

Your Personal Coach

Kathleen Brehony, Ph.D.

Dear Kathleen,

I've just started dating a woman I met at a friend's party. She recently called it off with a guy she dated for about a year, who is loaded with money. I'm working and going to graduate school and, frankly, I just get by in the finance department. I can't possibly afford to take her out to fine restaurants, to travel, or do the things that she was used to doing with Richie Rich. I'm falling in love with her, and would love to romance her, but don't know how to do that without much disposable income. Any ideas? -- Ron

Dear Ron,

I think you'll discover very quickly if your financial status is a major criterion for her interest in you. If it is, you will be better off not pursuing someone with such superficial values. I don't think this woman sounds like that kind of person. After all, if money were of such great importance to her, why did she end the relationship with her former boyfriend, the famous and fabulously wealthy Mr. Richie Rich? Being your own authentic self, creatively expressing your feelings for her, treating her with kindness and respect, and being spontaneous and fun are worth more to most women than expensive gifts and fancy dinner dates. Diamonds are not always a girl's best friend.

It's time to do a thorough self-evaluation. Do you give her quality time when you are truly present with her? Do you listen to what she has to say? Are you able to let her know how much she means to you? Do you remember special occasions with a card or some other symbol of your affection? Do you seem to share the same sense of goals and priorities, and an appreciation for the unmaterialistic riches you offer each other?

You don't have to max out your credit card to send a dozen long-stemmed roses when a thoughtful poem or small bouquet of wildflowers – delivered with passion and honesty – says more. A fabulous trip to Paris tasting the world's best wines may be nice, but watching a winter meteor shower cuddled together in a warm blanket with hot chocolate at the ready can be every bit as romantic and just as unforgettable.

I know a guy who won his woman's heart by creatively demonstrating these values of soul and meaning. From the moment they started dating, he collected souvenirs and memorabilia of all their times together: matchbooks from restaurants they went to, movie ticket stubs, a pressed flower from a hike, a postcard showing the beach they walked on. You get it? None of these items had any intrinsic value. They were simply symbols of time spent together as they were falling in love.

He saved everything that denoted their time together. Then he arranged them in a nice (but inexpensive) photo album and wrote a poem or some thoughts as he remembered and commented on each event that brought them closer. He spoke of his deepening feelings, his excitement at getting to know her better, and his unfolding realization of just how special she was to him. When he proposed to her – about a year after they started dating -- he gave her this book of mementos along with an expensive diamond ring. She loved the ring (Diamonds may not always be a girl's best friend, but they can still be, well, good friends sometimes). Now almost fifteen years later, she still wears her engagement ring but never speaks of it. But she still talks about the album of memories he created and how romantic and wonderful that was.

A little imagination can transform your relationship into a romantic journey.

Send your personal coaching questions to kathleen@fullpotentialliving.com or call 473-4004. Kathleen is a personal and executive coach, clinical psychologist, and writer. (©2003 Kathleen Brehony. All Rights Reserved.) All of the "Your Personal Coach" columns are archived at www.fullpotentialliving.com.