Magic Five hours*

Research shows that couples who made shifts in their relationships and went on to be happy and healthy only spent about five additional hours per week on their relationship. The following are areas where they made shift and about how much time it takes.

1. **Partings** – Make sure before you say goodbye in the morning that you've learned one thing that is happening in each other's life that day (meetings, doc appts., lunch dates, etc).
   (2 minutes a day x 5 working days = 10 minutes)
2. **Reunions** – Be sure to engage in stress reducing conversations at the end of work day . This is the classic, "How was your day dear?" (rules: the discussions are not about marital conflict but about stress from the day; listen, don't offer advice, take their side, validate emotions, be affectionate, express genuine interest).
   (20 minutes a day x 5 days = 1 hour 40 minutes)
3. **Appreciate and Admire** – Take the time every day to express appreciation and admiration for the other. Thank each other for tasks done or share a positive thought you had about him/her. You can do this in little notes or verbally.
   (5 minutes a day x 7 days = 35 minutes)
4. **Affection** – Kiss, hug, hold, grab, tickle, dance. A kiss before going to bed can be a way to signify that all the day's minor irritations are let go of and all is forgiven.
   (5 minutes a day x 7 days = 35 minutes)
5. **Weekly date** – low pressure way to stay connected. It can be a time to ask questions from the Love Map or things like "Where should we take our next vacation?" or "Are you still thinking about taking that class?" It can also be a time to work through an argument you had earlier in the week. When you're feeling relaxed, you can much more powerfully deal with an irritation that came up a few days ago. This might be a time to share underlying dreams. Clear up anything from the week that came up.
   (2 hours once a week)

*Taken from Gottman, J.M. (1999). The Seven Principles for Making Marriage Work. Three Rivers Press, New York.