

The Best Gift for Your Child: Romance for Your Wife

You love your children; you deeply desire to see them grow up healthy and happy. But what is the most important thing you can give your children to help them grow up feeling loved, nurtured, and self-confident and at peace?

There are many good answers here, such as providing a comfortable home in a safe neighborhood; making great sacrifices to help your children succeed in school; demonstrating unconditional love; setting consistent boundaries; modeling healthy values; and on and on.

One other important factor too often gets left off that list, and I'd place it right at the top. It's loving your wife.

You're two of the most important people in the world to your children, probably the most important. How do you think your child feels when one parent yells at, belittles, taunts, or insults the other? I imagine they feel like I did when it was obvious my parents didn't love each other. I was torn, hurt, angry, scared, and uncertain about my future. I always remember thinking, "Are they going to get a divorce and what would happen to me and my brothers?"

It is especially traumatic for children to see their mother—with whom that child has always had a special attachment—being hurt or neglected by their father. Too many dads con themselves into believing that the best way to invest in their children's future is to work long hours so they can live in a nicer neighborhood and send their children to better schools. In the process, they often end up jeopardizing the element that actually has the most impact on their children's lives—the relationship between Mom and Dad.

What a child's house looks like on the outside isn't nearly as important as what it feels like on the inside. Every child has a deep desire to see a committed, loving relationship between the two people he loves the most.

So, the good news here is that, with a little effort and creativity, you can provide your children with security, comfort, peace, stability, and health—by loving your wife. It may seem indirect, but it's very real. This is just one more reason driving my personal campaign to help men be more romantic.

Expressions of love between a child's father and mother should not occur solely behind the bedroom door. It is vital for children to hear positive affirmations of their parents' love for one another. It is equally crucial to see the parents back up those words with deeds—showing that they really are special to each other. It's giving warm hugs and gentle kisses; lightly scratching backs or massaging shoulders; snuggling together while watching movies; buying gifts or making presents for each other "just because"; talking with each other and laughing out loud. For me, it is the loving attack in the supermarket when no one was looking! By the way, I came to find out she hated that!

Your children are likely to emulate you when it comes time for them to find a spouse. They may mimic your affection and duplicate your disrespect. Most fathers

would love to have a hand in choosing a mate for their children; it's just ironic that they don't realize how much influence they already have.

So, start a new habit today. Make it your pursuit to romance your wife on a daily basis—not only on your anniversary, her birthday, Valentine's Day, and the other times when you would plan something special. I've included 10 specific ideas to help get you started.

- Buy some glow-in-the-dark stars at a toy store and arrange a special message above your bed.
- Make her a personalized coloring book with a dozen or so silly pictures of memorable experiences (browse through photo albums for ideas). Outline in black marker and then have the pages copied and bound on heavy paper at a copy shop. Give with a pack of crayons.
- Change the screen saver on the computer to a scrolling message. For added effect, use a character font that can't be read without decoding.
- Hide a bunch of silly prizes and a card in your love's favorite cereal.

Using a three-foot string, tie a card or gift to the bottom of the automatic garage door. When your honey comes home, the gift will magically arise to greet her.

- While your love is in the shower, put her towel in the dryer for a few minutes so it will be toasty warm when she steps out.
- Record a book, fairy tale or poetry on tape for your dearest to listen to on the way to work or while she is out of town.
- Move the living room furniture and have a picnic in the middle of the floor, complete with blanket, picnic basket and all the fixings. (A roaring fireplace would add to the effect.)
- Use Rain-X Anti Fog (for car windows) and a cotton swab to write a message that will mysteriously appear on the bathroom mirror while your sweetheart is showering. Or, use an old tube of lipstick.
- Use chalk to write a welcome home greeting on the sidewalk.

You know I can just hear guys laugh at this or scorn at these ideas. So, I will ask you the question: Do you do anything...oh, except on that expected special day. Can you remember the best times you ever had while growing up? Can you remember that cute little girl in middle school or maybe in elementary school that you just thought was the cutest thing in the world? I bet you wrote her notes for her girlfriends to pass to her or you left notes in her locker or in high school in her books or car windshield. I think I nearly flunked typing because I was always trying to figure out how to type something to leave it in her locker the next period. It was crazy but fun. But guess what, we grew up and became adults and the fun of it just seems to away. So, I challenge you to go back in time, do the crazy stuff, remember some old dates that made her feel special and pull it out of your bag of tricks. Your kids will watch and remember and feel secure and loved because they see you loving their mom. Oh, by the way, don't look for sex that night as a reward...that would be what you call "blowing it!"



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