

## 4 Steps for Surviving Valentine's Day

Posted [Jan 22 2016](#) by [GaryRoe](#), <http://www.garyroe.com/2016/01/22/4-steps-for-surviving-valentines-day/>



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Valentine's Day can be hard, especially if you've lost someone.

I used to think the whole Valentine's affair was silly. Candy, chocolates, cards, and flowers. Growing up, I saw a lot of show, but little substance.

Now, I see the day differently. "Be my Valentine" has a new meaning.

### "Be My Valentine"

There's a lot encompassed in those three words:

- You are loved.
- You are wanted.
- You matter to me.
- You are special.
- I'm thinking of you.
- I'm grateful for you.
- You are not alone.

No wonder this phrase is powerful. We're hot-wired to love and be loved. We're relational creatures who thrive on meaningful and safe connection. When our relational needs are met, it trickles down into the rest of life. Our hearts are more settled and content. We worry and strive less. Peace and joy come with knowing we are loved.

That's why grief hurts. *We dared to love*. When hearts have been joined, separation of any kind is painful. A person's presence is so powerful that when someone is missing it leaves a tangible void. Their absence is palpable. It's like a shortage of oxygen.

The loneliness can be smothering. It's like trying to walk through waist-deep mud. Slow-going. Exhausting. It can feel impossible.

Let's face it. Valentine's is tough for those enduring loss. It should be.

So what can we do?

## 4 Steps to Help Survive the Day

Here are 4 tips to help make it through February 14:

### Step 1: Meet the day head-on and make a plan.

Valentine's Day will not be stopped. Sitting back and dreading its approach isn't loving to ourselves or anyone else. What if we took the bull by the horns, and leaned into the Day instead?

*Make a plan.* What do you *want* to do? When? How? With whom?

As you make your plan, consider the triggers out there. Couples everywhere, holding hands, smiling, laughing, and having a good time. Romantic music and messages will fill the speakers and airwaves. How much can you handle? How much do you *want* to handle?

*Make a plan.* Keep it simple.

### Step 2: Honor your loved one.

As you make your plan, is there a way you can honor the loved one you lost? Write a letter. Buy a card. Release a balloon. Give a gift in his or her name. Honor a Valentine's tradition he or she liked.

Some might not want to honor the person – especially if they left or you parted on less than good terms. That's okay. Move on to Step 3.

### Step 3: Be nice to you.

Whatever plan you come up with, please be nice to yourself. Your loved one would want that.

Again, what do you *want* to do?

If you're angry at the one who left, consider doing yourself a favor by forgiving them. This could be your Valentine's gift to yourself. If you can't forgive now, put it on your radar screen for the future. You don't need that extra emotional weight on top of everything else.

### Step 4: Reach out to someone you appreciate

Use the Day. Reach out to someone you respect, appreciate, or admire. Valentine's Day is about expressing love. Share some. You'll encourage them, and it will help your hurting heart too.

## Here we go...

February 14 will come and go. You can make it count. Take your heart seriously. Make a plan. Honor your loved one, if you can. Be nice to yourself. Reach out and encourage someone.

Breathe deeply. This too shall pass.

About Gary Roe: Gary is the author of [\*Heartbroken: Healing from the Loss of a Spouse\*](#) (Amazon Bestseller; 2015 National Indie Excellence Award Finalist) and [\*Surviving the Holidays without You\*](#), and the co-author (with *New York Times* Bestseller Cecil Murphey) of [\*Saying Goodbye\*](#) and [\*Not Quite Healed\*](#) (2013 Lime Award Finalist for Excellence in Non-Fiction, 2013 Top 50 Non-Fiction Book List). He has over 250 grief-related and inspirational articles in print and is a popular speaker at a wide variety of venues.



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