

How to Fall in Love With Your Spouse All Over Again

No one gets married thinking their love for their spouse will fade. We go in believing those butterflies we felt when we first fell in love will last forever.

But the truth is every married couple experiences times where they don't feel as "in love" as they used to. Or the marriage relationship may begin to seem more ho-hum than they thought it should.

That's why practicing celebrating love is so important to your marriage! Celebrating Love is one of our "6 Secrets to a Lasting Love."

Celebrating love is all about reveling in the emotional, physical and spiritual connections that bond you to your spouse. It's a kind of love that protects you from drifting apart and enables you to fall in love and feel discovered all over again. It's not always about occasional gifts and surprises. Celebrating love rejoices daily in the marriage you have and helps you feel cherished and captivated by the other. It is a reflection of God's celebrating love as seen in Zephaniah 3:17 (NLT):

"The Lord ... will take delight in you with gladness... He will rejoice over you with joyful songs."

Without celebrating love, your relationship will stagnate, and you will drift apart emotionally. But when you cultivate celebrating love in your marriage, you will reconnect with the heartfelt love you discovered when you first fell head over heels for each other. Celebrating love means growing deeper in love year after year, rediscovering what you almost forgot about each other, appreciating again what may have lost its shine and displaying affection and appreciation for all that

you find in each other. Celebrating love prompts you to exult with Solomon: "This is my beloved, this is my friend" (Song of Songs 5:16b, NIV).

Celebrating love usually isn't something that "comes over" you. You don't just sit around and wait for the old, warm feelings of love to well up again. You cultivate celebrating love intentionally. One of the primary ways to inspire daily celebration in your relationship is to purposely put each other first. Move your spouse to the top of your to-do list, just a bubble behind your love for Jesus.

This means you must make spending time together a priority, just as you did when you were first dating. We're not just talking about "quality time." Sometimes you need hundreds of hours of "quantity time" before you can enjoy real quality time with your spouse. You need frequent periods of time away from the kids and other responsibilities. Find enjoyable activities—everything from hobbies to foreplay to conversation—that will rekindle intimacy of heart and spirit. Give your spouse priority access to your time instead of just the leftovers.

Priority time for your spouse means occasional date nights and getaway weekends. These events should be scheduled in your calendar ahead of time, because if you wait until the last minute, you may have trouble fitting them into your busy life. (You may find our book *40 Unforgettable Dates with Your Mate* helpful in planning dates!) But priority time also means smaller time slots each day, such as having dinner together, taking a brief walk, spending time talking, playing a game or watching a favorite program together.

Priority time for what? Among all the enjoyable things you may do when you set aside time to be together, make communication a priority. Sure, you may spend a couple of hours in silence watching the ballet or a movie. But make the effort to fit periods of meaningful conversation into your time together. By

meaningful we mean something more than how you liked the movie, what the kids did today or how the economy is faring. Talk about the two of you—your goals, your dreams, even your disappointments and your hurts. Try to learn something new about your spouse every time you enjoy uninterrupted conversation.

Meaningful conversation also means what you say through your body language. When you talk together, put down your phone and turn off the TV. Make eye contact and give undivided attention. Make physical contact through an occasional affirming touch. Draw out your spouse with questions that demonstrate your interest in what he or she is talking about. Ask God to help you focus directly on your spouse.

Lavish on your spouse the honor and pleasure of putting him or her first among your earthly relationships. It will prompt a daily celebration that will help you soar above the knotty problems and humdrum of daily life.

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Dr. Gary and Barb Rosberg are co-founders of the international ministry *America's Family Coaches*, respected marriage conference speakers, executive life and marriage coaches, award-winning authors and radio hosts. Together, they have written over a dozen prominent marriage and family resources and DVD series with almost 1 million total copies in print worldwide; including *The 6 Secrets to a Lasting Love* (Gold Medallion winner under the title *Divorce Proof Your Marriage*) and *The 5 Love Needs of Men and Women*, a Gold Medallion finalist. Selected books are available in more than twelve

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