

**"What the world needs now is love, sweet love. It's the only thing that there's just too little of."** Lyrics from "What The World Needs Now"

With Valentine's Day being just around the corner, I decided to ask Dr. Torri L. Griffin, LPC, a Love and Relationships Coach, to share with us her thoughts about this special day.



Dr. Torri L. Griffin, LPC

Valentine's Day is almost here. It's the time when people stop to celebrate the idea of love. Children exchange cards and candy, lovers plan exotic get-aways, and families share gifts and messages of heartfelt appreciation. It represents all things loving and cozy, warm and fuzzy - yet it can also remind us of love lost, love gone awry, and love yet unfound. For those without a valentine, Valentine's Day can feel like a two-edged sword.

To tell you the truth, I used to be afraid of Valentine's Day. I would try to ignore the flowers and candy filling the racks in local stores as messages of love and happiness filled the air. Don't get me wrong-I love love: puppy love, married love, public displays of love-all love.

What I didn't like was the implication that if a woman didn't receive a card, letter, box of candy, or flowers on that *particular* day of the year, she was somehow a refugee of love out on the fringes of society, forlorn and forgotten.

I know I am not alone. Many women today have mixed emotions about this holiday. So do men for that matter-talk about pressure! On Valentine's Day, a man is not only expected to present expensive gifts to his special someone, he also has to somehow acknowledge all of the other significant women in his life. This is far from the true meaning of the love Valentine's Day is meant to celebrate.

To avoid being caught up in the misrepresentation and the commercialization of this celebration of love, here are a few tips that both men and women can use to keep the sweetness in Valentine's Day and make it an enjoyable treat for all:

**1. Be honest.** Spend time with people you truly love and enjoy on Valentine's Day. Don't succumb to the pressure of appearing in love if you are not. If he or she is not Mr. or Ms. Right on the 13<sup>th</sup> of February, don't pretend they are on the 14<sup>th</sup> just to avoid being alone. Instead, reach out to special people in your telephone contacts list (or e-mail list) with a brief text, call, or note to reconnect or catch up.

**2. Be creatively connected.** Rather than spending "an arm and a leg" on expensive commercialized candy and cards, consider using your computer to make Valentine's Day gifts. Put together a coupon book of personal favors that the receiver would enjoy or create a slide-show of your favorite pictures together or maybe write a funny or wacky poem that will make your loved one smile. Give them a piece of you that they will appreciate and remember long after the day is done.



**3. Be happy.** Know that there is love flowing all around you in the form of friends, family, colleagues, and co-workers. Appreciate the love that you enjoy the other 364 days of the year without feeling left out because of this one holiday. Make a list of all the people you are happy that you get to enjoy and display it as a reminder of how much goodness and love there is in your life.



**4. Be a source of love.** So many people can be touched by your act of love. Select someone in your life who really means a lot to you and you do not contact very often. Remind them of a time the two of you spent together that is still meaningful to you and thank them for playing a significant role in your life. Gratitude is a powerful form of love.

**5. Be a bigger source of love.** Volunteer at a women's shelter or a children's hospital to bring care and encouragement to the families and children there. Visit a senior center with gifts to spread joy and love to the elderly. Put a smile on someone's face and you will be a source of love and feel loved.

**6. Be the hand that supplies love.** Consider those who truly need a touch of love in a distant place. You can show true love and concern by donating to a special charity (like organizations helping those in Haiti and others in need). The recipients of your gift may never know who the sender is, but you will. Charity and generosity are high on the list of the many forms of love. Give and you are guaranteed to feel love.



**7. Be loving to yourself.** If you don't happen to have a "special someone" to spend Valentine's Day with, make plans to have a great time by yourself. You can rent a movie that you have really wanted to see, set aside time to read a great book, or work on a favorite hobby that brings you joy. For those of us with hectic stress-filled lives, quiet time relaxing by ourselves can be a real treat.

This Valentine's Day, dare to be the demonstration of love that you would want to receive. As the song says, "What the world needs now is love, sweet love [from you]. It's the only thing that there's just too little of." Give the world a double dose of what's inside of you. It will make the world a better place and help keep Valentines Day the sweetest holiday on the calendar.

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