

Top 5 Don't Tips for Interracial Dating



By Rachel Khona

She's hot. She's cute. And she just so happens to be of another race. These days, dating someone outside of your own culture is hardly taboo, particularly if you live in a major city. But potential family issues aside, interracial dating can provide its own set of minefields, particularly when it comes to the initial pickup. Here are some handy tips:

1. Don't use her race as a pickup line

As a minority, I've encountered my fair share of men who think the easiest way into my pants is to use my ethnicity as

a pickup line. The numerous times men have resorted to racial stereotypes to pick me up are endless. The problem is, while these men may have good intentions, their execution is poor. They forget to take into account that women of other races are people, too – people who don't necessarily walk around thinking about their ethnicity or nationality all day.

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2. Don't assume you know what her race is

As an added twist, no one really seems to know what I am. Guys try to discern what my ethnic makeup is, and my friends even take bets on what he's going to guess. Usually it's some form of Latina, often Mexican or Puerto Rican, but sometimes men branch out to Columbian or Chilean.

Alas, I'm none of the above. I'm Indian.

But that doesn't stop men from walking up to me in bars and saying "Hola!" or "Como esta?" Failing to relate to me as a person, they immediately use race as a cheap tactic to start a conversation. One man even went so far as to say I'm sassy because of all that Latin blood running through me. I am sassy, but being Latina has nothing to do with it.

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3. Don't act as though she's not American, Canadian, Australian...

Not all of these men are uneducated, dumb or otherwise ignorant. Everyone from lawyers, businessmen, police officers and artists have asked me where I'm from, seemingly perplexed when I respond "New Jersey," as if that couldn't possibly be the right answer. "No, where are you really from?" they ask again. When I once told a man I was Indian, he responded by saying, "You're not all Ganesh and stuff."

He was right. Funnily enough, I didn't have eight arms or walk

around in a sari. I was raised in New Jersey. I pepper my sentences with “like” and “omigod.” I have a predilection for classic rock, going to the shore and dive bars. My life is not a Bollywood movie. I am more likely to be found joining every other red-blooded American singing “Don’t Stop Believing” at a bar than dancing to Bhangra music. For all intents and purposes, I am as American as anyone else. Yes, I am of Indian heritage and proud of it, but that’s hardly all there is to me.

4. Don’t pretend to be culturally enlightened

Some men attempt to use race as a way to prove how culturally enlightened they are. Case in point: As I was writing this article at an airport bar, the bartender asked me what ethnicity I was. When I told him I’m Indian, he responded by saying, “That’s what I thought. I’ve traveled to India quite a bit, so I could tell.”

I didn’t believe him, of course, as even Indian people often don’t know that I’m Indian. What I believed is that he was attempting to impress me with his worldliness. I imagine I could have said Brazil, Italy or Iran, and he probably would have said the same thing. When I expressed my surprise, he continued by telling me most people are ignorant for assuming I’m Latina.

Even one of my closest Indian friends thought I was Puerto Rican upon first meeting me. I hardly consider my friend to be ignorant. In dissing everyone else who thought differently, it’s as if he sought to show me how culturally enlightened he was. Not only did he assume that everyone else is just an unintelligent a-hole, he made the dire mistake of behaving like a know-it-all.

He then dropped the fact that he used to date an Indian girl. I wondered if I should respond, “Oh, I used to date a white guy. I’ve traveled all over America, Canada and Europe, so I

know a lot about white people.” I decided against it. He continued to tell me everything he knew about India, and even peppered the conversation with a few Punjabi phrases. My family doesn’t speak Punjabi and isn’t from Punjab. Not even close.

5. Don’t stereotype

Regardless of what end of the spectrum these men fell on, they didn’t realize how simple-minded they were showing themselves to truly be. They relied on racial stereotypes.

There’s nothing wrong with talking about race with a woman, but it shouldn’t be the first thing that comes out of your mouth. It should be something that comes up organically in the [conversation](#), not a way to impress her. If you find yourself interested in a woman of another race, whether she is Asian, Latina, or black, get to know her as a person first. Nobody wants to be reduced to a stereotype, and if that’s what you resort to when meeting a woman, you most certainly will not get very far.

