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It's Not the Romance, It's the Cereal

~ Amy Cushing

It's 7 a.m. and the alarm is chiming on my iPod.

I reach for it with a sloppy hand and manage to find the device without knocking over my water glass. I silence the ringing, place the iPod back in its former home, roll back into bed and close my eyes. I want desperately to pull the covers over me and once again experience the warm slumber from which I woke, but I know life has other plans.

I stayed up too late once again, clutching on to my few hours of mommy freedom. I have to remind myself that midnight and mommyhood don't mix.

I stumble out of bed, do a few minutes of delicious stretches, and make my way toward the bathroom. Because I didn't let the ultimate coziness of my bed lull me back to sleep, I've bought myself a few minutes for a shower.

Five minutes later, my husband wakes and makes his way out of bed. He straightens the bedding and heads down the hall to wake our four-year-old son, who has recently adopted a teenager-like attitude toward mornings. Not that we mind, the extra hour of sleep is precious.

My husband nudges our little sleepy head from dreamland, picks out his clothes for the day and leads him downstairs where he gets the tired tike's breakfast together.

By the time I've finished my morning makeover 30 minutes later, my son is dressed and halfway through his breakfast. As I make my way downstairs with our freshly woken baby girl in tow, half of my morning job has already been done for me.

I am so thankful for that.

My husband has a demanding job—the kind that requires nights, weekends, travel, holidays—little time is his own. He works hard. But he still manages to find time to make my day, as a stay-at-home mom, a little easier.

It's little things like this that make me love him even more.

It's not like I didn't marry a romantic; he's all stars in that department, but it truly means something that he gives his time to me and our family, despite all the responsibilities he has as the sole breadwinner. It shows reverence, appreciation, and *love*.

Mother Teresa once said:

“What can you do to promote peace? Go home and love your family.”

Without knowing it, my husband is spreading world peace every day. To me, he's a savior.

I sometimes think people miss the essence of love. It isn't all about the romance, the courting, the sex, the charm—although that stuff is all good—what makes it work are the small, daily efforts that show your partner you care.

Maybe it's the coffee already brewed, or the shirt already pressed or, as it is for me, the sleepy little boy dressed, fed and ready for preschool. It's those little things that make the difference.

With the most legendary of love days just around the corner, maybe take a moment to consider the gratitude for your relationships. It's not just about the big holidays with the flowers, expensive dinners, and exquisite chocolates (although, those are nice...very, very nice...and highly recommended for extra bonus points).

It's also about making time for those you love. Because, ultimately, all your partner, your children, your family really want is time with you. They want to know you see them, hear them, and understand what their days entail. They want to know you pay attention.

They want to know you're present.

So, make breakfast for your wife. Spend a Sunday afternoon rooting on your husband's favorite team. Play Candyland with your daughter. Let your son tell you a silly story, even if it takes 45 minutes.

With only an hour or less of your time, and maybe some knowledge on how to make a decent omelet, you've created moments that will foster a lifetime of love.

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