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Contact: Dr. Mary-Lou Galician

DrFUN@RealisticRomance.com

Phone: 602-717-3607 or 480-838-0003

*[THE COMPLETE LIST OF RECIPIENTS
OF THE 26 AWARDS WITH CITATIONS
BEGINS ON PAGE 6 OF THIS RELEASE*

-- AND IS ALSO ONLINE WITH STREAMING VIDEO AT www.RealisticRomance.com.]

**Media literacy advocate Dr. Mary-Lou Galician confers her 8th annual
Dr. FUN's Stupid Cupid & Realistic Romance[®] Awards[™]
for worst and best 2009 mass media portrayals
of sex, love, and romance**

***"The Ugly Truth," "New Moon," and "The Proposal"
share the 2010 Stupidest Cupid Award[™];
"I Love You, Man," "Away We Go," and The Blind Side"
share the 2010 Realistic Romance[®] Grand Prize[™];
24 other awards go to popular films, TV shows, songs, and magazines***

February 14, 2010—In an unusual double three-way tie, six popular films received the two overall awards of the 8th annual *Dr. FUN's Stupid Cupid & Realistic Romance*[®] Awards[™] for mass media portrayals of sex, love & romance, announced each year on Valentine's Day.

"The Ugly Truth," "New Moon," and "The Proposal" shared the *Stupidest Cupid Award[™]* for perpetuating numerous unhealthy myths and stereotypes of sex, love, and romance that abound in the mass media. Likewise, the *Realistic Romance[®] Grand Prize[™]* for presenting healthy relationship strategies—which entertainment media rarely demonstrate—honored "I Love You, Man," "Away We Go," and The Blind Side."

Recipients of all 26 awards—which include 2009's blockbuster films, top-rated TV shows, popular songs, and major magazines—are detailed online at www.RealisticRomance.com.

The awards are an educational public service established 8 years ago by media literacy advocate Dr. Mary-Lou Galician, creator of *REALISTIC ROMANCE[®]: The Thinking Person's Relationship Remedy[™]* and head of media analysis and criticism in the Walter Cronkite School of Journalism & Mass Communication at Arizona State University, as part of her media literacy mission to focus public attention on unhealthy, dangerous media myths and stereotypes and to honor the rarer portrayals that provide healthy models of coupleship and help media consumers "get real about romance."

Galician, who is affectionately known as "Dr. FUN" because of her musical motivation program *FUN-dynamics![®]—The FUN-damentals of DYNAMIC Living*, is an expert on the influence of mass media portrayals on real-life relationships. She is the author of the textbooks *Sex, Love, and Romance in the Mass Media: Analysis and Criticism of Unrealistic Portrayals and Their Influence* (2004) and *Critical Thinking About Sex, Love, and Romance in the Mass Media: Media Literacy Applications* (2007). Currently, she is working on a new book for the general public—*DR. GALICIAN'S PRESCRIPTIONS[®] FOR REALISTIC ROMANCE[®]: The 7-Step Reality Check-Up[®] to Bust Media Myths that Ruin Real-life Relationships*.

—MORE—

How the award recipients are chosen

The 12 Stupid Cupid Awards™—one for each of the 12 major myths that Galician's research has identified as affecting perceptions of romance and that comprise her *Dr. FUN's Mass Media Love Quiz®* (online at www.RealisticRomance.com)—focus attention on mythic and stereotypic media portrayals that Galician says people should never use as models for their own lives. A 13th overall award—the Stupidest Cupid Award™—goes to the portrayal with the most myths and stereotypes.

The 12 Realistic Romance® Awards™—one for each of *Dr. Galician's Prescriptions® (Rx)* for *Getting Real About Romance* (“antidotes” to the 12 myths and stereotypes)—honor the rarer media portrayals of healthy coupleship. The Realistic Romance® Grand Prize™ is awarded to the overall best example.

More than 1,000 nominations for 2009 media portrayals came from the public and students in Galician's university media literacy classes as well as other classes and groups around the country and around the world that use her books and website, www.RealisticRomance.com. Assisting Galician to narrow the field of nominations was a panel of judges that included Galician's own husband, Dr. David Natharius, a gender communication expert. The final decision about each award is then made by Galician alone, who also personally writes each citation that explains the reason for each recipient's award. (*Recipients of all 26 awards are listed with their citations beginning on Page 6, below.*)

***New this year:
3 sets of “pairings” of the recipients of the two overall awards—
“to help media consumers better understand
the media literacy tenets that underlie the awards.”***

This year, Galician did something a little different in naming the recipients of her two overall awards for worst and best portrayals of the previous year. Instead of the usual single winner for each of the two overall awards, she named three portrayals for each, intentionally creating double three-way ties.

“I think the additional examples help you more easily and fully discover how to identify dysfunctional *Stupid Cupid* portrayals that you should be seriously concerned about, as well as to appreciate the far better role models in the *Realistic Romance®* portrayals,” Galician explained.

