

Romance Refresher: Inexpensive Date Night Ideas

About the Author

I have been a therapist for more than 20 years. I graduated from the University of British Columbia in Canada. One of my specialties is marital therapy and I derive great joy from working together with my clients to create relationships that are worth living within. I enjoy imparting hope to couples who are troubled and then imparting information through counselling and coaching that results in new skills being learned and in restored and enhanced relationships. Marriage is definitely a verb and not a noun. You have to do marriage and I find that today more than ever, couples are wanting to work at their relationships in order to gain the very real positive benefits of a happy marriage and to avoid the very real negative consequences of divorce.

So why did I create this product? I have found that the one hour counselling session that is face to face is limited without couples learning, practicing and working outside of that hour. Each week, I see couples who have lost their passion for their relationships. For some, it is because of the wear and tear of trying to make a living in this day and age, or perhaps because of the demands of the children where they overtook the relationship you once knew. The lack of skills for marriage and the resulting negative events overtaking the positive transactions between you contribute to your hopelessness regarding any romance in your relationship. You may have experienced and identify many other challenges in this area for yourself. The consequences of having fewer and fewer positive transactions is often a withdrawal and sense of ambivalence in the relationship, finally leading to making plans to end the relationship. That is when couples often see me and it can be a long road back. I would like to help couples to develop the mindset for romance before that happens. Romance is not a frivolous goal. As humans we need novelty in our lives and sharing novelty as a couple really enhances your relationship. If you prefer being a couch potato, time to make a change for your relationship. Go forth and be wonderful!

Introduction:

Romance is one of the important things that keeps the warmth and spark going in a relationship. It softens our world of over- commitment and challenges. It helps with the attachment between you and your partner. When there is regularly occurring romance in relationships, there is a better mood overall and this can spill over into a more positive perspective of your partner. Some people who have children, do not prioritize their relationship and live within what is called child centered relationships. This is a mistake for both you and your children. Although you love your children and there is often some guilt attached to the amount of time you are away from them at work, your relationship with your partner remains the most important thing for your children. Being a great parent and a lousy lover is going to be devastating to your whole family if you lose each other during your children's growing years. Without a lot of nurture, your coupleness can get disconnected. Your relationship really is like a garden and needs to be nurtured regularly.

Some people seem to think romantically in a more natural manner. Others have to work at it or read a booklet like this for more ideas. Remember that ideally both of you need to be involved in the romantic adventure. Even if there is one planner, the other must be open to the romance of the event. Also, it is important that you each make romantic plans to sustain the relationship and that all the romance is not up to one of the partners. I advocate that the couples who see me in private practice have a date night every week. That can cost money when, in this day and age, money can be scarce. Therefore, I have tried to make a collection of ideas where most of the suggestions are low cost or very little cost. There are a few suggestions added at the end of some

sections that cost more, but save those for when the budget allows and for very special occasions. Please use these suggestions to spark your own creativity for romance.

YOU are the one who knows what your partner likes and doesn't like. To be romantic, the event needs to be seen as romantic by your partner. In other words, if they are afraid of heights, don't take them to a suspension bridge on your date or if they are allergic to flowers, don't give them flowers. The gesture is not about you but about what your partner might love or what you might love together. Use the dollar store to add fun to your inspirations and music and candlelight to create mood. Check out your used clothing outlets to purchase clothing that adds to the mood (an old tux, a period dress piece). All of these have the effect of softening, which is part of what romance is about. What did you enjoy doing on a lazy day when you first met? For little or no money, you can enjoy those same things once more and get to know each other all over again.

My first suggestion is that you imagine that you are building some wonderful memories together that you can bring out and look at and be pleased with what you have created together. So get a great box or decorate a cardboard box and begin saving memories. Items to be included are romantic letters or notes that you might have sent each other, stubs to theatre or sports events, sea shells from beach walks, labels from a bottle of wine you shared on a great picnic, pictures of you on your fun adventures and many more. Make sure you label them with a date so that you can relive those times together. In fact, if you already have some past mementoes, one of your date nights can include going back down memory lane, reminding yourselves of the good times. Often the bad times get much more focus and we need ways to remind ourselves why we chose each other and how much fun we can have together.

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Reconnect With Your Wild Side

Married couples may want to take a page out of their kids' book. Think about the times you have seen your kids laugh and giggle with joy. Those times are most likely when they are watching the antics of their pets or animals they have seen in the zoo. Adults can also share in the fun. Take a look at some of the places spouses can go to enjoy a walk on the wild side:

Visit the Zoo

Pick a time when a nearby zoo won't be overrun with kids; normally a weekday. You want to have a quiet, leisurely time strolling down the paths, holding hands, and watching your favourite animals frolic.

Take time to talk about the animals you see. You can even play a little game. Which animal would you be if you could? Choose one of the animals that you see and tell your spouse why you chose that particular animal. You might just learn something new about how your spouse feels about life and love.

