

## Give Love this Valentine's Day - Have loved and protected your own heart?

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February is the month of red roses, cliché cards and chocolate truffles galore. Most people know that the Valentine's Day is named after St. Valentine, but the day's traditions date back to Roman times when people took part in a fertility festival known as Lupercalia.

Today, it might feel like Valentine's Day has become overly commercialized, and that on this day we are expected to perform in a way that makes for a great Lifetime movie. But you don't have to ride the pink avalanche to give love to the people around you. You can use Valentine's Day as an opportunity to express yourself in a way that feels genuine.

### Buy Flowers for Your Neighbor Who Lives Alone



Nowadays, people know their neighbors less than ever before. Many are left lonely and forgotten in the age of internet relationships and social media. On Valentine's Day, don't forget about the elderly woman across the street — it may have been a long time since she received a letter from anyone. Consider stopping by her house one afternoon with flowers or a handwritten card. If she is feeling chatty, take the time to really listen. (That may mean more to her than the flowers). And don't forget to shovel her steps



when it snows. Small acts of kindness shown to our neighbors overtime will mean more than a grand gesture.

### **Honor Your Spouse's Love Language**



On Valentine's Day, we tend to give gifts to our spouses or significant others. But what if your husband or wife's love language is acts of service? According to author Gary Chapman, there are five unique ways to show love to someone, and many of us have a specific preference. We may focus too much on gift-giving that we neglect what our partners are really craving from us. This year, go beyond the ordinary to do something to make your spouse swoon. If you're not sure about your husband or wife's love language, [take the quiz together](#).

### **Include Everyone, Galentine's-Day Style**



February shouldn't just be a month for couples. The intensity of Valentine's Day can leave single people feeling alone, especially when it seems that just about everyone is paired up during the season of pinks

and reds. There's a reason why [Galentine's Day](#), first introduced by Leslie Knope on the show Parks and Rec, has taken off in recent years. Don't just focus on romance this Valentine's Day. Write a love note to your sibling, your child, or your friend. Have a ladies' night (or a men's get-together) and celebrate what you truly love about each of your friends.

### **Practice Self Love**



Have you taken time to love yourself recently? The question may sound selfish to an ear used to hearing that we should 'Live for the Sake of Others.' Sadly, some of us have come to confuse living for the sake of others with dying for the sake of others. But a life dedicated to spreading God's love will be ineffective if we feel taken for granted, unappreciated or even abused. As airline attendants tell us before the start of each flight, we must put our own oxygen mask on before attempting to help others with theirs.

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This month, ask yourself how well you have loved and protected your own heart. We each have an inner dialogue which runs in our mind throughout the day. Unfortunately, sometimes we allow this inner voice to speak to us in a way that we would never speak to another person. Did you share kind words with yourself this month? Did you do something that you enjoyed, which truly filled your soul? Did you spend time with a person who made you feel good about yourself? It can be hard to prioritize ourselves when we lead such busy lives. So do your soul a favor, and listen to what it has been trying to tell you.