

CONTINUE THE ROMANCE OF VALENTINE'S DAY ALL YEAR LONG

Let's face it, most all men think in terms of romance when they think of an ideal relationship—even if it is romance of a more physical nature. Although women may think more in terms of an emotional connection, they too think of romance being key to a great relationship too. Likewise, most couples seem to be able to focus more on their relationship and enjoying the love they share on occasions such as St. Valentine's Day, anniversaries, and other special times.

In general, men especially appear to be able to do the right things on these occasions in their efforts to help the one they love feel special or appreciated. Perhaps it is because we know more of what is expected of us. We have a pattern to follow. There are certain established behaviors and niceties we understand to be appropriate and we have a reasonable assurance our efforts will be met with approval or at least appreciation for the effort. It's just in between those special occasions many men tend to be surprised they have fumbled the relationship ball. The reality is we men often forget to use the same mindset all year long that we do on special occasions. Consider these tips (*by the way they're suitable for men and women*) for getting it right all year long.

1. **Love her with your words.** It often amazes me how rude and uncaring many men speak to their wives or girlfriends—all the while being amazed by the cool reaction they receive to their advances for romance and closeness later. I once asked a man, "Would you allow me to talk to your wife the way you just did?" "No," he responded! "Then why," I asked, "do you speak that way to her?" he had no answer. Guys, like it or not, understand it or not, a man cannot speak to the woman he loves in a manner that is gruff, hateful, mean-spirited, or critical and it not affect her feelings toward him for an extended period of time. On the other hand, loving kind, and considerate words often bring an immediate positive response.
2. **Love her with your actions.** Actions that convey love are simple behaviors like putting her first, doing things to ease her load, not criticizing her, noticing her preferences and always incorporating them into decisions, hug her or hold her hand without it having to lead to anything else, and a thousand other things. For example, for years I felt like I wasted money on gifts my wife had little interest in receiving. She was appreciative, but unenthusiastic. I thought I just needed to get a better gift. It kind of hurt my feelings. Then one day, after giving the bathroom a good scrub down, I saw the kind of appreciation from her I had wanted when I gave her the gifts! What I realized was she felt that action of helping around the house was more meaningful. I still buy her gifts, but cleaning the bathroom and like efforts still pay bigger dividends.
3. **Now, you have set the tone for loving her through romance!** By loving her with your words and your actions you will have transformed both your and her attitudes. She will feel much closer to you and more ready to connect in a romantic gesture. As for you, you will most likely feel and be more sensitive to her needs as you initiate romance. It will happen more naturally and romance will likely cease to be an event and instead be an ever-present part of your relationship all year long.

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