

I love Me and You

Should you send yourself a Valentine card? I say YES, emphatically. As a matter of fact, you should be sending constant messages of love to yourself. If your stream of self talk is more negative than positive, you need to eject that CD and pop in a new one quicker than you can say Godiva chocolate.

What kind of Valentine should you send yourself? Hallmark says “send the very best.” The array of choices in Valentine cards is amazing. They glitter; they dazzle; they play music and they express beautiful sentiments. If you selected a wonderful card for a dear friend, what would it say?

You make me laugh.

You are always there when I need you.

You are thoughtful and kind.

I'm lucky to know you.

Chocolate doesn't have calories when you eat it with a friend.

If these words fit your friend, they probably fit your friend's friend – **YOU**. We tend to look for traits in others that we want to emulate, or that we already possess. Imagine looking into a mirror seeing yourself standing in the middle of a group of people you love. All of the faces in the mirror, especially you, deserve love. There is a familiarity, a ribbon that encircles. There are no exceptions.

The custom of sending love messages on February 14th evolved from the tragic death and martyrdom of Valentine, a Christian priest in the time of Emperor Claudius II of Rome (270). Emperor Claudius II of Rome had a difficult time recruiting soldiers and he attributed it to the men not wanting to leave their loves and families. So, Claudius cancelled all marriages and engagements, but when he learned that Valentine was secretly aiding and marrying Christian couples, Claudius had him beaten and beheaded. Legend has it that St. Valentine left a farewell note to his friend, the jailer's daughter, signing it, “from your Valentine.”

No month in the year projects the topic of love more prominently than February, that month when every store window is dressed in red and pink offering tempting gifts from sensory to tasty to sparkling. Yet, all off these alluring advertisements envision remembrances coming to you from

someone else, from a partner, a lover, a husband, a child, a friend. But, have you ever seen one that read, “Have you loved yourself today?”

As Valentine’s Day draws closer, many of us become a little anxious. Will we receive cards, flowers, candy, or a special phone call? And, if none of those things happen, what does it say about us? Does it mean that we are not loveable? There goes that negative stream of self talk, again. Far too often, we translate outward symbols into inward messages that are very detrimental to our own well-being.

It is perfectly normal to want to receive sweet thoughts and expressions from those we hold dear; but, it’s a little like craving a candy bar. Before the candy bar, there’s a cry for something sweet. Eating the candy bar, there’s a warm satisfaction and a tiny guilty pang. Right after eating the candy bar, there’s a sugar rush and energy acceleration. But, an hour later, the sugar has burned up, the buzz is gone and you’re hungrier than before you tore the paper wrapper.

The greatest gift – Valentine or otherwise – that you can gift to someone you love is to free them from being responsible for your happiness. Someone else sending a card or roses isn’t the key to your self worth, nor the definition of your being loveable. The most meaningful, life altering message we will ever get is from ourselves. If the only repeating message in your private thoughts is dedicated to “didn’t, can’t, won’t, and couldn’t,” then your reservoir will be drained. If you give vast quantities of love and joy to others and serve yourself only blame and criticism, you will be starving and depleted.

But, if the message playing in your mind is a steady stream of sweet, affirming thoughts it will be like walking into a crowd of people smiling at you in the warmest, friendliest way. When you continuously, positively acknowledge your own efforts and positive intentions, it’s like having a mailbox stuffed with Valentines every day.

Article written by: Joan Hardy Eison, a consultant specializing in organizational development, training and career coaching. Her experience includes technical writing, non-fiction and fiction. Reach Joan at reset3@sc.rr.com or www.reset3.com.