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*[THE COMPLETE LIST OF RECIPIENTS OF THE 26 AWARDS  
WITH CITATIONS (REASON EACH RECIPIENT GOT AN AWARD)*

*BEGINS ON PAGE 6 OF THIS MEDIA RELEASE;*

*RELATED VIDEO ANNOUNCEMENT AT [www.RealisticRomance.com](http://www.RealisticRomance.com).]*

**Media literacy advocate Dr. Mary-Lou Galician confers her 11<sup>th</sup> annual  
*Dr. FUN's Stupid Cupid & Realistic Romance*<sup>®</sup> Awards<sup>™</sup>  
for the worst and best relational strategies  
in 2012 mass media portrayals of sex, love, and romance**

***“The Vow” gets the 2013 overall Stupidest Cupid Award<sup>™</sup>  
for perpetuating numerous unhealthy myths and stereotypes;***

***“Celeste and Jesse Forever” is honored with the 2013 Realistic Romance<sup>®</sup> Grand Prize<sup>™</sup>  
for presenting multiple healthy relationship strategies;***

***and other popular films, TV shows, songs, and magazines receive additional 24 awards***

February 14, 2013—“The Vow” and “Celeste and Jesse Forever”—two thematically opposite films about a happy marriage undergoing a major change—were named the past year’s worst and best mass media portrayals of sex, love & romance in the 11<sup>th</sup> annual *Dr. FUN's Stupid Cupid & Realistic Romance*<sup>®</sup> Awards<sup>™</sup>. The awards are announced each year on Valentine’s Day.

“The Vow” got the *Stupidest Cupid Award<sup>™</sup>* for perpetuating numerous unhealthy myths and stereotypes of sex, love, and romance that abound in the mass media, while “Celeste and Jesse Forever” was honored with the *Realistic Romance<sup>®</sup> Grand Prize<sup>™</sup>* for presenting multiple healthy relationship strategies, which are rarely demonstrated in the entertainment and advertising media (or even the news).

**Recipients of all 26 awards—which include 2012 blockbuster films, top-rated TV shows, popular songs, and major magazines—are detailed below and at [www.RealisticRomance.com](http://www.RealisticRomance.com).**

The awards are an annual educational service to the public established by media literacy advocate Dr. Mary-Lou Galician, creator of *REALISTIC ROMANCE<sup>®</sup>: The Thinking Person's Relationship Remedy<sup>™</sup>* and founding 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 to help media consumers “get real about romance.”

Galician, who is affectionately known as “Dr. FUN” because of her musical motivation program *FUN-dynamics!<sup>®</sup>—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). Her new book for the general public—*Dr. Galician's Prescriptions<sup>®</sup> for Realistic Romance<sup>®</sup>: The 7-Step Reality Check-Up<sup>®</sup> to Bust Media Myths that Ruin Real-life Relationships*—will be out soon.

—MORE—

“Worst” and “best” refer to relationship strategies, not to artistic merit, Galician notes. And the demonstration of healthy relationship strategies is the criterion for “realistic”—not dramatic realism or naturalism—so even some fantasies and animated features have earned *Realistic Romance® Awards™*.

### ***How the award recipients are chosen***

**The 12 Stupid Cupid Awards™**—one for each of the 12 major myths and stereotypes that Galician's research has identified as affecting real-life romance and that comprise her *Dr. FUN's Mass Media Love Quiz®* (online at [www.RealisticRomance.com](http://www.RealisticRomance.com))—are bestowed on the past year's portrayals that most clearly perpetuate these unhealthy messages. These awards focus attention on media portrayals that Galician says people should never use as models for their own lives. A 13<sup>th</sup> 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.

Each year, more than 1,000 nominations come 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 Galician's books and website, [www.RealisticRomance.com](http://www.RealisticRomance.com).

Assisting Galician to narrow the field of nominations each year is a panel of judges that includes Galician's own husband, Dr. David Natharius, a gender communication expert. The final decision about each award is made by solely Galician, who personally writes each citation that explains the reason for each recipient's award. (*Recipients of all 26 awards for are listed with the reasons for their awards beginning on Page 6, below.*)

### ***The happily-ever-after marriage of “The Vow’s” love-at first-sight artsy Chicago couple takes a tragic turn laced with melodrama and media myths when an auto accident leaves the wife with amnesia that renders her husband a stranger.***

Rachel McAdams and Channing Tatum fall in love at first sight (Galician's Myth #2) and marry The Chicago Art Institute in “The Vow”—a rip-off of Nicholas Sparks' “The Notebook” (an earlier McAdams vehicle). Tragedy strikes when a wintry auto accident sends Paige face-first through the windshield and leaves her with a presumably permanent amnesia that erases every memory of the last five years of her life, including her husband Leo, though it doesn't mar her model-perfect looks (Myth #5). It also changes her back into her former self: a preppy law student with a before-Leo boyfriend.

