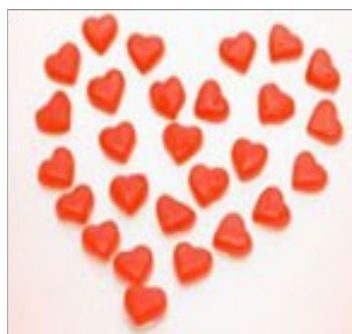




February 2010

American Heart Awareness Month

February is American Heart month. Heart disease is the leading cause of death in the United States and is a major cause of disability. The most common heart disease in the United States is coronary heart disease, which often appears as a heart attack. In 2009, an estimated 785,000 Americans will have a new coronary attack, and about 470,000 will have a recurrent attack. About every 25 seconds, an American will have a coronary event, and about one every minute will die from



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one.

There are diseases and conditions that put your heart at risk of death or disability including arrhythmia, heart failure, and peripheral artery disease, (PAD). High cholest-

terol, high blood pressure, obesity, diabetes, tobacco, and secondhand smoke are also risk factors.

Here are signs that can mean a heart attack is happening. Chest discomfort, most heart attacks involve discomfort in the center of the chest that lasts more than a few minutes, or that goes away and comes back. It can feel like uncomfortable pressure, squeezing, fullness, and pain.

Discomfort in other areas of the upper body. Symptoms can include pain or

Special points of interest:

- American Heart Awareness Month
- Forgiveness and what it can do for you

Forgiveness and How it Benefits You

Nearly everyone has been hurt by the actions or words of another. These wounds can leave you with lasting feelings of anger, bitterness and even vengeance -but if you don't practice forgiveness, you may be the one who pays most dearly.

By embracing forgiveness, you embrace peace, hope, gratitude and joy.

Generally, forgiveness is a decision to let go of resentment and thoughts of revenge. The act that hurt or offended you may always

remain a part of your life, but forgiveness can lessen its grip on you and help you focus on other, positive parts of your life. Forgiveness can even lead to feelings of understanding, empathy and compassion for the one who hurt you.

Continued ~ Heart Awareness Month



National Wear Red Day—When Americans nationwide will wear red to show their support for women’s heart disease awareness. Wear red on February 6, 2010.

discomfort in one or both arms, the back, neck, jaw, or stomach.

Healthy diet and lifestyle are the best weapons you have to fight heart disease. It is important to remember that it is the overall pattern of the choices you make that counts. The following are recommendations from the American Heart Association:

- Choose lean meats and poultry without skin and prepare them without added saturated fat in your diet.
- Select fat-free, 1%, and low-fat dairy products.
- Cut back on foods high in dietary cholesterol. Aim to eat less than 300mg of

cholesterol each day.

- Cut back on beverages and foods with added sugars.
- Choose and prepare foods with little or no salt. Aim to eat less than 2,300mg of sodium per day.
- If you drink alcohol, drink in moderation. No more than one drink per day if you are a women and two drinks per day if you are a man.
- Keep an eye on your portions sizes.

Physical activity in your daily life is an important step to preventing heart disease. You can take a few simple steps at home, at work, and at play to increase the amount of physical activity in your life.

Continued ~ Forgiveness

Forgiveness does not mean that you deny the other person’s responsibility for hurting you, and it doesn’t minimize or justify the wrong. You can forgive the person without excusing the act. Forgiveness brings a kind of peace that helps you go on with life. The bene-

fits of forgiving someone helps to let go of grudges and bitterness and makes way for compassion, kindness and peace.

Forgiveness can lead to:

- Healthier relationships
- Greater spiritual and psychological well-being

- Less stress and hostility
- Lower blood pressure
- Fewer symptoms of depression, anxiety and chronic pain
- Lower risk of alcohol and substance abuse

Sometimes it is easy to hold

Continued~ Forgiveness

onto a grudge. When you allow negative feelings to crowd out positive feelings, you may find yourself swallowed up by your own bitterness or sense of injustice. The effects of holding onto a grudge if your unforgiving, may end up with you paying the price repeatedly by bringing anger and bitterness into every relationship and new experience. Your life may become so wrapped up in the wrong that you can't enjoy the present. You may lose valuable and enriching connectedness with others.