“It's also best to consider the 12 media myths in terms of their corresponding prescriptions—and vice versa, so it's also best to consider the portrayals that exemplify them by comparing the awardees on ‘both sides’,” she added. “Therefore, to help media consumers better understand the media literacy tenets that underlie the awards, I announced the two overall awards in three “pairings” of one of the three *Stupidest Cupid Award™* recipients with a corresponding *Realistic Romance® Grand Prize™* recipient.

***First pairing of the 3 tied sets of recipients of the two overall awards:
A man you have to hate and a man you have to love—
“The Ugly Truth” (Stupidest Cupid Award™)
and “I Love You, Man” (Realistic Romance® Grand Prize™)***

“The Ugly Truth”: “It is ugly, but there's not a lot of *truth*, because it's all about being a total phony, with the emphasis on the superficial over substance. The Neanderthal primary theme promotes nearly every one of *Dr. FUN's Mass Media Love Quiz®* 12 myths and stereotypes, including: only

objectified model-like beauties can attract men (Myth #5), easy and wonderful sex signals a meant-to-be partner (#4), men must be (or feel!) superior to women (#6), and bickering and fighting symbolize underlying passion and true love (#8). In the film's final minutes, everything that's so totally wrong about this mis-matched couple (an annoying looking-for-love TV producer played by Katherine Heigl and the boorish advice man-you-have-to-hate played by Gerard Butler—neither of whom is ready for a healthy relationship) is suddenly made to seem totally right, and the audience is encouraged to applaud this unholy union.”

“I Love You, Man”: “This rare type of blockbuster—charming, touching, and also very funny—features many of *Dr. Galician's Prescriptions*© for healthy sex, love, and romance. The focus is a healthy, well matched engaged couple (Paul Rudd as a decent and caring man and Rashida Jones as his independent-minded but fully committed partner) who communicate courageously about everything from sex to sofas (Prescription #3; also Rx #4) and treat each other courteously (#8). Even their single pre-wedding-jitters quarrel is brief and without the usual trite battle of the sexes motif; in fact, Myth #8 is parodied here—further adding to the healthy message. This man-you-gotta-love, who genuinely loves women but has no male friends, learns the importance of importance of not expecting your romantic partner to fill all your needs (Rx #10)—thanks to the wisdom of his fiancée and a truly hilarious ‘bromance’ with a nuanced character played by Jason Segel.”

Second pairing of the 3 tied sets of recipients of the two overall awards:

Death vs. life—

***“The Twilight Saga: New Moon” (Stupidest Cupid Award™)
and “Away We Go” (Realistic Romance® Grand Prize™)***

“The Twilight Saga: New Moon”: “This series’ legions of mostly suggestible teen fans get another dose of a dreadful role model, as boring Bella—specifically and utterly stupidly taking a page from the icons of disastrous romance, Romeo and Juliet—decides that even suicide is a great option for reunion with her supposed soul mate, the vampire Edward (Myth #1, 3, and 10).

It’s not only dopey: It’s dangerous, because unlike some campy and satiric sci-fi, this franchise takes itself deadly seriously. And now she has *two* super-human protectors to lean on (Myth #6)—though it’s obvious she knows which one is her pre-destined partner, from whom neither dads nor death can separate her (#1).”

“Away We Go”: “The focus of perhaps this past year’s healthiest pop culture couple (played by John Krasinski and Maya Rudolph) is on *life*: the first child they’re expecting, in whose interest they’re touring the United States to decide where best to re-locate.

Throughout this warm and witty film, they demonstrate the kind of good coupleship the media rarely present. They communicate courageously (Rx #3), don’t fight (#8), share power (#6) and values (#9), and focus on inner beauty and long-term commitment (#2, 4, and 5) rather than merely on sex appeal or externals. And they’re still very real. Here’s a loving couple media consumers of all ages should model—though you need to find the DVD of this limited-release winner.”

Third pairing of the 3 tied sets of recipients of the two overall awards:

All About Sandra (Bullock), who ironically stars in both the worst and the best—

***“The Proposal” (Stupidest Cupid Award™)
and “The Blind Side” (Realistic Romance® Grand Prize™)***

The Proposal™: “Sandra Bullock is a mean-spirited top editor loathed by everyone, including her nice-guy male assistant (Ryan Reynolds) in this gender-reversal of the Beauty and the Beast myth (#7). Despite their totally different values (#9) and constant battles (#8), at the very end of this top-grossing film, his goodness changes her from a witch to a princess who realizes it’s his way or the highway (literally, as she’ll be deported if she doesn’t marry him), so they prepare for a wedding that’s just as sham as the fake one they concocted to fool U.S. immigration (#10).”

“The Blind Side”: A real marriage (dramatizing a well known real-life one) with real love is demonstrated in this film, for which Bullock earned a Best Actress Oscar nomination and Golden Globe Award as a wife, mother, businesswoman, and social activist. Although the marriage isn’t the focus of this heart-warming film, this loyal husband and wife illustrate many of the Prescriptions, including courageous communication (#3) and shared values (#9) in a committed long-term romantic relationship (#2 and 4) with shared power in a 21st Century coupleship (#6).