After trying everything he can think of to change Paige (again!) into the woman he married, Leo finally agrees to a divorce because he's “leaving it to fate” to bring her back to him as she was (Myth #1: “Your perfect partner is cosmically pre-destined, so nothing and nobody can ultimately separate you.”). Predictably but ploddingly, not even the cardboard caricatures who are her snooty parents or her equally snooty old boyfriend (or her uncured amnesia!) can keep them apart at the end (Myth #10).

Says Galician: “Sappy music and montages substitute for intelligent dialog and motivated development in this film about which I wish *I* had no memory.”

The complete citation is on Page 6, along with the full listing with citations of the recipients of *Stupid Cupid* awardees for each of the 12 individual myths and stereotypes of *Dr. FUN's Mass Media*

*Love Quiz*® including the following portrayals, several of which were finalists for the overall *Stupidest Cupid* awarded to “The Vow”:

- (films) “The Lucky One,” “Twilight Saga: Breaking Dawn Part 2,” “This Means War,” “This Is 40,” “Good Deeds,” “Silver Linings Playbook,” “Think Like a Man,” and “Hope Springs”;
- (television) “Once Upon a Time,” “Gossip Girl,” “The Vampire Diaries,” and “The Bachelor”;
- (magazines) “Cosmo” and “Maxim”;
- (songs and/or music videos) Rihanna’s “Diamonds,” Bruno Mars “Locked Out of Heaven,” B.o.B.’s “So Good,” Justin Bieber’s “Beauty and a Beat,” Adele’s “Skyfall,” Lana Del Rey’s “Video Games,” and Justin Bieber’s “As Long as You Love Me.”

*Stupid Cupids* were also given to pop culture fans who confuse “The Twilight Saga”’s performers’ real lives with “reel” roles and to media critics who describe mythic and stereotypic portrayals as “completely harmless” along with schools that don’t provide media literacy education.

***Media portrayals of healthy sex, love, and romance are hard to find.***

“Although *Stupid Cupid* nominees abound in the media,” Galician explains, “it’s much more difficult to find examples of healthy models of sex, love, and romance that are entertaining and appealing.” Nevertheless, she was able to identify worthy candidates for her awards.

***“Celeste and Jesse Forever” is witty, surprising, and moving while demonstrating a number of healthy relational strategies the popular media rarely showcase.***

The 11<sup>th</sup> Annual *Realistic Romance*® *Grand Prize*™ was awarded to “Celeste and Jesse Forever,” a funny and moving independent film co-written by its star, Rashida Jones, who plays “Celeste,” the wife of Andy Samberg’s “Jesse.” They’re high school sweethearts who’ve been drifting in different directions. Like the couple in “The Vow,” this no-longer well-matched couple has recently separated, but Celeste and Jesse are still best friends who love and genuinely demonstrate caring concern for each other.

What make this portrayal the *Realistic Romance*® *Grand Prize*-winner is the demonstrated validity of several of Dr. Galician’s Prescriptions in the evolution both of them experience as they move on to other worthy mates (Rx #1 instead of Myth #1), with Jesse manning up to the consequences of a one-night stand (Rx #4) and Celeste taking time (Rx #2) to get to know and value a new partner who’s a peer (Rx #6) and shares her values (Rx #9), and she learns to change herself instead of others (Rx #7) and to concentrate on her own completeness (Rx #10) to be a more healthy candidate for her new romantic relationship. Best of all, Celeste and Jesse remain good friends.

The complete citation is in the full listing of recipients, beginning on Page 6.

cautions that although even healthier portrayals usually include one or more unhealthy myths or stereotypes (because media narrative typically relies on these techniques), the dominant themes of *Realistic Romance*® *Award*™ winners strongly reflect Prescriptions that are research-based relational strategies for successful coupleship that benefit both women and men.

In addition to the overall *Realistic Romance*® *Grand Prize*™ winner, Galician found worthy 2012 portrayals to honor with her 12 individual *Realistic Romance*® *Awards*™ for healthier portrayals that exemplify one of her 12 *Prescriptions*®:

- (films) “The Five-Year Engagement,” “Ted,” “Pitch Perfect,” “The Hunger Games,” “Mirror Mirror,” “Snow White and the Huntsman,” “The Best Exotic Marigold Hotel,” “Ruby Sparks,” “The Big Miracle,” and “To Rome with Love”;
- (television) “Parks and Rec,” “Mike and Molly,” “White Collar,” “How I Met Your Mother,” “The Simpsons,” and “South Park”;
- (songs) Carrie Underwood’s “Good in Goodbye,” Taylor Swift’s “Begin Again,” Ringo Starr’s “Wonderful,” Jason Mraz’s “The Woman I Love,” Katy Perry’s “Wide Awake,” Pink’s “Blow Me a Kiss,” and Kelly Clarkson’s “Stronger.”

