

Valentine's Day endorses deceit

By Ryan Kamphuis
CAMPUS EDITOR

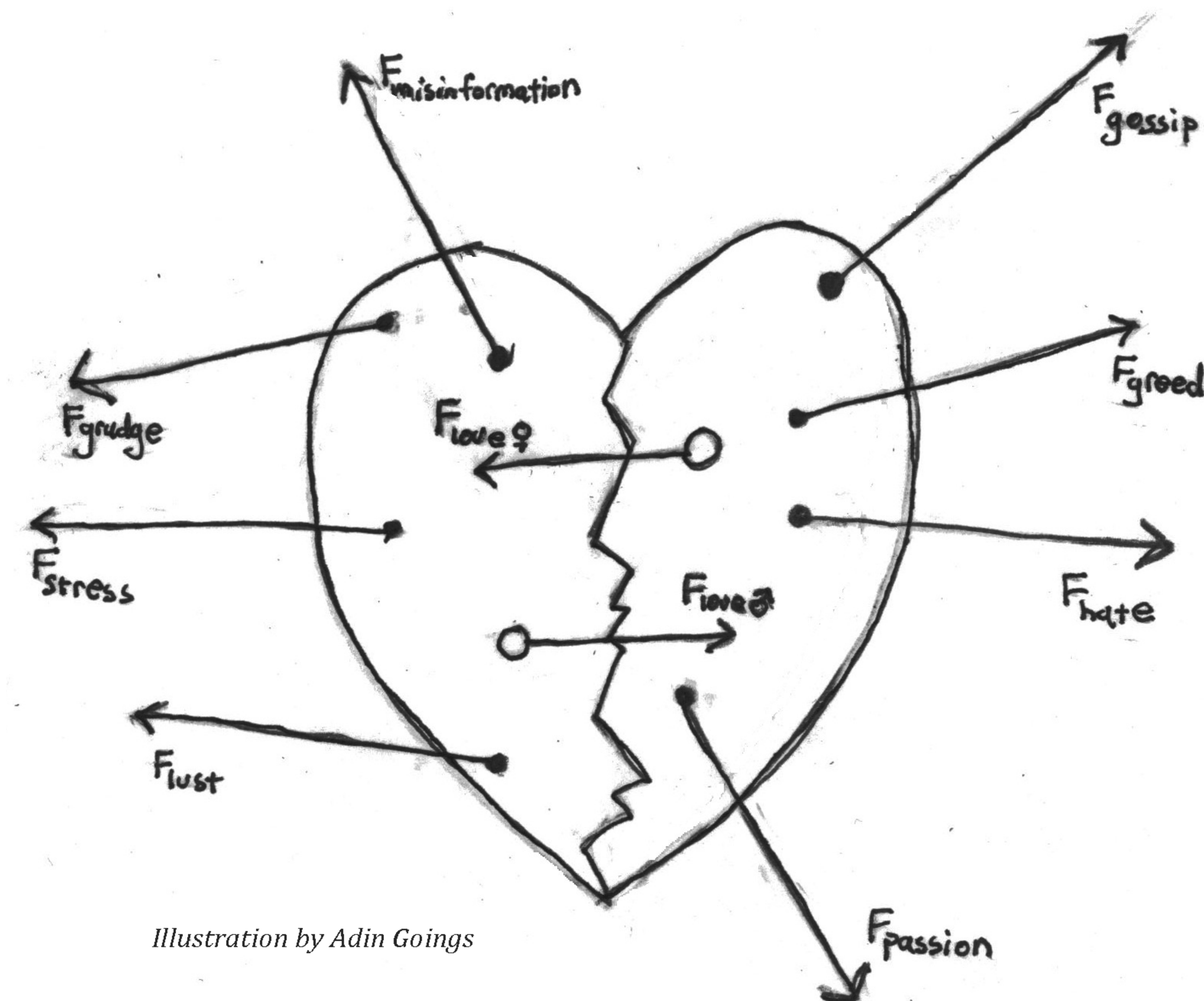


Illustration by Adin Goings

I'm not really sure why I loathe Valentine's Day so much. Maybe it's due to the repressed memories of my years in elementary school, where I was always the one kid that had fewer Valentines than everyone else in the class - even though it was required that every student bring a Valentine for everyone. It could be due to my years as an awkward teenager, where every girl I ever asked on a first date said no, and then started dating someone else within the following two weeks. Or it could just be because of the fact that Valentine's Day is the one day of the year, where I'm reminded of my failures when it comes to getting into a relationship by seeing thousands of happy couples out and about.

But when I really think about it, none of these things really contribute to my disgust with Valentine's Day. Which is a real shame, because all the tales of my spurned attempts at love would really contribute to the whole "heartless cynic" personality I'm trying to develop.

When I truly think about why I despise Valentine's Day, one reason shines clear: Valentine's Day is in no way, shape, or form about love. The powers that be have changed Valentine's Day from a day of love to a day of commercialism. On Valentine's Day, "love" is something that can be bought, sold, and marked down. The marketing minds behind this scheme have ingrained in the public perception the idea that there is no way you can love someone without buying them something on Valentine's Day. All one has to do to see this is look in the spam folder of his or her email

account. In that folder, you will see how the only way to show someone you love them on Valentine's Day is by taking that special someone out to dinner, or buying them clothes, a laptop, an iPod, or off-brand Viagra. For 364 days of the year, we ignore the spam we are sent, so why do we do everything it tells us on Valentine's Day?

There's one other reason I have such animosity for Valentine's Day, and that's the very purpose of the holiday. The purpose of Valentine's Day is to show that special someone that we love them. But why do we need a holiday for that? Shouldn't we be doing that every day that we spend with our significant other? Call me old-fashioned, but love is not something that can even begin to be expressed with money or possessions. Love is a deep thing. Love is being there for someone always, through the good and bad. Love is caring for someone. Love is helping someone. Love is sacrifice. Love is 24/7. Not one day in February.

