



THE MAGAZINE FOR GEOCACHERS

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# GEOCACHER

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*(with a little  
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## WHAT I'D DO FOR A SMILEY



# Why Geocachers Make Great Mates (...and sometimes don't)

by Paul Friesen (a muggle) in collaboration with Doug Macrae (*RetiredGuy*)

**T** We had just landed early morning in Johannesburg after 18 hours in transit from Boston and were looking forward to our safari across southern Africa. Most sane people would check into their hotel for some rest after such a grueling trip, but not when we are travelling with Doug, our host. We were off and running to catch a flight from Johannesburg to Lesotho. Google it; it's a real country.

When we missed our flight by two minutes and no other flights could get us to Lesotho and back that day, I thought, "OK, we'll just spend a relaxing afternoon at the pool." But Doug, was not going to give up so easily. He had already pulled out his iPhone and was madly typing away. I looked over his shoulder and watched as he jumped from app to app. Google Maps, Geocaching, Avis, Email, Text, and Calendar. What was he up to?

He occasionally made comments as he worked his iPhone.

"A round-trip drive to Lesotho would be 16 hours."

"Let me cancel the guide I had booked in Lesotho"

"Dinner's here in Johannesburg at 7:30."

"Avis has cars"

"How would you like to see the oldest mine in the world?"

We apprehensively said, "We're game for anything."

"Just told my wife that we changed from Lesotho to Swaziland"

So rather than flying off to Lesotho, we rented a car and off we went to

Swaziland, a "relaxing" 3 ½ hour car ride – one way.

Once in the car, Doug began explaining the new plan. We were driving to Swaziland. Once we got there, we would clear immigration, and then it would be a very short drive to an iron mine that dated back to 41,000 B.C. And out of his backpack, he magically

produced printed copies of the two geocaches that were at the iron mine which provided reading material for our trip. As we drove, we learned about Swaziland, what immigrations would be like, ancient mining of iron, the geology of Swaziland, and other miscellaneous pieces of information.

Arriving at the border, we went inside the building, filled out forms, had our passports stamped and hopped back into our rental. As we drove to the gate that would allow us to enter Swaziland,

the officer told us that we had to go back into the building. All we had done so far was to leave South Africa; We still had to go through Swaziland's immigrations and customs. More forms and more stamping of our passports and we finally crossed into Swaziland.

Up the mountainside we went following a dirt road and the iPhone's GPS. We saw no people as we drove but we were closely being watched by the vervet monkeys we would see along the side of the road. The skies were darkening as rain clouds moved in but we were too busy taking in the beauty of our surroundings to pay much attention. As we got within several miles of our destination, the phone switched to the dreaded "no service," but we continued up. Minutes later we turned into an empty dirt parking lot where there was a small building; that was the mine's museum, dark and locked.

As the skies opened, Doug pulled out his Garmin and we saw that the two geocaches were still 0.7 miles away with the compass pointing us directly over a cliff, across a canyon, and then up a rugged mountainside.

My wife and I reminded ourselves that Doug had arranged for his wife to spend the day relaxing at the spa and pool back in Johannesburg. She had opted out of this adventure. And to be fair, he offered this to us too.

*Up the mountainside we went following a dirt road and the iPhone's GPS. We saw no people as we drove but we were closely being watched by the vervet monkeys we would see along the side of the road.*

Paul & Virginia climbing to the oldest cache in South Africa



As we were sitting in the car trying to formulate a plan, the museum's caretaker showed up and offered to open the museum for us. We told him that we wanted to get across the canyon to the actual iron mine, that we were on a treasure hunt called geocaching, and that we needed help. He smiled and said, "Yes, I know of the geocache. I will take you there. It is around the canyon, up a road to the trail and then up the trail to the cache site."

The rain had stopped, the sun was coming out, and so off we went on a fascinating and scenic hike overlooking the canyon. Thirty minutes later, Doug was beaming as he held up a duct tape wrapped Tylenol bottle while triumphantly announcing "Geocaching country #75: Swaziland!"

