

# HAPPY Hosting



Entertaining as a couple can prove to be challenging if expectations are not managed and communicated ahead of time.

Whether you're hosting an event or having your friends over for a home-cooked meal, if you and your spouse cannot work together, your guests will feel the tension no matter how much money or time you've spent on food preparations, entertainment or setting the perfect table. Couples who struggle the most when trying to work together or manage conflict are those who have the highest expectations. Therefore, learning to manage your expectations for each other and work together as a team is important.

When you're part of a couple you assume your partner thinks like you do, but that's where the trouble begins. Your partner is a completely different person than you, with his or her own ideas, financial goals and social needs, so understanding that from the beginning and working together to help each person's attributes complement the others is what makes partners such great hosts. Couples tend to enjoy themselves more when they are comfortable

with each other and create an atmosphere where each guest feels special in some way.

If you find yourself planning to do some spring entertaining, these suggestions might be helpful in saving your marriage and your party from disaster.

## CHANGING YOU WORKS BETTER THAN TRYING TO CHANGE YOUR PARTNER.

When your partner feels forced to change to be good enough or fit into your reality, you're actually building a wall of resentment. If your partner likes entertaining in business casual and you prefer black tie attire, it's wiser to let guests know on the invite the dress code is optional business casual or black tie. This prevents a conflict between you and your partner and puts guests at ease.

## YOUR PARTNER IS NOT YOU.

Don't expect your partner to validate your perceptions or agree with everything you say. One of the reasons guests love attending

couples events is because of the diversity between the couple. Maybe you're financially conservative and more serious, and your spouse is easygoing and believes in spending money while you're alive. Guests are delighted with couples who play off each other and know how to keep things interesting and fun. There's nothing worse than being at an event with a couple who agree on everything and act like clones. It feels stuffy and censored.

## YOUR PARTNER CANNOT READ YOUR MIND NO MATTER HOW WELL HE OR SHE KNOWS YOU.

You have to communicate with your partner before entertaining about potential problems. If there are people attending who make you feel intimidated or uncomfortable, tell your partner so you can work as a team. If you feel incompetent with one area of entertaining, communicating that with your partner before getting upset because of something your

partner unknowingly said or did during the event will be embraced rather than be fuel for an argument after everyone goes home.

There is no such thing as a perfect couple. When you plan an event or host a gathering, expect and know in advance it won't be perfect. Focus on enjoying the company and working as a team with your partner. Some of the most memorable gatherings I've attended had unpredictable things happen, which added laughter and comradery among the guests that brought everyone closer together. The teamwork chemistry of the hosts and their ability to see the humor of the situation lightened the mood and added an air of fun.

Couples successfully entertaining together is a dance of conflict resolution and good communication skills. Having guests at your home or gathering guests for an occasion should be a celebration, not a display of perfection. You're human and so is your partner; work together as a team, enjoy your guests and show appreciation for your partner. ✦



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