

HOW TO HAVE A HAPPY VALENTINE'S DAY FOR TWO...OR ONE

By Yvonne Thomas, Ph.D.



As we approach February, we also approach one of the most hyped times of the year by all forms of media: VALENTINE'S DAY. TV, radio, newspapers, magazines, and a variety of stores all do their part in reminding us that this is a romantic, loving, magical time of the year - at least it is "supposed to be," per these sources. I'm sure that most people on their own are already aware that Valentine's Day is nearing; thus, the barrage of external reminders can certainly seem excessive. It certainly can FEEL excessive to people who do NOT have an opportunity to experience this romantic, loving, magical time of the year! I'm referring to several categories of people, including those who are single and looking, separated and/or divorced with no significant other, widowed, and those who are with a significant other but NOT happily so. Thus, there are a large number of people who may not get to enjoy Valentine's Day the way that media - and perhaps oneself - thinks it should be experienced.

Even in a heavily-populated city like Los Angeles, it can be very difficult to find the right significant other. And there are many people staying in unfulfilling, unhappy relationships often due to a fear that they will NOT meet a more compatible person the next time around. In addition, many people have fears about being emotionally close to others, especially to those who could be potential love interests. Maybe the person previously was let down or hurt by an important person in one's life; maybe the person has some low self-esteem and wonders (or doubts) if he or she could be seen as lovable or good enough for anyone. For these reasons and countless more, many people are not having romantic, loving, magical times IN GENERAL, let alone on Valentine's Day.

Thus, some tips are provided for how to have a happy Valentine's Day for two...or one. Note that these apply BOTH to those who are and are not in happy, healthy relationships, because, in essence, these tips all involve being nurturing and loving to oneself, which can enhance one's self-esteem AND the quality of one's relationship.

The purpose of being self-nurturing and self-loving is to reinforce one's sense of VALUE and SELF-WORTH and to appreciate and be exposed to those things that touch, uplift, and/or center oneself. Often, one can deeply experience such effects through some form of sensory stimulation, such as touch, sight, sound, smell, and taste. Here are some examples of each: touch: through massages, showers/bubble baths, saunas, and wearing fabrics that feel good against one's skin; sight: through seeing aesthetically-pleasing objects, such as sunsets, artwork, and colorful gardens; sound: through playing uplifting or personally meaningful music; smell: through incense, perfume, and aromas that are pleasing and convey warmth (cinnamon and vanilla scents are known to frequently have this effect); and taste: through allowing oneself to eat something of a reasonable quantity that one really enjoys (unless one struggles with overeating or another eating disorder).

Also, there are GENERAL ways a person can be good and nurturing to oneself that can enhance one's mind, body, and soul. These include engaging in exercise and healthy eating, getting enough sleep, being in regular contact with significant family and friends, participating in enjoyable hobbies and interests, laughing and having light-hearted, humorous moments, dabbling in creative outlets, experiencing the joy of unconditional love from a pet, etc. If these tips are not enough to help improve a person's mood, or if one suffers from low self-esteem and/or fear of emotional closeness, seeking some professional guidance from a Psychologist could make a big difference in one's life.

Happy nurturing and loving Valentine's Day to one and all!

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