

11 Good Reasons to Keep Your Relationship Status Secret



 By Kelly Rouba for Galttime.com

You know that euphoria that fills you up when you first start dating someone? That fun and excitement of entering a new relationship that makes us want to shout it from the rooftops for all to hear? That feels really good. But sometimes, sharing the news widely isn't a good idea. Sometimes, we should keep the rooftop-shouting only within range of our closest friends – at least for a little while – before we broadcast it online.

Carlee, of New Jersey, kept her relationships status quiet when she got back together with her ex-boyfriend.

“When I broke up with him, I hid my relationship status so I didn't have to deal with people asking me what happened. I kept it hidden even after we got back together a couple months later, until I was sure things were okay between us and so people wouldn't interfere in our relationship,” Carlee said. “Now that we've been back together for a while, it's unhidden again.”

April, of New Jersey, understands Carlee's quietness, which is why her Facebook status always indicates she is in a relationship even though she is currently single.

“I also want to avoid people asking questions like 'what happened' or just knowing information I may still be sensitive to,” April says, adding that she also keeps that status for safety purposes. “I don't want unnecessary people sending me inappropriate messages or text messages.”

Relationship expert and dating consultant Stacie Ikka says displaying your true relationship status on Facebook isn't necessarily a bad idea, but there are instances when it's smart to hold off on announcing who you are dating or if you are involved with someone at all to your online circles.

Here's when she says it's best to keep your relationship status quiet.

1. IF YOU GET A LOT OF UNWANTED POKES, WINKS AND INVITATIONS

Some people see a "single" status on Facebook as an invitation to be in contact, overtly flirt or even harass someone. If you are getting invitations that make you uncomfortable, consider leaving your relationship status blank.

"If you are single and not necessarily looking to use Facebook as a dating site and simply selected that status because you thought that all fields in your profile needed to be filled out—BEWARE!," Ikka says. Sometimes other singles, and even people who are in relationships already, prey on women who announce that they are on the market.

2. IF YOU DON'T WANT OTHER PEOPLE TO INTERFERE IN YOUR RELATIONSHIP OR ROMANTIC BUSINESS

"For a relationship to develop between two people in a way that leads to a healthy future, it is often best that the details and status of that relationship be contained among the two people involved—and the select few they choose to confide in," Ikka advises.

This also goes for those who are entering a new relationship.

"Moving from a casual to a committed relationship can often be tricky," Ikka offers, "and opening up that relationship to an online audience, which is presumably broader than one's immediate social circle, opens the relationship up to commentary—some of which could be damaging, especially if the

relationship is new.”

Consider keeping your status quiet for a certain amount of time or until the two of you feel secure in this new arrangement. Like Carlee, you may also want to consider updating your status at that point without sharing it widely through your newsfeed.

3. IF YOU WANT TO EASE SOME OF THE PRESSURE

“If the couple has not discussed how or whether they are going to ‘announce’ their union on Facebook, and one party goes ahead and changes their status, it might make the other party feel uncomfortable or put unnecessary pressure on that person,” Ikka says. “Even if it was a joint decision, it exposes the relationship to scrutiny, observations, and involvement that is not necessarily appropriate during the early phases of a relationship, where the focus should really be on whether attraction, compatibility, common values, and shared interests will survive the long-term.”

4. IF YOU WANT AN EASIER BREAKUP

Splitting up can be more complicated if a thousand of your Facebook friends can see your status.

“Breakups are painful in the best of times,” reminds Ikka. And changing a status from “in a relationship” to “single” or even “it’s complicated” can draw attention right in the middle of that pain. “Even if that attention comes in the form of support and sympathy to an already difficult, personal, and emotional experience.”

5. IF YOU’RE FED UP WITH JUDGMENT ABOUT YOUR LOVE LIFE

Facebook is not your diary or a private conversation with your best friend. It’s a loudspeaker to every one of your coworkers, high-school frenemies, mom’s friends, and siblings you are connected with on the social network. Not all of them

may get the situation, or you.

“If you are the type of Facebook user who updates your relationship status on a regular basis and that status is changing with a frequency that others may deem abnormal, you are opening yourself up to judgment, ridicule, and the potential for losing credibility amongst your Facebook network,” Ikka says bluntly. “So, if you are sensitive to other people’s opinions, think carefully before changing your relationship status and ask yourself why you’re doing it.”

6. IF YOU OFTEN GIVE IN TO PEER PRESSURE

In many relationships, Ikka says, one person is more guarded about their personal life and details. The other person may be more forthcoming and therefore have no issue with listing their relationship status online.

“It’s not uncommon in these circumstances for the more private individual to feel pressure to change their status for fear of not appearing loyal or committed to their partner or the relationship,” Ikka notes.

Resentment can build, she says, and the private person may let that spill over into real-life interactions with their partner.

“It’s usually a sign of bigger problems,” Ikka adds.

Avoid this friction by discussing what works best for both of you, even if that means the more open person lists a status and is understanding if the more private partner doesn’t.

7. IF YOU DON’T WANT TO HEAR FROM A NOSY OR AGGRESSIVE EX

Want to nix any opportunity for your ex to get back in touch, troll around your profile or hunt for more information about your new relationship? Then consider keeping your status set at a lower volume.

Showing you're in a relationship can be an invitation for exes to peer into your current love life, Ikka says.

"Although nosy exes always have their offline ways of determining your relationship status, putting your relationship status on Facebook – especially if you are naming the person you're in the relationship with – only encourages 'stalker'-type behavior and may prompt them to attempt to sabotage or disrupt your new relationship," she warns.

Those who are in the process of divorcing may also want to avoid displaying their relationship status, especially if they've begun seeing someone new.

"If you are in the process of a separation or a divorce, it might not be a good idea to draw attention to your relationship status for the benefit of any children involved, especially if they are on Facebook, and to protect yourself throughout any court proceedings."

8. IF YOU HAVE OVERBEARING PARENTS

Have parents who are anxious for you to get married or just be partnered up?

Stating that you are in a relationship could give your "parents false hope, further fodder for offline marital pressure, and render them an even greater annoyance as well as promote unnecessary involvement in your personal life," Ikka warns. Keep in mind, "even if they're not on Facebook, they will find out...and FAST!"

9. IF YOU'RE NOT UP FOR EXPLAINING COMPLICATED CIRCUMSTANCES

Although it might be tempting to select the "it's complicated" relationship status, Ikka advises against it.

Why?

"You are professing to the Facebook world that you are in

relationship that is not completely fulfilling you and that you are settling,” she explains. “We all know you deserve better than that – even if you don’t believe it yourself. Again, you are opening yourself up to unnecessary judgment, loss of credibility, perhaps pity, and vulnerability. All relationships have their complications, but if you’re with the right partner, then your status would simply read ‘In a Relationship.’ Anyone who’s ever been in a relationship understands that things are not always perfect and, at times, may be complicated.”

10. IF YOU DON'T THINK OPEN RELATIONSHIPS HAVE TO BE AN OPEN BOOK

“While in this day and age, society may be more accepting of alternate forms of relationships, like polyamorous, bisexual, transgender, homosexual, etc., this is another category that leaves you wide open to judgment,” Ikka cautions. “People will naturally jump to conclusions. For example, they may believe you have commitment issues or that you are promiscuous or whatever else this status conjures up in their imaginative minds.”

You don’t have to be responsible for other people’s concerns, criticisms or even their assumptions. But if you have a tendency to get wrapped up in them or if you would rather put your kind of relationship up for public scrutiny, then consider educating and informing others about in ways outside of social networks.

11. IF YOUR PROFILE IS FOR PROFESSIONAL USE

Facebook, for many folks, is a professional networking tool, an avenue for job-hunting or a way to stay in touch with clients. Many companies also use Facebook to check up on their employees or to survey someone’s social presence before a job interview.

“If you are using Facebook for business purposes or suspect

your personal information could get back to your employers or associates, then you may want to keep your page purely professional, this includes keeping your relationship status hidden," Ikka advises.

10 Ways to Make a Good First Impression on Your Mate's Parents



 By Nic Baird

What's the worst that can happen when you meet your partner's parents? Projectile vomit over dessert. But, really, what are the chances of that? Obviously be yourself, because anything else is too hard for something so stressful. If it makes it easier you can be reserved at first, and let your hair down as you size up the situation. Here are the standard rules to follow when meeting the parents for the first time:

1. Presentation: It could be that your partner's family is a commune of hippies and they don't care if you wear a ball gown or a burlap sack, but it's not a good idea to go into your first encounter with this assumption. Dress smart, but don't overdress. It has to show that you put effort into your appearance without any flash or sex appeal. Pretend you're dressing for a job interview at the library.

2. Grace: Most parents want to like you, and will try their best to establish good relations for the sake of their child. In some cases you might be prodded or even goaded. If this

happens then the only correct response is to remain untouched. Don't fight back, and keep smiling. You will demonstrate your power by your lack of aggression and offence.

