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Dating Your Spouse: Planning an evening on the town--no kids

By Alyice Edrich

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When was the last time you went out on a real "date" with your significant other? And no, a real date doesn't mean taking the kids to the movies with you and sitting them in the front row, while you sit five rows back to cuddle, eat popcorn, and share a large soda. If your date nights have consisted of squeezing in a little time while the kids play or go off to bed then it's time to dust off your dancing shoes and find a sitter!

Spending time with your better half can not only save your marriage, but bring it back to life. To add a little spark to the romance department of your marriage, follow these simple steps to a romantic evening the two of you will never forget:

1. Find a sitter. If you can't afford to hire a sitter because money is too tight, enroll the help of a trusted friend or family member. If you feel guilty, offer to swap sitter duties.
2. Listen to your spouse. What is your better half constantly wishing she could do? Is that something you can turn into an evening of fun?
3. Ask your spouse out on a date. Don't just tell your loved one that you two are going out without the kids, get romantic and ask her out on a date.
4. Buy a gift. Is there something your loved one has been eyeing but just couldn't justify buying? Is it in your "cash only" budget? If it is, buy it. If it's not, find something comparable and unique, then wrap it up in a real elegant box, tie a ribbon around it, and place a bow on the top.
5. Handwrite a love note. Hallmark is famous for offering cards that pull on one's heartstrings. If you can't think of something romantic to say on your own, spend a little time in the card section and find the perfect card to say it for you. But don't just sign your name to the card, adlib by writing a few extra special lines to personalize that card for your spouse.
6. Make reservations. Don't head out to the local chain restaurant for a meal; you can do that any day. Instead, call ahead and make reservations to some place new. Is there a local resort in the area? How about a private club?
7. Dress elsewhere. Tell your spouse you'll be back to pick her up, then head on over to your friend's house to get ready.
8. Surprise your date. When it's time to pick up your spouse, surprise her by coming to the door with a

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bouquet of flowers and/or box of chocolates. (Save the gift and card for later.)

9. Don't talk shop. When you finally make it out of the house, don't talk about the kids, work, school, finances, health problems, or anything else that could add stress or put a damper on the evening. Talk about fun, no-nonsense things instead.

10. Share a dessert. Order your spouse's favorite dessert and two forks, and then intertwine those arms and offer a bite to one another.

11. Bring out the finale. If you're really adventurous, get down on one knee, look your spouse in the eyes, and tell her how much your life together means to you while handing over that beautifully gift-wrapped box. If that's a bit too mushy for you, just reach across the table, grab your spouse's hands, tell her how much you love her and then say, "Oh wait, I have something for you." And pop out that gift.

12. Go dancing. Have you always wanted to try salsa dancing? What about line dancing? Now is the

time to try something new, you'll laugh so hard that it's the perfect way to end the evening. Can't find a themed dance studio in your area? That's okay, just boogie the night away at your local dance club.

Alyce Edrich is the author of several work from home e-books, and the editor-in-chief of a national publication for BUSY parents. Subscribe to her free e-newsletter at <http://thedabblingmum.com/joinezine.htm> to win a free book!

The Single's Guide To Online Dating

By Hak Ty

If you're single and you're willing to try out new avenues to dating then you should try out online dating. It's definitely fun, less expensive and easier than dating the regular way. You're also able to meet more people since the Internet lets you talk to people from all over the world! With online dating, there's no need to restrict yourself to dating the same old guys from your very small town (read: population of 817). With online dating, there's no such thing as social classes because it's open to everyone!

The Virtual Places To Be For Online Dating - If you're now open to the idea of online dating, there are several cyber places that you could stop by and see if there's anyone who appeals to your taste. First stop would be the online dating sites.

These sites were primarily designed to help people meet others with the same interests as theirs and maybe forge a relationship later on. Online dating sites such as these require you to register for membership and maybe even pay to enjoy additional features of the website.

Then, these online dating sites would ask you to create a profile for your own so that other members would know a little about you. These profiles could be the key to catching the interest of your future Mr. or Ms. Right so make sure that you make your profile as interesting as possible - without lying about anything, of course. Most online dating sites also allow you to upload photos of yourself so if you're reasonably attractive, do make sure that you post your best picture.

The second place that allows you to date online is chat rooms such as those provided by MIRC or Yahoo. These chat rooms are usually divided or categorized according to region, race or interest. If

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you enter a chat room with the name Singles20–40, then you should expect to meet people belonging to that age group. It's imperative to choose a chat room that reflects your preferences to ensure that you'll meet people who are probably similar to you in terms of interests.

The third virtual place to be if you want to try online dating is forums or interactive websites. By joining a forum or registering for membership in an interactive website, you'll be able to meet people who are sure to share the same interests as you do. These forums usually hold regular meetings so make sure that you participate actively and get yourself known!.

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