

Stress Bytes Newsletter

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“WHEN STRESS BITES, BITE BACK!”

THE NEWSLETTER OF ANNETTE VAILLANCOURT, PH.D.
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What Do You Need to Feel Loved?

Having a healthy relationship is like “tending” a garden. Like a garden, tending a relationship, may be considered “work” or “fun” depending on who you ask and when. Sometimes it’s both. And whether you plant a vegetable garden and look to it for nourishment and nurturance or a flower garden and look to it for beauty and sharing, both will wither and die if left untended. It’s the same with an intimate relationship.

Now, gardening requires knowledge of what the plants need. How much water? Shade? What type of soil? What’s the right fertilizer? What do you need to do to prevent bugs, birds or furry creatures from destroying your garden? Fortunately, there are plenty of books available to answer these questions, but you do have to inquire or have someone teach you. We are not born being expert gardeners.

The same goes for romantic relationships. We are not experts on our partners. They are. If we

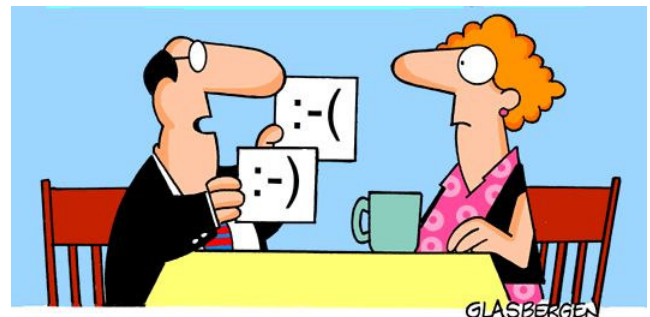
ask them, they will tell us what they need to feel loved and cared for. It is NOT safe to assume that what you need to feel loved is the same thing your partner needs.

Your partner may have an entirely different list than you of what they need to feel loved and nurtured in your relationship. The easiest way is to ask them to make a simple list of 20 ways you can best express your love for them. Have the list be specific, positive and behavioral. For example, you might say, “Kiss me good-bye before you leave in the morning and when you come home at night.” Or “clean up the kitchen for me after I’ve cooked dinner,” or “hold my hand when we sit and watch TV,” or “leave a little love note on my pillow to surprise me.”

Once you have your partner’s list, you can pick 5 things from it to do for them each day. It can be 5 different things or the same thing 5 times. This is great way to “tend” the relationship and make “deposits” into the emotional bank account. If you have

enough deposits built up over time, then when bad times come, there will be good feelings to draw upon, not an empty account.

Here’s another idea from NLP or Neuro Linguistic Programming that might be helpful for you to pay attention to with your spouse or partner. The idea is that people best take in information in one of three main ways: auditory, visually, or kinesthetically (by touch). way of receiving information.



“You always complain that I don’t know how to show my emotions, so I made these signs.”

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For example, a person with an auditory preference would most likely prefer to hear expressions of love. Having their partner say sweet words to them such as, "I love you. You're wonderful. You're so special to me. I can't believe I get to have you as my love," would be their favorite expressions of love and be deeply meaningful. Another way they might prefer receiving expressions of love is hearing love songs, or having poetry read aloud to them. The clues as to whether your partner is auditory are in their language. If he or she often uses expressions like the following, you've got an auditory person on your hands. "I hear.....let's discuss..... I want to talk..... it sounds like,.....I'm speechless.....I'm tongue-tied.... now that you mention it...we're on the same wavelength."

A kinesthetic person might prefer hugs, caresses, touch, and more physical expressions of affection and sexual interest. Perhaps they'd enjoy going dancing or for a romantic walk, receiving a massage, having you pour them a bubble bath, or getting snuggled amidst silky sheets. Perhaps chocolate, which is a stimulant, or scented candles would appeal to the kinesthetic person. Hints that you've got a kinesthetic person are expressions like, "get a load of this....laying my cards on the table....let's nail this down....I'm tied up for the rest of the week....she rubs me the wrong way....hang in there....I'm in touch with....it boils down to this."

