Happy European Love Appreciation Day

February 14, 2011 By Jeff Carroll

I am blogging early this week because today is a special day for lovers who live in America. I call it European Love Appreciation Day because it's a European holiday. It's not an Asian holiday, not an African holiday or even a Native American holiday. So, for this Valentines Day I take a break from just giving dating advice and decided to share a little history as well.

For many single people who are not dating Valentine's Day is a tough holiday. So since I am a dating coach and not a marriage counselor I have some tips for these single people and dating couples for ways them to maximize their celebration of this American/European Holiday.

For my single people who don't want to be single my overall message is to not stop looking for a date. You will NEVER find someone to date if you stop looking. So, I to help those people who wish to solve their dilemma I have two suggestions on going about their search.

First I suggest for people to go somewhere where they can find a good connection. My Venue Menu formula is designed to help people figure out which venues attract the type of people they would be attracted to. I explained my Venue Menu formula in last week's blog.

My second suggestion is to review my Opening Lines list (you also find this on one of my earlier blogs). I view the things people say to people they are interested in dating as opening lines as appose to pick up lines. While pick up lines are used to pick people up and take them to a sexual rendezvous opening lines are used to start a relationship through opening up a good conversation.

For dating couples who want to advance their dating process I suggest they use Valentine's Day to step up the substantial elements of their relationship. The traditional way to celebrate Valentine's Day is for the male to give the female a gift of chocolate or another physical gift. While these are good at expressing love and affection people in relationships should review their dating process. They should review what they want in a life partner. Valentine's Day should be not only a day of checking the love factor it should be a day of total relation ship review. I developed the Hip Hop Dating contract to help dating people understand what are the important factors to their relationship.

Now, my feelings toward this holiday stem from an experience I had in college. When I was in college I was President of the BSU and in a public monogamist relationship. My entire board was involved in relationships. There were so many public couples we called ourselves the Kings and the Queens. This was back in the late 80s and some of those couples are happily married today. Now during one of our African History Month celebrations we heard a very influential speaker. Dr. Jack Felder author of Should Afrikan People Celebrate Valentine's Day shared the history of Valentines Day with us. After hearing about the

history this holiday of love my Black Student Union was changed. We decided that we didn't feel sending a cherry filled chocolate heart to our girlfriends as a token of our love was not the same after learning that. We created a campus holiday celebration of our own. Our celebration was called Love Week. We used the end of the year celebration of Kwanzaa as our main influence. Love Week had a different value and activity for each day. Our school Kean University hosted our Love Week celebration for 7 years since we first started it in 1988.

The following is a piece I found on TheHolidaySpot.com which explains the history of Valentines Day. It's not as detained as Dr. Felder but it's good enough.

Every year, the fourteenth day of the month of February has millions across the world presenting their loved ones with candy, flowers, chocolates and other lovely gifts. In many countries, restaurants and eateries are seen to be filled with couples who are eager to celebrate their relationship and the joy of their togetherness through delicious cuisines. There hardly seems to be a young man or woman who is not keen to make the most of the day.

The reason behind all of this is a kindly cleric named Valentine who died more than a thousand years ago.

It is not exactly known why the 14th of February is known as Valentine's Day or if the noble Valentine really had any relation to this day. The history of Valentine's Day is impossible to be obtained from any archive and the veil of centuries gone by has made the origin behind this day more difficult to trace. It is only some legends that are our source for the history of Valentine's Day.

The modern St. Valentine's Day celebrations are said to have been derived from both ancient Christian and Roman tradition. As per one legend, the holiday has originated from the ancient Roman festival of Lupercalis/Lupercalia, a fertility celebration that used to observed annually on February 15. But the rise of Christianity in Europe saw many pagan holidays being renamed for and dedicated to the early Christian martyrs. Lupercalia was no exception. In 496 AD, Pope Gelasius turned Lupercalia into a Christian feast day and set its observance a day earlier, on February 14. He proclaimed February 14 to be the feast day in honor of Saint Valentine, a Roman martyr who lived in the 3rd century. It is this St. Valentine whom the modern Valentine's Day honors.

According to the Catholic Encyclopedia, there were at least three early Christian saints by the name of Valentine. While one was a priest in Rome, another was a bishop in Terni. Nothing is known about the third St. Valentine except that he met his end in Africa. Surprisingly, all three of them were said to have been martyred on 14th February.

It is clear that Pope Gelasius intended to honor the first of these three aforementioned men. Most scholars believe that this St. Valentine was a priest who lived around 270 AD in Rome and attracted the disfavor of Roman emperor Claudius II who ruled during this time.

The story of St. Valentine has two different versions - the Protestant and the Catholic one. Both versions agree upon Saint Valentine being a bishop who held secret marriage ceremonies of soldiers in opposition to Claudius II who had prohibited marriage for young men and was executed by the latter. During the lifetime of Valentine, the golden era of Roman empire had almost come to an end. Lack of quality administrators led to frequent civil strife. Education declined, taxation increased and trade witnessed a

very bad time. The Roman empire faced crisis from all sides, from the Gauls, Slavs, Huns, Turks and Mongolians from Northern Europe and Asia. The empire had grown too large to be shielded from external aggression and internal chaos with existing forces. Naturally, more and more capable men were required to to be recruited as soldiers and officers to protect the nation from takeover. When Claudius became the emperor, he felt that married men were more emotionally attached to their families, and thus, will not make good soldiers. He believed that marriage made the men weak. So he issued an edict forbidding marriage to assure quality soldiers.