You can also be interactive by feeding the animals you can by hand and visiting the petting zoo. Many zoos also have shows you can watch. But, the visit isn't just about the animals. There are often cute little places to share a lunch. You'll usually find a pretty park atmosphere where you can sit and relax while you listen to the lions roar and the birds sing. Close your eyes and pretend you're on an exotic safari. Some zoos even offer rides on the elephants. Take a ride together!

Visit the Aquarium

The peaceful atmosphere of an aquarium is also a perfect place to relax with your spouse. Aquariums normally have both bright sunny areas as well as the cooler, subdued tanks. The atmosphere alone of an aquarium feels soothing and romantic. Choose a day when it won't be as crowded so you can spend quiet time together gazing at the amazing species, and each other.

You won't want to miss the penguins, walruses, dolphins, and even whales. Take time to read the information to learn more. Simple facts about the creatures we share the earth with can open up great discussions. Consider the fact that male penguins watch over the unborn eggs. This can certainly give a young couple something to talk about!

Many aquariums have interactive displays such as petting tanks for baby sharks, skates, rays, as well as other beautiful sea creatures. This experience can give a couple something to share and laugh about. Romance, laughter, and nature often go hand-in-hand.

Go to the Circus

Want to enjoy wildlife with a bit of drama and flare? Get ready for the chills and thrills of the big top tent. Share popcorn and a soda as you watch death-defying feats. You will have a lot of laughs with your sweetie, along with a few screams. Sit real close and hang on tight to get ready for all those scary moments. There's a little romance right there!

Your trip to the circus is just for the two of you to relax and communicate on an entirely new level. Watch how the Flyer flies through the air somersaulting freely, absolutely trusting, as the Catcher safely grasps her (or him). When you have a coffee later, have a conversation about trust between you and whatever else comes up from that scene. Get to the circus a bit early and walk around. You may even get an up close and personal moment with some of the animals. Take advantage if you can for some real fun.

Visit an Animal or Bird Sanctuary

Hear how volunteers are trying to save a certain species of owls for instance and the fascinating ways they are helping Owls to manage in captivity. Or your neighbourhood bird sanctuary. Learn some names and habits of the birds in your area. Or if you are in San Diego, visit the elephants at the San Diego zoo safari park. Take your camera with you if you can be mindful of not getting lost behind the lens and having your partner feel they were on their own in the adventure (hard to do).

Walking with your Pet

One of the great things you can do is to have a routine of going for a walk with your pet together. Having a destination of a coffee shop gives you an inexpensive outing that can become a great ritual between you.

Laughing at your pet's antics will lighten your heart and your shared memories will give you reason to fall in love with your spouse all over again.

Old School Romance – Reconnect with The Past

A trip into the past often produces very fond memories of activities we did for fun as we were just starting to go out on dates. These activities now may seem sort of corny, but often the corny and simple activities we do are the most fun, and bring out the kid in us.

We know that laughter often produces a romantic atmosphere. It's not all about candlelight dinners. Romance can blossom when we giggle and enjoy ourselves, too. Let's look at some old-school activities that you and your sweetheart can share:

Roller Rink Rendezvous

Roller rinks have kept their place in the dating world because they have maintained that same atmosphere of funky fun, right down to the disco ball and flashing lights. The music sets the perfect rhythm to glide across the floor with your sweetie.

It doesn't matter if you have all the right moves, just wrap your arms around your sweetheart and enjoy your time together skating around and around the rink. A few falls may occur, but the bumps and bruises are well worth it. Many roller rinks offer 'adults only' skating time which makes it even easier to concentrate on each other, and your love.

Drive-In and Outdoor Movies

You will have to look around to find a drive-in or outdoor movie, but they are on the rise

in many areas. In big cities and small towns alike, old drive-in movies are being revamped. The latest craze is the moving outdoor theatre. Large vans pull into a town and set up their 'theatre' in a park. All you need to do is bring your blankets and chairs and settle in for the flick.

Movie dates are always fun but they are more romantic under the stars. Be sure to have warm blankets so you can snuggle underneath and keep warm. Don't forget to bring your favourite movie snacks like a big bag of popcorn and a giant beverage. If you are fortunate enough to find a drive-in, you'll want to climb in the back seat so you can get really comfy. Isn't it great to be able to recreate those first-date feelings with your spouse? That's the best of both worlds; being with your life-mate and feeling like a kid!

Bowling

If you believe romance starts with a good laugh, then bowling is for you. From the funny shoes to the silly moves, bowling is just plain fun. Make your bowling date competitive with contests between the two of you like a special romantic reward for who gets the first 'turkey' (three strikes in a row).

Enjoy classic bowling alley food like hot dogs and pizza. It's all about recreating a youthful date, so indulge like you did when you were a teenager. You say you've never bowled before? Maybe now is the time to let your spouse teach you a few basic moves which requires some real close hands-on methods. You may even want to pretend you can't bowl just to get a lesson or two from your sweetie!

