

## **The American Counseling Association's "Counseling Corner" Weekly Columns**

### **Surviving Valentine's Day Without Someone Special**

from the American Counseling Association

February is a month full of "holidays." While "Laugh and Get Rich Day" has already passed, "Do A Grouch A Favor Day" is still coming, as is "International Dog Biscuit Appreciation Day." But clearly the holiday that most of us are most familiar with is Valentine's Day.

While it's a holiday whose origins and traditions go back centuries, today's primary focus is primarily on Valentine's cards, candy, flowers and romantic dinners. That's all well and good for those in loving relationships, but this can be a painful time for those who are not.

Thanks to the commercial aspects of Valentine's Day, it's a difficult celebration to ignore. We are bombarded with stories and pictures of happy couples, as well as ads for romantic products or services.

Although Valentine's Day may be difficult to ignore, it needn't be overly painful even if you aren't in a relationship now or have had one end recently.

Start by accepting that not having someone special to share this Valentine's Day with isn't a permanent situation. Your being without a partner is likely only temporary, especially if you begin to take steps to move the odds for a new relationship in your favor.

A good start is to realize that you really aren't alone. We all have friends, co-workers or family members who are capable of understanding where our life is currently. In interacting with them, don't wallow in stories of how lonely you are, but instead vow to take a positive attitude.

It also helps to step back and take a look at your life. Are you taking care of yourself physically? Do you have some structure in your life which brings you pleasure, such as meeting with friends or being involved in a local social, civic or religious groups? Can you increase the time you make for these interests?

If you're alone this Valentine's Day because a relationship has ended, forgive and forget your ex-lover. Don't hold onto the past or try to rekindle what is clearly over.

The key to surviving Valentine's Day is to focus on you, on the good things in your life, on the value you have as a human being and the potential you have for the future. If you feel totally overwhelmed by where you are in life and love, consider talking to a professional counselor for the help to get some happy back in your life.

*"Counseling Corner" is provided by the American Counseling Association.  
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