



When you think about your valued relationships, what comes to mind? Do you instantly think about the joy they bring into your life? Healthy relationships might inspire memories of laughter, support, swapping stories and fun memories. Our lives are enriched by these experiences. Healthy relationships also allow for support and encouragement during tough times, they make you feel loved and appreciated. Friends, family and partners add to our lives in countless ways.

With our strongest relations, we often feel comfortable sharing our dreams and goals. These types of relationships inspire growth and confidence. These people want the best for us and act as cheerleaders, celebrating accomplishments. They're the ones who celebrate you and the positive things you do in life. They might also act as accountability partners, reminding you that your goal is important to you when you get off track. Generally, these relationships help us to remain focused on the importance of working toward the future we desire.

Think about the things you find important. Is it important for you to exercise, attend religious services or remain active in a hobby? How did you start doing these things? Often we try new things because we are encouraged by the people in our lives. As you try more things, you encounter more people. These new people might tell you about upcoming events and invite you to do things. As you welcome more people into your life who have shared interests, you increase your potential for fun.

Special Tips: Date Nights!

Whether you're looking for something to do in celebration of a special anniversary, weekly date nights or to enhance the daily romance in your relationship, date nights don't have to break the bank. With a little creativity, you can plan activities that bring joy to your time together and show that you care. Most cities offer free or low-cost opportunities for you to have fun together. You can also create your own opportunities. Start by considering your shared interests. What do you both find meaningful? What brings a smile to your loved one's face? Consider these things when planning activities together.

Below you will find a list of activities that you can do with your loved ones. As you read through the activities, consider who might enjoy doing them with you. Consider reading with a close friend, family member or your partner. If you find something that sounds fun, invite someone to join you. This will allow you to build memories and share fun times.

Remember, when planning an event to consider who to invite to maximize the fun. Work with whomever is attending to decide transportation, activities and the time you will spend in an activity. Set a budget in advance so that you don't end up spending more money than you intend. When budgeting, remember to think about meals and transportation. Also remember that lots of places offer discounts during less popular hours and to seniors, students and children. Be sure to plan your activities with the other participants. This will allow you to avoid the awkwardness that might occur if different participants have different ideas about how they want to spend this time.

Performances

Performances can lift your spirits, give you energy and put a smile on your face. While some performances can empty your wallets, most cities also provide free and low cost opportunities to enjoy live music and theater. Many colleges and music schools offer free recitals to give their students experience playing in front of an audience. Libraries and book stores often host free book and poetry readings. You might also enjoy a live band at your local pub or at a free outdoor summer music festival. These opportunities are often listed in local papers and on websites. Many cities' colleges and parks also host free outdoor movies in nice weather.

Tip: Show your special someone that your day is important by dressing nicely. Wear something that is appropriate for the activity but also shows that you put some thought into your style. Does your partner have a favorite color? Has s/he complimented you when you wore a certain sweater? Let them know you notice these things when you select your clothing.

Shopping

Do you enjoy fashion and design? If your idea of a great day involves walking and window shopping, stroll through for malls, department stores, shopping plazas, and downtown centers. For deals, try outlet malls, flea markets, yard sales and thrift stores. Take a break during a day of discount shopping for a low-cost lunch from a food court, farmers market or grab a slice of local pizza.

Volunteer

Do something that matters. Select a cause that is meaningful to both of you and volunteer together. If you haven't volunteered, you are in for a shock because in addition to the good feeling you get from helping others, volunteering can be a lot of fun. If you volunteer with the right group, you will spend the day sharing stories and laughs. Other benefits might be related to the work. If you clean-up a park, you spend the day breathing fresh air, enjoying nature and making your community shine. Reading or playing with kids brings all the silly joys of childhood along with the ability to inspire through stories and modeling behaviors. Find local volunteer activities on websites such as volunteermatch.org and serve.gov.

Tip: Write real letters. Print real pictures. Technology makes everything easier. But, for many, nothing beats being handed a gift that is thoughtful and shows that you put time and effort into a display of appreciation. Letters and pictures can be held, displayed and kept in a special place. They can be sentimental reminders of how much you care.

