

Eddie Cibrian and LeAnn Rimes: A Low-Key Valentine's Day



Recently engaged couple LeAnn Rimes and Eddie Cibrian did not plan for an overly romantic [Valentine's Day](#), reports [UsMagazine.com](#). At Sunday's Grammy Awards, the couple laughed and jokingly asked reporters, "Is [Valentine's Day] tomorrow?" Rimes butted in and further explained, "We have his boys [Mason, 7, and Jake, 3] on Valentine's Day. So we are literally going to play Wii with some friends and eat pizza, which is better than anything else we could be doing."

How do you have a date night with kids?

Cupid's Advice:

While many feel that romance becomes much harder to maintain

after children enter into the equation, many others have found this sentiment to be untrue. Here are a few ways to have a date night (even with kids):

1. Put your trust in technology: While video games, television and computers take away from study time, they can also keep your children occupied. Try renting a movie or a new video game for your children to play with while you and your partner enjoy some quality time together.

2. Take the kids with you: There are many restaurants that are family friendly. Experiment with a few, and you may find that both you and your children are happy with the experience.

3. Hire a babysitter: If you yearn for a date night without the kids, hire a babysitter. Trusted babysitters are lifesavers for couples in need of a night out, and most come at the reasonable price of about \$10 per hour.

And Our Valentine's Day Giveaway Winners Are...





Hope everyone had a wonderful Valentine's Day! Without further ado, here are our giveaway winners:

Pauly D's E-Cards from StarGreetz

Nasafi23

Afgzillestmami

breee

Biancabhj

One \$10 Pinkberry gift card

Sarina

CafePress T-Shirts

Debbie Jackson

Jeannine Mellan

Christian

Jetsrule709

AXE Buzzed Look Cream Jar

Mike B

Congrats to all of our winners! Be on the lookout for an email or a direct message on Twitter for information regarding your win.

If you didn't snag one of these giveaways, don't worry –

there's still time to enter a [Brenda Novak tote bag filled with goodies](#) or [a set of footed pajamas from PajamaCity](#)! Good luck!

'How About' Giving Online Dating One Last Try?



By Jenna Barbieri

Some people spend [Valentine's Day](#) doing extravagant things with their loved ones, while others spend it alone in front of their computers. Does the latter sound like you? Well, what would you do if I told you that this year, sitting in front of the computer might actually be the start to your ideal Valentine's Day? Would you think I was lying? Yeah, so would I. Which is why I did some research after hearing all the

hype about HowAboutWe.com.

Before I say anything else, let me point out that HowAboutWe is a dating site ... but it's not actually a dating site. Most people are hesitant to attempt online dating, but the only part of the actual dating that takes place on this site is the proposal. According to their homepage, "It's a site all about dates – inventing dates, scrolling through dates, asking people out and going on the dates you really want to go on."

It's no secret that connecting online has become an ideal dating option, which is why there are thousands of dating sites already out there. What separates HowAboutWe from the rest is the wait time (or lack thereof). HAW is straight to the point: What's your ideal date? Have you always wanted to go sky diving over beautiful scenery while holding hands with a significant other? Type it in and instantly connect with those who share your interest – it doesn't get easier than that. In the meantime, look through your own date proposals until you find one right for you.

Once someone accepts your dating proposal or vice versa, the rest is natural. The type of date itself already tells you a lot about the person, and you're immediately thrown into an activity you both enjoy. If the date lacks that special spark, take comfort that you've found a friend who shares similar interests as you, all while continuing to date other people who also share your hobbies until you find the person that's right for you. Who *wouldn't* want to be asked out on a regular basis?

So instead of spending Valentine's Day alone, How About YOU take a chance on HowAboutWe? It's more than just a great way to meet people; it's a great way to meet the right people.

*Interested in giving it a try? HowAboutWe.com is offering our readers a **SPECIAL DISCOUNT of 33% OFF** their service, just in time for Valentine's Day! Use promo code VDAYFUN. For more*

information, visit their Facebook page and follow them on Twitter: @howaboutwe.

Have a 'Delicioso Night In' With Aarón Sánchez This Valentine's Day



By Aarón Sánchez,
celebrity chef and TV personality

This Valentine's Day, forgo waiting hours on end for a table at a busy restaurant when you can have a fabulous night in right at home. Not only is it a great opportunity to intensify connections with family, friends and significant others, but it's much easier on the wallet! Celebrity chef and TV personality Aarón Sánchez agrees, and has some easy

tips to creating your own “Delicioso Night In.” You can join the Delicioso movement [here](#). Not only does this give you the opportunity to take part in great conversations, but by joining the movement, you’re automatically entered for a chance to win the ultimate Delicioso Night In, prepared by Chef Aarón himself in New York City. After flying to New York for this special evening, one lucky winner and three other people of his or her choosing will be whisked away to Veracruz, Mexico, the home of Kahlua. In the meantime, enjoy the following tips from Chef Aarón to start your Valentine’s Day off right:



The Nose Knows

You don’t have to be a chemist to create memorable aromatics for your next evening of entertaining at home. In my home of Veracruz, there is a huge influence of African spices that were brought over when Cortez sailed across the Caribbean. Let such robust spices (think cloves, canela – the *real* cinnamon, cardamom, and black pepper) help set the mood with the help of a standard frying pan. Toast the spices just to their smoking point, and the room will fill with an inviting – and delicious – bouquet.

