

**LOVE RIGHT NOW!**

Published by Diane Anderson, MA  
Registered Clinical Counsellor

**LOVE RIGHT NOW!** is an electronic newsletter with the purpose of helping people create love and happiness by transforming hurtful patterns of relationship!

Website: <http://www.DianeAndersonCounseling.com>

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December, 2007. Volume 2, Number 5  
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Feature Article: **MAKE THE SEASON BRIGHT!**  
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Please forward **LOVE RIGHT NOW!** to your friends, family, and associates.

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1.Note from Diane:  
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Hello Everyone,

This is a busy time of year so we will be brief!

"Make the Season Bright" is a list of 5 things you can do to make your relationship stronger during this holiday season. I hope you find it helpful and action-provoking

Next, I'd like to thank all 100 people who attended our What's Love Got To Do With It seminars in November. It was a pleasure to have you there and we appreciate the effort it took to venture out on two very dark, stormy nights--ah, yes, Vancouver winters are something else!

We will again present What's Love Got To Do With It Tuesday January 22nd in White Rock and Wednesday January 23rd In Vancouver. Details and pre-registration are available on our website.

On behalf of Edel, Lorill, Lanita (our new administrator), and myself, we sincerely thank you for all your support and this year.

We sincerely wish you and all your loved ones a safe, happy, loving holiday season. We hope that 2008 will be the best year yet for your love relationships.

Happy holidays to our readers from around the globe!

Until next time...happy loving,

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**2. MAKE THE SEASON BRIGHT! 5 THINGS YOU CAN DO TO  
STRENGTHEN YOUR LOVE RELATIONSHIP THIS HOLIDAY  
SEASON!**  
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Whether you are in a couples relationship or

single, these 5 tips will ensure a more healthy relationship. I refer to couples first, but want those of you who are single to read this too. I address these tips more specifically for singles after the couples section, however, if you really feel the urge to skip ahead I guess that's okay.

#### **FOR COUPLES:**

**1. BREATHE:** As the season winds up and up with activities and pressures, take time to ensure you are still breathing! Pause. Breathe. Feel your feet on the ground, feel your lungs fill with air, feel your body living! Encourage your partner to do the same. You need to breathe--consciously!--to slow down and to gain perspective.

The holidays have a way of magnifying (and distorting) everything that is good and not so good in your life (and your relationship). Breathe and get grounded.

Remember that the holidays are ten days or so that come loaded with expectations and longings. Ten days that can tend to stir up our emotions (both positive and negative).

Breathing will help you better attend to your emotions. Sending oxygen to your brain and to every other living cell in your body will help you think more clearly. Being present can help you enjoy the holidays by helping you remember that you are alive. And it can help you get through things that are maybe not so great about the season, like loneliness, sadness and disappointment. Even if it seems you have little control over most things at this time of year, at least you can control your breath!

Breathe in. Breathe out. Breathe in...even more deeply. Breathe out...even more slowly. Good for you!

**2. REFLECT:** Now that you are at least slowing down to breathe, I encourage you to reflect.

What is important to you? What is important to your partner? Likely, you have differing needs during the holidays...you are two completely different people with completely different experiences and histories around this season. Don't try to erase your differences...notice, appreciate, and support those differences.

As a small example, my Christmases were filled with my Mom's homemade butter tarts, cherry flips, and everything sweet. While opening presents on Christmas morning, I live on Nestle chocolate Turtles, coffee, and phone calls to family and friends across the country and around the world. Christmas just doesn't feel good to me unless I am revved up on sugar and caffeine and there is lots of excitement!

For my husband, Tom, Christmas is at a completely different pace. First, Christmas is not complete without making homemade tamales like his mother did (a languorous two-day event). On Christmas morning, he enjoys slowly opening presents and unwrapping tamales. He hates the frenzy that I crave. Different histories create different experiences. Different behaviours can have different meanings to different people. Stop trying to make others feel what you feel, think like you think, do what you do. You're different--not better nor worse--just different!

Can you notice your partner's differences (hint: they're usually the things that drive you crazy!). Will you grow yourself enough to not only tolerate your partner's uniqueness, but understand and appreciate your partner's diversity? Can you create space in your heart for the way in which your partner needs or wants something different from you? It's not so easy...we live in a world where we oppress and even annihilate differences. We have much work to do in this area. But if we can begin to do this in our close relationships, then I believe we begin

to create the real spirit of giving and create healing to each other...and perhaps around the world.

**3. APPRECIATE:** Yes, you knew I would say this! It's something I believe firmly in...and the research shows that expressing appreciation toward our partner keeps relationships healthy and strong.

