

Kimberly Blaker
P.O. Box 5585
Plymouth, MI 48170
(734) 397-3510
info@KimberlyBlaker.com
www.KimberlyBlaker.com

Word Count 1,325
Copyright 2001 by Kimberly Blaker

"A Weekend of Freedom"

Weekend Getaways for Re-igniting the Spark

By Kimberly Blaker

Parenting can put a real damper on marriage. The daily stresses of raising children often make finding the time and energy for each other seem an uphill battle. This not only affects your relationship with your partner or spouse, but also can affect the way you relate to your children.

Moreover, grown kids take into their own marriages what they witness in their youth. Therefore, a healthy relationship between parents is essential.

Sometimes, however, the only way to re-ignite the spark is by getting away from it all—including the kids. This will not only improve your relationship with your partner, but also can reenergize parents and bring a fresh outlook to the task of parenting. At the same time, for children the break can bring about a new respect and appreciation for their parents, alleviate conflict, and improve cooperation at home.

A WEEKEND CAREGIVER

The biggest hindrance to getting away can be finding suitable arrangements for the kids. The options may be few, but there are more than we often realize.

Relatives are frequently the best source, and even if they don't live close by can be a feasible choice.

If your parents live a distance away, discuss leaving the kids with them for a night or two the next time you visit. This also benefits grandparents and grandchildren who don't see each other often by allowing them special time together.

Ask a friend or neighbor with kids that are similar in age to do a weekend exchange. It might be just the opportunity they've been hoping for.

Talk with the parents of one of your child's friends. Suggest planning future weekend sleepovers well in advance so each of you can plan for and make the most of your weekend of freedom.

Ask a trustworthy young adult to spend the weekend at your home caring for the kids and earning some extra cash. Offer a reasonable flat fee for the weekend care up front to avoid misunderstandings.

Offer a fun filled week or weekend away at summer camp to your kids—and a good time away for the two of you! Look for a camp that suits their interests, and make the most of their time away.

GREAT ESCAPE WEEKENDS

It doesn't matter where you live. You're can find plenty of great escapes within half a day's drive or less. If you don't mind flying for a brief stay, your choices are unlimited. Try one of these ideas for the perfect getaway.

A Dude Ranch – Spend a weekend cowboy style at one of the many dude ranches offering accommodations around the country. You'll enjoy horseback riding, wagon

rides, hiking, fishing, cowboy cookouts, dancing, relaxing in a hot tub, and lots of western charm.

Golf Getaway - Get ready for a weekend of relaxing fun in the sun. Choose from one of many weekend golf packages or create your own by making accommodations near some of the courses you've been dying to play.

Bed and Breakfast – Look for a bed and breakfast in a quaint town with neat little shops, historical spots, fountain parks, and plenty of old-time charm. While you're away, take a stroll in a historical neighborhood, window-shop, have café lunches, try some old-fashioned ice cream, take riverfront walks, and visit local historical sites.

A Trip Down Memory Lane – Remember those carefree days before the kids came along? Make your reservations at a motel in the area that you lived while you dated or where you got married. Then spend the weekend revisiting the past. Eat at the first restaurant you went to together and visit parks you once enjoyed. Then, reenact some of your favorite dates by heading to the local drive-in or movie theatre, bowling alley, or nightclubs.

Lover's Lane Delight – Make accommodations that include an in-room Jacuzzi then dedicate your first evening away to a mini-shopping spree at Victoria's Secret or Frederick's of Hollywood. Choose items for each other to try on, and learn what each of you likes and dislikes. Be sure to purchase something you each found appealing on your partner. Then spend a cozy weekend in the room catching up on movies, having breakfast in bed, and savoring each other. Don't forget to bring along fragranced candles, a portable stereo, your favorite music, and other goodies for your weekend delight.

Go in Class – Select a top-notch motel with a luxurious room that offers fine dining. Don’t forget to reserve tickets to an area play, musical, or event, and bring along your best garb.

Mystery Weekend –Puzzle solvers will love a mystery weekend adventure. Search online or call your local travel agent for upcoming mystery events. But, be prepared. If you’re not the murderer, you could wind up the victim yourself.

Country Adventure –Reserve a log cabin at a park campground and delight in a scenic getaway. Take a country pedal, hike on wooded trails, picnic along riverbanks, and enjoy other relaxing outdoor recreation.

Amusement Park Fun – You’re never too old to play. Make your reservation at an amusement park resort. Then come and go as you please. Head up to your room for a brief interlude when you’re ready for a break from the coasters or take in a show while you gear up for the next round of fun.

Music Lover’s Weekend – Purchase concert tickets then plan a weekend of musical merriment. Reserve a room near the concert hall. Then hitch a cab for a guaranteed designated driver.

Winter Resort – If you like the cold, make your reservation at a winter resort. Then hit the ski slopes or cross-country trails, toboggan, slip on your ice-skates, or try other winter recreational activities. When you’re ready to warm up, enjoy hot cocoa by a roasting fire.

Festival Fun – Contact your visitor’s bureau or chamber of commerce to find out about upcoming festivals. Whatever your tastes, there are certain to be plenty that’ll suit your fancy to keep you busy the weekend through.

Camping and Canoeing – Take pleasure in a weekend of water play, sunshine, and sleeping under the stars. Look for a canoe rental facility that offers riverbank camping and overnight trips.

Second Honeymoon – Make a plan to renew your vows and take a second honeymoon. Write your own promise, and bring along a token of your appreciation for each other. This will serve as a reminder down the road of the strength of your commitment. And don't forget the honeymoon suite.

Make it a surprise – Pull this one off and you'll have your partner eating out of your hand. Concoct a story about going to dinner, to an out-of-town furniture store that you've been dying to visit, or whatever it takes to get your partner on the road with you. When you reach your destination, act confused, and explain that you got your directions wrong. Pull into a motel (conveniently where you've already made reservations), and then tell your partner you'll run in and ask for directions. Once you've checked in, see how far you can pull your partner along before he discovers the surprise. (My husband was actually in the room before he figured out what was going on!)

WEEKEND TIPS

Do your research and plan your weekend so it isn't over before you get started.

Discuss your expectations with your partner beforehand so you don't arrive with different ideas that will lead to disappointment. Come to a mutual agreement that meets both of your needs so you'll both come home feeling renewed.

Discuss costs and spending in advance to avoid arguments that could ruin the weekend.

Leave your cell phone or pager at home to avoid unnecessary interruptions.

Give the phone number of where you’ll be staying to the sitter, and remind the kids that it’s only for emergency calls.

Finally, keep in mind that some things won’t go as planned. Try to take it in stride and be flexible. Sometimes the biggest blunders of the weekend can make for the most memorable of times.

The End

PULL QUOTE: Offer a fun filled week or weekend away at summer camp to your kids—and a good time away for the two of you!

PULL QUOTE: Pull this one off and you’ll have your partner eating out of your hand.

SIDEBAR IDEAS OR WAYS TO LOCALIZE: List accommodations in your region that fit some of the above themes.

Kimberly Blaker is an author and freelance writer. Her articles have appeared in more than 120 magazine throughout the United States and Canada.

NOTICE: PUBLICATION OF THIS ARTICLE WITHOUT PRIOR CONSENT CONSTITUTES COPYRIGHT INFRINGEMENT. RECEIPT OF THIS MANUSCRIPT DOES NOT IMPLY CONSENT TO PUBLISH. IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO PUBLISH THIS ARTICLE, CONTACT KIMBERLY BLAKER, ABOVE. Fees for publication are based upon article length, type of publication, and area of distribution. Thank you for considering this article!

