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Seven Key Things to Make Your Relationship Work

by Nancy Bergeron, R.Psych. | info@nancybergeron.ca



What can you do to create a lasting relationship? Get a copy of John Gottman's *Seven Principles for Making Marriage Work*. Below is a sneak peek:

Enhance your love maps. Happy couples are very familiar with their partner's world. According to Gottman, these couples have "a richly detailed love map — my term for that part of your brain where you store all the relevant information about your partner's life." You know everything from your partner's favourite movies to what's currently stressing them out, you know some of their life dreams, and they know yours.

Nurture fondness and admiration. Happy couples respect each other and have a general positive view of each other. Fondness and admiration are two of the most important elements in a satisfying and long-term relationship. If these elements are completely missing, the marriage can't be saved. A helpful activity to remind couples of the partner they fell in love with is called "I appreciate." List three or more of their partner's positive characteristics along with an incident that illustrates each quality. Then read your lists to each other.

Turn toward each other. Romance isn't a Caribbean cruise, an expensive meal, or a lavish gift. Rather, romance lives and thrives in the everyday, little things. "Real-life romance is kept alive each time you let your partner know they are valued during the grind of everyday life." For instance, romance is leaving an encouraging text for your partner when you know they are having a bad day. Or romance is when you are running late but take a few minutes to listen to your partner's bad dream and saying that you'll discuss it later (instead of saying "I don't have time"). This might seem boring but turning toward each other in these ways is the basis for connection and passion. Couples that turn toward each other have more in their "emotional bank account." This account distinguishes happy marriages from miserable ones. Happy couples have more goodwill and positivity stored in their bank accounts, so when rough times hit, their emotional savings cushions conflicts and stressors.

Let your partner influence you. Happy couples are a team that considers each other's perspective and feelings. They make decisions together and search out common ground. Letting your partner influence you isn't about

having one person hold the reins, it's about honouring and respecting both people in the relationship.

Solve your solvable problems. There are two types of marital problems: conflicts that can be resolved and perpetual problems that can't. It's important for couples to determine which ones are which. According to Gottman, "One way to identify solvable problems is that they seem less painful, gut-wrenching, or intense than perpetual, gridlocked ones." Solvable problems are situational, and there's no underlying conflict. Gottman devised a five-step model for resolving these conflicts that can be found in his book.

Overcome gridlock. The goal with perpetual problems is for couples to "move from gridlock to dialogue." What usually underlies gridlock is unfulfilled dreams. "Gridlock is a sign that you have dreams for your life that aren't being addressed or respected by each other." Happy couples believe in the importance of helping each other realize their dreams. The first step in overcoming gridlock is to determine the dream or dreams that are causing your conflict. The next steps include talking to each other about your dreams, taking a break (since some of these talks can get stressful), and making peace with the problem. "The goal is to 'declaim' the issue, to try to remove the hurt so the problem stops being a source of great pain."

Create shared meaning. "Marriage isn't just about raising kids, splitting chores, and making love. It can also have a spiritual dimension that has to do with creating an inner life together. A culture rich with rituals, and an appreciation for your roles and goals that link you, that lead you to understand what it means to be a part of the family you have become." And that's what it means to develop shared meaning. Happy couples create a family culture that includes both of their dreams. Being open to each other's perspectives and opinions, happy couples naturally come together.

Bonus: Intentional date nights. If you struggle with ideas for date nights, grab a copy of Gottman's *Eight Dates*. Being intentional about having regular date nights is an important factor to continued connection.

If you need some help along the way, look for a level three trained Gottman therapist to keep you accountable and help your relationship thrive.

February Snow

by Garth Paul Ukrainetz

February snow can't miss your falling
Always sure to drift my way
Cling to pant legs, holding tightly
Begging me to come and play

Slide upon a long toboggan
Skate across a pond of ice
Downhill ski on powdered mountain
Friendly little snowball fight

February snow I know you're lonely
This time of year I feel it too
Maybe we should get together
Wintertime is over soon

Glide along the trails cross country
Snowshoe thru the meadows white
Snowmen build in brightest sunshine
Angels make on moonlit night



Word of the Month

Besotted: adjective (be-sot-ted)

To be blindly or completely infatuated.

After 50 years of marriage, he is still as besotted with his wife as the first day he met her.



