

Richmond's

For the baby boomer in everyone

BOOMER

Life

February - March 2009

FREE

The Reids Get Serious

Tim and Daphne talk to Bill Bevins

Boomers & Shakers

Four power women of Richmond

Richmond's Eight Favorite Writers

Ray McAllister on
The Dying Dailies

Bill Millsaps on
Basketball LONGS

Plus
Corvettes

Bermuda's
400th

Recession
Makeovers

and

At the
Inauguration

www.BoomerLifeMagazine.com

Myrt and the Doctors Agree: Live Life, Don't Sweat It



After a short marriage and a long divorce, I've now been married to the same person for 11 years, a miracle achieved by following Aunt Myrtle's Valentine's Advice.

If you add the years I insisted on just dating for fear of making another mistake, we've been together nearly two decades. Our first Valentine's Day, he wasted \$50 on a dozen dark-red roses, which remind me of funerals. I hadn't told him I'm a cheap date who considers a single fresh flower perfection itself.

Before Myrt disclosed her secrets, I was getting about as much warmth from Valentine's Day as a hubby who forgets flowers for the missus. When clueless colleagues asked me, "What should I get my wife for Valentine's?" I'd smile wanly and think, "Read the ads, buster."

My extended hiatus between significant others combined a choice to contemplate the essence of my inner being and an aversion to duplicitous married guys aching to be of service.

Eventually I decided to be cool with not marrying again and enjoy myself. If I met Mr. Right, I wouldn't have wasted my life. This turned out to be Myrt's numero uno:

DO WHAT YOU WANT TO DO, GO WHERE YOU WANT TO GO

You won't be noticed inside your locked house. Explore. Museums, shows, concerts, trips, walks, bike rides, classes, volunteering — alone or with a friend. If coupled, don't rely on your mate for everything. Get two lives. Then you'll both add something new and interesting to the relationship.

For added gravitas, yours truly checked Myrt's theories with a couple of therapists, one of whom is Dr. Everett G. McLaren, a Jungian analyst.

IT'S ONLY ONE DAY WAS A MYRT MOTTO.

McLaren's version: "Aside from its commercial trappings, Valentine's Day is a one-day celebration of love and passion ... and ultimately it's an expression of the value of having that other as a companion." Singles can "celebrate connections to

Michael Brown's "10-Minute Miracle" for Valentine's or any day:

- Three deep, quick breaths, hyperventilating to maximize oxygen intake.
- Then eight regular breaths, releasing toxins and tension.
- Repeat cycle for 10 minutes, eyes closed, focusing on breathing rhythm.

WHY?

Brown says: "It clears the mind, relaxes the body, turns the brain on and obsessions off. If everyone did this, everybody in the world would have a nice day."

friends you care about."

Myrt's version: Go out to dinner with bawdy buddies. Relax, joke and laugh while silent bored couples watch enviously. Or pop corn and watch a DVD at home. Feb. 15 will come.

FORGET PRECONCEIVED NOTIONS, MYRT ADVISED.

"They limit your options," McLaren says.

When I met my sweetie, he was wearing a '70s-era orange velour pullover and beige polyester bell-bottoms, both splattered with garden mud. Who knew?


Or, as counselor and hypnotherapist Michael H. Brown says: "You've got to get past the package to get to the soul."

But "if you don't know how to tap into your own soul, you can't get to the soul of the other, even if you're married."

Knowing yourself can change how you see your mate, Brown says. Like, "Maybe there's more to the old fart than I thought." That can be a stimulating alternative to looking for a new honey and going through the whole cycle again.

LIFE THROWS CURVEBALLS.

Myrt said she could hardly believe she dared say this, but as you age, perfectly good people "become available." She wasn't suggesting obits or divorce lists. But if someone is suddenly single, well, get a friend to introduce you. Myrt recommends becoming good friends before "proceeding."

Can't tell you how many men and women Myrt has given this advice to who are now happily committed to the love of their lives. Including Myrt herself and, quite by chance, yours truly. 

Betty Booker is a journalist and spawn of tart-tongued Virginia grande dames who were challenged to keep up with their spinster kin.