Team Chef

It’s like that old saying goes: those who sauté together, stay together. Collaborate on a menu and invite your guest(s) to help you bring the menu to life. Start the party early and enjoy cocktails as you cook; I like to keep it simple with a

glass of Kahlua on the rocks with a splash of ginger ale. Cooking your creations together as you enjoy cocktails will allow for plenty of lean-in moments over the stove top, and eating those creations will be the reward for your labors over delicious conversation.

Pairing is Caring

When prepping for a perfect evening, pairings are a fun way to turn any meal into a special occasion and spice up the fun. Plan three courses and pair each with a small cocktail; use one base spirit in three different ways. Keep in mind when choosing your menu to pick a spirit that embodies the flavors you are working with; for example Kahlua – from the heart of Veracruz, Mexico – will bring out beautiful notes of vanilla, another Veracruz staple that pairs lovely with complex and robust dishes that involve such flavors as molé.

Forget the Utensils

Feeding someone can be a loving, playful proposition (especially sans fork). In Mexico, we love to entertain with botanas – small bites – that incorporate foods indigenous to the region like seafood and black beans. Reconnect with your partner over a selection of botanas like plantains, garnachas (a small fried masa topped with pork or chicken), mushrooms, or fresh cut fruit. Watch those teeth.

Three Valentine's Resolutions That Last!



By Melissa Orlov,

marriage consultant and author of *The ADHD Effect on Marriage*

How often have you found that the requisite roses (slightly wilted at the edges) don't do that much for you? This year, for a truly meaningful [Valentine's Day](#), don't focus on a single romantic gesture. Instead, consider making Valentine's Day the 'New Years' of romance – a time for making resolutions that will create lasting change for your relationship.

The good news? There is science behind how to do this. Here are three resolutions that can make Valentine's Day *matter* for a change:

We will teach ourselves to argue. Significant marital research suggests that couples who argue using the right words, who are conscious of how to start and end a conversation, and who avoid accusatory or critical rhetoric in the middle can use disagreement to strengthen their marriage, rather than weaken it. So forget about what you are fighting about and focus instead about how you disagree. Healthy conflict puts you on

a path to resolve your differences. Unproductive conflict, or avoiding conflict all together, means that your problems don't get solved, only aggravated.

We will address ADHD in our relationship. If you have a child with ADHD, patterns of significant inconsistency in at least one spouse, chronic nagging and anger, or very uneven distribution of responsibilities in your relationship, then ADHD may be creating serious problems for you. Learning how ADHD impacts adult relationships will help you overcome the many challenges you currently face.

We will change the proportion of positive interactions to negative ones. University of Washington researchers, including John Gottman, have determined that healthy relationships include at least five times more positive interactions than negative ones. So every time you create a negative reaction in your relationship, you need to self-consciously make up for it by creating five positive ones! Saying 'I'm sorry' is a good start, but it's only one-fifth of the work you need to do – so get to it!

Melissa Orlov is the author of The ADHD Effect on Marriage, and has been featured in the NY Times, on CNN, Today and more. Her website is www.adhdmarrriage.com. For more, Orlov suggests For Better: The Science of a Good Marriage by Tara Parker-Pope and The Relationship Cure by John Gottman, Ph.D. You can also follow Orlov on Twitter: @msorlov.

Must-Dos for a Memorable

Valentine's Day



By Babe Scott,

author of *Delicious Dating*

Heidi Klum is going to say it with a surprise box of confetti hearts, cute underwear and chocolates. Katy Perry is said to be buying Russell Brand a lilac-colored Bentley. So how are *you* going to make your guy feel like the only man in the universe on [Valentine's Day](#)?

It's a given that your beau will romance you with a candle-lit dinner, but what will you do to ensure this night of love will be forever brulée-torched in your memories? Here are a few tips:

Dress to Impress

Ditch your Bridget Jones-style orthopedic underpants and usual denims. Your man is booking a delicious meal in an attempt to ignite your sensual appetite, so the least you can do is make

an effort.

Men are very Pavlovian when it comes to clothes, and what turns them on is a fitted dress and soft, figure-hugging fabrics. The Little Black Dress is always a good standby – a little cleavage, a spritz of perfume and high heels should have him salivating. Take a cue from Heidi, and make sure that what's underneath is equally enticing. Forget the Spanx, and put on those sexy knickers and a push-up bra.

Give Him a Gift

You might not be buying him a Bentley, but that doesn't mean the effort is all his. Give him a token of your appreciation and affection – maybe a guy necklace, a compilation CD of both of your favorite songs, or even a framed photograph of you together. You want this gift to remind him of you every time he sees or wears it, so avoid the generic.

Create Some Ambiance

Chances are, you'll be at your place later, so make sure you have all the ingredients to whip up his favorite cocktail and snacks. Remember to tidy up, and set the stage with dim lighting and soft pillows. Have candles and mood music at the ready, put some flowers in a vase, and get your best and softest clean sheets on the bed. It's the little details that count. Maybe have some strawberries and sparkling wine, if not Champagne, in the fridge for the morning.

The night doesn't stop once he pays the check. You want to continue the romance when you get home, and nothing says, "I don't care" more than a messy apartment and an unmade bed.

If you plan out every detail, you'll be in for a delicious night!

Babe Scott, a self-declared "manthropologist," is the author of Delicious Dating: The Single Girl's Guide to Decoding Men

by Their Wining and Dining Styles. A magazine publisher in her native Australia, Babe broke bread with more than 100 men, and interviewed more than 200 men and women to reveal how to judge a man's potential as a lover and husband by what and where he eats. Learn more at www.BabeScott.com, and follow her on Twitter: @DeliciousDating.

