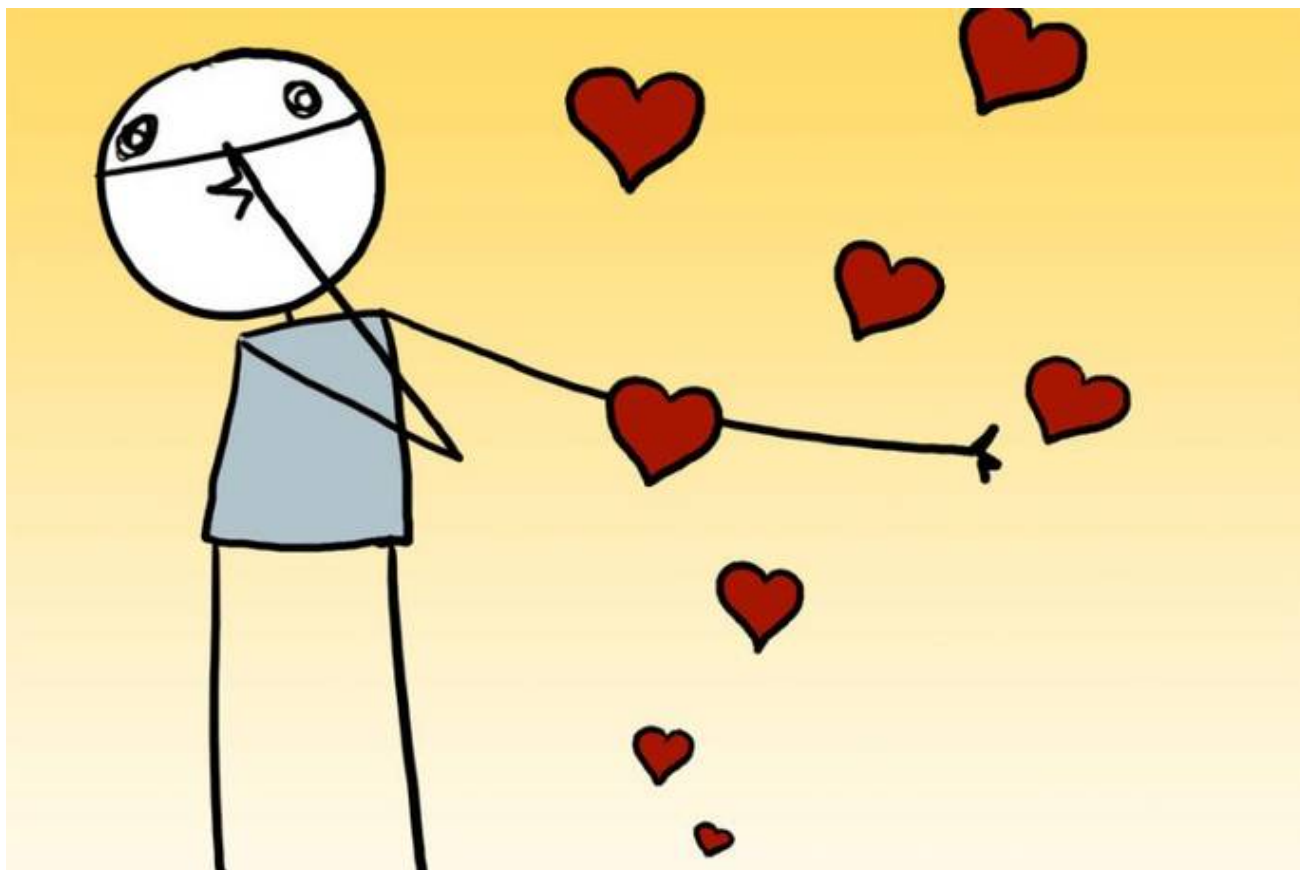




## Valentine's Day. Instructions for Use (For Men!)

Marina Melchionda (February 13, 2010)



Did you know that Valentine's Day is an Italian Holiday? And that all women, believe it or not, DO care about it? If not, read this post...learn, and act accordingly!

You don't need me to tell you that Valentine's Day is coming along. I mean, WHEREVER we are, all we can see is heart-shaped balloons, chocolate cakes, and cafes and diners advertising their "surprise your loved one with the sweetest breakfast". And so on...