Also honored with *Realistic Romance*® *Awards*™ were media literacy resources that foster critical thinking and consumers who utilize them.

***How media consumers can better understand  
important media literacy tenets that underlie the awards***

“The many examples from various media help you more easily and fully discover how to identify dysfunctional *Stupid Cupid* portrayals that could affect you, as well as to appreciate the far better role models in the *Realistic Romance*® portrayals,” Galician explains.

“It’s also best to consider the 12 media myths in terms of their corresponding 12 *Prescriptions*—and vice versa. Accordingly, it’s also best to compare the awardees on ‘both sides’,” she added. “That’s why I list the corresponding awards side-by-side; for example, the recipient of the *Stupid Cupid Award*™ for Myth #1 with the recipient of the *Realistic Romance*® *Award*™ for Rx #1.”

***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 has been called 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 animated feature film classics like “Beauty and the Beast,” “Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs,” and “Lady and the Tramp”—and even more recent hits such as “The Incredibles” and “Wall-E”—which are seemingly harmless but actually perpetuate counterproductive myths and stereotypes that can be easily and unconsciously adopted as counterproductive beliefs and actual behaviors.

***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](mailto: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*

***PLUS VIDEO of Dr. Galician’s announcement of the awards:***

**[www.RealisticRomance.com](http://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><b>The 11th Annual</b>  <b>Dr. FUN's Stupid Cupid Awards™</b>                  conferred on 2012 mass media portrayals that perpetuate one or more of the 12 Myths &amp; Stereotypes of Dr. FUN's Mass Media Love Quiz©</p>	<p><b>The 11th Annual</b>  <b>Dr. FUN's Realistic Romance® Awards™</b>                  honoring 2012 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><i>These mass media portrayals that appeared in 2012 illustrate and perpetuate the 12 unhealthy and harmful media myths and stereotypes of Dr. FUN's Mass Media Quiz©.</i></p> <p><i>There's a separate award for each of the 12 myths. Dr. FUN's Stupidest Cupid Award™—the overall award—goes to a 2012 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.</i></p> <p><i>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).</i></p>	<p><i>These mass media portrayals that appeared in 2012 illustrate and offer good models for successful, healthy relationships—the 12 Dr. Galician's Prescriptions (Rxs)</i></p> <p><i>There's a separate award for each of the 12 Prescriptions.</i></p> <p><i>The Realistic Romance® Grand Prize™—the overall award—is awarded to a 2012 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.</i></p> <p><i>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).</i></p>

**RECIPIENTS OF ALL 26 AWARDS**

Recipients of the overall awards—the **Stupidest Cupid Award™** & the **Realistic Romance® Grand Prize™** — and their citations (the reason for their awards) are presented first.

Awards for the individual 12 Myths and 12 Prescriptions are listed below these overall award recipients, including the statement of the Myth or Prescription.

<p><b>OVERALL AWARD</b>  <b>Dr. FUN's Stupidest Cupid Award™</b>  <b>AWARDEE: "The Vow" (film)</b></p>	<p><b>OVERALL AWARD</b>  <b>Dr. FUN's Realistic Romance® Grand Prize™</b>  <b>AWARDEE: "Celeste and Jesse Forever" (film)</b></p>
<p>Gorgeous Rachel McAdams and gorgeous Channing Tatum fall in love at first sight (Myth #2) and marry at The Chicago Art Institute in this moody melodrama. Tragedy strikes when a wintry auto accident sends Paige face-first through the windshield and leaves her with presumably permanent amnesia that erases every memory of the last five years of her life, including her husband Leo, though it doesn't mar her model-perfect looks one bit (Myth #5). It also changes her back into her former self: a rich, preppy law student who's once again attracted to her before-Leo boyfriend.</p> <p>In fact, Leo now seems like a stranger: She rejects his clumsy advances (which seem almost like sexual harrassment) and even Leo's rather vigorous tickling that she used to enjoy (Really?!) now annoys the heck out of her, so we're given very little sense of any believable physical or mental connection between these two beyond some brief pre-accident musical montages that resemble pseudo-hip restaurant commercials—not real life.</p> <p>And that's ironic, because this film boasts that it's "inspired" by a real-life couple (I guess that means the writers fictionalized even more than for a film "based" on</p>	<p>This delightful independent film is funny and moving indie production co-written by its star, Rashida Jones, who plays "Celeste," the wife of Andy Samberg's "Jesse." They're high school sweethearts who've been drifting in different directions: She's a highly motivated partner in a marketing firm; he's an unemployed artist and a bit of a man-child—a stereotype we see in many rom-coms. But the formula ends there, quite early in the film.</p> <p>Like the couple in "The Vow," this no-longer well-matched couple has recently separated, but C &amp; J still best friends who love and demonstrate genuine caring concern for each other. In fact, they're together every day until a casual post-separation one-night-stand makes Jesse a father-to-be, and he finally decides to man-up to the pregnant Veronica, who's also a lovely individual—smart and attractive and kind, like the majority of the characters in this thoughtful investigation into what it means to be a committed couple in a complicated world. This movie does feel real.</p> <p>Although Celeste can be controlling and pushy, she's not a mean or bad person. Interestingly, she seems mature—compared to Jesse—but like Jesse, she also has some growing up to do—and the demonstration of</p>