Ice Skating

A frosty day is romantic all on its own, but add smooth moves on sparkling ice and you have a perfect date. Between turns around the rink, warm up in your spouse's arms with a cup of hot cocoa.

If you haven't been on ice skates in a while, you may be spending a bit of time sitting on the ice, but that's part of the fun, picking each other up. It's all about having a laugh and snuggling to stay warm. Sounds like romance is in the icy air!

Activities that are reminiscent of dating days from your youth will spark the same feelings you had at that time. Even if you've never done an activity like this, just trying something new will make you feel like a kid again. Recreate a simpler time when you and your spouse were just learning about each other and enjoy the romance.

Let's Do Lunch and have a Romantic Midday Break For Two

How long has it been since you spent time in the middle of the day with your spouse? When couples get married it doesn't take long to settle into a routine. Most of us are busy with jobs and children and other activities and don't often think about romance in the middle of the day. But that is precisely why you should. The element of surprise and spontaneity are what makes lunchtime dates such a success.

When you're on a budget, a lunchtime date can be a real bonus. Lunch meals are cheaper meals that will enrich your love life without emptying out your wallet. How do you plan a lunch date with your spouse? Here are a few suggestions for surprising your

spouse with a workday romantic lunch for two:

Check your spouse's schedule. This may require hatching a plan with someone on your spouse's job if lunch hours are scheduled. Whether you are taking your spouse out for lunch or providing a picnic lunch in the office, you'll need to know when a good time is to take your sweetheart out. Keep your lunch date a surprise from your spouse if at all possible to make it more fun. Be sure to allow enough time for a relaxed meal. Again, enlist the aid of your spouse's boss and/or coworkers to set the stage.

Decide on a menu. You may want to fix something at home to stay within your budget. Cold cut sandwiches, cheese and fruit, sparkling cider and something simple like appetizers are not time consuming or expensive. Pack everything in a pretty picnic basket or decorated box. Don't forget to bring along glasses, plates, flatware, and napkins. If you decide to eat at a restaurant, be sure to call ahead for specials and prices so you are not surprised and know you are within your budget. Nothing ruins a romantic date like going in debt to pay for a meal.

It's show time. Once all the plans have been made, you'll want to arrive a bit early to your spouse's workplace. If you can get a coworker to distract your spouse so you can set up your surprise, all the better. You may want to enjoy your lunch outside if there is a park nearby or even a nice green area. If you have a town square with a fountain close by you may want to set up your blanket and picnic there. Water features are always so romantic! But no matter what the setting, simply getting away from work can help set a romantic mood. If your lunch date is at a restaurant, be sure to arrive early

and give yourself plenty of time to get to and from the restaurant. And do request that table in the corner!

When planning is your idea of fun, surprising your loved one with a lunch date may not be possible or even desirable for you. You may be the type of couple that likes planning things together. In planning lunch dates with your spouse you have the added bonus of the anticipation for both of you.

If scheduling lunch dates is more your speed, you just need to do a few things first. Of course, you'll want to decide on the day, but then let the fun begin. You may want to start figuring out where you want to meet for lunch by going down memory lane.

Remember some of the dates that you had when you were just getting to know each other. Where did you go? What did you both like about those places? Recreate those experiences and feelings, and you and your spouse will recreate the romance.

Going back in time and reliving some of your younger dates while you plan has another advantage. When you were young and first dating, you probably didn't have much money. Lunch and dinner dates were very often quite creative in order to eat on limited funds. Recreating those moments will save you money which means you can meet for lunch more often! You probably brown-bagged it, ate at hot dog stands, or at inexpensive sidewalk cafes. You may have even stopped in a theatre and bought a bag of popcorn for lunch! These inexpensive dates are the things that memories are made of. Eat like kids and you'll feel young at heart.

But dates aren't all about eating. If you are in the park, bring a Frisbee or a football.

Toss it around a bit to enjoy a few laughs. If you are on a lake with paddle boats, take a ride and enjoy the solitude to talk and reconnect. Lay back on your picnic blanket and talk. Learn something new about your spouse and remember why you fell in love in the first place. Play like kids and you'll feel young at heart, too.

If your budget is a little larger, you can hire a restaurant or a chef (you may know one or two who might be willing) to pack you an amazing picnic where you have exotic foods that you both can experiment with or reminisce with. Take your time and enjoy the food sensations. This picnic is not one to be rushed! You could bring an umbrella or table and chairs and dress up as a reminder of romantic times in the past.

You and your spouse deserve a little time for sweet talk and laughter in the middle of the day. A lunchtime date can bring out the romance in the most ordinary day; and lead to even more romance in the evening!

