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MY TURN

■ Wayne Chan



Roses are red ... and they'd better be

Ahh, I love that spring is right around the corner. When the birds are chirping, the flowers are blooming, and the gophers in my backyard seem to even leave my wife's rose bushes alone.

Speaking of roses, the upcoming spring bloom must also mean it's that time of year again — Valentine's Day!

And now comes all the pressure.

Pressure, you say? Well, yes, and let me explain.

I've been married for nearly 30 years now. The first few years, Valentine's Day was a fun, romance-filled day for two young people in love. Now? We're still in love, I'll have you know. Any woman who can put up with her husband buying a dorky-looking, battery-powered, portable air conditioner that wraps around his neck and can still bear walking next to him must truly be in love.

Truth be told, I threw that thing out because I couldn't stand the looks of people (and by people, I mean mainly my wife) staring at me while I was wearing the ridiculous contraption.

But Valentine's Day, it used to be so simple. Buy her some chocolates. I love her. She loves me. Easy peasy.

But after a few years, chocolates just don't have the same panache. And besides, with everyone nowadays so apprehensive about what we eat, giving a gal a box of chocolates is like wishing them a diabetic sugar bomb.

Do you know how many calories there are in just one of these chocolates?!? And whoa! Look at all those carbs!

Sorry, dear.

How about a bouquet of red roses? Roses are fine, but after a few years of roses, it's become predictable. Besides, I have a bit of an issue spending \$75 on a bouquet of roses that won't keep growing, just ends up being thrown away, and you can't even slice up and make into a nice warm

chowder to feed your family.

I generally prefer gifts that have dual uses.

So, what does a guy do to try and top himself every year for Valentine's Day? It's not easy. There's a virtual landmine of cultural no-nos waiting for any type of gift out there.

How about yellow roses instead of red? In Chinese culture, yellow roses are what you might give to someone if you're planning to break up. That's problematic. In western culture, yellow roses are a symbol of friendship and optimism. *Friendship and optimism?* Are we husband and wife or pen pals?

Here's another no-no: In Chinese culture, giving someone an umbrella as a present is another sign of breaking up, so that's no good. And even if it weren't a sign for breaking up, how would that look?

Hi sweetie, Happy Valentine's Day! I got you this umbrella! And for your birthday next month, I don't want to give away the surprise, but go ahead and throw your old rain boots away!!

But speaking of footwear, even if my wife would actually appreciate a new pair of rain boots (which, I can tell you right now, she wouldn't), giving a pair of shoes for Valentine's Day is culturally unacceptable as well. Chinese tradition says that giving a pair of shoes implies "packing away" your love. Sheesh!

I've also read, though, that if you give a pair of shoes then ask the recipient to refund you one dollar, it breaks the curse.

So, let me get this straight ... If I give my wife a pair of \$500 Jimmy Choo designer shoes, and she gives me back one dollar, then it's like she bought the shoes instead of me giving it to her? She just bought a pair of Jimmy Choo shoes for \$1?

I don't think so!

OK, I've got it. Gift card! You can't offend anyone with gift cards, right? It might not be the most romantic thing, but then again, I wouldn't have inadvertently broken up with anyone, either.

Opinions expressed in this newspaper are those of the authors and not necessarily those of this publication.



Celebrate The Year of the Rooster!

January 28, 2017 to February 15, 2018

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