

GAZETTE

H o l l y w o o d & W e s t w o o d

**MY BEST VALENTINE'S
DAY MEMORY**

In Japan, it is customary for girls to give chocolate to the boy of their choice on this day. Among them, there are different types of chocolates, such as “honmei chocolates,” given to the person you love, and “giri-chocolates” or “tomo-chocolates,” given to friends, each carrying a different meaning. The Valentine’s Day when I was in the sixth grade of elementary school is a memory I will never forget.

At the time, I decided to show my appreciation by giving chocolate to everyone in my class on Valentine’s Day. Although bringing sweets to school was forbidden, I consulted my homeroom teacher and received special permission under the condition that I give chocolate to everyone in my class. This is where the clever plan began to unfold. Lacking the courage to give chocolate directly to the boy I had feelings for, I decided to hide a special surprise in the chocolate I would give to all my classmates. After consulting with my best friend and researching his favorite chocolate, I created chocolate cookies for all my classmates.

On Valentine’s Day, I successfully distributed chocolate to girls as friend chocolate, boys as obligation chocolate, and a special chocolate to my true love. This secret plan was executed without being noticed by anyone around me or him, and I was thrilled and excited to witness the moment of success. I crafted a heart-shaped cookie specifically for him to convey my feelings. It was a Valentine’s Day carefully devised to express my affection for him while discreetly concealing my deeper emotions.

However, the story doesn’t end there. In Japanese culture, White Day on March 14 is the day to reciprocate Valentine’s Day. Boys give return gifts to girls, and these items are laden with meaning. For instance, marshmallows might signify “I don’t like you,” while cookies can convey “I like you.” I hadn’t been anticipating this day, thinking he hadn’t perceived the meaning behind my gift. However, on the morning of White Day, when I opened my shoebox, there was a cookie inside. It held a special message for me, and though there was no sender’s name, it was likely from him. I was very surprised and glad to see the box, but I could not talk to him because it was embarrassing.

Therefore, the secret Valentine’s Day plan succeeded once again on White Day and became one of the most romantic and endearing memories of my life.

By Natsumi Fujimoto

HOW DO I SHOW LOVE TO MYSELF

Loving myself is important to be happy, but it is difficult. Sometimes I lose my self-esteem and do not like myself. However, I am trying to love myself. There are two ways I show love to myself. One of them is to appreciate my surroundings. The other is to look back at what I achieved or what I'm focusing on for the future.

Sometimes I complain about what happened to me and forget how fortunate I am when nothing is going well for me. However, I try to appreciate my surroundings-like my family, friends and the environment in which I live-to improve these kinds of situations. Consequently, I realized how fortunate I am. If I realize that, I can boost my self-esteem and love myself. The act of appreciating often leads to a sense of happiness, not only for others but for myself as well.

Due to the spread of social media, I often struggle to compare myself to other people when I check Instagram. Therefore, I feel envious of them and lose self-esteem. However, I try to look back on what I achieved or what I'm focusing on for the future, like studying English hard and working out consistently. That makes me more confident and boosts my self-esteem.

Appreciating my surroundings and looking back at what I achieved or what I'm focusing on for the future are the ways to show love to myself. I try to do what I stated to love myself as much as possible. I sincerely wish for everyone to embrace self-love and find true happiness.

By Naoto Honda



ABOUT LOVE

If you need to choose love or money, which are you going to choose? My friend and I always have this conversation when we talk about love. I think this answer depends on the people. There might be no correct answer. However, in my opinion, I think love is more important than money because I strongly think that you cannot buy someone's feelings or mind, even though you can buy things with money. If I marry someone who is rich but he just has money and there is no love, I will definitely feel sad and lonely.

Maybe I can feel happy or enjoy this situation at first, but in the end I am left with only loneliness. On the other hand, even though my partner and I don't have money but we love each other, I will definitely feel happy and will get more happiness.

