

## Spiritual Romance

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By Darren Main

If you believe Hallmark and Russell Stover, there is only one way to find happiness in life, and it all comes to a boiling frenzy on February 14<sup>th</sup>. That's right. Romance is where it is, at least that's what we are told. If you don't have it, you probably spend at least a part of your day looking for it, and if you do have it, you probably wonder why it doesn't measure up to all the love affairs you see on TV.

Romantic love is fun, of that there is no question. But is it spiritually sound? Is it something that can be a part of our spiritual lives? Regardless of your spiritual persuasion, it is common knowledge that we can only find happiness within and that the only person that can make you happy is yourself. Yet we seem to talk out of both sides of our mouths. On the one hand we affirm that contentment comes from within, and on the other hand we say, "I will be happy WHEN I find prince[ss] charming." or "I will be happy WHEN my partner changes and behaves the way I want him/her to."

For a long time it seemed I needed to make a choice between my love life and my spiritual life. It was either a codependent relationship that was fun for a while, filled with drama and ended like a Greek tragedy when they didn't live up to my expectations. Or it was live a life alone, like a monk who was content to have a passionate romance with God. Neither path felt like a fit for me, so I bounced between these two extremes that seemed to split my mind and heart in half.

All that changed for me when I met a beautiful man several years back. He had long blond hair, blue eyes and a great smile. It was love at first sight. It was the first time I had ever fallen in love with a man. My prior relationships had always been with women where all the "rules" seemed to be in place for me. Now I had to figure things out for myself. And so I tried something I had never done before.

I treated this new relationship like a part of my spiritual practice. Everything was just like one of my yoga poses. When I resisted it, it became difficult and painful. When I allowed spirit to flow between us, I felt peace. Rather than trying to own him and make him a possession, I continually gave him as much freedom as I could. Of course I didn't do this perfectly, but I kept returning to the idea that I had to stay spiritually grounded. It was a powerful experience.

As the world might judge relationships, ours didn't work out. We never got to the "ever after" part. But we have remained friends and I consider him family. He has been one of my greatest teachers, and because of him I now believe in spiritual relationships. And so the way the world sees things, and the way my spirit sees things are once again at odds. Now I no longer look for a romantic relationship. I trust that one will come if one needs to come. I am just as happy to live as a single man, because I know that every person I meet is my lover if I choose to love them. Each

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P.O. Box 14584 • San Francisco • California • 94114  
info@darrenmain.com • www.darrenmain.com

person I give myself to honestly and  
openly is my partner in that one breath  
we share. And someday, if spirit sees fit,  
I will share many of those open honest  
breaths with one person.

So with all due respect to Russell Stover  
and Hallmark, I disagree that I need a  
box of chocolates and a sappy card to be  
happy. Instead, I will do something good  
for myself on February 14<sup>th</sup>, rather than  
wait for someone else to do it for me.  
And on that day I will remind myself of  
the words of Yogi Amrit Desai: "The  
solution is not in finding the right  
person, but in being the right person."

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