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October 23	2	2	\$1,286,500	\$1,276,500
September 23	8	2	\$1,444,950	\$1,430,500
August 23	3	1	\$2,270,000	\$2,150,000
July 23	3	7	\$1,649,000	\$1,600,000
June 23	9	4	\$1,835,000	\$1,800,000
May 23	6	7	\$1,425,000	\$1,410,000
April 23	6	4	\$1,762,000	\$1,697,500
March 23	7	7	\$2,150,000	\$2,050,000
February 23	5	4	\$1,632,500	\$1,547,500
January 23	3	0	\$0	\$0

To view more detailed information that comprise the above
MLS averages please visit elbv.mycalgary.com

Love on a Shoestring

by Danielle Robbertze



Valentine's Day can be expensive. We would all like to give our partner the world to show our appreciation, especially on the day dedicated to love. But that is not always possible. Valentine's Day is said to be the fifth largest consumer spending event in the world. It is estimated that \$25.9 billion (USD) was spent on Valentine's Day in 2023!

There are a few ways in which you can show your love without breaking the bank. Firstly, it would probably be wise to ask your partner what they would like for Valentine's Day. This may take away the surprise element of the day, but you could be surprised about what they want and how cost-effective it could be. Often you will see that all they want is some quality time. So set up a movie night at home or a lovely homecooked dinner. It is often the romantic gestures that count more than a diamond necklace or bouquet of roses.

Valentine's Day on a budget is a time to think creatively. Test out those DIY skills. You never know how much a handcrafted gift could mean to a loved one. Check out ideas online on how to make the perfect gift. You could make a special collage or photo album of all your favourite moments together. As cheesy as it might seem,

you can never go wrong with a heartfelt love letter, one that your partner will cherish for years to come.

It is important to set a budget for yourself and your partner. This way you do not create too high of expectations for yourself or your partner. Plan ahead and plan together. The day is dedicated to spending time together so why not put in some money together to do something truly special like a weekend getaway or a romantic dinner at a swanky restaurant.

Consider celebrating the weekend after February 14, that way you and your partner can score some great deals with marked off items. This may seem unconventional, but it could be more special to set out your own Valentine's Day, away from the hustle and the bustle of the actual day.

There are so many ways in which you can save money on Valentine's Day whilst still expressing your love. Take away the pressure and expectations of stereotypical gifts and set your own path to celebrate this day. A path as unique as your relationship and love for your partner. Love is not chocolates, roses, or jewellery. True love is being with one another and cherishing that person for everything they are, flaws and all.

February is Heart Month

by Alberta Health Services

Do you know the signs and symptoms of a heart attack and what to do if someone experiences these? Knowing may make the difference between life and death. Recognizing and responding immediately to the warning signs of a potential heart attack may significantly improve survival and recovery. February is Heart Month: take the time to be heart safe and learn how you can reduce your risk.

Common Signs of a Heart Attack

(Any, or all, of these signs and symptoms may occur)

- Chest discomfort described as simply a mild pressure up to a 'crushing' pain; may also be 'squeezing' or a 'heavy' sensation.
- Discomfort may move to the shoulders, arm, neck, or jaw.
- May include shortness of breath, sweating, or nausea/vomiting.
- Signs may vary person to person and can differ between men, women, and the elderly.

Heart Attack Risk Factors

- Obesity*
- Sedentary lifestyle*
- Smoking*
- High cholesterol*
- Age/Gender
- Family history

Speak with your doctor about how to treat your modifiable (*) risk factors and learn to be heart safe.

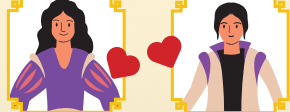
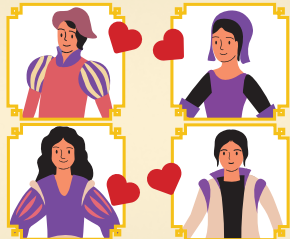


