

## VALENTINE'S DAY PUTS RELATIONSHIPS IN THE SPOTLIGHT

Valentine's Day is a great opportunity to think about the relationships in your life, not just with your significant other, but with friends, family, colleagues and the community.

Relationships Australia Tasmania CEO, Mat Rowell, encouraged all Tasmanians to take some time to reflect on how positive, respectful and fulfilling relationships can enrich their lives.

"We live in a world where we have many different ways to connect with people, but that can often mean we forget how important one on one communication is with our loved ones."

"It's important to remember that you don't have to spend a lot of money to show the special people in your life how much they mean to you," Mr Rowell said.

Taking some time out of your day to spend time with someone, ring them up or send a letter or a card can be more rewarding than an expensive gift.

"And these are gestures that can be done regularly, they don't need to be kept to just one day a year," Mr Rowell said.

Valentine's Day naturally brings relationships into focus and it can be a timely reminder to examine or improve your own.

"Sadly there are statistics that show an increase in online searches for 'divorce' and 'divorce advice' by as much as 40 percent in the weeks that surround Valentine's Day."

It's also important to remember single and recently separated people in your circle who may be feeling left out, lonely and impacted by the Valentine's Day promotions.

"Let's use Valentine's Day this year to celebrate the wonderful people who make our lives better, not just on February the 14<sup>th</sup> but every day of the year."

Inexpensive ways to show your partner your love

1. *Re-enact your first date - if you can't return to the exact place, try to re-create the circumstances and the romance of that first meeting.*
2. *Hand-write a book of lover's cheques - each 'cheque' is for something special that you can do for your partner, who can 'cash' them in at any time.*
3. *Organise a beach picnic - just for the two of you. Choose a private spot and pack some special treats.*
4. *Leave hidden messages in places where your partner is bound to find them, one for every year you have been together.*

Tips for building a better relationship

1. *Regularly set aside time to enjoy each other's company and common interests.*
2. *Show appreciation for your partner and focus on his/her good qualities. Talk about your partner in positive terms to others.*
3. *Listen without judgement or criticism. Effective listening is integral to a strong relationship, but certainly takes practice.*
4. *Have fun together. Schedule a 'date' night once a month, which doesn't have to be expensive.*
5. *Realise that intimacy includes a meeting of the mind, emotions and spirit, and enjoy physical closeness without necessarily moving on to sex.*
6. *Ask your partner to write down the five qualities/needs that are most important for him/her in a relationship. Do the same yourself and then look at the lists to see which of the needs you can easily help with and which ones you need to negotiate.*
7. *Communicate your needs rather than waiting for your partner to try to guess what is going on with you.*

**For further information, or for comment, please contact**

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**About RA Tas**

Relationships Australia Tasmania (RA Tas) provides counselling, relationship and parenting education seminars and courses, dispute resolution, community support and professional training. Services are available to all people regardless of cultural background, family structure, economic situation, religious beliefs, gender or sexual orientation.

For more information call 1300 364 277 or visit our website: [tas.relationships.org.au](http://tas.relationships.org.au)

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