Finally settling into our rooms that night after our dinner back in Johannesburg, the thought of a long night's sleep and late breakfast would have seemed like a dream come true. But over dinner, Doug informed us of a 7:30 a.m. geocaching Dönerstag breakfast event he had arranged. I guess that adventures with Doug will never end.

## The Culture of Geocaching

When I look back at our first days in Africa, I ask myself what would possess a man to forfeit a relaxing day by the pool, a good night's sleep, and a leisurely late breakfast and instead choose a dash through an airport, an expensive flight to an obscure country, a replacement seven-hour drive in a rental car to a different obscure country, a hike potentially in heavy rain, all to find a piece of paper in a Tylenol bottle? Yes – geocaching.

Back in Johannesburg at the Dönerstag geocaching event, I got to meet a South African geocacher and talk to him about his love of geocaching. We were halfway around the world and yet he was strikingly familiar.

He reminded me of the many geocachers that I had met. He had gotten up at 4:30 a.m. to drive to a breakfast event to meet other geocachers, trade travel bugs and geocoins, and obtain a coveted "Dönerstag" souvenir. Like most of the geocachers I've met over the years, he was focused, determined, persistent and passionate.

Being an observer of geocaching, I have been intrigued by the geocaching culture. There are wonderful aspects to geocaching which most geocachers seem to have in common. Here are some of the most common traits that I see.

## Focus and Passion

"Have you tried for that 5/5 yet?" "How many states do you have?" "I know it's not about the numbers but how many have you found?" "Did you get FTF?" "How long is your streak?" "Will you get the souvenir this weekend?"

One of the things that geocachers seem to have in common is a desire, almost obsession, to take their hobby to the next level. Not a single cacher that I have met seems ready to rest on his laurels. I have yet to meet a geocacher that says, "I found one and I am satisfied."

There seems to be an unrelenting desire to "do more" and "be better."

There are a wide range of goals and experiences that capture geocachers. For one it might be to have at least one geocache in every county of their state, another might be to

have one in every state, another might be purely about the numbers, and another might be entirely into puzzle caches. The means and abilities of each geocacher may vary but what most seem to have in common is a focus and passion to achieve personal goals.

## Studiousness and Follow Through

As we were driving through Botswana on our way to Namibia I saw Doug looking over pages of information he had gleaned from the internet in preparing to find his targeted cache in this new country. He even had chosen a backup cache, just in case. Page after page described the history of the country, the geography of Namibia, how best to travel to and in Namibia, other

cacher's notes about the best border crossing, etc. He had even noted that if we needed to grab a roadside cache, many African countries have laws stating that you must wear a safety vest if you hop out of your car along the side of the road. Doug

had his bright orange safety vest!

By email, he had interviewed several different guides for our trip and even had arranged for a lunch of local Namibian cuisine. He knew that everyone would accept our U.S. dollars or our South African Rands. Doug had become a student of Namibia and of the cache we were heading to find. His preparedness paid off. Much went exactly as planned. And when it didn't, he appeared ready for that too.

Geocachers are amazing planners. They often will go to great lengths prior

to going for the cache to increase their chances of success. Then, they follow through with their plan, with success the likely outcome.

## Creativity

At the Dönerstag breakfast in Johannesburg, one cacher brought a binder with countless geocoins that he had collected over the years. Each was creatively designed by another geocacher as his artistic calling card. Doug, as the inventor of Ms. Pac-Man, designed a commemorative Ms. Pac-Man geocoin that he places around the world as he travels. He has also decorated the outside of his laptop with a skin cover that maps out many of his geocaching accomplishments.

I have been captivated by the creativity of some of the caches Doug has told me about. In Germany, Doug and his wife came across a cache that had large batteries powering a diorama with lights and music when you opened the lid. Some have been so challenging that MacGyver would have had problems solving. I am amazed just thinking of the hours spent by the cache owners designing and building the caches.

