



Counseling & Testing Center

February 2016

Volume 3, Issue 1

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*Welcome back everyone!
We hope your holidays
were great and restful.
The CTC is open and
ready for the Spring term.*

Valentine's Day

Just another day in the big picture

By Dr. Karl Laves

Few things pull me into a Lewis Black-like rage than hearing people express deep sorrow and regret about being lonely or alone on Valentine's Day. I can think of few situations that better illustrate the idea "we have met the enemy and he is us." In the words of David Powlison, "Feeling sorry for yourself is one of the strongest, most addictive narcotics known to man. It feels so good to feel so bad. Self-pity arises so easily, seems so plausible, and proves so hard to shake off."

Folks, I have sympathy and empathy for people's pain, but I also think we set ourselves up for a great deal of the pain we experience in life. So what if so many hundreds of years ago a bunch of people decided to dedicate a day to love, or whatever the origin of Valentine's Day is. Some say it was a liturgical celebration, a remembrance of a martyr. Today it is another mainstream American McHoliday where you dump a ton of cash at Heart-Mart in yet another socially validated celebration of shared narcissism. Too obscure a reference? Erik Erikson wrote about how many adults based their romantic relationships on a quid pro quo notion. It isn't that I love you so much as it is I love that you love me.

Get the drift here; I am on a rant and I may not be making sense. The divorce rate in America is ridiculous, the prevalence of cheating and domestic violence is epidemic and yet people want to get all pitiful on one day of the year because they are alone. What is it about Feb. 14 that makes one's life so miserable? Is it the alignment of the planets? Does the inner

core of the earth shift and send shockwaves only felt by the broken hearted? C'mon, were you any less miserable on Feb. 13, or April 10, or July 7? In the manner of a true cognitive-behavioral therapist, which I am not, let me ask "what are you choosing to believe about Feb. 14 that requires you to despise yourself?"

How many of those couples, so deeply and publically in love on the 14th, will be broken up by March? How many of them are cheating on each other already, hence the need to bribe one another? Are you that vain or needy that you would rather have a pretend relationship instead of a real one? Can you imagine that there really are people who would rather be alone than be in a bad relationship?

You don't have to beat yourself up for being alone. Love, done well, takes time and you sure don't want to rush it. Forgive me for this comparison; love is like money. If you get a whole lot quickly, you probably did something hinky to get it. Let's get some perspective here my friends. On one day of the year you are going to mope around and feel horrible because you don't have a special someone? Because on the same day there are people walking around wishing they had a home, a meal, a safe place to play...there are people wishing they were not poor, hungry, or abused. On the day you think you have to be sad because you didn't get a box of chocolates there are other people wishing they had a few more days with their family before the cancer ends their lives.

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SPOTLIGHT



Jessica Stunson

I received a Bachelor of Interdisciplinary Studies with an emphasis in Social and Behavioral Science from Western Kentucky University (WKU). Following my B.I.S, I earned a Graduate Certificate in Leadership Studies from WKU. Currently, I am working on earning my MSW from WKU while working full-time as the Education Director for an after-school program. Many experiences in class and on the job helped me to see that I have a great passion for working with individuals in the mental health field and sparked my interest for clinical social work.

I take a constructive approach to counseling. I believe that clients should focus on their abilities, talents, and resources rather than solely focusing on problems and deficits. To do this, I view each client as an expert on their own life and experiences. My theoretical approach is based on Solution-Focused Therapy, which is goal oriented and targets the desired solution of the client, rather than the symptoms or issues being presented.

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Yes, it can be unpleasant to be alone or lonely. But it is not a permanent condition. And it certainly is not a condition that magically becomes worse on Feb. 14. Unless you say it does....but that is just you saying it.....nobody else is thinking it. Well, maybe some people are thinking it ... ,those narcissistic, thin-skinned, vain and entitled people I mentioned before.