<p>a real-life couple). But it's not at all "inspired"; it's a rip-off of Nicholas Sparks' "The Notebook" (an earlier McAdams vehicle) with a sentimental formula that's apparent from the get-go (and from the movie's posters). And most ironically, it doesn't feel real at all. A vague connection to real people doesn't make a dramatization "real"—or make it qualify for <i>Realistic Romance® Awards</i>, which are not based on dramatic realism or so-called naturalism but rather on evidence of healthy relationship strategies as a dominant theme. ("Realistic" in my media literacy program means "rational": sex, love, and romance with a balance of feeling and thinking. (For a good example, see this year's <i>Realistic Romance® Grand Prize-winner</i>.)</p> <p>This <i>Stupidest Cupid Awardee</i> demonstrates multiple myths and stereotypes but no sense of the long and difficult real rehab necessary or how these two would handle it, which would genuinely speak to some prescriptions about honoring marriage vows and commitment that goes beyond pure sex. Instead, artificial conflicts are clumsily introduced that only serve to make this story that is "inspired" by a real-life couple feel fake.</p> <p>Admittedly, Leo is faithful, and that's commendable—but is he there for Paige or for himself?</p> <p>After trying everything he can think of to change Paige (again!) back into the woman he married, Leo finally agrees to a divorce because he's "leaving it to fate" to bring her back to him as she was (Myth #1: "Your perfect partner is cosmically pre-destined, so nothing and nobody can ultimately separate you."). Predictably but ploddingly, not even the cardboard caricatures who are her snooty parents or her equally snooty old boyfriend (or her uncured amnesia!) can keep them apart at the end (Myth #10).</p> <p>Honestly: I'd be happy if I have no memory of the sappy music and montages that substitute for intelligent dialog and motivated development in this film.</p>	<p>their accomplishment of it is what makes this a <i>Realistic Romance® Grand Prize-winner</i>. Jesse's also the emotional one, and Celeste is the more rational-intellectual one. But over the course of this film, each comes to develop a repertoire of relational tools that include a better balance of those qualities that are too often polarized in media portrayals. And unlike "The Vow," this film doesn't stereotypically insist that all artistic individuals are worthier than business types (even though it does take place in L.A.).</p> <p>What make this portrayal the <i>Realistic Romance® Grand Prize-winner</i> is the demonstrated validity of several of Dr. Galician's Prescriptions (Rx's) in the evolution both Celeste and Jesse experience as they move on to other worthy mates (Rx #1 instead of Myth #1), with Jesse manning up to the consequences of a one-night stand (Rx #4) and Celeste (who starts dating and has to kiss a few toads to get to a more princely candidate) taking time (Rx #2) to get to know and value a new appropriate partner—Paul—a smart and gracious businessman who's a true peer (Rx #6) and who shares her values (Rx #9). She also learns to work on changing herself instead of others (Rx #7) and to concentrate on her own completeness (Rx #10) to be a more healthy candidate for her new romantic relationship with Paul. Best of all, Celeste and Jesse remain good friends. Many characters demonstrate Rx's #3 and #8—open honest and courteous communication that media consumers would be wise to emulate.</p> <p>CAUTION: Although even healthier portrayals usually include one or more unhealthy myths or stereotypes (because media narrative typically relies on them), the dominant themes of <i>Realistic Romance® Award™</i> winners strongly reflect <i>Dr. Galician's Prescriptions®</i>—research-based relational strategies for successful coupleship that benefit both women and men.</p>
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**RECIPIENTS OF THE AWARDS FOR THE INDIVIDUAL 12 MYTHS & 12 Rx's**

