



Romance for the Knackered!

Seven Easy Ways to Nurture Your Relationship for Exhausted Working Mothers

The best environment for romance is a desert island, with no mobile phones, no emails, no work deadlines, no dirty nappies and NO KIDS! Children are sure-fire passion killers for most of us. As working mums, we tend to give our attention to he or she that shouts the loudest, and children are natural masters at shouting the loudest to get their needs met. This means that all other relationships get pushed to the bottom of the pile, especially the one with our romantic partner

However, it is so important to invest in your relationship and to keep the romance alive. After all, when the kids have grown up and have their own families, it's just you and him. If you don't nurture and pay attention to your relationship, it's likely that you'll find that you and the father of your children have become a strangers with no connection.

Here are some frightening statistics:

- 67% of marriages end in divorce
- Half of all divorces occur in the first seven years
- Living in an unhappy marriage will shorten your life by up to four years, and increase your chances of getting sick by as much as 35%.

Convinced? I'm sure you know this already, but the questions I often get asked is:

“How can you keep the romantic fires burning when you are simply knackered most of the time?!”

Here are seven tips that really don't take much effort at all.

1. Look for the Good

As human beings, we tend to be very negative, always looking for the gaps or the faults. Look for the good in each other. Make a game of this - **every day tell each other three things that you really appreciate about each other**. You might feel a bit silly first, but after a week or so of awkwardness, see what happens. You will find that you thank each other more easily and without it being part of an exercise. You will start to see the good points about your partner, even when you've just picked his socks up off the floor for the 3rd time that week. Trust me - it works.

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2. Say Goodbye, Say Hello

It is so easy, especially when you have kids, to greet your partner with nothing but an instruction or a complaint. Make a point of kissing your partner goodbye, and greeting each other with a kiss again. Even better, make it a hug. Take two minutes to ask him/her what they will be doing today, and hold off from discussing domestic issues as soon as you greet each other during the evening. Instead, ask your partner what happened in their day – and listen. Remember that kids learn by observing their parents – you are their primary role models. What sort of relationship behaviours do you want to model? Things like saying hello and goodbye, touching each other and communicating are all behaviours and actions that will be observed by your children and you'll also be helping them to feel secure that their parents' relationship is a healthy one.

3. Indulge in Some Cyber-Flirting

Meet your partner on Facebook, Twitter or wherever and send him a private message telling him how you feel about him, that you miss him, what you're going to do to him when the kids are in bed...! Write a poem or a love letter. Send a love text or send him a photo of yourself with a big kiss using your mobile. Technology offers us so many ways to communicate so use them to communicate with the most important man in your life! Disclaimer – DO make sure that you don't use your company email etc to send risqué messages!

4. Schedule a Daytime Play Date

At the beginning of each holiday year, book a few "daytime dates" when you and your partner book a day off work in advance, but don't cancel your usual childcare arrangements, so that you can spend the day together alone! Daytime dates are great as you spend time together when you're not tired at the end of the day. Try using these dates to do something a bit different with your partner, or something you've never tried before. A few ideas – bowling, ice skating, go-karting, spend the day at a spa, hiking, visit a museum, a delicious lunch.....the possibilities are endless!

5. Look for your partner's Touch Points

This tip comes from friends, who learnt this on a parenting course, and it really stuck with me. Your "touch points" are what you as an individual need, what you respond to, and what makes you feel appreciated and loved. For example, one of my "touch points" is Chris saying something like, "I'll do the dinner tonight love - you take your time and catch up on your work" For Chris, his touch points are more around me showing how much I love him, telling him he is loved and needed.

What are your partner's "touch points"? You probably know them, but you may not have given them much thought. We humans spend a lot of time thinking more about our own needs and wants. Take five minutes now and jot down what you think your partner's "touch points" are, then go and ask them what they are... see if the two match! Once you've found out what these "touch points" are, actively make an effort to satisfy each other's touch points once a day.

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6. Switch the TV Off

If you tend towards “couch potato-ism” at the end of the day, as I certainly do, try scheduling just one or two weekday evenings per week to have a television detox. Now, light some candles, run a bath and go and soak, catch up...TALK to each other. Get an early night...!

7. Book a Weekly Date Night

I can almost hear the excuses coming now as to why you can't book a weekly date night! Primarily, we cite lack of money, and of course, I acknowledge that this is an obstacle. But I'll still challenge you on it, as I know that many parents will spend money on various activities for their children, whilst ignoring their own need for some adult time with their partner. Ponder on the following questions:

If you KNEW that your marriage depended on creating this time, what would you do?

In order to say “yes” to romance with your partner (and I'm assuming you do want this, as you're reading this article), what will you say “no” to?

So, your task is this: Please, book a date night today. Do whatever you want, whether it's going to the pictures or taking up a new hobby together. It's preferable to get ou

Your ultimate goal is to make this date night weekly. If you need to start small - once monthly, then do so. It's preferable to get out of the house if you possibly can - the constant chores that surround is in our own homes can stop us from connecting romantically with your partner.

If you really can't get out of the house, then set up your date night within the home. Light some candles, set the table, dress up and pretend you're in a posh restaurant - even if the menu is beans on toast!

Go book that date night now...and have fun!

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