101 SIMPLE WAYS TO SHOW YOUR HUSBAND YOU LOVE HIM

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HARVEST HOUSE PUBLISHERS
EUGENE, OREGON
101 Simple Ways to Show Your Husband You Love Him
Copyright © 2016 by Kathi Lipp
Published by Harvest House Publishers
Eugene, Oregon 97402
www.harvesthousepublishers.com

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data
Lipp, Kathi,
101 simple ways to show your husband you love him / Kathi Lipp.
pages cm
1. Marriage—Religious aspect—Christianity. I. Title. II. Title: One hundred one simple ways
to show your husband you love him. III. Title: One hundred and one simple ways to show your
husband you love him.
BV835.L529 2016
248.8'435—dc23
2015025539

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Printed in the United States of America

15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 / BP-JH / 10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1
To Chris and Vikki Francis

When you bought me that computer thirteen years ago, you did more than invest in a piece of equipment—you invested in me at a point when there was no proof that your gamble was going to pay off. I am forever grateful that you had the holy vision to see something in me that I would have never seen in myself.

Thank you for your example of loving God, loving others, and loving each other. You are life changers.
Acknowledgments

Great thanks go to Erin MacPherson, Cheri Gregory, Susy Flory, Renee Swope, Michele Cushatt, and Crystal Paine. So grateful to each and every one of you.

Thanks to Amanda and Shaun, Jeremy, Justen, and Kimberly. Love you more than is reasonable.

My team: Angela Bouma, Sherri Johnson, Brooke Martinez, and Kimber Hunter. You are faithful, inspiring, and a gift.

Rachelle Gardner—proud to call you agent.

Rod Morris—you make writing 80 percent less painful. In other words, you are a miracle.

Harvest House Publishers—I love that I get to call you home.

To our families: The Richersons, the Lipps, and the Dobsons. All my love.

To my friends at Church on the Hill in San Jose, California, and especially Scott and Kelli Simmerok. So grateful to call you home.

And finally to Roger. You are the reason for all of this. How do you pay someone for giving you your life back? I will just keep showing up and loving you every single day. Shut the door, baby.
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Preparing to Show Your Husband You Love Him

Thank you for showing up for your husband.

I’m excited that there is a group of women who still want to say, “My marriage is important, and my husband is important.” Which, it seems, is not very fashionable these days. In fact, as I was writing this book, husbands who talked to me about what was important to them were almost apologetic.

“I’m going to sound like a caveman, but I love it when my wife dresses up for me.”

“Is it OK to say that I love it when my wife has dinner on the table when I get home?”

Yes, much of what these men told me sounded like it came straight out of a happy housewives manual from the fifties.

Dinner.
Looking nice.
Spending time together.
A clean house.
Yep—it sounded positively archaic.

Since when did society get to determine what makes a man happy? If having a roast in the slow cooker makes my man happy, who am I to tell him he’s wrong? (I still like it when my man kills bugs for me. Does that make me a betrayer of my sex?)

What we’ve come to understand is that what makes a man feel loved hasn’t changed much. What has changed is the role women play. We are no longer solely caretakers of the home—we work outside the home (or inside, as many of us work or run businesses from our kitchen
We have dozens of responsibilities in addition to keeping our man satisfied and happy. So how does a real, true-to-life wife actually get it done?

We need to keep it simple.

I’m not telling you to do all 101 things described in this book at the same time. Even Wonder Woman had to get her cape cleaned every once in a while. But I am saying, try these out—and see what your husband responds to. You may figure out a whole new way to love your man.

OK, 101 ideas is a lot. And while I can get pretty creative when it comes to loving on my man, I have friends who are way more creative than I am. So I asked them to contribute their best ideas. I’ve included ideas from some of my buddies who have giant marriage books and websites, as well as from friends who just have great marriages. I know you’ll be as encouraged as I was reading through all their ideas.

**Super Simple Scriptures**

If you are looking to see real change in the heart of your marriage, the best thing you can do is pray for yourself and your man. So in various places throughout this book I have provided some of my favorite Scriptures to pray for your marriage. Now, I could give you lists and lists of Scriptures to hang on to as you pray for your man (and in a couple of cases I do), but for the most part, I pulled up my favorites. One that has stuck with me over the years as I pray for Roger is Hebrews 4:12: “For the word of God is alive and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart.”