**STUPID CUPID AWARDS™ (Myths)**

**REALISTIC ROMANCE® AWARDS™ (Rx's)**

<p><b>Myth #1: Your perfect partner is cosmically predestined, so nothing/nobody can ultimately separate you.</b></p> <p><b>STUPID CUPID™ AWARDEE:</b> (tie): "The Lucky One" (film); "The Vow" (film)</p> <p>"The Lucky One"—Even the themesong croons, "I was meant for you" in this well intentioned but ultimately myth-laden story of a marine whose life is saved in combat when a bomb misses him because he moves a few feet to pick up a photo of a beautiful woman that becomes his good-luck talisman. After his discharge, he equally miraculously finds her. Destiny! Wedding invitations follow after her bullying ex-husband conveniently drowns in a flood.</p> <p>"The Vow"—See citation for this portrayal's overall Stupidest Cupid Award™.</p> <p><b>DIS-HONORABLE MENTION:</b> "Once Upon a Time" (TV); "The Twilight Saga: Breaking Dawn Part 2" (film)</p>	<p><b>Rx #1: Consider countless candidates.</b></p> <p><b>REALISTIC ROMANCE® AWARDEE:</b> (tie): "Celeste and Jesse Forever" (film); Carrie Underwood's "Good in Goodbye" (song)</p> <p>"Celeste and Jesse Forever"—See citation for this portrayal's overall Realistic Romance® Grand Prize™.</p> <p>Carrie Underwood's "Good in Goodbye"—This musical narrative about a woman who unexpectedly sees a former love with his daughter tells us that she's happy she "didn't get what I thought I deserved" even though she doesn't regret and won't forget her earlier relationship with this man, which made them both strong. Now "we both ended up where we belong...and yeah I'm happy: I found somebody too who makes me happy."</p> <p><b>HONORABLE MENTION:</b> Taylor Swift's "Begin Again" (song)</p>
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<p><b>Myth #2: There's such a thing as "love at first sight."</b></p> <p><b>STUPID CUPID™ AWARDEE:</b> "The Vow" (film)</p> <p>See citation for this portrayal's overall Stupidest Cupid Award™.</p> <p><b>DIS-HONORABLE MENTION:</b> Taylor Swift's "Call Me Maybe (song); Rihanna's "Diamonds"</p>	<p><b>Rx #2: Consult your calendar and count carefully.</b></p> <p><b>REALISTIC ROMANCE® AWARDEE:</b> "The Five-Year Engagement" (film)</p> <p>The title says it all. The delightful couple played by Emily Blunt and Jason Segel take time to get to know each other—partly because they're smart professionals with busy lives and partly because their wedding date gets pushed back by a post-doctoral fellowship she wants to accept. He graciously quits his executive chef position and follows her. They exhibit a number of <i>Dr. Galician's Prescriptions</i>—including treating each other with respect and sweetness. And despite a temporary break-up during which they date others (who are clearly inappropriate partners, so it's a bit of lapse of their usually good sense), they do finally tie the knot.</p> <p><b>HONORABLE MENTION:</b> "Celeste and Jesse Forever" (film); "Ted" (film)</p>
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<p><b>Myth #3: Your true soul mate should know what you're thinking or feeling (without your having to tell).</b></p> <p><b>STUPID CUPID™ AWARDEE:</b> "The Twilight Saga: Breaking Dawn Part 2" (film)</p> <p>This series has earned at least one <i>Stupid Cupid Award</i> for every installment and got the overall <i>Stupidest Cupid</i> for two of them. It's a good thing Bella's loves could read her mind, because until this finale, she's been close to inarticulate. But now Jacob and Renesmee share a special unspoken language of love.</p>	<p><b>Rx #3: Communicate courageously.</b></p> <p><b>REALISTIC ROMANCE® AWARDEE:</b> "The Five-Year Engagement" (film)</p> <p>As noted in the description of this portrayal's award for Rx #2, even though it's a comedy (and a laugh-out-loud one!), this couple generally communicate courageously and treat each other with dignity and decorum.</p> <p><b>HONORABLE MENTION:</b> "Celeste and Jesse Forever" (film); "Ted" (film)</p>
