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Ways to be Romantic

By Rinatta Paries

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Rarely does Valentine's Day pass by without your notice. Even if you are single and think the day has no significance, the day will arrive and you will want a relationship more than usual. If you are in a relationship and Valentine's Day does not get celebrated, it will leave hurt and resentment in its wake.

I invite you to think of Valentine's Day as "Focus on Love Day," as opposed to "Hurt About Lack of Love Day" or "Ignore Being Single Day."

Below you will find ways to make your "Focus on Love Day" extraordinarily romantic, whether you are in a long-term relationship, dating, or are single.

A note for people who are in a new relationships, or who are dating someone but are not in a committed relationship. At the beginning of a relationship, it is best not to have too many expectations about how Valentine's Day will be celebrated. It is also best not to get disappointed if it is not celebrated in just the way you would want. In time, as you and your partner get closer, both of you will be able to celebrate Valentine's Day and other holidays in more meaningful ways.

This Valentine's Day, create a perfect "Focus on Love Day" for yourself, regardless of what your dating partner may or may not have planned for you. Look at the suggestions for singles below.

Then, do something small, but meaningful for your dating partner. Look for suggestions for couples below, but tone the activity down a bit.

And now, 10 ways to make your "Focus on Love Day" extraordinarily romantic:

1. The Perfect Day

Couples:

See if you can start to notice what your lover dreams about, wishes for. Listen for small, attainable things that can make a big difference. Alternatively, subtly question your lover about what he/she

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pictures as the perfect Valentine's Day. Now take the information you have gathered and make it into a perfect day for him or her.

Singles:

If you had a partner, what would you have him or her do to create your perfect Valentine's Day? Create it for yourself – love yourself that much.

2. The Perfect Card + One Perfect Rose

Couples:

Buy or make a lovely card and then fill it to the brim with words of love, admiration and appreciation. By "fill it to the brim," I mean leave no white space untouched. Present it with one perfect rose.

Singles:

Buy or make a lovely card for yourself, and just as above, fill it to the brim with words you want to hear from your future lover. Seal the envelope and open it on Valentine's Day. Present it to yourself with one perfect rose.

3. Valentine's Day is Not Just for Women

Couples:

Ladies, I have it on good authority that guys want to be celebrated too. So get him flowers and candy and a card, too.

Singles:

Guys, give yourself that same wonderful Valentine's Day as a relationship partner would give you. You may feel silly, but you will also feel good.

4. Say Goodbye to Obligation, Say Hello to Open Heart

Couples:

Don't give or do anything out of obligation this Valentine's Day. Give only from your heart, from love and treasuring your partner. No matter how good or bad your relationship is going, get in touch with how much you truly love and appreciate your partner. Give from that space.

Singles:

Don't beat yourself up for not having a partner. You have not failed. You are not bad. Valentine's Day can be "Focus on Love for Yourself Day" as easily as "Focus on Love for Another Day."

5. The Gift of Undivided Attention

Couples:

Give your partner the gift of undivided attention and see if she or he doesn't find that the most romantic thing going.

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Singles:

Give yourself the gift of your own undivided attention. Take away all of the distractions and be with yourself the way you would want your partner to be with you.

6. Gift of Communication, I

Couples: Men, allow your woman to talk about whatever her heart desires, and listen. Ladies, let your man talk or answer your question without finishing his sentences for him, interrupting him, or moving on to the next topic. See if this doesn't make sparks fly.

Singles:

Either find a person who will listen to you the way you need to be heard, or give yourself space and time to listen to your own thoughts and feelings or to journal.

7. Gift of Communication, II

Couples:

Ladies, give your man the gift of sitting down next to him in silence. No talking allowed. Men, give your lady the gift of talking and sharing from your heart. No closing down, walling up or running away allowed.

Singles:

Either silence or open heart, give yourself whichever one you need.

8. A Gift with Interest

Couples:

Is your partner into computers, and you don't know a mouse from a monitor? Or is she into gardening, but to you a rose is just a rose? Give your partner the gift of your interest in something that is important to him or her. Go ahead, ask your partner a question about it and see the smile light up his or her face.

Singles:

Give yourself the gift of time to pursue your important interests. Take the time to do something that nourishes you and makes you happy.

9. The Trust

Couples:

Ladies, give the man in your life the gift of trusting him to know how and when to take care of himself and you. Trust that he will do the best he can for Valentine's Day. Gentlemen, hold her trust sacred, and learn to listen for subtle requests. Then honor them. The celebration of love will feel good to both of you.

Singles:

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Today, trust your process and your fate. Today, trust that you too will be loved and cherished by a partner. Today, remember all the people who already love and cherish you.

10. A Shower of Words

Couples:

Write your loved one a love letter or poem and read it to them on Valentine's Day. Here come the tears.

Singles:

Write yourself a love letter or poem, exactly the way you would want it written by a lover. Read it to yourself out loud and have Kleenex ready.

Plan to have a happy Valentine's Day!

Your Relationship Coach,

Rinatta Paries

www.WhatItTakes.com

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With nearly a decade of relationship coaching experience, Master Certified Coach Rinatta Paries works with singles to help them attract their ideal relationship, and helps couples create more love and fulfillment in their existing relationships. Visit her web site at www.WhatItTakes.com or e-mail her at coach@WhatItTakes.com.

Can We Still Be Friends?

By Kevin B. Burk, Author of The Relationship Handbook

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Even when we know it's time to end a romantic relationship, we're often reluctant to let go of our partners completely. We've shared so much of our lives with our partner, it seems almost callous to simply cut them out of our lives—especially if we're ending the relationship on good terms. It's natural that we want to hold onto the loving and supportive part of the romantic relationship, and simply let go of the parts that

aren't serving us. This is entirely possible: we can remain friends with our former lovers. We both need to want to build a friendship, however.

If we choose to stay friends with a former romantic partner, we will have to establish new boundaries and expectations in the relationship. The old checklists are no longer appropriate, and it may take some time to make a successful transition to the new relationship. It's best, in fact, if we do not spend any time together once we've officially ended the romantic relationship. A clean break is essential. We need time to separate our life from our partner's. We need to reestablish our own boundaries and our own identity. And we need to spend a little time mourning the death of the romantic relationship. It takes time for the emotional connections to adjust, and it takes time for us to gain perspective on the entire relationship.

Once we're ready to spend time with our partner again, we must recognize that any friendship that we build is a new relationship. It is not an extension or continuation of our romantic relationship. We will need to start slowly, and to build up a new level of trust. It will take some time to make sure we're using the appropriate checklists. We can't expect the same kind of support or commitment in a friendship as we did in a romantic relationship. By the same token, we may find that we could tolerate certain behavior from a lover, but that we won't accept it from a friend.

In many ways, friendships are far more demanding than romantic relationships. We look for a higher level of shared interests and compatibility with our friends than we do with our romantic partners. We may discover that our former lovers don't make the cut as friends—and there's nothing wrong with that. We have a much easier time letting friends drift out of our lives than we

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do with letting go of romantic partners.

Kevin B. Burk is the author of *The Relationship Handbook: How to Understand and Improve Every Relationship in Your Life*. Visit <http://www.everyrelationship.com> for a FREE report on creating AMAZING Relationships.



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