Rachel Khona is a model broker and writer. She serves as a contributing editor for Vaga, and has written for Cosmopolitan, Inked, Treats, Richardson, Your Tango, and Ask Men. She’s often consulted for her dating knowledge, though she claims to know next to nothing about men.

Justin Bieber Proves Honesty Is the Best Policy



By UK Date

Teen heartthrob Justin Bieber believes that he is the perfect boyfriend because he's loving, patient and honest, according to a recent interview. The 18-year-old even revealed his top dating tips on just what makes him such a good partner to 19-year-old Selena Gomez. Bieber, who has attracted millions of teenage fans since his rise to fame, exposed his relationship skills when speaking to Radio Disney while promoting his new single which is coincidentally dubbed "Boyfriend." The celeb's most important advice? Honesty. He claims that people dating have to be honest from the very start, and he concluded that your partner will appreciate trustworthiness over deceit.

This dating tip transcends for all couples around the world, because honesty really is the best policy. No one enjoys being cheated on or lied to, even though small fibs are necessary at times to make a relationship work. Here are ways to keep

things legit in a relationship:

Date one person at a time

The best way to start a relationship based on honesty is to refrain from dating more than one person at a time. It may seem innocent at first, but should the truth come out later, the whole relationship and its foundation may be called into question.

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Speak up about your likes and dislikes

There's a fine line between impressing a partner to make them like you and being false, so if your prospective lover asks if you like horror films and in reality they make you squirm, say so. Often times opposites attract, so it's really in your best interests to be frank.

Related: [Five Reasons Why Opposites Attract](#)

That's not to say that couples don't face challenges. For instance, Selena Gomez and Justin Bieber began dating last year, but it wasn't made public until March 2011 due to hate mail from angry jealous fans. Gomez even received death threats after she was pictured kissing and cavorting with Bieber in Hawaii in May. The young idols have definitely faced their own trials and struggles in the relationship, and if they hadn't had a strong and honest foundation, they never would have stayed together. In fact, they never would have gotten through the next challenge they faced in November 2011 either, when 20-year-old named Mariah Yeater alleged that Bieber had fathered her son. This allegation was strongly denied by many in the pop star's court.

So perhaps Bieber's advice to be sincere is a top dating tip for real relationships in 2012. It seems to be working well

for him!

3 Reasons Nice Guys Shouldn't Finish Last



By David Wiseman

For many women, there's something exciting and stimulating about the bad boy. He's a rascal and a rogue, and that's part of the attraction. Confident, good-looking, stylish and poised, he knows how to conduct himself. So, then, what is the downside? Here are three good reasons that nice guys shouldn't be left unnoticed:

Bad Boy Attraction Can Quickly Burn Out

At first, part of the attraction stems from the fact that things are so spontaneous and exciting. He doesn't call four times, but rather just shows up unannounced. But after a while, this can become a bit tiresome and a woman wants someone she can rely and depend on.

Related: [What Attracts Us to Bad Boys?](#)

Take George Clooney, for instance. He's a bad boy who is seemingly never going to be tamed. He has said that he doesn't want to get married again and would rather just hook-up. For a girl who wants a long-term commitment, the glamor and excitement is quickly going to fade.

The Long Term and Starting a Family

If you're after something serious, a nice guy shouldn't finish last. A relationship needs to be built on a platform of trust, communication and honesty, and you will be struggling to get that from a bad boy.

Plus, there's the desire to start a family. If this is something you're after, you are going to want someone who will parent with the same concerns and values that you will.

Related: [4 Steps to a Stronger Long Term Relationship](#)

Some celebrity example of this is are Kevin Federline and Matthew Broderick. K-Fede is now barely a part of Britney Spears' life, and she takes care of her boys without his help.

Matthew Broderick is anything, but a bad boy and is a devoted dad. This isn't something you're going to be thinking of in the early stages of a relationship. Many women regret their choice of partner because the bad boy couldn't successfully make the transition from boyfriend to father. So, it's important to think ahead wherever possible.