Are you getting ready? Did you get your fiancé a nice gift? are you taking her out for dinner? will you buy her flowers? No? Well, maybe you don't need to do all of that. But you better do SOMETHING!

This piece is to give you a couple of advises, "instructions for use", on how to behave and what to do on this "special day". Don't come and tell me that you are cool with that, 'cause your "girlfriend does



not believe in this 'consumerist--American-holiday'", because believe me... you'll pay the consequences of your non-celebrating. Women DO care.

Sometimes I hear of people that don't even call their partner on Valentine's Day, just to show her that "Nothing is different", it's a day just like the other. Well, that should mean that you love her just like yesterday and the day before that... not that you hate her, and just don't care for 24hours!

Do you at least know why Feb. 14 is the day of love?

You can decide if you care or not about this day, but first you have to understand the FULL meaning of it. First of all, VALENTINE'S DAY IS NOT AN AMERICAN HOLIDAY. Celebrated almost all over the world, its origins trace back to the II century AD, Valentine being an Archbishop who lived in a small little town in Umbria, Italy. Oh yes, Italy.

Valentine was a sort of revolutionary, being the only priest throughout the peninsula that accepted to marry a "mixed couple", a Pagan and a Catholic. It was the first mixed marriage in the history of Catholicism, and Valentine celebrate it "in the name of love that overcomes all barriers" (Yes, you're right. We do need another Valentine today).

When he passed away, he was proclaimed "the saint protector of love". He is now the patron of Terni, where every year on February 14 they organize a huge festival in his honor. Couples come from other areas of Italy and abroad to get married here on this particular day, or to renovate their vows, or to promise one another "eternal love", and receive the blessing of the Archbishop of Terni, the town of St. Valentine.

Now that you know the story... don't you look at this holiday from a different point of view?!

Well, if you do (and if you still don't) here are some tips to surprise (and please) your partner (she is ALWAYS expecting something).

"Little things mean a lot", said a popular song written by Edith Lindeman and Carl Stutz, published in 1953. So, don't worry if you can't buy her diamonds and pearls... it is not what she is looking for (in most cases...). If you want it to remain the holiday of love, and not the one of consumerism, you can make her just the happiest person of the world with very small "attentions". Do you live together? Cuddle her with breakfast in bed. Squeeze your own oranges, don't open the can. Arrange the sweeties and fruits in an elegant manner; don't just throw them on the tray... you are not playing baseball!

It's not necessary to buy a gift or a full bouquet of red roses. What for? Most probably they are not even their favorite flowers! Women prefer much more a "customized present". My favorite flower, as an example, is the daisy. Don't you think they are the friendliest flowers ever? A single daisy picked up just for me would make me much happier than 2 dozens red roses.

The same for Valentine's Day cards. Don't look for a romantic quote on the web; don't go to [Hallmark](#) [2] to buy the first [American Greetings](#) [3] card you find. Just sit down and write something yourself. You don't need to promise eternal love (don't cheat!), just write what you feel you want to tell her (after all if you are going out with her, and you're sharing a piece of your life, you should have enough to write about...).



Chocolates? Yes, it could be a good idea...if they are her favorite sweets... Otherwise pick what she likes! [Hershey's](#) [4] doesn't own the holiday!

You can't afford to take her to the movies, or out for dinner? Well, that's perfectly understandable given the harsh economic times... of course she wouldn't (shouldn't) ask you to donate blood or to sell your wristwatch to get the money! If you can't afford it, however, it doesn't mean that you just can stay home with the excuse of "too much traffic on the road; it will take forever to get to your place" (it did happen to me once, and I was going to throw away the home-baked chocolate ganache cake I had made for the idiot, before my sister saved it!); or that you can go with your pals to watch the soccer/football/baseball/whatever game in a bar (not going is certainly one of the best ways you can show her your love!!!). So, rent your favorite movie, go to her place, and prepare her favorite dinner... that's something that has no price.

In conclusion, this is my message to you, my friend: whether you're rich or poor; you're married or not; you're romantic or naturally rude as a brown bear, Valentine's Day is your moment to do something special, something "customized" to your feelings and to the special woman you have on your side.

And if you want to keep spoiling her on Feb. 15, go for it! It might take some time to oil the gear, but you know.... practice makes perfect! (you are not yet!)

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