



## Words Of Love

If love sometimes leaves you at a loss for words, here are some quotes you may find inspirational:

♥ If I had a flower for every time I thought of you, I could walk in my garden forever. – *Alfred Lord Tennyson*

♥ You're nothing short of my everything. – *Ralph Block*

♥ I love thee to the depth and breadth and height my soul can reach.  
– *Elizabeth Barrett Browning*

♥ I can conquer the world with one hand, as long as you're holding the other. – *Unknown*

♥ I love you: Those three words have my life in them. – *Alexandra to Nicholas II*

♥ If I could reach up and hold a star for every time you made me smile, I would have the whole night sky in the palm of my hand.  
– *Unknown*

♥ You will always be the answer, when someone asks me what I'm thinking about.  
– *Unknown*

♥ Come live in my heart, and pay no rent.  
– *Samuel Lover*

**Sometimes the right words are the best Valentine gift of all!**

*Duncan Clark*

*Amore*

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## Why Does An Itch – Itch?

We've all scratched an itch and felt better for it. But why do we get relief?

Scientists uncovered an answer with magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) in a study where participants were scratched with a small brush – 30 seconds on and 30 seconds off – for a total of about five minutes. Researchers were surprised when areas of the brain that are associated with unpleasant or aversive emotions and memories became less active when participants were being scratched.

Scientists hope this knowledge will lead to help for people who suffer from chronic itching (for example, about 42% of patients who undergo kidney dialysis) by developing a drug that inhibits the same areas of the brain that scratching does.

## Eight Mysteries Of Life

Take a few moments to ponder some of these wonderful mysteries of life:

1. If swimming is so good for your figure, why are whales so fat?
2. What should you do if you see an endangered animal eating an endangered plant?
3. If Barbie is so popular, why do you have to buy her friends?
4. When cheese gets its picture taken, what does it say?
5. If it's true that we're here to help others, then what exactly are the others here for?
6. What is a free gift? Aren't all gifts free?
7. How come you never hear about *gruntled* employees?
8. Before the invention of drawing boards, what did people go back to?



## How To Break A Bad Habit

Are you an interrupter? If you are, you might want to rethink your decision to barge in on another's words the next time the urge strikes you. Why? In addition to generally being considered rude behavior, Elizabeth Gilbert, author of *Eat, Pray, Love*, says that when she interrupts someone, no matter how she tries to justify it, the truth is that her behavior is telling the other person that what she's saying is more important than what they're saying. When you get right down to it, such behavior says, "I'm more important than you."

If that's not the message you want to send to your loved ones, in the workplace, during a job interview, or during any interaction, the next time you're tempted to interrupt, stop and take a deep breath. Take another deep breath. Repeat as needed.

## Do You Know Your "nyms"?

The English language has its challenges – even if it's your native tongue. Here's a short refresher course in "nym" words, "nym" from the Greek *onoma*, meaning *a name*:

**Acronym:** a word formed from the initial letter or letters of a series of words such as NASA (National Aeronautics and Space Administration).

**Antonym:** a word opposite in meaning to another, e.g., *fast* and *slow*.

**Autoantonym:** a word that can take two (or more) opposite meanings; for example, *fast* means both *moving quickly* or *fixed firmly in place*.

**Capitonym:** a word that changes its meaning (and sometimes pronunciation) when it's capitalized: *march* and *March*.

**Heteronym:** words that have the same spelling, but different meaning and sometimes different pronunciation, such as *lead* (to conduct) and *lead* (a metal).

**Homonym:** words having the same sound and often the same spelling but different meanings: *quail* (to cower) and *quail* (a bird). Not to be confused with *homophones*, which are homonyms that have the same sound but different spelling and meaning (*to*, *too*, and *two*).

**Metonym:** a word that designates something by the name of something associated with it; e.g., *the Crown* referring to *the monarchy*.

**Synonym:** a word having the same or nearly the same meaning as another in the language, for example, *joyful*, *elated*, *glad*.

## Wrapped Vs. Unwrapped

If you're looking forward to enjoying some Valentine candy but you'd like to enjoy a bit less of it, here's something to consider.

A study presented at the American Heart Association Conference found that eating candy in wrappers might help us eat less, as opposed to eating unwrapped candies. Researchers found that people who ate candies and kept the wrappers in plain sight ate only about half as many as those who did not.

Lead study author Brian Wansink ([www.mindlesseating.org](http://www.mindlesseating.org)) says, "Having a visual reminder of how much you eat keeps you honest and eating less. Your stomach can't count, but your eyes can when they see the empty wrappers."

It also helps to keep the candy in a less convenient location rather than right at your elbow, Wansink says. Relocate the candy bowl five or 10 feet away so you have to get up and walk to it, rather than just reach for it.

