


10 Tips To Keeping Your Valentine



 By Brenda Novak, *New York Times* and *USA Today* bestselling author

With [Valentine's Day](#) approaching, it's easy to start pondering your love life. The "what if's" begin to run rampant, and the future is undoubtedly a big focus. If you can't imagine your life without your current partner, you need to start thinking about how you plan to keep him or her. Brenda Novak, bestselling author of more than 30 Harlequin romance novels, has some tips on how to do just that, which she's garnished from her own experience and research:

1. Avoid negative thought patterns: Allowing yourself to mentally or verbally tear down your significant other is like gnawing at the bond that holds you together.

2. Remember that this person means more to you than anyone else: This includes your parents and your kids. People who live their entire lives for their children are often disappointed to find that they have no relationship left once the kids head out on their own.

3. Be more flexible and forgiving with your spouse than mere friends and neighbors: We expect our spouses to "understand" our stress or limitations – in other words, put up with our crap. Instead, reserve your patience and kindness for the person who means the most to you.

4. Understand that relationships work on a spiral: The more thoughtful you are with your loved one, the more fulfilled and happy he or she will be, and the more he or she will be interested in giving back to you.

5. Don't get too practical: Some couples forgo the flowers, the cards, the dinner dates and the chocolates in favor of saving money. But what's worth more to you? A few bucks (or even a house or a car), or a relationship that will likely affect your whole life and the lives of your children?

6. Try to do something nice for your spouse every day: Even if it's just a chore he or she typically does, these thoughtful touches will act like a hedge against the tough times.

7. Be physical and touch a lot: These little reminders that a spouse cares are nurturing to the soul and send wonderful signals to your children. Your kids will feel secure and happy because *you're* secure and happy, and they'll be more loving because of the example you've set.

8. Remain loyal: Have the grit it takes to stick together through thick and thin.

9. Be unselfish: It might seem otherwise, but life isn't all about you, how you're feeling and what you want. Worry more about whether you're being a good spouse than whether your spouse is being a good mate to you, and you'll be glad you did.

10. Take care of yourself: You don't have to be model-thin or in the first blush of youth, but be the best you can be – mentally and physically. In other words, be someone you'd like to be with.

Brenda Novak and her husband, Ted, live in Sacramento and are proud parents of five children – three girls and two boys. When she's not spending time with her family or writing, Brenda is usually working on her annual fund-raiser for diabetes research – an online auction held on her at www.BrendaNovak.com every May. Follow her on Twitter: @Brenda_Novak. Still want more? Check out her special Valentine's Day giveaway [here!](#)