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## Words *for* Thought:

*“Life is like a box of chocolates... you never know what you’re gonna get.”*

Forrest Gump

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# Does Chocolate = Love?



It was mid-January as I made my way through the crowded aisles at my local department store. What is this – holiday stuff? Oh no, the aisles are full and overflowing with the next holiday hot items – Valentine’s Day. Chocolate galore. Everywhere. Chocolate candies, every kind of M&M’s you can imagine, chocolate hearts, bunnies, chocolate-covered nuts, heart-shaped boxes of chocolate. And it goes on and on.

### When did chocolate become known as a icon for Valentine’s Day?

I mean there are other ways to show love, right? Help! Right?

Valentine’s Day has been known as the one day to show love to the ones you love. It is a romantic holiday, one that gives you a chance to express your love – to your spouse, your friends, your children, your parents, but especially to your true romantic love. And then along comes chocolate.

When you are trying to lose weight, chocolate can be a huge distracter. It can make the difference between making progress and setting you back. And as a true chocoholic, I can relate. I had a huge addiction to chocolate and I still struggle with it today. When my weight-loss story was profiled in *Oxygen Magazine* a couple of years ago, it talked about my obsession with chocolate and how it progressed through the years. To me, chocolate was my escape. It helped me deal with a broken marriage, stress of owning a business, raising kids, just surviving. Chocolate is so easy. It’s so comforting. And if you’ve been raised with it like I was, it’s just a part of who you are. Or so I thought.

Several studies have come out recently regarding the “healthy” benefits of chocolate and that really makes me think [and do research]. Who comes out with these “studies”? It’s not companies against chocolate, right? Could it be from chocolate companies or promoters of chocolate?

### Hmm...is chocolate really all that good for you?

I believe in moderation – however, when I was in “Weight Loss Mode”, meaning trying to lose weight –

I had to give up chocolate. The problem wasn’t the chocolate itself, it was me. It was me not being able to stop eating it. I could not just eat a little. One M&M led to another, one handful led to another, one candy bar led to another and pretty soon, every time you eat a meal, you need just a little bit of chocolate to finish your meal or calm your nerves. Sounds like a drug to me. It was to me. It’s not anymore. I know some of my friends think I am a “chocolate nazi”, but again, I believe in moderation. There are some days, okay, there is one day, once a month, where I will indulge to save the lives of my family at home, but if I am training for a race, I won’t even do that until after the race. It’s not a big part of my life now.

Chocolate was a way to show love but now I use other ways. Is it possible to have a holiday about love without chocolate? Absolutely! I highly encourage it, especially if you are trying to lose weight and chocolate could be a set-back for you. I’m talking about the people like me who can’t stop after one M&M. Don’t even start and you won’t have to stop.

Besides the chocolate overload, the Valentine’s holiday itself bothers me. One day to show the ones you love how much you love them? Why not do it every day? Why show your love with a box of chocolates one day a year? Why not dig deep inside and find ways to show your love every day of the year – and NOT with chocolate?

I wish you a good Valentine’s Day this February, but mostly I wish you a good year full of love each day, and good health!

I am always here for you,

*Sandi Porter*

Sandi Porter

## Top 10 Healthy Valentine's Day Presents for a Man to Give to His Woman (aka...How to Survive Valentine's Day Without a Box of Chocolates)

1. Workout clothes – not an old t-shirt and shorts, something cute that fits her at the size she is now
2. A gift certificate for new running shoes
3. Lingerie – think activity points, girls. Guys, know her size, don't ask her, know her size
4. Jumprope – think cardio
5. Dumbbells – the next weight up [if you don't know what the next weight up is, ask her]
6. Box of protein shakes [Myoplex-Lite is a good one]
7. Box of protein bars [Luna or Clif or Myoplex-Lite]
8. Gift certificate for a massage
9. Red roses [if accompanied by No. 10]
10. A note or letter – not a store-bought card – but a note or letter that tells her how you really feel about her

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