Home Projects

Do you have roommates, family members, a partner or people who spend a lot of time at your home? Gather them together to spruce up the atmosphere while having fun. Consider home projects that you are confident you can conquer together. The more adventurous might take on large improvements, the less experienced might opt to paint, hang curtains, move furniture or tackle organization projects. New colors and/or order can have a huge impact while not costing an arm and a leg. Doing projects at home together can be fun, especially if you remember to take things in stride, laughing at the ridiculousness of difficult projects. For ideas about home design, Home Depot classes are listed on their website. Or, spend a few hours browsing Target or thrift stores for ideas that spark your creativity.

Get in touch with Nature

You can connect with the close people in your life while getting fresh air and exercise walking along nature trails, waterfronts, botanical gardens or just in your neighborhood park. Seasonal opportunities might allow for apple picking or collecting wildflowers. Pack a picnic to keep costs low and enhance the outdoor experience. If you don't have a chance to get away for a weekend, consider back-yard camping, barbecues and picnics.

Tip: Plan ahead but be flexible on the day of your date. Bring flowers, create a music playlist, make reservations, purchase tickets or pack in advance. These things show that you put effort into making the night special. Also remember that even the best planning doesn't assure that everything will go smoothly. Allow a date to take twists and turns that you didn't expect, keeping in mind what is important. Remain focused on enjoying each other and having fun. Be prepared but relax and be as casual and carefree as possible when things don't go as planned.

Explore your city

Cities often offer great shopping, restaurants and museums. These are all great things to do with loved ones. These things can be expensive. You might visit outlets, clearance sections or thrift stores to find a deal! Restaurants don't have to break your budget. Check the menu or do some price research on-line before committing to a meal. And, visit museumfreedays.com and freeattractions.com to see if there are free ways that you and your party can visit local attractions.

There are also non-traditional ways to explore your city. Consider seeing a side of your city through touring an old factory. Factorytours.com offers listings of factories from breweries to cookie baking shops which might be creative fun activities. If you're excited by the thought of moving around from place to place, participate in a scavenger hunt or create your own with a list of various things to see in a day.

Tip: Flirt. It's important to remain focused things you appreciate in your mate as you grow comfortable. Take moments to observe what first attracted you. Do you like how s/he walks, talks, or laughs? Remind your loved one what you appreciate about him/her. Make the decision to be generous with compliments, smiles, hugs and winks.

Feed your spiritual side

Do you have people in your life who hold similar religious views? Consider inviting them to services with you. Or, if you don't know people who share your beliefs, you might consider attending services to meet people. Spiritually grounded relationships can help you to feel connected to a higher power and remain reminded of what is most important to you in good times and bad.

Tip: Avoid stale conversations. Before the date, consider her/his interests. Do a little research on the things they like, including musicians, politics, television, art... Be ready to discuss these things. If s/he talks about things you don't know, show your interest by asking questions and relating it to things that you enjoy. Use the date as an opportunity to learn about your partner and to find things you both enjoy.

Physical Health

When we have people in our lives who encourage us to be physically active, we are more likely to get moving. There is no end to the fun things you can do that are good for your physical fitness. Do you know people who have similar fitness goals? Work together to encourage and inspire each other. Remember to make it fun. Exercise doesn't have to be dull and repetitive. Try new things. Consider swimming, biking, dancing, frisbee and roller skating. How fun is that? Add music to walks and gym time. Get in touch with your competitive side with sports or find calm in yoga. There are almost endless ways to get moving. There have to be a few that you and your friends will enjoy. Start thinking about what interests you today. Then think about who would want to join the fun.

Learn

Do you love to learn? Would you like to learn a new language? What about a new skill, like knitting or woodworking? Do you know anyone who might want to take a class with you? The world is full of things you can try. Share what you learn. Dazzle kids with magic tricks, hold a game night and teach the family a new card game, make a new recipe for your partner.

Play together

Instead of watching television or playing games on your phones, organize a board game or card game night. These activities allow for lots of chatting and laughter. Consider games that are appropriate for all ages involved or pair-up more experienced players with less experienced players so that everyone has a chance to win.

Tip: Consider activities that allow you to try new things together. Novelty keeps things fresh, fun and builds memories.

Festivals

Celebrate your own culture or get a taste of others with cultural festivals such as Cinco de Mayo and Chinese New Year. Or, spend the day wandering around art and/or music festivals. Bigger

cities offer plenty of opportunities during warm weather seasons. They are often free to attend but you'll have to budget for purchases including food and drink. To learn about these events, visit your local visitors center, newspaper websites and websites that discuss events and activities in your area.

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