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Red Hot Journey

Every memorable adventure has three things: the anticipation of going, the experience itself, and the lingering memories. Let's look at how to make Valentine's Day a journey to red hot love. Inspired by the effort we saw in King Solomon and his bride from Song of Songs in the Bible, here are few ideas from our book, *Red Hot Monogamy*, which might inspire you too:

Before: *The Invitation*

Make the invitation as memorable as the date itself by trying one of these ideas:

- If you hear "your song" on the radio, simply call his/her cell 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 an past special date and an invitation out to the Valentine activity
- Make a public statement of your love. Rent a billboard, hand a sheet or banner over the freeway overpass, make a banner for the garage door, write in chalk on the driveway, paint it on a wall that you are going to be repainting anyway.
- 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.

- In *52 Ways to Wow Your Husband*, I tell a story of a wife who was very creative in her invitation:

“When I was employed as a producer for a local TV station, I used to get all kinds of perks. On one occasion, a new hotel-casino was opening up, and I was given a free room for the festivities. I decided to make a romantic date night out of it. I booked the room without telling my husband. Then, on the day of the reservation, I packed our suitcases full of goodies and put them in the car. When he came home from work, I presented him with a handmade card that read, “You are cordially invited to attend a surprise getaway with your wife at the so-and-so casino resort. Even if you don’t gamble a penny, you are *guaranteed* to get lucky! Your ride leaves in 10 minutes. Just bring your smile.” Let me tell you, it was a great evening, even if we never did make it to the official festivities at the hotel!”

During: *The Date*

Valentine’s Day doesn’t have to be expensive. On our favorite Valentine’s date, we each had a five-dollar budget, and we divided up the letters of Valentine (Bill got *V*, I got *A*, and so on). I (Pam) started my part of the date with *A* is for *Acting*, and we read a portion of *Romeo and Juliet* on a park stage! Here are a few ideas on activities to try on your date that are different than the usual dinner and movie:

- 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.

- Use a magazine cover like Time's Person of the Year and scan in your spouse's picture. Or use Glamour or GQ or other magazine with catchy headlines but replace the model with a picture of your mate. Then give him/her a "red carpet" five star date of his or her dreams.
- "Kidnap" your spouse from work or other and blind fold them and take him/her to a romantic rendezvous. (You might clear this with the boss or show up at the end of the work day—just don't get your spouse fired—that would definitely ruin the mood).
- 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.
- Look at your wedding album and talk about what first attracted you to your mate.
- How do I love thee, let me count the ways: Write on a set of index cards all the reasons you love your spouse; make a paper chain of her or his best qualities; Bring one a flower for each positive trait you want to recount and bring them in one at a time to her as you verbally list off what makes your heart sing.
- Opposites attract: For one day, flip roles. If he usually drives, then let her. If she usually cooks, then let him. If he's usually on top, have her do the honors.
- Learn to do something your mate loves (the rules of football; how to golf; fly fishing; how to find a great antique or quilt, etc)

- For more free nearly free ideas adapted from our book *Red Hot Monogamy*, check out the free article “Recession Romance”

After: *Making the Memory Last*

Send a thank you card, email, text then go the extra mile to add a new romantic habit to you routine:

- Create a mail box for love notes: place it in your bathroom, on the kitchen table, etc and exchange love mail. A traditional mailbox I like because it has a red flag you can put up to signal “You’ve got mail!”
- Leave love notes between pages of a book or magazine your mate is reading.
- Place romantic cards through the house, or use the house for some play on words. The day after Valentine’s my spouse woke up to signs that read things like, “You are my CUP of tea”; “I love to STAIR at you!” “You’ve opened the DOOR to my heart.” Or use everyday items to send a unique set of messages, The title of a candy bar with a note that says, “You are a “Big Hunk” of Burning Love , or I am “Red Hot: for your love.

*Pam and Bill Farrel are relationship specialists, international speakers and best selling authors of **Men are like Waffles, Women are like Spaghetti, Red Hot Monogamy and 52 Ways to Wow Your Husband.** (www.Love-Wise.com)*