

## Wot no Valentines?

**At this time of year many people will pledge their love anonymously – but how often do we do it openly in our current relationships – especially after a few years of being together?**

Maintaining closeness and growth in a relationship can become increasingly difficult under the many pressures we face today. Time for our relationships is often sacrificed for our children and/or our work. When the relationship has become strained, time together is often tense and therefore avoided.

Taking time out to 'work' on your relationship is essential in order to maintain intimacy. Whether it is with the help of a counsellor, such as me, or with each other. Take time to think about how you might reignite the fire which brought you together and try to think of new ways to resolve difficulties and come to a mutual understanding.



### Some general tips:

1. **Talk about you rather than blaming your partner – 'I felt upset when you said ...' rather than 'You hurt my feelings.'**
2. **Hear your partner's feelings and think about whether you are willing to approach things differently.**
3. **Spend some time apart – doing something you want to do.**
4. **Spend regular time together to talk about your relationship.**
5. **Each make a list of caring behaviours and then swap them. Vow to do one thing a week from your partner's list.**
6. **Lastly, but most importantly, love yourself. Unless you love yourself, it's hard for you to believe that anyone else will. Self-esteem is important for a healthy relationship.**

### Helpful reading:

Why Men Don't Listen and Women Can't Read Maps, Allan & Barbara Pease  
 Why Men Don't Have a Clue & Women Always Need More Shoes, Allan & Barbara Pease  
 Mars & Venus Together Forever, John Gray  
 The Way of the Superior Man, David Deida  
 Intimate Communion, David Deida  
 It's a Guy Thing, An Owner's Manual for Women  
 The Dance of Connection, Harriet Lerner PhD  
 The Courage to be Yourself, *A Woman's Guide to Emotional Strength*, Sue Patton Thoele