What To Do When Seconds Count

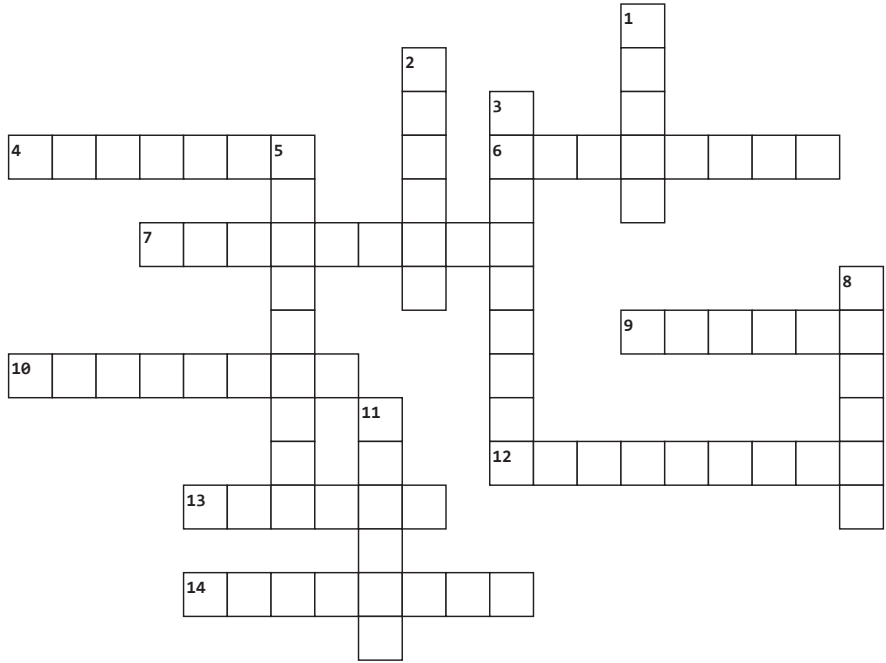
- Call 911, immediately. Early treatment can greatly reduce heart damage and be the difference between life and death.
- Treatment starts the moment EMS arrives. Paramedics can provide oxygen, start an intravenous, and perform an electrocardiogram (ECG).
- Paramedics can also administer important medication(s) in the early minutes of a heart attack to lessen heart damage.
- During transport, EMS will share information with the hospital so that definitive treatment can begin immediately upon arrival.
- Take a CPR/AED course. Training is widely available from many reputable organizations. It's easy and could make a significant difference in the outcome of someone experiencing a heart attack.

Medieval Tinder

Wearing your heart on your sleeve is more than just a phrase. Did you know that in the Middle Ages, love was a fashion statement? Back then, singles played a name-tag game, pinning their Valentine's name on their sleeves for a week! Talk about wearing your heart on your sleeve - literally!



February Crossword



Across

4. This historical fiction novel was released on February 10, 2009, and made into a major motion picture starring Viola Davis, Octavia Spencer, and Emma Stone.
6. A ring made with this birthstone had a carved image of Cupid and is said to be worn by St. Valentine.
7. This American painter, well-known for his artwork "American Gothic" was born on February 13, 1891.
9. On February 15, 1965, this country officially received its flag, 100 years after becoming a country.
10. Tessa Virtue and Scott Moir won gold in this category in February 2010 at the Vancouver Winter Olympics.
12. This well-known annual league championship takes place every year on the second Sunday in February. It will be played on February 11 at Allegiant Stadium in Las Vegas this year.
13. The official flower that represents birthdays in February.
14. The popular heart-shaped candies with cute messages were originally used as _____.

Down

1. This dwarf planet was discovered on February 18, 1930, and was named by 11-year-old, Venetia Burney.
2. February 10, 2024, marks the beginning of the Year of the _____.
3. This festival, which takes place on the same day as Shrove Tuesday, celebrates the end of the pre-Lenten season with colourful masks and parades.
5. Released in February 1940, this Disney motion picture featuring the beloved character Figaro, was the first animated feature to win a competitive Academy Award.
8. In 1990, the Lieutenant Governor of Alberta, Helen Hunley, introduced this day to celebrate and honour loved ones.
11. Abel Makkonen Tesfaye, better known as The _____, was born on February 16, 1990, in Scarborough.

Eggplant and Sundried Tomato Pasta

by Jennifer Puri

Simple, healthy, delicious eggplants, also referred to as aubergines or brinjals are used in the cuisines of many countries around the world, especially in China (Sichuan Eggplant) and India (baingan bharta).

Glossy, purple, green, or white in colour, the eggplant is a member of the nightshade family and has white flesh and small edible seeds. Due to its “meaty” texture it is sometimes used as a meat substitute in vegan and vegetarian dishes.

