

Sample from Taking Back Christmas and Other Family Celebrations

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For wives, it might be wise to lower our expectations for our spouses. While some men are good sports about the demands created by Valentine's Day for cards, roses, and gifts, others just refuse to be "forced" into action by what they regard as the demands for this day's attentions.

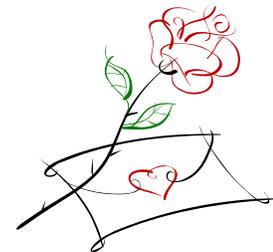
My late husband Tom wasn't enticed by the hoopla or demands of Valentine's Day. Yet he said "I love you" for 29 years in countless other ways. I wrote about what I learned from this in an article called "Another Kind of Roses."

Another Kind of Roses

Forget the holiday cards, the candy, and the flowers. My husband always did! But I finally decided not to sweat the touchy-feely (*his* abrasive definition) romantic gestures.

Maybe I was deprived and neglected by the standards of some therapists and marriage counselors. But I learned in 29 years of wedded partnership that Tom gave me "another kind of roses."

If other husbands are anything like mine, through the years their wives could find "roses" in multitudes of often unnoticed acts. It's wise to recognize these fragrant bouquets as concrete declarations of their love.



I have collected long-stemmed treasures in these memories and many more:

- I was scheduled to speak early one morning after a long night with an infant, and only snatches of time to prepare. As I struggled with a sense of inadequacy, I discovered a note my husband left nearby. He reminded me of his prayers and assured me that I would do well.
- Words didn't come from Tom the night I hemorrhaged and miscarried after an ordeal of waiting and hoping. Instead, when he left the hospital, he spent the early morning hours meticulously washing the bloodstains from my robe and gown.
- When I first began freelance writing, he "budgeted" \$50 a month for my expenses "until I profited" – a gesture of confidence that I would make it!
- When I traveled alone or with only the children, Tom spent the time before our departure making certain the car was ready for the road trip.
- We shared the night shift when our terminally ill daughter was sick through the night – even though he still had to go to work the next day.
- The day of our daughter's memorial service, he cleaned and dusted her wheelchair one last time. It would sit empty at our church as a reminder that she no longer had need of it.

Gary Chapman's book *The Five Love Languages* reminds us that different people "speak" love in different ways. Some best convey love in touch or words or gifts. Still others say it with deeds or quality time. If we don't speak the same language, we can misunderstand our spouse's best efforts, and that causes confusion and conflict.

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Tom fought and lost a battle with cancer and went home to heaven on November 1, 2000. I'm so thankful I had learned to recognize, receive, and appreciate his bouquets.

Go ahead. Sniff around. The sweet scent of flowers may be found in all kinds of unexpected places. Bouquets that say "I love you" may truly be present and simply undetected. Perhaps you also can discover and come to treasure "another kind of roses."