If we want the heart of our marriage to grow stronger, praying Scripture, in my opinion, is the best way to accomplish it.

**Super Simple Scripts**

Sometimes the way to show your husband you love him isn’t an action, it’s a statement. So I’ve offered a few simple scripts of things to say that will encourage your husband by showing him real love and affirmation. So simple—but so easily overlooked in our day-to-day lives.
It’s easy to think, *He should know this already!* But it’s kind of like the joke about the couple that’s been married for fifty years.

**Wife:** “Why is it that you never tell me you love me?”

**Husband:** “I said ‘I love you’ in our wedding vows. If something changes, I’ll let you know.”

We wives need to hear our husbands express their love for us more than once. We need to hear it often in order for it to sink in and really be believed. And so does your guy. So work some of the simple scripts I’ve suggested into your everyday conversation.

### You, Your Husband, and His Personality

Before introducing you to the 101 Simple Ways, I want to introduce you to a friend of mine. Her name is Cheri Gregory, and she and I wrote *The Cure for the Perfect Life* together. Cheri is a flat-out genius. (It’s always good to have a few of those around to help you with projects, right?)

While the 101 ways are important, we have to realize that every man is unique. Some are going to get positively giddy over a plate of brownies, while for others, their dream come true is to be left alone for thirty minutes.

And a lot of that comes down to their personality.

And that is why Cheri is here to help us all.

I love when a book provides tools, and that’s what we have here, my friends. Tools.

In the section that follows, Cheri provides you with a quiz to give you a peek into your husband’s personality. Then, she provides a ton of amazing suggestions to help you love on your husband with *actions, gifts,* and *words* that are totally appropriate for your man and his personality type.

To me, this is the keys to the kingdom. This is the secret code that unlocks our husbands and their personalities. So even though you’re eager to get started with those 101 Simple Ways, I encourage you to set aside some time to work through the following section. You just might be amazed at what you’ll discover.
101 Simple Ways
The Company You Keep

Take a close look at the friends you surround yourself with. Do you need to change (maybe even eliminate) some of those relationships?

My friend Kate showed up out of breath and about forty minutes late. “Sorry I’m running behind, guys! Gregg got home late from work.”

She sat at our table on the restaurant patio with the mostly eaten plate of taquitos and mini tacos and caught the eye of the waitress to order her iced tea. She was ready to settle in for some serious girl talk.

“Didn’t Gregg know that you had plans tonight?” Bev said. “I hope he apologized.”

I sat there kind of stunned. As far as I knew, Gregg was a loving and considerate husband. A really good guy.

But Bev couldn’t let it go. “This is what drives me crazy about Ben. He’s always coming home late from work, not even thinking about me and how long I’ve been home with the kids. It makes me crazy.”

Bev went on like this throughout the evening. Harping on Gregg and Ben and any other husband she could think of. Finally, Kate had had enough.

“Gregg had a big project at work and his boss asked him to stay behind. He called to ask if I would be OK if he ran late—and I told him of course. I’m sorry I was late, but this was important.”

Sometimes the Bevs in our life are going through a crisis of their own. Their husband is not in a great spot, she’s feeling unsupported, and marriage is hard. In those instances, be a friend and love her through it. I’m guessing she wants to hang out with you because she desperately needs some encouragement.

But husband bashing—hers, mine, or yours—is never OK. I have a few select friends that I’ve been known to ask to pray for my marriage, but these women are champions of my husband. They are the ones pointing out the good in Roger, looking at his side, and generally
in for the win of my marriage. And I feel the same about them and their marriages.

If the Bev in your life is constantly pointing out the bad in your man (or hers), it may be time to move on from that relationship.

Here are some things to consider when looking at the people you surround yourself with:

- *Does she speak the truth?* If she exaggerates the misdeeds (real or imagined) of the man in her life, it may be time to lessen your time with her.

