

5 Ways to Win Your Wife's Heart This Valentine's Day

I'm not remotely a Valentine's fan. But I do love my wife, and I do want to make it through the sugarcoated, chocolate-flavored, morass without causing trouble, being in trouble or compromising myself by playing the game. What I have learned over four decades of hit-or-miss (largely miss) can be distilled into five simple principles. This doesn't have to be as difficult as we make it.

Pay close attention and avoid the dual traps of avoidance and insincerity. Here are five Valentine hacks.

1. Many small gestures are more effective than one big one.

Try one rose and a handwritten note at breakfast, a modest token mid-morning, a small surprise at lunch, something unexpected in the afternoon, then a carefully planned meal in the evening. The message here is, "I love you enough to think this through."

2. Love is about giving and listening.

Prepare a "What I love about you" journal with a minimum of seven pages. On each page include a relevant photograph and then a description of that particular attribute. Examples: "When we walk together, you always hold my hand, and I love that." "Every day when I get home from work, you stop what you're doing and ask me about my day," "You are so beautiful I can't help but want you." You get the idea. Yes, this takes thought and work ... yes, that's the point!

3. Expensive jewelry doesn't fix everything.

Not even an expensive diamond can cover for a cold heart or a long-term indifference, so give her the gift of your desire

and attention. Ask her out; surprise her with a romantic escape; woo her like it's all brand-new; be fascinated by her stories; listen from the depths of your being; get to know her all over again.

4. Prepare a gourmet meal.

You may or may not know how to cook. If you can't, order to-go from a fancy restaurant, set a fancy table at home, then serve it up from the kitchen. There's something about the act of service of you doing it that communicates.

5. Begin thinking of next year's Valentine's Day.

"You can't 'say it with flowers' if you haven't been saying it all along."

Let it be the exclamation point at the end of a yearlong poem. Consider this a positive ongoing intention. Read my lips: Do not wait until mid-February to express your love. Do. Not. Wait. You can't "say it with flowers" if you haven't been saying it all along. Make sure she knows how much you love her every day.

Obviously, there are more hacks than this. Valentine's Day doesn't have to be cheesy; just think of it as an opportunity to do well as a guy. The Lord knows we all need the help.

What are some of your favorite Valentine's Day hacks?

Huddle up with your kids and ask, "What is something someone has done for you that made you feel loved?" {eoa}

Derek Maul *is the author of five books, a nationally recognized men's resource, a committed encourager and a pilgrim in progress. He divides his time between writing and traveling to speak about the fully engaged life.*

This article originally appeared at .