4 Great Valentine's Day Gift Ideas for Her



By Gunter Jameson

Men, for 364 days of the year, get to do things like fix cars, hook up electronics, and be a general handyman for the women in our lives. One day a year, we are asked to do something else to show our love – something a little more romantic. On

[Valentine's Day](#), it's our job to shave off our manly exterior and be the cute and cuddly teddy bears that our women want us to be. The time has come once again to buy gifts for our wives or girlfriends that tell them how much we love and appreciate them. This is not a time for utilitarian gifts, like a mixer or a car stereo, so if you're stumped as to what you should buy for your special someone, here are a few ideas that should point you in the right direction:

1. Chocolates and flowers: It may be cliché, but flowers and chocolates are a really great gift on Valentine's Day. Even though they're not practical, that's the point! They don't serve any other purpose except to look pretty, smell good and taste delicious. If you bring a little beauty and a piece of chocolate goodness into the life of your woman, she will love you right back.

2. Hand-dipped strawberries: Chocolate-dipped strawberries are one of those rare treats that are so simple to make, but are very special and unique. The sweet chocolate and juicy strawberry combined make a flavorful and slightly sensual treat that will delight your woman's palette and tell her that you love her, both at the same time. And she won't want to eat them alone; get ready to snuggle up and share. Want to score bonus points? Suggest making chocolate-dipped strawberries together.

3. Heart-shaped jewelry: Yes, it might seem a little cheesy, but heart-shaped jewelry is a great way to get into your woman's heart. Pendants, earrings, bracelets, necklaces, rings and more; it almost doesn't matter, as long as it looks beautiful. Your mate will know that you love her and that you had to embarrass yourself by walking into a jewelry store – and of course, that's part of the present.

4. A weekend away: Clearly, if you have the money, a weekend away is one of the best gifts you can give to your special

lady this Valentine's Day. All she wants to do is feel special by spending time with you without distractions, and doing things you both enjoy. Stay at a cozy bed and breakfast or at an upscale hotel. Get couples massages or spa treatments. As long as the two of you are together and relaxing, she'll love it.

The most important thing about Valentine's Day is that you make your wife or girlfriend feel special – like she's the only woman in the world. If you can help her feel that, then she'll know you love her. Plus, you can then go back to doing manly things the other 364 days of the year.

SELF: Reasons to Like February 14 Regardless of Your Relationship Status





From *SELF* Magazine

Love being single because...

1. You stay slimmer. Women who live alone gained less weight (about 9 pounds over a five-year period) than newly married women, a study from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill notes. “Men have a higher calorie allowance, so if you have whatever he’s having, you’re going to gain weight,” says Tara Brass, M.D., medical director of Columbus Park Collaborative.

Advice for all from SELF: Shared meals and social obligations can wreck any woman’s diet. Make sure you don’t match every forkful with your man – just because he finishes his entire plate doesn’t mean you have to. When dining out with friends, suggest that you both order something healthy, then split a dessert. Everybody wins!

2. You snooze more soundly. Sleeping solo has its perks: Two thirds of people who share a bed say their partner snores, costing some of them an average of 49 minutes of sleep per night, a National Sleep Foundation survey shows. “The noise created by snoring can be as loud as a kitchen blender,” says Carol Ash, D.O., a sleep specialist in Jamesburg, New Jersey.

Advice for all from SELF: Use a white noise machine for more

peaceful slumber, Ash suggests, and avoid alcohol or caffeine for four hours before bedtime.

3. You have steamier sex. Single gals report fewer bedroom issues such as lack of interest, low arousal and anxiety about sex than married women, a study from University College London reveals. “Excitement over a new crush creates a surge in neurotransmitters that crank up your sex drive,” Dr. Brass says.

Advice for all from SELF: As you grow more committed, novelty can keep your love life hot. “Try new positions and locations, role-playing and, yes, even toys, which have been linked to increasing your chance for orgasm,” suggests Debby Herbenick, Ph.D., a research scientist at Indiana University.

4. You enjoy more me-time. Single women luxuriate in seven extra hours a week that married women spend doing chores, finds research from the University of Michigan at Ann Arbor. “Women increase their housework after marriage; men reduce theirs,” says study author Frank Stafford, Ph.D. (Thanks, guys.)

Advice for all from SELF: Leave the dishes in the sink, and reduce stress by taking a Zumba class or diving into a book.

Love being coupled because...

1. You're probably not hung-over today. Married women are 20 percent less likely to binge-drink than back when they were single, a study from Northwestern University at Evanston, Illinois, indicates. Putting a ring on it may prompt women to put their wilder days behind them. And knowing your partner is watching may help you keep each other's vices in check.

Advice for all from SELF: Drinking a moderate amount of alcohol can be good for you. But indulging too heavily may increase your risk for breast cancer. Stick to no more than one drink per day.

2. You catch the happiness bug. Women who live with a mate

tend to brighten up when their partner is in a good mood, according to a study from the University of York. “Emotions are highly contagious, and so is happiness,” explains study author Nick Powdthavee, Ph.D.

Advice for all from SELF: The trickle-down glee can come from anyone we know and like, Dr. Powdthavee says, so take a friend out after her promotion or send a note of congrats for a relative’s new baby and bask in her joy, too.

