

WE JUST DISAGREE (AND THAT'S OKAY)

PREPARE/ENRICH BLOG - SEPTEMBER 29, 2021

Do you and your spouse tend to agree on most things? If so, great! If not, that's great too (*and probably much more likely.*) You might be thinking, "I wish we agreed more. We're always bickering over trivial things!" But when you think about it, it's better to disagree on the trivial things than on the big things. Going a step further, it's more important to be aligned on the bigger mission or purpose than to agree on every idea or method for getting there. Let's explore further.

Disagreeing can be a good thing.

You love documentaries, your spouse thinks they're sooo boring. You think there's a right way to load a new roll of toilet paper, your partner doesn't think it matters. While these are all very inconsequential examples, being able to openly disagree on these things as well as more hefty topics means you're both ***maintaining an individual sense of self***, which is important in all relationships. We need to keep growing as individuals, and healthy relationships leave room for that.

Disagreeing on smaller things also gives you a way to practice problem-solving and compromise when the stakes are relatively low – skills that will come in handy when dealing with bigger issues. You might find yourself branching out of your comfort zone, exploring ideas, perspectives, activities, etc. that you wouldn't have normally.

The key is keeping ***respect and empathy*** at the forefront during disagreement.

Are there things it's essential to agree on?

While disagreement is healthy, things like deep-held beliefs, life-guiding values, and big picture goals are important to agree on. As an individual and a couple, you'll need to determine which things are non-negotiable and which aren't. Lean into your areas of agreement and use them to ground you when issues come up.

Where does alignment fit in?

Agreement and alignment sound pretty similar, but in fact, they're not interchangeable. Think of agreement as alignment's uptight, perfectionist cousin—everything must be exactly perfect and in its place. Alignment, on the other hand, is a bit more laid back and realistic, recognizing that every tiny detail is not always as important as seeing the bigger picture.

You can disagree and still be aligned on a broader vision.

Do you have topics that you simply do not see eye to eye on? And you don't know that you ever will. It can be discouraging to get hung up on the goal of reaching total agreement. Not only is it sometimes just not possible, it's often not realistic. What's more important is that you value and gain an understanding of each other's perspective. Acknowledge that you may not agree on every detail, while staying focused on aligning on the greater vision that you share as a couple.

Imagine you're going on a road trip. You and your partner are aligned on your destination and the goal of staying within budget, but you have different ideas for how to get there, what sights to see, and where to stay. You can figure out the minor points of disagreement as you go. But without aligning on the broader vision, you might not even make it out of the driveway.

The takeaway

As with most things in life, agreeing and disagreeing with your spouse isn't black and white. There is a lot of gray area in between and trying to reach total agreement can sometimes be an exercise in frustration. Understanding the difference between agreement and alignment and when each one is best utilized can help you keep the big picture in mind when it's easy to get caught up in smaller disagreements.

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