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How Important Are Anniversary Celebrations?

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A weekly question/answer column

How Important Are Anniversary Celebrations?

Glen O. Jenson answers:*

If a marriage was worth celebrating originally, then it ought to be worth re-celebrating. Hopefully, good marriages get better with time, so each year should be a celebration of making something that was good and meaningful into something that is even better.

Here are some ideas for anniversary celebrations:

- Visit places of your courtship and early years of marriage. Return to the place of your marriage and reminisce over the events of that day. A little nostalgia can make a very enjoyable experience.
- Find ways to meaningfully express yourselves to each other. These might include written messages, physical intimacy, sharing of services or giving gifts that have special significance — music from the era of your marriage or dining out at a place frequented during your courtship or early years of marriage.
- Reaffirm your marriage vows. Get a copy of the vows or recreate on a paper the major phrases used at your marriage ceremony. Re-read them and ask yourself, how are you doing at keeping those vows. You might want to write some new ones that address current feelings and new challenges.
- Spend time looking at pictures of events in the past pertaining to your marriage. This includes recounting memories of special events or circumstances that stand out in your mind as meaningful and important.
- Arrange not to work on your anniversary. This day ought to be at least as important as any of the national and state holidays we celebrate. Do something that is entirely different than other holidays. If you have children at home, arrange for childcare and make this day something special for just you and your spouse.
- Do something that would be a pleasant surprise for your spouse. Gifts or activities are often more fun and meaningful if given as a surprise, and the unexpected usually makes meaningful memories.
- Plan well in advance for a special trip together. On milestone anniversaries such as your 10th, 20th, 30th or others, you might want to save extra money for something really special. There are many places to go and things to do that are not overly expensive if you plan for them.
- Put together a video or slide tape containing pictures of past memories interwoven with music of events with special meaning to the two of you.
- Invite all your children and their spouses, if they are married, to join with you in a

celebration of your marriage.

- Don't go anywhere. Just stay home, but tell everyone you are unavailable and enjoy a day and a night with each other away from the everyday rush of things. Spend some time remembering activities you have done on previous wedding anniversaries.

* Glen O. Jenson is Utah State University Extension Family and Human Development Specialist