I was remembering our courtship and how we would look into each other's eyes and talk about growing old together. Of course, we had no idea what that meant, but we knew we had our whole lives before us. Now, here we are, (not old yet!) twenty years later, still in love, still happy, still looking toward the horizon, wanting to walk the journey of life together. Do I say it often enough?--I love you! Thank you for loving me back and being my beautiful and wonderful companion for the last twenty years. That's 240 months, or 7,300 days, or 175,200 hours, or 10,512,000 minutes--every moment a treasure.

What can I give you to express my love? What gift could I possibly give you that would sum up the years of love that you've given me? A sapphire ring--that is what I have decided on. I know that gem has always been your favorite. It is precious like our love.

And we've had fun, haven't we? Remember when the kids were young and we were so broke that we could only take a vacation in a tent? Mostly, we just fought off mosquitoes, you tried to make pancakes over a fire, and I got us all lost on a trail. I laugh every time I think about it. And remember our first trip to Disneyland? We had saved for an entire year. The car broke down in Las Vegas (I think it was 120 degrees outside). We tried to stay cool by toweling off with water and drinking sodas, but three hundred and fifty bucks later and we were on our way again. It ended up being my favorite vacation. We shared so much--both good times and hard times--but we've faced everything together.

I started listing the reasons I love you, but it was becoming a tome. Let me just say that I never worry about your reaction to adversity. When I fall apart, you stand firm like a rock. You have always been faithful to me (how many people can say that today?). I've heard that it is better to be trusted than to be loved. I trust you--you have always been loyal to me. I love you for your smile and sense of humor. At the end of a hard day, I have always looked forward to seeing your happy face. Even your eyes seem to smile--those happy creases at the corners. I love you for your love of books and for instilling into our children an appreciation of good literature. I think you can discuss any subject with intelligence. I love you for putting our marriage and our family first. It seems that you regard no sacrifice as too much. Thank you for loving me.

The years have made you beautiful. I know that we both have been chagrined when we discovered a new gray hair or wrinkle. But to me you will always seem young, vibrant, and desirable beyond expression. Twenty years ago, I had no idea that I would marry a woman that would become more and more lovely as time passed. And that is the way of our love: it grows more beautiful with each passing day. We have been through so much together, I know we can weather the years ahead. We are one; we are united with a bond that can never be broken.

I know that the great poets have struggled to pen words that adequately describe this kind of love. In the end they discover they fall woefully short. And so do I. Please accept this poor attempt as my expression of undying love and devotion. Thank you for being all that you are.

Happy Anniversary, Sweetheart! I love you!