

Do Your Friends Influence Your Relationship?



By Kerri Sheehan

There is nothing stronger than the bond between a girl and her closest group of BFFs. Best friends break their plans and bring over a trio of aloe-infused tissue boxes and a pound of your favorite jelly beans when the man you've been dating for five years tells you he's in love with the girl he just met at Starbucks. Friends are also the ones who support you when you have a Tom Cruise-like outburst after going on a date with a man who you claim is your life-long partner.

It's true that your pals can have a big impact on you, and often times, without even realizing it, this influence

includes the type of men you end up dating or whether or not you settle down with someone permanently. If you don't think that these scenarios describe your situation, ask yourself the following five questions:

1. Do your friend's judge the men you date? When dating someone new, almost everyone looks for approval from those around them. The expression on your friend's face or the body language they display when you introduce them to your new boyfriend could actually have a bigger effect than you realize. What if your friends don't like that it takes your new guy 48 hours to return your text message? Or maybe they know his last girlfriend and heard some bad things about him.

Life coach Stacia Pierce affirms this thought and says, "Men and women generally present their dates to their friends for approval, especially if they intend to deepen the relationship. The opinion of your circle is often taken into consideration and can affect a decision to either move forward or cut the relationship short."

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2. Do your friends get along with your new man? Hearing your loved ones making negative remarks about the new guy you've fallen for can be a little disheartening. After all, we want the ones we love to also love one another, and that means having everyone in the same room on New Year's Eve, for your thirtieth birthday, or even for a Saturday evening of karaoke. In fact, when your friends and boyfriend don't get along, it can really put a strain on your life and influence whether your romance will fail or succeed.

3. Do they like and comment on your social media accounts? When we post a new photo or status update on Facebook, Instagram or Twitter, the objective is that our network of friends see it and give it a retweet, like, or positive

comment. Posting a picture of you and your partner going ice skating in Rockefeller Center can give you a glimpse into the underlying emotions that your friends have about your current relationship. If your closest friends ignore the photo and don't respond, it can definitely bruise your ego. If you're feeling sad or hurt by their non-reactions, then they may have a stronger influence on your relationship than you thought.

4. Do you usually meet guys through your friends? In the past, you may have heard one of your friends squeal in excitement, "I know the perfect guy for you!" Many romantic relationships can begin via introductions from acquaintances. However, before you jump into meeting someone blindly, make sure that the person your friend wants to introduce you to has some of the same common interests or values as you do.

Amanda Wozadlo, founder and co-owner of The Dating Stylist, agrees and adds, "If your social circle doesn't have the same goals as you, that may be why your dating game is lacking. It is important to have a variety of friends who share common life goals because they can introduce you to new potential dates."

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5. Do your friends want to settle down or stay single? Some people tend to follow the dating styles of their friends. For instance, if your friend is in a passionate relationship and always talks about the romantic candlelit dinners that their partner prepares for them every Friday night, then you may yearn for a lover who does the same. Consequently, if your friend is single and loves that they never have to worry about falling into the toilet bowl when their new guy forgets to put the seat down, then you may see the benefits of this lifestyle.

After asking yourself these questions, there's only one thing

left to figure out: What do *you* want for your love life? If your friends truly love you, they'll support whatever decisions you make when it comes to dating and relationships, even if they don't agree with them.

Cupid wants to know: How do your pals influence your romantic life?