

‘Take away love and the earth is a tomb’

– Robert Browning

7 The little things are important: Look at the following checklist of simple relationship enhancing tasks and tick off the ones that you do regularly.

1 Kiss or touch when saying goodbye or returning.	
2 Bring surprise presents; flowers, a card or chocolates.	
3 Ask about your partner’s day. Discuss what happened.	
4 Plan a night out in advance.	
5 Compliment your partner on his or her appearance.	
6 Cuddle and be affectionate without sex.	
7 Touch hands when talking or walking.	
8 Make partner a cup of tea or drink.	
9 Ask your partner for advice.	
10 Look after your partner if he or she is unwell.	
11 Engage in joking and teasing.	
12 Do your fair share of work around the home.	
13 Discuss personal feelings and problems.	
14 Make time to do things together.	
15 Show anger in front of your partner.	
16 <i>Add your own.</i>	

8 Write a structured letter: When we feel angry, disappointed or frustrated it is sometimes difficult to communicate in a loving way. Venting extreme emotion may create hurt and a vicious circle of retaliation. Writing your feelings down in a structured way releases some of the intensity, allows you to explore more than one feeling, moves you on to feelings of love, and assists you in telling the whole truth and not just part of it. This exercise involves writing a letter to your partner expressing your feelings in five sections. Start with ‘I feel angry that . . .’, ‘I feel sad that . . .’, ‘I feel afraid that . . .’, ‘I regret that . . .’ and ‘I love . . .’ Write a few sentences about each feeling. Complete all sections – do not stop until you get to love.

9 Open talk: Set aside a period when each partner has the opportunity to talk openly and the other has to listen without comment or interruption. Agree on a set time period between 5 and 20 minutes. Then decide who is going to go first. Then the first person says what is on their mind and how they are feeling. Then change roles. Make an agreement that either partner can ask for an open talk at any time.