

Love Lessons From ABC's 'The Bachelor'



By Erika Vujnovich

While there's no question that *The Bachelor* and *The Bachelorette* are must-watch television shows, statistics show that out of a 19 seasons, only two couples have stayed together, while waiting to see how the latest relationship between bachelorette Ali Fedotowsky and Roberto Martinez ends up. These are programs designed to produce long-lasting marriages, yet we often wonder whether we can call them reality TV or merely fantasy, designed to whet the appetite of women and men everywhere. Season after season, the program dominates the ratings with an average audience of 10 million viewers taking part in a voyeuristic game of watching desperate singles attempt to find true love.

If you're looking for "happily ever after" and contemplating the reality show route, here are a few things to keep in mind:

1. Get real: Each season, the contestants are whisked away to some exotic location to fall in love. Viewers watch as the couples travel over the canyons in helicopters, fly through the sky on rip cords or bask in the sun on a tropical island with a breathtaking backdrop. These settings could make even the biggest skeptic feel like they're falling in love. Let's face it, reality isn't always having the luxury to lounge on the beach and sip champagne with your partner, but rather it's realizing how you couple cope with money problems, children and everyday monotonous routines.

2. Play the field, but keep it simple: For those of you not familiar with the concept of the show, the series revolves

around one man or woman dating 25 singles in the hopes that they will find a partner for life. Throughout the season, the bachelor goes on a series of group dates, two-on-one dates and one-on-one dates. At the end of the journey, two contestants are left standing from which a fiancé is ultimately chosen. According to Match.com, there are several benefits of dating more than one person at the same time, "Multi-dating isn't merely a tactic for doubling your pleasure. Rather, during your hunt for 'The One', it can be a way to achieve romantic wholeness by dating partners with differing interests and personalities." This may be true but you also want to make sure you don't let your emotions get the better of you. Dating several people at one time can stir up feelings leaving you confused.

3. Don't come across as desperate: Put 25 singles against each other in a competition to land the perfect mate and you are sure to see some desperation among the contestants. Think about it: they all came on the reality dating show with one sole purpose – to find love and get married (or at least that's what they said). Therefore, it's no surprise that drama always finds its way into the story. When dating, try not to make yourself too available or be the one always initiating contact. This could come across as desperate. Be confident, attentive and a bit assertive, but most importantly, just be you.

The next season of "The Bachelor" returns to ABC in January 2011.