Now that you are breathing and reflecting...take a moment to consider what's worked between the two of you this year? What have been the highlights of your time together? Have you congratulated yourselves on finishing an outstanding project together, getting through a tough time with family, arguing less and enjoying each other more? Making a commitment to work on your relationship problems?

Express these appreciations to your partner! Share them. Tell your partner what it is about them (their qualities, characteristics, accomplishments, etc.) that you are grateful for. Tell them why you specifically appreciate this and what it means to you. Tell them how you feel about who they are and what they have done...or what you have done together.

**4. GIFT:** A gift is something that is given to show gratitude or pleasure. Some of us are good at selecting gifts, other of us could use some improvement in this area (myself included!)

Did you find a gift your partner could enjoy or appreciate? If you did, congratulations! If you didn't, you need to attend more carefully to your partner.

What is a gift for your partner? Because of your individual differences, what might be a "gift" in your mind may not be a gift to you partner. I encourage the gift-givers to listen throughout the year and to create a list of things that your partner has expressed they like, admire, or want. (If you are like me, you'll be writing this down

somewhere!) If you missed the boat on a gift, learn from your misses! Do you take the time, care, and attention needed to figure out what your partner wants? The gift-giver has responsibilities in getting it right!

Gifts don't have to be expensive. In fact, some of the best gifts are the ones that involve simply time, care, and attention. My favorite gift from Tom is a story he wrote about when we first met, printed and bound in a beautiful journal. It took him hours to write but hours also to bind by hand. And it means the world to me!

[And if you're reading this, Tom, please note that I also REALLY LIKED the pearls you gave me too!]

Receiving gifts is important too! How well do you express your gratitude and appreciation for what you receive? Are you generous in your gratitude or kind of stingy? Perhaps, you are disappointed. That's okay. You can still be gracious to your partner. It is just good manners to accept the gift that was given with grace and thanks.

If you are disappointed, at some point later on and at a more appropriate moment, you can (and should) express the disappointment too. Only do so with the intention of sharing more of yourself with your partner and with creating success in your relationship. Express your disappointment conscientiously so that your partner can understand both your disappointment and the hurt underneath it. You need to be considerate and helpful to your partner.

Be helpful by seeking to problem-solve ways in which the two of you can get better at gifting. For example talk about:

1. How your partner can get better at learning about you what you like.
2. How you can articulate your wants/needs/desires in a way your partner will recognize.

I often point out to clients how it seems to them that they are expressing something with a roar, when all too often it is coming across like a whisper. Sadly, they are then disappointed when no one got the message.

Ask yourself: Am I making myself clear and specific or am I vague and dismissive of my desires? Do I say what is really important to me or do I minimize my longings?

The gift recipient has responsibilities for getting it right, too!

**5. AFFECTION:** Have you expressed affection to your partner? Not sexualized touch. And not affection only for the purpose of getting sex later (although a strong foundation consisting of good, no-strings-attached, affection can go a long way to engendering sexual desire). I'm talking about honest to goodness affection. Do you take moments to hold a hand, give a hug, touch fingertips, a casual kiss, rest a reassuring arm around a shoulder?

Physical affection reduces our stress levels, produces serotonin (which protects us against depression) and oxytocin (the snuggle drug which deepens our ties to one another). Affectionate touch makes us live longer and improves our quality of life.

And remember, affection is not only expressed physically, but also by our actions. Do you do affectionate things toward your partner in your everyday life? Do you keep your word? Do you keep your commitments? Do you keep your vows? Do you give your time, energy, and attention? Or do consistently disappoint, let your partner down, and only give what is left over once you've attended to everyone else?

Do you put your partner in the forefront of your mind, above all others? Life is full of

distractions. But don't let that blind you from what is important.

And don't expect your partner to feel attracted and affectionate toward you if everyone else's needs (including your own) are placed above him or her.

Also, find out what feels affectionate for your partner? If you don't know, ask. For me, it's small everyday things, like when Tom leaves my daily vitamin and a glass of water on the counter when he leaves for work. It's the way he remembers what's on the grocery list. It's telling me how much he loves me every day and giving me the hug that let's me know I mean something to him.

#### **HOW TO APPLY THESE 5 STEPS IF YOU ARE NOT IN A LOVE RELATIONSHIP NOW...BUT WOULD LIKE TO BE?**

##### **FOR SINGLES:**

You really should read the above section too. But if you haven't, here are the specifics to you.