3. Enthusiasm: If it feels like a chore, that's reasonable. If the pressure of the date is pure torture, that's not unreasonable. As soon as you ring the doorbell, your gut might urge you to just hide in the bushes and slink away unseen. Resist. You must be ecstatic to have been granted an audience with these most respected figures. Or at least it should seem that way.

4. Confidence: Parents who smell a reasonable amount of fear on your person will not be upset. This could even delight them as a form of respect, or give you an endearing quality. An attempt at a confident presentation is all they ask. If they want you to try the mechanical bull in the basement and you don't have a heart condition, then there's only one choice.

5. Engage: Ask questions and be part of the conversation. Show an interest in topics they bring up, and try to bring new material to the discussion. Look them in the eye, talk at a reasonable volume, and, once again, smile.

6. Restraint: Especially for the first meeting, show restraint in your affection towards your partner. Groping and French kissing will disgust even the most liberal of parents. There's some leeway once you've established your presence, but the restraint you show in front of them demonstrates the respect they crave, and in most cases, the respect they deserve.

Related: [5 Ways to Reconcile Arguments With In-Laws](#)

7. Foresight: Even if you're uncomfortable looking to the future, this is a favourite topic of parents. What are your dreams and aspirations? What skills are you developing? How will you be a valuable addition to my child's life? You're not going to answer these questions outright, but it will be in

the subtext when you describe your plans. Talk about yourself. Don't talk about the apartment you hope to inhabit with their progeny.

8. Maturity: These people are older than you. They should be older than you, but if not this applies regardless. Keep your jokes and comments at a level above theirs. This isn't your grandma, but it's somewhere in between her and the school playground. Be mindful not to go too far.

9. Commitment: While it might seem like a good idea to describe yourself as hopelessly in love with your new soul mate, parents don't respond to this as well as you might think. Nobody is good enough for their child until they prove themselves. If this is your first encounter, you should demonstrate that you're serious about the relationship without planning the wedding day.

10. Etiquette: This is a skill that must be developed. It's more than being polite and thoughtful, though those are the essentials. Things to compliment: the house, the meal, the music, and anything of personal significance. Manners involve clearing the plates without offering, and sitting back down when they urge you to stop. You're a guest and you have to pay tribute to their hospitality.

What are some other tips for meeting your partner's parents? Share your ideas below.

7 Signs You Might Be in Love



 By Bethany Heinesh of DatingAdvice.com

For thousands of years, women have sought to love and to be loved. Yet we have no greater answer to the age-old question “What is love?” than when we started. There have been many poems, books, songs and plays written about love, but no one has yet to truly capture its essence.

Even the world’s greatest philosophers have pondered the notion of love but have been unable to analyze its implications. I would venture to say there are as many definitions of love as there are people. After all, love is in the eye of the beholder.

Here are seven simple signs to look for so you’ll know what love looks like when it shows up and makes your heart skip a beat. You might be in love if...

1. You’re thinking about him 24/7.

When you’re in love with a man, he haunts you like the boogeyman. He lurks in the shadows of your mind and overpowers every independent thought you can muster. If he’s all you think about, you’ve got it bad, girl.

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2. You’re talking about him 24/7.

When your friends have to stage an intervention because you babble about him incessantly, you’re in over your head. You’ve passed the point of no return – you’re love struck.

3. Your co-workers notice something is “different.”

People may say you look younger, you’ve lost weight or you did something to your hair. When other people detect a radiance emanating from you, they may not be able to pinpoint exactly what’s going on, but they know something’s changed.

Related: [How to Tell If He’s ‘The One’ After One Date](#)

4. You catch yourself shopping for him.

There's something about having a new man in your life that makes you want to fuss over him. I can't tell you how many times I've had to leave a cart full of clothes I wanted to buy for my boyfriend in a department store. Once I realized he might not be ready for me to buy his underoos, I came to my senses.

*"It gets even better once you
get past the lovey-dovey haze."*

5. You think every love song is being sung to you.

Oh, how I remember being love struck, singing at the top of my voice in my car to Mariah Carey songs while cruising down the freeway. There's something about love that makes us say, "La,la,la!"

6. The seconds feel like hours when you're apart.

I truly believe our perception of time gets contorted when we're in love, a theory I believe will eventually be proven through the miracle of science. When you're with the object of your affection, time seems to fly. When he leaves, it's like agony until he returns. Somehow, life just goes at a different rate of speed when you're in love.

7. You rearrange your life to accommodate his.

If he now has a drawer at your place, you're saving your money so you can go to Spain together, and you spend every lunch hour talking to him on the phone, let's just say you've shifted your focus from life as single woman to becoming a "we."

Of course, these rules apply to the new and blossoming relationship, and love takes on a different form as it evolves. Unfortunately, the obsessively wonderful experience

of falling in love eventually dissipates and routine usually takes its place.

So many women aren't prepared for what happens when newly found romance wears off. We often think the relationship isn't working and begin looking for someone else to rekindle those feelings with.

Take my advice – stick around for the next stage. It gets even better once you get past the lovey-dovey haze and get real.

Get more dating advice, tips, how-to's and Q&A's for men and women from the experts at DatingAdvice.com.

JLo and Casper Smart: Should You Get a Puppy Together?



 By Jane Greer, PhD for Galtime.com

When is puppy love the smart choice?

Jennifer Lopez and boyfriend Casper Smart [introduced](#) the newest member of their family to the public recently via Twitter – a brown boxer puppy they've named Bear. Lopez, who has four-year-old twins with ex-husband Marc Anthony, has been dating Smart since 2011. This step seems worth noting – not only for them but for all couples who might be wondering what the next phase of their partnership might be.

It is easy to get caught up in the excitement of your love and just want to enjoy the day-to-day, but at some point things must grow in one way or another. Sometimes the next step is

decided for you, with an unplanned pregnancy for example. Other times, a couple may hastily get ahead of themselves, moving in together or taking on more responsibility than they might be ready for. Or maybe they already have kids who are begging for a new sibling. Often when partners find themselves biting off more than they are ready to chew, the relationship can implode.

Instead of being taken by surprise, one way to test the waters of how you and your partner might handle responsibility in your shared life together is to get a pet. It will give you a sense not only of how your partner will be in a traditional role, but also how you'll take to it. Think of it as a practice run. Having a pet, especially if it's a puppy, requires some of the necessary behavior that occurs when you have a baby. Your schedule changes so you can take care of the dog – walk him, feed him, train him, and comfort him when he whines during the night. It will tell you a lot about how much each of you will be able to sacrifice your personal needs and work as a team to cover all the bases. Pets might be really cute, and melt your heart, but there is no denying how much hands-on obligation they require. In many ways, it is its own form of parenthood.

Puppies might bring puppy love and tug at your heartstrings, but they pack a punch when it comes to accountability – as does building a life with another person. JLo and Casper are doing it right, they are dipping their toes into the pool of settling down more before taking that jump. They brought home Bear before adding to their already existing family, allowing them the time to find the balance between love and reality.

The bottom line is that if your biological clock is ticking and you think you want a baby, but you're wondering about the timing and what it will mean to your relationship, take control rather than letting yourself be pushed into anything before you're sure you're ready. Instead, do a dry run with a pet – after all, you are never too old for puppy love.

Why a Blind Date Might Be Good For You



 By Jennifer Harrington

For singles, there are two words that can stir feelings of fear and excitement: blind date. Why such an intense reaction to these two little words? Simple: it's because there is the fear of the unknown and the excitement of the potential of meeting that special someone. So if you're still on the market and undecided if blind dates are really for you, here are a few reasons you may want to take the plunge and consider accepting a set-up:

1. Your friends and family know you best: Family and friends are often the ones who offer to set up blind dates. These are the people closest to you and know you best, and most likely, they know what qualities are most important to you in a potential mate. Also, you will have something in common (your mutual connection) with your blind date to help get the conversation started. So, put some trust in your inner circle and let them help you find "The One"!

Related: [The Last Blind Date](#)

2. You gain important dating experience: Whether your blind date is a success or disaster, every time you go out on a date, you get experience which will only help you as you continue on your dating journey. Most importantly, dates give you an important boost in self-confidence. After each date, look for the positives and honestly assess how the date went.

This self-evaluation can help you as you consider and go on future dates.

Related: [How to Ease Your Nerves Before a Blind Date](#)

3. You know celebrities do it: Despite fame and fortune, celebrities also go on blind dates! Jenny McCarthy admitted in 2011 to a blossoming romance with sports agent Paul Krepelka, after begging her friends to set her up with men. Jenny confided in an interview with *US Weekly*: “I told everyone I know, Please, I can’t pick them. As a friend, find me a man.” Also, a little-known Hollywood fact: Jennifer Aniston and Brad Pitt met on a blind date! While the couple eventually divorced, their romance started on a blind date in 1998, after Jennifer’s long-time crush on Brad.