- *When speaking the truth, does she do it with love?* So maybe her husband really does do some not so great things, but we can either approach our relationships with love or judgment. We don’t get to do both. Is she speaking the truth but not with love? It may be time to move on.

- *Does she love being stuck?* Some people just love being stuck in their bad situation. It doesn’t matter how many suggestions you make or ideas you offer—they just want to be stuck. Get out now before they start to limit your thinking about your own marriage.

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2

Know Your Man

Pay attention to what your husband says he likes.

It can be so easy to fall into expectations of what your husband “should” like. If he’s like most guys, he loves sports, barbecue, and action movies. But what if you’re married to a chess playing vegan who loves foreign films?

Celebrate the man you have! Pay attention to what he says he wants and take him seriously. There’s nothing worse than planning something
for your man, thinking, *Any guy would love this!* But you’re not married to “any guy”; you’re married to your guy.

“My husband had a big birthday coming up, but he doesn’t like gifts or celebrations. I decided that the thing he would like best is to have his grown children with him, so I secretly arranged for our daughter and her husband to come up from San Diego and my local son to take off of work and come for dinner. The travelers arrived about midnight Friday night and snuck into the house. He had no idea they were coming and was totally blown away. He says that weekend was the best gift he could have received.”—Susan Bringard

Here are some ways to up your noticing skills:

• I have a file on Evernote on my phone labeled “Hubby.” When he mentions a movie he’d like to see or a recipe he’d like to try, I make a note of it in my phone. The next time I want to surprise him, I just go to my “Hubby” file where I’ve collected all my intel.

• I have an Amazon alert for Roger’s favorite fiction author, Terry Brooks. When Mr. Brooks comes out with a new book, I’m the first one to get notified—and to order the book for Roger.

• In another file on my phone, I have a list called “Orders.” When I want to order Roger’s favorite drink at Starbucks or his exact order at In-N-Out Burger, I know what it is.
Give Him a Break

Figure out a way to give your husband a break—especially at an extremely busy time.

Yes, I know that you work hard too. And yes, if I could come over and scrub your kitchen floors to give you a break, I would. And no, you can’t do all your husband’s work for him every week. Marriage is a partnership. And I’ll just say it—my husband is better at doing dishes than I am.

But sometimes, we need to jump in on each other’s chores. This is why Roger and I know what our “stress weeks” are going to be.

For him, it’s:

• whatever week he’s working on our taxes
• Easter/Good Friday week (He’s a tech/program director at our church.)
• Christmas week (see above)
• big projects at work

For me, it’s book deadlines.

If your husband has his own stress week coming up, how about taking something (or a lot of things) off his list? I love Jennifer’s attitude:

“My hubby works at a church, so instead of having Saturday and Sunday off, he has Thursday and Friday off. He was feeling stressed, and I decided to get all the household chores done Wednesday night so he could come home and have two days off. He was so glad I did my work plus his. He was able to relax, and he was very grateful.” —Jennifer Helmholz

Here are some ways to help your man:

• Get some outside help. Could you hire a kid to mow the lawn, suggest that you pay someone to do your taxes, or offer to take
the car in for an oil change? Explain that while you appreciate all he does, you want to help lift the burden. I’ve learned from other friends’ experiences, though, that unless you know he hates those tasks, ask first. You don’t want to send a message that you don’t think he’s doing his job.

- **DIY.** What can you do yourself to help your husband. Could you take his turn in the carpool so he can still workout? Walk the dog after dinner so he can get some work done? What is it that you could do to make his life easier this week?

- **The reason you had kids.** So they could start taking over chores! I gave my kids breaks when they had big projects coming up—they for sure could do the same for Dad.

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**Give Him the Word**

Express to your husband the secret language of respect.

The old adage is “Women need love, men need respect.” In this one regard, men have it easy. A few heartfelt “I love yous” throughout the day will suffice for most of us womenfolk. But we need to get a little more creative when it comes to letting our husbands know how much we respect them.

Shaunti Feldhahn, author of *For Women Only,* has researched the ways that husbands feel truly respected. She says, “While we women enjoy hearing our man tell us ‘I love you’ often to reassure us of his love, men are not affected by hearing us say, ‘Honey, I respect you,’ but they do love to hear things like ‘I’m so proud of you’ and ‘I trust you.’”

