

Relationship Advice: Understand What You Don't Want



By Venus Rouhani

If we are truly going to know and, eventually, accept ourselves for who we are, it's crucial for us to have clarity not only on what we value, like, and enjoy, but also on what we don't—and ask ourselves why. Probing our dislikes helps us discover what are our deepest values. This is essential because self-awareness and self-acceptance are key parts of the foundation of all successful relationships. In an interview with *Entertainment Tonight*, Will Smith was asked how he and his wife, Jada Pinkett Smith had managed to have a successful 20 year marriage. His [relationship advice](#) was, “If

there is a secret I would say it's that we never went into working in our relationship" ... "We only ever worked on ourselves individually, and then presented ourselves to one another better than we were previously."

Relationship Advice: Your self-knowledge deepens when you recognize what you do not want and helps you realize what you do want and need in a long-term relationship.

Improve Self-Awareness

Through this process, as you keep learning more about yourself, your self-awareness also increases. Without this self-awareness and admitting to yourself who you really are, you'll keep chasing relationships with partners with aspects of their personalities that, in fact, you do not want.

You may not be willing to admit to yourself what you don't want for the fear of what that reveals about you. If instead of being honest with yourself you pretend, then you and your partner are going to pay the price in the long run and find yourselves in an unhappy relationship. You cannot hide your true self from your partner forever, so it is best to never start.

Create A No-No List

For example, your list of wants might include a desire for a supportive, funny, and good-looking partner. But, those qualities do not particularly tell you much about your personality. However, when you make a list of the traits you

don't want and cannot tolerate in a partner, such as being needy, controlling, stingy, sexist, or egotistical, and then elaborating further on those traits you get much closer to revealing your true self. The same handsome, funny, and supportive person could also be needy, a know-it-all, controlling, or so on. If any of these personality characteristics are among your deal-breakers, your relationship with this person will end up being joyless and unfulfilling. By having carefully defined your deal-breakers, or what I call your No-No List, you can eliminate those people with whom a relationship will cause heartbreaks and unhappiness in the long run.

A "No" Reveals A Lot About You

When you state that you don't want someone who is needy or who doesn't trust you, that reveals that you value independence and individuality and hate to be on a "short leash." You may want to be there for someone, but you don't want to be the one person your partner relies on to do it all. It can also say that you want a relationship in which both of you express your individuality and both of you are capable of taking care of your own selves.

Embrace Labels

Also, be aware that a trait that one person might think is your most shallow quality, another person might believe as simply practical. While one person may believe the things you don't want make you flakey, another person might see you as a free spirit. Don't be afraid of labels. The purpose of creating a list of the things you do not want is not to judge you or to blame you.

Venus Rouhani is a renowned psychotherapist and author whose approach to relationship counseling emphasizes the importance of using the rational mind to guide the desires of the heart. Specializing in pre-relationship, pre-marital, couples, and

*family counseling, Venus encourages those looking for love to develop a deep understanding of their non-negotiables as a foundation for lasting relationships. To learn more about her new book, *The No-No List, how to spot Mr. Wrong so You Can Find Mr. Right*, please go to www.VenusRouhani.com.*