When you have a passion for something it, is amazing how creative you can become. For those "less creative", they often find great designs from elsewhere to use or commission someone to assist them in creating an item of lasting memory.



*In Germany, Doug and his wife came across a cache that had large batteries powering a diorama with lights and music when you opened the lid.*

## Discovered While Geocaching



Tim Stewart (*The Weasel*) from Marion, IA, is standing by a statue of The Fonz in Milwaukee, Wisconsin.  
– Submitted by Steve 'n' Nancy



## Sacrifice

Geocachers put their heart into their hobby. Most people have a hobby that they are passionate about but I rarely see the level of devotion and sacrifice that I see in geocaching.

To log one more cache and add Swaziland to his geocaching countries, Doug sacrificed time, sleep, expense, and comfort to reach his goal of another geocaching country.

I have heard many stories of sacrifices made in order to achieve the goal of "the oldest cache in an area," "a cache in a new state," "a cache in a new country," "a First To Find," "another day in a streak," "a special souvenir", etc. Sacrifices that I have seen include sixteen hours of driving in a day, long hikes through swamps, great expense purchasing the proper gear, and alarm clocks set to 3:00am.

Many of these geocachers also hide caches and host events. Hours and dollars are put into intricate camouflage, well-executed themes, complex puzzles, interesting events, and amazing hides. Unlike many hobbies, the people that are enjoying finding geocaches are the same as the ones creating new caches for others. The hiding and maintaining a cache is done solely for the benefit of others at quite a sacrifice to the cache owner.

## Persistence

When we landed in Johannesburg, Doug had a goal of finding a geocache in his 75th country and nothing was going to deter him. Things did not look hopeful when we missed our connection to Lesotho, after 3 1/2 hours of driving to Swaziland, when it was pouring buckets of rain, or when the GPS indicated the cache was 0.7 miles across a canyon. But turn back, are you kidding, give up, ridiculous. We had come this far we weren't giving up.

To an outsider, it is very difficult to understand some of the things geocachers do. What could possibly drive a person to get a geocache a day for 800 straight days? What could possibly possess a person to drive for hours on end, grabbing a cache every 528 feet? What could possibly possess a person to drive for hours just to get a single cache. Persistence.

## Willingness to Seek Assistance

When we were sitting in the car at the mining museum trying to come up with a plan to get us to the cache and the museum's caretaker showed up, I got to witness a rare occurrence. Doug actually asked for help. There was an expert standing next to the car that could help us. So, Doug invited him in and he became our guide. In some ways, this was very surprising as Doug is very self-reliant. But in this case, he recognized that it was better to seek

advice from someone more familiar with Swaziland iron mines.

Puzzle cachers often work in groups as they attack complex codes and problems. It will often require several cachers' hard work to complete the puzzle. At times, assistance is even given by the cache owner. I heard of a cacher in Boston that

hosts regular geocaching

events where cachers all get together to attack puzzles. Some people are there to learn while others are there just to help.

Geocachers often lean on the community to help them in their endeavors. When they are having significant problems with a cache, the answer is often PAF. Before I got to know geocachers, I did not even know what that abbreviation was. But as many geocachers tell me, when you need help, they reach out by Phoning-A-Friend. They even have recounted stories of PAFing on a 1/1, whatever that means.

## Finding Satisfaction

After almost sliding down a steep hillside, Doug found the cache we were searching for in Swaziland and held it up with a big smile on his face. He had achieved his goal for

the day, his 75th geocaching country. To him, it was all well worth it.

He has recounted, with great satisfaction, getting up early in the morning in Europe and by day's end having added 6 countries to his list. He views that as one of the highlights of his geocaching years.

To outsiders, it may be tough to understand some of the goals geocach-

ers set for themselves, but within the geocaching community, the satisfaction of reaching those goals is well understood.

And even when a cacher comes up empty handed ("DNF" or "Did Not Find"), he will often still recount the adventure with a positive attitude and respect for being stumped. The words you most often will hear are "I'll be back!"

