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Therapist's Thoughts E-Zine For September 2005  
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## ROMANCE

This month I found myself talking a lot to couples about romantic dates. I tell almost all couples I work with that they need to go out on weekly, romantic dates. I get a lot of questions from them about my suggestion that tells me there is lack of understanding of this key area for relationships.

Romantic dates with your sweetie are as important as calling your friends and family and spending quality time with them. You have to nurture relationships for them to grow. When we do romantic things for our partner early on, in getting to know them, we are trying to capture their attention (or capture them), letting them know they are important to us. Frequently, after we have succeeded, we slow down or stop the momentum of romance. Why? The answer is scarcity. We put energy and focus into things we don't have; scarcity drives us. Relationships are no different. When we are first getting to know someone, we find a lot to like about him or her. When we imagine not being with them or not having the feelings we have when in their presence, we feel the scarcity and pursue them. Once we have them in our lives, we no longer feel that scarcity and then we incorrectly assume that we no longer need to show how important they are (and they become really important again if someone else shows interest in them).

We must continue to show interest in our partner. Not the type that asks how their day went, but the sweet, tender interest. Things like: candlelight dinners, running a bath for them, bringing home flowers, writing poetry, etc. The Internet is full of ideas that are romantic. Just go searching, because it doesn't matter what you do, but that you do something. It's really true that it's the thought that counts. Just show interest. It conveys love and nurturance. What captured our attention in the beginning was the experience of being special and pursued and this is what keeps things exciting and interesting in the long-term.

So, romance is really just letting your partner know that they have been in your thoughts throughout the day. Making a sacred time for just the two of you ensures the importance of your relationship, each and every week. Weekly dates can almost be like re-affirming your wedding vows.

Once again, many thanks to my clients that allow me to let this material bubble up while in their presence.

Sincerely,

Russell

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