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<p><b>Myth #4: If your partner is truly meant for you, sex is easy and wonderful.</b></p> <p><b>STUPID CUPID™ AWARDEE:</b> "This Means War" (film)</p> <p>Reese, Reese.... Did you really take Chelsea Handler's character's advice to use a "sex tie-breaker" (I'm not making this up!) to choose between two cartoonish CIA buddies who fight over you. And did you really pick the player (a real pig when it comes to women) rather than the nice guy? No you didn't! (I wish.) And how did the initial R-rating get changed to PG-13? This portrayal's many myths and stereotypes made it a close "runner-up" for the overall <i>Stupidest Cupid</i>.</p> <p><b>DIS-HONORABLE MENTION:</b> Bruno Mars' "Locked Out of Heaven" (song); "This is 40" (film); "The Twilight Saga: Breaking Dawn Part 2" (film)</p>	<p><b>Rx #4: Concentrate on commitment and constancy.</b></p> <p><b>REALISTIC ROMANCE® AWARDEE:</b> "Ringo Starr's "Wonderful" (song)</p> <p>The former Beatle is no longer young, so with the wisdom of age, his song to his love says, "When we look back at how far we've come, we know we're in it for the long run." (Note: This Prescription, like all Rx's, should be viewed in terms of the corresponding Myth of the same number to which it serves as an antidote.)</p> <p><b>HONORABLE MENTION:</b> "Celeste and Jesse Forever" (film); "Parks and Recreation" (TV)</p>
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<p><b>Myth #5: To attract and keep a man, a woman should look like a model or a centerfold.</b></p> <p><b>STUPID CUPID™ AWARDEE:</b> Justin Bieber's "Beauty and a Beat" (song)</p> <p>As he explains: "All I need is a Beauty and a Beat"—though I wish he'd be interested in a nice girl for her good mind and kind heart. However, it's the "Beauty" he tells: "I wanna show you off tonight" because "what you got a billion could've never bought." (Hasn't he ever watched a reality makeover show?)</p> <p><b>DIS-HONORABLE MENTION:</b> "Cosmo" (magazine); "Gossip Girl" (TV); "Maxim" (magazine); "Once Upon a Time" (TV); "This Means War" (film); "The Vow" (film)</p>	<p><b>Rx #5: Cherish completeness in companions (not just the cover).</b></p> <p><b>REALISTIC ROMANCE® AWARDEE:</b> "Mike &amp; Molly" (TV)</p> <p>It's unusual to see a leading lady who is plus-sized, and it's unusual for a television sit-com with such a leading lady to last for several seasons and garner several awards. But then the lady in question is the multi-talented comedian Melissa McCarthy, who has a depth that a lot of models and centerfolds would do well to emulate. (Of course, I'm still waiting for non-model or non-centerfold type to be happily paired in a non-comedic role with a genuine hunk—just once in a while.)</p> <p><b>HONORABLE MENTION:</b> "Pitch Perfect" (film)</p>
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<p><b>Myth #6: The man should not be shorter, weaker, younger, poorer, or less successful than the woman.</b></p> <p><b>STUPID CUPID™ AWARDEE:</b> "Good Deeds" (film)</p> <p>Just as healthier portrayals usually include one or more unhealthy myths or stereotypes, sometimes portrayals whose message is primarily mythic/stereotypic also offer a Prescription or two. That's the case here, with Tyler Perry's well-meaning story that reads like a film that was pitched to backers as "Cinderella" meets the "The Pursuit of Happyness." It's even set in San Francisco, just like the Will Smith pic. Tyler's a predictable (read "boring") good and kind son who runs the family business and makes lots of money; Thandie Newton is a widowed mom who's down to her last dime and works as cleaning lady in his office building. His high-class fiancée—a lovely professional woman who finds his niceness too boring—conveniently bows out at the end because (and here's another the Rx) she "doesn't want to be taken care of" by him. (How did Thandie and her daughter get a passport with a few hours' notice when Mr. Deeds gives up his business and arranges for the three of them to move to Africa to start their life together?)</p> <p><b>DIS-HONORABLE MENTION:</b> "The Bachelor" (TV); B.o.B.'s "So Good" (song); Adele's "Skyfall" (song); "This Means War" (film); "The Vampire Diaries" (TV)</p>	<p><b>Rx #6: Create coequality; cooperate.</b></p> <p><b>REALISTIC ROMANCE® AWARDEE:</b> (Tie): "Mirror Mirror" (film); "Snow White and the Huntsman" (film); "The Hunger Games" (film)</p> <p>Eschewing Neanderthal sexist stereotypes that hurt men as well as women, these three popular films center on peer couples who equitably share power in healthy sex, love, and romance based on 21<sup>st</sup> Century thinking. It's interesting that all three of these films feature a strong female who teams with a strong male who appreciates having a romantic partner who's a peer. And it's interesting that two of these films are re-imaginings of the "Snow White" tale—particularly as the traditional SW spent most of her story in an unconscious state while awaiting rescue.</p> <p><b>HONORABLE MENTION:</b> "Celeste and Jesse Forever" (film)</p>
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**Myth #7: The love of a good and faithful true woman can change a man from a “beast” into a “prince.”**