## How To Help Your Child Learn

Asking your kids about their school day is a good idea. Why? Researchers who study how kids learn already knew that children learn best with their parents or a peer, but it wasn't clear whether this was because the children were getting feedback and help, or merely because they were explaining their solutions to someone. In a recent study, researchers had mothers simply listen to their children without providing any assistance.



They learned that it's really effective to get kids to explain things themselves instead of just telling them the answer. Explaining their reasoning – to a parent, peer, or other people they know – helps kids understand the problem and apply what they've learned to other situations.

## Caregiver Challenges

Are you responsible for the care of an elderly family member? If so, you know that being a caregiver can be mentally and emotionally challenging. The National Center on Elder Abuse estimates that one to two million older people have been injured, mistreated, or exploited by someone they depended on. And more unsettling, 75% to 95% of the abuse was committed by family members.

Elder abuse can arise as a continuation of a longstanding pattern of abuse within families. But more commonly, elder abuse occurs because of altered living arrangements and changes in the senior's health – and the transformation of family dynamics as a result. It's a complex matter and often misunderstood. The adjustments you have to make as a caregiver can be staggering. So how can you balance your own needs with those of the individual you care for?

**Look for resources to help support you.** Try to find a way of giving yourself a break. Adult daycare might be one solution, or find someone to come in a few hours every week to help with difficult tasks or allow you to get away for awhile.

**Consider residential care** if things are really getting out of hand and you need a respite. Though you may feel guilty, you need to look objectively at the situation. A good residential facility would probably be better than the compromised care you might give once you lose your ability to cope patiently with your elderly ward.

**Seek counseling** if you need help with personal problems that could be contributing to your stress as a caregiver. It may take time, but you can learn new patterns of relating to the person you care for. Ask your doctor for a reference. If you can't afford a private therapist, check with state and local mental health facilities which may offer free or sliding-scale-fee help.

**Be honest with yourself** about the situation at hand. Denying that you're overwhelmed can lead to serious problems – and possibly put someone's health or life in danger.

**Signs You May Need Help As A Caregiver:**

- You had a poor relationship with the individual prior to being the caregiver.
- You're curt and impatient with the individual.

- You view your new role as a burden.
- You feel burned out, stressed out, or depressed.
- You worry that you might become violent.

Check the government sections of your telephone directory for "Aging Services" or "Social Services" for organizations that assist the elderly. There are numerous online resources as well, such as [www.eldercarecanada.ca](http://www.eldercarecanada.ca) and [www.eldercare.gov](http://www.eldercare.gov).

## Are You A Library Lover?

February is Library Lovers' Month, and research shows that everyone loves libraries, but no one thinks about them very much. Here are six simple ways to love your library:

1. Honor a friend or relative's birthday by purchasing a book for the library.
2. Buy your library a subscription to a popular magazine.
3. Donate your used books to the Friends Of The Library book sale.
4. Volunteer your time by reading stories to children or helping with class visits.
5. Use your skills to help with programs and fundraising events.
6. Write to your city government and state legislators to urge them to invest in libraries as a vital community resource, one that will save substantial tax dollars in helping people of all ages to be more literate and productive.

## Have A Tactful Valentine's Day

When most people think of Valentine's Day, they probably aren't worried about appropriate etiquette for the office. But etiquette expert Lizzie Post of the Emily Post Institute says the subject deserves a little loving care. Her advice: Don't flaunt your plans – either before or after they've happened – when chatting with coworkers or friends.

Valentine's Day can make people who are not part of a couple feel bad, Post says. Don't even talk about your plans unless you're asked to. Try to use the day to celebrate compassion, she advises, to give a little attention to those who might not be feeling as fortunate as you do. While people are probably genuinely delighted about your happiness, being modest in what you share is the most thoughtful approach.

## Do You Need A Larger Home?

We're in a time of opportunity for upgrading to a larger or more luxurious home. Prices have become more affordable during the past three years and interest rates for mortgages are quite low. Additionally, move-up (or move-down) buyers may be eligible for a \$6500 tax credit if they purchase before the end of April.

Home prices in South King County have come down about 30% on average from their peak in 2006-2007. For example, a home that might have sold for \$500,000 in late 2006, can be purchased now for around \$375,000.

Meanwhile, interest rates have dropped from about 7% to about 5% for a thirty-year fixed-rate mortgage. A payment on a loan of \$300,000 has been reduced from \$1996 to \$1610 per month, a savings of \$386 per month.

The difference in affordability is more dramatic when you consider the effect of both a lower purchase price and lower interest rates.

Call me if you would like to explore the possibilities for your family.



## Example

This home sold new in late 2006 for \$474,500 and is now offered for \$349,950. The home, in Kent, is 3600 square feet and is loaded with upgrades including beautiful maple cabinets with granite countertops, stainless appliances, four bedrooms and four bathrooms, berber carpeting and dual water heaters. There is a large bonus room upstairs and an office/den downstairs. The fenced yard backs on to a greenbelt.

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