## Relationships and Geocaching

Since encouraging strong marriages is a passion of mine and my wife, and something we do vocationally as well, I couldn't help but think of how applying these characteristics from geocaching to relationships might help a geocacher snuggle more with their "snuggle mugle." The time spent out on the trails has built up many skills that are also important skills in a long-term relationship.

It is my hope that I can encourage geocachers to apply their geocaching skillset to their relationships in very constructive ways.

## Focus and Passion

After a few years, many long-relationships seem to "lose that lovin' feelin'."

We were observing an older couple recently on a "date" at a restaurant and watched them for almost a half hour as the husband was

focused on reading the newspaper, never once putting it down and

the wife was focused on her iPhone the whole time never looking up. My observation is that many of us lose focus and passion over time rather than gain a greater excitement for our relationship. It is easy for our relationships to become routine rather than robust.

I was just told of a husband whose geocaching streak is now over 800 days. I don't know this husband's marital routine, but I wonder if he has been at least as focused on his marriage for the last 800 days. What would happen if he were to wake up each morning saying, "I wonder what I can do today to compliment my wife and let her know I am thinking of her. What little thing can I do to make my wife's day better?" I believe if he did this his marriage could become as exciting to him as geocaching.

## Studiosness and Follow Through

One our first date I blindfolded Virginia and drove her to a cliff overlooking the Pacific Ocean and surprised her



Doug and Julie  
atop Table Mountain



TB Hotel atop  
Table Mountain

*One our first date I blindfolded Virginia and drove her to a cliff overlooking the Pacific Ocean and surprised her by setting up a card table and a fully prepared meal from salad to dessert.*

by setting up a card table and a fully prepared meal from salad to dessert. I had heard she loved avocados, so even though I had never purchased an avocado before I made sure to have one in her salad. I did that because I listened closely to what she said, her likes, her dislikes, and I was both creative and intentional to do those things that pleased her. I wish I could say in the 40 years we have been married I have always been that attentive, creative, and intentional.

I have found that geocachers are amazing students when presented with a challenge. I would like to encourage you to take loving your mate more deeply as your next challenge. Study what your partner likes, look for clues, ask questions, and learn as much as you can about your mate. Then follow through by using your newfound knowledge. Figure out your partner's favorite dessert and try making it. Even if it doesn't come out perfectly, the studying of your mate's likes and the taking of initiative will be what matters most.

A man made a birthday cake for his wife of fifteen years. All went well until he gave her the cake and had her exclaim, "Cake, I hate cake. I haven't eaten birthday cake in fifteen years. Don't you even know me?" Apparently, the husband had not been very intentional in getting to know his wife. She went on to say, "I would feel more loved if you made me chocolate-covered cashews." One year later the wife emailed us stating she was the "cake lady." She said, "My husband and I are doing much better this year. For my birthday, he made me chocolate-covered cashews."

Take some time to study your partner. Find out your mate's favorite coffee, restaurant, meal, dessert, shoe size, etc. Take some initiative, be intentional and I think your partner will respond in ways you will appreciate.

### Creativity

When it comes to creativity in marriage, I know no one that is better at it than Doug. In their home, they have a picture collage Doug made that has over 50 heart shaped pictures of places Doug and Julie have been on special dates.

Years ago, Doug called his wife in the morning asking if she would like to have lunch that day. At noon, he showed up at the house and picked her up. As he drove towards Boston, her curiosity had her trying to guess where they might be going. He hadn't told her to dress up but he certainly had something planned.

As they drove through the tunnel and appeared at the airport, Julie racked her brain to try recalling restaurants at the airport hotels that would be worth the trip. But when Doug pulled into the air-

By Ellie Vegas

## Gross Kitty Goes to Disney!

Since we didn't take our usual Florida trip back in December, we decided to go in February this year. I myself have been to Disney many times, but Gross Kitty has not yet gone!

We flew into Orlando on Saturday, 03 February and spent the evening getting settled in. The following day was for some geocaching and exploring the area before heading back to the resort for the Super Bowl.



