

A Valentine's Day Love Story

Making Valentine's Day A Simple Expression of Your Loving Life

By Faust Ruggiero, M.S.

The holidays are behind us, and love is in the air. The feast of Saint Valentine, aka, Valentine's Day is right around the corner, complete with stunning bouquets of fragrant flowers, delicious candy assortments, and reservations for intimate dinners adorned with all the heart-felt romantic ambiance. And let's not forget those grab your heart Valentine's Day cards which punctuate this wrap yourself around your lover Hallmark holiday. Valentine's Day cards are the biggest seller after Christmas. In 2020, according to a survey by the National Retail Federation, Americans planned to spend \$1.3 billion on valentines.

Valentine's Day was originally celebrated in honor of an early Christian martyr named Saint Valentine. and through later folk traditions, has become a significant cultural, religious, and commercial celebration of romance and love throughout the world.

Expressions of love can create an absolutely wonderful way to live. The ability and the willingness to love, to spread that love to others, and to accept love from others is the pinnacle of the human experience in all its magnificence. No other human attribute possesses the power to change the world than love. Though short lived, spanning a mere twenty-four hours, Valentine's Day represents the opportunity to express our love for others, and to except the love they are expressing for us.

Like so many other well-intentioned holidays, however, there is always the commerciality associated with Valentine's Day. Valentine's Day sells. Who wants to be in a relationship with someone who refuses to spread the love on the most loving day of the year? Not everything about the commercial part of Valentine's Day is negative though. Though it's only a short-lived expression of affection, it's an expression on the big stage, and that attracts many to participate. That's a good thing.

The real questions are who and how you love. How do you know who to express your love to, and when you find that special someone, how do you make it all happen? Loving someone can be a quick evolving emotional enterprise. Almost everyone wants to be loved, and finding that special someone is a priority for so many of us. The key word is emotional. When we want something, we do

everything in our power to obtain it. Unfortunately, that causes us to miss some of the more important information.

Inviting someone into our lives means they are going to share a reasonable part of our lives with us. That means opening our mind, emotions, and our spirit to them. That means they are going to begin to understand who we are. Wouldn't it be nice if we, ourselves, know who we are before we invite our lover in?

Loving another human being is a three-step process.

- First, you must love yourself. Learning to understand who you are, and creating the world that you are comfortable living in are essential components for a loving relationship.
- The second step in the process is turning that love outward. This includes finding someone who understands themselves, has created a world that they are comfortable living in, and who is willing to be loved by you.
- The third step is allowing someone else to love you. This is where you open up, and let someone into your life.

The Love Plan...Valentine's Day and Beyond

So let's create a simple foundational blueprint, one that can help you create that special Valentine's Day, and beyond, love story.

1. Get to know yourself first. It's hard to know who you want to love before you understand and learn to love yourself. Start by being honest with yourself. Know your strengths and weaknesses, identify what needs to change or improve, and be willing to make those changes first.
2. Always remember the person you choose to love should not be in your life to complete you. Take the steps to become a complete person yourself. By doing this you introduce a stronger more confident person into your relationship, one that does not need the other person, but understands how to appreciate them rationally and lovingly.
3. Be willing to create a world that you like to live in. It's difficult to go into a relationship trying to fix your world there. Your relationship should be a happy and wonderful extension of a life you've already created, with a person who is willing to do the same for you.
4. The next step is an important one. Try to remove yourself from that emotional dance we all do when we are in the initial stages of a

relationship. Know what you want from another person, and know that the person you are taking into your life possesses the qualities you are looking for. The key is to go slow. Become friends first.

Communicate, and learn about the other person. These are the initial ingredients for a lasting and loving relationship.

5. The last step is letting someone else love you. Before you decide to let someone into your life, it does make good sense to make sure that they, themselves, are working to become that complete person. You don't want them to need you, and you certainly do want to be loved and appreciated for who you are. So, make sure your lover is checking off all those boxes that are important to you, and do stay away from that old notion that things will get better as the relationship progresses. Know what you want, and be your own personal loving gatekeeper.

Remember this. Relationships that last are balanced relationships. That means that we are using our intellects to understand them, keeping our emotions subdued enough to keep things in perspective, not rushing or overemphasizing the physical part of the relationship, and going slow enough to appreciate it. Be willing to think of yourself as special and worthy enough to take the time to build the relationship you've always wanted, as a person who is confident, and is creating a world that a loving partner would be thrilled to be part of.

The human experience should be a warm and loving one. All of us should experience the wonder of a loving relationship. So, this year, may your Valentine's Day be one that is filled with joy, laughter, and much love. May you experience it as a person who understands how to love, how to extend your love, and how to be loved, and may your loving dreams come true.

Happy Valentine's Day, love to all of you. God bless!

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