

How To Stay Lovers As Well As Parents

Children can bring great joy to a marriage, and they deserve our love and attention. But their arrival can alter¹⁾ the couple's usual way of doing things, and even the way they feel about each other. There is great harm in boxing ourselves into a role of "servants of children." We mistakenly think that the children of course can't take care of themselves, but that marriage can. When time together as a couple is at the bottom of the priority list, not only do we parents suffer, but our children suffer too.

Couples can have passion in your love life again if you strike a happy balance between your needs and those of your children. Begin by acknowledging that you are lovers as well as parents. Staying lovers with your spouse is, in fact, essential to keep harmony in the family. "Romance, on the scale of human needs, may not rank quite as high as food or shelter," writes author Laurence Shames. "But it does not fall much farther down — it's one of the things we live for." It's easy to forget this. When we become parents, many of us suddenly feel we must be serious, no-nonsense²⁾ people. But who doesn't desire a happy and vigorous³⁾ marriage? Here are some ways to create that romance.

1. Keep each other interested. Real life is not a romantic fairy tale. The baby spits up⁴⁾ and cries a lot. There are bills to pay and laundry to do. No one can be Prince or Princess Charming all the time. But you can create an environment that is conducive to romance, and bring out the lover in your spouse. One friend of mine, Joyce, felt that her marriage was in the doldrums⁵⁾. She is too busy with the kids, and her husband his work. There seems to be a wall between them. Then one day, she sent the kids to her mother's house. Putting on her most beautiful dress, she greeted her husband at the door. Amazed, her husband gave her a long kiss and then carried her inside. They sat by a cozy fire, then had an intimate dinner and had a fantastic time.

After couples have been married for a while and especially when the baby is born, spouses often get the notion that the hunt is over. They stop trying to make themselves attractive and stimulating. Keep in mind that we are living in a world full of temptations of all sorts, don't let go your efforts to be appealing to your spouse and keep each other interested.

2. Have fun away from the children. When Melly turned 3 5, she and her husband celebrated for two nights in San Francisco. "We had a blast⁶⁾." she recalled. "I didn't want it to be over. But you know, you always pay for it in the end." "What do you mean?" I asked. "Well, you end up feeling guilty because you had so much fun away from the kids."

Melly, like many other parents today, carries around with her an unrealistic sense of parental duty that can put a damper on a potentially enjoyable evening. For some couple, it prevents them from going out together, except to attend weddings, funerals. But to maintain romance and intimacy⁷⁾ in your relationship, it is crucial that you set aside time to have fun together and not sabotage the occasion with guilt.

It's not easy to separate from children, especially if one of them is screaming and clinging to you like a leech while your husband is waiting impatiently in the car. Train yourself to realize that getting out with your spouse is essential for you to be a good

parent, good lover, a good person.

3. **Become a couple of lovers again.** Create a fun evening for yourselves in such a way that you become a couple of lovers again, not Joey's dad or Janie's mom. If you spend the whole evening out discussing the kids and problems at work, you are missing the point. Often there is a need to talk about those things, but couples who have fun limit discussion of family issues. At dinner, talk turns to current events, books, music, art, good times.

“My husband and I always start with a toast to our love for each other — and to successfully getting out of the house. Then we talk about when we were younger and some of the risks we've taken, like going rafting down a river,” tells Julie, mother of two little boys. “That kind of reminiscing⁸⁾ sets up for an exciting evening.”

4. **Magic of surprises.** Malcolm, the father of two preteen children, once sneaked out the back door and rang the front door bell. When his wife answered, he gave her a single rose and asked her for a date. “I felt like a schoolgirl again.” She told her friend with excitement and pride.

Surprise, a gift, an invitation to dinner or a movie, or an air ticket for a trip can work like a magic that creates the romance and sparkle in your love life. Parents need to allow themselves time to have fun — to laugh and enjoy themselves. Creating romantic moments can be a terrific antidote for restlessness and discontent. When couples make the effort to generate enthusiasm in their relationship, they build a powerfully intimate connection, one that invigorates a mature love with a young romantic love.

