



MEDIA RELEASE

8 February 2010

Expressing your love the key to a happy Valentine's Day

During the past 25 years, Valentine's Day has become a fixture in the romantic calendar of many Victorians, particularly the under 40s.

Yet according to Relationships Australia Victoria (RAV), not all of us feel the same way about 14 February.

RAV's counselling practice leader, Dr Ingrid Sturmey, says that for some, celebrating 14 February is an important way of injecting romance into an important relationship – that feeling of being desired and admired.

For others, the day is a load of old rubbish and just another sentimental fad Australians have imported from the US – a marketing of emotions.

And then there are those who sit somewhere in between.

Dr Sturmey says it is important for couples to understand how their partner feels about Valentine's Day and the expectations they have.

"By ignoring the celebration, a non-romantic partner could be on the way to temporary relationship hell.

"However, he or she could earn a lot of brownie points by organising some sort of celebration to mark the day. It does not have to be expensive, just something deeply meaningful between the two of you.

"The gesture recognises that what is important to their partner is important to pay attention to and if it means a lot to them, to do for them. Equally, the romantic partner needs to acknowledge the gesture fully, thankfully.

"If both partners are clear about each other's expectations and respond accordingly, the day and the days to follow are likely to go much more smoothly."

Yet Dr Sturmey says despite the hype surrounding Valentine's Day, people should not judge their partners only by their actions on one day of the year. There are many ways to show love and admiration.

"In the end, the worth of a relationship is judged by far more than whether your partner gets the Valentine's Day thing right.

“Nurturing our relationships every day – paying attention, being affectionate, appreciative words, acts of kindness above and beyond doing our agreed responsibilities - is the most important thing we can do in our lives.

“Don’t take your partner for granted. Affirm them by expressing your love and celebrating each other, sometimes for no obvious reason. You don’t have to wait for Valentine’s Day, a birthday or another significant event to show you care. Do it every time.”

Dr Sturmey has the following Valentine’s Day tips for couples:

- Don’t expect your partner to automatically feel the same as you about Valentine’s Day.
- Let your partner know that Valentine’s Day is important to you if it is. It can save a lot of disappointment later.
- Plan ahead and communicate your expectations about the day.
- Simple celebrations and simple words - a picnic in the park or a note delivered with the morning coffee after Sunday morning sleep in - are sufficient.

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