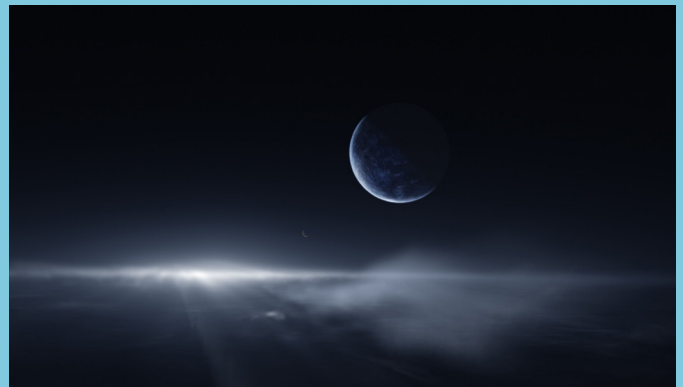
So, here are my revolutionary thoughts for Valentine's Day. Don't have someone special? Good!!! Send Valentines to people who are hurting for other reasons. Make

some goody bags and drop them off at the hospital, local school, or police station. Take yourself out for an excellent dinner and movie. Better yet, find three or four fellow wonderful humans who are not currently dating, etc., and all go together. The origin of Valentine's Day, according to some, is a celebration of a person who suffered for others, who gave time and energy to those around him. This Valentine's Day why don't you honor the true meaning and share the love and don't get so wrapped up in the material Kardashian bull hockey of chocolates and roses.

This Feb. 14, send a valentine to someone who really deserves it.....you!

Mindfulness Group meets Thursdays

The Counseling and Testing Center hosts a Mindfulness Group every Thursday in the Health Services Building, room 1075. The meetings begin Feb. 4, from 1-2 p.m., and consist of a weekly introduction to mindfulness and meditation. For more information, contact Todd Noffsinger at todd.noffsinger@wku.edu.



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Star's Report

Hello everyone! Welcome back! I hope everyone had a wonderful holiday break and enjoyed time with family and friends. I had a lot of fun and got to experience my first snow. It was a lot of fun playing in the white stuff but it was cold on my paws.

My training is going extremely well and I am coming into the office almost everyday now. I am also busy preparing for my good puppy citizenship test but still have some more training sessions to complete. Come visit me if you need a little puppy time and if you see me around campus, don't forget to stop and say hi. I am looking forward to a great semester and meeting lots of new people.

Counseling Services

College should be challenging, not overwhelming

That's why we're here to help, offering our services Monday thru Friday from 8 a.m. – 4:30 p.m. There is a ONE-TIME \$20.00 fee for paperwork and documentation. After the one-time fee, students have access to unlimited visits for their entire college career here at WKU. Our services are confidential and NO information is released without the student's written permission, unless in an emergency situation. So if your mom, grandma, or next door neighbor calls to learn about your counseling appointment, "mums" the word.

We offer individual and group counseling services to help with coping strategies, conflict resolution, and crisis situations related to:

<i>College Adjustment</i>	<i>Eating Disorder</i>
<i>Bipolar Disorder</i>	<i>Anxiety</i>
<i>Problem Behaviors</i>	<i>Suicide Prevention</i>
<i>Stress Management</i>	<i>Grief/Loss</i>
<i>Depression</i>	<i>Decision Making</i>
<i>Sexual Assault/Abuse</i>	
<i>Relationship Issues</i>	<i>....and more!</i>

Don't Forget! We also offer counseling for couples of all kinds: friends, relationships and roommates.

Testing Services Available

The Counseling and Testing Center offers most national tests such as CLEP, MAT, LSAT, DSST, ACT, HESI and COMPASS. STAMP, Residual ACT and Chemistry Placement tests are also available. For more information on testing dates, see www.registerblast.com/wku. PRAXIS testing dates are at www.ets.org/praxis. Questions may be e-mailed to: testing-center@wku.edu.

LGBTQIA Group meets Tuesdays

The Counseling and Testing Center hosts an LGBTQIA Group every Tuesday in Potter Hall, Room 409. Meetings for this semester begin Feb. 2 and will be from 4:30-5:30 p.m. For more information, contact Brian Lee at: brian.lee@wku.edu.