Give Your Spouse The Spa Treatment

Pampering is expensive in a spa. But, who says you have to go to a spa for all that special treatment? You know what you like, and you can probably guess what your spouse likes. So, why not create a nice spa atmosphere right in your own home?

The spa treatment can include facials, massages, or foot and hand soaks. Whatever you decide to do for your spa day at home, set the mood and get everything ready ahead of time so there are no interruptions. Here are a few suggestions for designing an inexpensive spa at home for you and your spouse:

The Atmosphere

Most spas distinguish themselves first and foremost with their personal style or atmosphere. Begin by choosing an area in your bedroom, living room, bathroom, or guest room that is cozy and quiet. Depending on the services your spa day will be providing, you'll need to set up specific furniture and equipment. However, there are amenities common to all spas that let you know you are in for a treat.

Begin with soft, warm lighting. Draw the drapes and turn lamps on low. Set candles around the room, using candles in containers for safety. Use scented candles that you enjoy to add pleasant aroma to the room. Finally, be sure to have soft music! Silence is golden, but lovely music adds something to the hushed sounds of the spa.

The spa treatment or treatments you choose to do will be shared with your spouse. Your couple's spa day is give and take, sort of - Do unto others as you would have them do unto you! You'll want to either swap treatments right away, or choose alternating days. Let's look at a few basic services most pampered spa guests like to receive:

Massage

You will need a comfortable place to lay, first and foremost. Make sure the height suits the person giving the massage so the masseuse doesn't suffer a sore back as a result of this treatment. Cover the massage table with warmed towels, blankets, and sheets. The clothes dryer works well for this. Arrange your lotions or oils so they are convenient to you. Help your spouse get comfortable on top of the warmed linens, then warm up

your hands and begin.

Just use your best technique to make your partner feel relaxed. Aim for about a fifteen to twenty minute massage to give your spouse time to really relax. Be sure to include those tender feet, shoulders, neck, and back. Then, depending on what you planned, switch places and continue with the next massage.

Foot Soak

This is a popular spa treatment that both men and women enjoy. You don't have to spend a lot of money on fancy equipment or ingredients. Choose a couple sturdy plastic bins and fill them with warm water and any gentle soap you like. You can even add natural ingredients like vanilla, honey, oatmeal, and peppermint oil for a real organic and aromatic soak. Let your spouse soak in quiet for about five to ten minutes, then use a nice scrub or a washcloth and gently scrub the feet and legs. Then pour fresh water over and dry the feet and legs with warm towels.

Now pull up a comfortable stool to sit on in front of your spouse. Choose a lotion or oil that your spouse likes and gently massage all over the feet and up the ankles and calves. Use gentle massaging movements and push gently into soles of feet with your thumbs to relax sore muscles. When finished, wrap your spouse's feet and legs in warm dry towels to continue the relaxation. Now, when it's your turn, your spouse will know exactly what to do for you!

This shared spa experience is a great way to share intimacy in your relationship. By

giving your spouse a spa treatment, you not only give your spouse a wonderful experience, but you prepare your spouse to give you the same. Learning what each other likes is the first step to creating a romantic life together.

Of course – if your budget can manage it you can make an appointment for 2 at a spa. Plan to have the kids looked after overnight and extend those great feelings into an evening of dinner and fun. Make this one of your great memories together.

The Great Outdoors

Nature can spark romance in the heart of just about anybody. Even a little time away from concrete and office buildings can relax and romance your spouse. You don't have to be in peak physical condition to enjoy time outdoors in the fresh air.

With just a bit of planning, you can create a little oasis for you and your spouse to bask in and find new ways to communicate with each other. Let's look at just a few things you can do to get out of your daily rut and into the great outdoors, and your sweetie's heart:

Hiking

You'll find well marked trails in just about every community. Try to find trails that take you out of the hustle and bustle of town so you can have a little time alone to share a stolen kiss or two. If you have a state or federal park nearby, you'll find many trails. Of course, if you are avid hikers, you'll want to find more challenging trails to enjoy.

Make sure you have water and snacks packed to keep you nourished as you find

romantic places together. Comfortable shoes and lightweight backpacks are a must. Pack a love note in your spouse's backpack for an extra touch. Take your time on the trail to enjoy the view, and each other.

Boating

Floating along on a lazy river or lake is certainly one way to enjoy a romantic day together. You may choose a row boat, a motor boat, a canoe, or a kayak. You may even want a pontoon boat or a raft to spend the day on. Whatever you choose, it's all about connecting with your sweetie, so plan a boating excursion in which you can take time to talk and share special moments together.

Plan enough time so you can stop and indulge in a nice picnic lunch either on the boat or on land. If your boating experience involves racing around, you will want to slow down the pace just long enough to enjoy some romance. If you don't have a boat, look for adventure centers or resorts that rent boats. They are often inexpensive and can provide a full day of romance and rekindled love.