***Awards for the individual 12 Myths or 12 Prescriptions:
“Stupid Cupids abound,
but media portrayals of healthy sex, love, and romance are harder to find.”***

In addition to this year’s three *Stupidest Cupid Award™* recipients, 2010 *Stupid Cupid* awardees for each of the 12 individual myths and stereotypes of *Dr. FUN’s Mass Media Love Quiz®* include blockbuster films “The Time Traveler’s Wife,” “Paul Blart: Mall Cop,” “I Love You, Beth Cooper,” “Angels and Demons,” “Not Easily Broken,” “Ghosts of Girlfriends Past,” “Madea Goes to Jail,” “Confessions of a Shopaholic,” and “He’s Just Not That Into You”; TV’s “One Tree Hill,” “90210,” “Gossip Girl,” Teleflora’s “Talking Flowers” Super Bowl commercial, “Tool Academy,” “Keeping Up with the Kardashians,” and sit-coms; magazines *Maxim* and *Cosmo*; and popular songs “Jai Ho: Destiny,” “Knock You Down,” “Soulmate,” “Love Sex Magic,” “Beautiful,” “I Can Transform You,” “My Life Would Suck Without You,” “I Just Call You Mine,” “Inseparable,” and “La La La”; and “media critics who describe mythic and stereotypic portrayals as ‘completely harmless’” along with “schools that don’t provide media literacy education.”

“Unfortunately, *Stupid Cupid* nominees abound in the media,” Galician explains, “but it’s much more difficult to find examples of healthy models of sex, love, and romance that are entertaining and appealing.” Nevertheless, in addition to the three *Realistic Romance® Grand Prize™* winners, worthy portrayals from 2009 were found to honor with the 12 individual *Realistic Romance® Awards™* for healthier portrayals exemplifying one of *Dr. Galician’s Prescriptions®*, including popular movies “Love Happens,” “(500) Days of Summer,” “Observe and Report,” “Miss March,” “Surrogates,” “It’s Complicated,” “Whip It,” “New in Town,” “The Princess and the Frog,” and “Julie and Julia”; TV’s “Alice” (SyFy two-part mini-series), “House,” “The Office,” and “The Simpsons”; popular songs “I Thought I Loved You Then,” “Consider Me Gone,” “Don’t Let Me Stop You,” “I Do Not Hook Up,” “U Should Know,” and “White Horse”; and media literacy resources that foster critical thinking.

***Reminders for really great sex, love, and romance:
Media portrayals of sex, love, and romance affect nearly all of us
— even though we might not realize it.***

Galician’s research examines how mass media portrayals of sex, love, and romance affect nearly all of us — men and women, young children and seniors, singles and couples — even though we might not realize it. “People in my studies with unrealistic expectations are less satisfied in their own romantic

relationships,” says Galician, who is known as the nation’s Realistic Romance® Guru, “and many of these unrealistic expectations come from media we enjoy without fully considering how they influence us at a subconscious level.

“It’s also important to remember that when I say ‘realistic’ I don’t mean ‘naturalistic’ or ‘normal,’” she adds, “I mean ‘healthy’. I don’t want you to lower your standards: I actually want you to raise your standards (because you’re worth it) but lower your mythic and stereotypic expectations, which are unhealthy.”

Galician insists that her work “is *not* about censorship or avoiding media. It’s all about being a wise media consumer, about using the media instead of the letting media use you, and about ‘getting real about romance’ to be more successful and happier.”

She notes, “It’s important to take time to consider how mass media portrayals at the least reinforce — if not create — unrealistic expectations that most of us can’t dismiss completely. First we have to understand where they come from. Then we must learn how to analyze and critique them and, most important, how to reframe them more constructively.

Galician’s books and programs offer her *7-Step Reality Check-Up®* for analyzing and criticizing unrealistic portrayals. She even includes suggestions about how parents should debrief their children after they view cartoon classics like “Beauty and the Beast” and “Lady and the Tramp” (and one of last year’s *Stupid Cupid* winners, “WALL-E”), which are seemingly harmless but filled with myths and stereotypes.

***Galician’s ultimate advice:
“Get real about romance!”***

“We can still enjoy the ‘escape’ that unrealistic romantic media portrayals offer us,” Galician says, “but it’s not wise to use them -- or media celebrities -- as models in our real lives. “It’s much healthier and smarter to make yourself the hero or heroine of your own true love story.”

Her ultimate advice for Valentine’s Day -- and every day: “Get real about romance!”

For more information about Galician’s *Dr. FUN’s Stupid Cupid & Realistic Romance® Awards™*

or to arrange a print or broadcast interview with “Dr. FUN”

(who IS indeed a very FUN interview!),

please contact Dr. Mary-Lou Galician directly:

DrFUN@RealisticRomance.com

A complete listing of this year’s 26 awards with the citations that explain why the award was made appears on the following pages of this release as well as on Dr. Galician’s web site (which includes streaming video of Dr. Galician’s announcement of the awards):

www.RealisticRomance.com.

NOTE TO EDITORS:

Do NOT edit the wording
of the 12 numbered one-sentence copyrighted Quiz Myths
or the 12 numbered one-sentence copyrighted Prescriptions (Rxs).

