

**Keeping Romance Alive**

Life has a way of chipping away at our marriages: jobs and job related travel, in-laws, church activities, activities with the kids, conflict and misunderstandings. Most of us run at the speed of light, wake up one day and realize, "Huh. I don’t feel very close to my spouse anymore." The truth is that it happens to the best of us.

Here are a few simple methods I have learned throughout the years to revive romance in a stale marriage.

**Start Dating Again**

Go out at least once a week. It doesn't have to be an expensive date — just something simple.

A brown bag dinner in the park, a walk around the lake, a cup of cappuccino at a coffee shop or simply putting the kids to bed early and just talking will often do the trick. Or, revisit the things that you did when you were dating, like going to a movie, the theatre or a nice relaxing dinner for two.

After being "pulled apart" by all the pressures of modern life, it is imperative to reconnect each week. If you don't, you won't feel close.

**Make the kids wait**No spouse wants to feel second best, even to his own kids. Without the spouse, you wouldn't have the kids, so make time for that relationship. Hopefully, you'll stay together long after the kids leave, so take care of your marriage while you still have kids in the house.

**Make Yourself Attractive**

Here's the irony: If you make yourself more attractive, your spouse will often become more attractive to you. Quite often, changes that you make in your appearance can precipitate changes in your spouse just as positive actions often breed positive reactions.

Other suggestions:

* Go to the gym together.
* Walk with your spouse three to five times a week.
* Buy new clothes, and throw out those ugly sleep shirts/pajamas.
* Change habits.
* Shave the beard (men only), or change your hairstyle.
* Get new eye glasses, or try contacts.

**Make a List**

Determine what it is that makes you feel attracted to someone. What attracted you to your partner in the first place? What are the things that you find attractive that you would like to see in your spouse? What gets your attention?

**Communicate Your Desires to Your Spouse**

Do so in non-threatening, non-judgmental ways.

For example, you could say, "Honey, let's make some changes. We are both in a rut. We've changed over the years and lost some of the spark in our marriage. Let's change how we treat each other. Let's call each other during the day at work. Let's change how we look. Let's walk together each evening."

Avoid using "you" statements. Use "I feel" or "I need" instead.

Try writing a letter as an alternative to face to face communication, especially if you feel he or she will react negatively.

## Get physical Physical intimacy is an important part of marriage. It's the part of yourself you reserve for your spouse alone. Of course, this doesn't just mean making love. Don't forget other forms of daily intimacy. Hold hands in the car, kiss hello and goodbye and snuggle on the couch.

**Do Your Research**

Attraction doesn't *just occur* in a marriage. It is something that must be worked at. Often the process of bringing attraction back begins with education and basic communication. Read books and research articles on the Web that discuss reviving romance and attraction.

## Perform an act of service - Do Good Things — Daily Doing good things doesn't necessarily require spending a lot of money. Simple things, like picking up your dirty underwear, washing the dishes, preparing dinner, giving a free back rub, preparing dinner, writing an appreciative note, hand picking flowers or taking on a chore that your partner normally does, build intimacy and closeness in your marriage like nothing else.

Attraction often follows on the heels of serving each other like you did in the early years of your relationship. Often it's the little things that count – not the big ones.

## Send a message Let your spouse know you're thinking about her during the day. Send a sweet text message or e-mail. When you're apart, you can also involve your spouse in your daily life by sending pictures of what you do and where you go.

## Try something completely new Part of feeling connected is learning new things with your partner. Pick a hobby to try out together, and agree to stick it out even when you feel silly. You might sign up for a dance class, try out tennis or do something adventurous like zip-lining.