

Take T.I.M.E. for Love

By ***Pam and Bill Farrel***, authors of ***Red Hot Monogamy***

How much time does it take to stay in love for a life time? In our book, ***Red Hot Monogamy***, we explain the minimum time commitment we have seen necessary to maintain the connectedness needed for a healthy strong marriage (and a sizzling sex life). This month, make some T.I.M.E. for love:

Ten – twenty minutes to talk together **alone** everyday. It is amazing how just making time to talk about things more important than who is going to pick up the milk will reconnect and rekindle your hearts. This is the reason that we place couple communication questions in all of the books we author. We first learned the skill and importance of dialoguing when we, as newlyweds, went to a United Christian Marriage Encounter.

We saw the intense power of connection after we had each written a simple love letter on a topic then read the letter aloud to one another. The process is simple, but the results are profound. Many of the most happily married couples we know, those with a spark in their eyes even after 30, 40, 50 years together have found the magic in the small things: a cup of coffee and conversation in the morning or a walk around the block in the evening.

Invest in a weekly date night (or date breakfast or lunch) together for at least 4 hours. (It takes a couple hours to emotionally reconnect) We believe in the weekly date time so much that we actually schedule two of these a week

because sometime (no, many times—life interrupts the best laid plans), so having twice as much time as we actually feel we need each week for a date ensures that even on the busiest weeks we get at least the minimum. WE also believe in scheduling sex, which gives you something to look forward to on the most hectic of weeks! (One happily married pastoral couple chose Wednesday after evening service. Often she will call him at work and whisper to him, “It’s Wednesday!” His whole day seems better after that call!)

A weekly date doesn’t have to cost much either. In *Red Hot Monogamy* we give over 200 red hot romantic ideas and many of them you can pull off for pennies. Here are a few:

- If you hear “your song” on the radio, simply call his/her cell phone and hold your phone up to the speaker and let the song do the romancing.
- Create a photo postcard of the two of you and on the backside, write a thank you for that special memory and an invitation out to another romantic activity.
- Recreate your first date. If you can still fit into it, wear the same clothes. If not, at least go to the same places.
- Check a book out of the library or buy a book of love poems. Sit in front of the fire place in each other’s arms and take turns reading poems to each other. Or write one yourself and read aloud.
- Create a series of thank you notes. Send one a day for as many days as you can think of things to thank your mate for. One line on each card day after day will make a bigger impact.

- Each of you take a blank set of Post it notes (each choose your own color) and write seductive, sensual things on each page, then exchange the notes randomly. Place them on the mirror, the rear view mirror in the car; on his golf clubs, in her briefcase, inside his shoe, etc . . .try to find the most outrageous spot to place the love note.
- Use everyday items to send a unique set of messages, for example, use the title of a candy bar with a note that says, “You are a “Big Hunk” or a note on a box of cereal reading, “You are my “Life”.
- Write your own “feature” article about your spouse who was just named, “World’s greatest Lover”. Include all their best traits as a lover, add in a picture of this famous lover and frame it!
- Have dinner someplace different in your home: in front of the fire place, on the rooftop, on the patio or balcony out back, in the attic, under the tree in the back yard, etc.
- Use inexpensive dime store Valentines to create a trail of clues that lead to a romantic destination. You can also make this into a car rally by taping the Valentines around town, around the mall or leave taped to your friend’s front doors.

Make a monthly day away policy. At least once a month spend 8- 12 uninterrupted hours together. This can be anything you ***both*** enjoy. (To maximize this, make sure you schedule a few moments of privacy in case you want to fan the flame on your love and have a little red hot monogamy sometime during this 10-12 hour block of time.) Sometimes parents of young children find it difficult

to find over night childcare, but if you will at least commit to leaving when the kids are asleep, and returning when they are already put to bed, you can turn your own home into a B and B and make it seem like you “got away” and were a couple again. By finding a new sport or hobby you both enjoy, you create some common bonds.

Escape quarterly (or at least bi annually) away for a 48 hour weekend. Nothing is as nice as unplugging from life to stir the embers of love.

But if you can't getaway today, then at least start tonight. Do a mini escape by locking the bedroom door and ask and answer a few questions that will fan the flame on love:

- What is your favorite place I touch you?
- What lighting sets to mood for you?
- What sounds and aromas set your heart ablaze?
- What words do you love me to whisper in your ear?
- What sights make your heart dance? A view? A sunset? The majestic? Quaint and cozy? Great art? Unique and eclectic?
- What is one simple change I'd like to make in our bedroom to set the mood?

Enjoy your T.I.M.E.!

Pam and Bill Farrel are relationship experts, international speakers, authors of over 30 books including best selling *Men are like Waffles, women are like Spaghetti, Red Hot Monogamy, 10 Best Decisions a Couple can Make, and Love. Honor and Forgive*. The Farrels are popular marriage and family conference speakers, radio and TV guests, and

have a regular relationship column in numerous magazines and newspapers. To order their helpful resources: www.farrelcommunications.com