

VALENTINE'S DAY: WHAT'S LOVE GOT TO DO WITH IT?

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Author, "Taming Your Inner Brat: A Guide for Transforming Self-defeating Behavior"

The perfect card, the perfect gift, the perfect date . . . Isn't there enough pressure in relationships without having to live up to some romantic ideal on Valentine's Day?

This is not how the celebration of February 14 started out. Its origins stem from Pagan and Christian history. Back then there were feasts celebrating fertility, and later there was recognition of St. Valentine (whose actual existence is questioned by some experts) who secretly performed marriage ceremonies for soldiers when the emperor had forbidden it. But there were no TV commercials depicting models with perfect bodies and perfect teeth giving each other chocolates and back rubs. Valentine's Day back then was not a test of how good a lover you were.

Modern relationships are difficult enough without having to stage a major performance on a designated day. Men agonize over the greeting card racks, hoping that they can choose a card that is not too funny, not too mushy. And the gift: how will she interpret it? If I buy her chocolates will she think I want her to get fat? If I don't buy her chocolates will she think I assume she is fat? Is the gift too extravagant? Is it too impersonal? Are roses too predictable?

This is not what love is all about. Love is much more complex than flowers and chocolates. Social psychologists have been studying interpersonal attraction and love for almost four decades, and they still haven't figured it out completely. What is known, however, is that love relationships are multi dimensional. Sexual attraction, or what some people call "chemistry" is only one ingredient of a love relationship, and often not even the most important one.

Distinctions have been made between passionate love and companionate love. Passionate love is an intense longing for the other person. It is accompanied by extreme feelings: ecstasy when things are

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going well, and despair when things are rocky. Passionate love is also characterized by physical sensations, such as rapid heartbeat and "butterflies" in the stomach.

Companionate love does not have the fire and the heat that passionate love does, but it can more than compensate in the form of closeness, trust and affection. Furthermore it lasts much longer than passionate love, which subsides relatively quickly.

Another way of defining love is in terms of three components: passion, commitment and intimacy. These interact with one another in various combinations, so that no two relationships are alike.

Long-term satisfaction in relationships does not depend on material wealth or success. Nor does it depend on physical attractiveness. A recent study of middle-aged college graduates indicated that

good looking people, on average, were no more satisfied with their marriages or with their lives, than were plainer people.

So what does constitute long-term contentment in relationships? Psychologists have found that a feeling of equity is important. That is, the partners feel they are each getting about as much as they're giving. Not that they keep score, but over the long run things even out. This is similar to just being good friends to one another, supporting one another, laughing at each other's jokes even though you've heard them dozens of times. Another ingredient in long-term relationships is investment. This refers to material possessions, time and emotional investment. The greater the investment, the more likely the couple will stay together.

So what does all this have to do with Valentine's Day? If you wish, buy that card or those flowers, but keep in mind that this is not a maker or breaker of a relationship. Better yet, show your partner love and consideration on the other 364 days in the year. It will make a greater impact than doing so according to the calendar.

Pauline Wallin, Ph.D. is a psychologist in Camp Hill, PA, and author of "Taming Your Inner Brat: A Guide for Transforming Self-defeating Behavior" (Beyond Words Publishing, 2001) Visit <http://www.innerbrat.com> for more information, and subscribe to her free, monthly Inner Brat Newsletter.

~Happy Valentine's Day~

By Patricia *Lite* Hickman, RM

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"HAPPINESS IS...
SOMETHING YOU DECIDE ON,
AHEAD OF TIME" ~
Mrs. Jones, 92 yrs old

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~HAPPY VALENTINE'S DAY~ This is February, the month we celebrate love, not only relationship love, but more importantly, self love. Not everyone is in relationship, for those that are, I wish you the most Blessed Valentine's Day,,,ever :-)

For those that aren't, I wish you the most Blessed Valentine's Day,,,ever! This Valentine's Day (and month), celebrate the love you have in your life, friend(s), family, pet(s)~ celebrate loving yourself, and where you are right now. :-)

Grounding/centering, working on projects that have been put off in the household, or an extra 30 minutes of work-out time is also a good use of the energy.If you are feeling anger or frustration, or find yourself around angry people, or situations, just send yourself a beam of love or give yourself a hug -) Weather might also be a tad bit bizarre, as it has been in Wisconsin :-) Stay warm darlings, and if possible stay home :-)

The GOOD NEWS most people will focused on LOVE, this Valentine's Day. Love energy will be flowing for most of us, and that's the best energy we can operate under :-) let the love flow this February 14th. Let us approach it as a Return to Love, give yourself a hug everyday, just because, you deserve it :-)

I wish you Love and Light, during the month of February, and always~

Lite

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Psychic and clairaudient, I am, a Reiki Master, Healer, Minister and Metaphysician for more than 25 years. In order to find out the answers to my life, I studied Astrology, Tarot, Numerology, Religion, Psychic Phenomenia, as well as Healing,Spirit Releasement Therapy and Psychic Self Defense. I am the Grandmother of 9 and reside in Milwaukee, WI

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