



2-17-2014

Drinking Bourbon with Cupid

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Kirkenir, Joseph L., "Drinking Bourbon with Cupid" (2014). *SURGE*. 31.
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Drinking Bourbon with Cupid

Abstract

It was Valentine's Day, and rather than enjoying the suspiciously commercial holiday with a romantic partner, I was alone watching reruns of "How I Met Your Mother," from a cozy armchair with a cigar in one hand and a glass of bourbon in the other. The show prompted me to examine the nature of relationships; specifically, how the media portrays them vastly different than reality and the implications that arise as a result. Romantic relationships in film and literature appear to be idealized to a ridiculous degree. Unfortunately for us, this means that we create unrealistic expectations for our partners that lead many to remain single while they search for a relationship that adheres to the media's extravagant standards. [*excerpt*]

Keywords

Surge, Surge Gettysburg, Gettysburg College, Center for Public Service, relationships, media

Disciplines

Feminist, Gender, and Sexuality Studies | Gender and Sexuality | Sociology

Comments

Surge is a student blog at [Gettysburg College](https://www.gettysburg.edu) where systemic issues of justice matter. Posts are originally published at surgegettysburg.wordpress.com Through stories and reflection, these blog entries relate personal experiences to larger issues of equity, demonstrating that -isms are structural problems, not actions defined by individual prejudice. We intend to popularize justice, helping each other to recognize our biases and unlearn the untruths.

SURGE

[VERB] : to move suddenly or powerfully forward or upward

DRINKING BOURBON WITH CUPID

February 17, 2014

It was Valentine's Day, and rather than enjoying the suspiciously commercial holiday with a romantic partner, I was alone watching reruns of "How I Met Your Mother," from a cozy armchair with a cigar in one hand and a glass of bourbon in the other.

The show prompted me to examine the nature of relationships; specifically, how the media portrays them vastly different than reality and the implications that arise as a result. Romantic relationships in film and literature appear to be idealized to a ridiculous degree. Unfortunately for us, this means that we create unrealistic expectations for our partners that lead many to remain single while they search for a relationship that adheres to the media's extravagant standards.



One of the most frustrating aspects of the media's depiction of relationships is how it typically shows romantic partners that love everything about each other, including their flaws. Take the [famous final speech from the movie, "When Harry Met Sally."](#) In it, Harry literally rattles off asinine aspects of Sally and claims that he loves them all. Apparently, loving Sally means that Harry must see her low tolerance for the cold and sandwich indecision as objects of affection. I don't know about you, dear reader, but I personally do not adore these things. In fact, waiting an hour and a half at a restaurant sounds downright miserable to me. Even in sitcoms like "Modern Family," that use characters' flaws to create comedic tension in their relationships, one sees everything working out in the end because their flaws are what they love about each other.

Worried that you will never be able to overlook a romantic partner's shortcomings? "How I Met Your Mother," has your back. The series' lead, Ted, is continually searching for his future wife and the ridiculous standards he assigns to his ideal partner cause him to reject a multitude of women for reasons as trivial as talking too much. While it may be realistic that Ted has trouble finding the "perfect" partner, what is not realistic is that he eventually does find a woman who plays bass, sings to breakfast food, and paints pictures of robots playing sports. According to the media, there is a person out there for everybody who will either cause us to embrace their flaws or fulfill our every desire in a romantic partner, but this is most certainly not a realistic expectation.

I fail to understand why I should adore everything about my partner. By definition, flaws are inherently bad. If one wants to become a better person, they do so by removing their flaws. Why should I love these aspects of my

romantic partner? Actually, if I truly did love her would it not make more sense for me help her to fix them in order to help her better herself? However, instead of adhering to this realistic view, people hold out for the person that causes their heart to go a-flutter over their every characteristic. I know I personally have flaws and do not believe that anybody should love them. Nobody should shower my intense sarcasm, crippling nicotine and caffeine addiction or lack of empathy with adoration, even my future true love. Even if such a person does exist, I do not think I would want to be in a relationship with her.

Herein lies the problem with this belief. We all have flaws and they are most certainly not good. To expect that there is a perfect person out there who will either make us fall in love with their flaws or not have any is unrealistic; to expect that you are potentially perfect in all ways for someone is equally absurd. If I wait for a lover that idolizes everything about me I will be alone forever, and if I wait for a person that I love everything about I will be also be perpetually single. Rather than waiting for a partner whose every attribute makes us love them, and who also reciprocates the feeling, we should instead seek to remove our flaws in order to attract a partner.

Are you too sarcastic? Then you start being more genuine. Do you ingest too many addictive substances? Then you should probably ingest less of them. Are you too callous? Then start relating emotionally towards others more. I realize that this view requires a lot more effort on our part. Why would anyone want to change themselves when there is the perfect partner waiting somewhere out there who will love us as we are? Unfortunately, this may not be the case. Our flaws may overshadow our good qualities and drive away potential partners, not to mention the fact that we may not even desire those who do approve of our negative aspects.

Perhaps I am underplaying the power of love. Maybe it is an all-powerful force that causes us to adore our partner's every detail. I may not comprehend its ability to turn one's negative characteristics into objects of affection. It is possible that soul mates who fulfill their partner's every desire do exist. However, there is one thing I do know. If I continue to do nothing to remove my flaws I will most likely find myself alone on many more Valentine's Days. I, for one, will not let the media influence my expectations of relationships. Instead of waiting for a relationship that adheres to its unrealistic standards, we should seek to create healthy relationships that are applicable to reality. A place where flaws are viewed negatively and partners are complex individuals, not flawless idols to be worshipped unconditionally.

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