

3 Ways to Maintain the Family Dynamic During the COVID Pandemic

So, I know I'm not the only one who was anxiously awaiting that first episode of the Michelle Obama podcast when it dropped right? I'm still trying to figure out how the woman was able to accomplish five lifetimes' worth of goals, maintain the love and intimacy in her marriage and raise two amazing daughters. Hat's off to you Michelle because a lot of us (me) are out here struggling. The podcast eventually dropped and of course, I loved it. However, of all the profound things that have been said in the last few weeks, the thing that has stood out to me the most was when Michelle discussed how she maintained some sort of family dynamic during this pandemic. When the days are all running together with many of us still working from home and now virtually schooling our children, it's become easy to just drag through them and slink past the members of our household without much interaction. We actually have to work at maintaining the connections with our family in a way that we haven't had to work for in the past. Is it impossible? No. But it does require just a bit of creativity. Here are a few unique ways that you can maintain the light, love, and intimacy in your family and home.

Change Your Expectations

This one might seem a little obvious, but it's worth putting in here. While in this pandemic, we just can't do things the way that we used to. Even though businesses are beginning to open again, many are still hesitant to get out and want to minimize exposure as much as possible. All of the free concerts, outdoor plays, and amazing events Austin is known for, have pretty much been canceled for 2020. A lot of us, myself included, are still mourning the loss of those events. So the first thing we need to do is grieve that loss and move on to finding solutions. Those things may not be coming back for this year, so it's time to change our expectations. Once we do that our eyes will open to new possibilities.

Your Romantic Getaway is Not Canceled (It Might Just Need to Happen in Your Own Home)

So you and your partner had this incredibly romantic trip planned for just the two of you right? It was going to be all strawberries and champagne in a honeymoon suite somewhere away from Austin and then COVID hit. Does that mean the romance is canceled? It doesn't have to. It's easy enough to still get the champagne and the strawberries (hello, HEB Curbside!) The only thing missing is the suite. Why not take a cue from the gorgeous Sharon Richards (Mom of Olympic Track star Sanya Richards-Ross and fellow Austinite) and have a sexy sleepover in your guest bedroom? Mrs. Richards (Instagram: @madukesssharon) shared on her Instagram, a date night she and her hubby spent in the guest room of their house to change up the scenery. Throw a few rose petals on the comforter that you spent so much time picking out, bring the champagne glasses, and rekindle the romance at home.

Be a Tourist in Your Own City and Support Local Business

Okay, it may not look like it now, but Austin used to be home to local mom and pop businesses all over the city. Big tech and other corporations came in and brought in big business. But that's not to say all the small local businesses are gone. They are still here and now is the perfect time to support them. If your family used to spend two Saturdays a month taking the kids to see a movie, but you don't feel comfortable with that now, it's a good time to play tourist in your own city. Take a drive with the family to a part of town that you may not have spent much time in before or maybe a small suburb just outside of Austin. Manor or Kyle, are good options. Play games in the car sans cell phones (you know like some of us did in the '90s), and be on the lookout for interesting small shops, food trailers, outdoor markets with local vendors or other businesses you may not have seen before. When you change your focus and keep your options open you might just stumble across a local gem.

This is definitely a unique time, but it doesn't have to mean an end (or even a pause) to creating memories or for the growth of our families. Instead, it has provided us with a wonderful opportunity to see things in a way that we may not have seen them before and maybe even a chance to begin new traditions.