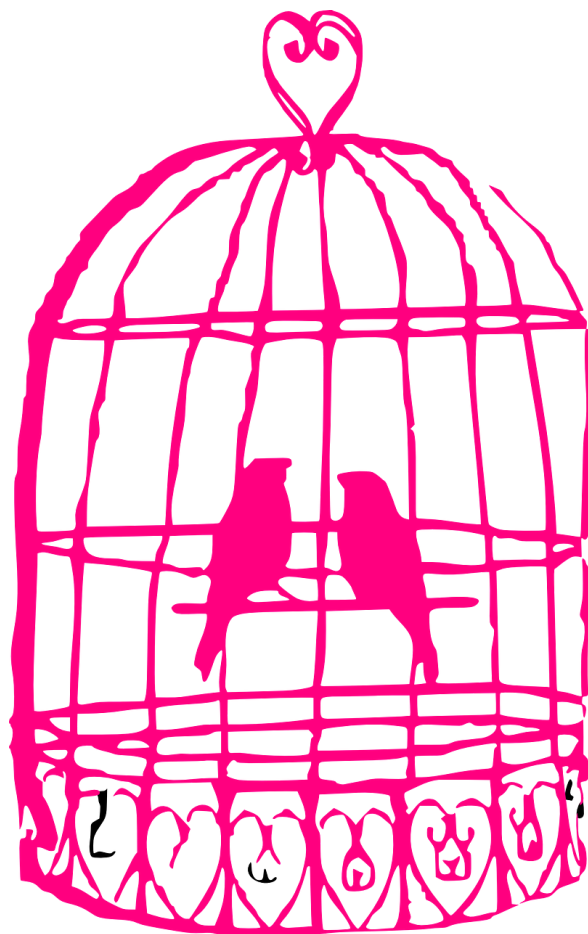


ELEVEN

IDEAS FOR CONNECTING WITH YOUR SPOUSE

When you have no time



CAN'T DATE ONCE A WEEK? TRY THIS!

Have you ever read a magazine article that said the key to a successful marriage was to go on a date once a week, and then felt super-guilty that you just couldn't find the time, or the energy, to keep that magical once-a-week schedule? Me too! Maybe you even blew up at your mate because they are not romantic enough and vowed you would date once a week, no matter what, but then gave it up after a couple of weeks.

Well, I am here to tell that there's no need to feel guilty,, or even resentful if you just can't go out once a week. Maybe you are just too busy right now, with a crazy schedule. Maybe you are too tired or an introvert who finds the prospect of weekly outings too much. (yep, me too.)

If so, don't despair -- there is an alternative. This choice is what helped carry my husband and I through nine years of marriage, with all its ups and downs. It helped us survive shiftwork, long hours and crazy schedules that included sharing child custody with another household.

Instead of the "once a week date," try the "grab a few minutes" concept. What is it? It is literally grabbing a few minutes, whenever you can during the day and making the *very most* of that time. Whether it's a shared coffee or a getting a little physical, remember that you are still lovers.

Remember, the key to making the "grab a few minutes" idea work is to celebrate and make the best of the little pockets of time that you have available. Don't wait for the big date night to be romantic and cute together. Imagine that every day is like a date, but just a short one, and seek out those few minutes. Be creative and be grateful for those minutes. And remember that minutes add up to a lifetime!



#1 Ask a simple question ...

Ask "how are you doing?" and then really listen. Keep probing and asking clarifying questions. You might be surprised at how much depth you can get into, with this simple inquiry.



#4 Help with Goal Setting

Ask your spouse about one of their goals. What, specifically, are they endeavouring to achieve right now? Focus about one goal, in detail and about any challenges they are experiencing. Offer to help them any way you can.

#2 Go for a short walk

If you have fifteen minutes, you can go for a little walk, even if it is just around the block. Get out, enjoy the fresh air and hold hands. Who says you have to have a two-hour stroll along the beach? A short walk can bring refreshment, both to your body and to your relationship.

#3 Play a Guessing Game

Did you ever play guessing games when you were a child? Well, they can actually still be pretty fun for adults, too! One version is to choose a person in your mind and then have the other person ask "yes or no" questions to guess who it is. The other type is to think of an object and do the same thing. This is great for a few minutes before sleeping!



#5 Play with your pet

If you have a cat, use a wand or a laser and get them to chase it. If you have a dog, go for a short walk together with him or get him to chase a ball. Take the time to laugh at your animal's antics. It is great entertainment!

#6 Give a Massage

One of the best ways to connect is through touch and that doesn't have to always mean sex. A few minutes is more than enough time to massage your partner's back, legs, head or feet. One of the advantages of being married is that you shouldn't have to pay for a masseuse. Instead, serve each other through the power of touch.

#7 Do a Back Scratch

Have you ever seen those pictures of a bear scratching itself on the side of a tree? Ever animal on earth understands the need for a good scratch. We humans need it even more. Perform this favour for each other. What a treat and way to connect.



#8 Enjoy a coffee date

Make some coffee, tea or other your beverage of choice for your partner and savour it together. Remember back in your single days? A coffee date was a very special occasion. Bring back the glory!



#9 Shower Up!

Hey, you have to shower, anyway, so why not make it into something memorable? Wash each other's backs and do some shameless flirting.

#10 Have a Quickie

Making love when you don't have much time can be exciting for both of you. It can also be a way to truly bond you when you are starting to feel disconnected. A quick hop in the sack – one of the benefits of marriage. Send off your spouse with a smile on their face!

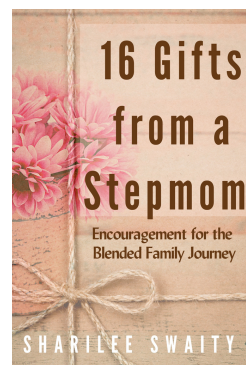
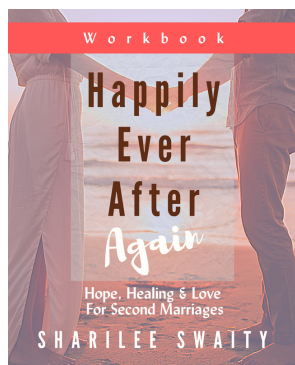
BONUS!

#11 Pray Together

There used to be an old saying, "the couple that prays together stays together." As your hearts become vulnerable before God, you will also become more vulnerable with each other. Pray for a few minutes when you are getting ready for your day, at a meal or before you go to bed.

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