

2. Couples: Go on the offensive.

"Those in a relationship, tell yourself how fortunate you are. Don't take it for granted. Do something about it. I don't mean buy a gift. Think what you could do that would really please the other person.

"You have a moment on the airplane. As you are reading this, something not connected with the advancement of your career, make it a moment of decision. Say to yourself, 'We ought to go to that little restaurant.' Make a reservation. [But remember that] restaurants are open late at night. You don't have to go to the early-bird dinner. Take a bubble bath, sip a glass of wine, have good sex and then go out for dinner."

3. Washingtonians: Skip the power trip.

"In Washington, take all of your ambitions and pressures and make a package and put it outside your bedroom door—not in the hallway to get stolen—it will be there the next day. Say to yourself, 'Yes, there's pressure, but look how fortunate I am to be a part of it.'"

4. New Yorkers: Strive for balance.

"When one of the couple is very successful and satisfied with their life, it is a big test for the relationship. It's too easy

to say, 'Rejoice in the success of your wife or your husband.' It doesn't work. I have to find myself to be satisfied intellectually and emotionally, and then it will happen sexually. It's important not to sabotage the relationship. If she has go out to social functions, she has to say, 'It's our anniversary and I'm not going to go tonight,' or make a plan for the next evening. We must be careful not to let things slide because of being consumed."

5. Bostonians: Computers off!

"Computers can be very damaging. Shut off your computer. Pretend it's not functioning, that it has a virus. In intelligent households, either he or she sits in front of a computer until they are too tired to make love."

6. Everyone: Into the kitchen!

"Use your imagination. Make believe you are actually taking a bubble bath in chocolate pudding. Take two washcloths that you've already sewn together on three sides like a European mitt. Then wash each other and go on the kitchen floor, imagine the chocolate mousse and have good sex. Of course, make sure there are no children or in-laws at home. Yes, the kitchen floor—you haven't made love there before, have you? And if the tiled floor is too cold, put a rug under you."

—KAREN FELD

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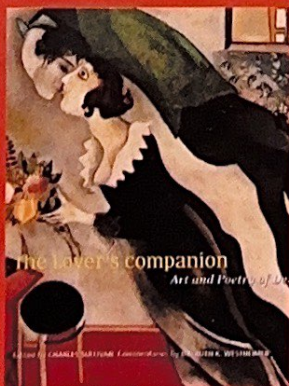
COVER ILLUSTRATION BY MARCOS CHIN

DR. RUTH'S READS

Not surprisingly, Dr. Ruth Westheimer also recommends her own latest book as a Valentine aid. *The Lover's Companion: Art and Poetry of Desire*, co-created with Charles Sullivan (\$29.95, Harry N. Abrams Inc.) is a coffee-table volume of layouts combining a poem, a sensual work of art and a bit of commentary about love, relationships or sex from Westheimer. More Sister Wendy than Madonna, Dr. Ruth as an art critic leads browsers in a leisurely meditation on what drives and sustains intimate relationships. The art picks are appealing, never scandalous, sometimes humorous—reaching from contemporary artists like Christo and Cindy Sherman back to 16th-century

Florentine Agnolo Bronzino and a pre-Christian Greek vase painter. On a page including Roy Lichtenstein's *We Rose*

Up Slowly and John Donne's poem "The Bait," Westheimer shares these thoughts:



"Was there ever a person more willing to be trapped than someone who has fallen in love? No matter how many times our hearts may have been broken, no matter how dangerous those shoals of love may be, we never seem to be able to stop ourselves from diving right in when the opportunity

presents itself. If you always hold yourself back, then you'll never experience what love has to offer."—BRITTA WALLER