

Five Conversations to Avoid on the First Date



By Steven Zangrillo

Here it is, your huge, nerve wracking first date. After obsessively digging through the mountain range of shoes, dresses, belts and bags in your closet, you've nailed down the perfect outfit. Your hair looks good and you've even managed not to overdo your make-up. All signs point toward success.

Lest we forget, as great as you may look, you must "wow" him or her with your intellectual acumen. That is, don't say anything that'll earn you a trip back to Match.com. We've outlined a few conversational situations to steer away from, should you find yourself talking yourself ... into a corner.

1. Avoid Talking About Your Ex: You'd think that people follow this rule to a tee with ardent discipline. In truth, it happens a little bit more than you think. It's easy, as well as unfair, to overtly express comparisons between your new potential mate and past flames. The important thing to remember is that the person you are considering is *not* guilty of the romance crimes your ex committed. Show this person you're interested in them, not how they stack up to someone else.

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2. Avoid Talking About Things You Dislike: No one cares that you don't like movies, spinach or *Harry Potter*. Do you know why? Ask yourself if you've ever been told to list your "disinterests" or "dislikes." Your date wants to know what

you *like* so they can treat you to those things. Tell them how you like the theatre or going to football games. This way, you can determine what you have in common. Discussing the positive things will lead to a second date, and that's the goal.

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3. Avoid Talking Too Much: While not a conversational topic per se, talking too much is a dangerous proposition. While there's no doubt that your new potential partner will want to find out as much as they can about you, they probably want to talk about themselves a little bit, too. After all, they're just as invested in the conversation as you are and they're just as nervous. There's no harm in sipping your wine, while listening to them talk about whatever they want. Being a good listener is an integral pillar in the foundation of a strong relationship and shows you have communication skills. That's a huge turn on.

4. Avoid Talking About How Much Money You (or They) Make: Your careers will be a huge topic on the first date. "What do you do?" is a classic and predictable first date query. Generally, you'll be able to determine how much money this person is making when they tell you they're a doctor, public relations professional, lawyer, fry cook or waiter. If you don't feel that you're of equal pay grade, don't embarrass them and don't embarrass yourself. While "it's not about money," both of you should be in stable professional situations. Don't be unfair and make anyone feel awkward though; you can figure this information out for yourself.

5. Avoid Talking About Your Physical Relationships: Don't tell your date your "number." You will be judged with subdued harshness. No matter what *anyone* says, don't let this conversation happen. You're on this first date for the purposes of getting to know each other and to have some fun.

You are, in a sense, auditioning to be in each other's lives. Don't screw this up by trying to figure out which one of you is more promiscuous. This conversation will happen eventually, so don't be in a rush to have an awkward conversation with someone you don't know very well.

What conversations are important to discuss on the first date? Share your suggestions below.