4. You know it may work: Blind dates always come with the potential of meeting somebody really great. But you will never know unless you accept the date and go into it with an open mind. If you need extra inspiration to accept the blind date you’ve been offered, think back to Charlotte’s quote from *Sex and the City*, “I’ve been dating since I was fifteen. I’m exhausted. Where is he?”. Mr. Right could be your blind date, so always accept the date!

Blind dates – friend or foe? Tell us in the comments about your blind date experiences!

10 Steps to a Remarkable Relationship



 By Harriet Lerner, Ph.D.

This Valentine's Day, give your partner the best gift of all – a remarkable relationship! Dr. Harriet Lerner, one of our nation's most loved and respected relationship experts, reminds us that while it takes two people to couple up, it only takes one to make things a whole lot better. Here's how:

1. Warm your Partner's Heart. Make a concerted effort to focus on the positive. Do three little things every day that make your partner feel loved, valued and special.

2. Dial Down the Criticism. People become more allergic to criticism over time. Remember this: No one can survive in a marriage (at least not happily) if they feel more judged than admired.

Related: [How to Master Being in a Relationship](#)

3. Apologize. You can say, "I'm sorry for my part of the problem" even if you're secretly convinced that you're only 28% to blame.

4. Don't Demand an Apology. Don't get into a tug of war about his failure to apologize. An entrenched non-apologizer may use a nonverbal way to try to defuse tension, reconnect after a fight, or show he's in a new place and wants to move toward you.

Related: [What Kim Kardashian Taught Me About Marriage](#)

5. Stop Being So Defensive. Defensiveness is the archenemy of listening. The next time your partner has a criticism try to listen only to understand—that is, no interrupting, offering advice, defending your position, or correcting facts. Save your defense for a second conversation.

6. Say it Shorter! Your partner may avoid conversation because it feels awful to him. Sometimes the culprit is the sheer number of sentences and the intensity in our voice. Slow down your speech, turn down the volume, and make your

criticism in three sentences or less.

7. Sweat the Small Stuff. When you say you'll do something, do it! Never assume that your overall contribution to the marriage compensates for failing to do what you say you'll do, whether it's picking up your socks or moving the boxes out of the garage by Sunday.

8. Know Your Bottom Line. Be flexible in changing for your partner 84% of the time, but don't sacrifice your core values, beliefs and priorities under relationship pressures.

9. Be self-focused. Connect with friends and family, pursue your interests, and be of service of others. If your primary energy isn't directed to living your own life as well as possible, you'll be over-focused on your partner in a worried or critical way.

10. Choose happiness over winning the argument. Your partner's happiness and the tone of your marriage mean a whole more than who is right and who is to blame. Don't lock yourself into negativity at the expense of your happiness and well-being. Step aside from old anger and hurt.

Harriet Lerner, Ph.D., author of Marriage Rules, is a clinical psychologist whose many acclaimed books have topped six million copies in combined sales. She is a dynamic, sought-after speaker who has appeared on The Oprah Winfrey Show, CNN, and NPR, and she hosts The Dance of Connection blog on psychologytoday.com.

Long-Term Relationships: 5 Ways to Keep the Spark Alive



By Christina Steinorth MA MFT

I wanted to get away from the more standard type of Valentine's Day articles that seem to surround gifts and intimacy, so I asked this question on my Facebook page: *What topic should I write about for Valentine's Day?*

While I received many great answers, one that seemed to pop up more than others was: *What about an article for those of us who are in long-term relationships or have been married for many years?* I gave it some thought, and my fans were right—there isn't a lot of advice relating to Valentine's Day and long-term relationships.

I loved the idea.

As many of you know, come April, I will have been married to my husband for 14 years (we've been together for almost 16). While we don't have the hot, crazy, spark of love we may have had at the start of our relationship, what we have now is something far sexier—a deep understanding and admiration for each other that makes our love life even *more* passionate than it was when we first got together. We didn't get to this point by accident though—it has taken a lot of work and as well as consistent effort on both of our parts.

Related: [4 Steps to a Stronger Long Term Relationship](#)

Here are my five best tips for those of you who are in longer term relationships to keep your spark alive:

1. Start doing things together. A lot times, especially in

longer term relationships, we start to live our own lives so to speak and do less and less things with our partners. Start doing activities together three to five times a week—go for a walk, go for a bike ride or shop for and cook a meal together once a week. It will bring you closer and give you shared experiences to bond over.

2. Touch each other and do it often. Touch doesn't need to be sexual to draw us closer to our partner. Rub each other's shoulders from time-to-time. Hold hands when you walk. When we touch each other, it helps us feel more connected with one another.

Related: [What's Love Got to Do With It?](#)

3. Be someone your partner will *want* to spend time with. Put the nagging and criticism aside and be charming, fun and engaging again—our partners are more drawn to us when we're happy.

4. Reconnect with each other for at least ten minutes a day. Do it either before you get out of bed in the morning, or before you go to sleep at night or any other time during the day that you can sneak off and have ten minutes of uninterrupted conversation. Power down all of your electronics, make eye contact and just talk. It doesn't need to be serious—just talk about your day and what your plans are for tomorrow. Have light hearted chit-chat—it will help stop you from drifting apart from one another and it will help bring the spark back.

5. Act loving even when you don't feel like it because people will always remember how you make them feel. If you don't have loving words to share, loving actions can go a long way too.

Christina Steinorth MA MFT is a psychotherapist and a popular relationship expert on radio and in print. Her advice has been featured in publications such as Wall Street Journal, USA

Today, *Woman's Day*, *Fox News Magazine*, and *The Chicago Tribune*, among many others. Her critically acclaimed new book is *'Cue Cards for Life: Thoughtful Tips for Better Relationships'* (Hunter House, 2013). Learn more at <http://www.christinasteinorth.com>.

Ways to Forget Your Singledom This VDay



By Meghan Laslocky

If you're single on Valentine's Day, don't be grumpy about it! If you're proactive and plan ahead, there are a thousand ways you can enjoy VDay, even if you're flying solo. Here are a few ideas:

1. Get a good workout in, either at the gym or outside. Really, there is nothing like a little rush of endorphins to chase away the VDay blues. Remember that there could well be tons of other singles doing just the same thing at the gym, so keep your eyes peeled. Get your workout done early in the day, before work or during lunch, so that you have the evening free for other plans.

Related: [How to Make Your Lady Feel Special This Valentine's Day](#)

2. Gather your single friends for a rollicking night at home. If you're up for cooking, here's a great recipe for burgers with spinach and arugula pesto that goes well with a Zinfandel. Or you might want to consider this totally amazing

butternut squash gratin, which you can assemble the night before and then just pop in the oven. (Pair that one with a nice Viognier.) If you don't cook, then order takeout for a crowd! After dinner, play a board game like Pictionary or Scattergories, battle of the sexes style.

3. Get your friends together for a whiskey tasting (whisky is the new black, after all). Kink it up with blindfolds. In a blind taste test, who can tell the difference between an Irish whiskey and a single malt scotch, or a bourbon and a rye?

Related: [Surviving Valentine's Day](#)

4. Movie night! A few suggestions if you want to stay in: "Lost in Austen" is a hilarious 3-hour British mini-series in which 21st century Jane Austen fan switches places with Pride and Prejudice's Elizabeth Bennet. If you want to steer clear of love stories all together and you're game for dark, quirky foreign comedy, check out the Danish film "Adam's Apples," with Mads Mikkelsen. Or head to the cinema and laugh your socks off over Bruce Willis jumping through glass ceilings in "A Good Day to Die Hard."

5. Go see a comedy show. Valentine's Day makes for great fodder for comedians! Check out your local comedy clubs for what's coming up on February 14.

6. Peruse local listings for creative singles events. Some bookstores host Valentine's Day speed dating events geared toward readers, bars host "no love song" karaoke nights, and some cities like San Francisco even host flash-mob style V-Day pillow fights!

So, if you're single, there's no reason why V-Day has to feel like D-Day. All it takes is some creativity and positive thinking and just about anyone can have a fun, memorable Valentine's Day.

Meghan Laslocky is the author of 'The Little Book of

Making Valentine's Day Fun Again!



 By Eleanore Wells

When did Valentine's Day become such a BIG deal? At some point when I wasn't looking, it went from being a lighthearted, fun, semi-holiday to another over-the-top, loud, commercial holiday that comes with feelings of annoyance and angst for so many. It's not really about who you love anymore; instead, it's about gifts and lavish displays of...well, I'm not sure what.

As a kid, I loved this holiday. I got such a kick out of giving out cards with big red hearts on them to all the people who made me happy. I gave them to my parents, my teachers, my favorite classmates, my playmates and even my mailman. Back then, Valentine's Day was fun, and it was an excuse to tell the people who make you happy how much they mean to you. Romance had nothing to do with it when I was ten years old.

