

Valentine's Day and valuing your relationship

TIP SHEET



Valentine's Day is one of those days that can bring up a range of emotions. If you are in a relationship, it's important to understand your partner's feeling about and expectations of the day.

For some people, Valentine's Day is an important celebration and recognition of an important relationship. Others believe it is an unnecessary and commercial exploitation, or may be completely ambivalent to it.

However you feel about Valentine's Day, if it is meaningful to your partner, recognising and celebrating it will show that you have paid attention to what is important to him or her. Equally, your partner needs to acknowledge this gesture.

If you are both clear about each other's expectations and respond accordingly, your Valentine's Day is likely to go much more smoothly.

1 Tips for a happy Valentine's Day

Don't assume your partner feels the same as you about Valentine's Day.

If the day is important to you, let your partner know. It could save a lot of disappointment later.

There is no need to be extravagant or spend a lot of money. Your celebration can just be something meaningful between the two of you. Simple gestures and simple words are sufficient.

2 Focusing on your relationship everyday

The fact that Valentine's Day brings relationships into focus can be a good excuse to take stock of your own.

Relationships experts agree that valuing your relationship, and acknowledging and celebrating the good things about a partner is important – not just on Valentine's Day, but every day of the year.

Just like your health, fitness and finances, relationships need attention and maintenance and can't be taken for granted. This includes the different parts of being in a relationship; the 'me', 'you' and 'us'.

Like most things in our lives, when things are going well we don't necessarily feel the need to put a lot of effort in to keep things that way. It's only when things begin to slide that

we feel the need to take action, and sometimes this can be too late.

Conflict and negative feelings such as anger are normal in relationships. The difference between happy, stable relationships and unhappy, unsuccessful relationships is the way that conflict and problems are managed.

In happy relationships, partners:

- don't let negative feelings disrupt their attempts to work out their problems
- build up positive feelings
- manage the number of negatives
- repair their connection
- support each other's goals and aspirations.

3 Relationship tips

Nurture your relationships every day by paying attention, being affectionate, though appreciative words and acts of kindness above and beyond your agreed responsibilities.

Don't take your partner for granted. Affirm them by expressing your love and celebrating each other, sometimes for no obvious reason.

Despite the hype around Valentine's day, don't judge your partners only by their actions on one day of the year.

You don't have to wait for Valentine's Day, a birthday or other significant event to show your care.

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4 More information

Research by Relationships Australia and the Australian National University has shown that couples who participate in relationship education courses are more likely to be happier in their relationships, find it easier to communicate their concerns and deal with conflict.

Relationships Australia Victoria (RAV) conducts relationship programs at centres across Victoria. Visit www.relationshipsvictoria.com.au/courses/relationship-education/category/2

RAV also provides a free online relationship course, Good Connecting. Visit <http://www.relationshipsvictoria.com.au/good-connecting>

About Relationships Australia Victoria

RAV is a community-based, not-for-profit organisation, with no religious affiliations. Our services are for all members of the community, regardless of their religion, age, gender, sexual orientation, lifestyle choice, cultural background or economic circumstances

We aim to provide high quality and comprehensive services that assist families and children to overcome challenges, grow and thrive.

For more information on our programs, locations and how to access our services, please visit our website or call 1300 364 277.

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