

GET TOGETHER STAY TOGETHER

X & Y COMMUNICATIONS

WRITING HISTORY TOGETHER

with Scot and Emily McKay

Scot: Hello again. This is Scot McKay.

Emily: And this is Emily McKay.

Scot: And welcome to our next audio in this series which is called Writing History Together. Emily, in this audio, we're going to talk about creating variety within the relationship, but also the secrets to keeping the spark alive and understanding really in many ways what you are going to be facing once you start living together and how to make sure that the good things are maximized and that the negatives are minimized, right?

Emily: Well, of course. Everybody who's ever been in a relationship or in a new relationship, the biggest question is how can we keep this going or are we doomed to five, ten, fifteen years, the spark goes away, life ends up dull and boring, and we end up separated like everybody else on this planet.

Scot: Well, not everybody else on this planet. A high percentage, but hopefully we're trying to not make that everybody on this planet. This whole audio series is designed to help lower that percentage of people who break up.

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Emily: That's right. That's the thing to realize. When we're feeling this way and feeling this fear of commitment, "What if I get together with this person and what if we can't keep this wonderful spark that we have right now? This excitement, is it going to die sometime?" A lot of people have this fear and it's a natural given fear.

Scot: It keeps people from committing a lot of times, especially if they've been burned in the past.

Emily: Or if they've seen too many friends and family going through this. But the reality is the divorce rate is 50%. You know what that means?

Scot: That means 50% of us are staying together.

Emily: That's right.

Scot: Glass half-full.

Emily: The point is we're going to talk about how to keep that spark alive, how to create that history, and make sure that you are the 50% that survive.

Scot: We've talked about the honeymoon period and how, yeah, you know what? The novelty may wear off, but the amazingness of being in a relationship, the love that you share, the adventures that you have, the life that you look forward to every day should continue to be something that you feel is better spent together in that life than apart.

Emily: Well, not only that, but to add to that, when you have a history together, you've gone through problems and troubles together, that should help make you stronger. Because when other

problems come about, you're like, "You know, we've weathered the storm before and we're going to do it again because we are meant to be."

Scot: I think also I would add to that the positive things, the milestones, the adventures, the new people who come to live with you, the children. All those things that add to your history, even in a positive way, do make the bond stronger also. That may be obvious, but I don't want it to go unsaid nonetheless.

Emily: Well, that would be the whole package.

Scot: Now, when we're talking about this whole idea of people fearing getting into a relationship because they've seen so much mayhem everywhere else, people not being right for each other, I think one of the best mindsets to have when you're getting into a relationship, and indeed if you're already in a relationship, this would be a great mindset to get into, is that yeah, okay, look. People get into relationships for the wrong reasons. People settle for each other. People feel somehow coerced into a relationship. They don't have anybody better to be with, and they just want to fight this nagging loneliness. But if you're getting into a relationship for all the right reasons, which we talked about in the first couple of audios here, then I think you have every right to be optimistic about your chances.

Emily: Well, even the right people who have come together, even if you have two people who are right for each other, they've done all the right research, they figured out that the two of you are perfect together, you have two wonderful human beings with great character, even as time elapses, things can deteriorate. Rechecking and re-evaluating that relationship can help strengthen that bond.

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Scot: Sometimes, even at the beginning Emily, the expectations people have when they get into life together, when they move into the same house together, may not be in line with reality. I'm reminded of a time I heard about a guy who was wildly in love with his new wife. They didn't cohabit prior to marriage, which is something we can talk about by the way, and he was absolutely flabbergasted when the bathroom stank after she took a dump. It wasn't supposed to, I guess.

But regardless of how we idealize each other prior to actually living with each other, man, the light shines bright on exactly how human you are, warts and all, when you're actually living with someone. That's an argument people use for cohabiting prior to marriage.

Emily: But the results are still the same because that person is not going to live to unrealistic expectations, whether you cohabit together or just got married.

Scot: Well, yeah, but either way, we're all human. If we are being idealized by our partner, if you'll pardon my passive voice, if we idealize our partner or vice versa frankly, we're going to be disappointed. I mean, when we're in a household and we're living together, guess what? Yes, the bathroom is going to stink. Yes, guess what? The laundry is not going to get done, glasses are going to get dropped, dinner is going to get burnt. All those things are going to happen because we're human, and this kind of harks back to what we were talking about in terms of being set in your ways. You have certain ways you do things. Once you're together, since you're two people, you can connect on every level, but sometimes things aren't going to get done your way, sometimes disappointment is going to happen and that disappointment is going to be caused by the other person in the relationship, and you're going to have to forgive each other.

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Emily: Yeah, forgiveness is huge. One of the things we haven't touched on yet is forgiveness. You get two people who know how to forgive, two really good forgiving people, and they can get through anything. That's a really good point you brought up. Yes, people are not going to live to our expectations, and forgiving them for that is really important.

Scot: Yeah, you're right. We haven't touched on forgiveness yet, and I think that's yet another cornerstone of a great relationship. I would kind of say it's under the subheading of being optimistic. Certainly, there are things that are really heinous that we can do to each other. Infidelity, attempting to kill each other with a firearm, things like that come to mind, and we will talk about some of that in another upcoming audio.