Years later, I received a beautiful bouquet of roses from a guy I'd broken up with about seven months earlier. We weren't really speaking, and he's not the sentimental type, so I was more than a little suspect. I called the florist and learned that, back when we were still dating, he had set up an automatic "send her flowers on Valentine's Day" thingy. So each Valentine's Day, when I was so pleased with his thoughtfulness, he really hadn't given it much thought at all. Well, maybe the first time...

Related Link: [How to Make Your Lady Feel Special This Valentine's Day](#)

I laughed and said nothing. It took him another two or three years to remember that he had me on automatic delivery, and I continued to enjoy my flowers each year. It had nothing to do with him or the romantic day. I just like pretty flowers.

Then, there was the guy who “surprised” me with a ginormous ten-pound box of chocolates. It was a surprise because I don't really like chocolate, and he certainly should have known that because we'd talked about it many times. I guess he only *pretended* to be listening.

Jennifer Lopez has been quoted as saying, “Love to me is someone telling me, ‘I want to be with you for the rest of my life, and if you needed me to, I'd jump out of a plane for you.’” Can you imagine the pressure her guy feels on Valentine's Day?!

For too many single women, Valentine's Day is a loud reminder that they have no man (or woman, in some cases) in their life to love. It's a loud reminder of their sad, lonely lives...even though, on most days, their lives are not very sad and not that lonely. And the lead-up to it is fraught with anxiety because “whatever will she do” on this day when happy couples all over the country are celebrating? (Even though that isn't really happening.)

Related Link: [5 Tips for Single Moms to Survive Valentine's Day](#)

When I'm not in a relationship on Valentine's Day, I like to enjoy a dinner or some other outing with people who make me laugh. Not a gloomy, woeful dinner with whiny people who are miserable about being single, but a fun dinner with interesting and delightful people who happen to be single...single for now or single forever.

And that – or something on the list below – is what I recommend for everybody. I wish Valentine's Day were less about romance and more about an opportunity to remind people that you love them or tell them for the first time that you enjoy their company, that they matter to you. Let's reclaim Valentine's Day and experience it like we did when we were kids by injecting some much-needed lightheartedness into it.

1. Go bowling or plan some other group outing for people you know and enjoy but may not see as often as you'd like. It's a great excuse to reconnect!
2. Volunteer at a nursing home or children's organization and surprise them with Valentine's Day cards and trinkets so they can share in the day's fun too.
3. Treat yourself – and maybe even someone else – to flowers. Flowers can brighten anyone's day.
4. Buy a pack of Valentine's Day cards and give them to anybody and everybody you want.

Let's make Valentine's Day about love instead of romance: love of great people, love of laughter, love of life. And you don't need a date for that!

Creative Dating on a Dime for Valentine's Day



 By Mary Humphreys for Galttime.com

Valentine's Day is coming and romance is in the air. So what

if you are looking to meet someone new but are tight on funds? Don't worry, you don't need fancy dinners and limo rides to spark a romance with someone. All you need is a personal connection, and we've come up with some great date ideas that can create connections on a budget.

Get online to go offline

Hanging out at a club or going on blind dates can get expensive while you are trying to find that special someone. Get out of the bars and onto your computer. With free trial periods and coupon codes galore, you can try out even the most popular paid dating sites without making the commitment of paying full price. That way you can set up as many dates as you'd like. And the beginning of the year is the most popular time to start dating online, so now's a great chance to check out the largest pool of new daters.

Let's Take This Outside

Planning something active outdoors is one of the best ways to spark a connection with another person. And depending on your city and the weather, there are lots of great active dates you can plan.

Act like a kid: If your town's a winter wonderland right now, suggest doing some of your favorite activities from childhood. Grab your ice skates and head to an outdoor skating rink. Dive headfirst down a hill on your sleds. Have a snowball fight from your opposing snow forts. Build your own Frosty the Snowman. Or just fall into the fresh snow and make snow angels. You can even pack a thermos of hot chocolate to keep you warm in the cold.

This will help break the ice (no pun intended) and help showcase your playful side, and hopefully give you a glimpse at his inner child. Any of these activities are guaranteed to spark laughs and some deep conversations about how each of you

grew up. It's perfect for that getting-to-know-you stage.

Get active and release some endorphins: If the weather's a little warmer, try working up a little bit of a sweat. Go for a hike; it'll give you plenty of quiet time to get to know each other and nature is a perfect backdrop to spark conversation when there's a lull. Go for a bike ride through the park. Exercise will also release endorphins in your body that will help in making that love connection.

Stay-At-Home Romance

Looking for a date that won't make you and your honey head out into the cold? These dates are probably better suited for a little later on in the relationship, but they can be great, cozy ways to get to know each other better.

Movie theater-style movie night: Take a trip to a local grocery store to pick out all your favorite movie snacks and either grab a great movie rental or use an online video streaming service like Netflix or Amazon Instant Video and throw yourselves a theater-style night at home. Bonus if it's cold outside, so you have an extra excuse to cuddle.

Top Chef meal: Pick out a recipe or two that you've wanted to try and go out to buy the ingredients together at a farmer's market or a local grocery store. Then cook up your creations at home and give yourself ratings. For extra fun, come up with a challenge to complete, like incorporating an unusual ingredient or technique.

Hometown Tourist

If you've never played tourist in your hometown, now's the time. Look online for free walking tours or just head out to the most popular tourist attractions and take your camera.

Try a history lesson: Hit up some of the most famous landmarks and tourist attractions in your city, although avoid any

tourist traps, they tend to overcharge unsuspecting tourists. Take a tour of an old, historic building. Learning new information will not only give you something to talk about, but will also give you something to bond over on future dates.

Use culture to spark a conversation: Often museums offer free entrance once a month or on specific days, and looking at art is a great way to spark a conversation. If you check ahead of time, you may be able to get a great deal on entrance.

Get close on an adventure: Looking for something a little more obscure? Check out Geocaching. Using a GPS device or your smartphone, you can locate hidden containers left all around the world by other Geocachers, get your hands on some cool little treasures, and leave your own artifacts behind. Geocaches are stashed in a wide range of places, from hidden city nooks to remote wilderness spots, so you can explore wherever you are.

We're Breaking Up: Virgin Mobile Presents National Break Up Day



 By Nicole Cavanagh

Tomorrow is Valentines Day, which is supposed to be the day of love, right? Well, it may surprise you to hear that a recent survey conducted by Virgin Mobile found that 59 percent of people said that, if they were planning to break up with a boyfriend or girlfriend around Valentine's Day, they would do

it before the big day in order to save money.

While you may be a hopeless romantic ready to celebrate a day full of bliss, others have decided now is the best time to move on from a bad relationship. 42 percent of people surveyed said they have stayed in dead-end relationships because they were scared to make a change and try something new. If you want to break up with someone but feel like you can't because of Valentine's Day, you don't have to feel bad any longer! Why not cut the loose ends and put some extra money and happiness back in your pocket? Why put off for tomorrow what could be done today?

For that reason, Virgin Mobile has proclaimed February 13th to be "National Breakup Day." Finally, people across the country have an incentive to break free from a troubled relationship before they spend Valentine's Day with an unworthy partner. Just in case you don't know how to break the news, relationship experts from OkCupid are taking over the @VirginMLive Twitter handle. Use the hashtag #CupidConfessions to ask questions and learn how to make your online dating profile more desirable, so you can mend your broken heart and find someone new.

Even if you are newly single this Valentine's Day, remember that you aren't alone. Check out these statistics below:

1. Half (50 percent) of Americans ages 18-24 have experienced a breakup via texting, email, or social media, with 26 percent of that age group experiencing a breakup through text message specifically.
2. 10 percent of people have experienced a breakup on or around Valentine's Day (same week), with that number being 17 percent for 18-24 year olds.
3. When asked about when they change their Facebook relationship status after a breakup, 84 percent said within

two days, including 41 percent doing so immediately so others know they are back on the market.

4. 43 percent said the silver lining in a breakup is a chance to find a better, more rewarding relationship, while 26 percent cited freedom to do what they want.

Let's face it – we're pretty much in a relationship with our phone carrier too. A carrier can either put a smile on our faces with their excellent service and low rates or bring us to tears when we drop that important call or a huge bill comes at the end of the month. So why not celebrate National Breakup Day with your phone carrier as well? Virgin Mobile will pay up to 100 dollars of termination fees for any customer that switches to Virgin Mobile, making it even easier to leave their unhappy relationship with their current phone carrier and save an average of 1,000 dollars (compared to two-year contracts with other carriers). Also, for today only, Virgin Mobile USA will give online customers 100 dollars off the purchase of a new Samsung Galaxy SII 4G on a Beyond Talk no-contract plan.

5 Ways to Find a Last Minute Date for Valentine's Day



 By Susan Trombetti

[Valentine's Day](#) is fast approaching ladies, so instead of spending another year sitting at home and sulking if you're [single](#), it's time to take action. Just because it's two weeks away, doesn't mean you can't have a date. Follow these simple

and fun steps to land that date night on the most [romantic](#) night of the year.

