

Cook up a better relationship

Unite through food

Make the most of an opportunity to bond with loved ones by taking time to cook and eat



RELATIONSHIPS
With Joanne Wilson

FOOD, glorious food! It's one of the wonderful necessities of life.

We eat throughout our marriage and relationships and well, every part of our lives.

Do Australians take the opportunity to use this shared experience to strengthen their relationships?

You may well have done the exciting and romantic dates in the early days at your favourite restaurants or on the beach as you gazed hopefully and lovingly into each other's eyes. What about the every-day upkeep of our relationships?

Some of the best conversations you'll have will be over a meal. It's universally acknowledged as a great time to discuss a variety of topics, even difficult ones. Don't underestimate the psychological and emotional benefits, namely social connection, intellectual stimulation, relaxation and romance.

Here's my top tips for curating culinary cohesion for couples.

Give up multi-tasking. Hands up who eats in front of the TV or accompanied by a screen? Thought so.

The trap of living under an unnecessary sense of urgency to be entertained, work and of course be ever present on social media can put you in chronic toxic stress and make you sick, including terrible indigestion.

Turn off the screens and allow meals to be the perfect time to talk about your highs and lows. It will also slow you down and eat less.

Invest the time in home cooking. Savour the satisfaction of creating a dish and likewise having your partner prepare something for you is something you can put loving care and effort into. (Hello husband, I hope you're reading.)

Sure, it's still a meal, but when it's made with love, it's super special and tastes oh so much better! It's like a tiny, tasty gift at the end of a long day.

Can't cook? Try learning. This is the perfect joint activity. There are awesome options to do this together here on the Sunshine Coast. Putting in the effort to improve yourself for the sake of your relationship shows a great deal of love and dedication.

Create the mood: Arty and bright or warm and dark tonight? Use those funky little string lights, draw something, use aromatic candles and swoon to the music. Want to feel sophisticated? Throw on some classical. Tweak the atmosphere in your house and bang - date night is on.

Relax and enjoy yourselves! Just because you switched off technology doesn't mean you need to be super formal. Sit back, relax and chill. Why not kick back on the floor whilst eating for a change? If there are little munchkins in the house, they'll love a snackable spread on a blanket. Plenty of other cultures do it.

Make it a habit. It's all wonderful to now decide to "eat together more often." Why not hand write a specific goal, ie "Eat together as a family at the table three times per week on a Tuesday." Paste this up on the fridge for all to see and practice, practice, practice. Keep each other accountable and after 30 days, it'll be the start of the norm of 'united through food' for you!

Just for fun, if you need a few songs to inspire, try these:

- ▶ Banana pancakes by Jack Johnson.
- ▶ The Mango Tango by Sesame Street.
- ▶ Food, Glorious, Food: Oliver! the Musical
- ▶ Beetlejuice: Banana Boat song.

Joanne is the Founder of TheConfidante Counselling. Visit www.sunshinecoastcounselling.com for enquires.

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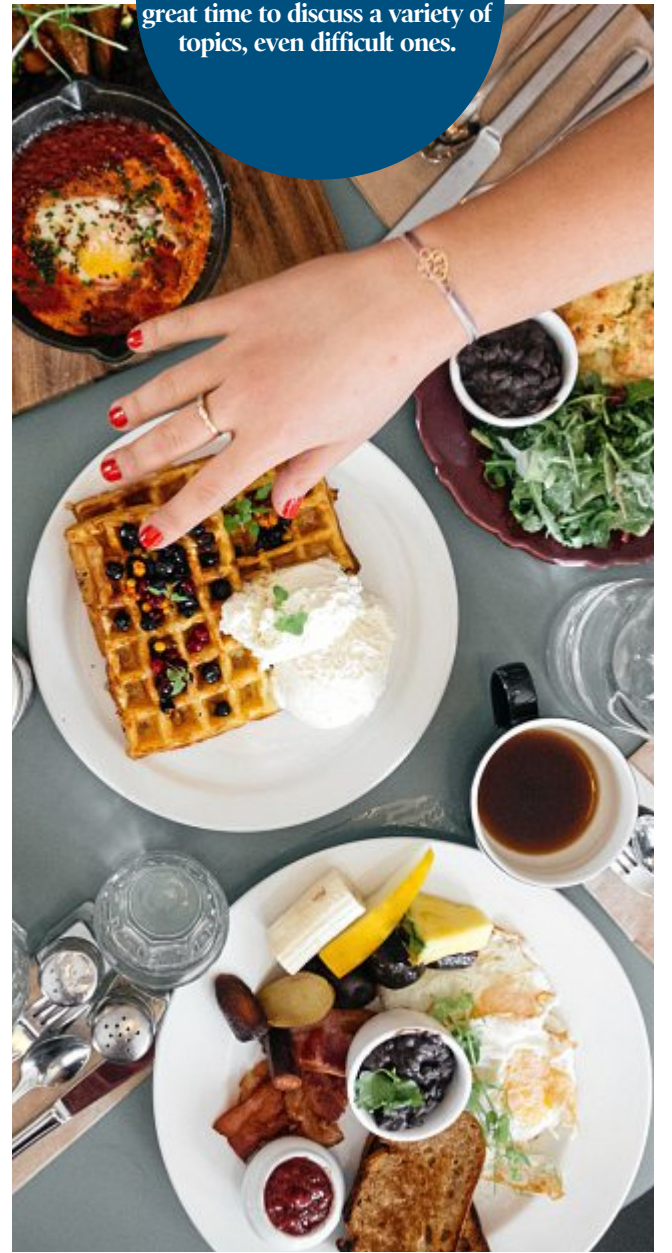


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