3. You have better health care access. Single women are 60 percent more likely to lack health insurance than married women, a Centers for Disease Control survey suggests. “Having a spouse increases your odds that you will have employer-sponsored coverage,” says Mark Rukavina, executive director of the Access Project, a health research and advocacy organization.

Advice for all from SELF: Visit HealthCare.gov to search for the most affordable plans in your state and to find out how reform will improve your access.

4. You keep your brain going. Couples who marry or live together are half as likely to develop dementia later in life than those who live solo, a study in *BMJ* notes. Constant social interaction between partners (even bickering) may strengthen the connection between brain cells and prevent cognitive decline.

Advice for all from SELF: Paired up or not, everyone can benefit from healthy social connectivity. With stronger mental health, you’ll fare better with any health hurdles that come your way, suggesting all women build connections by prioritizing church or charity as well as friendships. How about throwing a February 15 party just for fun?

Keep on top of all fitness, healthy eating and wellness news with SELF Magazine. For more tips, follow SELF on Twitter: @SELFMagazine.

Special Valentine's Day Beauty Giveaway from Bestselling Author Brenda Novak!



*This post is
sponsored by Brenda Novak.*

To celebrate Valentine's Day, Cupid's Pulse has teamed up with *New York Times* bestselling author Brenda Novak to offer a **Brenda Novak canvas tote to TWO LUCKY READERS!** But don't think you're getting just the tote bag; included are **Novak makeup bags with THREE lip glosses** named after her **HEAT trilogy** (retail price: \$21 each) and **an autographed set of all three books!**

~~To enter, tell us your next lip gloss-worthy occasion — whether it's a steamy first date or a cool and comfortable night with you beau. The best answer wins! Please be sure to use your real email address so we have a way of contacting you if you've won — don't worry, your address won't be shown and we will never spam you. This giveaway will run until **11:59 PM EST on Thursday, Feb. 17.** Check back on **Friday, Feb. 18 at 10 AM EST** for a post announcing the winners. Good luck!~~

This giveaway is now closed.

In the meantime, check out Brenda Novak's special Valentine's Day guest post: 10 Tips To Keeping Your Valentine. For more information, visit her website at www.BrendaNovak.com and follow her on Twitter: @Brenda_Novak.

10 Tips To Keeping Your Valentine





By Brenda Novak, *New York Times* and *USA Today* bestselling author

With [Valentine's Day](#) approaching, it's easy to start pondering your love life. The "what if's" begin to run rampant, and the future is undoubtedly a big focus. If you can't imagine your life without your current partner, you need to start thinking about how you plan to keep him or her. Brenda Novak, bestselling author of more than 30 Harlequin romance novels, has some tips on how to do just that, which she's garnished from her own experience and research:

- 1. Avoid negative thought patterns:** Allowing yourself to mentally or verbally tear down your significant other is like gnawing at the bond that holds you together.
- 2. Remember that this person means more to you than anyone else:** This includes your parents and your kids. People who live their entire lives for their children are often disappointed to find that they have no relationship left once the kids head out on their own.
- 3. Be more flexible and forgiving with your spouse than mere friends and neighbors:** We expect our spouses to "understand" our stress or limitations – in other words, put up with our crap. Instead, reserve your patience and kindness for the

person who means the most to you.

4. Understand that relationships work on a spiral: The more thoughtful you are with your loved one, the more fulfilled and happy he or she will be, and the more he or she will be interested in giving back to you.

5. Don't get too practical: Some couples forgo the flowers, the cards, the dinner dates and the chocolates in favor of saving money. But what's worth more to you? A few bucks (or even a house or a car), or a relationship that will likely affect your whole life and the lives of your children?

6. Try to do something nice for your spouse every day: Even if it's just a chore he or she typically does, these thoughtful touches will act like a hedge against the tough times.

7. Be physical and touch a lot: These little reminders that a spouse cares are nurturing to the soul and send wonderful signals to your children. Your kids will feel secure and happy because *you're* secure and happy, and they'll be more loving because of the example you've set.

8. Remain loyal: Have the grit it takes to stick together through thick and thin.

9. Be unselfish: It might seem otherwise, but life isn't all about you, how you're feeling and what you want. Worry more about whether you're being a good spouse than whether your spouse is being a good mate to you, and you'll be glad you did.

10. Take care of yourself: You don't have to be model-thin or in the first blush of youth, but be the best you can be – mentally and physically. In other words, be someone you'd like to be with.

Brenda Novak and her husband, Ted, live in Sacramento and are proud parents of five children – three girls and two boys.

When she's not spending time with her family or writing, Brenda is usually working on her annual fund-raiser for diabetes research – an online auction held on her at www.BrendaNovak.com every May. Follow her on Twitter: @Brenda_Novak. Still want more? Check out her special Valentine's Day giveaway [here](#)!

Happy Valentine's Day from Cupid's Pulse!



Happy Valentine's Day

To all of our visitors!

Visit us hourly for everything you need to make your

Valentine's Day fabulous!

Valentine's Day Special: Find Your Five-Star Celebrity Relationship



Wouldn't you like somebody to love? It seems most of Hollywood thinks they do. So many celebrities jump in and out of relationships that we need a scorecard to keep track. Just when we they've got it right, Cupid's pulse hits a flat line. If celebrities can't keep their relationships together, we wonder: can we? Take beloved Sandra Bullock, left standing at the altar of her professional accomplishments, Oscar in hand, gushingly thanking her beloved Jesse James – only to find he

has been screwing around behind her back. Naturally, she instantly dumps him. We also keep hoping that Jennifer Aniston will find her special love. Her ex, Brad Pitt, appears to have a great thing going with Angelina Jolie – at least for now. Then, there's David Arquette, who was dumped by Courteney Cox. One celebrity couple who appears to have it all is Sarah and Matthew Broderick (if we disregard the pre-marital tabloid fodder). And at least we've got Jeff Bridges, Helen Mirren, Meryl Streep, Kyra Sedgwick and Kevin Bacon as beacons of hope.