1. Get on Facebook. Check out friends of friends. When you spot the right guy or girl for you, be sure to email your friend to ask if it is okay to email or friend request after getting the scoop on him or her. You want to make sure this person is single and truly available. After all, you are looking for more than a Valentine's Day [date](#). You need to find your [true love](#), and if he/she is hung up on someone else or is a player, this just won't work.

Related: [Is That You, Mr. Right?](#)

2. Online Dating. Don't overlook this because this is where the single people are (okay, they are supposed to all be single). They are looking for a valentine's date, too. I like EHarmony. I feel if you are a quality catch, have a great professional photo in your hot red dress, and you get some help writing your profile, you will have a ton of potential dates. The problem will be who to pick, but then that is a good problem to have. Just be sure to pick people for all the right reasons.

Related: [3 Benefits of Meeting People Online](#)

3. Think of Valentine's day as a fun excuse, whether you are a guy or a girl, to just ask anyone out you have been dying to ask out but didn't have the nerve. It's a great time to ask the person you have been crushing on for a long time, or that single coworker on another floor.

4. Pass out those drug store valentines cards that you used to give and receive when you were a little kid in 1st grade. Hershey kisses work well with the cards, or by themselves. Pass them out to every single person you can find. It is bound to be received with a smile, and you should line up at least a few dates if you go about it in a fun way. Pass them out to

singles in your apartment building, job, or even starbucks. Try your local bookstore. Just get creative and find some cute single, and go for it. It's corny, but it's one of the few times you can get away with it.

5. Every neighborhood has a social calendar of events with Charitable functions, or just fun things to do. Be sure to check out the calendar in advance of Valentine's day and go out and meet someone at one of these events. There are a lot of single events also around this time. Be sure to attend and meet someone. Be bold and put yourself out there and show your interest.

So what happens if you don't land that Valentine's Date. Don't sweat it too much. Rally up your single girlfriends and head out to your favorite spot. There's bound to be groups of single men hanging out, just like you and your girlfriends.

Susan Trombetti is an expert matchmaker and member of the Professional Matchmakers Association. She has helped many discerning singles discover long-term relationships and partnerships that are both rewarding and fulfilling through her business, [Exclusive Matchmaking](#). She's also been featured in several top dating/relationship magazines and websites including Cosmopolitan and iVillage.

How to Deal with Someone Difficult in Your Relationship

✘ By Elizabeth Davis

The reality of human interaction is one of both inevitability and need for acceptance since it often goes against one's favor. This is especially true for those who are difficult to deal with, and one may even become your better half. For better or for worse, it's still a drag when you have to deal with a partner who may not be as agreeable as you would have hoped.

It's understandably hard to stay calm and collected when the stress of having to deal with someone difficult on a daily basis starts getting to you. Of course, the last thing you need is to lash out and go crazy all of a sudden, which is not a very good thing for anyone. Here are a few things that you can remember in order to deal with such a person:

Marcus Aurelius, the great Roman emperor, wrote in his *Meditations* these words of wisdom.

"When you wake up in the morning, tell yourself: the people I deal with today will be meddling, ungrateful, arrogant, dishonest, jealous and surly. They are like this because they can't tell good from evil. But I have seen the beauty of good, and the ugliness of evil, and have recognized that the wrongdoer has a nature related to my own – not of the same blood and birth, but the same mind, and possessing a share of the divine. And so none of them can hurt me. No one can implicate me in ugliness. Nor can I feel angry at my relative, or hate him. We were born to work together like feet, hands and eyes, like the two rows of teeth, upper and lower. To obstruct each other is unnatural. To feel anger at someone, to turn your back on him: these are unnatural."

That's pretty deep, but also quite insightful about how we can look at the people around us, including those who are close to us. Maintaining a relationship is about patience and

acceptance, so if you're in love with someone who may be difficult at times, then you need to follow a few things in order to get the most of the situation.

Related: [How to Master Being In a Relationship](#)

Be Objective

Face that person in a calm and objective way, looking at the facts and ignoring the bad things. You have to be able to see the fundamental truth while still being able to see the silver lining. Even when things get bad and even downright bizarre, staying objective and getting the facts straight should give you that edge to keep yourself together, despite the negativity that can take down almost anyone.

Maintain a Mature Attitude

The topic of maturity has always been a convoluted one, and there is a tough question regarding what makes one mature. In any case, it's not something that can be acquired overnight. Such a mindset requires practice and the careful building up of patience amidst adverse situations. Maturity is about being able to balance everything you have in life, and it's definitely hard to pull off. But if you really do care about that person, then you should be able to find a way somehow by being mature about everything.

Be Assertive

Sometimes, you do have to put your foot down and make yourself heard whenever things do get too far. Of course, don't do it in a hysterical way, but in a conducted manner that will both make you understood and sympathized with at the same tie. Call the person out without provoking antagonism, which is easier said than done. Just remember to do it out of necessity rather than anger, and you'll somehow find a way to deal with the person's mischief and immaturity without having to resort to anything drastic.

Related: [Why Amazing Confident Women Remain Single](#)

Have a Sense of Humor

The British Royal Marines are perhaps one of the most elite group of soldiers anyone can ever encounter in this world. In the face of war and adversity, they remain calm and capable of facing even the most life-threatening obstacles. They're also known for the one trait that every Royal Marine is required to have, which is a sense of humor. As strange as it may seem, it's that ability to smile and joke around in the face of adversity that makes them so strong.

That is also the trait that can help any person get through the toughest of times in life, including a relationship with a "difficult" person. Being able to laugh during bad times is a great load off anyone's shoulders. So there is no need to be so serious and that person could eventually realize the folly of what has been done as you laugh and joke about what has transpired. Of course, as long as you don't do it in a mocking and condescending manner.

Elizabeth Davis has 20 years of experience as a relationship adviser. She writes and shares more relationship tips and marriage advice on her blog [RelationshipsAdvice.co](#).

10 Most Outrageous Celebrity Valentine's Day Gifts



 By Michelle Danzig

With the most romantic day just around the corner, you may

find yourself pressured to find the perfect gift to surprise your sweetie. In today's economy, it's hard not to find yourself in the cards, candy and flowers section of the department store, looming over the inevitable three-hour wait for dinner reservations this Valentine's Day. But what would your holiday be like with some extra, disposable income? Look no further than these 10 celebrities who emptied their pockets and went over-the-top with these outrageous Valentine's Day gifts for their significant others:

1. Courteney Cox: Before their recent split, Cox once purchased her then-husband, **David Arquette**, an antique Carousel horse. The estimated cost of an antique can range anywhere from \$3,500 to \$45,000.

2. Jay Z: With an estimated cost of \$24,000, the rapper and record producer bought his now-wife, **Beyonce** a Platinum covered mobile phone. I wonder if she picked that up while she was dancing in the club with Lady Gaga?

3. George Clooney: Even though it seemed like a fling, in 2008 Clooney splurged \$40,000 for girlfriend **Sarah Larson** on a hotel suite at the Hugh Hefner Sky Village in Las Vegas's Playboy Tower at the Palms Casino Resort. Not only that, but the two had dinner at the exclusive Nove restaurant while watching the Cirque Du Soleil tribute show to the Beatles at the Mirage Hotel and Casino.

Related: [Extravagant Celebrity Gifts Within Reach of Your Budget.](#)

4. Angelina Jolie: If you were anticipating another adoption, think again. Jolie bought hubby **Brad Pitt** a 200-year-old olive tree for £12,000—a little over \$19,000—for Valentine's Day last year. The olive tree was planted at the couple's chateau in France and is said to be a symbol of peace and longevity.

5. David Beckham: The sexy soccer star bought wife **Victoria**

Beckham an \$8 million Bvlgari necklace and flew chefs in from her favorite restaurant in London to Spain to prepare dinner.

6. Justin Bieber: Although sadly the teen power couple is no longer involved, the 18-year-old pop star spent \$2000 on singer and Disney Channel star, **Selena Gomez** by buying out an entire florist of his roses, tulips and daisies. Talk about being Justin's girlfriend...

Related: [Valentine's Day Advice: How Successful Women Can Ditch Dating Duds](#)

7. Jerry O'Connell: The *Stand By Me* star once planted over 800 grapevines in the home he shares with fellow actress and [wife](#), **Rebecca Romijn**. The estimated cost of this fruitful investment is \$52,000.

8. Howard Stern: The over-the-top radio personality designed and gave his now-wife, **Beth Ostrosky** a 5.2 carat emerald-cut engagement ring valued at over \$250,000 on Valentine's Day in 2007.

9. Katy Perry: Before filing for divorce in 2012, the singer purchased hubby **Russell Brand** a lilac-colored Bentley Brooklands. Interested in buying this for your sweetie? The base price for a 2009 model is nearly \$341,000.

