

The Honeymoon Stage is Long Over... **NOW WHAT?**

[BY SUSAN SEMENIW]



**"DRESS TO IMPRESS,
PUT ON SOME SEXY
LINGERIE. BOYS...
PUT SOME EFFORTS
INTO YOUR LOOK—
NO SWEATS AND
SNEAKERS."**

Relationships are always so fun and exciting in the beginning. You idolize your partner, get butterflies, focus on the good stuff and turn a blind eye to any shortcomings. Then—when you've been together for awhile—reality sets in, and you move into the 'comfort zone'. This is where couples must remember that some effort is required to keep the romance thriving.

It's proven that doing something new with your partner can add some zip and help recreate some of that early excitement. Break out of your routine and try a new restaurant, holiday location, or social activity—anything to change things up! Plan weekend getaways or organize a regular date night that works with your busy schedules.

No matter how long you've been with your partner, it's important to avoid boredom.

Dress to impress, put on some sexy lingerie, get your hair done and feel gorgeous. Boys, this applies to you too: put some effort into your look—no sweats and sneakers. Pretend you're meeting for your first date and don't forget to flirt. Have fun, keep things light and stay away from contentious topics or the mundane parts of your life. Really focus on each other and listen to what the other person has to say.

Many people only buy gifts for their partners on special occasions like birthdays, anniversaries or Valentine's Day. Truth is, your partner would be more delighted when not expecting a

gift—and you don't need to break the bank. Small gifts or thoughtful notes on a regular basis will help bond you to your partner and put you at the forefront of their mind. 'Thinking of You', 'Why I love You' or 'What I Like about You' notes are a great way to show how much you care. Slip them in their briefcase or coat pocket.

Sex is a critical part of the relationship. Frequency and spicing things up are important—try new things in the bedroom, or even book a sex appointment with your partner. Research new techniques through the myriad of great reading materials or movies available—there's no better way to spend a day than doing sex research with your significant other! Find a good sex store where they can explain some new products that you might feel comfortable using. There are also seminars and courses

you can attend. If your partner is up for it, go together.

I can't say enough about communication. Miscommunication is very common, and if you can learn to express your feelings without hurting the other person and to listen carefully to their concerns you can improve the quality of any relationship. You can't expect your partner to read your mind. Learn to fight fairly and disagree, and to try to see things from their point of view. Resolve a problem, move on and don't hold grudges. If you can't solve longstanding problems, consider a professional counsellor.

And remember to let relationships breathe—don't spend every free hour with your partner. Give each other space, and spend time on hobbies and with friends. You're supposed to complement—not complete—each other! **RV**