Getting Bad Out of the Nice

The thing is, it's very easy to write off a guy after a first meeting. He may be a bit shy and a socially awkward. His dress sense isn't the best, and he says the wrong thing at the wrong time. But, after a while, you get to know him; he feels more comfortable in your presence and comes out of his shell.

What you may have is nice guy on the outside and a bad boy on the inside.

He will give you the best of both worlds. For example, Ashton Kutcher was like this with Demi Moore until the bad boy just took over, and they split. But being bad doesn't always lead to relationship failure. One famous guy who seems to have been able to keep the faith is Jon Bon Jovi, who married his high school sweetheart and is still happily married to her.

They have four kids, and he seems to be one of the very few who has been able to get the balance just right.

Dating a bad boy is like flying too close to the sun. If he gets a little bit worse, he might not be loyal to you, and staying faithful is one of the biggest issues that prevent bad boys from being in long term relationships.

David Wiseman loves popular culture and is one of the few people left who think Ted Mosby will actually get married. His dream celebrity video chat is Christina Hendricks. His role models are Don Draper and Walter White.

Renew Your Vows Like #1 Life

Coach and Mariah Carey



By Evan Money

How can a Life Coach be proud of the fact that he's getting married for the 16th time? Well, in my case, I'm marrying the same woman! You see, my bride and I remarry in a different state or country ever year, and this year is number 16! We are not alone, however, as celebrities like Mariah Carey and Nick Cannon are following our lead and doing the same exact thing.

Whenever my bride and I share this story, most people respond by saying they would really like to do follow suit or that it sounds really [romantic](#). Guess what? It really is! And I highly recommend it for everyone, not just my clients. Here's my story:

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It all started 15 years ago when I heard a story about a successful business man who was married for 25 years, and he and his wife renewed their vows every year. As a newlywed and young businessman, it sounded like this idea would be a big help in having a successful marriage, something my bride and I desperately wanted. It seemed to us that most married people were divorced or miserable. We wanted to "live happily ever after," so rather than just saying, "Oh, that sounds like a good idea," my wife and I chose to take action.

We just happened to be in Paris for our anniversary the next year. However it's not as romantic as you think, since we were chaperones for a group of high school students on a tour. My business had yet to take off, and money was really tight, but a funny thing happens when you make a real commitment – you can always find a way. So, lo and behold, my bride and I found ourselves in the City of Love for our first vow renewal. It was really pretty simple, as we had a small private ceremony in the gardens of Versailles (a famous French mansion) that lasted about five minutes. Simple, short and sweet, but our married lives were changed forever from that day forward.

When we returned home, we became so excited to plan our next renewal. We still didn't have any money, so we just needed to get creative, take action and find a way. We chose Arizona for our second renewal simply because we could drive there and not have to pay for airfare. We had some wealthy friends with a ranch in the city of Carefree and we had a fun ceremony on their private lake. My bride's bouquet was made of peacock feathers since they had a few of the majestic birds on the property. This ceremony was much bigger and more exciting, thanks to our friends' help, and yet again, our married lives were changed forever. It seemed after each ceremony, our marriage bond became stronger and stronger. We were truly living happily ever after!

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Through the years as my business has grown, along with my love for my bride, we were able to do more exotic yet still highly creative vow renewals. Number 14 was in the Bahamas at the famous Atlantis resort. A friend of mine is one of the dolphin trainers, so we were able to have the ceremony in the water with the dolphins by our side. I had my best “mammal” and my bride had her brides “mammal.” It was so amazing!

For those who have really connected with this idea, but are still having doubts or letting your limiting beliefs get in the way, I want to encourage you with these final thoughts:

If your limiting beliefs are around finances: If you’re not willing to invest in your relationship, what else is there to invest in? The returns on renewing your vows is 1,000% more than the stock market or real estate.

If your limiting beliefs are about time: I have two young children that we home school, I run multi-million dollar corporations, I lead a non-profit, I volunteer with foster kids and even teach a high school class on entrepreneurship at a private school. Even with those commitments, every year my bride and I prioritize our time so we can leave the country or state and take two to five days for marital bliss.