10. Mike Tyson: Known for some previously extravagant gifts, the former undisputed heavyweight champion purchased a \$2 million bathtub for ex-wife **Robin Givens**.

Get a crazy gift for Valentine's Day? Share your story below!

Top 5 Don'ts of a First Valentine's Date



 By Susan Trombetti

As Valentine's Day approaches, the nerves are building up for many young couples. Maybe you've been dating for months, maybe you've been on a few dates or maybe you're friends, but want to take that next step in your relationship. Whatever situation you're in, don't let the expectations surrounding this day get to you. If you're spending the first Valentine's Day with your new honey, follow these tips:

1. Don't make your first date on Valentine's day: I don't like this idea. Valentine's Day isn't a day to get to know someone. This date also leads to easy let downs. There will be too high of expectations for one person or both, which can be awkward if it's the first time you go out on a date.

Related: [How to Make Your Lady Feel Special This Valentine's Day](#)

2. Don't leave your wallet or purse behind: You want to be romantic and chivalrous on the most romantic day of the year, so at least offer to pay even if he/she doesn't let you.

3. Don't be on your cell phone or other device: This is pretty much a no-no on any date, but especially don't screw it up on this night by being preoccupied by your phone. You need to let you're date know that they're the most important thing at that moment in time, which means not responding to texts, emails or calls you may get.

Related: [Surviving Valentine's Day](#)

4. Don't talk about your ex: Leave this conversation at the door unless you want your new partner to run. If you're on a date and all you can talk about is your ex-boyfriend or girlfriend, than your date is obviously going to think you're not over that person, which is probably true if you're too focused on them anyway. That person is your ex for a reason, realize that and try not blow this date because of the person in your past.

5. Don't drink too much: We all know that too much alcohol can lead to embarrassing and regretful behaviors, so forget that third glass of wine and keep it classy on this night. This is especially true for those spending their first Valentine's Day together, because new partners can be less forgiving of some of your actions caused by drinking.

Valentine's Day shouldn't be a make or break in your relationship. Yes, as a couple you should celebrate it, but don't let it stress you out too much. Take it for what it is. Do something to show your partner that you love them and keep it light hearted and fun at the same time.

Susan Trombetti is an expert matchmaker and member of the Professional Matchmakers Association. She has helped many discerning singles discover long-term relationships and partnerships that are both rewarding and fulfilling through her business, Exclusive Matchmaking. She's also been featured in several top dating/relationship magazines and websites including Cosmopolitan and iVillage.

Biggest Break-Up Mistakes



✖ By Amy Hoglund for Galtime.com

Break-ups can be absolutely horrible, especially when it's not expected. Sometimes our heart makes us act, think, and do crazy things. What may seem like a fantastic idea at the time turns out to make you feel even worse about yourself afterwards. I'm a personal fan of just cutting all contact, which means deleting their number, Facebook, email, and giving back all of their personal belongings, or at least tossing them out! But we all know it's much easier said than done.

SO, WHAT ARE THE BIGGEST MISTAKES PEOPLE MAKE AFTER A BREAK-UP? Writer, Editor & Creator of "Your Boyfriend's Best Girlfriend" gave GalTime a list. Let's count up to the worst.

#5 Broadcast your pain...in song

We all love to listen to our break up music. Songs like "I'm a Mess" by Anthony Hamilton comes to mind. You may even find yourself cry-singing along. However, there is no need to make your depressed musical debut on YouTube for all the world to see. This is one part of the break up you should suffer in silence.

#4 Beg

Sure, all of those romantic movies show the poor sap coming with his tail between his legs pleading to get back with the love he lost. Yeah, well, it does not work like that in what we call reality. Apologizing is one thing, but begging is a bit of an overkill. Will the person really respect you, once you are back together? Probably not. Value yourself enough to have a spine.

#3 Get back together too soon

Some break ups are necessary. If you have issues in the relationship, time apart may be exactly what the love doctor ordered. However, if you rush to get back together, without

working on the issues, you may find yourself back in the same predicament sooner than you think. Take time to work on your issues while apart.

#2 Develop (or nurture) a vice you can't handle

Break ups can be devastating. Life altering even. But the way you react to them, will determine how much they actually affect you in the long run. Sure you can turn to the comfort of a vice like overeating or not eating, having a drink or whatever. Just be mindful that the results of drowning your sorrows may mess you up for some time. So choose your vices wisely.

#1 Seek revenge

It may seem like a great idea to get some "get back" against the one who broke your heart. But you really are only hurting yourself in the long run. Maybe the break up is temporary, but your actions could make it permanent. Most people will tell you, revenge has a way of reversing course and smacking the heck out of the perpetrator.

All in all...suffering a break up is hard. The key is to go THROUGH the break up, and not DWELL on the break up.

So what can you do to get through a break-up with some grace?

Contributor ASK DAN AND MIKE suggest you break ties, set boundaries and surround yourself with true friends. Here are there best tips.

– Get over it! We know this is harsh, but it's the reality that you need to work towards. It's a process, it won't happen overnight, but you'll get there.

– Release all tethers. Get any necessary items back ASAP. Put all of his/her stuff in a box and give back to him immediately.

- Erase his numbers from your phone, because we’ve all drunk dialed and made that embarrassing “booty call.” Avoid the “I Need You Now” behavior.
 - Break social media ties for example unfriend on Facebook, quit following them on Twitter, Instagram, Pinterest, Google+ and block them on any and all dating sites you subscribe to.
 - Surround yourself with friends and family to eliminate alone time.
 - Take a break from mutual friends that you have.
 - Put yourself out there and begin dating immediately. It will help build self confidence and eliminate the feeling of loneliness.
-

How Celebrity Couples Overcome Their Stressful Lives



 By Whitney Baker

While it’s tempting to think that celebrity couples never experience the ups-and-downs of real life, that’s not always the case. Like everyone else, they must survive personal heartbreak, career letdowns and various forms of rejection – and they must do it all in the public eye. Of course, being a Tinseltown twosome means that they have money and means to overcome their stressful lives, perhaps by doing one of the activities below.

1. Learning something new: Although stars are often on set for long hours or traveling for various commitments, there is always downtime during their hectic schedules, giving them time to pick up a new hobby. For instance, Curtis Stone, who has a son with fiancée Lindsay Price, hopes that he and Price can learn how to speak Spanish and then teach their son the language.

Related Link: [Celebrity Couples Who Have Turned Over a New Leaf](#)

2. Taking an extravagant vacation: Thanks to their hefty paychecks and flexible jobs, stars can jet off to Mexico or the Caribbean on a whim. Some of them even own their own private planes, making it extra easy to take a last-minute vacation. After co-hosting ABC's *New Year's Rockin' Eve* with Jenny McCarthy, Ryan Seacrest headed down to St. Barts for some fun in the sun with his long-time girlfriend Julianne Hough. This trip provided some much-needed R&R for the busy couple: Seacrest is gearing up for the twelfth season of *American Idol*, while Hough is promoting her upcoming movie *Safe Haven*. Likewise, Reese Witherspoon, Jim Toth and their three children spent the holidays in Hawaii.

3. Enjoying normal, domestic activities: Sometimes, just doing basic, everyday chores helps alleviate the pressure that comes with being rich and famous. When their schedules align and Carrie Underwood and husband Mike Fisher are both at their Nashville home, they like to keep things simple: they often spend time cooking and watching television together. Underwood likes to keep a similar routine when she's on tour, often doing her own laundry on her days off.

4. Donating to charities: While stardom certainly comes with stress, it also includes many wonderful perks. One way for stars to fully appreciate how blessed they are is by giving back – and no couple does this better than the Duke and Duchess of Cambridge. Kate Middleton is making sure her

charitable donations reflect on her pregnancy; in January, she gave both a hamper of new baby products and a package of baby clothes to one of her favorite causes, East Anglia Children's Hospices.

Related Link: [Recovering Neuroscientist Don Vaughn Talks About Finding Love and Changing the World With Music](#)

5. Adopting a puppy: Similarly, many celebrities show their goodwill by rescuing dogs from local shelters. These furry creatures provide them with constant companions despite their busy schedules. At the start of the New Year, Miley Cyrus and Liam Hemsworth adopted a Chihuahua-mix puppy, Bean, who joins their family of four other rescued dogs. Likewise, Katherine Heigl – who even started her own animal companion charity – and husband Josh Kelley have a full house: they're raising their two daughters alongside seven rescued dogs.

How do you and your partner handle stress? Tell us in the comments below!

5 Tips for Single Moms to Survive Valentine's Day



 By Kerri Zane

As a single mom, there are holidays we love like Halloween and 4th of July. Then there are holidays that we don't love so much, like Valentine's Day. The bountiful red hearts, bundles of red roses, inane jewelry commercials and mushy holiday cards are consistent reminders of our painfully evident single status. But we can be above it all. As the Single Mom Advisor,

I have five surefire tips, to handle our hearts and mind with tender loving care. We can all get through this Hallmark Holiday with our healthy egos in tact.