But yeah, I mean, I've seen people get divorced because of the cumulative effect of all the little things you've ever done to piss me off. That just screams lack of forgiveness. Everybody, everybody listening, men and women, I guarantee you, no matter how much your partner is your soulmate, no matter how connectible the both of you are at the baseline level, no matter how powerfully you connect together, you get each other, all of those wonderful things we've talked about, you are going to fall short of each other's expectations sometimes. It's not going to be just ever so often. It will probably be on a daily basis because we're all human and we all fail on a daily basis. When we're together and we fail, guess what? We're failing together. We're failing each other.

Now, that's not to say that we're habitually letting each other down on purpose. There's nothing malicious going on here. But we got to cut each other some slack, don't we Emily?

Emily: Oh absolutely, especially on the little things.

Scot: And most things are little things.

Emily: Isn't that the truth? Now, however, the great thing about expectations, if you talk about them up front, when possible, you can't cover all your bases, but if you cover the major ones, the little ones will take care of themselves. The major ones would be where we're going to live and how many children we're going to have. The last thing you want to do is get with somebody, you live together for a short period of time just to find out one of you want a baby and the other doesn't. Period. Those are major things that should have been discussed, these expectations that should have been handled before you get together.

Scot: Yeah, major expectations like that fall under the heading of communicating, getting each other that we've already talked about. If you can't even communicate about those large things, guess what? You're going to miscommunicate about a myriad of small things all the time. It's going to happen constantly. It's going to be irritating. Guess what? That's when the relationship, once again, will start feeling like work, right?

Emily: Oh, absolutely. That's when you end up with the cumulative effect of all the little things that cause the end of the relationship.

Scot: Right, exactly. Lack of forgiveness basically stems from lack of understanding, lack of empathy, lack of getting each other. You could go ahead and add forgiving as opposed to someone who isn't forgiving and judges everyone and refuses to forgive and is just vengeful about it forever, holds a grudge, to the list of archetypal attraction traits.

Emily: That is true.

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Scot: I don't think anyone wants someone who holds a grudge and says, "Oh, yeah, well, that's my dream person."

Emily: Right. Let's face it. If you're feeling this way, if your partner is feeling this way, it's kind of hard to come home and feel this heavy weight of someone being angry at you, being upset with you and knowing that you've displeased them even if there was nothing you can do to fix it.

Scot: Yes, especially if there was nothing you could have done to fix it, if it's nothing you did intentionally. If it's something you did by accident, we need to be extra forgiving of each other in a relationship. By the way, that will serve you well when you're a parent also. If you don't already have kids, someday when you do, you'll be much better off.

I would dare say that when single parents get together, they probably have a head start on the forgiveness with each other, and they also have a huge head start on what we talked about earlier, which is all the smells and all the offensive things that can happen to your senses when you're sharing a household with someone else. Parenthood pretty much cures you of that. I think you can almost absolutely say that it's the domain of people who have never had kids in the house before and who have never been married before who had these unreasonable expectations of, say, the bathroom stinking and stuff like that.

Emily: Right, because they've never shared a space.

Scot: Yeah. It's unreasonable to have those expectations.

With that out of the way, let's talk about the opposite. Instead of judging each other and blaming each other and being appalled

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when the bathroom stinks, let's talk about keeping the spark alive. Because that's another thing people fear, Emily, is that over time, once the honeymoon fades, it's not going to be replaced with anything. First of all, it's probably good to level set and say, "What the hell is this spark of which we speak?"

Emily: Well, I think most people assume that this is a sexual spark. Really, it goes beyond just sex because the sex will eventually wane, but you still have the relationship, you still have the emotional connection. If you don't have that, then something is vitally missing. Having that emotional connection is essential because then when the sex is gone, you have that. Hopefully, the sex is never gone.

Scot: I know. What are you talking about? I mean, that sounds a lot like kissing don't last, cooking do to me.

Emily: Well, I'm just saying, you don't know what your future holds. Accidents can happen and maybe somebody will not be able to fulfill those duties.

Scot: Well, sure. But let's talk about sex even in terms of the natural course of events over years of a marriage. First of all, it's unreasonable you're going to screw each other like rabbits for your entire honeymoon.

Emily: Five times a day.

Scot: Yeah, without ever coming out of your hotel room, which is what people think are going to happen. You're going to want to go down to the pool and have a piña colada or two or play some tennis or see some sights or something. Even the amount of sex that I

think we sometimes unreasonably subject ourselves to expecting is unrealistic to begin with.

Here's what I'm going to say, and I think this is a major takeaway and I want to hear what you have to say about this. I know you've heard me say this before because we've been in practice together for 13 years. But look, if your relationship is built all around sex and the spark is purely sexual that you're trying to keep going, know this. If it's all about sex, after you put the round peg in the round hole about eight or ten times, you're ready for something different. The variety is gone. You know your way around that other person sexually.

Emily: Well, that's when we know that in relationship, that spark isn't solely about sex. Yes, the sex is important, you've got to have that, but you have to have that deep connection, that communication which we talked about earlier, and so many other things, taking time for each other, appreciating one another, not taking the other person for granted. After being together for a period of time, that's the easiest thing to do is take each other for granted. You're here today. You'll always be here no matter what I do to you. I can mistreat you, and hey, you put up with it.

Scot: That's a great point because people forget pain. That's a scientific fact that people forget what it's like to feel pain. That's a protection mechanism we have built into our psyches. But when you have this person who you've allegedly chosen and, of course, you should have chosen each other instead of settled for someone, remember, even on your wedding day, write this into your vows if you're not married yet is "I have chosen this person from many options. It is my choice to be with this person and commit to them for the rest of my days. It's something I'm happy about. It's something I want."