How do we avoid the heartbreak of loss and pain to go after long-term love?

First, you need to learn to follow your own Cupid's pulse. Here are 10 tips to your own five-star celebrity relationship this [Valentine's Day](#):

- 1. There are plenty of fish in the sea:** Stop depending on celebrities to teach you how to have a successful love life, and start swimming in your own pond. Sitting home expecting prince or princess charming to magically appear at your door means living in fantasy land.
- 2. Get out there:** Dating takes courage, research, smart thinking, a cautiously open heart and the willingness to learn more about yourself en route to your future. Like Nike says, "Just do it."
- 3. Be pragmatic:** Dating is like job hunting. You might get lucky the first time, or you may have to invest some significant time and effort into sorting through the possibilities.
- 4. Think of dating as an education:** Learn, go after what you want, and don't settle. Just because someone wants you, doesn't mean you need to want them back. Take charge of your own life.

5. Move on from the past: Whatever your dating history, be it a long-term relationship that ended or a series of short-lived affairs that didn't last, every dater remembers enough prior heartbreaks to make a grown elephant cry. So what? You never know what's around the corner. Surprises come wrapped in the most unexpected packages.

6. Don't ever utter the words "I'm too busy to date": No one is too busy to date! Making time for yourself and your future sweetheart is important. Start looking for ways to free up some time so you can get out there and find the love of your life.

7. Images are illusions: If you feel insecure about something, odds are that the other person does as well. In fact, most people you date are far more worried about how they look to you than how you look to them. Remember, most glamour photos are airbrushed.

8. Remember that you are a catch: Focus on your positive qualities. Shifting your attention to your best features, both physical and otherwise, will make you more confident and attractive. Sure, you may have some low self-esteem issues. So does everyone else.

9. Keep a wish list: Jot down general values you want in a mate. What are your deal breakers? Is smoking unacceptable? Is religion an issue? Knowing where you draw the line can save you tons of time and heartache later.

10. Keep a dating journal: It will help you learn about your likes and dislikes, as well as your own patterns.

Celebrities are just like you. Follow these tips and you just might be able to teach *them* a thing or two. Dating can lead to your own-five star romance ... and a love that lasts!

Valentine's Day Special: Speed Shrinking for Love Event



By Lavanya Sunkara

The best way to attain what you seek is to make the effort and take that first step. At last night's Speed Shrinking for Love party at Housing Works Bookstore Cafe, organized by bestselling author and journalism professor Susan Shapiro, New Yorkers of all ages and walks of life flocked to find what they were in search of, whether it was love, a book deal, or psychoanalysis.

Enthusiastic participants lined up for their speed meeting – think speed dating, but with literary agents and relationship

experts. The jam packed space buzzed with curious newcomers, mingling friends, therapists dolling out advice three minutes at a time, and literary gurus advising writers on pitches. Free wine and [Valentine's Day](#) chocolate cupcakes were plentiful.

But Speed Shrinking isn't just a witty name for a networking event. It is also the title of Shapiro's debut novel about a self-help author who sees eight therapists in eight days to deal with her cupcake addiction after her best friend, as well as her shrink, suddenly move away. What started out as a one-time party idea to promote her book, Speed Shrinking has become a social phenomenon, entertaining a series of television appearances and parties on both coasts. Last night's event was Shapiro's 10th party, and she said a producer is interested in turning it into a reality show.

When asked how therapy changed her life, Shapiro said, "It's my secret weapon. I have everything I want in life because of it – a husband I've been happily married to for 15 years and two careers I love. Therapy really pays for itself. I tripled my income, thanks to my last shrink." The participating psychoanalysts agreed, and said they want to expose people to therapy and show that it is indeed a smart life choice.



Susan Shapiro (center) with psychiatrist Sheri Spirt and

Jungian astrologist Bob Cook.
Photo courtesy of Susan
Shapiro.

Among the participants are devoted Shapiro-ites – students, literati friends and work contacts. Kiri Blakeley, author of *Can't Think Straight: A Memoir of Mixed-Up Love*, said it was her first time at a Speed Shrinking event. "I'm thrilled people recognize me from my online interviews," said Blakeley, who added that she came to spend time with friends and talk to editors about possible projects. Her experience is the norm for a Shapiro networking event. Everyone is connected to one another, either through an acquaintance, an agent, or Facebook. But the mutual link between all is Shapiro.

One participant, Daniel Berman said, "Shapiro is like a full-time operator – always available and willing to connect you to an editor, agent or romantic match. She is very supportive and I got published because of her."

Former student Alyssa Pinsker shared her thoughts. "Like most of New York, I consider Sue Shapiro my mentor. I believe in her message and good karma. What better way to spend Valentine's Day than to help others and find help?" Like many others, Pinsker wooed the editors to whom she pitched her ideas. "I always find what I need here."

Shapiro's next book, this time in collaboration with her former addiction therapist Frederick Woolverton, is titled *Unhooked* and is about how to get off addictions. For upcoming free events, please visit www.susanshapiro.net.