I believe that whether we are in a love relationship or not, we are ALWAYS in relationships! What you do and what you master in your friendships and other relationships are skills readily transferable to your love relationships. So what you practice in your friendships and your casual acquaintances (integrity, honesty, compassion, courage, reliability, vulnerability, forgiveness, fun) gets you prepared for fantastic love relationships!

**1. BREATHE:** Well, this applies to you too! Just breathe! (Yes, go back and read the couples section. Sorry I don't want to rewrite it.)

**2. REFLECT:** What did you accomplish this year? Where did you grow? What new things did you try regarding relationships? What did you learn about yourself...did you hold back, jump in, be more careful, be less cautious? Appreciate the ways in which you are growing and changing to be

in the kind of relationship you desire?

As you look toward the coming year, are you clear on what you need and desire for a relationship? Do you have a game plan for creating and achieving it? Are you becoming the kind of person who would be a good partner in the type of relationship you're looking for?

**3. APPRECIATE:** Have you celebrated your successes? Have you shared with those closest to you not only your successes, but their successes? Have you revealed what you have appreciated about the important people in your life...everyone from your best friend, your daughter-in-law, your local grocery store cashier, or the Grade 8 teacher from years ago who believed in and encouraged you.

**4. GIFT:** Are you good at giving? Are you good at receiving? Are you attentive? Can you say what you need/desire/want in a clear and precise way? Are you a gracious receiver?

Let's put it to the test. Did you buy yourself a gift this season? Are you acknowledging your own worth and readiness to get what you want?

**5. AFFECTION:** Like Diana Ross and the Supremes sang, "Reach out and touch somebody's hand. Make this world a better place if you can!"

In a world where people are dying for affection, there is no shortage of places to give and receive touch. Are you open to giving and receiving affection, or do you keep one foot out when giving a hug and one shoulder between you and the giver when getting a hug?

Whether in a love relationship or not, EVERYONE needs affection (and I mean non-sexualized touch). We thrive with it. And if you are apprehensive about getting or giving affection from other humans, then I encourage you to get it from animals...creatures need affection too! A little can go a long way to alleviating stress, increasing

serotonin levels, and making us feel good!

So there you have it. Five things that can make your season bright!!!!

Happy holidays to everyone!

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### 3. Love Byte

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*"I attribute my success to this - I never gave or took any excuse."*

- Florence Nightingale, Nurse

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### 4. Relationship Action Step #6--NO EXCUSES: Commit to Changing Your Unproductive Relationship Behaviours

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If your relationship is working well this holiday season...celebrate! Celebrate, celebrate, and then celebrate some more!!!

If it is not, then don't blame, accuse, or become defensive. With compassion, reflection, and self-examination ask, "What did I do to contribute to this?"

Perhaps you were a jerk, plain and simple. Perhaps you didn't ask enough of your partner and thus didn't ask enough of yourself--i.e., to take a stand on your own behalf.

Either way, ask forgiveness from your partner and/or yourself and make a decision as to what you are going to do to remedy this fracture in your relationship.

Come up with TWO ACTIONS that you will begin to do today. Make them:

- Positive: say what you will do, no negatives
- Measurable: make the behaviour change not for "forever" or "always" but in real do-able length of time.
- Specific: describe precisely the actions you

will take

Write them down and keep them posted where you will see them.

For example:

My goal is:

To be more considerate of my partner.

I will: (2 actions)

1. For the next month, I will think of what my partner needs from me when she gets home from work and commit to making sure I have dinner ready for her three out of five work nights per week.
2. For the next three weeks, I will ask my partner what is important regarding our finances and commit to keeping our chequing account out of our overdraft.

or

My goal is:

To value myself more fairly in this relationship

I will: (2 actions)

1. In the next 5 weeks, I will tell my partner honestly when I only choose to be affectionate and say and initiate love-making when I am interested.
2. I will take 60 minutes per day for myself, every day for the next three weeks and write it on the calendar so my family will know when I am unavailable to them and only be available for myself.

New behaviours are hard to keep so you must be attentive.

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**5. More Relationship Action Steps**  
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Want more tips on Relationships?

For more tips, download my 21-page FR\*EE report:

*21 WAYS TO WIN AT LOVE*

Or check out the Articles page on my website at:

<http://www.dianeandersoncounselling.com/articles.htm>

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## **6. Seminars and Workshops**

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### **SEMINARS:**

*What's Love Got To Do With It* seminar is here again!

Reaching out to the community and sharing our knowledge is so important to us at Diane Anderson & Associates. After all, we believe that knowledge provides the power and choice to make a difference in ALL relationships.

