

10 Things You Can Do to Romance Your Partner on a Budget

There are many ways to express your feelings without breaking the bank.

During the courtship process, romantic feelings are usually very strong and partners go out of their way to reveal them to each other. With time though, these romantic feelings can fade. This tip sheet is designed to offer a few practical ideas for couples wishing to “fight the fade” and reignite the romance.

Before we dive into the tips though there are two common barriers to reigniting romance that you should keep in mind. Time is a major barrier for most couples so before trying any of these tips sit down and compare schedules. Find some time just for the two of you when you can participate in any of these suggested activities. Even the busiest couples can usually find some time if they plan for it and stick to the plan. Doing so gives a message to each other, and to your kids, that you care about each other and your relationship is important.

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Another barrier can be finding or affording quality child care. If you do not have family who can baby sit for you, find a friend (perhaps one who has children) and arrange to exchange baby sitting with each other. Some people even set up a coopera-

tive baby sitting group in their neighborhood. Now that we have considered some potential barriers to spending time on reestablishing romance in your marriage, here are a few tips to help get things on course.

1. Write What You Feel.

Take a moment to reflect on the things you really like or appreciate about your partner but often neglect to say. Write them down in a little note or on a decorative card., and put it someplace where it will surprise her or him like under a pillow or on their car’s dashboard). Everyone likes surprises so be creative with yours. Remember when you were a kid how thrilled your Mom was when you gave her a card you had made saying she was special! You’ll be surprised at how romantic this sort of gesture can be and what a positive effect it will have. If writing is not your strong suit just keep your sentiments short and sincere.

2. Go “Out” to Eat Together.

Making reservations and going out for an expensive dinner is traditionally a popular way to show your partner that you care. Due to the expense, this gesture is usually reserved for Valentine’s Day, anniversaries or birthdays. Try using the same concept of a fancy dinner out but at home and not necessarily on a special occasion. The reason people usu-



ally like romantic dinners is because of the ambiance and the beauty of the setting. With a little planning, a few candles, a decorative presentation and some soft music you can bring the joy of fine dining into your home, especially if you leave the TV off and spend the time talking with each other. Some people make a regular once a month or even once a week habit of these “date nights”. If cooking is not your best talent, order take out and serve it on your best dishware.

3. Catch a Flick.

Movies are a great way to de-stress with your partner. They allow you to sit back and forget about life's challenges while sitting shoulder to shoulder with the one you love. If you catch a matinee before 5pm you can both see a movie for about \$15. If that's a bit more than you would like to spend, try joining your local movie store or online movie rental site. A single movie is usually less than \$5 and can be enjoyed without even leaving the house. For the full effect, add some popcorn and drinks! Once you both are relaxed and reconnected, be open to the opportunity of sexual intimacy with your partner. This intimacy can suffer when couples do not make time for romance.

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4. Go Hear Some Music.

A concert can make for a fun date night. With ticket prices, convenience fees and parking though it can also be an expensive night. There are however some great alternatives to attending concerts at traditional music venues. Look through your local mainstream and alternative newspapers each week for the entertainment calendars. This is a great way to see what kind of activities are going on in your area. Many churches, coffee shops and bars all regularly have music at low or no cost. University bands are also a great option depending on the type of music you both like. Music students are eager to play and always need an audience. Why not let it be you!

5. Phone in Your Feelings.

In this day and age, cell phones are a common part of everyday life. Use yours to send a romantic text message to your partner. It can be a pleasant surprise to receive a random message in your inbox. If your partner keeps his or her phone off during the work day, a message from you can be a great find during a break in the day. It can also initiate intimate moments later on!

Consider joining a recreation center and working out together.

6. Break a Sweat Together.

Getting physically fit is not most people's idea of a good time. Some partners would however complain that they or their partner do not look quite as

attractive as they did when they first started dating. Physical changes (for the worse) can negatively impact a couple's sexual intimacy. Consider joining a recreation center and working out together. Working out is not necessarily enjoyable, but once you begin to see results, it can be rewarding and lead you back to romance.

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7. Take a Hike.

There is a lot to be said for the simple act of walking. Walking with your partner is a great activity because it can be a relaxing time to talk about life. Not only that, it is a great way for you and your partner to get fit. A formalized workout can be a challenging thing to achieve based on work and parenting schedules; a brisk walk however can go a long way in achieving your aims of growing more connected and healthy.

8. Get “Board.”

Board games are a timeless and inexpensive way of having a great time. The cool thing about them is that, once purchased, you can enjoy them for years to come. Playing board games is a great at home activity that does not take a lot of set up time or require any expense. Pull the box out of the closet, set out some refreshments and have a blast. Another subtle twist on this idea is to play cards or put together a puzzle. All of these activities are a great alternative to watching TV.

9. Dream Out Loud.

Part of forging a healthy marriage is setting goals for your future together. Part of this goal setting begins with discussing your hopes and dreams for the future. This simple activity can be a great escape from your present financial challenges because it allows your imagination to run free. Using your imagination will go a long way in shaping your actual plans for the future. By building the foundation for your future you will draw closer to each other and potentially experience a return to former romantic feelings that can be easily overwhelmed during challenging times.

10. Expand Your Circle.

Online, in the newspaper and at houses of worship you can often identify and join a wide array of social groups for couples. These groups can be safe environments to strengthen your marriage and meet other couples with similar goals. Spending time with other couples who are devoted to developing a healthy marriage can be fun because you can share your experiences and revel in your commonalities. Many of these groups are designed to be fun and engaging and to function as an informal date night with good company, laughter, conversation and refreshments.

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