

Is He Husband Material?



By Kelly Rouba, GalTime.com

The other day, my friend was distraught over how his wife has been treating him lately. The two had begun the process of getting divorced when she suddenly had a change in attitude and promised she would change. Sadly, that promise lasted only a couple of weeks.

After we discussed the situation, we began exploring what he should expect from his partner and it led me to think about what characteristics I should be looking for in a man so that I don't end up in a similar situation someday. For those single ladies, like myself, who are hoping to get married one day, allow me to share some expert advice on what you should be looking for in a partner:

“What makes a man husband material are emotional characteristics, including stability, reliability and honesty. These are the hallmarks of what makes a man a good long-term partner,” says Dr. Seth Meyers, a licensed psychologist, relationship expert, and author of *Dr. Seth's Love Prescription*.

In addition, and perhaps “the most surprising factor that is important is empathy, or the ability to be sensitive and understand how the other person feels,” Meyers adds. “When problems develop, as they inevitably will, having a man in your life who listens and cares about your feelings is one factor that helps to solidify mutual respect and intimacy.”

Stacie Ikka, founder of Sitting In A Tree, a consulting service that was created in response to the dating community's need for customized and innovative approaches to help facilitate sustainable relationships, offers the following tips:

1. You feel as good about him when you're not with him as you do when you are with him.
2. He's never made you cry and you're confident he never will. (There's a saying that goes something like this: No boy/man is worth crying over and the one who is will never make you.)
3. He shows a genuine interest in the things that are important to you.
4. He fights fair.
5. He holds your hair back if/when you're sick.
6. If your child were to come out EXACTLY like him, you'd be thrilled.

As for my own advice, which I shared with my friend, you need to learn to love yourself first. Learning to love yourself and finding self-fulfillment while single is crucial because you cannot expect a mate to fill those voids for you. Depending on a partner to meet those needs will never work and

you'll remain emotionally needy, not to mention more likely to put up with bad behavior just to be with someone.

Personally, I also promised my parents I'd never bring someone into the family who didn't fit in with them or get along with them because they mean too much to me. Plus, I want to be with a man who respects me, values me and treats me well because I will do the same in return.

Maybe this piece of advice seems obvious, but Robert Epstein, Ph.D., who is a distinguished research psychologist and former editor-in-chief of *Psychology Today* magazine, reminds us that the man needs to be "available (meaning not married or in a serious relationship), and he needs to be ready for a long-term commitment." Emotional availability (don't want someone who's pining for his ex) is also key.

Beyond that, women also need to watch out for deal breakers, meaning threats to having a future together, Epstein says. "When there is a deal breaker, that means that extremely important relationship needs – either your's or his – are not met by the other person. You want kids, for example, and he hates them. Forget about it!"

If you feel an issue is at-hand that could be a deal breaker, it's best to address it right away. "When there are deal breakers, you need to put them on the table and talk about them. If you try to hide them, they'll turn up anyway, eventually, and probably destroy your relationship – or at least make you miserable. Get them out in the open and see if you can work something out! Hey, maybe he can handle having just one kid! You never know until you talk."

Here's to happily ever after!