<p style="text-align: center;">The 8th Annual Dr. FUN's Stupid Cupid Awards™</p> <p style="text-align: center;">conferred on 2009 mass media portrayals that perpetuate one or more of the 12 Myths & Stereotypes of Dr. FUN's Mass Media Love Quiz©</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">The 8th Annual Dr. FUN's Realistic Romance® Awards™</p> <p style="text-align: center;">honoring 2009 mass media portrayals that model one or more of the 12 Prescriptions© [Rxs] of Dr. Galician's Prescriptions© for Getting Real About Romance</p>
<p>These mass media portrayals that appeared in 2009 illustrate and perpetuate the 12 unhealthy and harmful media myths and stereotypes of Dr. FUN's Mass Media Quiz©.</p> <p>There's a separate award for each of the 12 myths. Dr. FUN's Stupidest Cupid Award™—the overall award—goes to a 2009 portrayal with the most myths. It's OK to enjoy these portrayals (well some of them!), but make sure you're aware of the unhealthy beliefs and models they promote.</p> <p>For each of the 12 myths, see its "antidote" — the corresponding Dr. Galician Prescription© (Rx) in the listing of the 12 Realistic Romance® Awards™ (column at right).</p>	<p>These mass media portrayals that appeared in 2009 illustrate and offer good models for successful, healthy relationships — the 12 Dr. Galician's Prescriptions (Rxs) There's a separate award for each of the 12 Prescriptions.</p> <p>The Realistic Romance® Grand Prize™—the overall award—is awarded to a 2009 portrayal with the most Rxs. The Rxs are harder to find in the mass media, which are loaded with myths and stereotypes of sex, love, and romance.</p> <p>Each Rx is the "antidote" to the comparable Dr. FUN's Mass Media Love Quiz© myth or stereotype in the listing of the 12 Stupid Cupid Awards™ (column at left).</p>

RECIPIENTS OF THE TWO OVERALL AWARDS

This year, the **Stupidest Cupid Award™** & the **Realistic Romance® Grand Prize™** were each shared by three portrayals rather than the usual single one. These six overall award recipients and citations (the reason for their award) are presented here in three separate "pairings"—with a caption that explains the pairing.

Awards for the individual 12 Myths and 12 Prescriptions are listed below these overall award recipients.

**FIRST PAIRING
OF 3 TIED SETS OF RECIPIENTS OF THE TWO OVERALL AWARDS:**

A Man You Have to Hate and a Man You Have to Love

<p style="text-align: center;">Dr. FUN's Stupidest Cupid Award™</p> <p style="text-align: center;">AWARDEE: <i>The Ugly Truth</i> (film)</p> <p>It is ugly, but there's not a lot of <i>truth</i>, because it's all about being a total phony, with the emphasis on the superficial over substance. The Neanderthal primary theme promotes nearly every one of <i>Dr. FUN's Mass Media Love Quiz©</i> 12 myths and stereotypes, including: only objectified model-like beauties can attract men (Myth #5), easy and wonderful sex signals a meant-to-be partner (#4), men must be (or feel!) superior to women (#6), and bickering and fighting symbolize underlying passion and true love (#8).</p> <p>In the film's final minutes, everything that's so totally wrong about this mis-matched couple (an annoying looking-for-love TV producer played by Katherine Heigl and the boorish advice man-you-have-to-hate played by Gerard Butler—neither of whom is ready for a healthy relationship) is suddenly made to seem totally right, and the audience is encouraged to applaud this unholy union.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Dr. FUN's Realistic Romance® Grand Prize™</p> <p style="text-align: center;">AWARDEE: <i>I Love You, Man</i> (film)</p> <p>This rare type of blockbuster—charming, touching, and also very funny—features many of <i>Dr. Galician's Prescriptions©</i> for healthy sex, love, and romance. The focus is a healthy, well matched engaged couple (Paul Rudd as a decent and caring man and Rashida Jones as his independent-minded but fully committed partner) who communicate courageously about everything from sex to sofas (Prescription #3; also Rx #4) and treat each other courteously (#8). Even their single pre-wedding-jitters quarrel is brief and without the usual trite battle of the sexes motif; in fact, Myth #8 is parodied here—further adding to the healthy message.</p> <p>This man-you-gotta-love, who genuinely loves women but has no male friends, learns the importance of importance of not expecting your romantic partner to fill all your needs (Rx #10)—thanks to the wisdom of his fiancée and a truly hilarious "bromance" with a nuanced character played by Jason Segel.</p>
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**SECOND PAIRING
OF 3 TIED SETS OF RECIPIENTS OF THE TWO OVERALL AWARDS:
*Death vs. Life***