Valentine's Day is merely a representation of what love has become in our society. In pop culture, love is merely an object. Music tells us that it can be bought. Reality TV shows turn love into a game. If we want to make love mean something in modern society again, Valentine's Day gives us a good point to start.

We can stop celebrating Valentine's Day, and instead show our love every day of our life. And that would provide the first steps necessary to take the concept of love back from the corporations.

What's your angle?

An ethical discussion on current topics

By Annie Hutches & Phil Theisen
TECHNEWS WRITERS

"So, Marcus, have you ever bought anything from Nike?"

"Hmm, I believe so. Probably a pair of shoes, shirts... stuff like that. Why?"

"Well, I just heard an interesting story about how some of Nike's soccer balls are made in sweatshops over in Pakistan. Apparently, the working conditions there are terrible, and the workers, children included, are treated poorly, just so the company can bring the cost down. It seems like it's a cruel way to make money."

"Maybe, but don't you like to buy cheap things?"

"Yeah..."

"Well, these sweatshops will make products cheaper for you. If they are paying less money to their workers, then they can lower the prices of their products. A lot of poor consumers benefit from this."

"But what about all the Americans being

put out of work just so the company doesn't have to pay employees a decent salary? Or how about other businesses that don't invest in sweatshops? They are doing the right thing but have to compete with these business' cheap prices."

"Yes, I agree, but you have to also think about this from the perspective of the kids in the sweatshops. These kids live in third-world countries, and they are being given the opportunity to make money. Working in sweatshops is a much better life for them and will probably help them in many ways. Many alternatives are things like unpaid labor jobs,

subsistent farming, picking through trash, unemployment, and it can keep them off the streets, which are not always safe."

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What's your angle? Send your thoughts to peds.iit@gmail.com.

This week: sweatshops and savings

Marriage is for love & profit

By Ed Scanlon
TECHNEWS WRITER

Such an odd title. One might think that I am attempting to suggest that marriage can be used as a scam (which it can), but I insist that this is not my intention.

What am I talking about?

The thing I'm talking about is gay marriage. It has been a complicated issue in America in recent times. America has a tendency to oppress people, and then stop, and then move on to the next human rights violation, and fix it. With any luck, eventually people will be free in the land of the free.

Until then, we have to have debates between people who want freedom, and people who won't give it to them. For some reason, it is acceptable to tell someone they can't have something that you have because they're different from you. We did it to the blacks, the Irish, the everyone else.

Every time a group of people points out that they're not being treated equally, there's always some other group ready to point out that they don't deserve equality because of [insert reason here]. The GLBT crowd is no different.

Why can't gays marry?

Naturally, if there are people saying that something should not be allowed, the only way they'll be taken seriously is if they can provide a reason. Without reason, after all, the logic never flows to conclusion. Let's see how many reasons I can remember.

- Being gay is a choice, so gay marriage isn't necessary.

- God doesn't like gays, and since it's not PC to hate them, I'll just hate the idea that they could get married.

- Marriage is between a man and a woman.

- Marriage is sacred.

- Gay marriage undermines the institution of marriage.

Exploring the reasoning

In all logical pursuits, when presented with reasons, the next step to legitimizing them is determining why they work (or why they don't). So let's explore.

First up, "being gay is a choice, so gay marriage isn't necessary." This one is scientific. Either it is [true], or it isn't, and we can determine which using science.

So what does the science say? Psychology and biology experts are in agreement that homosexuality exists from birth, or at least from a very early age. Of course there are plenty of scientists with degrees from [insert not re-

ally accredited religious college here] who are quite capable of denying this. They're the same people who can deny global warming while watching it happen. In other words, this debate is decided. It isn't a choice.

Next on the list was the "God hates gays" argument. We can treat "marriage is sacred" and "marriage is between a man and a woman" in the same breath. See, these things are all religious arguments. With that, I'll pause. This one can come later.

The last one remaining is the "gay marriage undermines the institution of marriage" argument. The question that inevitably follows is ... how? This is normally the part where I explain the argument and then get snarky, but I can't.

I don't get it either. Marriages are independent units. No one marriage has a direct causal effect on another simply by virtue of the sex of the participants.

Religion

It was inevitable. And you knew it was when I said "this one can come later." See, as I mentioned, these arguments come from religion. But when we talk about the law and gay marriage, we talk about the good old USA and how it works. When we talk about how it works, we talk about the Constitution. "But the constitution doesn't talk about marriage", you say. Correct.

"Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or preventing the free exercise thereof." The good old first amendment. For those who don't speak 1700's English, "no law respecting an establishment of religion" means that we can't have laws enforcing religious values in and of themselves.

We can legalize murder because that has logical reasoning behind it. But when the only reasoning is religious, it violates the first amendment. Since the only reasoning that can't be disproven is religious, the only arguments that can stand against gay marriage are also religious.

Conclusion

The conclusion here is as short as it is obvious. Because we can't legalize something purely on religious grounds, and the only grounds are religious, we can't ban gay marriage.

And that doesn't even consider the religions in which homosexuality is not taboo, which will be infringed upon by the others. The others just happen to be more popular. And we all know that the best societies are based on popularity contests, right?

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TechNews Corrections

In our previous issue's coverage of summer options on campus, some important information was left out:

As of January 31, all current IIT students are able to register for summer classes using their existing Spring 2011 pin. All summer registration is initially waitlisted, so there is no obligation to the student to complete the registration when they register for fall, the week of April 4. Initially, all registrations are waitlisted in order to determine which classes are most popular and which may require more sections to open.

TechNews regrets the error.