

## **Maintain Your Identity in a Relationship**

All of us dream of a perfect and ideal relationship that will stand the test of time. Perhaps we're in the midst of one right now showing great potential, but we mustn't forget to continue to take care of ourselves in the meantime.

It's unhealthy to only spend time around your partner and never be by yourself. Spending quality time by yourself periodically allows you to rest and renew, and continue to give your partner your full attention and presence. No matter how long a couple has been together, whether newly found lovers or married for half a century, this can still become an issue.

Spending every waking moment with your partner could lead to a feeling of being totally lost when you are left alone. Following are some ways to continue to nurture yourself so that you can offer your best when it is time to be a couple:

1. Remember that book you've been dying to read but haven't taken the time? Spend a night in and enjoy it on your own without any temptation to spend the time with your partner instead.
2. Go see a great chick flick that your partner wouldn't see with you. It's always a great chance to spend some time by yourself when there's something you've wanted to do but your partner didn't.
3. Spend some quality time with family that you haven't seen in a while. Sometimes it's easy to stop maintaining family relationships with the interest of new love, so ensure you continue strengthening these bonds as well.
4. Call up your friends and schedule a night out without your significant others. Let loose and go dancing or out on the town without worrying about how your partner sees you.
5. Take up a forgotten or neglected hobby, or play sports with a local league. You may want to do this especially if your partner doesn't like your favorite sport. Pick your selected hobby and do only that for an entire day.
6. Treat yourself to a bubble bath or a day at the spa. Renew your energy and confidence levels with a massage, pedicure or manicure, or even a facial treatment. Feeling great about yourself and being totally stress-free allows you to be a better partner in the relationship and more focused on their needs, too.
7. Take yourself shopping. Splurge on that sweater you've had your eye on for a while, or search for new home accessories to create a new look and feel to an old space you've grown tired of. If you choose, you can also purchase something for your partner while you're out.

8. Take yourself out to dinner. Alone. Go to that mega-expensive or trendy restaurant you've been dying to try, and order the biggest dessert they offer. Take a walk afterward and window shop or look for a new antique for your home collection.

Spending some quality time with yourself periodically is just as important as doing so with your partner. Taking care of your own needs will allow you to be more fully satisfied and able to contribute to a growing, healthy relationship.