Forgiveness is a commit-

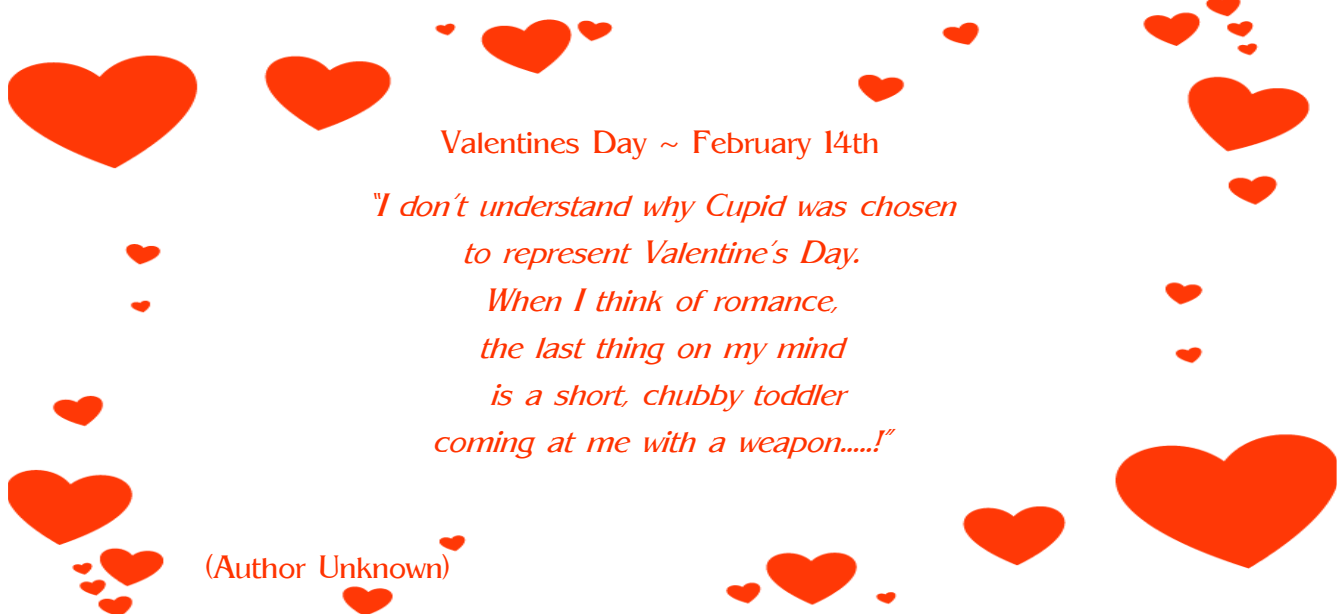
ment to a process of change. A way to begin is by recognizing the value of forgiveness and its importance in your life at a given time. Then reflect on the facts of the situation, how you've reacted, and how this combination has affected your life, health and well-being. When you're ready, actively choose to forgive the person who's offended you. Move away from your role as victim and release the control and power the offending person and situation have had in your life. As you let go of grudges, you'll no longer define your life by how you've been hurt. You

may even find compassion and understanding.

Forgiveness can be challenging. It may be hard to forgive someone who doesn't admit that they are wrong or doesn't speak of his or her sorrow. You may find it helpful to talk with a person you've found to be wise and compassionate, such as a spiritual leader or a mental health care provider. You may also want to reflect on a time you've hurt others and on those who've forgiven you. Keep in mind that forgiveness has the potential to increase your sense of integrity, peace and overall well-being.

"The weak can never forgive. Forgiveness is the attribute of the strong."

~ MOHANDAS K. GANDHI



Valentines Day ~ February 14th

"I don't understand why Cupid was chosen to represent Valentine's Day. When I think of romance, the last thing on my mind is a short, chubby toddler coming at me with a weapon.....!"

(Author Unknown)