Finally, for any of the guys that may be reading: Why would you only settle for one honeymoon in life? I’m on honeymoon number 16, and they just keep getting better!

Evan Money is the #1 Online Life Coach and the author of the runaway hit Take Action Now – How to Live Your Dreams in Less than 3 Weeks!

Love Advice For a Stronger Long-Term Relationship



By Ricky Peterson

Everyone wants to have a great long-term relationship that keeps on getting better, but it simply won't happen without some effort on the part of both partners. Making a stable relationship and love work isn't always easy though, as we see many famous couples going through their ups and downs in public via celebrity news and gossip...and it's no different for us regular folk. That being said, here are four pieces of love advice (with help from some of our favorite celebrity couples!) that we can all use to make our relationships stronger.

Love Advice To Follow

1. Be prepared to listen to each other: Listening is the hallmark of all good relationships. If you don't listen to your partner or they don't listen to you, how can you hope to develop a strong relationship and love for the long haul? Talking is good, but recognize when listening is required of you, and practice doing it more often. Everyone feels more valued when their partner sits and really listens to them. Listening means comprehending and not just making the right noises in the right places!

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2. Don't ignore problems – they'll only get worse: You cannot hope to go through life with no problems at all. There might be minor setbacks in your relationship or problems that occur outside the relationship that affect you both. The trick is to never ignore them and to confront them head-on. Talk about these issues and decide how to tackle them as a team.

Celebrity Couple Example: Seal and Heidi Klum are a great example, as Seal's reported anger management issues seem to have caused a rift in their celebrity relationship. This is the sort of thing that, if worked on early, could have been resolved, possibly saving the marriage.

3. Never wait for the other person to apologize: The apologies have to come from both partners; otherwise, one of you will always be saying "sorry" even when the other one does something they shouldn't. You've probably heard the idea that you should never go to bed angry, and that definitely applies in this case.

Related Link: [Heidi Klum and Seal – What Blew Up Their Marriage?](#)

4. Be positive in lots of little ways: We would all benefit

from being more positive in our daily lives. For example, if your partner has a job interview, be sure to call them just before they go in to provide some support. Then, call them afterwards to see how it went. You could even plan a dinner to mark the event, whether they were successful or not. You can either congratulate them or provide support and let them know the experience was still a positive one because it will help them gain experience for a the future.

Celebrity Couple Example: [Angelina Jolie](#) and [Brad Pitt](#) have had their ups and downs, but recent reports of a date night show that they are at least making the effort. Sadly, the media is much more into reporting on Hollywood couples who are having problems than those who are happy, but little bits of effort like this can make all the difference. Let's hope it works out for these two!

Stronger Relationships and Love

By following this love advice, it'll be easier than you think to build a strong partnership that will survive the test of time. Be sure you know how to make the most of your relationship and love, and start putting more effort into it today for the best results in the future.

Ricky Peterson is a writer who works for passionsearch, an online dating site.

Five Celebrity Divorces We

Really Weren't Expecting



By Francesca B.

The world of celebrity is fraught with ups and downs. Scandals of drug abuse, cheating husbands and lying wives make for gripping and sensational stories when they come to public attention. We have come to expect a bit of drama from Hollywood romances, but even so, there have been some celebrity divorces that we really didn't see coming. Here are a few:

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Tom Cruise and Nicole Kidman

The original Hollywood sweethearts, Tom and Nicole met on the set of the hit movie, *Days of Thunder*, in which they played a

young and romantically entwined couple very believably indeed.

It was therefore no great surprise when their on-screen romance started to become apparent off screen as well, and they were eventually wed on Christmas Eve, 1990. A popular and adorable couple, they stuck it out for over a decade before “irreconcilable differences” saw them seeking the advice of divorce solicitors and putting an end to the fairy tale romance the whole world had enjoyed. Still, both parties have now happily remarried and have children with their new partners.

