

Help! It's Already Difficult

In the last lesson, you learned some tips on how to keep the passion in your relationship. Remember to establish the greeting and “leave-taking” rituals. You’ll be surprised at how much you look forward to them.

What happens, though, when you haven’t lived with each other long and things are already difficult? Before you doubt yourself and your decision, read about common difficulties when a couple first moves in with each other.

Yes, You Will Have Challenges

Think about the irritating things your parents or siblings did when you were living with them. Weren’t there times you thought you’d go crazy and couldn’t wait until you were living on your own? We’ve all been there.

You may not have known it, but once you move in with someone you love, expect similar challenges. The two of you are independent people who’ll now need to make some adjustments. How good are you at adapting? Both of you will discover that answer!

Planning Makes It Easier

If you haven’t joined households, this is the perfect time to agree on how your household will run. If you haven’t had that conversation yet, now is an excellent time to sit down together and divide up the duties.

It’s important to realize each of you have moved in together with certain expectations. The surprise comes when you realize that your expectations may be totally opposite of your partner.

There are tasks which absolutely have to be done. Decide now how those duties will be divided:

1. **Money and bills.** Previously, you each paid for everything. How will you handle your finances?
 - Will you have one checking account or three? One checking account means both paychecks go in the same account and bills

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are paid from that account.

- **With three accounts you each have your own money and deposit an agreed amount into the “house” account where bills are paid.**
2. **Who pays for what?** You only watch Netflix and Amazon Prime. Your partner wants the highest end cable package. You belong to a gym and your partner prefers to walk in the park.
- **If all your money is in one account, you’ve agreed to pay for each other’s bills no matter what they are.**
 - Each of you list your bills. Decide who’ll pay for what. Some non-mutual expenses may balance each other out. You may decide it’s okay if you pay half of something you don’t use.
3. **Don’t let chores cause resentment!** There are always things you don’t like doing but must be done for the house to run smoothly. Divide up those chores now.
- The last thing you want is a break-up because the toilet bowl isn’t clean. **Sharing chores is a sign of mutual respect.**
 - Make a list of all the chores that need to be done. Claim the ones you want. Negotiate on the rest. Alternate tasks monthly unless someone really likes one specific chore.

Time and Space

When living by yourself, you’re used to things staying where you put them. You’re also used to it being quiet when you want quiet time or turning the music up loud and dancing when you’re in the mood. You did what you wanted when you wanted. Times have changed.

Unless you and your partner have the same needs, which is rare, it’s time to talk about your needs. Sometimes you’re not aware you have a specific need until you don’t get it. Your needs may change over time. That’s why you’ll have this conversation often.

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Three areas to be aware of:

1. **Needs.** Everyone has needs for quiet time and fun time. **If you need hours of quiet and your partner needs lots of people, talk about these needs and decide how to accommodate each other.**
2. **Stuff.** Decide how much “stuff” each of you are bringing. Moving into someone else’s place can be difficult because it was theirs and now it’s both of yours. Space needs to be made and some “stuff” needs to go. Some of your “stuff” may send shivers up your partner’s spine. Talk about it.
3. **Quality Time. Be sure and schedule quality couple time with each other.** Yes, you’re with each other during your non-work time, but that special time to share thoughts, feelings, hopes, dreams, and fun will keep the intimacy going.

When the Cute Becomes Annoying

It may not have happened, but there may come a time when that little quirk you thought was cute turns into something that sends you screaming. If you catch yourself grimacing or doing eye rolls when your partner does that “cute” thing, it’s time to deal with it.

The key is finding out why it bothers you. Your annoyance could mean that there’s something deeper for the two of you to sit down and talk about. (Module 2 will give you excellent pointers in how to talk so others listen.)

Then there are things about the other you just need to accept. That is part of living together.

Summary

If moving in together has been more difficult than you thought, you now know you’re not unusual. Bringing together two different people requires much communication and acceptance of each other’s quirks and habits.

Before you move to the next lesson, in which you’ll explore ways to keep problems to a minimum, answer the following reflection questions to deepen