The rest of the week, we got to do some pretty cool things, one of my favourites being Skeletons - The Museum of Osteology. If you're into bones, anatomy, science, etc, I highly recommend checking this place out! It was very educational and fascinating to see so many animal skeletons in one location.



One of the other highlights was of course Disney's Animal Kingdom (if you didn't know, there is a virtual in the park). We intentionally went during the off season and I won't complain. We got to ride all of the rides at least once and by the end of the day, there wasn't any wait time at all! Gross kitty got to see some exotic animals on the African safari ride, and I got to ride Mount Everest like a billion times.

We also spent a few days exploring Downtown Disney and Universal Citywalk as well. One of the best parts about the trip was escaping the gross Atlanta weather for a week, as it already felt like summer in Orlando (and it was only February!!!). We were able to get in quite a bit of caching as well, and discovered a cool boardwalk in a new neighbourhood thanks to one cache series.

And of course, the minute we landed back in Atlanta, it was cold and monsooning. I miss Orlando already. So...when is the next vacation?



The Daily ATL  
etsy.com/shop/TurtleTracksDesigns



port parking garage, she was confused. He popped the trunk and pulled out their two suitcases.

It wasn't until the ticket counter that Doug explained that lunch was in the Caribbean. Rather than jump for joy, Julie began her interrogation:

"What about the kids?" "Karen has them for the weekend."

"Soccer games?" "I sent their uniforms."

"What about the dog?" "She's all set."

"Meetings tomorrow?" "Rescheduled."

"Clothes?" "All packed."

Julie then began to relax and the biggest smile grew on her face. She loved surprises. She loved the Caribbean. She loved that her husband knew she liked surprises and the Caribbean. She loved her creative husband.

Setting up the trip as a surprise took a significant amount of detective work on Doug's part. He had studied his wife carefully and pulled together all the pieces. Packing for one's wife required paying attention to what she wears, what she packs for herself and knowing her calendar and who to contact to reschedule things. Meticulous planning, careful study, and a sense of adventure were all necessary to pull this off. Was it worth all that effort? Absolutely!

Not all of us have the means to surprise our mate with a trip to the Caribbean but we all can be more creative in making our relationship fun, memorable, and letting out partners know they are special and valuable to us. For some of us it may be a surprise picnic lunch we plan, for others

a weekend away, for some farming out the children for a night and having wine and cheese in front of our fireplace. The product is not as important as the heart.

### Sacrifice

Early in relationships, many men would drive all night just to spend the weekend with their girlfriends. Years later, they might just tell them to "call Uber" instead of getting up early to take them to the airport. From the beginning of time, how valuable something was or how loved it was has been associated with how much one is willing to sacrifice for the thing or the person.

Sacrificial love is knowing your partner's desires and seeking to serve your mate before yourself. It might be planning your vacation around what your partner has always wanted to do, rather than where the new

*At intermission, I went up to Lou and said with a twinkle in my eye, "So you love ballet?" Lou's response was simply, "I love my wife."*

geocaching finds might be. I have been told of an avid geocacher (25,000 finds) that was planning a trip to New England with his wife. He talked of previous trips where everything centered around geocaching. This trip was to be different. His wife collects lighthouses. From what I understand, there are people that try finding and logging as many lighthouses as possible. So, when he planned for the trip, he created a detailed map as he would when he geocaches and planned the route to best get to just about every lighthouse in New England. Yes, he did plan in a few key caches along the way,

some of which were right next to the lighthouses, but in the end, I believe that they found more lighthouses than geocaches. She loved that he put her first.

We were in the room when Lou told Grace, for the first time, (after 30 years of marriage) "I have never loved you." They separated from each other. For most observers, Lou and Grace never should have gotten married. Lou grew up in orphanages and foster homes, a rough kid that loved rodeos and drag racing. He worked as a big equipment diesel mechanic. It seems if it had dirt or grease associated with it Lou loved it and often was "wearing" it. Grace on the other hand was Dutch, in every sense of the word. She was always dressed meticulously, never had a hair out of place, nor even a speck of dirt under her fingernails. She loved to go to craft shows and quilting exhibits. After a year and a half Lou and Grace got back together. Shortly after that we were at the Nutcracker Ballet. At intermission, I went up to Lou and said with a twinkle in my eye, "So you love ballet?" Lou's response was simply, "I love my wife." And that was the right answer. You see Lou's preferences had not suddenly changed, but his heart had.

