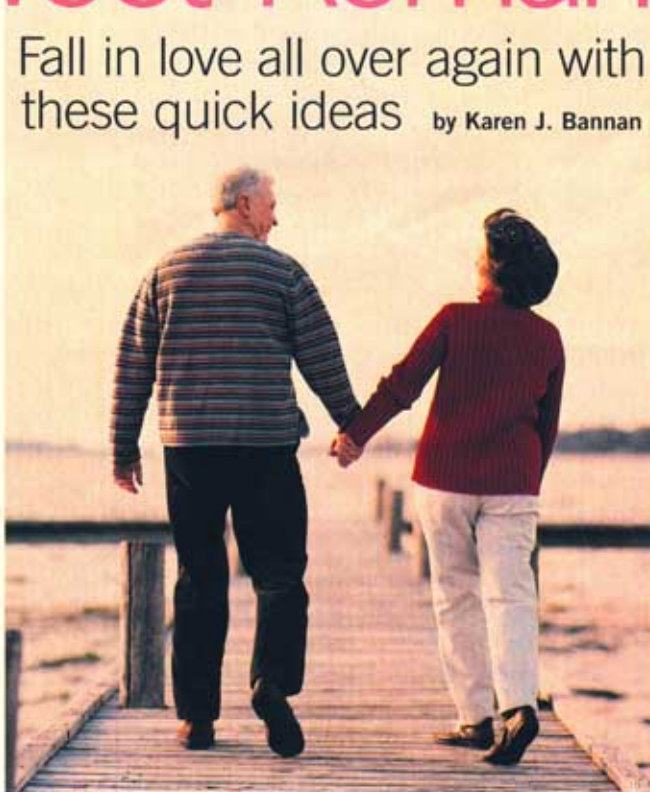


Sweet Romance

Fall in love all over again with these quick ideas **by Karen J. Bannan**



YOUR WORK. HIS WORK.

The children's homework. The bills. There are so many things we *have* to do that we forget the things we *want* to do. Before you know it, you're cutting out kisses, hugs and compliments and replacing them with dashed off e-mails and pats on the back before going to sleep.

Even the smallest efforts will help recharge your relationship and have you running back into each other's arms at the end of the day. Try these moves to fan the flames.

Romance Happens When You...

Thank each other. Start by doing it once a week: Thank your partner for something you've never thanked him for. "Maybe you'll thank your husband for not getting a haircut because you mentioned that you like his hair longer or for being so gentle with your children," says Susan K. Perry, Ph.D., author of *Loving in Flow: How the Happiest Couples Get and Stay That Way*. "Appreciation is a great form of positive reinforcement."

Go back to the basics. There are reasons you fell in love with each other. Maybe you enjoyed bad old movies. Maybe it was your love of

baseball. Take time to do the things you used to enjoy but stopped doing once your lives got busy, says Alison Sweeney, who plays Sami Brady on *Days of Our Lives*. "My husband, Dave, is a private pilot, so we have a lot of fun together flying around Southern California. On our first date, Dave took me on a night flight, and it was so beautiful to look at the city lights. He is always coming up with romantic getaways for us," she says.

Don't take each other for granted. No matter how busy Kelly Packard, field correspondent for the TV show *Ripley's Believe It or Not!*, and her husband get, "he lets me know every day just how much I mean to him and I try to do the same. There are mornings when I will find a note

on my pillow that says something like, "When I awoke this morning, I watched you sleeping and was moved by how beautiful you are," she says. "I keep that one in my journal. Truth is, I am the luckiest girl in the world, and I will not take that for granted."

Set rules for family members. Your kids should never be allowed to walk into your bedroom unannounced, so make a habit of keeping the door closed. "You want to be open and accessible to your children, but you can't relax if you're always worried someone will walk in," says Kate Wachs, Ph.D., a psychologist in Chicago and author of *Relationships for Dummies*.

reader tip

We have a "picnic" once a week in our family room. We make a fire in the fireplace, put a blanket on the floor and spread out finger foods like baked brie, bread and olives.

Denise Hein
Bethlehem, PA

"Communication is both verbal and nonverbal, including touching and gestures. When you roll over and touch each other at night, you're communicating."

Want More Intimacy? Try...

Getting rid of your king-size bed. "If you have a king-size bed, you can go a whole night without touching each other," explains Dr. Wachs.

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Taking the TV out of the bedroom.

Research shows that your love life and sleep suffer when there's a television in your boudoir.

Breaking a sweat. Try working out or doing a gardening project or

some housework together. "Sweating together is quite intimate," explains Dr. Wachs. "You're breathing on each other. You're huffing and puffing. You're glowing. It's just sexy."

Creating quirky rituals you both enjoy.

Roger Lodge, the host of the television show *Blind Date*, says he and his girlfriend have a set date night when they do something just for themselves. "Monday night is 'Spaghetti Night,' when we have a romantic dinner at home with wine and candles...the whole deal! Friday night is 'New Restaurant Night,' when we take turns picking a place that neither one of us has ever been." Even planning a date night once a month will give you both something to look for-

ward to and help refocus your energy on your relationship.

Laughing in bed. Too often, being intimate becomes a chore, something you have to do instead of something you want to do, says Sandor Gardos, Ph.D., a sex therapist for MyPleasure.com. Keep your sense of humor, even when something goes awry in your bedroom. Laughter can break the tension. It also releases pleasure hormones, brings a glow to your face and boosts your mood. "Sex can be funny," he says. "Embrace it."

You'll Enjoy Each Other More if You...