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If you're lying to yourself when you speak those words, don't do it. But if you honestly believe, "Yeah, you know what? This person is the one I've chosen from many options." That was the case with you and I. I can honestly say as a result, even after knowing each other for 13 years, there's not one scintilla of a moment ever that has happened any day of our marriage where I said, "You know what? I've made a mistake. I really wish I was single again. I wish I could go back and find someone better." Because I've already resolved in my mind, "Hey, look, you know what? I played the field, I went and dated a bunch of different women, I learned how to be the most attractive man I could be, and I found the woman of my dreams, the woman who is the culmination of every one I've ever been looking for. I want to be in a committed relationship. I don't want to have sex with a bunch of other people. I want to be committed to this woman. I want to build a shared history with this woman."

When you recognize that and you're at peace with that, you love that. You think it's great. You wake up every morning blessed. It's like what they say about your career. If you're doing what you love, you'll never work another day in your life.

Emily: Which is why relationships aren't work.

Scot: Exactly. If you're with the person who is your best friend, the person you want to be with, the person you want to build this legacy and write this history together with, it never feels like work, there's never any regret.

Emily: Oh, you're so wonderful. I love you too. Can I keep you forever?

Scot: Of course, you can. Although we're on record as saying we don't necessarily believe in ownership between spouses. You're your own person, I am my own person, and we have freedom within this marriage.

Emily: Oh, absolutely. But what we just did is show how we love and appreciate each other. I think people forget to do that. You constantly need to remind the other person not just you love them, "I love you," and leave it at that, but expressing why you love that person and expressing that you appreciate what they do and what they are and how they are.

Scot: Yeah. You always show gratitude for what you have as a couple. That's the right word to use, I think, which is gratitude. I mean, here we are, we've chosen each other, we have what a lot of other people envy in this relationship, but if we get complacent about it and take it for granted, like you said, then not only is our relationship in danger of falling apart, but people are going to vomit when they see a relationship like ours fall apart like that because my goodness, how arrogant can you be? You had what everybody wants and you blew it because you got complacent and you didn't show any gratitude, you weren't grateful.

Emily: We all want to be shown that gratitude and love and appreciation. How awesome is it when your partner comes to you and tells you I love you because you're just the light of my life, because you have woken up in the morning and gave me coffee. Sometimes the little things mean a lot. It may seem insignificant to you, but you're showing gratitude towards that person, or vice versa, just the little things that you do for someone. You went shopping the other day and you surprised me with a little cake, which is my favorite, and I got all excited about it. I'm like, "Oh, he loves me."

Scot: Yeah, I do that sometimes. I'm looking for ways to make you smile because I live for that giggle.

Emily: Oh, I should giggle more.

Scot: Yes, you should. Absolutely. Just like that.

Emily: But trying to find the little things that make your spouse or your partner happy and excited, just doing those little things for them will deepen that emotional connection.

Scot: Now might be a good time to interject that we not only tell each other that we love each other, but we tell each other that we like each other.

Emily: Oh, that's important.

Scot: I think that's important. Yeah, absolutely. Because, yeah, love is unconditional, love means what would I do without you, you're a part of me, everything that love represents. But liking means I have positive feelings towards you. It's not something that's a commitment. It's not something that is nebulous, which love can be. We can talk about that.

I think when couples love each other, they're committed to each other, they feel their life is made better with this other person, they don't want anything bad to happen to that person, and they have, yes, affection and esteem for that person, but it goes above and beyond that. That person is someone who they would give their own life to save. That love is somehow transcendent of mere positive affection. But I still, we still believe it's important to express that affection to each other. I like you. I not only love you, I actually like you. That's something that we've created as a tradition in our

family also is we say "I like you" to our kids and we always have. I always have even with my older daughter before I met you. I've noticed that our kids really, really appreciate and enjoy it because they get it, because love is something that seems kind of grandiose and divine in a way, something that transcends human emotion, whereas like is very, very objective.

Emily: Well, you can love someone dearly, you can even love the wrong guy who mistreats you and all that, but not like them, not like what they do.

Scot: That's true. That's why saying "I like you" is also very important.

Now, you were talking about that spark, and that spark comes from being with your best friend every day. You do things together. You're enjoying what you would do if you were by yourself with that other person. As we alluded to in an earlier program, two plus two equals five or six or 100, not four.

Emily: In this house.

Scot: Right. Now, getting back to sex, however, because I think we left that on the table a little bit. Sounds kind of hot, doesn't it?

Emily: Oh, I love that.

Scot: Having sex on the table?

Emily: We're going to make people vomit.

Scot: No. Well, hopefully, they can go create their own vomit-worthy relationships with lots of sex ten or twelve years in from listening to

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us, but I digress slightly. Everyone listening, men or women, yes, you can continue to still have sex long into your marriage. We are not the experts on having sex into our 70s or 80s. Maybe we could get someone to come talk about that. But we're 13 years in, and I'll tell you what? What's keeping us from having lots of sex is generally the busyness of life, kids and doing things and traveling and the things that you would expect that would make sex less of a priority than when you first started dating or first got married because you're willing to give up anything to have that sex.

Emily: Or for that matter, less of an opportunity.

Scot: Exactly. That's right. As Bill Cosby once said --

Emily: They could smell when you're in the mood.

