

Dr. FUN's Realistic Romance™ Awards

These mass media portrayals illustrate the 12 **Dr. Galician's Prescriptions™** for healthy relationships. Each one is an "antidote" to the comparable mythic or stereotypic portrayal in the Stupid Cupids Awards listing.

Dr. FUN's Realistic Romance™ Grand Prize
ABC-TV sitcom "I'm With Her"
(See Rx No. 3 and No. 8.)

Rx No. 1: Consider countless candidates.

Awardee: "Lost in Translation"

Rather than fall into the formulaic trap of ditching their spouses when they discover they are "soul mates," the bored young wife played by Scarlett Johansson and the jaded former action-star played by Bill Murray enjoy each other's company over several days in Tokyo (without engaging in gratuitous sex) and then – enriched by their experience -- return to their own partners, who are worthy candidates.

Rx No. 2: Consult your calendar and count carefully.

Awardee: "The Wedding Singer"

Adam Sandler and Drew Barrymore play individuals who are each engaged to inappropriate partners but who learn that a romance with each other based on a healthy foundation of growing friendship, deepening understanding, and shared values (see Rx No. 9) can be soaring and solid at the same time.

Rx No. 3: Communicate courageously.

Awardee: ABC-TV sitcom "I'm With Her"

(also Realistic Romance Grand Prize winner)

This sparkling new sitcom courageously communicates a novel and needed message in the otherwise typically mean and toxic emotional environment of today's TV: Romantic partners can be interesting, sexy, and funny without putting each other down constantly (see Rx No. 8). In this Chris Henchy creation based on his own life as Brooke Shields' husband, Teri Polo is a movie-star dating a teacher (David Sutcliffe). They're nice (but not goody-goody) and respectful (but real). And they actually share their feelings and wishes with each other -- gently but honestly. (Best example: When he tells her that her singing voice is less than stellar.) Each episode is a lesson in how to talk to someone you love, with clever dialog that *is* dialog -- courageous two-way communication underlined with obvious loving respect. Did I mention it's also funny?

Rx No. 4: Concentrate on commitment and constancy.

Awardee: WB TV drama “7th Heaven” (now on ABC Family)

Although often heavy-handed, preachy, and uneven in its “messages” (in other words, the members of this minister’s family are nice *and* goody-goody; respectful *and* unreal), this series – honored with diverse awards for its wholesomeness – admirably encourages sexual responsibility (according to a recent Rand Study) and advocates factors other than sex (friendship, understanding, and commitment) in romantic relationships.

Rx No. 5: Cherish completeness in companions (not just the cover).

Awardee: “Hairspray”

John Waters’ cult classic (a current stage success) is campy and a bit over-the-top, but it’s rare and refreshing to see teenage Ricki Lake break a variety of stereotypes as a big, bright, and beautiful character who not only becomes a popular dancer on a 1960s TV teen dance show (and a clothes model for “big-boned gals”) but also wins the Elvis look-a-like boyfriend from her blond, thin, and racist rival.

Rx No. 6: Create coequality; cooperate.

Awardee: TV’s “The Cosby Show” (now airing on Nick at Night)

For 20 years, the husband and wife in this still running and still popular television classic (which shattered many stereotypes) have been a rarity: an evenly matched peer couple who model loving respect and cooperation. Cliff Huxtable (Bill Cosby) is a respected gynecologist; Clair (Phylicia Rashad) is a successful attorney. They share the duties and responsibilities of child-rearing, income-producing, and housekeeping – and they still find time to keep their own romantic fires lit.

Rx No. 7: Cease correcting and controlling; you can’t change others (only yourself!).

Awardee: “28 Days”

After finally seeing the light during alcohol rehab and determining to stay sober, Sandra Bullock’s character realizes she can’t change her boozy boyfriend, so she simply and without recrimination says, “Goodbye.” This wise heroine knows that Myth #7 only works in the movies. (Bonus: The movie doesn’t paint these lovers as black-and-white cartoon characters or demonize the old boyfriend, nor does she begin a new relationship with the willing but “not entirely ready” attractive baseball player who’s still in rehab.)

Rx No. 8: Courtesy counts; constant conflicts create chaos.

Awardee: ABC-TV sitcom “I’m With Her”

(also Realistic Romance Grand Prize winner)

(See Rx No. 3.)

Rx No. 9: Crave common core-values.

Awardee: “Legally Blonde 2: Red, White, & Blonde”

The sequel to last year’s Realistic Romance Grand Prize winner moves its totally unrealistic college courtroom action to the halls of Congress, where it retains the sassy silliness of the original. But it also retains the compelling sweetness of a committed couple who share their idealism, social activism, and legal expertise, as well as a great friendship, and who honor, respect, and support each other.

Rx No. 10: Cultivate your own completeness.

Awardee: Pop song “Cinderella” (recorded by Swedish group Play and by Disney’s Cheetah Girls)

Realizing that “fairytale life wasn't for me,” the young girls in these two popular groups defiantly sing in unison: “I don’t wanna be like Cinderella -- sitting in a dark, cold, dusty cellar -- waiting for somebody to come and set me free.” Instead, they’d rather rescue themselves. (“My knight in shining armor is me.”) Because they’re content in who they are as individuals, they’re waiting for someone who wants their “soul, heart, and mind.”

Rx No. 11: Deconstruct celebrities.

Awardee: Two different pop songs — “Celebrity” (NSYNC) and “Celebrity” (Brad Paisley)

The notion of “celebrity” gets cleverly deconstructed in these two different songs. NSYNC asks, “If I wasn't a celebrity, would you be so nice to me?” -- pointing to a problem with many obsessed fans who live vicariously through their media icons (“I'm glad that you are having a good time livin' the life that I've laid out for me.”) but who don’t really know the idols they worship (“I hate the way you like to say your man's a celebrity...; I thought you wanted me for me.”). Brad Paisley’s country lyric is more generally satiric but equally spot-on: “Someday I'm gonna be famous. Do I have talent? Well, no. These days you don't really need it, thanks to reality shows.” And he pinpoints the value of celebrity: “You can act just like a fool, people think you're cool, just ‘cause you're on TV.”

Rx No. 12: Calculate the very real consequences of unreal media.

Awardee: (music video) *Precious Illusions* (Alanis Morissette)

The clever split-screen visuals demonstrating mythic portrayals (for example, a knight in shining armor on one side) side-by-side with comparable realistic visions (a young suitor on a motor bike) perfectly illustrate the wise and hauntingly honest lyrics that acknowledge the singer “won’t keep on playing the victim” by clinging to her old “precious illusions.” Even though “parting with them is like parting with a childhood best friend,” this smart and talented woman wants “to decide between survival and bliss.”