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## Flowers, Trust Me

*This is Episode number 67 of Stay Happily Married, "Flowers, Trust Me."*

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Lee Rosen: I'm Lee Rosen. I'm your host today. Welcome to the show. I'm here by telephone with Ben Buie and Sharon Miller of Lake Boone Florist in Raleigh, North Carolina. Ben and Sharon, welcome to the show.

Ben Buie: Hello.

Sharon Miller: Hello.

Lee Rosen: Glad you could both join me today. You know, flowers are a -- they've always been associated with love and romance and I wanted to talk -- I think a lot of us think about flowers when we're dating and we think about them on certain special occasions. But we never really figure out what's going on in the world of flowers.

And I know from personal experience that flowers in my marriage -- in a way it feels a little -- it's kind of silly to say it but they make a big difference. I mean, they have had a big impact on my relationship at various times. And I wanted to talk that through with you guys because you're on the front lines with the flowers and I think you can give us a lot of advice and information that might help us to use flowers in the way that is most helpful and most effective.

Before we even jump into that, how long have you both been in the flower business?

- Ben Buie: I've been in the flower business for three to four years.
- Lee Rosen: And how about you, Sharon?
- Sharon Miller: Same here.
- Lee Rosen: And so you -- and I assume you have seen a lot of different situations come up where flowers have made a big difference. And I know a lot of them aren't romantic. I mean, gosh, at the other end of the spectrum sometimes you're dealing with flowers and, say, funerals. But is romance a big part of your business?
- Sharon Miller: Absolutely. Definitely.
- Lee Rosen: yeah. Do you find that people are using flowers mostly for special occasions? Or how does it really work out in most of those sort of romantic uses of flowers?
- Ben Buie: Well, a lot of people use flowers just -- it's like almost just because. They get them for all occasions.
- Lee Rosen: No special event?
- Ben Buie: No special occasion because everyone loves flowers.
- Lee Rosen: Doesn't that --
- Sharon Miller: Sometimes that's even more romantic if you don't have a special occasion. The "just because" flowers seem to be a big hit.
- Lee Rosen: It almost seems like that would have more of an impact. Because people sort of -- like, on Valentine's Day I think a lot of people expect flowers.
- Ben Buie: True.
- Lee Rosen: Yeah. So you get the double impact. You both sent the flowers and you did it when they least expected it. But do you feel like people also feel like they have to do it and they do do it for anniversaries and birthdays and that sort of thing?
- Sharon Miller: Sometimes they do. We get those phone calls where -- well, we get the last minute phone calls in the morning time, "I forget it was her birthday today. Could you send something for us?" And we do that. But like I said, a lot of times they get a greater impact if it's just because.

- Lee Rosen: Yeah. Just because. I feel -- am I alone -- well, I guess let me ask you this. I'm a guy and I wonder, is it like a gender thing that I know nothing about what to send or is that -- do men and women struggle with what is the right thing to do?
- Sharon Miller: I find that it is generally the men that have the harder time. Women already have a notion of what they want to send. But the men, when they call we try to help them out by asking them questions, her favorite flowers, favorite colors, what the occasion is, what kind of personality are you trying to send for. And that will help a great deal.
- Lee Rosen: Do most of us call up -- most guys, anyway -- call up and say, "I want to send roses"? Is that like the only flower that we've ever heard of?
- Ben Buie: I wouldn't say that at all.
- Lee Rosen: I'm the only one that things that. The other guys all went to Flowers 101.
- Sharon Miller: Don't feel bad.
- Lee Rosen: But you do get guys that know what they're doing?
- Ben Buie: Oh, yes. And it also helps to have a good designer.
- Lee Rosen: It does. Yeah. Well, I love the questions you were asking about. What is the person like and what are their favorite colors and all that? So when you get that data, that input, you start getting ideas about what would be the right thing to send, huh?
- Ben Buie: Oh, most definitely. It helps me a lot in designing for that person, the detail and stuff.
- Lee Rosen: How does price play into all of that? And in today's market what should we be spending? Fill me in on where we stand from a money standpoint on flowers.
- Ben Buie: Well, our prices stand basically -- we have a \$35 minimum for delivery and it's a \$10 delivery fee. But usually they don't mind as long as we do the flowers.
- Lee Rosen: Now, if I call you up and I want to do the minimum am I getting, like, two daisies in a cup or something or no?

Ben Buie: No, you're getting an average size arrangement. It's a considerable amount of -- I would say it's an average arrangement.

