

How Valentine's Day Works When the Woman Makes More Money

Ciara Larkin (/author/1610108) | Follow ()



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NEW YORK (MainStreet (<http://www.MainStreet.com>)) — Valentine's Day: the honorary romantic holiday (<http://www.mainstreet.com/article/5-best-reasons-to-avoid-a-valentines-day-marriage-proposal>) that allows restaurants to up their prices (<http://www.mainstreet.com/article/5-absolute-worst-things-you-can-buy-this-valentines-day-weekend>) and couples to question their relationships (<http://www.mainstreet.com/article/valentines-effect-causes-40-explore-divorce>). While Valentine's Day originated in the 5th century as a feast for Christian saints, it has now morphed into a reason for significant others to stress out about buying the perfect gifts for each other, choosing the perfect card, and planning the perfect date. While most think of February 14 as the day that a man should take his lady to a fancy



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dinner and shower her in expensive wine and even more expensive diamonds, the case is quite the opposite for most couples.

Ever since women in the workforce became a societal norm, the possibility of a woman making more money than her male counterpart has become quite common. While the unspoken rules of equality state that it doesn't matter who makes more money, it does put a bit of a spin on the unspoken rules of this overstated "holiday." So...how does Valentine's Day work when the woman is the so-called "breadwinner?" Does she expect to be wined and dined in the same way as a woman who is dating a male breadwinner? Or, does she feel like she should foot the bill or choose a less expensive place because she knows that he doesn't make as much money as she does?

Bottom-line

According to Dr. Carole Lieberman, Beverly Hills psychiatrist, author, and radio personality (<http://www.drcarole.com/home.htm>), the bottom line of it all is this is that, regardless of how much she makes, a woman still wants showered with affection.

"Regardless of whether the woman makes more money or not, she needs to be courted and adored, if not put on a pedestal, for Valentine's Day," Lieberman said. "Most women, breadwinning or not, just want to be made to feel special, especially on Valentine's Day. For some couples, a steak dinner with a bottle of fancy champagne will do that, while for others, a quiet night at home with takeout Chinese in front of the fireplace might seal the deal. However, the question of how the financials work in female-breadwinning relationships is where things start to get unclear.



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If she makes more money, should she pay for dinner?

“The biggest mistake that a woman who earns more can make on Valentine’s Day is to pay for dinner,” Lieberman said. While some people may feel that this sentiment is a bit too 1950s, the plain truth of it all is that most men are programmed to take care of their woman financially, just like how most women are programmed to be nurturing and motherly, according to Lieberman. If the woman does something, like pay for a special dinner, she is unconsciously flaunting her spending power in his face, and therefore making him feel less able, and, essentially, less manly.

What if she still wants to somehow contribute to the evening?

Maria Avgitidis, matchmaker and dating coach (<http://www.agapematch.com>) at AgapeMatch.com, explains that just because a woman makes more money than her man, this does not lessen the expectation of romance and chivalry. It wouldn’t be frowned upon for the woman to take him for late-night drinks or dessert after he takes her out to dinner. Especially for those in long-term relationships, this would be viewed more as a team effort or joint date for both people to enjoy Valentine’s Day, as opposed to the man trying to “win over” the woman early on.

In general, do women really expect the overpriced “hoop jumping” that is seemingly inevitable on Valentine’s Day?



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The short answer? Usually not. However, the short answer is not always true across the board. While spending \$9 for a rose or \$200 on a dinner that would usually be half that price is a generous gesture, women can be made to feel just as special over a plate of banana pancakes at the local diner. Chris Choulet, a stay-at-home dad and creator of (<http://www.themoodsign.com/>)the Moodsign, a tool designed to both enhance relationship communication as well as the frequency of sex for couples with hectic schedules, explains his perspective that Valentine's Day should be a reminder to couples to remain valentines throughout the year. While spending all of that money is nice, surprising a spouse with flowers randomly or helping each other out with normal, household tasks are just as much, if not more, sentimental ways to say “thank you” and “I love you.”

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Do breadwinning women expect different treatment for Valentine's Day compared to women who aren't the breadwinners?

Todd Valentine, relationship expert and creator of (<http://valentinelife.com/about-me/>) ValentineLife.com, explains that, if anything, breadwinning women still expect the man to contribute to the relationship, and to Valentine's Day, just in different ways. “If anything, I've found breadwinning women easier to date, because they have the means to take care of those [financial] things themselves,” he said. Valentine explains that all women want their guy to be ambitious and goal-driven, and while being financially stable is also a key factor, the actual money is more of a symbol of his ambition



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as opposed to a tangible factor in the relationship.

"Money is only one of the many things that a man can bring to the table—there are also good emotions, leadership, connection, and good sex," Valentine said. "If you're contributing in these other areas, money is far less important." While breadwinning women may not be the first to look for an expensive date night on Valentine's Day, they are still expecting to be served in the rest of those good qualities.

For her: Gifts?

"Thoughtful Valentine's Day gifts don't have to be pricey," according to April Masini, dating and relationship expert (<http://www.askapril.com/>) at AskApril.com. "A fabulous book, a single orchid, a red panini maker, or a pink turtleneck will all be appreciated gifts that don't break the bank. The worst thing that the man can do is to blow it all off and assume that she can just buy herself whatever she wants." She continues by explaining that typical Valentine's Day gifts can be purchased at every price point. "Roses can be purchased by the dozen or the single stem," she said. "Chocolates can be artisanal or Whitman's from the drugstore. Godiva comes in a huge box, or you can buy a single truffle in a gold bag. It's all good."

For him: Gifts?

According to Masini, "When women make more money than their men—or are the sole breadwinners in the relationship, showing up with pricey Valentine's Day gifts that a man can't match for her might make him feel less than manly." For breadwinning women buying gifts for their men, Masini suggests either doing so subtly—like cooking dinner while wearing your best new Valentine's lingerie. While the lingerie may have been a purchase for yourself, the true gift is for him.

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She also suggests small, personalized gifts, like framing a cute photo, or planning a day doing a fun (yet still price-savvy!) hobby, like ice skating or hiking. Also—be sure never to forget the card. These days, conversation consists mostly of quick texts and messages, leaving handwritten sentiments, which can be much more meaningful, should not be overlooked.

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Is it okay to O.K. a price point or make plans beforehand?

Diane Gottsman, a national etiquette expert (<http://www.protocolschooloftexas.com/>) and owner of The Protocol School of Texas, encourages couples to discuss plans for Valentine's Day in advance. This will assist in avoiding any awkwardness when it comes to the financials of it all. She suggests discussing a celebration that would be meaningful for both people. "A spa weekend, a wine tasting, or even a few nights at a bed and breakfast can be completely doable if both members are willing to pool their resources to accommodate each other's joint wishes," Gottsman says. A joint trip or an experience, like a wine tasting day, alleviates some of the pressure on the man to plan the "perfect date," which is a perfect option for couples in which the woman makes more money.

--Written by Ciara Larkin for MainStreet



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