Scot: I don't know. That sounds gross.

Emily: You're in the mood and they just know, "Wait, it's time to interrupt mom and dad."

Scot: Hopefully, they can't smell the room afterwards.

Emily: Oh, I know.

Scot: Exactly. I've lost my train of thought, but I will get it back again quickly because I'm a professional. What happens is you still want to have sex, you still enjoy having sex, it's just that you've had a lot of sex already and you've grown accustomed to having sex with each other and you've grown accustomed having adventures and cooking with each other. It's part of a well-rounded life.

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By the way, kissing and whacking you on the butt while you're cooking dinner, and sticking my hands down your pants when the kids are in the other room, all those things still happen, all that flirtation which we're going to talk about in just a second. But kind of as a precursor to that, I believe that when the relationship is built around that friendship, around that connection, it's not like you have sex six or eight times and you're done. You're having sex for something other than the sex. You're making love actually. I'm doing this because I know you need orgasms, and I want to be the guy who gives them to you because I like you, I love you. I think it's great. You do the same for me. Our sexual activity is because we like each other, because we appreciate each other, because we want to give to each other, and because we're soulmates and we understand each other.

I'm going to say something that's going to sound really, really freaky to a lot of people, but it's almost like you never get sick of masturbating. You can masturbate with yourself for the rest of your life and be perfectly happy. If I'm married to someone who's one of me and who's on the same team with me, we can have sex with each other and have it be perfectly natural and never get sick of it for the same reason. Isn't it an interesting thought?

Emily: That's an excellent thought. Nice analogy.

Scot: I don't think I've ever heard anybody put it that way maybe because far too few people have such a relationship. But I don't get sick of sex with you because I'm attracted to you. I don't get sick of masturbating because it's me who's getting the pleasure, it's me who's receiving the benefits. If I'm optimistic and I'm generous towards you, I want you to receive sexual benefits too. It feels just as good for me to give you sexual pleasure as it does for me to give

myself sexual pleasure. We're in this together, and voila, you don't get sick of the sex.

Emily: That is so very true, and I feel the same way about it. Now, there are some things that will get in the way of having very active sexual activity that you would like to have.

Scot: That's right.

Emily: And we can cover those. For example, if you have new children, you just birthed a few of them, mom is going to be exhausted. Even day-to-day life, maybe a change of job, extra stress.

Scot: Extra stress. Things on your mind.

Emily: Different things happening that really interfere with your energy level. You may want to be in the mood, but you just don't have the physical energy to carry it out or do anything with it and understanding that from both partners. Both partners need to understand what's going on when things aren't happening as frequently as we'd like to there in the bedroom.

Scot: Yes. I think, again, this is going to resonate with that whole idea of being soulmates, connecting, being honest and authentic with each other. You're not having to guess what's going on in the other person's mind because you married someone you connect with, someone who gets you.

Let's be frank. Even when you get a little older, your body may change, after a few kids are born, immediately after pregnancy, you may be more self-conscious about how you look and how you feel than you were when you originally got married. As the years go by

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even further, you may not be as sexy physically as you were when you were younger. All those things factor in, but because you love each other and because you're there for each other and because this isn't all about the sex per se, you get past it, you go through it. You and I believe in being at our best for each other. With the way you feed me, that's a little bit of a challenge.

Emily: I do love making you happy.

Scot: Right. But I think couples do owe it to each other to not let themselves go in terms of their health and their attractiveness.

Emily: That is true. Even though in some families people grow up not having open discussions about sex and having the freedom to express their feelings about it, it will feel uncomfortable discussing this with your spouse or with your partner. If I say I'm feeling a certain way or that my needs aren't being met or this or that's happening, maybe he won't like me anymore or maybe it will turn them off, the fear is what's going to happen if they understand or if they know what I'm thinking or feeling about what's going on in my life right now as it relates to sex.

Scot: I think no matter how well you know each other, no matter how much you get each other, no matter how great your sex life has historically been, it can be hard to talk about that because it can be embarrassing or it can be especially vulnerable. I mean, literally, when we're naked before each other, that is not only physically, but it's emotionally as well.

Emily: There could be so many things that will affect that. The way we were raised, trauma that might have happened that we need to discuss and figure out what can we do not to have triggers when those things happen. It could be a number of different things.

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Scot: Lots of times, even couples who get each other can go years upon years with skeletons in the closet that they just don't want to admit or come to grips with. We see even in the public domain both women and men who have been assaulted in the past and are ashamed of it and don't know how to come forward.

I think it's unreasonable to say, oh, that's going to be laid bare immediately as soon as you get to know each other and as soon as you connect, even in the best of relationships. We have to be good to each other there. We have to be welcoming. We have to be patient. We have to be nonjudgmental with each other in terms of those sexual things that may come up in the relationship. I think that's a wonderful cornerstone to getting through them when they happen.

Emily: Absolutely. That's the things that bond us together in the future.

Scot: Yeah, exactly. That brings us to dating and flirting after marriage. Now, not only are we having great sex well into our marriage and doing what it takes to keep that going and understanding why it's been kept going, like we just talked about, but that's not the only thing there is to a spark. Our spark not only as just friends, I mean, we're not in the just be friends zone together, but as best friends who are also hot for each other. We still go on dates, don't we?

Emily: We sure do.

Scot: I think that's important. That's a bit of, I don't know, a cliché in dating and relationship advice is "Oh, yeah, keep dating your spouse."