Lavanya Sunkara is a freelance writer whose work has appeared in Time Out, NY Resident and online magazines. For more information, visit www.lavanyasunkara.com.

Valentine's Day Special: Love the One You're With



By Sherry Richert

Belul, founder of Simply Celebrate

Whether you're madly in love, still looking for love, or are in a snit with the one you love, these 14 tips below are surefire ways to jump start more luv'n' feelings in your life, just in time for [Valentine's Day](#). Just choose one of these suggestions and try it out – on your spouse, your beau, yourself, or a friend. Or for those who crave a larger dose of feelin' good, try one a day for the next 14 days!

– Make a Love List full of silly, sweet, funny, poignant reasons why you love someone. When you're mad or disappointed, read this list! When you're happy and in love,

add to this list. If you're sad or lonely, make a Love List for yourself, a relative, or a friend.

- Share the things on your Love List with the person for whom you wrote 'em. Mail 'em in a card. Send one text message every hour. Write them on notes and hide them in their shoes or coat pockets. Make a poster. Leave voice messages on their phone.

- Pretend you are meeting your spouse or beau for the first time. Choose someplace new, where neither of you have ever been. Arrive separately. Catch eyes across the restaurant or café. Introduce yourselves using names you just made up that suit your mood. See them (and yourself) anew.

- Surprise them on an any-ole-day. It's not his birthday. It's not your anniversary. It isn't Valentine's Day. It is Tuesday the nothingth. Make a candlelight dinner, buy him that gizmo he's been drooling over, or offer an hour-long massage and kissfest.

- Be the dashing, witty, sexy, romantic, fun person you have always longed to be in relationship with! Dress up in sexy clothes, tell funny jokes, focus on the positive, talk to strangers, be dynamic and magnetic.

- Listen. Focus all of your attention on them. Try reflective listening, in which you actually repeat back verbatim each sentence they say. It's amazing how good it feels to the recipient to know someone hears every word!

- Try something new together that you've always wanted to do. Now.

- Find a way to transform your anger or snits into something fun. Buy and wear big puffy coats so you can smash into one another. Put on your favorite music and dance. Have a sword fight with foam swords. Speak in feigned accents. (When my

beau says, “Hey Boo Boo” like Yogi Bear, it is impossible not to laugh!)

- Collect and print out your 10 favorite photos of the two of you in which you’re both truly happy. Hang them someplace you’ll see them often. Let yourself feel the joy again and again and again.

- Be vulnerable. Tell him or her something you wouldn’t tell anyone else, or something you’ve been afraid to say.

- Choose connection over being right or proving a point. (Ooh, that is hard. But wow, does it pay off in spades!)

- Get those unmet needs met – someplace else. Don’t expect anyone in your life to be everything to you.

- Be present. This is the number one best way to connect – and the very best gift you can give.

- If you don’t have a partner – or even if you do – do all of these things for yourself. Loving the one you’re with starts with YOU. If you love and enjoy yourself, you’re well on your way to loving whatever wonderful and imperfect Valentine is in your life or about to show up in your life.

To help you get started on creating more love in your life, download the free Love List template at simplycreate.net and make one for yourself, your spouse, a friend, or relative.

Sherry Richert Belul is mom to a witty and wonderful 10-year-old boy. She is also founder of Simply Celebrate and author of Present Perfect: It Really is the Thought That Counts – an ebook that includes dozens of creative-not-crafty gifts that are fun to make and are full of love. Find her books or sign up for her free newsletter at www.SimplyCelebrate.net. Email Sherry to tell her your Love List experiences, ask questions, or learn about the one-of-a-kind tribute books she makes at celebrate@Madmoon.com. For more, follow her on Twitter:

@simplycelebrate.

Valentine's Day Giveaway: Look Good with AXE Buzzed Look Cream



This post is sponsored by AXE.

Don't you want to look good when you head out on your hot date? Try Buzzed Look Cream + 15, the newest in [AXE's](#) hair care products for men. Perfect for guys with short hair, this product will protect the scalp from those damaging UVA and UVB rays, all while keeping your hair soft and touchable. In fact, 75 percent of women surveyed* said they are more likely to run their hands through a buzz cut on a guy because they

love the soft feel of it. Want further proof? St. Louis quarterback Sam Bradford and candidate for NFL Rookie of the Year allowed AXE shave his shaggy hair – check out his [new buzz look here](#).

~~And to celebrate Valentine's Day, Cupid's Pulse has teamed up with AXE to offer a jar of AXE Buzzed Look Cream to **ONE LUCKY READER!** Simply tell us what your perfect date night would be in a comment below. The best date wins! Not a dude? Don't worry ladies – you can enter to win for your boyfriend or hubby. Please be sure to use your real email address so we have a way of contacting you if you've won – don't worry, your address won't be shown and we will *never* spam you. This giveaway will run until **11:59 PM EST on Monday, Feb. 14 – Valentine's Day.** Check back on **Tuesday, Feb. 15 at 1 PM EST** for a post announcing the winners. Good luck!~~

This giveaway is now closed.

In the meantime, visit your nearest food, drug or mass retail outlet to find AXE Buzzed Look Cream. A 2.64-oz. jar costs \$5.99 and is enough for 75 uses (i.e. date nights!). For more, visit Axe on their Facebook page and follow them on Twitter: @AXE.

