider when giving a gift to help you affirm it is a good one (not all must apply, but these will help you in your selection):

- Will this gift meet a need or desire of theirs?
- Will they feel seen and known when receiving it?
- Is this something they already have or have something very similar?
- Will this be something they remember, cherish, or want to keep for a long time?
- Is it different from a gift you recently gave them?
- Does the gift align with a dream, desire, or passion they have?
- Does this gift apply to a particular event or thing happening in their life right now?
- How does this gift reflect the story we want to be telling?
- Does this gift reflect our shared goals and values?
- Does this gift reflect the fact that I've "bought in" to this person and all their likes or dislikes?



DATE NIGHT IDEAS

Winter: Heartwarming and Festive

1. Take one of your favorite board games to a cozy café and have a two-person game night.
2. Go to a local Christmas tree farm and pick out the perfect tree to decorate.
3. Go rollerblading (or ice skating) and end up at your favorite ice cream or coffee shop.
4. Progressive dinner: Go to several different restaurants for appetizers and small plates, then end with dessert. You could also coordinate with other couples and go from house to house instead of restaurant to restaurant.
5. Go skiing, sledding, snowboarding, or snowshoeing; stop for a festive hot dinner and drinks on the way back.
6. Get warm by going to a hot springs or indoor heated pool with a hot tub or sauna.
7. Make a Spotify playlist of your favorite songs together and listen to it while you play your favorite board games or complete a puzzle.





Spring: New and Refreshing

1. Go to a local botanical garden or flower farm. You could even plant something together!
2. Sign up for a local 5K race or half marathon.
3. Set up an outdoor movie theater and watch a classic.
4. Turn off your phones for an entire day and road trip to see a new city or town. Rely on other people to find coffee, gas, and get home.
5. Cook a meal together with local spring produce.
6. Rent a canoe or pedal boat and find a river or lake to float in.
7. Go on a nature walk or an urban hike. Take pictures of your journey and frame your favorite one.

Summer: Long, Lazy Days

1. Check out local garage sales, estate sales, or open houses, then go to brunch.
2. Go to a county fair.
3. Find a drive-in movie theater near you.
4. Go for a hike and bring a picnic. Pick up supplies for your picnic from the local farmers market.
5. Rent a tandem bike and ride to a lake or river to go swimming.





6. Make a summer bucket list while enjoying a campfire.
7. Do something neither of you have ever done before—pottery class, axe throwing, batting cages, Top Golf, rock climbing, and so on.

Fall: Crisp and Cozy

1. Explore a pumpkin patch together and carve pumpkins or roast the seeds.
2. Build a campfire! Bring marshmallows, sticks, drinks, and a blanket, and read to each other from your favorite book.
3. Go to a local soccer or football game.
4. Go apple picking and then make an apple pie or homemade apple sauce.
5. Take a workout class together like spin, rowing, dance, or boxing.
6. Make a time capsule together and hide or bury it in a meaningful location.
7. Dress up and create a themed dinner or a “fancy dinner” by candlelight and play music to add to the ambience.



11 Questions to Explore and Enhance Your Sex Life

1. What does sex mean to *you*? What do you think is the purpose of sex?
2. What makes you feel sexy? What makes me sexy to you? (Sexy might be defined as when you feel most comfortable in your own skin—when you love being you and feel desirable as a result.)
3. How is our current sex life?
4. What has been your favorite moment from our sex life?
5. Do you think we have different desires? How do you think we can handle that?
6. What can I do physically to demonstrate my affection and love to you?
7. How can we romance each other during the day in anticipation of making love?
8. How do you like to show me that you are in the mood?
9. What turns you on? How and where do you like to be touched? Is there anything that makes you uncomfortable, or is there a way that you do not like to be touched?
10. Is there something we haven't done that you want to try?
11. Is connecting emotionally before we have sex important to you? If so, how would you like to connect? How would you like to connect after sex?



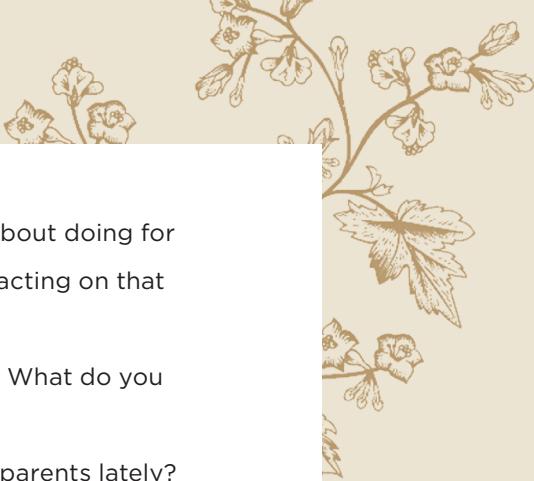


Get Creative

Think about the Date Night Ideas section of this chapter and pick your favorite ones. Choose which of you will plan the next date and put it on your calendars. Then, while you're on your date, ask each other some of the following questions to help guide you into more meaningful conversations:

1. What's something you've been thinking about a lot lately that you haven't told me?
2. What brought you joy this week, and what is something that was hard this week?



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3. Is there something you have dreamed about doing for a long time? What is keeping you from acting on that dream?
 4. What do you value most in friendships? What do you value most about our friendship?
 5. What is your relationship like with your parents lately?
 6. When was the last time you cried? Why?
 7. What is something that is giving you a lot of purpose right now?
 8. Tell me about the most interesting conversation you had this week.
 9. Tell me about a side of you that I haven't experienced yet.
 10. What is something that you find most intriguing about me?
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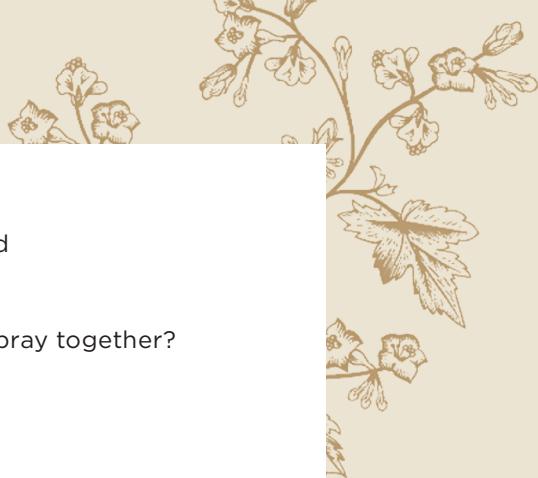
Get Creative

Are you protecting your love? Here is a quick checklist check-in.
Mark off each one after you discuss it.

- What are the helpful boundaries for our relationship?
- How will we pursue purity in our relationship?
- What are our consistent rhythms for communication or quality time together?
- Are we satisfied with our community?
Why or why not?
- Who is an older couple we could invite to spend time with together?



- ❑ Who is a younger couple we could invite to get to know?
- ❑ When could we set aside time to pray together?
- ❑ What things on this list could we be praying for together?





DREAM TOGETHER

- What is our mission?
- Is there something we need to quit or give up?
- How do we plan to make a living?
- What have we always envisioned for our future? What would we be prepared to give up?
- Do we want to travel? If so, when and where?
- How do we plan to spend and save money?
- How can we combine our talents, skills, strength, and creative abilities to be on mission together?
- What kind of transformation do we want to see in our own lives?
- What is God affirming or blessing in your life?
- Who should we seek mentorship and wise counsel from?
- How do our faith and values align with our dreams?
- How can we serve?
- Do we want children? If so, by what means? (Adoption, foster, biological?)
- How do we want to raise our children? And where?
- What do we want our community to look like?
- What are our health and fitness goals?

