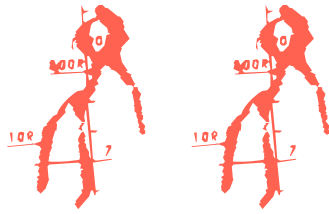


SHOW YOU CARE!



Step up and try something new or do the tried and true.



Ways to show your partner you care!

HERE ARE A FEW IDEAS!

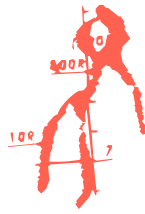
Want more? Just ask, BLBernell@gmail.com.

Or, look at *Tokens of affection*, Chronicle Books.

Or, check the web for lots of ideas!

Successful relationships have a 5-to-1 ratio of positive interactions—compliments, loving glances, offers to help out, and other **WAYS TO SHOW YOU CARE** (turning toward behaviors)—to negative gestures such as criticism and nagging. Whether you nag or simply turn your back when your partner is talking, negative gestures erode your connection.

SHOW YOU CARE!



An Excursion

Somewhere new. To Good Vibrations, in person, together, in Palo Alto, San Francisco, or online, can be an inspiration for fun, pleasure, connecting.



Keep a list . . . of all you appreciate and tell your partner, day by day.
Nothing is too small!

Collect, day by day, a list of things you appreciate about your partner. Write them down. Keep a little book. When you get to ten, tuck them into a card. When you get to twenty, send him/her a note with them. When you get to thirty, write them in your own hand and post them in a visible place in your home. When you get to 40, have them framed. Keep gathering and noticing how much about your Sweetie you appreciate and let her/him know what you are seeing!

Portrait

SHOW YOU CARE!

Read to each other

Find a book of fairy tales, a novel that you have both wanted to read, and read a chapter together before going to sleep. Or, make it your Sweetheart's favorite childhood book and read it to him/her, making sure s/he gets a good look at the pictures. It is a sweet and romantic ritual.

And, you may actually read something you want to read!

Send a Card

Send a card for no obvious reason. In fact, keep a stash of cards that you pick up as you discover them for just such a non reason. Make it a thank you note for something that meant a lot to you, or for just being in your life. A card or note out of the blue just showing you were thinking of him/her can mean a lot. Be sure to pay attention to the kind of card s/he likes—romantic, silly, gushy, handmade, or whatever hits the spot.



Mail Art

Most people enjoy getting packages in the mail. Receiving something handmade from one's lover is especially nice. Even if you aren't a brilliant artist, you can make a unique tribute to your relationship. It could be a collage of photographs, thoughts, or doodles, a love note buried in a small box of rose petals, a list of things you love about him/her made up as an old-fashioned scroll, or even a Play-Doh heart. Just be sure to pack it carefully, as something arriving broken would give the wrong message.

SHOW YOU CARE!

Box of Sweets

Put together a box of sweets. Buy a few pieces of chocolate at a yummy candy store and have them put into a big one pound box. Then, put other things of your choosing into the rest of the space. You could include a photograph, a flower, tickets, a poem, a symbol or something shared between you, anything you think your partner would like. The more personal the better. Let the other person know you are thinking about them, really noticing them, know them, see them. That is an aphrodisiac!

Personal Cookbook

Make a personal cookbook of your Sweetheart's favorite recipes and foods. Leave room for more entries and include a page for the phone numbers of his/her favorite restaurants. It might be a great gift to make that works as a helpful guide so your partner can make plans that are surely going to be just right for you.



Talk! Listen!

Talk to your partner. Listen carefully to your partner. These are each valuable and meaningful gifts. Not talking (withdrawal, stonewalling) or not listening, carefully, is a an issue to be made better, now!

SHOW YOU CARE!



Grand Gestures

Do something, big, out of character—buy a dozen roses, everyday, in his/her favorite color, of course, until s/he says that is enough! Give your partner a fabulous card, every day, until s/he says that is enough. Or, start each day with an appreciation and keep going even if s/he says that is enough. That can happen every day forever. Grand gestures earn a ton of good feelings.

Romantic Ritual

Invent a ritual involving an activity and a time. For example, take an evening walk during every full moon or try new exotic recipes on the first of every month. Keep the old rituals and add new ones.

Volunteer Together

After you have planted that tree, become a part of your community, together. CityTrees is a volunteer group that promotes and supports urban forestry efforts in Redwood City. CityTrees works with the Redwood City Public Works Department to plant and maintain trees along Redwood City's streets, at schools, and on other publicly owned property. Visit CityTrees.org to get more information. Find a similar organization in your community.

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Do something Novel and New

Any chance you get to do something you haven't done before or do something you have done before in a new way, you stimulate the pleasure center in your brain, definitely a good thing to do with and for a partner.

Celebrate the Earlier Days

Find and keep a baby photo of your partner nearby as a sweet reminder of the tender and gentle person they were before growing up and being the partner you now know and love,



Endless Small Gestures

They matter. Bring him/her a coffee or tea in bed. Bring a toothbrush and paste to bed, with a glass of water to rinse his/her mouth, to make that morning kiss all the sweeter.

Dream Talk

Ask about and talk about your partner's dreams. If you need help understanding them, keep talking to each other and see where they lead.

Rubs

Rub anything your partner wants or does not even know they want. Explore. Rub his/her fingers or toes. Rub his/her forehead or neck, shoulders and back. Rub. Touch.