**National survey of 1,000 girls 18-34 conducted by StrategyOne in January 2011*

Valentine's Day Giveaway: Sweet and Sour Gifts from

CafePress



This post is sponsored by CafePress.

Single on Valentine's Day? Don't worry – we have gifts for you, too! If you're one of the 44 million people who changed their relationship status to "single" in 2010 (according to Facebook), we have just what you need this holiday: "singles pride" products on CafePress, the go-to website to design whatever you want, on anything you please. In fact, there are more than 358,500 anti-Valentine's Day products on the site – a 12 percent increase from 2009. As for our happily attached readers, yes, there are all kinds of gifts for your sweetheart. From cute, matching shirts to make-you-laugh apparel, you'll find the perfect gift for your sweetheart.

~~To celebrate the holiday, Cupid's Pulse has teamed up with CafePress to offer **ONE VALENTINE'S DAY T-SHIRT** to **FIVE LUCKY READERS!** Simply tell us what your Valentine's Day slogan would read in a comment below. The most creative designs~~

~~win! Please be sure to use your real email address so we have a way of contacting you if you've won — don't worry, your address won't be shown and we will never spam you. This giveaway will run until **11:59 PM EST on Monday, Feb. 14 — Valentine's Day.** Check back on **Tuesday, Feb. 15 at 1 PM EST** for a post announcing the winners. Good luck!~~

This giveaway is now closed.

In the meantime, visit CafePress.com to find a selection of budget-friendly pro- *and* anti-Valentine's Day gear, perfect for gifts or party décor. For more updates and information, follow them on Twitter: @cafePress.

Valentine's Day Special: How to Have an Irresistible Online Dating Profile





By Julie Spira,
online dating expert and the bestselling author of *The Perils
of Cyber-Dating*

test

February may be the shortest month of the year, but for those anticipating [Valentine's Day](#), it's critical to ramp up your online dating search. There's no quicker way to find a date on the Internet than by starting with a cyber face-lift of your existing dating profile.

With more than 116 million members worldwide viewing online dating sites, the odds are in your favor that you'll be able to snag a date by Valentine's Day with these tips:

1. The Lady in Red: Everyone knows that red is synonymous with love and passion. We're reminded about Valentine's Day as soon as New Year's is over. I always say the color red will attract a man. Grab a friend and your digital camera and start snapping some photos wearing your favorite red dress or sweater to grab his attention. Post three to five photos: one full-length shot, one close up and an activity or vacation shot. Not sure what to use? Check out your own Facebook profile and scan through your photos. There might be one on your favorite social networking site to post on your online

dating profile.

2. Create a Catchy Screen Name: When I create irresistible online dating profiles for singles, I'm always amazed at how many singles just use the screen name assigned by Match.com, eHarmony, or on the free online dating site. There's nothing catchy about it at all. Think about a newspaper with a great headline and an interesting photo. If it captures your attention, you're more than likely to skim or read through the article. The same theory holds true for online dating. It's a competitive digital landscape out there – Suzy115279 isn't going to impress him, but ArtLover4U or HikingGal will show him what your interests are. This will make it easier for him to approach you.

3. Change your Settings: Typically, women like it when a man does the pursuing, but February is already here. You need to let him know you're available and ready to meet. How do you do this? Change your privacy settings to show you're online and open up your live chat or instant messaging service. Online dating is a numbers game and men are rejected all too often. Make it easy for him to find you. It's a crowded digital landscape and the squeaky wheel *does* get the deal.

4. Shorten your Profile: There's so much to say and so little time, but time is your friend. Don't tell your entire life story in your profile, or there's no reason for him to contact you. Shorten your profile to a simple paragraph with enough information to pique his curiosity.

5. Cast a Wide Net: So what if he doesn't look like your dream guy? If you have enough common interests, take a chance and accept a date. You never know if a great friendship will develop or if he'll have a friend to introduce you to, even if it's not a love connection. Women *do* fall in love with their best friends, so don't be too quick to judge the book by its digital cover.

Julie Spira is known worldwide as The Cyber-Dating Expert. She's the author of the bestseller, The Perils of Cyber-Dating: Confessions of a Hopeful Romantic Looking for Love Online. Julie creates irresistible online dating profiles for singles on the dating scene. Follow her on Twitter: @JulieSpira. Like her at Facebook.com/CyberDatingExpert.

Valentine's Day Giveaway: Pinkberry Introduces Swirly Grams



This post is sponsored by Pinkberry.

[Pinkberry](#), the original tart frozen yogurt brand, introduces the Pinkberry Swirly Gram, a unique Valentine's Day treat that

can be delivered to the ones you love all over the country. These packages are Pinkberry frozen yogurts or gift cards that are specially wrapped and decorated with heart-shaped balloons, a hand-written note, and are hand-delivered to the home or office. Choose from Cupid's Swirl (one medium frozen yogurt with toppings for \$10), Take Me Home (five servings packed in a 25 oz. container with toppings on the side for \$20) or Swirly Spree (one gift card for any amount, plus an additional \$2 delivery and packaging fee). In addition, you can choose your Swirly Gram from these three flavors: original, chocolate, or blood orange, each with special Valentine's toppings.

Head over to your closest Pinkberry location and order a Swirly Gram for your loved one – or one for yourself! Swirly Grams are also available on Pinkberry.com for those who prefer to shop online. But do note that balloons will not be included for online orders. As Pinkberry says, make hearts swirl this Valentine's Day!

