



A Personal Note from Single Steps Strategies Founder Mary Grace Musuneggi

Surviving Valentine's Day

It seems we have barely finished taking down the Christmas decorations, when in every store Valentines appear. And, although Valentine's Day should be something to look forward to in the doldrums of the winter; for many women Valentine's Day can bring them into the cold reality of defining them in terms of their relationships... or lack thereof.

Remember how in elementary school, you would spend days decorating that shoe box, writing out your cards and choosing the best card for that "Someone Special"; only to watch that "Someone Special" walk past your desk to give his "Someone Special" card to that too adorable, too sweet, "teacher's pet" little girl, who wouldn't have much as given him the time of day. She would take the card and put it in her box with the other 15 "Someone Special" cards she got that day. By the end of the school day, the amount and size and shape of the cards you received defined you as popular... or not; in the right clique... or not; pretty ... or not... and so on.

And somehow 20, 30, 40 years later, nothing has changed. Unless your current relationship is with your prince charming, soul mate; or you are the adult version of the "teacher's pet", Valentine's Day defines you as single, divorced, widowed; happily attached; sadly unattached; in the wrong relationship with the wrong person; or living with the guy who just will never think to buy you flowers and candy, but he will get your car washed. No matter what, we will define ourselves in terms of our relationship on that day. This holiday can attack self-esteem, produce anxiety, create confusion over lifestyles and cause a sense of inadequacy for women who are normally intelligent, successful, self-confident and self-assured.

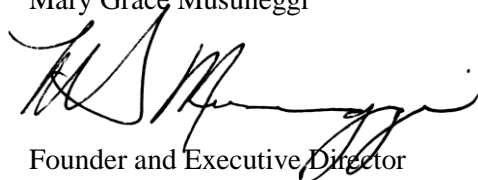
The whole reason for this is that we all have the need to be loved. And thanks to Cinderella and "Pretty Woman" Julia Roberts, we believe that romantic love is the ultimate form of love. And Valentine's Day is all about romantic love.

So how do you survive this if you are not currently in a romantically loving relationship?

We can begin by focusing on who we love and who loves us. Even if this is your kid sister or your mom, you can be reassured that you are a lovable person. Hang out with your mom. Take your little sister shopping. Spend some time being grateful for who you are and what is special about you. These thoughts will reassure you and remind you of your self-worth while restoring your self esteem. Plan to spend February revisiting the goals you had set for yourself going into the new year. Concentrate on the things that are important to you. Do something special for yourself. Go to a spa, get a professional pedicure, or get a massage. Send Valentine's cards to everyone you know. You will feel good for doing it and they will feel great for receiving it. And for someone, this may be the only card they get. Write on each card, "For Someone Special". Prepare your favorite dinner, have a glass of wine and watch your favorite "Chick-flick". Use this month to become the kind of person you would love or the person you would love to be.

Single Steps Strategies wishes you a Happy Valentine's Day, for you are "someone special". You are on your life's journey... and it all begins with a single step.

Mary Grace Musuneggi

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'M. Musuneggi', written in a cursive style.

Founder and Executive Director

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