Fishing

You don't need a boat to fish, but you do need a body of water, fishing poles, and bait. Fishing is all about patience, so what better way to spend quiet time with your spouse? There isn't a lot to do in between baiting the hook and pulling in the catch, which makes this time together perfect for sharing thoughts and kisses.

If you've never fished before, you will have to learn a few things. Let your spouse show

you how to get the worm on the hook and the fish off the hook. You may need to learn how to cast, unless you're using a bamboo fishing pole and just dropping the line in the water. All this learning only takes a little time and will most likely result in some real laughter. And, we all know a good belly laugh can lead to romance!

Camping

Roasting marshmallows over a crackling campfire, sipping your favorite beverages, sharing stories in the dark, watching shooting stars, and finally falling asleep cuddled up together in a big, puffy sleeping bag. That describes the perfect evening alone outdoors. Camping is one way to find time away from your daily routine to enjoy the peaceful solitude, and your spouse.

Camping doesn't have to be complicated. You'll need a tent and a big sleeping bag for two. If you plan to cook, you'll need utensils and food. Most campgrounds provide a spot for a fire as well as firewood. Keep it simple so you won't be spending all your precious time together setting up camp.

A Walk on the Beach

In the cold, the beaches are deserted. Take your blankets, some thermoses, maybe some music or just enjoy the water. Plan some conversation starters. Before you go, jot down some ideas such as, what is most important to you in your life right now, what is most interesting to you right now, what has the most meaning, what is the most challenging to you right now? etc. Enjoy the health of the crashing waves and the romance of being together in the majesty.

Be a Walk -on Passenger on the Ferry in Your Area

Ferries offer an inexpensive way to have an adventure on a nice day, if you are a foot passenger. Take a loaf of bread, some cheese and a bottle of wine. Take a downloaded map on your ferry adventure and a pair of binoculars. Learn the names of the islands and bodies of water that you pass. You can even watch out for special species of birds. When you get off the ferry, there are often shops or lots of nature and beaches to explore. Take the next ferry back and you have had an exceptional date!

Or as above, you can hop on a train and go to the end of the line and back and enjoy the scenery and a packed lunch. Or go on a bus in your area (as long as this is not something you have to do daily. Remember, part of romance is the novelty of the event. There are lots of possibilities here.

Are you starting to warm up to the idea of exploring the great outdoors together? Take time to discover these romantic getaways and enjoy all that nature has to offer.

Game Night For Two and Romance Your Spouse With Competitive Fun

You have probably already been enjoying family game nights with your kids. But what about enjoying a game alone with your spouse? Games played with your spouse are not only fun and romantic, but a very inexpensive way to spend an evening alone together.

Along with being fun, a little competition often adds another level of excitement. Let's

see what sorts of games to consider and how you might want to use them to turn up the romance, and the heat, with your spouse:

Twister with a Twist

You don't have to stretch your imagination too much to know why a game of tangled bodies can turn up the heat. Of course, this game has been around a long time, but now that you're all grown up, you can rediscover a whole new angle to the game. Now that you and your spouse are looking for games to get the blood pumping again, consider rethinking this classic game.

To add a little extra spice to your grownup version, slip into your prettiest, softest, and even skimpiest nightwear. It can get pretty silly, but isn't that why you got married in the first place? Have a few laughs and watch the romance build a bit. And, those sore muscles could even lead to a pleasant rubdown for both of you!

Board Games to Bring Out the Kid in You

Rekindle those fond feelings for each other by taking a trip through your youth. Romance often follows a night of frivolity and laughter, and playing games that are silly and fun is a sure way to bring on a giggle and more! Of course, you can tweak these board games a little to turn your game night into a night that makes you blush, and fall in love all over again. Some suggestions for board games to fill the evening with fun, romance, and a bit of friendly competition are:

Monopoly - buy properties using romantic or sexy bartering instead of money.

Life - perfect way to open discussions about your real life and love.

Sorry - play with no holds barred then spend the rest of the night making up.

Candy Land - make your sweet surprises a bit more grownup.

Battleship - fast paced and full of competitive moves which get the blood boiling.

Checkers - perhaps 'king me' could take on a whole new meaning.

Card Games for Higher Stakes

You can take any card game you enjoy playing and make the stakes a bit more romantic or tantalizing. Instead of playing poker or gin rummy for money or matchsticks, play for special treats, like backrubs or a sexy dessert, or whatever heats up your spouse. You can even create your own deck of cards for your game using symbols that suggest what's in store for the winner... or loser. Of course, no one really loses at these games!

The most well-known adult card game is probably strip poker. You can make this game even more fun by coming up with a variety of inventive stakes the 'loser' must pay. How about doing a sexy dance? Think of a dozen or so grownup treats your spouse would

enjoy winning, then set up your game table and get those cards shuffled.

A romantic game night is all about the two of you bonding together and having fun, maybe with a few intimate moments added. Send the kids to Grandma's house for the night and play a few games of your own!

