

## Christmas Gifts that Can Strengthen Your Marriage

### Bill and Pam Farrel

As the holidays arrive, questions of what to give your spouse as a Christmas gift might be running through your mind. In our book, *Red Hot Monogamy*, we give 200 red hot ideas to fan the flames of love. Many of them are simple ways of saying, "You are valuable" or "Thanks for being you!" Here are a few to spark your thoughts:

1. **Send a handmade card:** Most computers now have programs to personalize a message. One Valentine's Day, Bill inserted pictures of the front covers of all of our books on to separate greeting cards then created a twist of words that celebrated our love. For example, "It's been a Pure Pleasure being married to you."
2. **Send a unique gift box in the mail:** A treasure chest with an invitation to "unlock my passion"; a love note buried under a layer of dried rose pedals; a scroll on antique looking paper inviting your mate out for a fancy night on the town. (For a big bang, insert the rolled up scroll through a beautiful brand new ring in your lover's size.)
3. **Picture This:** 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. Make a photo slide show of many pictures of the two of you, set it to your favorite song and email the show to your loved one. Have a "glamour shot" taken and slip the picture on his or her desk with a personal note on the back • Create a photo collage for his or her office
4. **Send an invitation to a "First Date":** Recreate your first date, or go to the place you first said "I love you" or proposed or the place you first honeymooned -- and honeymoon again.
5. **Write a love song.** Even if you can't sing it, you can read the lyrics. Or write your own love poem. Even a simple, "Roses are red ... " rendition will make him or her smile.
6. **Buy a pound of chocolate** and take a few of the chocolates out. In those paper cups, place a few other trinkets and gifts: jewelry, a key, a tiny love note, tickets to a play or movie, a flower, etc.
7. **Create a romance almanac.** Create lists like: *Places we love to go, Restaurants we love to eat at, 10 Best Things about You, 20 Romantic Movies Still to See, 10 books on Marriage Still to Read, Dream Date list, Places We Want to Vacation, Concerts schedule, Drama options, etc.*

8. **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. Some ideas to thank are: his/her character, things he/she has done for you, His/her commitment to you, his/ her provisions toward you. One line on each card day after day will make the biggest impact.
9. **Create a mail box for love notes:** Place it in your bathroom, on the kitchen table, or another good place in your home and exchange love mail. A traditional mailbox is nice because it has a red flag you can put up to signal "You've go mail!"
10. **Burn a personalized CD** of love songs that remind you of your love or the red hot monogamy you have shared. Load some surprise songs onto his/her Ipod.
11. **Use everyday items to send a unique set of messages.** For example: The title of a candy bar with a note that says, "You are a 'Big Hunk' of Burning Love" or "Red Hot: for your love." See if you can work in all kinds of items: shaving cream, deodorant, perfume, cereal (You are my "Life," etc.)
12. **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. Use a magazine cover like TIME's Person of the Year and scan in your spouse's picture. Or use *Glamour* or *GQ* or another magazine with catchy headlines, replacing the model with a picture of your mate. Perhaps you find some of these ideas perfect for your spouse, or perhaps they spark another idea just right for the holidays. The most important factor in your gift-giving is finding a creative, personal way to say, "I took the time to notice who you are, and I am thanking you for being wonderful you!" That is always romantic, no matter what box it arrives in.