Kate Winslet and Sam Mendes

The beautiful actress of *Titanic* fame, who we all thought would marry the gorgeous Leonardo DiCaprio, instead fell for dashing director, Sam Mendes. Despite being 10 years her senior, he definitely wasn't her sugar daddy, with Winslet being worth about double the Mendes fortune. They painted a picture of domestic bliss, but following the making of *Revolutionary Road*, a film starring Winslet and directed by Mendes and ironically about a couple stuck in a failing marriage, their relationship hit the rocks. To the surprise of the couple's friends and fans, they split in March 2010, leaving Winslet with two children from two marriages at just 34.

Related: [Why Celebrities Fall In and Out of Love So Quickly](#)

Courtney Cox and David Arquette

One of the world's best-known faces of the '90s for her role in *Friends*, Courtney Cox surprised everyone when she hooked up with David Arquette after starring in the *Scream* movies with him. However, even more shocking was the news that after 11 years of marriage and a child together, the couple had decided to split. Despite speculation about the real reasons, Cox stated that she “was tired of being (David's) mother.”

Madonna and Guy Ritchie

We all love Madge, and when she decided to marry a quirky British director and settle down in the English countryside, the place we held in our hearts for her grew a little bit bigger. The announcement that the couple were splitting up in 2011 came as a complete shock to most, with Madonna claiming that Ritchie 'drinks too much' as the reason for the split. That's OK, Madge, we still love you.

Jennifer Aniston and Brad Pitt

Another celebrity of *Friends* fame and so popular she had an entire generation of young ladies going into hairdressers and asking for 'a Rachel,' Jennifer Aniston tied the knot with the most eligible bachelor in the world, Mr. Brad Pitt. Without a doubt the hottest couple in Hollywood, it seemed nothing could come between them. But that was until naughty Brad went off to film Mr. and Mrs. Smith and reportedly fell in love with Miss Luscious Lips herself, Angelina Jolie. Brad and Jen split a few months later, back in 2005, but even today Hollywood still rumbles with the scandal from time to time.

Whether expected or unexpected, Hollywood splits never cease to rock the Tinseltown boat with rumors and gossip. If only everyone could just be happy all the time!

Francesca is a freelance writer and blogger who enjoys writing about a variety of subjects from celebrity gossip and fashion, to travel and food. Be sure to let her know what you think of this guest post by leaving a comment below or Tweeting her @franki_blogs.

What Attracts Us to Bad Boys?



By Dr. Carole Lieberman

Though we women pride ourselves on how 'we've come a long way, baby,' we still fall prey to the charms of bad boys. Why? It all starts with Daddy – the first man we've ever loved. If this relationship was dysfunctional, such as with a father who was abusive, depressed, a workaholic, or simply divorced and unavailable, we feel unlovable and grow up with a penchant for bad boys.

The Dozen Dangerous Devils, or 12 types of bad boys, include the: Fixer-Upper Lover, Compulsive Flirt, Grandiose Dreamer, Misunderstood and Married, Mr. Power Mad, Commitment Phobe, Wounded Poet, Self-Absorbed Seducer, Man of Mystery, Dramatic Daredevil, Prince of Darkness and Lethal Lover. We are attracted to one or more of these types in an unconscious

effort to turn our disappointment with Daddy into a fairytale happy ending.

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For example, if a little girl's father abandoned her, such as by death, divorce or emotional distance, she would likely grow up to be attracted to a Fixer-Upper Lover (also named the Frazzled Frog), who seems like he would be the least likely man to abandon her because his life is in need of much repair.

But, once she provides him with the nurturance he craves and helps him get his act together, he hops away to find a more discerning princess. All Dozen Dangerous Devils are heartbreakers. They just break a woman's heart in 12 different ways!

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Headlines are perpetually filled with celebrity bad boys – from Brad Pitt, who claimed to be Misunderstood and Married when he fell for Angelina Jolie; to Chris Brown, an abusive Prince of Darkness who Rihanna still can't resist; to *Bachelor* Ben Flajnik, who's become a Compulsive Flirt despite his engagement.

Some bad boys can be tamed, but a woman must be careful not to lose her self-respect or sanity in the process. Look where it got Catherine Greig, the woman who harbored mob boss James 'Whitey' Bulger, a Lethal Lover. She'd laughed about liking bad boys until it landed her in jail!

