

*The seven*

**7.** Conversations every couple  
should have *before* renovating.

*A small, honest evening's work. The seven conversations most couples put off, and why the ones that feel boring are usually the ones worth having first.*

THIRTY MINUTES · NO PHONES · ONE EVENING

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**Reno Together.**

THE COUPLE'S RENOVATION SYSTEM

[renotogether.co.uk](http://renotogether.co.uk)

Most renovation arguments don't start with something big. They start with a Tuesday-afternoon WhatsApp that goes unanswered, a tile chosen without a second opinion, a number on a quote that quietly grew. By the time you notice the tension, you're already in it.

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BEFORE YOU BEGIN.

*Thirty minutes. An evening you're both a little tired. No phones between you. Pen nearby.*

This is a guide to the conversations most couples skip, usually because they're boring, or inconvenient, or because they feel unnecessary right up until the moment they become essential.

There are seven of them. None of them are hard. All of them are easier now than in six months' time, standing in a half-finished kitchen arguing about grout.

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## How to use *this*.

*i.*

### Sit down together

Pick one evening. No phones on the table. Thirty minutes is plenty. You don't need to solve anything tonight.

*ii.*

### Read each one aloud

The discussion question matters more than the description. Read it, then let it sit for a moment before answering.

*iii.*

### Tick when you've talked

Not when you've solved it. Just when you've had the conversation honestly. Come back to the ones that need another pass.

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*The goal isn't to agree on everything. It's to find out where you don't agree, before a contractor is standing in your hallway waiting for an answer.*

## CONVERSATION 01

# I The Invisible Load

*Who's actually running this thing?*

One of you will end up carrying more of the admin. Booking trades, chasing quotes, reading the group chat, remembering the delivery window. It looks like nothing from the outside, which is exactly why it becomes a problem. The work is invisible until someone resents doing it.

## DISCUSS · TOGETHER

*Right now, who is carrying more of the admin weight of this renovation? Could each of you name five things the other person has done this week?*

## DO THIS WEEK

Split accountability into ownership areas rather than tasks. One of you owns trades and timeline; the other owns finishes and suppliers. Write it down somewhere you can both see it.

↳ *If one of you can't answer the question above without a long pause, that's the flashpoint.*

## PLATE

I · 01

## READS

~4 MINUTES ALOUD

## PAIRS WITH

*Conversations 02 & 05.  
Decisions and money.*

*We've talked this one through, honestly.*

01 / 07

## CONVERSATION 02

## II

## Unilateral Decisions

*The tile you bought without telling anyone.*

Something needs deciding. The tiler is waiting. You know what you'd pick. So you pick it. It feels efficient at 11am and causes an argument at 9pm. The problem isn't the tile. The problem is being left out of the choice.

## DISCUSS · TOGETHER

*Has either of you made a renovation decision this month without checking with the other first? How did it land when the other person found out?*

## PLATE

I · 02

## READS

~4 MINUTES ALOUD

## PAIRS WITH

*Conversations 01 & 04.  
Admin and standards.*

## DO THIS WEEK

Start a shared decision log. A single note on your phones will do. Every decision goes in: what was chosen, who chose it, and what the alternatives were. It kills the 'you never told me' argument outright.

↳ *If you've caught yourself thinking 'it's not worth a whole conversation,' that's the flashpoint.*

*We've talked this one through, honestly.*

02 / 07

## III

CONVERSATION 03

## Budget Drift

*Where the money actually went.*

The budget starts clear. Then the kitchen comes in over. Then the electrician finds something behind the wall. Then one of you falls in love with a tap that costs three times what you planned. Individually, each of these feels reasonable. Cumulatively, nobody is tracking the running total together.

DISCUSS · TOGETHER

*Do you both know, right now, exactly how much you've spent versus what you planned? Could you agree on a number without opening a spreadsheet?*

DO THIS WEEK

Review the budget together every weekend. Room by room, forecast versus actual. Fifteen minutes. No surprises, no secret overspends, no awkward reveal in three months.

↳ *If one of you is quietly hoping the other doesn't ask about a recent purchase, that's the flashpoint.*

PLATE

I · 03

READS

~4 MINUTES ALOUD

PAIRS WITH

*Conversation 05. Timeline pressure.*

*We've talked this one through, honestly.*

03 / 07

# IV

## CONVERSATION 04

# Different Standards

*Perfect, or good enough?*

One of you wants the skirting boards flawless. The other thinks they're fine. One of you notices the small imperfection by the door frame. The other genuinely cannot see it. Neither of you is wrong. You just don't know where the other person's line is yet.