SHOW YOU CARE!

Check In

Ask your partner about their day. Remember what they say and check back to see how whatever was happening happened.

I Love You

Say it. Write it. Think it. Remember it. Remind yourself and your partner. You cannot say it too much. The great myth that you can say it one time and your partner should remember is, just that, a myth.

Say it. Write it.
Think it. Remember it.

Thank You

You can never say "thank you" enough. For everything. "Thank you" makes a difference. Really. Being noticed for what you do, especially the things you do all the time, helps strengthen the connection to your partner. Taking each other for granted, the neglect of the familiar, is to be avoided!



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Love Language

What is your partner's preferred love language? 1 Quality Time. 2 Acts of Service. 3 Words of Affirmation. 4 Receiving Gifts. 5 Physical Touch. Each of us wants to feel loved by our partner and wants our partner to feel loved by us. The challenge for many couples, according to Gary Chapman, author of The 5 Love Languages, is that the way one person shows love often isn't the way his or her partner intuitively feels it. Find just the right ways to offer love to your partner. You can even generate that list together. Make it fun. Make it happen. Do not delay.

1 Quality Time

You want your partner's undivided attention. It's important to you to have time together without distractions where you can nurture conversations and enjoy activities together. No technology!

2 Acts of Service

Do things you know your partner would like you to do. Make dinner, take out the recycling, pay the bills. Show your partner that you notice what's going on in his/her life and demonstrate that you want to participate in his/her life, to help out.

3 Words of Affirmation

Some people experience love most directly through warm words, whether they're verbal compliments or encouragements — anything from "I appreciate that you found a babysitter for tonight" to "I know you can run that 10K!" Whether or not words of affirmation are your primary love language, supportive comments help couples develop a sense of "we-ness," a feeling that enhances closeness.

4 Receiving Gifts

Actual presents have their place here. Help your partner know you love them. This could be a store-bought bracelet or a beautiful rock you pick up on a hike or a watercolor you paint. These kinds of gifts show you've been paying attention, that you see who your partner is and what s/he needs/wants.

5 Physical Touch

Back rubs, holding hands, deep hugs, kisses, putting your arm around your partner. Physical intimacy is the signal of love and affection for some people. Hold. Touch your partner.

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Differences

Attend to them. Settle them, once and for all, get help if you need it, put what cannot be solved in the category of this is just how it is. Move on.
This is a loving way to be together.



Hug to Relax

Most hugs last an average of four seconds.
Extend your hug to 10 minutes without the expectation that it will lead to sex.
Reconnect with your partner. Put your arms around him/her and calm yourself. This closeness, while you are calm, is bonding.

Pursue Passion

Passion often gets sidelined. Show your partner s/he is someone you want to share closeness with, each day. Passion also improves relationships by making people more accepting of one another. "When we think our partner likes us, we are much more forgiving of grievances, and we're also more appreciative of the inherent day to day challenges of being in a relationship,

SHOW YOU CARE!

Heads on Pillow

For many it's tough to go from washing the dishes to rolling around on the sheets. Lie in bed with your clothes on, face each other, clearly see each other's face. Hold hands, look at each other, and stay there for 10 minutes. Most people feel passion start to kick in when they're relaxed and lying down.

Space for Solitude

The poet Rainier Maria Rilke wrote: "A good marriage is one in which each partner appoints the other to be the guardian of his solitude, and thus they show each other the greatest possible trust." Give your partner the emotional space s/he needs to reflect and reconnect with himself or herself.

Together Time

Solitude is healthy, and as with all things, balance is key. Too much can weaken a relationship by creating separate spheres of interest, which can lead to having less in common over time. After all, we tend to fall—and stay—in love with the person we have the most fun with. Do the things you enjoy the most together. Recreational companionship combines two key needs: to have fun and to have a companion. Stumped about what to do together? Check out the Recreational Enjoyment Inventory at www.marriagebuilders.com.

Feeling While Touching

Many couples touch each other without really feeling each other. Be present. Notice how you feel. Talk to your partner. Enjoy each other.

Tiny surprises

An unexpected delivery of snacks with a note saying, "I hope you're taking care of yourself."

SHOW YOU CARE!

Laugh. Be silly.

Pet the pet.



Stamp Out Criticism

Nothing can sink a relationship faster than unrelenting negativity. Whether you nag or simply turn your back when your partner is talking, these negative gestures erode your sense of togetherness. Researchers have even found that eye rolling after a spouse's comment can be a strong predictor for divorce. Become aware of how often you're criticizing your spouse. One way to do this is to create some kind of lighthearted stopgap when you notice critical commentary — put a coin in a jar, or create a silly code word to let your partner know you've caught yourself (or her) in the act. Then try consciously focusing on each other's strengths instead. Criticism will be naturally tamped down, and that will give each of you more opportunities to feel successful, appreciated and loved. Start from the perspective that you respect your partner, and his/her way of doing things is as valid as yours. Underneath every criticism is a wish.

Ask for what you want and need directly.



SHOW YOU CARE!

Your Turn!

Ask your partner what would hit the spot!
Listen to the answer! Do what they suggest.

Your personal WAYS TO SHOW YOU CARE!

SHOW YOU CARE!



SHOW YOU CARE!