Simple Common Interests - Reconnect With Everyday Events

When you first met, you probably found out you had things in common. Because of that, you became interested in each other. Do you remember some of the more ordinary things you both enjoyed? These are the everyday events that may not seem like a romance in the making, but simple things you liked doing together.

Ask your spouse about what they remember about the things you used to do together that did not involve entertainment. Think of the things you once liked to do on a lazy day that didn't involve a call to the box office or even a seat at a restaurant. Now that you remember those simple things, take out the newspaper or go online to your local town's website and see what's happening around the area. Here are a couple examples just to get you thinking:

Visit Open Houses

Perhaps wandering through perfectly decorated homes is something the two of you enjoy. You get to drive around town alone, spending time in your spouse's company.

When you get to the open house, you are normally treated to some sort of snacks and beverages. You can stroll through interesting homes and get ideas for decorating your

own home, or just share thoughts about what you see.

Sometimes these open houses are arranged for a group of homes that are for sale.

However, you may also like the open houses set up specifically for the holiday seasons.

The glitter and glamour is romantic and will provide you with a nice day or evening that is very inexpensive, but entertaining.

Stroll the Yard Sales

Taking a leisurely stroll around tables of 'treasures' may not be everyone's idea of romance, but if you and your spouse like to hold hands and talk about the old days or possibilities for the new days, then yard sales are the place for you. The whole 'trash to treasure' industry is entertaining and popular for a reason. You'll find just as many people reminiscing about their lives together as you will people purchasing stuff. It's more like a trip down memory lane than a day of shopping.

Take your biggest vehicle and a pocket full of cash. As you look through the racks and tables, talk to each other about the things you find valuable in your own home, and lives. You might learn something about your spouse, and you could even find something you want to buy!

Take a Community Education Course

Take a community education course or workshop on an evening or a Saturday. Choose an interest you both have and use the course to dream about your future and how you might use the information. Make sure you have a walk or coffee afterwards to let each

other know what you were thinking. Spend most of your time in positive reflections of the information (not negative talk about the instructor or other challenges in the course – that defeats your purpose!).

Discover Each Other in a Bookstore

When couples are looking to reconnect and romance each other, a bookstore is a natural choice. What better way to learn about each other than by watching what books you choose. Romance starts with rediscovery, so seeing what your spouse chooses to read certainly will help in that department.

Sit and share a coffee in a quiet corner away from the crowd. Choose a book of poems and take turns reading them to each other. Pick out a romance novel and pass the book back and forth showing your spouse the sexy passages. You may even learn a thing or two or get a few ideas for later that evening!

How-To Workshops

As simple as this sounds, these little how-to workshops at craft and home improvement stores are fun and usually very inexpensive. Plus, you learn something new! Whether you make a bird house or learn a new painting technique, you'll have fun doing it together.

There are plenty of opportunities for these how-to workshops but they are especially popular during holidays. You can carve pumpkins, make candy, arrange flowers, or build bird baths, depending on the season. You may even find a new hobby to enjoy

with your spouse, which is another romantic idea!

Have a Dream Night for the Future

Dreams are an important part of a healthy life and relationship. Take a date night and share your dreams with each other about what you want to see in the next year to 5 years. How fun to look ahead and find ways that you will be enhancing each other's life in the future.

Enjoy The Show and Productions For Romantic Couples

In most cities and even small towns, there are a lot of nightlife opportunities to take advantage of that are inexpensive and fun for couples. If you search for plays and music events well in advance, you can often get good prices on tickets to stay within your budget. You may even be surprised to find out that there are many free events to enjoy, as well.

Whether you want a fancy dress-up evening or a more casual time, there are plenty of options for couples to enjoy. You just need to do a little research. Let's do a bit of work for you here by giving you some suggestions on where to start looking for budget-friendly entertainment:

Community Playhouse

Tickets for community theatre productions are notoriously inexpensive. Consider a matinee to save even more money. Lunch and an early show will save you money and still provide a nice romantic escape for the two of you. Add a walk through the park after

the play to add more time for romancing your sweetie.

If you opt for an evening production, dress up extra fancy for fun. But, to save money, skip dinner out and just go for dessert after the show. Your community theatre is a great place to find time alone with your spouse without spending a lot of money.

School Productions

Whether it's a university, junior college, or a high school, you'll find excellent performances at any school with a drama department. Perhaps it shouldn't surprise us so much to find great plays at these levels; after all, our favourite movie stars had to start out somewhere!

Look online or visit any school's drama department for a list of productions for the semester or year. Get your tickets in advance to save money and to have something on the calendar to look forward to. The ticket price is often so inexpensive that you may be able to top off the evening with a nice late night dinner or fancy dessert and drink.

House of Worship Productions

You may not think about a house of worship at first when you think of romance, but that shouldn't be the case. After all, they are invested in marriage, just like you! Many have their own wonderful choirs that put on concerts on occasion. You can also find special events with guest singers, choirs, and music.

