



No, this is not my new headshot. But everyone at Crescendo agreed that this retro pinup would be our image of the month.

FROM THE FOUNDER

In this issue, we're celebrating Valentine's Day, a month-long festival of love that we happen to love back.

Still, we know that Valentine's Day can sometimes stir up baggage. Confidence-killing ideas can crop up around now, like this one: "Unless I'm madly in love, I'll always be lonely."

If you ascribe to that point of view, your happiness will always depend on another person. Whether you're a free agent or someone's better half, why not claim a big hunk of the holiday this year and show *yourself* some love?

We've put together some ideas for just that purpose, ranging from taking a class to taking care of your health.

Because love is still love if it comes from within.

*Kathryn McKechnie
Founder, Crescendo Apparel*

WORSHIP THE GROUND YOU WALK ON

So much energy goes to taking care of others (family, colleagues, pets). See what happens when you do something for you and only you.

Stop in for a free makeover at [Sephora's Beauty Studio](#).

Daily, write down 5 things you're grateful for. You might find that life is full of riches you never before considered.

Sit in the [Crystal Gardens](#) at Navy Pier. Breathe.

Create a custom-designed scent at [La Maison du Parfum](#).

Meditation centers you. [Chicago Yoga](#) offers classes. But you can also [learn to meditate online](#). That probably sounds peculiar to you, but they do an incredible job of it.

In the middle of the day, when the theaters are nearly empty, escape to see a movie. It feels refreshingly mischievous.



WHO WAS ST. VALENTINE ANYWAY?

When ancient Roman Emperor Claudius (aka, "Claudius the Cruel") decided to build his army, men resisted. Their reason? They'd miss their wives and girlfriends too much.

The show of non-compliance led the Emperor to ban marriage outright. (That'll teach them.)

But the affianced had no cause to fret: Father Valentine, a local priest, set up shop in town, marrying couples in secret.



LOVE FACTS

Do you believe in love at first sight? You're not alone. According to a recent study, 71% of people do, too.

Ever-interested in love, we dug up a host of similar stats pertaining to romance and its side effects.

As it happens, love really is heart healthy: A 150 pound woman can expect to burn 96 calories in an hour of kissing.

Read on for more [strange-but-true LOVE FACTS](#).



RESOLUTION REDUX

We're pretty sure about two things. One: You made your 2010 fitness resolution with the best intentions. Two: Good intentions do not a fitness goal make.

Because a few of us at Crescendo (not you) have this thing called "being imperfect," we sought help from an expert. Fitness pro Valerie Williams is an instructor and trainer at Chicago's well-appointed [Lakeview Athletic Club](#). (Rock climbing anyone?)

She recently shared a few of her favorite, most effective strategies for accomplishing your fitness goals.

Read on for [Valerie Williams' stay-on-track advice](#).



DO SOMETHING!

Winter makes you want to stay in. And sometimes, that's a mighty-fine idea. Do it too often, though, and it becomes a recipe for some deep-fried cabin fever.

When we have plans to do something beyond the usual dinner and drinks, something that makes us think, we often find ourselves scraping the ice off our car windshield, happily, on a Wednesday night.

Some ideas:

Lessons at [Old Town School of Folk Music](#) include Flamenco dance and jazz improv.

At the [Newberry Library](#), hear speakers talk about Chicago history, Mozart and everything in between.

Take cooking lessons at [The Chopping Block](#). One class covers knife skills. Who doesn't need knife skills?

At the [Field Museum](#), view bling worn by Hollywood divas Mae West and Joan Crawford at "[The Nature of Diamonds](#)."

Learn the language of love at a French language class at the [Alliance Francaise de Chicago](#).

FASHION GETS FREUDIAN

Chicago image consultant and "closetologist" [Jackie Walker](#) helps her clients develop wardrobes they love. As she does, she gives them insights into the psychology that drives their style choices. Recently, we asked The Freud-ess of Fashion to share her expertise with Crescendo.

Within an hour, the public speaker and co-author of "[I Don't Have a Thing to Wear: The Psychology of Your Closet](#)" (Simon & Schuster, 2003) upended many beliefs we'd long held to be absolutely, positively true about ourselves, often because our mothers told us so.

Instead of taking for granted that mom is always right, Walker helps clients see things more objectively. She walked us through one exercise that helped us understand, for once and for all, whether we're long or short waisted (or neither). [Try it for yourself](#).



Psychology, including our self-confidence and the beliefs we hold about our shapes, drives the decisions we make about our wardrobes. [Jackie Walker](#) helps clients navigate through all the headgames.



SPECIAL OFFER

Book an appointment to view the spring collection by April 1 and save 20% off your entire order. Call 312.235.1062 or write us a [note](#). Our sales pros will take care of you.