身为父母不忘浪漫

孩子能给婚姻带来极大的快乐，我们应该给予他们关心和爱。但他们的降生可能改变夫妻俩原来的行为方式，甚至还可能改变彼此的感情。父母一旦陷入“孩子的奴隶”的角色，则其害无穷。我们都误以为孩子们不能自己照顾自己，而婚姻则可以任其发展。把夫妻共处看得无足轻重不仅会给夫妇自己带来痛苦，而且孩子们也会受到影响。

如果能协调处理好夫妻之间的需要和孩子们的需要，你们的情感生活仍然可以再度充满激情。首先要意识到的是，你们既是孩子们的父母，也是情侣。与你的配偶保持情侣关系对保持家庭和美至关重要。作家劳伦斯·沙梅斯这样写道：“浪漫，在人之需要的天平上，其重要性也许比不上吃和住，但也差之不远，它是我们的生活支柱之一。”这一点很容易让人忽略。作了父母之后，我们许多人突然觉得必须严肃正经起来。可谁不向往幸福而又充满活力的婚姻生活呢？以下是几条让婚姻充满浪漫色彩的方式。

1. **保持彼此的魅力** 真实的生活并不是浪漫的神话故事。孩子大哭大闹，账单要付，衣服要洗。没有人能长期保持迷人的王子或公主的形象。但你可以营造一个浪漫的气氛，让你的配偶表现出其作为情侣的一面。我的一个朋友乔伊斯觉得她的婚姻缺乏激情。她忙于照顾孩子，她的丈夫则忙于工作。他们之间好像隔着一堵墙。后来，有一天，她把孩子们送到母亲家，穿上她最漂亮的衣服在门口迎接丈夫归来。惊讶不已的丈夫久久地吻了她，并把她抱进屋里。他们在温暖的壁炉边坐了下来，享用了一顿甜蜜的晚餐，共度了一段美妙的时光。

夫妻结婚一段时间尤其是孩子出生后，他们常常觉得彼此的追恋已经完毕，于是不再努力使自己充满魅力。但必须记住我们生活在一个充满各种各样诱惑的世界里，所以，不要放弃吸引你配偶的努力，保持彼此的魅力。

2. 夫妻独享欢乐 为庆祝她35岁生日，梅利和丈夫两人在旧金山呆了两夜。“我们都玩疯了。”她回忆说：“真想一直乐下去。可是你知道，最终总是要为此付出代价的。”“你指什么？”我问她。“嗨，把孩子撂在一边只顾自己快活，终会让你愧疚的。”

梅利像当今许多父母一样，总怀着一份不切实际的作为父母的责任感，这责任感会使一个本可以过得很愉快的夜晚变得很扫兴。有的夫妇还因此不再单独出去，除了参加婚葬礼外。但要保持彼此之间的浪漫和亲密，腾出时间夫妇单独出去，并且不被负罪感所累，这非常重要。

放下孩子不是件容易的事，尤其是当他们哭喊着缠着你不放，而你的丈夫已在车里等得不耐烦时。要逐渐使自己明白，夫妇单独出去对于你做一个好父母，好情侣，好人都很关键。

3. 重温恋爱时光 找一个愉快的夜晚，忘掉自己是乔伊的爸爸或珍尼的妈妈，像以前一样，你们只是一对恋人。如果出去一晚上谈的全是孩子或工作当中的问题，那就违背初衷了。有时候有必要讨论这些事情，但过得开心的夫妇都避开讨论家庭问题。吃饭的时候，他们谈的是当前的新闻、书、音乐、艺术或美好的时光。“我丈夫和我总是先为我们的爱和胜利走出家门而干杯。之后，我们回忆我们年轻的时候及我们的冒险经历，比如顺河划船而下，”朱莉，一个有着两个男孩的母亲讲述说。“这种回忆会让我们度过一个激动人心的夜晚。”

4. 惊喜充满魔力 马尔科姆是两个不满十岁的男孩的父亲。有一次，他从后门溜了出去，按响了前门的门铃。当他的妻子打开门时，他献上一枝玫瑰，并邀请她出去与他约会。“我感到自己又回到了学生时代。”她激动而又自豪地告诉她的朋友。

惊喜可以是一份礼物，一个吃晚饭或看电影的邀请，或一张去度假的机票；这些都会奇迹般地给你的感情生活创造出浪漫和火花。所以，父母们有必要腾出时间去寻找快乐，一起开心和欢笑。创造浪漫的时光还是防止烦躁和不满情绪的良药。如果夫妇努力在他们的关系中注入激情，他们的感情会变得亲密而又牢靠，从而使他们成熟的爱充满年轻人浪漫的生机。

NOTE 注释：

alter ['ɔ:lteɪ] v. 改变

no-nonsense [nəʊ'nɒnsəns] adj. 实际的，严肃的

vigorous ['vɪgərəs] adj. 充满活力的，精力旺盛的

spit up 咳出，呕出

doldrums ['dɒldrəmz] n. 忧郁，消沉

blast [bla:st] n. 喧嚣的聚会，狂欢会令人极兴奋或愉快的经历

intimacy ['ɪntɪməsi] n. 亲密，亲昵行为

reminiscing [ˌremɪ'nɪsɪŋ] n. 回忆