Have a romantic, stress-free Valentine's Day
By Kelsey Collister
February 11, 2011

For some singles, Valentine's Day can be a slap in the face. Another year and you have no Valentine.

For couples, it may be a test. Will you buy the perfect gift or make the right romantic gesture? If you don't, will your significant other feel jilted? This is why Valentine's Day for some can be difficult and disappointing.

Vince Schuld, a 26-year-old receptionist who lives in the Midwest expressed his indifference towards the quasi-holiday.

"People take it too seriously. It's a hallmark holiday. Guys are just trying to make their girlfriends happy. If you're really happy with each other, then it should be enough to just be together."

Marital and relationship therapist, Dr. Linda Freedman of Chicago thinks the day should be an expression of love, but sometimes "life gets in the way."

"You find yourself thinking "Oh crud, its five minutes until Valentine's Day and I didn't get her the card and my boss still wants me to finish this project."

Clear communication is essential in romantic relationships, especially when it comes to Valentine's Day, Freedman said.

Nervousness and fragility seem to trivialize relationships in American society, explains Courtney Irby, a sociology instructor at Loyola University Chicago.

Talking about the future of your relationship on Valentine's Day can provide an open moment of communication, or it can cause unnecessary stress. If you fear commitment, you are likely to fear intimacy. Fears of rejection, fears of exposure and fears of suffocation can result in fearing intimacy, according to Freedman.

Freedman suggests keeping your expectations low on Valentine's Day. You will be more satisfied in the end.

"Don't make it into a huge test. Express your love every single day and you will be better off in the long run."

Maintaining eye contact with your partner, asking him or her thoughtful questions, and initiating physical touch are excellent ways to communicate intimacy in a romantic relationship.

"Men and women are sensuous beings," said Freedman.
We are excited by what we see, feel, smell and touch. When it comes to love, communicating in a way that reaches the senses is very important, says Freedman. Next time your significant other shovels the driveway, give him a massage as a reward.

Don't be afraid to ask about your partner's fantasies to get ideas for creative gestures or gifts. Here are some tips for planning a relaxed, romantic Valentine's Day. Sit down together and decide where to go for Valentine's Day. In most romantic relationships, the element of surprise is unnecessary, according to Freedman.

Plan a date that you and your significant other will be excited about. As a result of your shared investment in planning, the date will be more fun and romantic.

Forget about the cultural norms on Valentine's Day. Just be honest and open with your significant other.

That way you can breathe easily come Feb. 14, recommends Freedman, who has practiced marital and relationship therapy for 25 years.