1. Grieve with Gusto

In the movie *Moonlighting*, Cher's character said, "Snap out of it." It is the old school way of recovering from life's traumas. The reality is we all need time to grieve. So if this Valentine's season finds you fresh out of a relationship, give yourself space to mourn your loss. Turn up the tune that was "your" song or play something that make you want to cry. When I was just separated I loved getting in my car and turning up my Evanescence CD. I'd drive and cry and think and sing along with Amy Lee's sultry voice until I felt better.

Related: [Surviving Valentine's Day](#)

Appreciate the You in You

As a woman, it's crucial to your well being to appreciate and love yourself. After all, if you don't respect yourself how can you expect that of anyone else? You have to know what you are bringing to the party. I suggest you write yourself a love note including all the things you appreciate most about you.

Be Weary of Red

In the *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology* researchers found that men interpreted red as a signal that a woman was more open to sexual advances. They went on to say; "It's well known that males tend to inflate a woman's sexual appeal if they believe she'll be more open to a pickup line." And it didn't matter if it was a low cut sexy dress or a simple t-shirt. So if you're looking to lay low this Valentine's Day, then avoid the color red. If you want a little mindless hmm hmm, primp your pretty pout with rouge.

Related: [7 Behaviors That Are Keeping You Single](#)

Fun With Friends

You know the saying, “Men will come and go, but girlfriends are forever”? Have a Valentines Vision Board Party. Invite your BFF’s over, open a bottle of champagne, pull out the scissors, poster board, glue and old magazines and spend the evening creating “new romance” vision boards.

Engaged With Your Young Ones

You may find a new guy to share your life with down the line, but he will never take precedence over your children. So go ahead and create a new Valentine’s tradition celebrating the love you share with those divine little creatures you cherish most.

Kerri Zane is an Emmy award winning, twenty-year veteran television executive producer, healthy living expert, single mom advisor, speaker and author of “It Takes All 5: A Single Mom’s Guide to Finding the REAL One,” published by Morgan James, (November 2012). She has an M.A. in Spiritual Psychology from USM and a B.A. from UCLA. She is a member of NATAS, the Directors Guild of America, an ACE Certified Personal Trainer and Weight Management Consultant. For more advice, visit <http://kerrizane.com/>.

Second (and Third) Marriages: Destined For Divorce?



 By Jim Duzak for Galttime.com

Statistically speaking, the more times you’ve been married in

the past, the more likely you'll get divorced again if you remarry.

The divorce rate for first marriages (meaning a marriage in which neither person has been married before) is reportedly between 40 and 50%. But for second marriages (at least one of the spouses has been married once before), the rate jumps to between 60 and 67%. And for third marriages (at least one of the spouses has been married twice before), it's a whopping 70-73%.

Are second marriages really doomed for divorce? How so? Why would this be? Don't people learn from their mistakes? Well, unfortunately, many people don't, or they rush into another marriage for the wrong reasons or before they've figured out what went wrong last time.

HERE ARE SOME COMMON POST-DIVORCE SCENARIOS:

- You may be blind to the role you played in the breakup.** The problem was always something your "ex" did or didn't do.
- You may be stuck in your comfort zone,** even when that comfort zone is harmful to you (like if you're someone who always seems to be attracted to partners who abuse you or cheat on you).
- You're an incurable optimist when it comes to relationships,** always falling in love too fast and always seeing your latest partner as the answer to your prayers.
- You fear living alone,** and will get married just to have someone to come home to.
- You may be looking for a quick fix to the psychological wounds that divorce inflicts,** rather than taking the time to heal.
- If your ex was unfaithful during your marriage,** you may

immediately try to get revenge by taking up with someone else.

– **You may lack basic skills**, such as household, financial or job skills, and will get remarried just to avoid having to learn them.

– **If your ex filed for divorce first, left you or neglected you sexually or romantically**, you may feel rejected and unattractive, and you may marry the first person who makes you feel the spark or lavishes you with compliments.

In addition, second and third marriages often involve the challenges of dealing with stepchildren and/or difficult ex-es. If those challenges aren't anticipated and addressed, a remarriage can be shaky from Day One.

The good news is that divorce statistics—sobering as they may be—are only evidence of what has happened in *other people's* marriages.

They don't predict how *your* marriage will turn out. If you or your future spouse are getting married for the second, third, or even the fourth time, you can “beat the odds” if you're well-matched, emotionally mature, and truly understand what went wrong in the past—including accepting responsibility for your own mistakes or wrongdoing.

But if you recognize yourself or your partner in at least one of the scenarios I listed, you should temporarily hold off on getting remarried. You may need to do more soul-searching. You may need to have frank discussions with your partner, and ask him or her some tough questions. You may even need to seek outside help from a therapist or other professional. But all of this will be worth it if you can enter into your new marriage knowing that you've done everything in your power to ensure that you're not setting yourself up for another divorce.

Why Being Too Picky is Ruining Your Relationship



 By Whitney Baker

When it comes to finding the love of your life, it's important to know what you want. Even so, having a checklist that you refuse to deviate from means you could miss out on meeting Mr. Right. And if you're already in a relationship, you may be looking past the good stuff about your man because you're too hung up on the not-so-right things that you wish you could change. Below are a few reasons why being too picky is ruining your relationship. Pay attention and think about what you need to do before you sabotage your chance for love.

1. Demanding too much of your loved ones may drive them away. Smothering your sweetheart may lead to feelings of resentment and irritation, while constantly talking down to your cute coworker may make him see you as a nuisance instead of a potential partner. Whether you're developing a new friendship or trying to improve your romantic relationship, be understanding and open about other people's differences. See their unique personalities as a positive thing and help to foster their individuality.

Related Link: [Love Lessons from Holiday Movies](#)

2. Nagging can be as harmful to your relationship as infidelity. If your significant other isn't living up to your idea of an ideal mate, you may be tempted to ask him to make some changes. If he resists, this cycle could turn into

nagging, the interaction in which one person makes a request over and over again, while the other person continually ignores it. According to an article in 'The Wall Street Journal,' every couple will face this issue at some point – and depending on how they deal with it, this form of toxic communication can be the end of a partnership.

3. Pointless arguments mean you spend a lot of wasted time being unhappy. By constantly wanting something different, something more, from your sweetheart, you're bound to cause a lot of unnecessary disagreements. One fight leads to another fight, and before you know it, you forgot why you were arguing in the first place. Rather than constantly quarreling, look past your pickiness and remember why he makes you laugh or how he surprised you on your birthday last year. If you can't think of anything good about your partner, you may be fussing over silly things to cover up a deeper issue.

4. You miss out on the great aspects of your relationship – or a great person who could be your perfect match. When you're too picky about the way your man folds his clothes or how your girlfriend chews her food, your mind becomes too crowded with negative thoughts to appreciate the happiness that your partner brings you. When it comes to meeting someone new, you should be open-minded towards everyone. Who knows, you may even find the person of your dreams in the most unexpected place! And even if the fling is short-lived, you can use the experience to improve your next relationship.

How has being too picky affected your relationships? Share your answers in the comments below.

The Only Four Options for Dating with Hair Loss



 By Adam Kutner

So you thought that by the time you started losing your hair you'd be off the market and ready to let yourself go, walk around in your underwear, and generally not have to impress potential dating partners anymore. Well, surprise! Life doesn't always go exactly as planned. For starters, hair loss can start in your early twenties, and let's not forget that we're getting married later and divorced more often. This means that dating with hair loss is not only a possibility—it's almost the norm.

But don't worry about it. You have options. Four options, to be exact. Let's take a look.

1. Hide it: This is the first step for many experiencing hair loss. Wearing a hat works for a little while, but how many dates can you think of where a hat is appropriate? Combing it over is the same story. Is this really a secret you want to carry with you for years? A toupee is also an option in this category, and not a bad one. Just make sure you get a good one, and one that is age appropriate. Think Billy Bob Thornton. Yes, he wears one.

2. Shave it: An old standby for hair loss, the shaved head can be really liberating, and some people find it to be the perfect hair loss solution. Unfortunately, it doesn't work for everyone. Some of us simply aren't blessed with a good head shape or otherwise just can't pull it off. Some people find it makes them appear too intimidating. But still, it's a viable option. Many women and men are crazy about it. Think Bruce

Willis or David Cross.

3. Own it: Think you can pull off the young Woody Allen or Prince Charles? Why not? There's more to attractiveness than hair. If you can muster it, try just owning what your genes gave you. Thinning hair doesn't have to be a sentence to ugliness to undesirability. Plus, maybe it will give you reason to better yourself in other, non-superficial ways.