**STUPID CUPID™ AWARDEE:**

**(tie): “Beauty & the Beast 3-D” (animated feature); “Silver Linings Playbook” (film)**

“Beauty & the Beast 3-D”—Although present in a new edition with the latest visual enhancements, this “tale as old as time” is the archetype of dysfunctional codependency that can lead to emotional and physical abuse. While we can and should support those attempting to change themselves, “good” women (and men) can’t be expected to magically transform the bad behavior of others. Even though parents feel they can “trust Disney,” they’d be wise to evaluate the messages in these fantasies and debrief their children, who should be warned that Belle’s attempts to reform her captor would be dangerous in real life. (This myth is better understood as metaphor about our own good side overcoming our own bad side!)

“Silver Linings Playbook”—I really enjoyed this film—with great performances and a nice mix of funny and touching moments. And it’s always good to see people with mental illnesses move toward health. But—like “A Beautiful Mind” and “As Good As It Gets” (also excellent *cinema*)—the expectations raised by this kind of dramatization of another true story are beyond what most similar individuals could hope to achieve. In real life, it usually takes more than just a cute, persistent, caring young woman to “fix” people with serious problems.

**DIS-HONORABLE MENTION: “This Means War” (film)**

**Rx #7: Cease correcting and controlling; you can’t change others (only yourself!).**

**REALISTIC ROMANCE® AWARDEE:**

**(tie): Celeste and Jesse Forever” (film); “The Best Exotic Marigold Hotel” (film)**

“Celeste and Jesse Forever”—See citation for this portrayal’s overall Realistic Romance® Grand Prize™.

“The Best Exotic Marigold Hotel”—This outstanding British cast of veteran stars offers evidence that sex, love, and romance don’t end when you retire. These couples and singles who, for various reasons, move to a new life in India wind up teaching young lovers there a thing or two. And when one of transplants just can’t get her husband of many years to bend to her ways, she wisely realizes the truth of this Prescription and returns home to England, leaving her blessing for him to pursue a late-in-life romance with a widow who shares his values. (See the citation for Rx #9.)

**HONORABLE MENTION: “Ruby Sparks” (film); Katy Perry’s “Wide Awake”: Jason Mraz’ “The Woman I Love” (song)**

**Myth #8: Bickering and fighting a lot mean that a man and a woman really love each other passionately.**

**STUPID CUPID™ AWARDEE:**

**“This Is 40” (film)**

Yes, we laugh. But it’s like nervous laughter at a funeral, which is what this marriage needs. A funeral. This toxic couple have no business staying together and scarring their children, to whom they present a horrible example—as duly noted by their kids who are wiser than their parents, whose incessant nasty and dangerous fighting is clearly occasioned by goals that are in total and utter opposition. At the least, they should be in serious long-term counseling to resolve those differences. (The only time they stop fighting is during a hotel tryst: Myth #4.) Love is about peace, not war—so there’s no place for a battle of the sexes, which is a divisive and dangerous concept.

**DIS-HONORABLE MENTION: “This Means War” (film)**

**Rx #8: Courtesy counts; constant conflicts create chaos.**

**REALISTIC ROMANCE® AWARDEE:**

**Taylor Swift’s “We Are Never Ever Getting Back Together” (song)**

The sarcasm in her statement—“I’m really gonna miss you picking fights, and me falling for it screaming that I’m right”—make it clear that she’s finally and wisely going to end a relationship that offers only constant conflict. “I mean, this is exhausting, you know, like,” she explains—adding “Like, ever” to the title. Just for emphasis, you know, like.

**HONORABLE MENTION: “Celeste and Jesse Forever” (film); “How I Met Your Mother” [Lily & Marshall] (TV); Pink’s “Blow Me a Kiss”: “The Five-Year Engagement” (film); “White Collar” (TV)**

**Myth #9: All you really need is love, so it doesn't matter if you and your lover have very different values.**

**STUPID CUPID™ AWARDEE:**

**(tie): “Hope Springs” (film); “Think Like a Man” (film)**

“Hope Springs”—Where to begin—and how to put it in PG-13 terms? And how did this film, with Meryl Streep's below-the-belt inept attempt at oral sex on her husband Tommy Lee Jones in a movie theatre (Eww!) on the advice of sex therapist Steve Carell (Double eww!), get a PG-13 rating? (Is that activity even legal in a Maine movie house? I hope I never have to sit next to a couple who's gotten ideas from this film!) And how did such great artistes wind up in this not very funny but rather very sad tale of two people who have nothing in common and who have made each other miserable for years? She says he's a bully (and we see that he is), and he says she's passive-aggressive (and we see that she is). But they learn very little about genuine communication during a week of counseling that's focused on sex and not on the intimacy they need to cultivate first. The bartender nails it: When the shy Streep admits they're trying to get back their old magic, the bartender (like a Greek chorus) asks: “Did you ever have it?”

“Think Like a Man”—This film (based on a comedian's advice book of the same title) had me at “think” (always good advice) but then lost me with its insistent message that women should employ trickery to control men. Pretending and playing games and lying are hardly ways to form the basis of a healthy lasting relationship. When the men they're trying to fool find out, the dialog gets down and dirty: “Every war has its turning point.... This is war. There are no rules, so LIE.”(See the citation for the Myth #8 portrayal regarding the “battle of the sexes.”) Although in this silly scenario, the women get what they think they want, they've set their caps on men whose values are not in sync with theirs, so no wonder one man declares that “love is a battlefield.” (It's not—and it shouldn't be.) Why not find a partner who's already on your wave-length so you can be honest and true instead of hiding behind a mask that you'd have to wear forever? And who wants a trained dog as a romantic partner?

**DIS-HONORABLE MENTION: “This is 40” (film); “This Means War” (film)**

**Rx #9: Crave common core-values.**

**REALISTIC ROMANCE® AWARDEE:**

**“The Big Miracle” (film)**

In this charming family-oriented film based on a true event, Prescriptions are even demonstrated by the two whales stranded under the Alaskan ice with their baby. Banding to help rescue them are a broadcast journalist (John Krasinski) and his former girlfriend—a Greenpeace organizer played by Drew Barrymore—and the local far North native community. Although he's tempted to romance a glamorous big city reporter and get into the broadcast bigtime, he realizes that his values are really aligned with his former love. This happy ending is also a motivated, healthy one.