Loving someone sometimes changes your life in good ways and bad ways. I have had both experiences; however, I feel like even if you have a bad experience in a relationship with someone, it still has some meaning. I too had a bad experience once and at that time I was so lonely and sad, but when the time comes, you are going to be stronger than before because of the hard time. Love sometimes makes you stronger and you can learn so many things.

Through my experience, loving someone is a necessary thing in life.

By Karin



LOVE IS LOVE



When I heard we were going to write about love, I thought about LGBTQ +.

First of all, LGBT is an acronym for lesbian (L), gay (G), bisexual (B), and transgender (T) and is an umbrella term for these diverse individuals and communities related to sexual orientation and gender identity.

And sexual minorities, including LGBTQ+, are found all over the world. These days, I believe the world is more tolerant of LGBTQ + than ever before. As human beings, we all need to be treated equally, but there are still challenges in many areas.

They have to live in a society where they are insecure, discriminated against or insulted because they are a little different from others, and cannot live as they are.

In fact, many of my friends have their own problems.

There is a famous place in Japan where these people gather, and about 10 years ago, when I was tired of the world and had a hard time living, I used to go there to drink with them, spend the same time with them, and they saved me. I think that is why I am where I am today.

The world is still very conservative, and there is still a part of the world where minorities are wrong and the image of being socially vulnerable is hard to shake off. However, I believe that the majority is never the winner and never right, and I hope that each and every one of you will continue to go forward as you are and be proud of who you are for a long, long time to come. It is the most beautiful just as it is.

I don't think there is anything normal or abnormal about everything. However, it may be difficult for all people to understand each other.

"Love is love" is a phrase that I love. It is a phrase used in the LGBTQ+ community for others, and it expresses the message that love should be equally respected in all forms.

I think it is important that people of different sexual orientations and gender identities accept and respect each other's love. I think it is wrong for anyone to judge anyone else. As one of the minorities, I want to continue to be with them. And I hope the world will be more kind to them. That is what I think: love is love.

By Yurina

SAINT JORDI'S DAY IN SPAIN

It is one of the most original celebrations in Catalonia and takes place in spring, on the 23rd of April. It is a very popular festival that combines culture and romanticism, celebrating both World Book Day and Valentine's Day.

On this day it is the custom for couples to exchange gifts: the men receive a book and the women receive a rose. However, this has developed over time, so both men and women can receive books and roses.

Book and flower stalls are set up along the streets of Barcelona. The streets fill with people walking around the stalls, looking for a gift for their beloved, and for their family and friends, too. You will find the latest publications, see well-known artists signing copies of their books, and of course, smell the scent of roses.

This interesting festival comes from the Catholic tradition. It coincides, on one hand, with the fact that Saint Jordi has been the patron saint of Catalonia since the 15th century, and on the other hand, it comes from the famous legend of Saint George and the Dragon: The knight defeats the dragon, which was terrorizing the village and its princess. After fatally stabbing the dragon with his sword, Saint George gave the princess one of the beautiful roses that spilled out of the dead dragon's body.

Additionally, there is the medieval tradition of visiting the Chapel of Saint Jordi in the Palacio de la Generalitat, where a rose fair, or a "lovers' fair," used to take place. This is why Saint Jordi is also the patron saint of lovers in Catalonia.



By Maria Fernanda Giraldo Sierra

STUPID MIRRORS

Many times in my life I have realized that sometimes the inevitable happens: you just look like your parents whether you like it or not.

What especially catches my attention is that from them we often learn what we so often criticize and it's a big step when you decide to break that cycle.