<p align="center">Dr. FUN's Stupidest Cupid Award™</p> <p>AWARDEE: <i>The Twilight Saga: New Moon</i> (film)</p> <p>This series' legions of mostly suggestible adolescent and teen fans get another dose of a dreadful role model, as boring Bella—specifically and utterly stupidly taking a page from the icons of disastrous romance, Romeo and Juliet—decides that even suicide is a great option for reunion with her supposed soul mate, the vampire Edward (Myth #1, 3, and 10).</p> <p>It's not only dopey: It's dangerous, because unlike some campy and satiric sci-fi, this franchise takes itself deadly seriously. And now she has two super-human protectors to lean on (Myth #6)—though it's obvious she knows which one is her pre-destined partner, from whom neither dads nor death can separate her (#1).</p>	<p align="center">Dr. FUN's Realistic Romance® Grand Prize™</p> <p>AWARDEE: <i>Away We Go</i> (film)</p> <p>The focus of perhaps this past year's healthiest pop culture couple (played by John Krasinski and Maya Rudolph) is on <i>life</i>: the first child they're expecting, in whose interest they're touring the United States to decide where best to re-locate.</p> <p>Throughout this warm and witty film, they demonstrate the kind of good coupleship the media rarely present. They communicate courageously (Rx #3), don't fight (#8), share power (#6) and values (#9), and focus on inner beauty and long-term commitment (#2, 4, and 5) rather than merely on sex appeal or externals. And they're still very real. Here's a loving couple media consumers of all ages should model—though you need to find the DVD of this limited-release winner.</p>
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**THIRD PAIRING
OF 3 TIED SETS OF RECIPIENTS OF THE TWO OVERALL AWARDS:
*All About Sandra (Bullock), who ironically stars in both the worst and the best***

<p align="center">Dr. FUN's Stupidest Cupid Award™</p> <p>AWARDEE: <i>The Proposal</i> (film)</p> <p>Sandra Bullock is a mean-spirited top editor loathed by everyone, including her nice-guy male assistant (Ryan Reynolds) in this gender-reversal of the Beauty and the Beast myth (#7). Despite their totally different values (#9) and constant battles (#8), at the very end of this top-grossing film, his goodness changes her from a witch to a princess who realizes it's his way or the highway (literally, as she'll be deported if she doesn't marry him), so they prepare for a wedding that's just as sham as the fake one they concocted to fool U.S. immigration (#10).</p>	<p align="center">Dr. FUN's Realistic Romance® Grand Prize™</p> <p>AWARDEE: <i>The Blind Side</i> (film)</p> <p>A real marriage (dramatizing a well known real-life one) with real love is demonstrated in this film, for which Bullock has earned a Best Actress Oscar nomination and Golden Globe Award as a wife, mother, businesswoman, and social activist. Although the marriage isn't the focus of this heart-warming film, this loyal husband and wife illustrate many of the Prescriptions, including courageous communication (#3) and shared values (#9) in a committed long-term romantic relationship (#2 and 4) with shared power in a 21st Century coupleship (#6).</p>
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RECIPIENTS OF THE AWARDS FOR THE INDIVIDUAL 12 MYTHS & 12 RxS

STUPID CUPID AWARDS™ (Myths)

REALISTIC ROMANCE® AWARDS™ (RxS)

