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A Screw Loose



by Liz Holzemer

Valentine's Smalentine's

Don't get me wrong—deep down inside I'm a romantic at heart. I have a treasured box of every card and letter my husband has given me packed away somewhere in our basement. I swoon when offered dark chocolate of any kind, although I prefer Belgian. Hallmark commercials often bring me to tears.

I just have a problem with this upcoming holiday that insists we be romantic. Commands us to empty our wallets on overpriced, wilt-too-soon roses. Demands us to shower our loved ones with gifts when we only did so six weeks ago over that politically name-challenged season. Yes, that one we're seeing debit creditors for.

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I don't need a date on a calendar to remind me when I should profess my love to my betrothed. Isn't that what spontaneity and surprises are all about? Like when my husband fills my car up with gas when snow is forecasted or when I leave an "I love you" sticky note on his dashboard.

As a child, I remember making creative valentines out of doilies and collecting them in paper sacks to bring home. My girlfriends and I enjoyed reading all the sweet sayings on those chalky conversation hearts. Simple sentiments like "You're Cute", "Be Mine" and "Kiss Me." And who could forget red hots?!

Show up with a doily and a 39-cent box of hearts today and you're in trouble according to the way Valentine's Day should be embraced by societal standards. Showering your sweetie requires trendier gifts today. Thankfully I'm a religious subscriber to *InStyle* and have received a crash course on matters of the heart, er, buck. In the February issue of *InStyle*, the Valentine's buck doesn't end with your significant other. There are dollars to shell out for your co-workers, friends, neighbors, and why not include the local grocery clerk and the Pizza Hut delivery man while we're at it?

If I want to contribute to the \$30 billion consumers spend on average each Valentine's Day, I should indulge my hubby with a \$500 Sanyo Mobile ESPN phone; he should indulge me in a \$298 charmeuse camisole. I should spring for the matching cotton candy pink rain boots for my daughter and me at \$143. My not-quite-two yet son should receive his own love seat for \$329. Let's see that only sets back a family of four to \$1,270. I think we could enjoy spring break for less. Suppose we'll be eating Top Ramen and I'll be home schooling my children during the month of St. Valentine.

And if that's not enough, how about the daily ads in my paper boldly proclaiming "**Surprise your sweetie with Botox or Restylane injections**" and "**Lipo your love handles.**" Even though I've had two kids, I'm not falling for the \$100 off liposuction coupon either. Who knew all I needed was an afternoon date with a needle or power hose to get me feeling in the mood? Maybe I'll surprise my hubby with a year's supply of Cialis. That should lift his sagging spent spirits, don't you think?

I'll settle for the chalky hearts thank you.

*Bad Hair Day

*Mommy
Hullabaloo

*Dirty Laundry

*The Morrison Boys

*Side Dish

*Comments From
The Carpool

*The Foggiest Idea

*Home Away
From Home

*Small Town Soup

*Mommy - Daddy
Dance

*From The Frontline

*Life At 40

*Livin' In My Head

*Sigh, Moan &
Garfbuckle

*Don't Get Me Started

*Dad Libs

*Lady Of The House

*Blissfully Numb

*Mommy Chronicles

*Domestic Engineering



Liz Holzemer is the founder of Meningioma Mommas.org , an online support group she founded after surviving a baseball-sized meningioma brain tumor. She is a freelance writer, LizHolzemer.com and is currently looking for a permanent home and cushy advance for her book; I Have a What in My Head?! Liz is a 2004 Woman's Day "Women Who Inspire Us" recipient. She lives in Colorado with her husband and their two miracle children. Liz also maintains her sense of humor on a daily basis and can be reached at lizholzemer@comcast.net if you have a plum writing assignment to offer her.



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