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Keep Love Alive

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Nothing in life is better than a marriage that works. But you need to keep your relationship moving forward with creative loving and effort. Stasis doesn't exist in a relationship, and if you don't work at keeping the love alive, things will start moving backward quickly. If you stopped working at your job, you'd probably lose it. The same thing goes for relationships. How can you keep your love alive now and in the years to come? Read on!

Stay on the Sunny Side:

How you think may be more important than what you do or say, and a perpetual positive outlook is effective divorce prevention. If you're constantly negative, that's going to spill over into every aspect of your life. And if you're thinking about his flaws or any flaws in the relationship, chances are that your man will move away from you; men are especially intuitive in this regard. But if you think, "I am with this great, glorious, wonderful person," even if you don't say it, you'll motivate him, help him feel loved, and add fuel to your relationship.

Say Five Positives for Every Negative:

It really is true that if you don't have anything nice to say, you shouldn't say anything at all. Love is fragile. Bring up problems only when you are able to handle them well -- not in the middle of an argument, or when you're tired, hungry, or upset about something else. Nothing dampens a love relationship more than yelling, fault finding, and character assassination. Make a point of being kind and supportive and verbalizing your positive feelings. Gush, fawn, write memos, send carrier pigeons. It doesn't matter; just keep the flow of good loving going so that when negativity befalls you, you have a cushion of the good.

Kiss and Hug Every Day:

Pecks don't count and neither do shoulder hugs where almost no other body parts touch. Skin-on-skin contact is good for your physical, as well as mental health. Remember those deep, meaningful kisses that made your pulse race and your heart flutter? Don't save those for the bedroom. Making them a daily part of your relationship keeps things loving and sensual and romantic. It doesn't matter if it's the most erotic, exciting thing; it just has to be a daily, intimate connection. Once you start adding pets or children to the equation, be sure that your mate is still getting his full share of hugging, stroking, sweetness, and caring.

Protect Your Romance from Overscheduling, In-Laws, Bosses, and Children:

Make sure you have enough take-care-of-you time, as well as ample time to connect with your partner. You have to make a conscious effort to make room for yourself and for romance. Decide what you have to sacrifice to keep love alive. Being overly involved and committed to work, church, volunteer activities, hobbies, exercise or sports, the kids, your extended family, or friends is the way couples can create distance. Do have a full and rich life, but if your marriage is important to you, you need to give it the attention and emotion it needs to survive.

Love Even When You're Angry:

Separate the person from the problem and try to get rid of your anger before you express it. Anger is only going to be destructive if you act on it without first getting a grip. Remember, no matter what's gone on, you still love him, he loves you, and whatever it is that is upsetting you was probably not done with the intention of upsetting you. Don't be afraid to state this before you get into dicey discussions with your guy. Words are devastating, and you're not arguing with someone you want left bloody and bruised. Sometimes you'll end up saying something when you're mad and your partner will remember it forever, not because he is unforgiving but because what you said was unforgettable. Anyone can forgive but if it's deeply hurtful, you can't erase it even if you try. Breathe, count to twenty, and remember that this is your dream mate. He's not perfect, and neither are you.

Act with Love:

If something's not done with joy, it doesn't really count. Once you start doing things because you think you have to (whether it's making dinner or kissing your spouse), then you're moving toward resentment. That negative feeling comes across and turns giving and loving into tasks. Your mate will sense your lack of wholehearted willingness and may be somewhat uncomfortable and definitely less grateful. If you're begrudging or dreading, either find a way to put your heart in it or let your heart find another way to show love.

Talk at Least 20 Uninterrupted Minutes a Day, All at Once:

For some couples, this might be easy. For others, finding 20 uninterrupted, consecutive minutes everyday is hard. Turn off your phones, the TV, the radio. Lock yourselves in the bedroom or the bathroom if you have to. Talk in the morning, the afternoon, or the evening after the kids have gone to bed. It's not important where you do it, or when you do it, but how you do it, and that you talk every day.

Make and Keep a Regular Date Night:

Be very serious and deliberate about taking a once-a-week date night, or afternoon, or date morning. Decide on a time and take your date at the same time every week. If you don't feel like going out, no one says you can't stay in your pajamas, watch movies, and eat ice cream, as long as that time is uninterrupted and enjoyable for you both. Other people might get offended, or think it's weird,

especially at first, but setting time apart to spend one-on-one with your partner is important for your bonding. Think of it as a job: unless you're deathly ill, or plan far in advance, you show up for your scheduled shift. Marriage may be the biggest adventure you'll ever have, so if you can't show up for the main event once a week, how do you plan to stay on the ride?

If somebody wants to do something during your scheduled date time, just say, "Sorry, that's when we're together." You might get some strange objections at first, but eventually, you will feel closer as a couple, and your friends will not ask during your appointed evening and be more respectful of the bond of your relationship.

De-Stress Your Married Life:

The most important way to de-stress your married life is to show your partner more love. And then show him even more. People feel less stressed if they feel more loved. All the while, remind yourself that you are a team and he has your best interests at heart. But don't forget to take some time to love yourself. You shouldn't expect your partner to be the source of your every joy, inspiration, and creative endeavor. Take the time to spoil yourself whether with a massage, exercise, or drinks with your most supportive girlfriends. But whatever you do, be sure to spoil your mental self as well as your physical self. And there are so many benefits to exercising together it bears repeating. When you exercise together, you share a natural high, and you can be relaxed together.

Have an Annual Review:

People often think I'm joking when I say that marriage licenses should require continuing education, but I could not be more serious. Usually, people don't resort to couples' books or counseling until they have difficulty. But you should take the opportunity to be ahead of the game and prevent any slips before they become issues. To do so, an annual review of your marriage can be helpful. This review shouldn't be painful or something you dread. It should be an exciting time, and done with the idea that you're strengthening your relationship and making it better. If you dread an annual review of your partnership, something's going wrong and/or one of you is an unwilling participant.

Structure your review any way you'd like; if you want to do it stark naked over a glass of champagne, in a hotel room, or while you're on a bench in the park, that's okay. Just make it romantic and productive. It's really just a basic look at the state of your marriage and an opportunity to tell each other how well you are doing and what you specifically admire and appreciate about each other. If problems exist and can be resolved, do it. If they can't be resolved, agree to disagree. It should take less than two hours, but you're certainly not doing your relationship any harm by scheduling some extra time after the review to just hang out together and enjoy each other.

Share Your Goals:

During your review make a list of the things that are important to you as individuals and as a couple. In a relationship, you often have to compromise time for jobs, children, or other family, but when you know that something is really important to your partner, it can change how you plan your time together and apart. Numerous studies have shown that people who write things down are more likely to get them done.

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