

The Big Merge: 3 Tips for Moving In Together



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It's time for the big MERGE! You finally found The One and you are moving in together or getting married. Exciting, thrilling and... bumpy? When two adults decide to come together to create one life, there can be a few bumps along the way.

Even the most compatible partners will still have differences when it comes to habits, interests, and yes, even decorating taste. Now that you share a bathroom, how do you negotiate those small and sometimes ugly discrepancies while keeping your bond strong? It's easy when you keep in mind your UNIFYING VISION.

Here's a secret. Most couples create damage to their union when they forget the big picture and, instead, focus on nitty-gritty details. Before long, you can ruin an entire weekend shouting about who takes out the garbage, whether his ugly old lamp gets to stay, and if you can read in bed while the other person tries to go to sleep.

So, how do you find the right compromise on all of the little differences that threaten to weaken your love? Remember, it's never really about the little things. When we argue about the small things, it's really the big hidden issues that we are playing tug of war over, such as feeling loved, trusted or respected.

The solution: Identify the underlying issue and bring your focus back to your Unifying Vision for your relationship.

Let's take a peek into how to make this happen.

Step 1: Create Your Unifying Vision

When you set up house together it's the perfect time to explicitly commit to the vision you have for your lives together. Sit down and take some notes on the biggest question of all: What do we really want our life together to look like?

Brainstorm on such topics as:

- What are the 5 top values or attributes that guide the way we want to interact with each other? For example: loving, trustworthy, respectful, honest, reliable...
- What are the 3 most important qualities we want our free time together/activities to embody? For example: novelty, adventure, relaxation, intellectual stimulation...
- What characteristics do we want our home/living space and routines to embody to support our bond? For example: organized, cozy, bright, romantic...

Once you have the big picture in mind, little disputes become much easier to resolve by referring back to what you agreed *really* matters.

Step 2: Identify the Underlying Concern

When a conflict crops up, before you get embroiled in your stances, take a deep breathe and step back. Ask yourself or each other: What is really bothering me here? Which of my deepest held values or needs is being triggered by this situation?

It could be that your argument about him leaving the toothpaste cap off is really about not feeling heard. Or maybe his need to be on time is rubbing your more care-free nature the wrong way.

Step 3: Decide Based on your Unifying Vision

Once you know what is really going on, go back to the big picture: the vision you and your partner have for your lives. Based on what's most important to you both, the things you do agree on – has something shifted in the way you feel about this difference?

Typically, once you truly understand what makes your partner tick, the solution comes easily. For example, once you know that your partner values reliability over all else – you'll be able to commit to being on time regularly. Or, if your partner knows how important it is for you to feel supported, it'll be easier for him to take out the trash without being hounded.

By always stepping back from any perceived difference, you can usually find what you both have in common. And once you step back onto the same team with the same goals, winning happens naturally!