



**T**here comes a time in a long-term relationship when your texts go from: "Just cracking open the wine, can't wait to see you ;)" to: "Can you pick up some loo roll?" In fact, a scroll through my messages to my husband Rob, 34, a business journalist, showed a depressing number centred around what we need from the shop. With a baby on the way, it's hard to imagine our exchanges are going to get any more exciting. But luckily there's an app or two to help with that. From scheduling chores to saucing up your sex life, we tried some out...



**THE ONE TO HELP YOU RESOLVE ARGUMENTS**

While we're not ones for heated rows, our minor disputes do cause resentment, so we downloaded Fix A Fight (£4.99, iTunes) in the hope it would help resolve them. We chose a fairly mundane disagreement: Rob putting his coat on the sofa rather than hanging it up, which drives me mad. First, the app asked us to rate our feelings of frustration, indignation and exasperation on a scale from 1-5 (I chose 3), then we had to share our views without interrupting each other. So far, so good, but there were more steps to complete, including breathing exercises and verbal commitments. On reflection, Rob was probably right that it wasn't the end of the world, while he conceded if we applied his logic to everything in the flat, the place would be in disarray. By the time he promised to hang his coat up, I got the giggles. It all seemed so ridiculous over something so small, but at least we saw what a daft argument it was.

# CAN THESE APPS REIGNITE YOUR RELATIONSHIP?

If you thought smartphones were romance-killers, think again. Writer Franki Cookney, 33, and husband Rob sync their mobiles and put five apps to the test

**THE ONE TO HELP YOU GET ORGANISED**

Couple (free, Google Play, iTunes) allows you to share to-do lists and schedule dates, as well as send each other messages, sketches and pictures. The ThumbKiss feature causes both your phones to vibrate if you touch your screens at the same time. This is apparently popular with couples in long-distance relationships, as it creates the illusion of physical touch, but for me at my desk at home and Rob in his office a few miles away, it felt a bit silly. I added

in our birthdays, wedding anniversary and our baby's due date. After that, I wasn't sure what to do. The app only logs dates and sets reminders - it doesn't display a month-to-month calendar, which I found irritating. Plus, given that we already use Google Calendar to share events, this doesn't offer anything new. However, the to-do lists were handy, as we could both add items to the same shopping list. While I was tempted to keep the app for sketching hilarious pics, it wasn't enough of a draw (geddit?!), so I deleted it.

**THE ONE TO HELP YOU DIVVY UP CHORES**

At £45 a year, HomeZada (Google Play, iTunes) comes at a price for helping you schedule all your household chores - from ironing to repair jobs and big tasks such as cleaning the windows - and set deadlines and alerts. It also lets you plan, budget and manage home-improvement projects and keep track of bills. Maintenance suggestions such as replacing loft insulation didn't apply to our tiny flat, but I was determined to persevere as we're both guilty of ignoring chores. I opened up the calendar and scheduled replacing light bulbs for the following Saturday. The weekend rolled around, the alert popped up and... we both ignored it. For us, laundry gets done when we need it, bins get taken out when they're full, so trying to schedule it felt pointless. But if you really want to get the most out of the app and take advantage of its budgeting and maintenance features, you'd need to take a full inventory of your home, then input details about upkeep and costs. It's time-consuming, and for a couple who can't even get round to changing their light bulbs, this was clearly never going to happen.

**THE ONE TO HELP YOU SPICE UP YOUR SEX LIFE**

If things are a bit boring between the sheets, Kindu (free, Google Play, iTunes) suggests romantic and sexy activities that you and your partner select yes, no or maybe to. It then reveals the ones you agreed on, which is a lot of fun. The ideas, such as watching another couple having sex or hiring a professional dominatrix, were far more imaginative than I expected. Plus, seeing which ones Rob said yes to was exciting (no surprise he turned down his 'n' hers leather outfits). It also sparked some sexy conversations, which was a turn-on. While we have a fairly healthy sex life, we're aware that will change when our baby arrives, so it's good to know there are ways to keep the spark alive.

**THE ONE TO HELP YOU REDISCOVER EACH OTHER**

Love Maps (£1.99, iTunes or £1.68, Google Play) asks questions about your partner that you answer together. We raced through what our favourite things are, but then they got harder, such as: "What is missing from your partner's life?" Wow! When it asked Rob what I'd do if I wasn't a writer, he answered "something in textiles", which is something I've always fantasised about but didn't think I'd shared, so that was nice to hear. Although he was a bit miffed when I couldn't remember his fantasy career - drumming in a band. Not all of them were as thought-provoking (your other half's National Insurance number, anyone?). Even so, it reminds you that asking deep and meaningful questions is a great and fun way to reconnect.

**THE VERDICT**

Getting organised with Couple's to-do lists and shared shopping list definitely helped us to stay on top of life admin - especially for Rob, who will happily admit that he is the forgetful one. However, we ditched HomeZada as it felt like all the scheduling added complications rather than reduced them.

When it came to reinvesting in our relationship, Fix A Fight was worth having to hand, and we'll definitely keep Kindu for fun. But the one we found most valuable was Love Maps, as it got us out of the usual "How was your day?" rut. For the first time in years, we're talking about something other than whose turn it is to buy the bog roll - and that can only be a good thing. **F**