The seminar is FR\*EE. And pre-registration is required. The *What's Love Got To Do With It* seminar is presented in:

#### **White Rock/South Surrey**

Tuesday January 22nd, 2008

7-9 pm

Rotary Fieldhouse,  
South Surrey Athletic Park  
148th and 24th Avenue  
Surrey, BC

#### **Vancouver**

Wednesday January 23rd, 2008

7-9pm

Sport BC Building  
Room 107 1367 W Broadway  
Vancouver, BC  
V6H 4A9

To pre-register and for more information, check

our website at  
<http://www.dianeandersoncounselling.com/workshops.htm>

**WORKSHOPS:**

JUST ANNOUNCED

**This Thing Called Love!**

Our 2-Day Intensive Workshop to map YOUR Love Blueprint and to expand your love relationship capabilities!

**This Thing Called Love!**

Saturday March 29th and Sunday March 30th, 2008  
Vancouver  
9:30 am to 5:30pm

**Regular Tuition \$397 per person**  
**SAVE \$147 WHEN YOU REGISTER WITH ANOTHER PERSON** (Second person pays only \$250 tuition).

**Early Bird Tuition: \$347**  
**REGISTER BY FEBRUARY 14TH, 2008 AND SAVE \$50!**  
**SAVE \$197 WHEN YOU REGISTER WITH ANOTHER PERSON** (Second person pays only \$250 tuition).

**BEST DEAL: AT SEMINAR TUITION ONLY \$300**  
Attend the free seminar,  
*What's Love Got To Do With It* and

**\*\*\*SAVE \$97 WHEN YOU REGISTER AT THE SEMINAR**  
**\*\*\*SAVE \$244 WHEN YOU REGISTER WITH ANOTHER PERSON** (Second person pays only \$250 tuition).  
See our website for more information at  
<http://www.DianeAndersonCounselling.com/workshops.htm>

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**7.Counselling & Consulting**  
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Are you struggling in your relationships?

Do you seem to have a pattern of being hurt or hurting others?

Do you want to take your relationship to the next level?

Whatever your relationship concerns and questions are, we can help.

Married, living together, dating or looking for that special someone, we will show you how to identify your relationship problems accurately, transform your frustrations into the moments that bring you closer together, and repair hurts that have occurred along the way.

We can also help you enhance and deepen an already solid and satisfying relationship by realizing your life-long desires and goals for loving.

Contact us for a free 10-minute phone consultation. Together we can explore how we might help you solve your relationship problems. For general inquiries, you can email our administrator, Lanita, who will set up your free consultation, make an appointment, or answer your questions at [info@DianeAndersonCounseling.com](mailto:info@DianeAndersonCounseling.com)

Or you can visit our website for more information about how we work:  
<http://www.DianeAndersonCounseling.com>

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**8. About Diane Anderson & Associates**  
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**Diane Anderson, MA**, is a Registered Clinical Counsellor who assists individual and couples in healing hurtful pattern of relationships and creating the happy, healthy loving relationships they long for.

Diane has been on all sides of relationships: married, divorced, and now happily remarried again. She knows what it takes to make or break a relationship as a couple, how awfully painful and costly it is to go through a separation and/or a divorce and how challenging it is to dive into the relationship swimming pool again!

She has also been a client of several relationship therapists, so she has a keen sense of what helps couples sort out their relationship troubles.

Diane says, "I am a happy, living example of how hurtful patterns of loving and relating can be changed!"

Diane lives and practices in beautiful White Rock, British Columbia, Canada!

**Edel Walsh** is a Registered Professional Counsellor and Certified Life Coach. Edel has also been on all sides of relationships and has a passion for helping people make their relationships work well! Edel's West-End Vancouver office is especially convenient for those in the downtown core, the North Shore, North Burnaby, and South and East Vancouver areas.

**Lorill Drummund** is a Registered Clinical Counsellor working from her White Rock office. Lorill has tools and techniques for helping couples move through their relationship difficulties and create the relationships they really want. Both Lorill and Diane are convenient for people located in Richmond, Surrey, Coquitlam, Cloverdale, Langley, Mission and further in the Fraser Valley. We are also convenient for Washington residents, especially Blaine, Bellingham and Seattle areas.

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**9. This Ezine**

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Feedback:

Your feedback, input, and suggestions for upcoming articles are always welcome and appreciated. Please send your comments to:

[info@DianeAndersonCounselling.com](mailto:info@DianeAndersonCounselling.com)

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<http://www.DianeAndersonCounselling.com> and sign in. You will also receive our complimentary, 21-page report, **21 WAYS TO WIN AT LOVE!**

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