4. Fix it: When all else fails, you can always take the leap and fix it. There are some medications that can actually make a dent in hair loss, and many other pills, lotions, shampoos and creams that won't put a dent in much except for your wallet. Your best option is probably hair transplant surgery, which has come a long way in the passed couple of decades. It's more affordable and successful than ever. Too many celebrity examples to count. Mel Gibson, Kevin Costner and Brendan Fraser, to name a few.

Adam works with Great Hair OKC a trusted leader in Great Hair OKC repair. Adam enjoys writing about hair restoration and dating.

No More Mr. Nice Guys



 By Terri Trespicio for Galtime.com

Nice? Is it REALLY What You're Looking For?

One of my coaching clients said to me recently, "I just want to find a nice guy." I had to call bullshit on her. Especially since she had just finished telling me that the most significant relationship of her adult life was this sexy but

slippery beast of a man whom she couldn't say no to. And he knew it. This was a man whom she had dated, then not dated, then sorta dated. Just when she was thinking it had subsided, she'd get the text that would make her heart jump.

The point is, this dude is not a nice guy. He's not a great communicator, he's not even honest. She's moving on and it's probably for the best. But when she tells me she just wants someone nice, as we all have said at one time or another that we do, well, I don't believe her.

The Problem with Nice

Here's how I know: She has met several nice guys. And has zero interest in any of them. If I had a penny for all the women who say, "But he's so niiiice, why can't I like him?" (Complete with the long, whiny emphasis on the word "nice," and paired with the crinkling of the brows, and caricatured heart wrenching that girls tend to do when they have complete and total access to someone they don't want, but feel they should.)

That's like saying, "But broccoli has so many vitamins and minerals and powerful phytochemicals that will make me healthy and strong. Why can't I like it?" Because you don't. Period. Amen.

We think we have control, or should have, over the kinds of people we desire. We don't! We don't even have control over the things that make us hot and bothered. And it comes much to our chagrin, and sometimes our shame. But one thing won't change it: Wanting and trying to like someone.

I realize I'm dealing with two different issues here. Some people really do want nice guys. But I'm not alone when I say that most of us are bored by them.

I will add here that the opposite of "nice" isn't "mean." Not

in my book. It's exciting, thrilling, a little scary. It's decisive and masculine. Though it's not unkind. Kind is important.

In her book *Mating in Captivity* (a must read), Esther Perel talks about the importance of distance and uncertainty, and that you can only have as much passion in your relationship as you can tolerate uncertainty (an idea she borrows from Tony Robbins).

Nice is a chair by the pool. The opposite of nice is a long path that curls out of view, somewhere cast in sunlight and shadow—and entices you to follow it. Even though you're a little scared. No relationship just stays put—and if it does, it's dead in the water. So you have to move—and my idea of thrilling is someone who invites you to find your edge, and then push past it.

The Nice Guy	The Guy You Want
Says: <i>Where would you like to go?</i>	Says: <i>Show up at this address at 8pm. Wear heels.</i>
Calls before you have a chance to wonder if he will.	Calls only after I'm dying him to and hoping he does.
Wears his heart on his sleeve.	Makes you want to explore him.
When you're with him, you're content.	When you're with him, you're ravenous.
Is always available	May be available
Makes you smile	Makes you hot
Sex is comfy and cozy	Sex is thrilling and a little scary
He sees you as his strength	He sees you as his weakness

(Not sure who you are? Here's a tip: If you bitch and moan that girls don't like you when you try so hard to

be...nice—well, there's your answer.)

My point is this: Women want a man who is direct and not afraid to be assertive. Too “nice” can often mean overly accommodating, can't make a decision without your input, and, well, a little bit feminine. He also likely does things wanting points for “being nice”—and that's just annoying. Don't be nice; be yourself.

By the way, I don't want guys to think I'm “nice,” either (and I'm fairly certain they don't). And that's fine by me. I aspire to far more, and so should you.

So unless you want to commit sexual suicide, you'll drop the nice act—because nice doesn't make you noteworthy; it makes you, well, nice. Average. Fine. And I don't know anyone who's happy with being that. In fact, I think people who say they want that believe that's all they need or can handle. And to that I say you're dead wrong.

5 Celebrities Who Don't Know How to Date



 By Courtney Allen

Some of the hottest celebrities in today's world find their soul mates on the Hollywood forefront. Couples from the likes of Brad Pitt and Angelina Jolie and Justin Bieber and Selena Gomez are deemed “the lucky ones” in just a handful of celebs who have hit the jackpot on love. But for others, dating is nothing more than a love taboo. After endless relationships, dates, splits, and shots at love, these five just can't seem

to settle down with the right one:

1. Taylor Swift: If there's one thing Taylor Swift is known for, it's her willingness to share her heart-wrenching and disastrous relationships with the entire world. This seems to be one of the many reasons why this flawless Cinderella can't find a Prince Charming to last forever. Swift has dated a series of celebrities ranging from John Mayer to Jake Gyllenhaal and she has the songs to prove it. The musical genius even confessed her dating troubles, telling *British Cosmopolitan*, "I don't know how to make relationships last." Swift may not be able to make them last just yet, but practice makes perfect. The gorgeous musician recently split from One Direction's Harry Styles.

Related: [Celebrities With Too Much PDA](#)

2. John Mayer: Heartthrob John Mayer has a way with musical lyrics, but certainly not with the ladies. The smooth singer and his unfavorable habits were exposed with release of Taylor Swift's "Dear John," in which she calls Mr. Mayer out for a number of wrong-doings during their rocky relationship. The song called fans to speculate the 35-year old brown-eyed boy's past relationships, which includes celebs like Jennifer Aniston, to see if he was a repeat offender of breaking hearts. It's clear Mayer was nothing less than a heartbreaker for Swift. Let's just hope Mayer takes better care of alleged new girlfriend, Katy Perry.

3. Emily Maynard: Both *The Bachelorette's* and *The Bachelor's* Emily Maynard has been in the center of love's battlefield for the past two years. This sweetheart momma has been engaged twice since both shows have ended and still remains single. Her relationship status leaves us wondering exactly how this tan, blonde bombshell's fairy-tale like relationships take a turn for the worst so quickly. Not only are her engagements called off, but they end rather messy with ex-fiancée Brad

Womack's insults and Jef Holms' digs on Twitter. Seems like the last thing Miss Maynard needs is for her next few dating experiences to be televised for millions to see.

Related: [Celebrities Who Are Better Off Alone](#)

4. Joe Jonas: One-third of the Jonas' Brothers, Joe Jonas, has had his fair share of dating experiences amongst some of the youngest and hottest Hollywood starlets. His flings include powerhouse singer and actress Demi Lovato, *Twilight* star Ashley Greene, and even girl next door, Taylor Swift. It is said that Miss Swift's "Forever and Always" is all about the boy band's lead singer, but Swift wasn't as forward in revealing who ripped her heart to shreds in this tune. Not much is said about the musician when it comes to dating, but it seems like he has some trouble keeping a girl around for good.

5. Flavor Flav: It's hard to forget Flavor Flav as he was once the face of VH1 for his popular reality television show *Flavor of Love*. The ex-rapper searched for three long seasons for a woman to call his own, with at least twenty five girls to hand-pick for himself, and still ended up with nothing. Flavor Flav did eventually find what he was looking for, but none of the girls from his show proved worthy. Even so, we can't help but think the long chain-wearing goofball has trouble dating after several failed opportunities placed directly in front of him.

Which celebrities do you think have the most trouble dating? Share your thoughts with us!

Why Are You Hanging On to Old Photos and Letters From Your Exes?



 By Jane Greer, Ph.D for Galtime.com

Even though star Bradley Cooper stood conspicuously solo in pictures taken at the Golden Globes, there are still plenty of images floating around of him with his now- ex girlfriend Zoe Saldana.

Celebrities have to deal with this all the time – published pictures of them with former loves. The images are out there, on magazine covers and blogs, impossible to erase completely, even after they have moved on. But what happens if you aren't in the public eye?

Say, for example, that you've been dating for a few months now. Everything is great and your new relationship is growing at a comfortable rate. But last night he found that big box behind the couch, the one with all the pictures and letters from your old boyfriend. It was the first time you saw him get really angry, jealous even. He accused you of holding onto the stuff because you are still attached to your ex. So what do you do? Do you have to get rid of it all? What if you don't want to?

The most important thing that can come into play here is communication. Explain that you are not holding onto these things because you still have feelings for your former partner, but rather because you are holding onto the part of yourself you discovered then. In truth, it has less to do with the person you left behind and more to do with the shared

history that was a marker on your past. Instead of thinking of it as a barrier between you and your new partner, think of it as a breadcrumb trail to who you were, and that way you can share how you've grown.

If, on the other hand, the mementos have no real meaning, then it is fine to just throw them out. But before you do that, accept that they can often be less about the person you were involved with, and more about who you were when you were with that person. Knowing that gives clarity to the meaning of those pictures and letters.