

# Tips for Reconnecting Well

## Reconnecting is fun, fulfilling and a downright discouragement to the Enemy.

by Erin Prater

You and your spouse are finally under the same roof again. Unfortunately, rebuilding your connection doesn't happen automatically. Both of you have become increasingly independent and unaccustomed to considering each other in everyday decisions. Satan desires to use selfishness to tear your relationship apart.

The good news? Reconnecting is fun, fulfilling and a downright discouragement to the Enemy.

- **Celebrate Couple-Style.** Your husband made it home safely and you both made it through the deployment. God is good, and it's time to celebrate! While it may be tempting to plan a surprise party or a large family get-together, such celebrations may overwhelm your spouse. Ask him how he'd like to celebrate, and let him know you'll take care of the details. Then, enjoy your festivity – be it a low-key evening of movies and popcorn at home, a relaxed backyard BBQ or a night on the town with friends.
- **Become a Student of Your Spouse.** Remember the good old days of dating or courtship when the two of you remained engrossed in communication for hours? Enjoy frequent conversation, and relearn his or her temperaments, preferences and quirks.
- **Don't Finish His Sentences.** Being able to finish your spouse's sentences is generally a sign that you know him well, but what if his preferences and feelings have changed over the course of deployment? Instead, hear-out your spouse without interjecting. Then affirm him by repeating back what he just said.
- **Laugh Together.** Laughter really is the best medicine during stressful times. Read the "Sunday funnies" together, stock up on comedy DVDs from a used media store or share a joke you heard at work. Don't be afraid to act silly around each other; it's a fun way to develop intimacy (and a few inside jokes)!
- **Dream Together.** Discuss individual and corporate goals. Take an online career test, and examine what vocation God might be calling each of you to. Find a hobby you can pursue together. Plan a vacation to Europe or a vow-renewal ceremony.

- **Help Him Commemorate.** If your service member lost a friend or comrade while deployed, offer to frame photos or create a scrapbook. (Wait until your service member is through with the most painful part of grieving and speaks regularly and fondly of his fallen friend.)
- **Detach Strings.** Offer a back scratch or massage when your service member has a hard time sleeping, but make sure he knows you don't expect one back. (This will allow him to fully relax.)
- **Establish a New Tradition.** Make it fun, frequent and exclusive. What about always sharing a homemade smoothie on Saturday mornings, or playing footsy under the dinner table after a long Friday at work?
- **Intake War-Related Media.** Be available to watch movies, documentaries or news reports about the war (or former wars) with your spouse. It's never wise to force a service member to watch such material, but a spouse who is otherwise unwilling (or possibly unable) to talk about his combat experiences might find it easier to express what he went through while viewing footage.
- **Step Outside Yourself.** If your relationship is a bit stressed during the reconnection process, find others you can help as a team. Spend quality time with the child of a deployed soldier from your church, or bring cookies to war veterans in nursing homes or hospitals. You'll find yourselves naturally refocused when working together to benefit others.
- **Forgive at the Drop of a Hat.** Yes, he was inconsiderate. Yes, she's asking too much of you. We're all human. We're all imperfect. What matters is that both of you are back together. Quickly extend forgiveness with a smile and watch the tension of the moment melt away.

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