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Emily: Even if you can't go out on a regular basis due to finances or you can't find a babysitter, you can still have a date within the house. Put the kids to bed and that's your time together.

Scot: Yes, I think that's an important point. Yes, go out, get a babysitter and have date night together, go have a nice dinner, take a breather, reconnect in a place where you don't have to worry what you're saying because the kids might overhear it or whatever, although the table next door may overhear it, but heck with them, right?

Emily: Actually, they might have some interesting things to hear.

Scot: Yes, exactly. But you make a wonderful point in that you should still at least endeavor to make time for yourselves alone after the kids are in bed that you can share and connect. Watch a favorite TV show together. Have a glass of wine. Do what you're going to do. I think that's very integral to keeping the spark alive because then we have kind of our little secret. Not a dirty secret, not a secret that we're keeping from the kids or anything, but just we're reserving the right to have our own special sexual non-platonic relationship apart from kids in the house or apart from the travails and, well, the mundane things that happen in life. We just keep it going.

Emily: Just having that wonderful adult conversation.

Scot: Yes, exactly, which brings us to flirting. Now, unfortunately, so many people, Emily, don't even understand flirting before they get into a relationship, let alone how to keep doing it after they're into a relationship. So then on that note, understanding that plenty of people who'll be listening to this aren't necessarily familiar with the

rest of our work, I want to go ahead and give my definition of flirting, which I think is pretty good.

Flirting is any interaction between a man and a woman, and it's for sheer convenience that I'm assuming heterosexuality here by the way, any interaction between the masculine and the feminine, let's put it that way, that would feel awkward as hell if between two heterosexual members of the same gender or let's say two people who generally aren't of the same orientation where they would be eligible to attract each other. Like, for example, if there's a dude bagging my groceries, I'm not going to tease him and call him a troublemaker. That's something that I would only reserve for bringing out the playful in a woman because that's what men do with women when they're flirting.

Interestingly enough, you can also define romance in a similar way. Romance is any activity uniquely shared by people who can sexually polarize each other that would feel awkward as hell between people who can't. Like for example, I would never go on a moonlit walk hand in hand with another dude. It's just not going to happen. It's comedy to even think about.

Emily: Not in this universe.

Scot: Right. Romance is usually free of charge. It's not about what you buy. It's often unplanned and it's often in a spontaneous moment never to be recreated. We love flirting and being romantic. A lot of times, women are the ones who historically are known to be the ones who are interested in romance. When men present women with romantic interludes and romantic experiences, they reap the benefits of that. But I think men should learn to enjoy romance too because it can be lots of fun.

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Emily: There are parties for women when it relates to romance and toys and all that good stuff, but there needs to be the same thing for men.

Scot: We're talking about sex toy parties? That's romantic?

Emily: Well, they talk about how to spark romance or what you can do to make the other person feel good and how to touch and manipulate certain things to make things more exciting.

Scot: Well, yeah, you can have romantic experiences in the bedroom. But even when you're together, those uniquely sexually polarizing experiences, whatever they are.

Emily: Sure.

Scot: Moonlight, me playing the guitar for you, singing a special karaoke song to you that captures your heart.

Emily: Making me dinner.

Scot: Anything like that, anything that I would do for you because you're a woman and I'm sexually attracted to you should be romantic.

Emily: Absolutely.

Scot: Right. Back to flirting for a second because these things are related. Men and women tend to understand flirting differently from each other, don't they?

Emily: Yes, they do.

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Scot: For men, it's often binary. Either I'm blatantly telegraphing sexual interest in this woman or I'm not. Whereas women can flirt with each other, women can flirt with their children, women can flirt with their dog, women can happily flirt with guys they have no sexual interest in at all. Because for women, it's kind of like a dial. You turn it up. You start at one with maybe --

Emily: Nurturing.

Scot: Nurturing or just acknowledging that there's a male presence. When a guy opens a door for you, you would go, "Thank you, kind sir."

Emily: Oh, thank you.

Scot: Exactly. That's a flirt number one. Now, a man may take that simple acknowledgement of his masculinity from a feminine viewpoint and think, "Oh, she's into me. She wants to have sex with me." But that may be not at all what the woman is thinking. But I would say that what happens is if a man understands that women ramp up this flirting, it's a great gift to us. Because even when we're single, we can start off with a little playful gesture that shows that you understand that she's a woman and you're a man, like saying she has a pretty name or just smiling at her when you wouldn't be smiling at other guys at the grocery store, making eye contact with her.

We saw a wonderful example where the guy kind of tilts his head up and then gives an eyebrow flash and flashes a smile to a girl. It was caught on camera during a college football game. Even though the camera was on the football player's face in a close-up at a time when he didn't really realize it was happening, it was a candid shot, everybody in the world watching television knew he had seen a girl

and was making that gesture towards someone female. That's what I'm talking about. That's the simple kind of flirt that women appreciate. You've seen the video and you're smiling this endearing smile.

Emily: He is so cute.

Scot: See, that's what melts women's hearts. They're not thinking about sex yet. They're just thinking, "Oh, there's a boy and he's getting my attention." It is. It's innocent.

Emily: We love male attention.

Scot: Right. Now, when I take guys out on Ten-Plus Lives, and some of you may not know this, but I'm taking guys who are single out in field teaching them how to flirt with women and I'm happily married. Why in the world would you allow this? Because I'm teaching guys how to flirt like women. I'm teaching guys how to get women's attention, charm them and create a situation where they can dial it up further if they want it, right?