Eggplants are a high fibre, low-calorie food rich in nutrients and vitamins, which can help control blood sugar and aid in weight loss. Antioxidants such as lutein, which may help prevent age-related macular degeneration and zeaxanthin, along with natural plant chemicals called polyphenols are also present.

There are many tasty ways to eat eggplant as it can be steamed, stir fried, roasted, stewed, curried, pickled, or added to pasta noodles with whipped ricotta cheese and sundried tomatoes as shown in the recipe below.

Prep Time: 20 minutes

Cook Time: 30 minutes

Servings: 3 to 4

Ingredients:

- 1 large eggplant
- 2 small shallots, finely chopped
- 3 garlic cloves, finely chopped
- 1 small jar oil packed sundried tomatoes
- 1 cup extra virgin olive oil
- 500 g cooked spaghetti (al dente)
- 1 cup whipped ricotta cheese
- ½ cup fresh basil leaves
- 2 medium sized tomatoes chopped
- Salt to taste
- Black pepper to taste
- 1 tsp red chilli flakes
- 1 cup shaved parmesan cheese



Directions:

- Heat oven to 425 degrees Fahrenheit.
- Arrange eggplant slices on a foil lined baking tray. Brush each slice with a little olive oil and then flip over and repeat. Place the tray on the middle rack of the oven and bake for about 20 minutes or until eggplant slices turn a light brown. Remove tray from oven and set aside.
- Add 2 tbsp of olive oil, chopped shallots, and garlic to a large frying pan and sauté on medium heat for two minutes. Separate the sundried tomatoes from their oil, slice each piece in half and add to the pan along with the fresh chopped tomatoes and a few basil leaves. Stir fry for about two minutes then add the ricotta cheese, red chilli flakes, and salt and pepper to taste.
- Finally, add the cooked spaghetti to the pan and gently blend with the sauce. Remove from heat and garnish with shaved parmesan cheese, a few basil leaves, and serve.

Bon Appétit!





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RESIDENT PERSPECTIVES

Backyard Bird Watching

by John McFaul



Many bird species make their home in Calgary or pass through the city on migration. They bring joy to backyard birdwatchers with their songs, colourful plumage, and their interesting antics. The cheery disposition of the Chickadees in winter, the Robin singing that spring has arrived, the bejewelled Ruby-throated Hummingbird visiting the flowers of summer, and the waves of exotic warblers passing through on their fall migration connects us to the flow of nature and time.

Calgarians can attract avian visitors to their yards by providing food, water, nesting, and shelter. Wintering birds such as Chickadees, Nuthatches, and Finches benefit from a steady supply of black oil sunflower seeds and chips. Blue Jays enjoy dining on unsalted peanuts. Suet will attract Downy Woodpeckers. Hummingbird feeders filled with a mixture of four parts water to one part sugar could entice the hummingbirds that summer in Calgary.

Water is appreciated by birds for drinking and bathing. It can be provided by simple bird baths or by more elaborate ponds and small streams.

Nest boxes and platforms can attract birds such as Chickadees, Nuthatches, House Wrens, Tree Swallows, and Robins to raise their families in our backyards.

The best thing that can be done to make backyards bird friendly is to provide a habitat full of a variety of trees, shrubs, and other plants that are native to our region.

Keeping our avian visitors safe is important. Mark the outside of windows to prevent the birds from colliding with the glass. Keep cats indoors or in a Catio to prevent harm to the birds and just as important, harm to the cat. Turn off outside lights between 11:00 pm and 6:00 am, particularly during spring and fall migration. Avoid using insecticides and pesticides.

The Importance of Healthy Snacking

by Alberta Health Services

Maintaining a healthy lifestyle, especially in today's fast-paced world, can be a challenge. Busy schedules often lead to rushed meals and unhealthy eating habits.

Packing snacks is a great way to keep you energized and nourished throughout the day. Having a quick bite at work, home, school, or on-the-go can be an important addition to your daily eating habits. Ensuring you always have healthy snacks on hand may also prevent you from stopping at a convenience store or vending machine and purchasing a higher cost food which often is lower in nutritional value and hard on the budget.

Five Reasons to Snack!