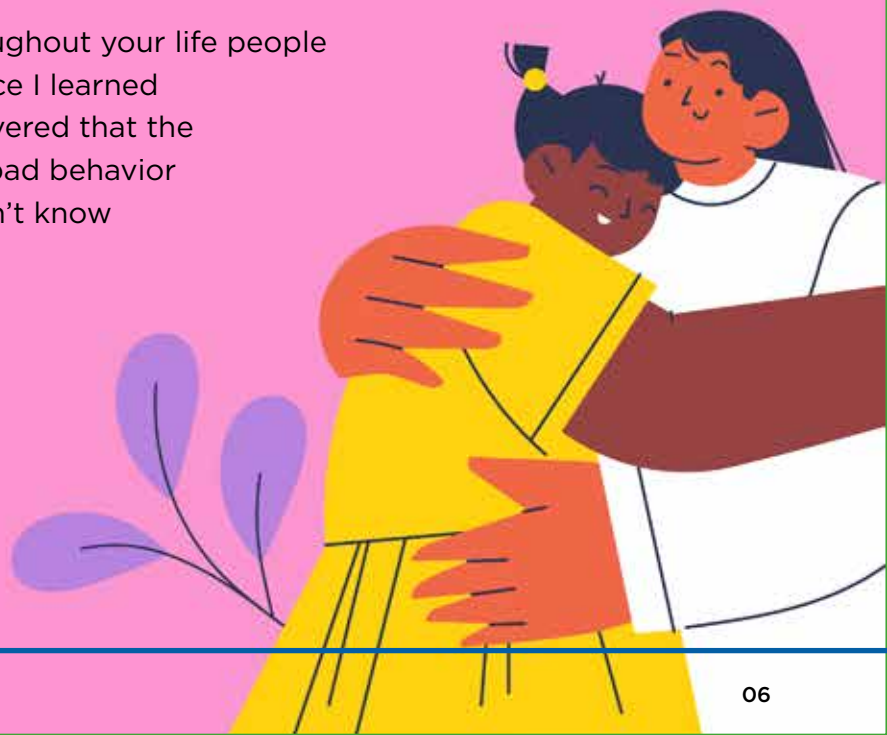
We have all heard about The Five Languages of Love (if not, I recommend that you read it). Well, the last time I read it I asked myself not only about the love language of the person I decided to love for the rest of my life, my husband, but also the love language of my parents, because they also deserve that I make an effort to make them feel loved.

The last time I saw my mother I discovered that my love language was exactly the same as hers. This does not have to happen in all cases, but it happened in mine and when I realized this, for a moment I felt that it was she who had taught me to love, to love my friends, to love myself, to love my surroundings, to love my reality and then I understood that I owe her for who I am. Now I try to spend most of my free time trying to find a way to love her and to love those around me.

My goal is that after they have shared time with me, they know that they are happier than when they arrived.

It is common to hear in the hallways throughout your life people who say bad things about others. But since I learned about the Law of the Mirror, I have discovered that the only way you can dislike someone else's bad behavior is if you have that same flaw and you don't know it or you have been fighting against it for a long time.

By Maria Fernanda Giraldo Sierra



THE EMOTION OF LOVE

Love is a very important emotion. Every person in the world needs to love someone because it is necessary to satisfy their mutual feelings. It is not essential that there is love between different genders, i.e., between men and women; it exists between sisters, between parents and children, between husband and wife, between Valentines.

Love even exists for other living beings, like animals and plants. As a result, the being of love cannot be rejected on the Earth. I think love is a willingness to prioritize another's well-being, happiness, welfare and health. This is the most important point.

Secondly, I think love plays an important role in both our physical and psychological health. Love has an important role in mental health in the way that feeling unloved is strongly correlated with feelings of low self-esteem and depression.

Love can play a crucial role in long-term psychological health especially, and feeling emotionally connected to another human being helps increase physical health, including the immune system. Many scientific studies from all around the world have shown the benefits of love.

To sum up, love is a very important issue in our social lives, and also even in our business lives. We need plenty of love in life in order to maintain a healthier life!

