



Thoughts on Marriage & Romance

By Bud Wassell, MS., LPC, CEAP, Director, Solutions EAP

On Valentine's Day our thoughts and hearts turn to romance.

According to Gregory Godek, the author of *1001 Ways To Be Romantic*, there are two kinds of romance:

1. Obligatory romance
2. Optional romance

Obligatory romance includes: celebrating birthdays, giving gifts for the holidays, acknowledging your anniversary and remembering Valentine's Day.

Optional romance includes: *everything else*. Little surprises. Big surprises. Candlelit dinners. Champagne toasts. Weekend get-aways. Sending funny greeting cards., romantic cards, sexy cards, home-made cards. Escaping from the kids. Exercising your creativity. Massages. Surprise dates in the middle of the week. Romantic movies. Love Letters.

Godek's new book, entitled *Bring Food. Arrive Naked*, claims that Romance is the answer to most relationship problems. On his website, <http://www.1001waystoberomantic.com/default.htm> Godek says "My first book, *1001 Ways To Be Romantic* was like a basic college course in romance. It's great, helpful and fun—as far as it goes. While my newest book, *Bring Food. Arrive Naked*, is a graduate level course in romance."

I'm not trying to sell Godek's books, but if you're looking for ideas to bring more romance and passion into your relationship, at least check out the website and click on Romantic Tips for a healthy sampling of ways to be romantic.

Some random quotes on Marriage:

"The difference between a successful marriage and a mediocre one consists of leaving about three or four things a day unsaid."

- Unknown

"As far as I'm concerned, marriage is one of the most wonderful, satisfying experiences a person can have. But, I've only been married 17 years, so I haven't seen that side of it yet."

- George Goble

"Sexiness wears thin after awhile and beauty fades, but to be married to someone who makes you laugh every day - ah, that's a real treat!"

-Joanne Woodward

The more I think about it, I mostly agree with Godek's statement that Romance is the answer to most relationship problems. But keeping romance and passion alive in any long term relationship is a challenge and as they say, "you have to work at it". But maybe it's not such hard work if your partner is your best friend as well.

Friends & Lovers

"Healthy relationships have the friendship factor in common. Everything - sex, affection, good communication - depends on whether parents, after years of being together, still consider each other best, or even good, friends." Ron Taffel, Ph.D., a contributing editor of Parents magazine writes in his article, *The Friendship Factor*.

Here are six ways to start becoming friends again:

1. Ask yourself: Would I say this to a friend?
2. Friends find ways to defuse resentment.

3. Friends share interests.
4. Friends accept each other.
5. Friends listen.
6. Friends laugh together.

More random quotes on Marriage:

“The secret of a happy marriage is simple - just keep on being as polite to one another as you are to your friends.” -Robert Quillen

“Don’t over-analyze your marriage. That’s like yanking up a fragile indoor plant every 20 minutes to see how its roots are growing.” -Unknown

“What counts in making a happy marriage is not so much how compatible you are, but how you deal with incompatibility.” -George Levinger

You often hear how important communication is to any relationship. Well, that makes me think of an old saying, “God gave us two ears and one mouth so that we would listen twice as much as we talk!” Listening, I believe, is underrated. Think about it, when most people talk about communication, they’re usually talking about how to get their message across. In other words, they want to be heard! We tend to forget that good communication involves both *a sender* and *a receiver*. So **listen generously** and let your partner know they have been heard.

Practice active and empathic listening. Reflect back what you have heard and then go a step further, reflect back the the feelings you have heard between the lines. This takes concentration, but you will find yourself really listening to the whole message.

But this is really just scratching the surface, which is what you get when you don’t fully listen. **Don’t interrupt, show respect and don’t give advice unless asked for**, are just three of the **Top 10 Listening Tips** from an article on About.com. Check it out for more tips including Blocks To Listening:

<http://marriage.about.com/cs/communicationtips/tp/listening.htm>

Finally, in her booklet called “Tell Me More: On The Fine Art Of Listening,” Brenda Euland talks about how very powerful listening is. “When we are listened to, it creates us, makes us unfold and expand. Ideas actually begin to grow within us and come to life.”

“Listening is a magnetic and strange thing, a creative force. When we really listen to people there is an alternating current, and this recharges us so that we never get tired of each other. We are constantly being re-created.” - Brenda Euland

More random quotes on Marriage:

“Marriage is like a long trip on a tiny rowboat. If one passenger starts to rock the boat, the other passenger has to steady it - otherwise, they’ll go to the bottom together.” ---Dr. David Reuben

“The great secret of a successful marriage is to treat all disasters as incidents, and none of the incidents as disasters.” -Harold Nicolson

“More marriages might survive if the partners realized that sometimes the better comes after the worse.” -Doug Larsen

**Call Solutions EAP at 1-800-526-3485 for assistance for all of life’s challenges.
It’s free, confidential and open to your family members.
Check us out on-line at www.solutions-eap.com**