1. Sustained energy levels – Choosing nutrient-dense snacks provides your body with the energy needed to function optimally throughout the day. Snacks rich in complex carbohydrates, fibre, and healthy fats release energy slowly, helping you maintain steady blood sugar levels and avoid energy crashes.
2. Nutrient Intake – Snacks are an excellent way to increase your daily intake of essential nutrients. Opting for snacks like fruits, vegetables, nuts, and whole grains provides your body with vitamins, minerals, and antioxidants crucial for your overall health. These nutrient-rich snacks support your immune system, boost your metabolism, and aid in various bodily functions.
3. Improved Concentration – Healthy snacks can have a positive impact on cognitive performance. When the brain is fed with balanced snacks, focus and concentration are enhanced. Nutrient-dense snacks provide the brain with the necessary nutrients for optimal functioning, helping you stay alert and productive throughout the day.
4. Reduced Cravings – Packing healthy snacks can reduce unhealthy cravings for sugar, salt, and junk food. By eating nourishing snacks, you feel more satisfied for longer.

5. Convenient and cost-effective – Preparing snacks in advance ensures you always have healthy options readily available. This saves not only time but also money, compared to purchasing expensive and, often, unhealthy snacks on the go.

Snack-Making Tips and Ideas

To help make it easier to bring snacks from home, prepare in advance by following these simple tips:

- Plan your week's snacks before heading to the grocery store and include them in your meal preparation.
- Think outside the box! Use a "bento box" filled with a variety of different snacks to keep things interesting.
- Chop extra vegetables and fruit and have them ready in the fridge to grab-and-go.
- Make muffins ahead of time and store them in the freezer.
- Buy hummus when grocery shopping or make some at home.
- Hard boil eggs and keep them in the fridge with the shell on (they will keep for about a week).

If you have the option to store snacks at your workplace, here are some options that do not need refrigeration:

- Apples, oranges, or canned fruit
- Dry oatmeal
- Canned tuna
- Whole grain crackers
- Nuts, pumpkin, or sunflower seeds

Kids Need Snacks Too!

While adults and teenagers benefit from eating snacks during their busy, activity-filled lives, it's also important for children to consume snacks. They have smaller stomachs than adults and teenagers and may have trouble eating the foods they need at mealtime. Food choices established in childhood often continue into adulthood, so building a healthy foundation is important.

Add Protein

To help satisfy hunger between meals protein provides a sustained release of energy, preventing blood sugar spikes and crashes. To help satisfy hunger between meals, snack on nuts and seeds or hummus and veggies. Pair one or two slices of cheese with a couple of whole grain crackers or cook some hard-boiled eggs for an easy protein-filled snack on the go.

Happy Snacking!

For more snack ideas, check out this snack resource to help you to choose healthy snacks every day. Visit ahs.ca/nutritionhandouts and search for the handout called Snacks.



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The Transformative Power of Love

by Jonni Fox

In the experience of our life, love is the universal thread that binds us all. It's a complex emotion, felt uniquely by each individual. February, ostensibly the month of love, goes beyond mere commercial celebrations. Love is profound; it's the bond between a caretaker and a once-wild creature, a connection so deep it moves us to tears.

Love isn't just a fleeting emotion; it's a powerful force that contributes to our well-being. It has the remarkable ability to heal our minds, bodies, and spirits. Music, a language of emotions, harmonizes with love, influencing our hearts with its frequencies. In times of tragedy, music becomes a source of solace, offering joy amid sorrow.

Surviving life's trials is intrinsically linked to love. It's the anchor that keeps us grounded during turbulent times. When someone is lost in suffering, reconnecting with love becomes a lifeline. Whether through music, shared experiences, or self-discovery, love guides us towards healing.

Capturing the essence of love requires focusing on its transformative power.

From the silent connection with nature to the healing notes of music, love's resonance echoes through our existence. It is an unwavering support system, an antidote to life's hardships.



Leapers and Leaplings Special Day



Four million leap day babies? Did you know the odds of being born on February 29 is one in 1,461! Leap day babies are better-known as 'leapers' or 'leaplings'. Hats off to these time-defying, once-in-a-blue-moon birthday legends!

BRAIN GAMES SUDOKU

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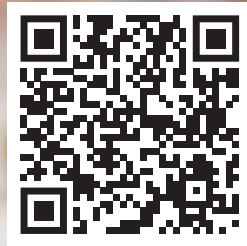


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