By Betul, from Turkiye



THE QIXI FESTIVAL

In western countries, each year on February 14, people exchange lovely cards, candies, or gifts with their loved ones and celebrate Valentine's Day. In China, the Qixi Festival, also known as Chinese Valentine's Day or Double Seventh Festival, has been a traditional Chinese romantic festival for over 2000 years. There is a tale of love story behind it.

According to Chinese myth, Zhi Nu, a weaver girl and daughter of the Queen of heaven, and Niu Lang, a humble cowherd. Zhi Nu was bored by her mundane life as an immortal and decided to descend into the mortal world. On earth, she met Niu Lang. It was love at first sight for both. Zhi Nu defied the rules of heaven and got married to Niu Lang. She also gave birth to two children, a boy and a girl.

When Zhi Nu's mother discovered their union, she became very upset and angry. She sent soldiers to bring back Zhi Nu to heaven and the lovers were separated. Niu Lang was heartbroken. But soon when a cow once rescued by Niu Lang told him that he was actually an injured God banished to the mortal world. The cow offered his skin to Niu Lang once he died as it could make shoes which could fly him to heaven. When the cow died, Niu Lang carried his children to heaven in search for his wife Zhi Nu. However, the Queen mother knew of his arrival and created a massive river to separate the lovers forever—which is now referred to as the Milky Way.

Touched by the love between Zhi Nu and Niu Lang, the magpies flew up to heaven and formed a bridge for the couple to walk over the Milky Way. Their love moved Zhi Nu's Queen mother, who eventually permitted the couple to meet once a year on that same day, which is the seventh day of the seventh lunar Month.

Chinese people love the story and celebrate the Double Seventh Festival because love is an eternal presence for anyone and anywhere, whatever the race, in western countries or eastern countries. And love makes our world more beautiful and peaceful.

By Ying

VALENTINE'S DAY TRAVEL TIP: A MAGNIFICENT – AND ROMANTIC – TEMPLE IN TURKEY

The Temple of Apollo is a Roman temple built around 150 A.D. during the Pax Romana era in the ancient Carian town of Side, in southern Turkey on the Mediterranean Sea coast and dedicated to Apollo, the Greek and Roman god of music, harmony and light. The Temple is considered as one of the most romantic attractions in the Antalya region.

The Temple of Apollo dates back to the time of Roman emperor Antoninus Pius. The best preserved temple of the group of three temples on the tip of the peninsula is the one dedicated to Apollo, the Greek god of beauty, light, the patron of the arts and the guide of the Muses. Some coins minted in ancient Side show the figure of Apollo standing in front of his temple.

From an architectural point of view, this temple was a peripteros i.e. it was surrounded by a colonnade on all four sides of the inner chamber (called cella or naos). In the case of the temple of Apollo this colonnade was executed in the Corinthian order. Each longer side of the building was originally adorned with 11 columns and both shorter sides were decorated with 6 columns.

The stylobate of Apollo's temple, that is the top step of the platform on which colonnades of temple columns were placed, has the dimensions of about 16 meters (52 feet) by 30 meters (98 feet). Five columns that are currently standing were re-erected as part of the reconstruction work carried out in the 80s of the 20th century under the supervision of Professor Jale İnan. The frieze placed above them depicts the heads of Medusa - a mythological monster that had the face of a human female with living venomous snakes in place of hair.



Between 1984 and 1990, the five columns, which remained standing side by side over centuries, and the capitals were restored. As the concrete base carrying the columns started to wear down, and the iron bars inside the columns came to the surface affected by weather conditions, restoration works were carried out in 2017. The broken parts of the columns were repaired with the same material used during the restoration in the 1980s.

If you have a chance, make sure you go there. The magnificent temple of Apollo and Athena is mostly in ruins, but you get the feeling of how it looked before.

The territory of the temple is small and you can see everything in 30 minutes. The Temple is close to good restaurants where you can have a nice lunch or dinner. So there's so much to do in that area.



Photo by Eren Tank; August 19, 2018

By Eren Tank