<p>Myth No. 1: Your perfect partner is cosmically predestined, so nothing/nobody can ultimately separate you.</p> <p>STUPID CUPID™ AWARDEE: <i>The Time Traveler's Wife</i> (film)</p> <p>This sci-fi sob story of a literally out-of-control couple (due to constantly changing time sequences) verges on the promotion of child pornography in its repeated creepy suggestions that a grown-up man is the husband-to-be of a little girl to whom he continually appears and cautions not to tell her parents. Of course, she waits for "The One," who drops in now and then even after he's dead.</p> <p>DIS-HONORABLE MENTION: <i>Jai Ho! (You Are My Destiny)/Slumdog Millionaire Theme</i> (song); <i>One Tree Hill</i> (television)</p>	<p>Rx No. 1: Consider countless candidates.</p> <p>REALISTIC ROMANCE® AWARDEE: <i>Love Happens</i> (film)</p> <p>A sweet and suitable romance develops when an unlucky-in-love florist (Jennifer Aniston) learns to judge men as individuals on their own merits rather than as stereotypes based on former inappropriate partners, and a widowed motivational speaker (Aaron Eckhart) who challenges others to move beyond paralyzing grief at losing loved ones finally follows his own advice.</p> <p>HONORABLE MENTION: <i>(500) Days of Summer</i> (film)</p>
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<p>Myth No. 2: There's such a thing as "love at first sight."</p> <p>STUPID CUPID™ AWARDEE: <i>Paul Blart: Mall Cop</i> (film)</p> <p>Sit-com star Kevin James re-hashes that medium's tired trope that out-of-shape men always get attractive women (Myth #5). Here, he's a lonely widower and wannabe police officer with a crush on a cute mall employee to whom he's barely spoken, much less taken time to get to know—and she's a hold-up hostage for nearly the entirety of the movie, but when the "loser" rescues her (#6), they're an instant loving couple, with wedding bells ringing at the film's end.</p> <p>DIS-HONORABLE MENTION: <i>Knock You Down</i> (song)</p>	<p>Rx No. 2: Consult your calendar and count carefully.</p> <p>REALISTIC ROMANCE® AWARDEE: <i>(500) Days of Summer</i> (film)</p> <p>The film's title and the trippy out-of-order time sequences underscore its focus on the value of taking time to get to really know your romantic partner before assuming that attraction or infatuation is genuine love. Hopeless romantic Tom finally takes off his rose-colored glasses (and the headsets through romantic songs influence him) and realizes that candid Summer is right: Their different values cause their frequent fights, so they must part as friends and find more suitable mates (Rx #1).</p> <p>HONORABLE MENTION: <i>I Thought I Loved You Then</i> (song); <i>Observe and Report</i> (film)</p>
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<p>Myth No. 3: Your true soul mate should know what you're thinking or feeling (without your having to tell).</p> <p>STUPID CUPID™ AWARDEE: <i>Soulmate</i> (song)</p> <p>By assuming, "Who doesn't long for someone to hold/ Who knows how to love you without being told?," Natasha Bedingfield normalizes this Myth that "there's a soulmate for everyone."</p> <p>DIS-HONORABLE MENTION: <i>The Twilight Saga: New Moon</i> (film)</p>	<p>Rx No. 3: Communicate courageously.</p> <p>REALISTIC ROMANCE® AWARDEE: <i>I Love You, Man</i> (film)</p> <p>As detailed in the citation of this film's overall <i>Realistic Romance® Grand Prize™</i>, this healthy, happy couple knows that mind-reading leads to mis-understanding, so they candidly but courteously discuss everything.</p> <p>HONORABLE MENTION: <i>Consider Me Gone</i> (song); <i>Don't Let Me Stop You</i> (song)</p>
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<p>Myth No. 4: If your partner is truly meant for you, sex is easy and wonderful.</p> <p>STUPID CUPID™ AWARDEE: <i>Love Sex Magic</i> (song)</p> <p>Although the lyrics of Justin Timberlake's hit recording with Ciara describe nothing but sexual activity, the two repeat the unrelated refrain, "Oh, this is the part where we fall in love"—but it's based on convincing each other to "believe in love and sex and magic."</p> <p>DIS-HONORABLE MENTION: <i>90210</i> (television); <i>Gossip Girl</i> (television); <i>The Ugly Truth</i> (film)</p>	<p>Rx No. 4: Concentrate on commitment and constancy.</p> <p>REALISTIC ROMANCE® AWARDEE: <i>Miss March</i> (film)—with CAUTION</p> <p>A caution is issued because some gratuitous sex scenes seem to confound the surprising main message of this sometimes raunchy story of a committed couple who dedicate themselves to abstinence until marriage—an event delayed by his 4-year coma and her employment as a <i>Playboy</i> mansion bunny (but it's just to pay his medical bills). And it's worth screening if only to hear Hugh Hefner offer genuinely healthy and fatherly (if perhaps tongue-in-cheek) advice to "cherish completeness in companions" (Rx #5) rather than the cover (or centerfold)!</p> <p>HONORABLE MENTION: <i>I Do Not Hook Up</i> (song); <i>U Should Know</i> (song)</p>
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<p>Myth No. 5: To attract and keep a man, a woman should look like a model or a centerfold.</p> <p>STUPID CUPID™ AWARDEE: <i>The Ugly Truth</i> (film)</p> <p>Although gorgeous-to-begin-with Katherine Heigl's character ultimately dismantles some (but not all) of the enhancements of the model-like makeover she's undergone to snag her "Mr. Right" (at the demeaning direction of Gerard Butler's chauvinistic "Mr Wrong"), neither man gave her the time of day until she did superficially transform herself and eagerly objectify herself to serve as arm candy for such shallow men.</p> <p>DIS-HONORABLE MENTION: <i>Beautiful</i> (song); <i>I Love You, Beth Cooper</i> (film); <i>Maxim</i> and <i>Cosmo</i> (magazines); <i>Teleflora's "Talking Flowers"</i> Super Bowl commercial (television)</p>	<p>Rx No. 5: Cherish completeness in companions (not just the cover).</p> <p>REALISTIC ROMANCE® AWARDEE: <i>Surrogates</i> (film)</p> <p>This cautionary tale about the dehumanization inherent in the extreme pursuit of physical beauty is set in a not-too-distant future when humans hide their imperfections at home while remote-controlling their perfect-looking surrogate robots that substitute for them in the real world, but it's sci-fi that's as real as today. Bruce Willis's character tries to convince his accident-scarred wife that he loves the total person she is—not merely the facade.</p> <p>HONORABLE MENTION: <i>Away We Go</i> (film)</p>
