

Coping with College Series

Where's My Valentine?

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Valentine's Day is over and you may be gazing at a huge bouquet of flowers, or a box of half-eaten chocolates with a heavy sadness. Sadness? Well, the gifts weren't for you. They were for your roommate, or your best friend, your brother, or your co-worker. Sometimes on Valentine's Day it feels like everyone is part of a couple, except you...single, lonely, you.

Some people enjoy being single; but what if you're NOT happy with being single? What if you want the security and companionship of an ongoing relationship? What if being single makes you question your desirability, your attractiveness, your worth? How do you maintain your self-esteem and lead a happy life in a world that celebrates romance nonstop?

First, stop measuring your self-worth on your dating status. Consider this question: Would you stop loving your best friend because they broke-up with their significant other? So, why hold yourself to a harsher standard? We all know not-so-wonderful people in relationships, and wonderful people who aren't. Relationship status is not a good way to evaluate anyone's worth, including your own.

Second, start living your life now! Don't put your life on hold. Spend your single days getting to know the one person who is guaranteed to be with you every day for the rest of your life -- YOU. Learn what makes you happy. Try new things you've always been curious about, or buy yourself that bouquet of flowers if it brightens your day. Don't make your happiness dependent on whether you're single or dating. If you put your effort into cultivating your own life while single, a partner will be an added bonus to an already full life, rather than a crutch to boost your self-esteem.

Finally, don't ignore or deny your desire for a partner. Most of us want to love and be loved deeply. And there are things you can do to increase your chances of meeting a partner. Be active. Hang around places and become involved in activities that interest you so you increase your chances of meeting some one with similar interests. Do what you can to lead a meaningful, full life. People are attracted to people who are comfortable with themselves, and are actively engaged in life. Who knows, next Valentines Day you might be trying to choose between that cute person in your Tai Chi class or that fascinating and sensitive person you volunteer with. And whomever you choose, they'll be lucky to get a date with exciting, interesting, happy-to-be-living-my-life, YOU!

