



Showing Appreciation to Those You Love with Something Homemade

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While we're all familiar with the phrase *"It's the thought that counts,"* nothing says it more than a homemade gift from a loved one. After all, anyone can buy something from a store.

Where the real trick comes in is actually taking the time to think up a special gift, gathering the supplies, and crafting it out of your own time, energy and talents.

Small, thoughtful gifts, while usually less flashy than diamonds, are often cherished more than the most precious of gems.

Here are 10 of the top ways to show appreciation to your loved one with something homemade:

1. **Bake something.** Call up Grandma and get that delicious red velvet cake recipe you've wanted for so long. Besides, what could be more romantic than fighting over who gets to lick the bowl and the spoon?
 - Not only will it give you a chance to catch up with Granny, but it will also show your loved ones that you care enough to take some time out of your busy schedule to whip up some fantastic eats.
2. **Create a card.** Remember making cards in 5th grade? Grab a sheet of construction paper, some Popsicle sticks, and a few of those fancy hole-punchers, and go to town. Who knows, maybe you'll uncover a hidden talent!
3. **Cook a homemade dinner.** There are thousands of great recipes online for dinners that will *wow* any loved one. Even if you aren't a great chef and have some trouble when it comes to pots, pans, and open flames, just go with something simple.

4. **Make a coupon book.** This is always a hit with your partner. Fill the coupon book with massages, a night away from the kids, or even a week of taking care of the other person's chores. Make it personal, honor the coupons without complaining, and don't put an expiration date on them.
5. **Make a slide show.** Whip out your old pictures and make a slide show from "*then till now*." Set it to your favorite music and let it scroll through some of the highlights of your relationship.
 - If it's for your partner, remember what it was like before kids, when the kids left the house, before grandkids or whatever stage of life you want to remember. Just sit back in each other's arms and let the pictures and music envelope the both of you for a while.
6. **Recreate your first date.** If you went to a fancy restaurant, recreate the experience at home. Dim the lights, put on the same music, and fix the same meal. If you drove somewhere, pack a picnic style dinner, go back, and enjoy the experience all over again.
 - Whatever you did that first time, do it again and remember where you began and how far you've come.
7. **Make chocolate covered fruit.** Pick a fruit. Dip it in chocolate. Allow it to cool. Indulge. Simple, right?
8. **Make homemade jewelry.** Whether it's a necklace made from triangle shaped pieces of wallpaper wrapped into bead shapes, or rings made from polished stones, handmade jewelry is always a hit with family and friends.
9. **Make a CD.** Remember mixed tapes when you were a teenager? Technology has advanced a bit since then, so why not create a CD that holds all the songs that have meant something to you and your friends since you've known each other.
 - It will remind you of old times and bring back memories of the past. These are great as gentle reminders of why you love them so much.
10. **Create a scavenger hunt for your partner.** Start with a trail of rose petals from the front door to a location of your choice. From there use a post-it-note to give them a second clue. The next one can be written on the inside of a chocolate wrapper.

- Send them all over town if you must and have them meet you somewhere special.

There are thousands of things you can do to show appreciation to those you love. ***The best thing to remember is to keep it from the heart.*** No matter what you make, or how well you do it, your loved ones will appreciate it because it's coming from you.

Follow some of these tips and you'll be well on your way to coming up with your own ideas for creating cherished homemade gifts.