Emily: That's right.

Scot: Let me give a sample of how this may work. Let's say you go to a grocery store and a woman is handing out samples of something that's very caloric. The guy goes, "Oh, what kind of trouble are you going to get me into?" The woman may say, "Well, I'm not going to get you in any trouble at all." The guy may go, "Oh, you look like a complete troublemaker to me." The woman may say, "Well, if you only knew." The guy may say, "Well, are you trying to tell me you get into trouble above and beyond giving people cupcakes for free?" "Well, I don't know. Maybe you're just going to have to find out."

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Then the guy may say back to her, "Well, that means you're going to have to give me your phone number so we can find out after hours." The woman may say, "Well, now you got me all excited about the kind of trouble you're going to get me into." The guy may say, "Well, you should be excited." The woman is like, "Why is that?" "Because I'm going to give you the best orgasms you've ever experienced in your entire life." The woman may say, "Oh, I'm already wet."

Now, that's a completely fictional conversation. Chances are, very, very good that it won't happen in that order that quickly. But do you see how it got ramped up? It started innocuous, and over the course of that exchange, it went from a one to a ten in intensity. That's how women understand flirting. Women can cut it off at a two. Women can cut it off at a three. They can playfully talk to guys about being troublemakers and they understand, okay, we probably thought the other person was interesting, but it's not going any further. Men would love to get straight to the part where, "I'd love to give you orgasms," and the woman goes, "I'm already wet." That's what men would love to do. But men are, generally speaking, misunderstanding how to melt women's hearts and make them really hot for you. When men understand this, Emily, life gets much better for them, doesn't it?

Emily: It does. You can enjoy life at its best when that happens. Getting to that point takes time. It won't happen in one conversation.

Scot: Usually.

Emily: Right. This is over the course of time, and that just shows how that just increases over time. Now, a woman, if she's married

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or in a relationship, she's going to cut that off or cut that conversation or dial that down.

Scot: When she's talking to a guy she's not married to.

Emily: Exactly.

Scot: Right. Okay.

Emily: Having that friendly little banter that's innocent is one thing. When it starts to get a little too far, then she realizes she'll dial it back.

Scot: Right. Maybe put the kibosh on it even. But in the context of your marriage, when we're talking about keeping the spark alive, oh man, this is pure gold what we're talking about.

Emily: Well, you can even have that conversation when you're married or living together if you're at work. Let's say if you're the sample lady, you show up and have this wild conversation, as if you didn't know each other.

Scot: The more creative you are, the better.

Emily: Well, we've been where we've gone shopping and you come around and bump my shopping cart.

Scot: Right. Or even earlier today, we were in the grocery store. You got there before I did. And you were, coincidentally enough to this conversation, getting a sample.

Emily: Of course.

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Scot: At the grocery store. Probably why I came up with the example I gave previously. I just came up and said, "Make sure you give her an extra helping because, boy, she's really cute and sexy." The woman looked at me like, "Huh?" Then you laughed and gave me a kiss, and she knew the jig was up.

Even our first kiss when we were just getting to know each other was instigated by text message. We were sitting at a counter together, having something to eat, and I very rudely picked up my phone and started texting someone and you were looking at me like, "Why would he do that?" But then I casually put it down after I was done and I said, "Excuse me, where were we?" Then your phone.

Emily: About five minute later.

Scot: Yeah. Back in 2006, it took a couple of minutes.

Emily: It took a while.

Scot: Yeah, to get a text. You picked it up and you read it, and you realized it was from me and I'll never forget your face. You were trying to suppress this joyful little giggle. Then you kind of kept a straight face and started texting me back. My text had said --

Emily: "I think it's time for our kiss."

Scot: Right. Then you texted me back something like, "Most definitely." Then I kissed you wordlessly.

Emily: After you got my text.

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Scot: After I got the text. We're having this out-of-band conversation, kind of a meta-level conversation over text message while we're keeping prim and proper in the actual words we're saying to each other.

Emily: On date number two.

Scot: Right, on date number two. We kissed each other, and then I picked up my phone and I said, "Very nice, you're an excellent kisser." You got that text a couple minutes later, and then you texted me something else and it was very cute. You can continue doing things like that your entire life. I mean, why the hell not? Emily and I go through life whacking each other on the butt with spoons.

Emily: While cooking.

Scot: Grabbing each other when the kids aren't looking, saying horny little things to each other. We'll do the flirting from scale one to scale ten, and we'll ramp it up and we'll ramp it back, and the kids will walk in the room and we'll have to act like nothing was happening. All of those things happen and more.

Emily: Oh, yeah.

Scot: All the time.

Emily: Or when you call me and I answer, "You missed me, didn't you?"

Scot: Exactly. We're flirting with each other on levels one to ten constantly. I think that's a huge, huge linchpin towards why we still keep the spark alive. We still like each other. We still like flirting. It

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never became old hat to us. Of course, if you have a sense of humor, if you have creativity, if you use your brain, if you're always looking for new and exciting ways to flirt, you'll be able to come up with limitless ways to flirt over the course of however many years you're blessed to be together on the face of this Earth.

Emily: That's right.

Scot: I think another thing that should be said here is this happens, or I should say it's facilitated by liking each other. I want you to giggle. Like I said, I live for that giggle. It's my favorite giggle in the world. I want you to be happy. I want you to smile. I want your day to be brightened.