As passionate as Doug is about geocaching, I have been impressed with his even greater obsession with sacrificing to serve Julie, his wife, and putting her interests and desires ahead of his.

While in Johannesburg we had breakfast with a fellow geocacher. He told us he used to be more of an avid geocacher than he is now. He is married and has two very young kids. "I have decided at this present stage of my life, it is often more important to be home than geocaching. I have a good balance."

One simple way we have heard this done is for you to ask your partner before you part ways in the morning, "What could I do today to make your day easier?" And once you've asked the question, follow through!

### Persistence

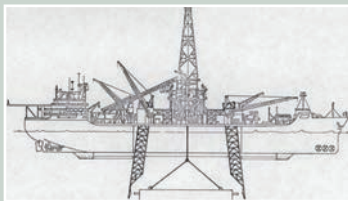
I told a husband once that his job was to serve his wife and I believed if he put her interests ahead of his own he would have a different wife, not a new one, but one that acted differently to him. He called me three days later and said, "It doesn't work, I've served her for three days and nothing has changed." I went on to tell him this was not a three-day experiment, but a lifetime pursuit.

Too often we hit a snag in our relationships and look for ways to exit. We give up instead of being persistent.

Very few serious geocachers would think of quitting the search after five unsuccessful minutes. A study was done by Time Magazine, US News and World

## The Raising of K-129 – aka *The Jennifer Project*

I was up early one morning and tuned to a talk show on *I Heart Radio*. When they mentioned the Howard Hughes Company, Global Marine, I recalled seeing that name at a virtual cache we had done many years ago in the first year we began geocaching in 2005. We were highly interested in locating *The Jennifer Project* (GC9812) virtual, now archived, as it related to Richard's vocation when he was transferred to Schlumberger's Offshore Division in Houston, training the electronics technicians that worked on offshore rigs. There are a lot of virtual caches still out there that can bring back good memories and be informative. I hope they continue to keep the virtual caches enabled. – (Ja of Jarihend)



*The Jennifer Project (actual code-name Azorian) was a secret CIA mission of the ship (Hughes) Glomar Explorer, built in 1973 with the specific purpose of raising a Soviet nuclear submarine that had sunk in the Pacific in 1968. The exceedingly difficult mission, to raise a wrecked submarine more than 3 miles beneath the surface, was only a partial success, as the lifting mechanism failed, dropping two thirds of the submarine back to the ocean floor. As part of the recovery, the bodies of six Soviet submariners were buried at sea in a surprisingly moving ceremony. You may view the ceremony via YouTube at <https://youtu.be/kFWMo7aHDRo>*

Report, along with various prestigious universities on divorce and happiness. It was found of the couples that reported being unhappy in their marriage at the time of the study and yet stayed together, five years later 85 percent reported being happy.

As in geocaching, every long-term relationship will have obstacles along the way that get discouraging. Don't give up. The struggles will serve to strengthen your relationship.

### Willingness to Seek Assistance

For many of us, men especially, we seem to have a hard time asking for assistance. Often the only female voice we welcome giving directions in our car is the feminine voice on our GPS. When we first meet with couples for counseling the two questions most couples ask are "Have you ever seen a couple in as bad shape as we are" and "Is there any hope for us?" We are amazed at how many couples truly feel they are unique in their marital struggles. We often are this way because we are not willing to say we are "lost" and need some direction. Often what couples need is simply to have another couple say, "Oh, we took that "wrong turn" once and this is what we did to correct it.

Few geocachers would say, "I was working on that puzzle cache but couldn't figure it out so I just quit." Unfortunately, many people that are not finding satisfaction in their relationships quit before seeking serious assistance.