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<p>Myth No. 6: The man should not be shorter, weaker, younger, poorer, or less successful than the woman.</p> <p>STUPID CUPID™ AWARDEE: <i>Angels and Demons</i> (film)</p> <p>Tom Hanks reprises his "DaVinci Code" role of Dan Brown's hegemonic hero—Harvard "ymbologist" Robert Langdon, and the franchise gets another <i>Stupid Cupid Award</i>™. The symbolism of once again casting a much younger, foreign female star (less well known to U.S. audiences) is clear: This super-man is superior in every way to his female "side-kick"/lover interest.</p> <p>DIS-HONORABLE MENTION: <i>I Can Transform You</i> (song); <i>Not Easily Broken</i> (film); <i>The Twilight Saga: New Moon</i> (film)</p>	<p>Rx No. 6: Create coequality; cooperate.</p> <p>REALISTIC ROMANCE® AWARDEE: <i>Alice</i> (television)</p> <p>This Syfy channel 2-part miniseries "re-imagines" the Lewis Carroll classics with a 20-something Alice—a modern, self-sufficient judo sensei who returns to a future Wonderland whose residents' emotions are controlled by instant-fix drugs. This "Alice of Legend" teams up with resistance fighter and go-to guy Hatter to bring humanity back to reality, where the two strong but sensitive true partners begin a promising romance.</p> <p>HONORABLE MENTION: <i>Away We Go</i> (film)</p>
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<p>Myth No. 7: The love of a good and faithful true woman can change a man from a "beast" into a "prince."</p> <p>STUPID CUPID™ AWARDEE: <i>The Proposal</i> (film)</p> <p>It's usually a good woman who changes a bad man, but in this year's overall <i>Stupidest Cupid Award</i>™ recipient it's nice guy (Ryan Reynolds) whose grounded goodness magically transforms his nasty, universally hated work-success/romantic failure witch of a boss (Sandra Bullock). Perhaps he's not really that good, though—as he could have chosen the really nice hometown girl who's a better match. (Note: <i>This Myth is better understood as a metaphor about your own good side overcoming your own bad side!</i>)</p> <p>DIS-HONORABLE MENTION: <i>Ghosts of Girlfriends Past</i> (film); <i>Tool Academy</i> (television)</p>	<p>Rx No. 7: Cease correcting and controlling; you can't change others (only yourself!).</p> <p>REALISTIC ROMANCE® AWARDEE: (tie) <i>House</i> (TV; <i>White Horse</i> (song)</p> <p><i>House</i>—In the 2009 season, Dr. Lisa Cuddy finally seems to realize that a romance with a man who's already a nice person is much easier and more satisfying than trying to reform misanthropic Dr. House. Let's hope she doesn't dump her sexy stud in the finale.</p> <p><i>White Horse</i>—Taylor Swift won a Grammy for this intelligent song that she also co-wrote, whose lyrics wisely warn a man who let down that she's changed herself ("I'm no longer a dreamer."), and now "It's too late for you.... I'm gonna find someone someday who might actually treat me well."</p> <p>HONORABLE MENTION: <i>It's Complicated</i> (film); <i>Whip It</i> (film)</p>
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<p>Myth No. 8: Bickering and fighting a lot mean that a man and a woman really love each other passionately.</p> <p>STUPID CUPID™ AWARDEE: <i>The Ugly Truth</i> (television)</p> <p>This “couple” are more like combatants from the moment they first encounter each other until just a few minutes before the credits roll—but perhaps mistaken and dangerously driven by the sexual tension inherent in their constant mean-spirited and juvenile fight, they ultimately stop mid-argument to realize that they really “love” each other. Perhaps they don’t know that love is about peace, not war—or perhaps they’re just addicted to chaos and drama. At any rate, they need lessons in anger management and civilized manners.</p> <p>DIS-HONORABLE MENTION: <i>Gossip Girl</i> (television); <i>Keeping Up with the Kardashians</i> (television); <i>The Proposal</i> (film); TV sitcoms</p>	<p>Rx No. 8: Courtesy counts; constant conflicts create chaos.</p> <p>REALISTIC ROMANCE® AWARDEE: (tie) <i>Away We Go</i> (film); <i>The Office</i> (television)</p> <p><i>Away We Go</i>—This couple’s refreshing mutual respect and lack of conflict actually becomes a running joke as they attempt to raise the heartbeat of their fetus by pretending to argue (on a plane). But his attempt to berate her only results in their infectious laughter.</p> <p><i>The Office</i>—Pam and Jim continue to poignantly prove that a courteous couple can win our hearts and hold our attention without resorting to the gratuitous and mean-spirited bickering and fighting that the rest of their office mates exhibit, so we can rejoice at the long-awaited marriage of these two lovely individuals.</p> <p>HONORABLE MENTION: <i>The Blind Side</i> (film); <i>I Love You, Man</i> (film)</p>
