

Cultivating the Garden of Loving Partnership

By Ruthanne and Louis Carosio

When we first fall in love, there is a delicious mix of hormones and excitement that marks this time of getting to know someone new. Fascinated by the other, we think of them endlessly and want to be with them all the time. We see all that is good, and turn a blind eye to their faults. Ah, what a sweet time that is. Inevitably, however, we settle into a relationship that, though loving, may feel less exciting. We see each other more clearly, we share daily life, but paradoxically this daily relating can also be a great extinguisher of passion and excitement. However, this does not have to be the end of deeply satisfying and passionate partnership.

The truth is, life long loving and passionate partnership does not just happen. It requires our commitment and conscious effort. In that, our most important relationships can be viewed as a garden. We all know the importance of tending a garden. We prepare the soil, we plant, we water frequently. We regularly give the garden our full attention with the end result of a harvest of delicious fruits and vegetables. If we ignore the garden we end up with shriveled plantings and no harvest. Tending of our relationship garden includes this same amount of care and loving attention, prioritizing the relationship as vitally important and nurturing it in an on-going way.

In our work as relationship counselors we are frequently aware of how often the garden of relationship falls into serious neglect. Life in the 21st Century is filled with things to do. Busy, busy, busy! We have to work hard, make enough money, take care of the kids. All these details of life can seem so monumentally important. Yes, but! When we place our time and attention on all there is to “do” and neglect to give time and attention to our relationship, over time distance grows, we lose sight of our partners and we can become more like roommates or worse, combatants. Our garden no longer thrives. The time and attention that we so eagerly gave to the relationship in the beginning has been parceled out to many other priorities. Each partner may long for that early time and wonder why they feel so differently now.

Something magical can happen, however, when we make tending our garden a regular and sacred priority. In our minds, there is little that is more important than nurturing our relationships in this steady and

loving way. This can be simple. We often suggest to couples that at least once a day, they have a long and relaxed embrace, breathing together and feeling each other. We suggest they take time each day to talk, not just about kids and jobs, but about their hopes and dreams. Garden tending can be a weekly date where everything is left behind for a little while and there is spaciousness for just being together. Scheduling time for intimacy is often needed in the busy world we live in. Couples sometimes balk at the idea of scheduling sex, but if they can come to honor it as the creation of a special and sacred time, there is incredible benefit to the relationship as a whole. However a couple decides to tend their garden, it is important that their attention is turned fully toward one another in a loving way. In doing so, each partner glows in the attention they receive from the other.

So, as we travel through the month that honors the beautiful energy of love, we invite you to spend some relaxed time tending your garden. And to make the commitment to the on-going tending of your relationship. In doing so you will reap the benefit of that abundant garden every day of your life.

©2010 Pathways to Radiant Loving

Ruthanne and Loius Carosio, are counselor living in Eugene Oregon. They are co-founders of the Radiant Life Center and Pathways to Radiant Loving. Twice a year they offer “Cultivating the Garden of Loving Partnership; a Retreat for Couples”. This retreat is held along the beautiful McKenzie River, near Eugene and is a quality weekend, giving couples needed time for the nurturing of their beautiful garden. For more information visit <http://www.radiantloving.com> or visit them on Facebook-Pathways to Radiant Loving.