Lee Rosen: Right. Now, what if I want to blow her away? What have I got to spend?

Ben Buie: Basically, if you want to blow her away you're going to have to go at least \$75 to \$100.

Lee Rosen: and then you're really going to get something people are going to say "wow."

Sharon Miller: You have to remember --

Ben Buie: Yeah. And it all depends on the designer too.

Sharon Miller: And we've got the best. One thing to keep in mind about that also is that with the market being what it is now we rely heavily on return customers. So we don't want to send anything out the door that'll -- we don't want to have people spend money for something on that one time and have it go out the door and not have them be satisfied. We need them to come back and to know that we're going to do a good job for them and to pass that on. So whatever they spend here, they're going to get a lot of bang for their buck.

Lee Rosen: Right. Do you find that flowers have a bigger impact if you have a professional like you deliver them? Or are we better off coming in, picking it up and taking it to our spouse?

Ben Buie: I think the personal impact of that comes with most guys -- most people, period, will send flowers but the most personal you can get with it, the better off you are. Say such as just being able to do a handwritten card along with the flowers. Send a letter with the flowers and bring it in; we'll attach it. That just lets the person know that you're really thinking of them and that you just didn't call up and order some flowers.

Lee Rosen: Right. Right.

Ben Buie: Put a little bit more time into it.

Lee Rosen: Now, you mentioned the card. What do most guys write on the card?

Ben Buie: "I love you."

Lee Rosen: That sort of standard "I love you."

Ben Buie: "Thinking of you." Yeah.

Lee Rosen: Do women get more creative on the cards?

Ben Buie: Oh, yes. Women usually -- they will fill a page.

Lee Rosen: You'll have to get the big cards.

Ben Buie: They know exactly what they want. Women know exactly what they want when it comes to ordering flowers usually.

Lee Rosen: That's just fascinating to me. Now, do you see a lot of women sending their husbands flowers?

Ben Buie: Oh, yes.

Lee Rosen: But that's not --

Ben Buie: I got a few orders today from Father's Day.

Lee Rosen: Oh, Father's Day. Okay. It's not even, though. I would assume --

Ben Buie: Oh, it's definitely not even.

Lee Rosen: -- many more men sending flowers to women, right?

Ben Buie: Definitely.

Lee Rosen: Okay. But back to my pick up or delivery, would you say it has more impact if we have you guys deliver it or if we bring it ourselves? You think it's more if we bring it ourselves?

Sharon Miller: That just depends on -- a lot of times time will be the issue. If it's something that you can do yourself, that's great. If you can take it to the office, that's fantastic. But we all have to work and so sometimes it's better just to have it delivered. And it's just all a personal thing.

Lee Rosen: Right. Now, that leads me to another thing about the office. I watch in my office and I watch on Valentine's Day, which seems to be the - - a ton of flowers coming in here. It seems like delivering it to the office where all of her co-workers and friends can see it has a much bigger impact than having it delivered to home.

Sharon Miller: Oh, yeah.

Lee Rosen: It does.

Ben Buie: Definitely.

Lee Rosen: Okay.

Ben Buie: Most definitely.

Lee Rosen: It does. All right.

Ben Buie: The brag factor.

Lee Rosen: Right. Right. Okay. But that's good because if you're going to do this, you want to do it right. So if we're looking for absolute maximum impact, you say do it for no special reason just at a random time and have it delivered to the office. That is going to score you the biggest home run.

What about having flowers delivered to the restaurant where you're going to have, say, the anniversary dinner? Do people ever do that?

Sharon Miller: Oh, yes. They do that quite often, in fact.

Lee Rosen: So she sits down at the reserved table and, boom, there is the special arrangement sitting there waiting on her.

Sharon Miller: Oh, yeah.

Lee Rosen: And you would say that has a pretty big bang?

Ben Buie: I would say it has a big impact also when your table is the only table with the designed arrangement on it.

Lee Rosen: Right.

Sharon Miller: That'll definitely mark up some points because that shows that you went -- you did that extra effort to make sure that those flowers were there and waiting and, yes, that'll score a lot of points right there.

Lee Rosen: We are definitely going to keep some people married today. Now, I walk into a florist's store today and when I come in now -- it used to be when I would walk into a florist there was flowers. Now there's other stuff. There's -- I don't know; it's been a while. But I think everything from balloons to stuffed animals to plants. I mean, it's really taken on a -- in the last I guess decade it's really expanded. Do you need to send balloons along with your flowers, or what are people doing today?