Today there are many "helps" for those that are "lost" in their relationships. Make sure you avail yourself of them. One other note. You would never return to a geocache "counselor" that said, "finding the geocache is really not that important so just give up." So also, avoid counselors that say the equivalent. "Saving your relationship is not really the goal, just being happy doing whatever you wish should be your pursuit."

### Finding Satisfaction

I have never been to a geocaching Mega-Event, but I imagine there are a lot of happy people there. They have taken geocaching seriously and have enjoyed the "results of their labor." I have, however, observed many couples over the years that have taken their marriage seriously and have seen couples married for 30, 40, 50 years or more that have not "lost that lovin' feelin'." They still love being together, giving a kiss when they greet each other, praise rather than complain when talking about and to each other, giving each other a hug or slapping each other's butt when they pass.

One of my favorite couples of all time are Claude and Forestine. Many years ago, Virginia and I taught a three-week

class on marital sexuality. I did not expect them to attend the series—after all, they were already in their 80s—but they attended all three weeks. Claude came up to me after class and said, "This series on sexuality is the best series you have ever done. There has been so much huggin' and kissin' in our house these last three weeks—streaking, too!" I try not to envision those in our classes, but I have a vivid mental picture of Claude and Forestine chasing each other around their house buck naked, and I thought, "they have it!" I don't know if they could even do it, but at 80 years of age, they understood more about sexual intimacy than most couples in their 20s will ever learn. Claude and Forestine were drawn to each other because of their shared convictions and character. They had similar passions and enjoyed compatibility in many areas and, because of all this, experienced a lasting intimacy and chemistry into their old age. I wish this for you.

## Balancing Life: Relationships & Geocaching

Let me try a very simple question: "Is geocaching bad?" I could just as easily have asked: "Is golf bad?", "Are video games bad?", "Is watching football bad?", "Is TV bad?", or "Is Facebook bad?" Inherently they are not, but any hobby has the possibility of distracting us from the rest of our life.

Ask most geocachers if they value their mates more than geocaching and I am sure they would say, "Yes, of course!" But when they put huge efforts and focus to get an FTF, a 5/5, or a geocache in a new state, ask them how often they put a similar effort into serving their partners. It might seem that geocaching takes precedence. Or ask their mate if they feel geocaching is a higher priority than their relationship and they might hesitate.

So how do you find balance between a loved hobby and a loved partner? What would happen if you applied your geocaching skillset to your relationship?

In my experience a funny thing happens when a mate feels valued, cherished, respected, and honored. The mate often begins to encourage the hobbies as opposed to feeling slighted.

Let's say for instance, your partner loves staying at B&Bs. As you begin planning your next vacation, you find a list of the top B&Bs in the area and suggest targeting a few. I am almost positive that your mate will genuinely feel touched, at might even suggest, "There must be some geocaches in those areas that we could find."

It is not done manipulatively, but when our partners feel genuinely valued

and loved, they are usually not threatened our other interests of ours.

As I write this we are nearing the end of a wonderful South Africa vacation with Doug and Julie. Doug has made Julie, and us, the focus of this trip. Tomorrow we arrive in Cape Town and the three of us are thrilled to hike with Doug to find the oldest cache in South Africa. Balance!

Knowing our partners and finding joy in delighting in their passions is a win-win. They are enjoying things they love, while you delight in seeing the one you love find joy in a passion of theirs. The result will often be that you begin to snuggle more with your snuggle muggle. Enjoy the journey! ✦

*Paul Friesen and his wife, Virginia, are marriage counselors, authors, and international speakers for Home Improvement Ministries ([www.HIMweb.org](http://www.HIMweb.org)) and have found maybe twenty geocaches.*

## Discovered While Geocaching



Castle Northmore (GCX612) is located in Kansas City. This castle was hand built and is absolutely incredible! There is a winding staircase that takes you all the way to the top! It's definitely something to see! – *Team Brandy-Jack*