



# Psychologists, Marriage or Couples Counseling Specialists: Chuck Gray, Ph.D. & Associates *Serving the Houston Area since 1987*

## **Add a Touch of Romance**

Most of us enjoy romantic love. Yet our time may be filled with work demands, family demands, and other demands. Who has time for romance when we are feeling tired, burdened, and frustrated?

The answer may be almost all of us. ***Romance does not have to be time-consuming or labor-intensive. Romance is a gift of the heart: a kind smile, a thoughtful gesture, a playful interlude.*** Romance is creative. Romance is fun. Romance is the joy of bringing that special smile that only you can bring to the soul of the person you love most dearly.

The key to romance is opening your heart and mind to the simple pleasures of showing your lover how much you care. Let go of that negative emotional energy that can block romance. Exercise. Meditate. Vent your frustrations with a willing friend, a pet, a journal, a stove, a steering wheel – anything that allows you to purge your spirit of irritations, hurts, and worries. Be good to yourself. Free up that space in your heart for romance.

Once you are in romantic mood, empower your lover to do likewise. Romance cannot be forced. If your partner is stressed, ask what you may do to help. Women may like to relieve their stress by talking. So husbands, help your wives unwind by drawing them out verbally and listening attentively to their feelings. Men may like to relieve stress by distracting themselves with solitary pursuits such as projects, computers, or magazines. So wife, help your husband unwind by encouraging him to have some time alone. Then, if necessary, ask him for what you want in a fun, friendly, positive way when he is most likely to be able to respond. When we suggest that our spouses relieve stress in ways that work for them, we free them to open their hearts to romance with us.

Men and women often try to connect romantically in different ways. Women may first seek emotional intimacy by sharing their feelings in order to open up to physical intimacy. Men may first seek physical intimacy in order to open themselves to emotional intimacy. Romance may mean helping your partner find intimacy your partner's way.

Men: listen to her, gaze attentively into her eyes as she speaks, understand her, relate to her, compliment her, protect her, stand by her, care for her, cuddle her, cherish her, connect with her in heart, mind, and soul. Women: show up naked, bring beer. All kidding aside, have some light-hearted romantic fun your lover's way. Below are some tips for romance. Enjoy!

### *Romantic Tips for Men*

*Listen attentively to her. Make devoted eye contact. Let her know you love her by tuning into her feelings.*

*Call or leave messages letting her know you are thinking of her.*

*Surprise her frequently with poems, flowers, or little love notes.*

*Give lots of little affections: hugs from behind, kisses on the neck, warm embraces.*

*Make dates in advance, especially for her birthday, your anniversary, and New Year's Eve.*

### *Romantic Tips for Women*

*Flirt with him.*

*Initiate lovemaking.*

*When burdened, allow him to help you. Ask for his assistance when he is most likely to give it; then show him your appreciation.*

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***If you complain, do so about traffic or the shopping lines, not him.***

***Let your eyes reflect your admiration for him.***

***Romantic Tips for All***

***Create private time together.***

***Make your times with your lover warm and friendly. Smile, hug, and play.***

***Apologize freely. Forgive readily.***

***Reassure each other of your love and respect.***

***Joke around. Laugh. Sing. Playfully serenade your lover.***

Remember that romance is a state of heart and mind. Romance is an atmosphere, an ambiance, a mood. Romance does not require a lot of time. Romance is a special smile, a knowing glance, a soft word. Give your lover and yourself a gift of romance.

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This article was written by Dr. Chuck Gray, a licensed psychologist in Houston, Texas who specializes in marriage counseling and other adult relationship counseling. Chuck has helped thousands of Houstonians through his counseling at his clinic, Chuck Gray, Ph.D. & Associates. Chuck lives in the Houston, Texas area with his loving wife Laurie and delightful daughters Cheryl and Valerie. For this article, Chuck has borrowed liberally from the Mars and Venus books of his cousin, author John Gray, Ph.D.

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