### DISCUSS · TOGETHER

*On a scale of 1 to 10, how finished does each room need to feel before you'd be happy? Compare your answers. The gaps are the conversation.*

### DO THIS WEEK

Agree a 'done' standard for each room before the work starts, in writing. Revisit it if the budget or timeline moves. Shared standards, set early, save weeks of rework later.

↳ *If you've muttered 'they'll never notice' about something you're about to sign off, that's the flashpoint.*

### PLATE

I · 04

### READS

~4 MINUTES ALOUD

### PAIRS WITH

*Conversations 06. Taste and standards.*

*We've talked this one through, honestly.*

04 / 07

## CONVERSATION 05

# V Timeline Pressure

*One of you wants in. The other can wait.*

Renovations always take longer than planned. The stress compounds when one of you is desperate to move in and the other is comfortable waiting. Deadlines stop being motivating and start being a weight you're dragging behind you, especially the third time one slips.

## DISCUSS · TOGETHER

*What's each of your individual tolerance for delay? Is there a hard deadline (a lease ending, a baby arriving) or a soft one? Are you both treating it the same way?*

## PLATE

I · 05

## READS

~4 MINUTES ALOUD

## PAIRS WITH

*Conversations 03 & 07.  
Money, exhaustion.*

## DO THIS WEEK

Set a realistic timeline together, then add 30% to it.  
Review progress weekly so delays get flagged early, not discovered in a crisis the night before the floor was supposed to go down.

↳ *If you've started saying 'we'll definitely be in by...' for the third time, that's the flashpoint.*

*We've talked this one through, honestly.*

05 / 07

## VI

CONVERSATION 06

## Taste Conflicts

*You love mid-century. They want farmhouse.*

You love mid-century modern. They want farmhouse rustic. You want dark walls. They want everything white. Taste is personal and emotional, which is exactly why disagreements about it feel personal and emotional too. The goal isn't to compromise down the middle until neither of you likes it.

DISCUSS · TOGETHER

*Where do your tastes genuinely clash? Have you named those rooms or decisions out loud yet, or are you both quietly hoping the other will come around?*

DO THIS WEEK

Each of you pick up to three non-negotiables. Rooms, materials, colours you deeply care about. Everything else is open to compromise. Name the clashes early so they don't ambush you at the paint counter.

↳ *If you've both already got Pinterest boards you haven't shown each other, that's the flashpoint.*

PLATE

I · 06

READS

~4 MINUTES ALOUD

PAIRS WITH

*Conversation 04. Standards and taste.*

*We've talked this one through, honestly.*

06 / 07

# VII

CONVERSATION 07

## Emotional Exhaustion

*When the renovation becomes the weather.*

At some point one or both of you will hit a wall. The dust, the decisions, the money leaking, living out of boxes, having the same conversation about the same radiator for the fourth time. If you don't have a way to say 'I'm struggling' without it becoming another problem to solve, the pressure just compounds.

DISCUSS · TOGETHER

*When did you last ask your partner how they're actually coping with the renovation? Not how the progress is going, but how they are.*

DO THIS WEEK

Build a weekly emotional check-in. Two minutes, no agenda. 'How are you doing with all this, honestly?' Then the hard part: listen without jumping to fix it.

↳ *If 'fine' has started doing a lot of heavy lifting in your conversations, that's the flashpoint.*

PLATE

I · 07

READS

~4 MINUTES ALOUD

PAIRS WITH

*All six before it. Exhaustion compounds.*

 *We've talked this one through, honestly.*

07 / 07

AFTERWARDS • FOR THE TWO OF YOU

# Where you *landed*.

*You'll remember less of this in three months than you think. Write down the agreements while they're fresh, even the small ones.*

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## Where we're aligned

01

*The conversations that landed easily. The ones you agreed on without trying.*

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## Where we need to come back

02

*The conversations that need another pass. It's fine. Not everything has to be solved in one evening.*

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## Our three non-negotiables each

03

*Three rooms, materials, or decisions each of you deeply cares about. Everything else is open to compromise.*

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## The first thing we'll do differently

04

*Pick one habit, one system, one small change for next week.*

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END OF CHECKLIST · PLATE VII

# Now you know *where the pressure is.*

This checklist is the small, free version of a bigger idea. The full Reno Together system is a week-by-week companion for the whole renovation - accountability splits, a shared decision log, a running budget review, weekly check-ins, and the uncomfortable prompts we think couples should have to hand on a Tuesday night when something has quietly gone wrong.

Everything you need to get through a renovation without it getting between you.

FOR WHEN YOU'RE READY

## The Reno Together *companion.*

*A printable system, used weekly, for  
the whole build.*

[renotogether.co.uk](https://renotogether.co.uk)

SEARCH "RENO TOGETHER" ON ETSY

*Built by a couple, for couples. Because grout colour shouldn't end a marriage.*

*rt.*