

**Family Living**  
**Focus**  
 by  
 Adams Co.  
 Extension Agent  
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**It's Never Too Late To Honeymoon!**

Russell and I have planned a date. Yes I mean a real date. You know one of those things just two people do to enjoy each other's company. Russell's brother Gary and his wife Esther have been offering for months to keep the boys so just the two of us could be alone. Oh it sounds so romantic already doesn't it.

Think about your own relationship. In the beginning, it was relatively simple. "You" met "him or her" and "you" became a couple. The two of you had lots of time to spend together and each of you was the object of the other's undivided attention.

If you have children, how

quickly things change. With the birth of children, Russell and I not just became a couple but also parents. Now we have two relationships: spouse and co-parents. Since February is the month of love, let's look at the "spouses" relationship in our lives.

While parenthood can be wonderful . . . inside many two-parent families there's a couple that is being neglected. Think about your own relationship. Do you give "your all" to the kids and shall I say leftovers to your spouse? Remember, it's never too late to honeymoon! Consider these four ideas to refresh that honeymoon spirit.

**Honeymooning**

Imagine yourself, alone with

your spouse, sleeping late in a motel room. No phones are ringing, no children crying, no dog needs to be let out, no one begging for the car keys! It's just you and your spouse with time for each other. Reminiscent of the early days of your relationship, you can remember the fun and rekindle old feelings. Feel guilty about leaving kids? Remember the old saying . . . absence makes the heart grow fonder.

**Prescription: Date Night**

Once every other week or a minimum of once a month, invest in a baby-sitter and spend an evening out alone together. This is not time to invite other couples along. It's a night just for the two of you. Maybe you'll have to learn to talk to each other all over again. Dating was fun, or it wouldn't have turned to marriage! Try it again.

**The 10 o'clock hour**

The last hour of each day (at whatever time it is) should be reserved for time as a couple. At this point, the kids are in bed, or they're not, but you are! It's time to talk. Time to touch time to be close and nourish your relationship. Your relationship needs constant renewal. Often this is accomplished through touch. Like cats, many people purr when they are massaged. Try expressing

your love and care through massaging each other. It's a great stress reducer.

**The Greeting**

(This is my favorite because it's so true.) The way we greet our spouse upon arriving home often sets the tone for the entire evening. No one likes to walk into a war zone. If we are hit with a barrage of demands, blame or chaos, we are more likely to want to avoid coming home. Instead, if we are welcomed in peace and allowed to acclimate ourselves,

homecoming is a more pleasant experience.

Happy spouses are usually happy parents. Unhappy spouses are often miserable at home, at work, with the kids, everywhere. The best way to guarantee the health and safety of our family is to take care of our marriage. Your marriage is the foundation of your family. When the foundation is weakened, the entire structure is at risk. So when I see you around the county in this month of love, I hope I see that look of happy honeymooning about you!

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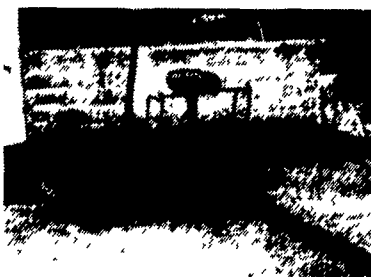
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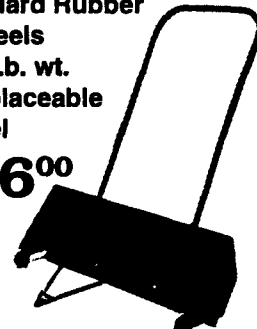
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