The interior of a cathedral, synagogue, or other house of worship can often be very

splendid, setting the perfect background for a night of music or a play. You'll find, especially during holiday seasons, that there are a number of scheduled performances to enjoy. The setting is beautiful, often candlelit, and the atmosphere is warm and soothing. And, holding hands is encouraged! Perhaps you'll be reminded of your wedding day, which is sure to bring out the romance in both of you.

Music Under the Stars

You don't have to attend an expensive concert at a fancy concert hall to enjoy the music, and each other. Most communities have some sort of music-in-the-park or music festival to enjoy. These are normally free and all you need are chairs. There may be a variety of music for the evening or perhaps a certain group is featured. Your town's newspaper or website should have a schedule.

Many of these events encourage setting up picnic lunches to enjoy. This is another opportunity to enjoy your date night without spending a lot of money. However, because the concert is free, many couples like to splurge on their picnic basket dinner and include nicer dishes, beverages, and desserts.

Dinner and a play or concert used to evoke thoughts of a bundle of money. Now, there are so many opportunities for free or inexpensive events, you and your spouse can rekindle the romance without breaking the bank. Enjoy the show!

Backyard Romance and Simple Escapes And Fun Right At Home

Is your backyard a kids-only territory? Does the swing-set make it seem like your backyard is off limits for adults? It shouldn't be that way. The backyard is a playground for you as well as your kids. Rediscover the potential of the outdoors with these romantic backyard date ideas. Let's look at some of the ways you can turn your backyard into a grownup playground:

A Playground For Grownups

You'll discover your silly side and feel sexy at the same time when you play tag or moonlight-moonlight in your own backyard without the kids. Don't forget about that swing-set. Enjoy the gentle swaying of the swings or take a quick and exhilarating trip down the slide. A jungle gym is the perfect place for tickles and stolen kisses.

Chasing your spouse around the backyard may bring back those feelings you shared during the chase you enjoyed while you were dating. And don't forget that running around also releases endorphins which are the feel-good hormones. That can only improve the rest of your evening together!

Picnic for Two

Pack a basket with your favourite snacks, food, and drinks. Include sexy foods like grapes, cheese, strawberries, and chocolate; foods that you can feed each other and nibble slowly. Make the picnic pretty by including your nice dinnerware and napkins. Don't forget your favourite stemware for your beverages.

Take a big blanket and spread it out under a tree in the backyard. You may want to bring a few pillows out, too, so you can rest your head as you gaze up at the sky, or into your spouse's eyes. You may also want to bring a book of poems to read out loud. The idea is to eat and talk about anything but the kids and the bills. Try a game of twenty questions. No matter how long you've been married there are always things that you didn't know about your spouse. Spend this time alone to find out.

Dinner a la Ritz

Turn your patio table into a five star restaurant with candles and your finest dinnerware and linens. Use inexpensive fabric or sheets to cover the chairs to make them prettier, then add cushions and pillows. Add romance and privacy to your outdoor dining room by draping fabric from the rafters or railings to close in the area. Use your imagination and dig around your linen closet to create a budget-friendly dining room. Steal the sheets off your bed if you have to! The more cozy and comfy, the more romantic.

There are many romantic meals that can be tweaked to stay within a tight budget. Recreate a classically romantic meal such as 'Chateaubriand For Two' on a budget by using a less expensive cut of meat, but keep the traditional red wine and tarragon sauce, as well as the Chateau potatoes, which are both relatively inexpensive to make. Save your money for the special touches; the food will quickly become less important as the romance heats up.

Light My Fire

Freestanding fire pits are another way to set the mood for romance. They are designed for the backyard and come in a variety of styles and prices, some very affordable. You can enjoy the fire without worry as they come with safety screens to guard against flying sparks. Spend a nice evening by a warm fire snuggling together and ignite more than just a pile of wood!

Begin your evening just as the sun is setting so you can enjoy the shades of orange, red, and purple. Then, as the sky gets dark, draw in close to the fire and gaze into the flickering flames. The sunset, firelight, moon, and stars will do wonders for setting the stage for soft talk and romance.

Use these ideas to spark your imagination and create romantic fun in your own backyard. Surprise your spouse with a romantic dinner or a game of hide-and-seek and feel like a newlywed again.

A Couples Retreat At Home and Intimacy After Hours

When you have kids, time for romance is hard to find. Even when you can find the time, your budget is tight and you can't afford a babysitter every time you want to enjoy your spouse's company alone. Then there's the exhaustion. Oftentimes parents are just too tired after a day of work and kids to think of leaving the house again. But, finding time alone with your spouse is important for your marriage. You get to see each other once again as sexy and not just as a mom or dad. So, how can you romance your spouse when you're strapped for time, money, and energy?