~~To celebrate Valentine's Day, Cupid's Pulse has teamed up with Pinkberry to offer **ONE \$10 GIFT CARD** to **ONE LUCKY READER!** Simply tell us what flavor and toppings you would chose for your own Swirly Gram in a comment below. The most scrumptious combination wins! Please be sure to use your real email address so we have a way of contacting you if you've won – don't worry, your address won't be shown and we will *never* spam you. This giveaway will run until **11:59 PM EST on Monday, Feb. 14 – Valentine's Day.** Check back on **Tuesday, Feb. 15 at 1 PM EST** for a post announcing the winners. Good luck!~~

This giveaway is now closed.

Valentine's Day Giveaway: Pauly D's E-Card



This post is sponsored by StarGreetz.

Are you stuck on what to say to your significant other, crush, or even just your friends on Valentine's Day? Let Pauly D do it for you! Everybody's favorite *Jersey Shore* guido has a new line of e-greetings and ringtones that make for the perfect gift idea. Not only are they hilarious, they're personalized! You can choose exactly what you want Pauly to say in addition to your names. These e-greetings and ringtones are fun, cheap and guaranteed to make you fist pump. If you're tired of throwing grenades on Valentine's Day, head over to www.StarGreetz.com and let @DJPaulyD speak for you. And when the love holiday is over, get Pauly to wish your friends a happy birthday, invite them to your event, or make you laugh until you answer your phone!

To celebrate Valentine's Day, Cupid's Pulse has teamed up with StarGreetz to offer **Pauly D's e-cards** to **FIVE LUCKY READERS!** Simply tell us your favorite DJ Pauly D moment from season three of MTV's *Jersey Shore* in a comment below. The funniest moments win! Please be sure to use your real email address so we have a way of contacting you if you've won — don't worry, your address won't be shown and we will *never* spam you. This giveaway will run until **11:59 PM EST on Monday, Feb. 14 — Valentine's Day.** Check back on **Tuesday, Feb. 15 at 1 PM EST** for a post announcing the winners. Good luck!

This giveaway is now closed.

For more fun gift ideas, follow @stargreetzinc on Twitter.

Special Valentine's Day Giveaway: Pajama City PJs!





This post is sponsored by PajamaCity.

PajamaCity manufactures and distributes these PJs for both men and women. This line of pajamas is exactly like the ones we had when we were kids, but are now in adult sizes! Their creation stems from a deep desire to appease the inner-child within both men and women. Also, his and her PJs would be the perfect gift for Valentine's Day!

Features:

Sizes: 13 unisex sizes (to fit men and women from 4'4" to 7'0")

Widths: 3 extra-wide sizes (to fit men and women from 5'0" to 6'3")

Standard Features: **roomy cut**, zipper front and kangaroo pockets

Fabric styles: fleece, flannel, waffle knit, velvet, sweatshirt

Flap styles: dropseat or regular back

Foot styles: regular feet, convertible buttoned foot or cottony stocking foot – all with friction dots

Cost: \$34.95 to \$44.95.

As a special offer, Pajama City will give away a pair of their footie PJs! To be considered, comment* on this post below

telling us why you want these childhood PJs. The most unique answer wins!

For more Cupid news, follow us on Twitter [@CupidsPulse](#). Thank you for reading **The Product Beat**! Visit us weekly for new products and offerings.

**Restricted to U.S. residents only.*

When Strangers Click – HBO's Take on Online Dating



By Jennifer

Harrington

With love on everyone's mind on [Valentine's Day](#), it's no surprise that HBO chose Feb. 14 to premiere a documentary

chronicling the new avenue to find love in the 21st century – online dating. *When Strangers Click: Five Stories From the Internet* tells the stories of individuals who have explored Internet dating.

[Trailer](#)

Knowing the documentary would premiere on Cupid's big day, our friends at Single Edition invited us to an advanced screening in New York City, which featured a Q&A with Robert Kenner of the Oscar-nominated *Food, Inc.*, who both directed and produced the film. The audience included 12 to 15 dating and relationship bloggers based in the city.

For anybody who has ventured into online romance – or for those who are just curious about discovering love on the web – *When Strangers Click* is worth checking out. This movie both resonates with and intrigues viewers, resulting in a very entertaining one-hour special.

From the woman who cried on her 30th birthday because she was convinced she would spend the rest of her life alone (but later found love online), to the New Jersey woman who married a Prague-based man who spoke virtually no English simply because she felt the indescribable “click” with him, it's easy to become emotionally invested in these real stories of love. More shocking is the tale of a Swedish man who created an avatar on Second Life, an online virtual world: he forged a relationship with a woman he met through the site, went on to father her child, and the two continued their virtual (and real-life) romance.

During the Q&A, many bloggers noted that the documentary felt a bit “dated,” as it mentioned AOL and chat rooms. A few bloggers also said that the film reinforced negative stereotypes about online dating (one said that the people profiled seemed to be “on the fringe” of society), which were more prevalent 10 years ago, but aren't now. However, they

appreciated that Kenner picked a variety of different stories to tell and that not all of the stories had a happy ending. In fact, he mentioned that he is looking for more stories to potentially do another segment.

While surprising, this extreme quest for love makes viewers question how far they would go to find their own soul mate in a world increasingly dominated by social media. With more people than ever venturing into the world of online dating, this movie is sure to spark dialogue about dating virtually.

Don't forget to catch *When Strangers Click* on **Monday, Feb. 14 at 9 PM ET** on **HB02**.

For more videos from CupidsPulse.com, check out our [YouTube channel](#).