



# Our “It Factor”

## Step-by-Step Instructions:

1. Ask the couples how many are familiar with the term the “it factor.” This term has been used to refer to individuals or celebrities in describing the indefinable something that makes that person special. The “it factor” is subjective and can be a matter of taste, background, and viewpoint. “It” might be that the person radiates charisma and charm, has attractive personality qualities, or has endearing traits.
2. Tell the group that every couple relationship has an “it factor” — something special that makes the relationship unique. This can be a quality or trait of one or both partners, an inside joke or memory based on a significant moment in the past, or a tradition or routine that is enjoyable to both. “It” can be the spark that started the relationship (something he or she said or did that made falling in love possible) or the glue that now keeps it all together (something that he or she now does that keeps the love strong). It can have something to do with sexual or emotional intimacy, or the fun that the partners have with each other. Sometimes “it” is only known to the couple in the relationship, but often the bonding that the “it factor” brings to a couple is evident to others who look at the relationship from the outside (even if they don’t know what the “it factor” is). Whatever story, scenario, inside joke, special name, or tradition that links each couple together is the “it factor” for them. The fact that “it” is so unique to each couple is exactly what makes the relationship special.
3. Have the couples refer to the *It Factor Worksheet* and, without discussing with their partners, write down the answer to 1a. (Note that the “it factor” can be different for each member of the relationship.)
4. Ask the participants to now turn to their partners and share what they listed on item 1a. Tell them to write down their partner’s “it factor” on item 1b of the worksheet. Once each has had the opportunity to share, ask how many had the same “it factor” as their partner. Ask how many listed different “it factors,” and then see if any participants are willing to share their “it factor” with the group. Accept a few responses.

**Group Size:** All

**Time Needed:** 20 minutes

**Goal:** To assist National Guard couples in creating strategies for keeping a special and intimate relationship while separated for military duty.

**Audience:** National Guard couples, typically before deployment

**Special Considerations:** None

### Materials Needed:

- ✓ One copy of the worksheet for each participant and something to write with
- ✓ One *Our Commitment* card for each participant (preferably on nice cardstock)

5. Tell the participants that just because they will be separated for military duty, they don't have to forget or suspend building on what makes them unique as a couple. In fact, a great opportunity exists with the separation to do things to keep that "it factor" strong and special. Tell the couples that while separation in a relationship is never desired, many National Guard couples have found that the time can still be used to foster closeness.
6. Have the participants refer to their worksheet and answer 2a and 2b without sharing with their partner. Give them a few moments for them to complete the assignment.
7. Ask the participants to turn to their partner and share what they wrote. Give them a few moments to share. Knowing that some couples may have listed very personal things, ask if there are any "PG-rated" examples that they are willing to share.
8. Have the participants refer again to their worksheet and answer question 3. Give them a few moments to complete the question.
9. Ask the participants to turn to their partners and share the sentence that they wrote.
10. Give a copy of the *Our Commitment* card to each participant. Have each person complete the "I Commit to My Partner" section by following the directions on the card. Now have the couples exchange cards and write their commitment again in the "My Partner Commits to Me" section. After each has completed it, ask the couples to exchange cards so that they each have their original cards. This way each partner will have a copy of their commitments to each other. Encourage the participants to keep their copy in a visible place (such as near a bed or the bathroom mirror) so during the military separation, they will be reminded of and can follow through with their commitments.

### **Process:**

Depending on the group dynamic and time available, the moment can be enhanced if each participant or a few are willing to read their commitment statement to their partner aloud. However, their *Our Commitment* card might be personal and some might not be fully comfortable sharing. So you may want to ask for general comments and feedback from the group on any insights they gained in this session and how they can apply what they learned during the separation.

### **Conclude:**

Give additional encouragement that while separation may be difficult, the relationship can be sustained and even enhanced during a military separation. Express your confidence in the couples that the things they learned here can help.



# The “It Factor” Worksheet

Every relationship has at least one thing that makes it special — the “it factor.” This “it” can be anything that keeps the relationship special. “It” can be events or experiences that began in the dating period, subtleties or qualities of each other and/or the relationship, inside jokes, or commonalities that bind the couple together. Sometimes “it” is only known to the couple in the relationship.

1. Name at least one “it factor” in your relationship:
  - a. For You: \_\_\_\_\_
  - b. For Your Partner (write down what your partner tells you): \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
  
2. Brainstorm up to three things that you and your partner can do during the separation to continue to foster the “it.”
  - a. For your “it factor” (item 1a above):
    - \_\_\_\_\_
    - \_\_\_\_\_
    - \_\_\_\_\_
  
  - b. For your partners “it factor” (item 1b above)
    - \_\_\_\_\_
    - \_\_\_\_\_
    - \_\_\_\_\_
  
3. Write one sentence to describe what you are willing to do during the separation to continue to contribute to the “it factors” you and your partner listed. (Sentences can start with phrases like “I promise to...” or “I commit to...” or “I will...”). This sentence can apply to either or both partner’s “it factors.” \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Congratulations! You have made the first step to keeping your “it factor,” even from a distance. Remember that during the times you are apart, you can still invest in and build upon what makes your relationship special.



# Our Commitment

## I Commit to My Partner

I \_\_\_\_\_, promise to

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**so we can keep our relationship strong  
while we are apart**

\_\_\_\_\_

(Signed)

\_\_\_\_\_

(Date)

## My Partner Commits to Me

I \_\_\_\_\_, promise to

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**so we can keep our relationship strong  
while we are apart**

\_\_\_\_\_

(Signed)

\_\_\_\_\_

(Date)