Here are some ways to express the secret language of respect:

- **Tell him why you’re proud of him.** One day, I was coming out of the house just after Roger had left for a walk with our dog, Jake. Roger was almost out of sight, but I saw him bend
down to pick something off the ground. It was the wrapper to a candy bar. How many people would pick up trash off the other side of the street? I let him know that I’m proud of him for always being a stand-up guy—when people are watching, and especially when they aren’t.

• **Tell him why you feel safe around him.** It’s the little things—like locking the deadbolt at night, texting me to make sure my flight got in OK, and checking my tires to make sure I’m driving safe.

• **Tell him the ways that you feel taken care of.** Does he take out the garbage without being reminded (or reminded only once)? Does he call and ask if he can pick up anything at the store? Let him know all the ways you feel cared for.

• **Tell him what a great dad he is.** One of the best ways to show respect is to let him know that you know he is a great dad. Point out all the ways that he goes above and beyond in his parenting.

5

Simply Show Up

*Do life together with your husband.*

So much of what our husband wants and needs is someone simply to do life with him. He wants a partner in life and in fun.

How could you take an active interest in what your husband loves? Look at the lengths my friend Arlene Pellicane, author of *31 Days to a Happy Husband*, went to in order to connect with her man.

“It may sound odd, but one way I can affirm my husband is to inline skate with him. Before you write this off as an easy hobby, please note I am terrified of putting anything with wheels on my feet. I was the kid who dreaded going to the roller rink for birthday parties. My
husband, James, on the other hand was the kid skating with a boom box on his shoulder, Michael Jackson tunes blaring.

“Sixteen years into our marriage and into our forties, James bought me my first in-line skates for Christmas. I had a choice. I could make him feel like he bought me a vacuum cleaner or I could smile—and learn how to skate with the rest of my family (the kids got blades too; it was a nefarious plot in James’s master plan). My first time on blades, I fell so hard on my tailbone that I sobbed. The second time, my ten-year-old son coached me so James and I wouldn’t kill each other. The third time, I honestly questioned why I should have to learn this (painful and scary and dreadful) sport. I lay in bed the night before picturing myself falling over and over. As I skated cautiously and slowly, arms extended ready to brace myself, I realized something. Something big.

“I could throw in the towel that day and declare myself unfit for in-line skating. Or I could make up my mind that it was something I could learn. I saw in my mind the happy memories I could make with James if I could become his skating buddy (not whiz, champion, or expert…but buddy). My angst melted and I relaxed. I certainly didn’t get much better, but I wasn’t dreading it anymore. Later in the day, James said, “It shows me how much you love me when you try to skate. Thank you.” For James, it’s a huge stress reliever to have fun skating. It means a lot to him if I show up too—just to be his buddy.”

Here are some ways that you can show up for your husband:

• Ask him to teach you a game that he loves. It can be a video game, chess, or another board game that he loves.

• Is there a sport your man would love to share with you? Could you go to the park and learn how to throw a pass or walk the dog? (Yo-yoing is a sport, right?)

• If having your husband teach you this new skill could be marriage-testing, see if you could have one of your kids, a friend, or a coach help you out. What a great surprise for your man too!
• Is there a book your husband has read and loved? Grab his copy and give it a read—and then invite him out to coffee to discuss the finer points of surviving a zombie apocalypse.

6

Super Simple Scripts

Tell your husband “I love doing __________ with you.”

Just that one little sentence can mean the world to your man.

I love doing life with you.
I love doing this parenting thing with you.
I love doing errands with you.
I love doing lunch with you.
So small a sentence, but so packed with meaning.

As much as you love all his accomplishments, as much as you love how he provides for your family and how he leads your tribe, saying “I love doing __________ with you” says “I love who you are. To your very core. You are exactly who I need in my life, and just being with you makes me happy.”

Think of how you could slip this phrase into your husband’s day.

• By text.
• Over the phone.
• In front of the kids.
• In front of his mom.