Give Love to All on Valentine’s Day

Evelyn May

Ce4553dr@metrostate.edu

Valentine’s Day sucks. Not the day specifically, but how people behave in regard to the day. Florists mark up the cost of roses, mushy love paraphernalia becomes immensely popular, and people who may not have romantic love are made to feel isolated. I'm one of those people.

In a time long, long ago, my spouse was against celebrating Valentine’s Day. I came home from class to an empty house on a dreary February 14 evening. On the kitchen table sat a pound of pre-cooked bacon and a 24 case of Pabst Blue Ribbon. This, I believed, was a gift from my boyfriend. I called to thank him for the confusing items, only to find they were not for me. This was the moment when I warmed up the bacon, cracked a beer, cried, and decided from that point on Valentine’s Day should be about giving everyone love and respecting myself. Oh, and feeding my boyfriend’s heart to the cat.

I'm not the only one who has gotten down in the dumps about this holiday. In a study done by the University Department of Psychiatry in Queen Elizabeth Hospital, published overseas in the British Medical Journal, rates of attempted suicide increased on February 14. Control dates of February 7, and August 15, where used, also Christmas. With a median age of 21-22, a measured 45 percent increase of people attempted to take their own lives on Valentine’s Day. A day meant to celebrate love can also bring up feelings of disappointment and loneliness. Let's band together and give gratitude to ourselves and others to avoid the stress.

Down with gross commercialized love! This Valentine’s day, revolt and love yourself, friends, pets, and even strangers. Life is too important to live it feeling alone. You are never alone. I'm not saying that to boost your self-esteem or to inflate your ego. I'm saying it because everyone deserves love, acceptance, friendship and joy.

On a day that is all about commercialized, gushing red-cartoon hearts, how do you love yourself? Do something for others or with friends. Here are some tips to revolt against Valentine’s Day and still send love to yourself and the community.

**Donate:** How often do items sit going unused? There are many people in need of clothing. And, let’s face it, some of us have items in our closets that haven't been worn in years. Instead of spending money on an expensive meal, buy non-perishable items for a food shelf. Maybe gather up books you no longer want and bring them to Goodwill.

**Volunteer:** Find a cause you like and volunteer. Fellow students have causes they love. Last year a student volunteered at a horse sanctuary and invited me to help raise money for the ponies. Other students may be more interested in volunteering in soup kitchens, animal shelters or hospitals. Find a passion to give yourself to.

**Build community:** Whether it be going to dinner with classmates, dancing to Zumba YouTube videos with friends, attending church, practicing a sport or yoga, or just setting up a study group. Build community and have fun with it. There is no need to spend ample amounts of time on romance when friendship is available to everyone.

**Explore:** Bundle up and go for walk to a new place, read a new book or watch a new TV show. Explore something new and appreciate the adventures that life holds.

Minnesota winters are hard enough on us all. After getting through the stressful holiday season we can't let the most commercially romanticized day of the year cause undue harm. Let's have fun, give back, and send love to the world rather than just one person.