Emily: You do a good job of it.

Scot: Men who go around brightening women's day in general with level one, level two flirts. Guys who understand this are beloved by women. They make them feel safe and comfortable and they charm women. They make women laugh, and when women are laughing, they're having fun.

Emily: They realize that they are being loved and they realize that they're safe.

Scot: And they're being acknowledged. Exactly. I do this for you because you're the queen of all the women in my life. Why would I somehow forsake flirting with you? Why would I somehow forsake making your day brighter? That just doesn't make any sense in the context of a relationship where we love each other and indeed like each other. Yeah, guys, when you get a woman in your life, it should be not work at all to try to figure out how to flirt with her. There's that word again, work, in a relationship.

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But you should be looking for new and exciting ways to brighten her day, and it should brighten your day to do it. Store them away when you think of them. When you find a way to flirt with her and she's right in front of you, don't waste any time. Do it. Make it happen. I think that's just a huge, huge way to keep a spark alive.

Another one, and we talked about complacency as time goes by and how absolutely fatal that is to this spark. It's like throwing water on the eternal flame. Some people are complacent right from the get-go. I mean, their first date is Netflix and chill, their second date is "Well, what should we do? How about Netflix and chill?" They're going to Netflix and chill with each other for the next 50 years without any deviation.

One of the things we want to tell couples to do, Emily, is to mix it up from the very beginning. Set that precedent that there's going to be adventures, there's going to be variety. We're not going to get in a rut of doing the same things. If you ever do find yourself doing the same things and getting into that rut, do something to change it, because that is the KOD, the kiss of death to this relationship.

Emily: In this day and age, that's so easy to do. All you have to do is go online, look up and see what's going on in your city. There will be a calendar that will tell you what's going on this month and next month and you can plan ahead. There will be something that the two of you will love to do. If it's not your town, it would be the next-door town and the town before that and the town after that.

Scot: And if it's not something you love to do and she loves to do it?

Emily: Do it.

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Scot: Next time, do something you love to do and she's maybe indifferent towards. What's going to happen there is you're going to end up introducing each other to all sorts of new and exciting things. You alluded before that I introduced you to BMX. You've introduced me to RVing.

Emily: Oh, yes.

Scot: All kinds of things that, go figure, we ended up liking because we're a lot alike. We didn't have to come pre-equipped with all these common interests.

Emily: That's right. We just introduced each other to new stuff, and it makes your life more broader, more fulfilled.

Scot: Yeah. Complacency rhymes with laziness. If you're getting complacent in your relationship, if you're not going on new adventures, if you're not trying new things, if you're not even getting the hell out of the house, you're taking your relationship for granted is what you're doing, and that stems from being lazy.

Emily: Well, you're also taking yourself for granted and not doing something that's good for your soul and getting out there and renewing and revitalizing it and giving it some energy because your relationship needs you to have that vibe, that vitality to ignite it.

Scot: Exactly. If you're sitting around being lazy, you're going to lose interest in just about everything. Going out, breathing the air, having a little bit of an adventure, whether it's the next ZIP code or the next country like we've done.

Emily: Or even a simple hike through the park.

Scot: Exactly. You can think small in the near term. You can think large and make sure you go out on a big vacation every year. All of those things will bring you closer and all of those things add variety. Now, that's not to say that, hey, you know what? Couples do absolutely bring their own interests into the relationship. Some of those interests will become our interests when we introduce them to each other.

Emily: And some not.

Scot: And some may have to go away.

Emily: Yeah. You can't join me for Bunco.

Scot: Well, that's something you uniquely are going to enjoy with--

Emily: My girlfriends.

Scot: Other women, yeah, in the neighborhood. Yet, there are also things that life just suddenly doesn't have time for anymore. Things that you used to do, things that used to be important. Now that you're in this relationship, there's just not enough hours in the day. Although it may be kind of a melancholy feeling not to be so interested in those things anymore, if you're honest with yourself and say to yourself, "For some reason I'm just not interested in this anymore now that I have this relationship," I think you can run with that. There are things you used to do that weirdly you don't do anymore. You used to be interested in ice skating.

Emily: That's right.

Scot: And rock climbing.

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Emily: Night clubbing.

Scot: Yeah. It just never came up. Certainly, in my life, there are things that are similar. There are things I was interested in doing that I'm not doing anymore. Not necessarily anything prurient or untoward, just our interests seem more fun now. The interests that I introduced you to that you take to like a duck to water and vice versa become our interests, and our interests seem like a lot of fun.

Emily: Absolutely. That's the wonderful thing is that you can create your new life together. It doesn't have to be the old life and you have to take on your significant other's life or they don't have to take on your life. You actually learn to create one together separate from what used to be.

Scot: Yes, exactly. Since you're soulmates and since you've connected to each other, you're going to like what you create. It's like writing a history book together.

Emily: The story of us.

Scot: Yes. That's kind of a romantic thought because it's not something I would do with another dude, right? There you go.

Emily: No, it's not. Not unless you're hunting, the story of our hunting trip.

Scot: Well, that's a little bit different. You women also like to scrapbook your stuff.

Emily: Oh, yes.

Scot: That's not a dude thing.

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I'd be remiss if I didn't mention the whole idea of inside jokes and inside information within a family because that just brings you closer. We went on a certain trip and we saw a very frustrated tour guide. He finally got so frustrated with his tour group who wouldn't move forward that he finally said in an Egyptian accent, "What can I say? Go!"