Don't compromise all the time. Sure, giving in sometimes helps a marriage run more smoothly, but if you're giving in and giving up something you feel strongly about, you'll become bitter in no time. Don't be

Take a Little Break—Together

You can recharge without spending a dime. How about...

- Turning off the phone and hanging out in your house for the day?
- Spending the day at a local tourist spot?
- Climbing a tree together?
- Holing up with your wedding video and some cake?
- Sitting in front of an outdoor fireplace under the stars?

afraid to stand up for something you believe in or agree to disagree, says Pepper Schwartz, Ph.D., the author of *Everything You Know About Love and Sex Is Wrong*.

Fight more constructively. You'll live longer and be happier. Researchers at Ohio State University's College of Medicine and Public Health found

If you feel more connected to him, chances are that you're going to connect more frequently—on many levels

that strong relationships are associated with overall better health for both partners. If you stay positive when you're discussing goals or having an argument, you'll keep stress hormones in check. Couples with higher stress levels in their blood during a fight were more like-

ly to divorce after 10 years. So you can still tell your husband he's a slob as long as you also tell him why he makes you proud.

Don't look for the easy way out. "My husband's grandmother told me the night before we got married, 'Murder, maybe. Divorce, never,'" says Susan Walters, who plays Diane

Jenkins on *The Young and the Restless*. Susan, who's been married to actor Linden Ashby for more than 17 years, knows Grandma was kidding but agrees with her sentiment. "Marriage is work. Some people know it but don't live it. Always remember: Every relationship has

its highs and lows. Stick with it during the lows because the highs are just around the corner."

Look Forward Together as You...

Celebrate the future. When the monotony of everyday life gets to you, create excitement by celebrating some future special events today, says Dr. Perry. Choose a wacky milestone—such as your 80th anniversary—and celebrate it on a day you're both feeling down. "This lets you renew your love more than once a year," Dr. Perry adds.

Surround yourself with people who love you both as a couple. Other couples and family members have a vested interest in keeping you together. They're happy watching the two of you when you're happy. Scott Haltzman, M.D., a psychia-

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trist and founder of the web site SecretsofMarriedMen.com, suggests inviting friends over to reminisce about the old days before your marriage. "Old friends are the ones who can remind you about just how wild you were for each other," he says.

Take advantage of "forbidden moments." Remember sneaking kisses when you were a teen? It felt great, didn't it? Recapture that excitement by fitting in romance while doing everyday chores, recommends Dr. Haltzman. "Kiss in the back seat of your car. Caress your mate's leg under the table. Little gestures can get the juices flowing." Try whispering sexy talk into your husband's ear at a party or using a code word that will remind him of a hot date.

Keep Your Relationship Fresh by...

Having a change of clothes at work. If you know you're meeting him for dinner, or even at your child's open school night, dress up. "Changing out of your regular clothes shows him you think he's special," says LaVerne Wheatley-Terry, a psychotherapist and relationship expert from Louisville, Kentucky. "You're telling your husband, 'I want to look good for you.'"

Carving out some time for yourself.

Laura Diaz, a professional golfer with the LPGA, and her husband, Kevin, travel together on tour all year, so the time they spend away from each other is equally important. "Alone time is key. I enjoy watching my favorite soap operas and shopping with my friends. Kevin is into practicing his guitar

right now," says Laura. "The key is recognizing and respecting what the other person enjoys doing alone, then encouraging him to take the time for himself."

Taking a road trip with just the two of you—and turning off the cell phone.

Get out of the house, away from ringing telephones, friends and worries. This gives the two of you the time and space to talk about hopes and dreams, chat or simply focus on each other. The scenery will provide a relaxing backdrop, suggests Dr. Wachs.

Eating meals together. Turn off the evening news and sit at the table when you eat and your relationship will reap the benefits, according to David Arp, the cofounder of Marriage Alive International, a non-profit marriage and family enrichment resource organization. Research shows that families who make time to eat together are more likely to stay together.

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Let's Spice It Up, Shall We?

● We write love notes to each other with soap on our bathroom mirrors. When we shower and the bathroom gets a little steamy, the notes become visible. It's always a great surprise.

Rosie Moyer, Vancouver, Canada

● My husband travels extensively for business. Sometimes I'll make secret travel arrangements and meet him at his hotel. After a long day's work he expects to return to an empty room and e-mail; instead he's got me and a bottle of Champagne.

Kelly Riley, Oak Park, IL

● Having just celebrated our 30th anniversary, my husband and I agree that the best investment we made in our marriage was couples therapy. My husband pursued therapy to overcome his extremely introverted nature. At a certain point I was invited to meet with him and his therapist. We continued as a couple. For us, learning that some conflict is a good thing and how to fight effectively were important. Now we're not afraid or insecure when we have differences of opinion. Therapy definitely took a good, committed marriage and enriched it beyond what we ever imagined.

Pat Hunnell, Raleigh, NC

● After 24 years of marriage, big birthdays and occasions are celebrated with alone-vacations instead of parties. It's so easy to get distracted when you have a family, but the vacations that we take all by ourselves help us remember why we're together in the first place.

Paula Weiser, Calabasas, CA

to order your Woman's Day Red Dress pendant

by Swarovski (shown on page 106), have your credit card handy and call toll-free 800-426-3088.* You will be charged \$29.95 for each pendant plus a flat \$4 shipping and handling fee no matter how many pendants you order. Please allow four weeks from our receipt of order. Offer available in the United States and only while limited quantity lasts.

*Our toll-free line is open Monday through Friday from 8:30 A.M. to 6:30 P.M. ET.