Sharon Miller: Well, that just depends on the personality of the person receiving them. We have some that if it's a more youthful recipient or if it's somebody who likes whimsy, balloons are a lot of fun. But if it's somebody who's more into the elegant design, balloons may not be the best option. But I think that's what it is; it's a matter of choices, being able to decide what you want instead of being solely restricted to just flowers.

Lee Rosen: Right. Do you see a significant difference between what gets sent to men and what gets sent to women? Are the flowers very different?

Ben Buie: I think it's a difference in color mostly. Men get as many roses probably sent to them as women do but we tend to work with more greens and whites with men.

Lee Rosen: Okay. Makes sense.

Ben Buie: Greens, whites, browns.

Lee Rosen: Right. So now if I call a florist, and let's say I'm a guy that just doesn't do this very often, what do I need to be prepared to -- I mean, obviously I need to have my credit card, right? I assume now that's how all this business is done. But what do I need to be prepared to tell a florist when I want to send flowers to my wife for just a nothing special day, just wanted to do something nice?

Ben Buie: I would say pick a florist that you can depend on in which you trust the designer a lot and become friends with that designer so that he knows what you're looking for when you call. And you can just basically give him a price range and that leaves that designer open to do -- to really be a designer and give you what you need to satisfy your significant other.

Lee Rosen: Okay. Any other tips for the amateur orderer?

Sharon Miller: Well, like we covered before, favorite color is handy. Maybe -- even if we're doing school colors -- we've done that quite a bit if they went to a certain college and we want to deal with that, that would be great. If they're into gardening we have a lot of plants in the store that are living plants that can be planted outside. If they are more into like the whimsy or the elegant, just use as many descriptive words as possible to help our designer then do the best work possible to keep you coming back.

Lee Rosen: Makes sense. Yep. Well, you want to have a long-term relationship and so do all of us.

Sharon Miller: Yes.

Lee Rosen: So everybody's on the same page. Have you guys had any interesting experiences when you're delivering flowers to a spouse that doesn't expect it?

Ben Buie: Well, we have a delivery person so we really don't leave the office much for deliveries. But we asked him about this and he said that he had one interesting event happen a couple years ago where he had someone come to the door -- answer the door -- in revealing clothes of some sort.

Sharon Miller: Very scantily dressed.

Lee Rosen: Right.

Sharon Miller: For having somebody come to the door and --

Lee Rosen: That keeps it interesting.

Sharon Miller: He said that he has also had occasions where there has been some kind of spat going on and hence the reason for the flowers and the wife has just refused them, period.

Lee Rosen: "I don't want those flowers." It didn't work in that instance.

Sharon Miller: Right. Right.

Ben Buie: That's true.

Sharon Miller: A little bit of a backfire.

Lee Rosen: Right. Well, I guess that can happen if things have already gone too far.

Well, Ben and Sharon, I really appreciate you filling us in. For you it's old hat but for a lot of us it really does feel a little bit like we're stepping into a land of -- we're strangers in a strange land when we call a florist or come into one of your stores. So thank you so much for filling us in on how all of this works. I appreciate it.

Sharon Miller: It was our pleasure.

Lee Rosen: Well, I hope that you have learned something that will help you to do something special for your spouse and make your marriage work a little bit better. And it does sound like a great idea to just -- maybe



you ought to just get on the phone right now, call the florist and place an order for no reason at all. It does sound like a good idea and it certainly can't hurt.

Ben and Sharon are at Lake Boone Florist. They have a website at [LakeBooneFlorist.com](http://LakeBooneFlorist.com). I'm going to put a link to that in the show notes. You can also give them a call at (800) 777-6293. Their website is very interesting. They have a dictionary of flowers and that's really I think helpful because I don't know which flowers are which and what they're called or anything like that. And I think if you are wanting to learn about it, that is a great place to start.

And I appreciate you joining us today. This is I think a little bit of a different show for us but I think you'll be able to put it to work and make it work in your relationship. If you have feedback about this show or any of your shows, we love to hear from you. We love to hear your comments. Give us a call at our comment line at (919) 256-3083 or shoot us an e-mail at [comments@stayhappilymarried.com](mailto:comments@stayhappilymarried.com), or post a comment right on the site at [StayHappilyMarried.com](http://StayHappilyMarried.com).

I'm Lee Rosen. Until next time, stay happily married.

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