

Twelve questions to ask your spouse *now that the kids are gone*

The picture you carry of the person you married is a living document — and most of us stopped updating it around the time the youngest one started driving. Parenting turns two people into co-managers, and co-managers trade logistics, not interiors. These are the questions that start the updating.

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| 1 What are you looking forward to in the next five years that I might not know about? | 7 What part of how you parented are you proudest of? |
| 2 What do you miss most about who you were before we had kids? | 8 What's something you'd like to try that you've never mentioned because it seemed impractical? |
| 3 What are you worried about right now that you haven't said out loud? | 9 When do you feel most like yourself? |
| 4 Who are the people you feel closest to outside this marriage these days? | 10 What are you most afraid of about getting older? |
| 5 What does a really good ordinary day look like for you now? | 11 If we had one year with no obligations, what would you want to do with it? |
| 6 What has changed about what you need from me in the last few years? | 12 What's one thing you'd like me to ask you about more often? |

How to actually use these

Pick three. Take them to dinner. Whoever is listening has exactly one job — be curious. No correcting, no defending, no problem-solving, and no "well, that's because..." The only things you're allowed to say are follow-up questions: *Tell me more. What's that like? Since when?* Then switch.