



ONTARIO ASSOCIATION FOR MARRIAGE AND FAMILY THERAPY

(A Division of the American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy)

"Helping with life's most precious relationships"

A Dozen Principles for Keeping Your Love Alive

- 1. Never take your partner for granted. You chose them years ago because of something special, and you've already shared a good part of your life. Who better to share the rest of your life with, if you can get past the problems?**
- 2. Listen for where your partner's at, what makes them tick, what turns them on. Listen as though you just met.**
- 3. Address disappointments and hurts soon, before resentments grow.**
- 4. If you argue repeatedly about the same things, ask your partner (with sincerity) what makes this issue so important. Then ask yourself the same question.**
- 5. Take time to enjoy yourselves as a couple: have fun, feel lively and sexy together. Enjoy watching your partner's enjoyment.**
- 6. Be open and trustworthy. Secrets and closedness erode intimacy at an enormous rate.**
- 7. Use tough times as an opportunity to show your partner you really care about them. Be caring and nurturing in their time of need. Pitching in will be remembered forever.**
- 8. Watch your bad habits. Before you notice it your partner may mistake your laziness and avoidance behaviour as disrespect and lack of love.**
- 9. Show appreciation every chance you get.**
- 10. Keep your sense of humour. Laugh together, but don't laugh at each other. If anyone isn't laughing, it's not a good joke.**

11. Romanticize growing old together with your best buddy. Trading your partner for a younger model often has unforeseen side-effects.

12. Don't be afraid to get counselling. A little coaching can go a very long way to turning your relationship into what you want it to be.

By Bev Behar RMFT