The date nights I am suggesting will begin after the kids are tucked in bed, and you won't even have to leave the house. Let's take a look at a few ideas for romancing your spouse without leaving the house:

Come Dance With Me

Get dressed up in your sexiest dress or suit and meet in the living room or dining room. Push the table or couch out of the way to clear the floor. Lower the lights and close the drapes. Light candles to set the mood. Turn on the romantic tunes that you used to dance to when you were dating and ask your spouse to join you on the dance floor.

Dancing is a great way to get close again. Not only are you in each others' arms, but you are increasing those endorphins, the feel-good hormones, which will make you feel happier, too. Make your dancing date even more entertaining by learning some new moves. Choose a dance video that teaches the tango, salsa, or other fun new moves you haven't tried yet. Show your spouse that you can still 'cut a rug!'

A Very Personal Scavenger Hunt

This game can become as playful as you want to make it. You each take turns leaving clues as to your whereabouts. When your spouse follows the clues, they lead to a secret rendezvous. Make your clues intriguing, filled with double entendre if you wish. But, don't waste too much time with the clues. You want to be able to enjoy time together once you're found! You can even have each clue lead to an item they will bring with them to the rendezvous spot. Where do the clues end up? Well, that will be up to

you and your imagination.

Movie Night for Grownups

Now's your chance to watch something other than a Disney movie. Drag out your old favourite movies to rekindle the flame you felt when you first saw them. Or, choose something new that you both have been longing to see. You can choose a movie to make you laugh, cry, or blush. Even a scary movie can be fun when the monster makes you scream and leap into your sweetie's arms.

Set the stage with low lighting, popcorn, and cozy quilts to snuggle in. You may even want to plan a simple dinner for your late night movie. Choose foods like pizza or chilli that are reminiscent of meals you might have enjoyed when you were dating.

Recreating those youthful times is always good for romance.

Adults Only Dessert

You ate dinner with the family, but tonight dessert is just for the two of you. Opt for romantic desserts that you, not your kids, will appreciate. Even when on a budget you can find simple desserts that taste and look decadent, and yes, sexy. Look for grownup choices like sparkling wine and strawberries. Choose smaller portions of rich chocolates to stay within your budget. With a grownup dessert for lovers, the idea is to choose quality, not quantity. Add a rich dark coffee, hot cocoa, or warm liqueur to top off the evening in sensual bliss. Take time to feed each other and don't forget the kisses in between the nibbles!

Back when you were first married, there was no shortage of ideas for ways to spend time together, even when there wasn't enough money to spend on expensive nights out, dining and dancing. You had to be creative to find romantic things to do cheaply at home. After hours, the house belongs to couples with romance on their mind. So, tuck those kids in bed early and let the romance begin!

Have a Romantic Theme Date

Use a theme to spark up an evening date. This was from a client of mine. Have a theme of kisses (or hearts or any theme that you love, even a favourite old group such as the Beatles). Buy Hershey kisses. If having dinner and a movie at home, sprinkle them around the dinner table, take the white and blue ribbon off a bunch of them and put them in a gift bag or fun container for him or her to open with a tag that says, special gifts to be redeemed any time. Then you can find some great songs that you have shared about kisses and download them, playing them through dinner and finally watching an oldie but goodie movie that is famous for its great kisses. Have fun - almost any romantic theme will work and here is where the dollar store is helpful to find great ideas.

Have some money to Spend on a Date night at Home?

Hire a musician to play while having dinner at home. This is such fun! I have done this myself and it is very romantic. You can look at universities or colleges for students who would be happy to play for you for an hour or so. Make sure you take care of all the details first so that payment etc. does not interrupt your romantic moments. You can also pay someone to do your dishes at a reasonable rate. Ask your babysitters or your

cleaning person, if you have one, if they know someone who might do this for you.

Now this is just the beginning. This eBook has given you ideas regarding date nights only. But you will find that these are working so well to build the necessary friendship to nurture your relationship and add the spice necessary to improve the passion in your relationship that you will want to develop a mindset of romance on a daily basis.

Perhaps your spouse complains about not feeling the romance in the relationship and despairs that he or she will ever have that with you. Once again, this is a skill, not part of your genetics as a person. Developing a romantic/ loving mindset happens when you become aware and learn how. If your relationship would be helped by having you learn this skill more thoroughly, look under the coaching section at [LivingFullyCoachingSite](http://LivingFullyCoachingSite.com) or on [HealthierMarriages](http://HealthierMarriages.com) for the year long program "laser relationship solutions". It will be there for a limited time. Or you can take the 2-month course where you learn about languages of love and making deeper connections with your partner. This one is not advertised but you can connect with me if it seems as if this might be helpful for you to move to the next stage in your relationship!

You can with me at lynda@livingfullycoachingsite.com

If you have enjoyed this eBook and found it helpful, please send others to my website at [HealthierMarriages](http://HealthierMarriages.com) to see more products to enhance relationship skills.