Emily: Go!

Scot: That has become an inside joke in our whole family. When someone won't move and someone just won't get out of the way and someone just won't get to the car or put on their shoes, we'll raise our hands exactly the way he did and go, "What can I say? Go!" Everybody in the family knows exactly what we mean. Now, of course, everybody else in the world would look at us with one eyebrow raised and go, "Okay."

Emily: That's weird.

Scot: Yeah. But we know exactly what we're talking about. That's the kind of signaling within a family that makes you closer. It makes you feel like you're part of a tribe. You know things, there are little secret things, there are little things we do.

One of the things we do in our family that it would be weird to everybody else is we have this thing where we stroke each other's bridge of our noses. Like I'll just reach over and stroke the bridge of your nose up and down.

Emily: Like you are right now.

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Scot: Right, like I'm doing. I don't know any other family that does that, but everyone in this family sees that as sort of like a butterfly kiss or an Eskinose.

Emily: It's affectionate and it's just lovely.

Scot: Yeah. And it's ours.

Emily: The kids just melt when we do that.

Scot: And it's our thing.

Emily: It is.

Scot: Right, uniquely. Inside jokes, little inside things you share just between your family, that doesn't make you weird; that makes you more connected. All of these things contribute to keeping the spark alive.

Emily: And it's beautiful.

Scot: Yeah, definitely. My hope for people listening, for all of you who are listening, is that while we're not going to be able to cover every nuance of how to keep every spark alive, you have to look alive, you have to feel alive, you have to be alive in order to want things to stay alive. So make that effort.

Emily: That comes from making the decision within ourselves. We can't blame the other party and say, "Well, I would, but he doesn't want to and why should I even bother."

Scot: Yeah. You have to mutually value your relationship. It's like valuing a classic car that you have. If you value that classic car and

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you want to keep it around, you're going to do the upkeep on it, you're going to wax it, you're going to take care of it. This is kind of like waxing your relationship and changing the oil, if I may bring up such a masculine analogy. Did that turn you on?

Emily: Yes.

Scot: Okay. Just checking.

Emily: Well, the great thing is that decision has to come from ourselves.

Scot: Both of us.

Emily: It starts with me first, ourselves. When I say me, I mean I. Everybody is an I. More than one I in this relationship.

Scot: Both I's in this relationship, binocular. It's a binocular view.

Emily: Right. We both have to take the "I" viewpoint. I have to make the decision that I want this great relationship and I want to do what needs to be done to make it happen.

Scot: Indeed.

Emily: These things are going to be fun and exciting, but sometimes it's hard to initiate it and sometimes it's easier to do nothing. We just have to push ourselves, like I just need to make myself do it, get out there, and once I get in the mood, it will be great.

Scot: It's like that old time management principle of things being important but not urgent. This is an important thing, but it isn't

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something that's going to burn a hole in your life with immediate urgency.

Emily: So we tend to put it on the backburner.

Scot: Right. But keeping the spark alive, if that spark starts fading, it's going to do it slowly over time until --

Emily: It's like boiling a frog.

Scot: Like boiling the frog. You're not even going to realize it's happened. It's just one day you wake up and it's gone.

Emily: Right. Then you have two people going, "I don't even know you and I don't really love you anymore."

Scot: Meanwhile, a bunch of urgent unimportant things have been attended to, like the phone ringing and the kids having to go here and, "Oh, my gosh, I got to go to the grocery store and pick up this one thing I forgot to get," and we forget to do those things that are upkeep on our relationship. Again, it shouldn't be work. It should be something that's integrated with me.

Emily: Well, breathing isn't work. Is breathing work for you?

Scot: No. Well, maybe after I've run a few miles.

Emily: Relationship should be like breathing. It should just feel refreshing. It should feel good. When you're doing these things proactively, it may be difficult in the beginning, it may feel unnatural in the beginning because it's not routine. When something is not routine and we're not used to it, it feels weird and awkward, and we want to go back to what feels normal and safe. Even if your partner

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is not quite on board with you, encourage them, "This is for us. Let's do this. You need it as much as I do."

Scot: We need it together.

Emily: Exactly.

Scot: Yeah. Anytime in any relationship where someone is basically sitting there complacently saying, "Okay, you take care of it. entertain me. Make this relationship work. It's your fault that this relationship isn't working." That portends certain doom, I think.

Emily: It does.

Scot: You have to take responsibility for this and indeed every part of a good relationship.

Emily: Every once in a while, sometimes we need that encouragement. I know you've done that for me when I don't feel like going out on my bike to exercise, and you're like, "Come on, you need fresh air. Let's go." It feels great and wonderful. We're all coming back all happy and I'm like, "I'm so thankful that you encouraged me."

Scot: Right, because I'm acting in your best interest. I care because I like you.

Emily: And I like you.

Scot: Again, we could talk a lot more about this and a lot about the nuances, but the key here is yes, make sure you pay attention to this and look for those opportunities that you can uniquely flirt with

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each other, keep that spark alive, have your own adventures and write your own history book. Not ours, but yours.

Emily: Your story.

Scot: Exactly. Until the next audio when we talk to you. This is Scot McKay.

Emily: And this is Emily McKay.

Scot: Be good out there.

Emily: And have fun.

Scot McKay Emily McKay



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