

Extension Notes

Personal Column for February 2, 2010

By Gary Hall, Iowa State University Regional Extension Education Director

Time for Valentine's Day

Looking to make that big impression on your partner on Valentine's Day? I finally found a great idea that will not cost you an arm and a leg. Yes, it has taken me many years of marriage to realize this gift is more important than something I can buy from a store.

A Family Specialist has indicated that for many adult relationships, spending money on the significant other is of less concern than spending time.

Older couples that have spent several Valentine's Days together realize the importance of just spending time together. I hate to admit it but I'm half of an older couple and I should have recognized this long ago. Just planning a weekend trip together that doesn't have to include five-star hotels or fancy restaurants will send the right message. Or we could stay home, prepare dinner together and watch a movie.

A younger couple that doesn't have the years of togetherness might feel compelled to try to impress one another. This doesn't mean going overboard. Buying someone flowers doesn't always have to mean buying them roses. Think about the person and try to do something special for them.

For children, Valentine's Day is great fun. Making the bags for the candy and cards at school provides excitement. Instead of buying store bought cards, see if a child and a couple of his or her friends would rather make their own Valentine's cards together. Get some construction paper, scissors, glue and let the children go at it. This will help promote creativity while cutting back on the rising cost of manufactured cards.

I'll leave you with a short story about my oldest daughter who was about 11 years old at the time of this particular Valentine's Day. Plans were made with the school to release my daughter early. I arrived with a long stem red rose, dressed in a suit and knocked on the classroom door. All of her classmates stunned as I presented the rose to a shocked daughter. My arm was extended as I escorted her out of the school to an evening of dining and fun.

Take some time this Valentine's Day and give it to those who would enjoy it the most.

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Contact: Gary Hall, 2023 S Federal Ave, Mason City, IA 50401, 641-425-3116, garyhall@iastate.edu