The ban on marriage was a great shock for the Romans. But they dared not voice their protest against the mighty emperor. The kindly bishop Valentine also realized the injustice of the decree. He saw the trauma of young lovers who gave up all hopes of being united in marriage. He planned to counter the monarch's orders in secrecy. Whenever lovers thought of marrying, they went to Valentine who met them afterwards in a secret place, and joined them in the sacrament of matrimony. And thus he secretly performed many marriages for young lovers. But such things cannot remain hidden for long. It was only a matter of time before Claudius came to know of this "friend of lovers," and had him arrested.

While awaiting his sentence in prison, Valentine was approached by his jailor, Asterius. It was said that Valentine had some saintly abilities and one of them granted him the power to heal people. Asterius had a blind daughter and knowing of the miraculous powers of Valentine he requested the latter to restore the sight of his blind daughter. The Catholic legend has it that Valentine did this through the vehicle of his strong faith, a phenomenon refuted by the Protestant version which agrees otherwise with the Catholic one. Whatever the fact, it appears that Valentine in some way did succeed to help Asterius' blind daughter.

When Claudius II met Valentine, he was said to have been impressed by the dignity and conviction of the latter. However, Valentine refused to agree with the emperor regarding the ban on marriage. It is also said that the emperor tried to convert Valentine to the Roman gods but was unsuccesful in his efforts. Valentine refused to recognize Roman Gods and even attempted to convert the emperor, knowing the consequences fully. This angered Claudius II who gave the order of execution of Valentine.

Meanwhile, a deep friendship had been formed between Valentine and Asterius' daughter. It caused great grief to the young girl to hear of his friend's imminent death. It is said that just before his execution, Valentine asked for a pen and paper from his jailor, and signed a farewell message to her "From Your Valentine," a phrase that lived ever after. As per another legend, Valentine fell in love with the daughter of his jailer during his imprisonment. However, this legend is not given much importance by historians. The most plausible story surrounding St. Valentine is one not centered on Eros (passionate love) but on agape (Christian love): he was martyred for refusing to renounce his religion. Valentine is believed to have been executed on February 14, 270 AD.

Thus 14th February became a day for all lovers and Valentine became its Patron Saint. It began to be annually observed by young Romans who offered handwritten greetings of affection, known as Valentines, on this day to the women they admired. With the coming of Christianity, the day came to be known as St. Valentine's Day.

Here is our Love Week celebration, which we used as an expansion of the European celebration. I also think this type of celebration would be good to address bullying but this another subject.

Day* Principal* Nickname
Sunday* Internal Love* I Love Me Day

This day is geared to the personal and internal family love that needs to exist before love for others can exist.
Activity:
This is a day that you do something nice for someone in your immediate or extended family to show him or her you care and appreciate what he or she has done for you.

Day* Principal* Nickname
Monday* External Love* Hug Me Day

This is a way to break the interpersonal feelings of distance that we have for our own African family. Touching is important for people to develop healthy relationships.
Activity:
Embrace each other and tell another person “I love you as a person.” Go up to someone new and give them a hug and experience the beginning of a new relationship.

Day* Principal* Nickname
Tuesday* Manhood Building* Brother Do Something nice For a Sister Day

This is a way for Brothers to display their manhood to their Sisters and family. This day develops a sense of responsibility in our men.
Activity:
Men are to offer to do something nice for a woman. Ex: carrying a young lady’s books or cooking her a meal.

Day* Principal* Nickname
Wednesday* Appreciation* Shake a Brother’s Hand Day

This is a day for the African family to thank and encourage our men for their activities in the home and for their service in their community.
Activity:
Not only are women to go up to men and shake their hands and thank them for what they do, young men are to shake the hands of older men too.

Day* Principal* Nickname
Thursday* Individual Recognition & Respect* Compliment a Sister or Brother Day

This day is designed to assist in alleviating feelings of jealousy and unhealthy competition among African Americans.
Activity:
African people are to verbally commend each other for their personal achievements and accomplishments.

Day* Principal* Nickname
Friday* Affirmation* African Garb Day

This activity is to allow African descendants an opportunity to wear the traditional African attire. This will show both pride and give these Africans a first hand feel of the clothes of their ancestors.
Activity:
This is a day set aside to show pride for our culture by wearing garments that represent our heritage. This gives us the opportunity to affirm our cultural pride.

Day* Principal* Nickname
Saturday* African Unity Day* Community Day

This is the final day of Love Week. This is a day you should allow for the entire African family to come together as whole communities. Africans from each part of the Diaspora should be individually identified and recognized, from the United States, to the Caribbean, South America, Europe and the different countries in Africa.
Activity:
All activities planned for the day should include the whole community, with a focus on the betterment of the community.

Hey I know you got something to say about this so hit me with your feelings coachyojeff.gmail.com.

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