

Celebrating our anniversary at Fogo's

Written by Marcia Humphrey
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I can hardly believe it, but December marked my 18th year of marriage. It feels like only yesterday when my husband, Lonnie, and I met on the campus of Michigan State University. Now, 18 years, three kids, and seven moves later, we still like each other. At the time that I met my husband, I was dating someone else, but I thought Lonnie was such a good friend because he was so easy to talk to and so much fun. I even confessed to a girlfriend, "I wish that boyfriends could be like real friends."

Being immature and naïve (read young and dumb), I had no idea that I had stumbled upon the philosophy that should have been guiding my dating decisions all along. In 18 years we have grown both as individuals and as a couple. The path of our life together has consisted of many twists, turns, and bumpy roads, yet through it all one thing has remained constant; our friendship. Rather than going out buying one another expensive gifts, we decided to celebrate our 18-year friendship at an exciting restaurant in downtown Minneapolis' City Center that we had never before visited. We had heard many great reviews of Fogo de Chao (fo-go dèe shoun) and believe me, they were all true. So if you are looking for a unique place to celebrate a special occasion, make a reservation at Fogo's.

Before I go on and on about Fogo de Chao, www.Fogodechao.com, I have to be truthful and tell you that this is not a cheap meal, but my husband and I both agreed that it was a great value, especially if you have a big appetite. (See, I eat way more than my husband-for real. You can even ask my kids!) At \$46.50 a pop during dinnertime, this Brazilian Steakhouse provides an endless spread of quality meats, including a gigantic salad bar, fit for a king. After we were seated in this beautiful restaurant, we were greeted by a waiter, who explained that not just one person would be our server, but the entire restaurant staff.

Then we each were given a disk: -red, for "stop," on one side and green, for "go," on the other. We were instructed to flip the disk to the appropriate color to let the chefs know whether or not you were ready for tableside carving of one of the fifteen different cuts of meat slow roasted on skewers. Seeing all the chefs scurrying around carrying big chunks of meat, was very fascinating-I felt as if I was getting a meal and a show. As various servers passed by the table to check on us they would ask if we were celebrating a special occasion. "It's our anniversary!" we eagerly responded. At the end of our meal, we were given a large piece of chocolate cake, which I took home to the kids after taking a few bites. After our dinner, I learned that lunch is served Monday through Friday until 2:30 pm and it only cost \$26.50! (Okay, that's still pricey too, but better than \$46.50!) The next time we go, it will definitely be during the lunch hour, but we were really impressed by the outstanding service, excellent food, and entertaining presentation.

Even when you are living on a tight budget, it is still vital that you properly acknowledge and celebrate the most important events in life. In fact, it's crucial to the health of your marriage and all your valuable relationships. The one thing that I can always count on from my husband is a special greeting card. He always takes the time to look through all the cards to find the one that best expresses his feelings toward me, and in my mind, that's more valuable than diamond

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earrings any day.

Our meal, about \$120 total, was still much less than the earrings he could have bought me or the flat-screen that I could have bought him. We shared a special time together, and it was perfect for us. When you know that an upcoming event might require you to drop some extra cash to make it more memorable, just plan ahead. For two weeks or so, give up your usual little treats-Friday movie at the theater, lunch at that cute restaurant near your job, or every morning drive-through breakfast. Celebrating love, friendship, and marriage need not be super fancy or extra costly, just really special. Regardless of how you choose to recognize those milestones, remember to ENJOY!

Marcia Humphrey is an interior decorator and home stager who specializes in achieving high style at a low cost. A native of Michigan, she and her husband Lonnie have three children.