**HONORABLE MENTION: “Celeste and Jesse Forever” (film); “Pitch Perfect” (film); “The Best Exotic Marigold Hotel” (film);**

**Myth #10: The right mate “completes you”—filling your needs and making your dreams come true.**

**STUPID CUPID™ AWARDEE:**

**Valentine’s Day advertising; “The Vow” (film)**

Valentine’s Day advertising—Candy in heart-shaped boxes, dinner at fancy restaurants, sparkly jewelry, red or pink cards with soulful messages, and long-stemmed roses.... Right after Christmas, the ads begin bombarding women who expect to get some of this stuff from men who are expected to get it. It can make singles and couples experience a range of emotions from good to bad and happy to sad. It’s important not to be influenced by these marketers. (And I say this as someone whose thoughtful husband had two dozen pink roses sent to me early in this V-day week! But we have Valentine’s Day just about every day. Truly.) Yes—it’s grand to have an *appropriate* partner, but please remember: You’re not incomplete without one.

“The Vow”—*See citation for this portrayal’s overall Stupidest Cupid Award™.*

**DIS-HONORABLE MENTION: Justin Bieber’s “As Long as You Love Me” (song); “The Bachelor” (TV); “Think Like a Man” (film); “The Twilight Saga: Breaking Dawn Part 2”; Lana Del Rey’s “Video Games” (song)**

**Rx #10: Cultivate your own completeness.**

**REALISTIC ROMANCE® AWARDEE:**

**Kelly Clarkson’s “Stronger” (song)**

Clarkson’s anthem to independence after a breakup proudly proclaims that “What doesn’t kill you makes you stronger”—and she makes a fine point: It “doesn’t mean I’m lonely when I’m alone” and it “doesn’t mean over cause you’re gone.” This Prescription isn’t about counterdependence, but it is about being able to be independent at times and to focus on your own growth: “Thanks to you I’m finally thinking about me”—which ultimately makes you a better candidate for a healthy happy relationship.

**HONORABLE MENTION: “Celeste and Jesse Forever” (film); “The Five-Year Engagement” (film); “Katy Perry’s “Wide Awake” (song)**

**Myth #11: In real life, actors and actresses are often very much like the romantic characters they portray.**

**STUPID CUPID™ AWARDEE:**

**“Twilight Saga” Fans Who Confuse Performers’ “Reel” Roles & Real Life**

So was Kristen Stewart’s “Snow White and the Huntsman” director Rupert Sanders her “Jacob”? Can fans separate fictional now only-half-human Bella’s motivations and behaviors from the real-life fully human failings of her on-screen portrayal? Is Robert Pattinson a vampire? (Crazed fans *have* asked him to bite them....) Do fans of the movie franchise really know what it’s like to be these filmidom idols or what they’re really like? Do these fans realize that they’re objectifying the very icons they idolize? Can we admire the artists’ work without invading their private lives? Discuss with your fan club. And while you’re at it: Make *yourself* the star of your *own* real-life love story.

**Rx #11: (De-)Construct celebrities.**

**REALISTIC ROMANCE® AWARDEE:**

**To Rome With Love” (film)**

*Film* critics weren’t crazy about it—and I’m not generally a Woody Allen fan—but I loved this one, and not just for the great scenes of one of my favorite foreign cities. I think some of those critics failed to appreciate the great satire of the popular culture (particularly of myths and stereotypes of sex, love, and romance in the mass media) that this movie deftly presents and delightfully asks us to consider. Front and center is the hilarious deconstruction of media celebrity (Rx #11) but several Myths and Stereotypes also get skewered.

**HONORABLE MENTION: “South Park” (TV); “The Simpsons” (TV)**

**Myth #12: Since mass media portrayals of romance aren't "real," they don't really affect you.**

**STUPID CUPID™ AWARDEE:**

**(tie): Media critics Who Describe Mythic and Stereotypic Portrayals as "Completely Harmless"; Schools That Don't Provide Media Literacy Education**

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.

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.

**Rx #12: Calculate the very real consequences of unreal media.**

**REALISTIC ROMANCE® AWARDEE:**

**Media Literacy Resources That Foster Critical Thinking—and Consumers Who Utilize Them**

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 the Center for Media Literacy (CML)—[MediaLit.org](http://MediaLit.org), the National Association for Media Literacy Education (NAMLE, formerly AMLA, the Alliance for a Media Literate America)—[Name.net](http://Name.net), and, of course, my own media literacy contributions via Realistic Romance®—The Person's Relationship Remedy™—[RealisticRomance.com](http://RealisticRomance.com).

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