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<p>Myth No. 9: All you really need is love, so it doesn’t matter if you and your lover have very different values.</p> <p>STUPID CUPID™ AWARDEE: <i>Madea Goes to Jail</i> (film)</p> <p>A successful lawyer about to marry a colleague suddenly changes his mind when he encounters a childhood girlfriend who has become a drug-addicted prostitute. In Tyler Perry’s comedy sub-plot (a storyline reminiscent of <i>Pretty Woman</i>), the two are made to appear made for each other, and their disparate paths magically merge.</p> <p>DIS-HONORABLE MENTION: <i>Confessions of a Shopaholic</i> (film)</p>	<p>Rx No. 9: Crave common core-values.</p> <p>REALISTIC ROMANCE® AWARDEE: <i>The Blind Side</i> (film)</p> <p>The relationship of long-married Leigh Ann and Sean Tuohy demonstrates the benefits of shared values—including their devotion to football and their loyal support of their alma mater’s team, making time for their children, commitment to the same religious and political values, and (the film’s real focus) sharing their blessings with someone less fortunate.</p> <p>HONORABLE MENTION: <i>Away We Go</i> (film)</p>
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<p>Myth No. 10: The right mate “completes you”—filling your needs and making your dreams come true.</p> <p>STUPID CUPID™ AWARDEE: <i>Inseparable</i> (song)</p> <p>The lyrics of Maria Carey’s song are sadly similar to a host of other needy narratives (including the three Dis-honorable mention awardees for this Myth), all of which are based on the erroneous belief that two dysfunctional individuals make a desirable couple. “Lost without my other half/How can I live without you” merely illustrates unhealthy dependency rather than the inter-dependent love of healthy couples.</p> <p>DIS-HONORABLE MENTION: <i>He’s Just Not that Into You</i> (film); <i>I Just Call You Mine</i> (song); <i>La La La</i> (song); <i>My Life Would Suck Without You</i> (song); <i>The Twilight Saga: New Moon</i> (film)</p>	<p>Rx No. 10: Cultivate your own completeness.</p> <p>REALISTIC ROMANCE® AWARDEE: (tie) <i>New in Town</i> (film); <i>The Princess and the Frog</i> (film)</p> <p><i>New in Town</i>—In this Renee Zellweger-Harry Connick Jr. vehicle, initial mutual dislike changes early on (rather than at the very end!) and gradually evolves to a working partnership, then a personal friendship, and finally a romance embracing the entire community that supports these two strong individuals who make things better for others as well as for themselves.</p> <p><i>The Princess and the Frog</i>—Like <i>New in Town</i>, this seemingly world’s-apart couple come to respect each other and learn they’re a good match by working well together in a community that they each discover they need beyond themselves. Through this more layered offering with welcome racial diversity, Disney finally avoids its usual <i>Stupid Cupid Award</i>™.</p> <p>HONORABLE MENTION: <i>The Blind Side</i> (film); <i>I Love You, Man</i> (film); <i>Julie and Julia</i> (film)</p>
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<p>Myth No. 11: In real life, actors and actresses are often very much like the romantic characters they portray.</p> <p>STUPID CUPID™ AWARDEE: “Team Edward vs. Team Jacob” Fantasy-frenzied Fans of <i>The Twilight Saga: New Moon</i> (film)</p> <p>The media and fan frenzy surrounding the release of this first vampire film based on Stephanie Meyer’s best-selling book series, which targets adolescent and teen girls, has been re-focused for the second installment on the contest for Bella’s love between vampire heartthrob Edward Cullen (Robert Pattinson) and wolf-man “just-a-friend” Jacob Black (Taylor Lautner), which fuels passions and sells not only the film but loads of related merchandise. Although fans claim to know the difference between fiction and reality, their behaviors frequently belie that fact.</p>	<p>Rx No. 11: De-construct celebrities.</p> <p>REALISTIC ROMANCE® AWARDEE: <i>The Simpsons</i> (television)</p> <p>In its 20th year, this pop culture legend continues to cleverly skewer and satirize our conflation of media celebrities’ reel-lives and real-lives, as well as the related fanatical feelings and behavior of fans—reminding us to apply this Prescription. Marge even appeared on the actual November cover of <i>Playboy</i> (and in a provocative inside spread), and on “The Devil Wears Nada” episode she posed in little or nothing for a charity calendar. Of course, Homer has also experienced fleeting moments of fame.</p>
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<p>Myth No. 12: Since mass media portrayals of romance aren’t “real,” they don’t really affect you.</p> <p>STUPID CUPID™ AWARDEES (tie): Media critics who describe mythic and stereotypic portrayals as “completely harmless”; schools that don’t provide media literacy education.</p> <p>Critics—Although we can still enjoy mythic portrayals of sex, love, and romance in the mass media, research shows they can lead to harmful unrealistic expectations and behaviors; therefore, it’s irresponsible to label all these portrayals as completely harmless simply because they’re fluffy and vacuous.</p> <p>Schools—Media literacy offers foundational concepts and applicable strategies for helping media consumers of all ages to stay in control of the media they use and enjoy—rather than allowing the media to control them. We can and should still enjoy the media, but it’s important to learn how to “dis-illusion” ourselves and our media! Media literacy education in other English-speaking nations is far ahead of the United States. It’s high time for us to catch up.</p>	<p>Rx No. 12: Calculate the very real consequences of unreal media.</p> <p>REALISTIC ROMANCE® AWARDEE: Media Literacy Resources</p> <p>Remember: We can and should still enjoy the media, but it’s important to learn how to “dis-illusion” ourselves and mythic/stereotypic media portrayals of sex, love, and romance. The core of media literacy is critical thinking, and its strategies and skills can be learned and adopted by utilizing a variety of excellent media resources, such as MediaLit.org (Center for Media Literacy), amlainfo.org (National Association for Media Literacy Education—formerly the Alliance for a Media Literate America), and—of course—RealisticRomance.com.</p> <p>HONORABLE MENTION: (500) Days of Summer (film); White Horse (song)</p>
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