A visual person would most likely want to see expressions of love. These might include receiving cards, flowers, and other gifts, observable acts of kindness or assistance. One therapist I recently met said that nothing arouses a woman more than the sight of soap suds on her husband's elbows. In other words, a woman can feel loved when she sees her husband helping with the dishes or other chores around the house. A visual person might use these expressions, "catch a glimpse of...I see what you're saying....let's look into that....don't make a scene....I can't picture it....take a dim view....you went behind my back....in hindsight."

I encourage you to listen to your partner's choice of language and match their style and see how much more in-tune you feel when you do.

Next, have both of you complete the worksheet on Page 3 and share it with your partner. Think of the exercise as a way to "tend" the garden of your relationship, to water it with loving actions.



"I need you, darling. You complete me."

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Actions that Make Me Feel Loved

Directions: Write a list of specific things your partner can so or do that shows you, tells you, or indicates that they love you. Be specific. Write a list of actions. It's best if you tell them what to do, not what NOT to do. For example, instead of saying "watch less TV," say "hold my hand while we're watching TV." Or instead of "stop nagging me," say "tell me at least one thing each day that you appreciate about me before making a request." When finished share this with your partner. Then you can pick 5 things from this list to do every day for them that will fit perfectly with what they want and need to feel loved best by you.

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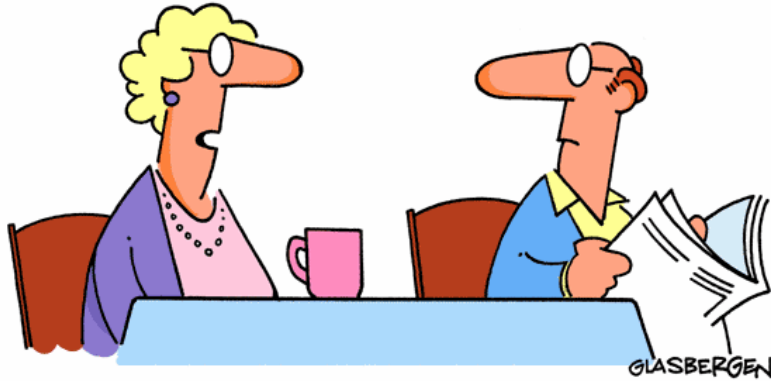
The Stress Doctor is IN!!!

"I LOVE YOU, NOT ONLY FOR WHAT YOU ARE, BUT FOR WHAT I AM WHEN I AM WITH YOU."
ROY CROFT

IMMATURE LOVE SAYS, "I LOVE YOU BECAUSE I NEED YOU." MATURE LOVE SAYS, "I NEED YOU BECAUSE I LOVE YOU."
ERICH FROMM

"AND IN THE SWEETNESS OF FRIENDSHIP LET THERE BE LAUGHTER AND THE SHARING OF PLEASURES. FOR IN THE DEW OF LITTLE THINGS THE HEART FINDS ITS MORNING AND IS REFRESHED."
KAHLIL GIBRAN

I LOVE BEING MARRIED. IT'S SO GREAT TO FIND THAT ONE SPECIAL PERSON YOU WANT TO ANNOY FOR THE REST OF YOUR LIFE.
RITA RUDNER



**"When you say I mean the world to you,
which part of the world are you talking about?"**

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LICENSED CLINICAL PROFESSIONAL COUNSELOR

- 16 years experience gently helping individuals, couples and groups resolve personal problems, manage stress, and reach their full potential.
- Specializing in Women's Issues and Stress Management

Call **(618) 549-5935** to set up an appointment for couples counseling.

Visit our website at www.GotStressGetHelp.com

IDEAS FOR LOVING GESTURES

Everyone loves a love letter, right? But what if you lack inspiration or you're not a writer? Here are some ideas about ways to get started.

1. Post-It notes—write some a brief compliment on a Post-It note and leave it on the bathroom mirror
2. Write a letter about the first time you knew you were in love.
3. Get a bag of candy kisses and leave a trail of them from the front door to the bedroom.
4. Make a list of the Top 10 things you love or appreciate about your partner.
5. Send flowers to the office.
6. Send a text message in the middle of the day saying, "I'm thinking of you. Can't wait to see you."
7. Make a practice of starting and ending the day by telling your partner something you love about them.
8. Copy a love poem from a book or the internet. Read it into a tape player. Give them the tape.
9. Draw a picture of a heart and write "You live here always" inside of it
10. Use your imagination!