

How to Communicate to Get What You Need



By Dating With Dignity's Marnia Battista for GalTime.com

While some men just aren't Mr. Boyfriend Material, others just need clear communication from you about what you want, need and expect from them. To make things trickier, many women have difficulty articulating exactly what they're looking for. That said, imagine if you knew the following:

- Exactly what you want in a partner, including his values and goals in life.
- How to effectively communicate your needs and expectations without having to be bitchy, brash or judgmental.
- Simple ways to set boundaries to allow the possibility of a relationship to unfold before you knee-jerk kick him to the curb.

In order to get your needs met, you have to be able to articulate exactly what you need and then be able to communicate those needs in a way that is appropriate, kind, compassionate, and reveals your true, authentic self.

Here are three steps you can take right now to begin to clearly express your desires to the man in your life so you can begin getting what you want:

1. Decide exactly you want.

If you're going to communicate your needs and desires to your man clearly, you need to be clear in your own mind about exactly what those needs and desires are. Whether you want him to be on time, call instead of text, move the relationship to

the next level, call you his girlfriend, or propose marriage, the first step is to own those needs and desires in your own mind.

2. Tell him directly.

No matter how great a guy is, he's most likely not a mind reader. If you want him to call you instead of his usual texting, you're going to have to tell him so. He may or may not be willing to comply. If he isn't, it's up to you to decide if the issue at hand is a deal-breaker. The bottom line is this: Once you communicate, he knows what you need and expect, and you are both agreeing to whatever resolution is reached together.

3. Set boundaries—and enforce them.

This is the most difficult part of self-care for many women. One of my clients recently shared a story with me about a date that went horribly awry. She had met the man online, and then they had met in person for coffee. Upon leaving the coffee shop together, her date discovered his car had been towed. Instead of politely excusing herself from the impending drama (setting a boundary), she felt obligated to be part of his crisis-management team. He called his mom, complained loudly about the \$200 fee he had to pay to get his car back, and whined for hours while she drove him around searching for his car, an ATM machine, and so forth.

My client, who had known this man for only an hour (give or take a few exchanged emails and texts), spent the entire time she was with him fantasizing about how she might exit the drama without hurting his feelings. The result was that not only did she see a part of him he most likely didn't want to share on a first date, but she also became annoyed with herself for not speaking up. She felt bad that she could not set the boundary immediately. Had she followed the two steps outlined above, it would have been simple from the get-go.

Knowing she did not want to do crisis management for a man she had just met, she should have stated simply, "Thanks for the coffee. It's such a drag your car was towed. I'm going to get on with my day now, but I look forward to hearing how it turns out when we talk next." Instead, she wondered why he didn't give her an out, excusing her from dealing with his mistake so she could get back to her life.

Men deserve to know what you want so that they have an opportunity to deliver. It's that simple. Men are not mind readers. It's up to you to tell them what you want, need and expect.