

Editor's notes:

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Love is in the air on February 14, but why? It may have something to do with the 1 billion Valentine's Day cards that are sent every year to express love and good wishes.

Although today "Valentine" is synonymous with love, several early Christian martyrs shared the name. The Valentine most closely associated with the present day holiday was a priest who lived in Rome in the 3rd century. The Emperor Claudius II had outlawed marriage, under the theory that married men didn't make fierce soldiers. When Valentine continued to perform weddings, Claudius had him put to death.

In another version of the story, Valentine attempted to convert Claudius to Christianity while in prison and was executed. In other tales, Valentine healed his jailer's blind daughter, and the two fell in love. According to legend, Valentine's final letter to her was signed, "From your Valentine."

Valentine's Day began to take off in the late 18th century, when a British publisher brought out a book called *The Young Man's Valentine Writer*, full of sentimental poems for lovers unable to compose their own romantic messages.

Today, Valentine's Day is celebrated in many countries around the world, including Canada, the United States, Mexico, the United Kingdom, France, and Australia.

This month, we also look forward to the following dates:

Groundhog Day, February 2 -- If the groundhog sees his shadow, we'll have six more weeks of winter.

International Flirting Week, February 8-14 -- Flirting is not only a great way to connect with people and make new friends (and romantic partners), it's also a fun way to get romance back into your relationship.

International Expect Success Month -- Karla Brandau, founder of International Expect Success Month and president of Life Power Dynamics, a firm specializing in personal empowerment, says: "A key factor in fighting depression is to change the view of life from pessimism to optimism. In other words, if you can learn to wake up every morning and 'Expect Success,' you will improve the quality of your life, improve your relationships, and be more innovative at work."

XXI Winter Olympics, February 12-28 -- All eyes will be on Vancouver which plays host to over 2500 athletes from 85 countries who will be competing in 84 events in various winter sports.

Ash Wednesday, February 17 -- The beginning of Lent, a period of forty weekdays and six Sundays until the observance of Easter.

Three steps to finding out what you really want from life

To-do lists. Phone calls and e-mails. Urgent assignments. Demands on your time—and your sanity. Every once in a while it all piles up, and you feel ready to collapse. Before you have a breakdown, you need to step back and focus on priorities. Here's what to do:

- **Create a master list.** Start writing down everything you want to do in your life. Not the tasks you have to do, but the things you've dreamed about. Take your time—walk around your home and your neighbourhood, letting your thoughts run free, and listen to your memories.
- **Organize your list.** Group the items into three categories: things you really want to accomplish (include some steps you can take right away); activities you're interested in but not fully committed to (hold this list in reserve and check it every few months); and goals you want to drop (either you've accomplished them or they no longer really attract you).
- **Discard your master list.** Throw away the big list you compiled in step one. This symbolically clears your mind of all your scattered thoughts and let you zero in on the activities you want to pursue in the immediate future.

Step back from conflict

What happens when someone "pushes your buttons"? Do you instinctively push back? That may do more harm than good. In the workplace, it's sometimes best to back away from conflict until you can resolve it calmly and rationally.

Here are three guidelines to keeping your cool:

- **Recognize your automatic responses.** When that meddlesome co-worker gets into your business, what goes through your head? Pay attention to your thoughts and emotions. Resolve not to lose control over your words and actions.
- **Think about the end result.** Explore the consequences of your reaction to conflict in the past. Did you regret what you said or did? Was the stress of acting out your anger—or holding it in—really worth it? Should you act this way again?
- **Stop before you react.** The next time your automatic responses start playing in your head, imagine yourself hitting the stop button on a recorder. This can allow you to think more clearly about what's really happening. Then you can move calmly ahead with a solution that works for both of you.

For Cupid's sake, you must remember these quotations . . .

What better way to celebrate Valentine's Day than with a romantic movie? To get in the mood, match these quotations with the famous love story they came from:

- a) "I don't know how to say goodbye. I can't think of any words."
b) "Promise me you'll survive. That you won't give up, no matter what happens, no matter how hopeless."
c) "What can you say about a twenty-five-year old girl who died? That she was beautiful and brilliant? That she loved Mozart and Bach, the Beatles, and me?"
d) "I think I was a little in love with her."
e) "Winter must be cold for those with no warm memories. And we've already missed the spring."
f) "It's gonna be really hard. We're gonna have to work at this every day, but I want to do that because I want you. I want all of you, forever, you and me, every day."
g) "Kiss me. Kiss me as if it were the last time."
h) "I know that this is the beginning of the end. Not the end of my loving you but the end of our being together. But not quite yet, darling. Please. Not quite yet."
i) "And when I shall die, take him and cut him up in little stars, and he will make the face of heaven so fine that all the world will fall in love with night and pay no worship to the garish sun."
j) "You should be kissed and often, and by someone who knows how."

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| 1. <i>Dr. Zhivago</i> | 2. <i>Gone With the Wind</i> | 3. <i>The Notebook</i> | 4. <i>Brief Encounter</i> |
| 5. <i>Romeo & Juliet</i> | 6. <i>Titanic</i> | 7. <i>Love Story</i> | 8. <i>An Affair to Remember</i> |
| 9. <i>Roman Holiday</i> | 10. <i>Casablanca</i> | | |

Answers: 1(d); 2(j); 3(f); 4(h); 5(i); 6(b); 7(c); 8(e); 9(a); 10(g)

Scientists: Birds use tools, too

Humans and apes aren't the only creatures that use tools. Scientists at Cambridge University have observed that crows can use pebbles to get what they want.

In an experiment, crows were shown a plastic tube 6 inches tall with a tasty worm floating in some water at the bottom.

The birds, unable to reach the worm on their own, quickly began dropping nearby stones into the tube, raising the water level until the worm came up into range of their beaks.

The crows also realized the larger stones lifted the water—and the worm—more quickly.

One small stone for a crow, one giant leap for birdkind?

Quotable Quotes

Men always want to be a woman's first love; women like to be a man's last romance. -- Oscar Wilde

Wear the old coat and buy the new book. -- Austin Phelps

It is easier to fight for principles than it is to live up to them. -- Alfred Adler

It is not the strongest of the species that survive, nor the most intelligent, but the most responsive to change. -- Charles Darwin

"Throughout history, poverty is the normal condition of man. Advances which permit this norm to be exceeded -- here and there, now and then -- are the work of an extremely small minority, frequently despised, often, often condemned, and almost always opposed by all right-thinking people. Whenever this tiny minority is kept from creating, or (as sometimes happens) is driven out of a society, the people then slip back into abject poverty. This is known as "bad luck."

-- Robert A. Heinlein, *"Time Enough For Love"*

Who do you think is the "small minority" that the great Heinlein was talking about? Certainly not the politicians!



Two hearts beating as one

A researcher at the **Institute of HeartMath** in Boulder Creek, California, investigated what happens to longtime couples' hearts as they sleep. Heart-rate monitors showed that while slumbering beside each other, the individuals' heart rhythm fell into sync. When EKG printouts of a couple's heart rates were placed on top of each other, the printouts looked virtually identical.