Dr. Carole Lieberman is an internationally renowned "Media Psychiatrist." On TV, Radio, the Internet, in Film, Print, as a Speaker and as the first "Shrink on Board" airline in-flight entertainment, Dr. Carole's insights help people seize the moment to live happier, more fulfilling lives. She's also the author of Bad Boys: Why We Love Them, How to Live with Them and When to Leave Them.

How to Get the Best Sleep You Can With Your Partner



By David O Volpi, M.D.

Sleeping habits aren't exactly first date conversation topics, but the reality is that more than a quarter of couples say their partner's sleep habits prevent them from getting a good night's rest, according to the National Sleep Foundation. Sleep incompatibilities are a top reason why one in four couples sleep in separate beds, and snoring is actually one of the top three reasons for divorce in the U.S.

So, how can women sleep in sync with their guys? Often times,

simple lifestyle changes can help busy couples make their sleep routines mesh, and stop the snoring and bad sleeping habits that prevent them from sleeping soundly together. To get the best sleep possible, try the following tips:

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Sync up your sleep schedules. Going to bed and waking up at different times every day is a sleep destroyer, and it's easy to do when couples have different work or social schedules.

In order to practice good 'sleep hygiene,' couples should get into a pattern of going to sleep and waking up around the same time every day, including weekends.

Change your position. For some people, an increased amount of airway obstruction occurs when they sleep on their backs.

This is called positional snoring. The obstruction can be reduced or eliminated if the snorer sleeps on their side, which is why bed partners always try to get their snoring counterpart to wake up and "roll over." In this case, a simple solution is to keep the snoring person off their back.

To do so, you can try sewing a ball into the pocket of a t-shirt, and having the snorer wear it backwards during sleep. Sleeping with an extra pillow can also help, because it elevates the head and opens the airways.

Reserve the bed for two things: Sleep and intimacy. Try to avoid eating, watching TV or using electronics in bed. It's been scientifically proven that the light from TV and computer screens affects melatonin production and throws off circadian rhythms. Plus, working in bed won't help couples bond, or wind down and ease into sleep.

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Make sure neither of you use alcohol or sleeping medications before bedtime. Alcohol and medicines that make you drowsy can

actually prevent you from sleeping through the night, even though they may make you drowsy initially. Alcohol and sedatives also cause the throat and tongue muscles to relax even further than usual, exacerbating snoring.

Create a relaxing bedtime routine. When your body gets used to a nighttime routine (whether it's a beauty routine or an activity like reading), the brain is tricked into knowing that it's ready for bed. Try doing a crossword puzzle together or taking a warm bath. A study in *Sleep*, the Journal of the American Sleep Disorders Association, suggests taking a hot bath 90 minutes before bedtime can help you fall asleep. The hot water raises body temperature, and cool air in the bedroom lowers skin temperature, which triggers your body to produce melatonin and become drowsy.

Finally, always see a doctor if you or your partner struggles from sleep problems. Sleep disorders affect millions of people. Even celebrities like Rihanna and Shaquille O'Neal are known for struggles with snoring! But taking time to fix sleep problems is always worth it. In fact, it can help save relationships!

David O. Volpi attended Hahnemann Medical College in Philadelphia and completed his post graduate training in General Surgery at the Hospital of The Medical College of Pennsylvania in Philadelphia and a residency in Otolaryngology, Head and Neck Surgery at the New York Medical College Affiliated Hospitals and the New York Eye and Ear Infirmary. He is also the co-author of the book Wake Up! You're Snoring... which was conceived and written to be an authoritative information source for people seeking guidance on treating the many causes of snoring.

Snooki's Pregnancy: Can You Salvage Your Image?



By EJ Parfitt

What happens if you have a certain image at work, and then you change that image? If everyone expects you to be a particular type of person, will they still accept you if you are suddenly different? Can you be effective in your job if you alter your personal “brand”?

We all change as we go through life, and in many cases those changes can affect the way people see us on the job. Even someone with a job as unusual as *Jersey Shore*’s Nicole “Snooki” Polizzi has to deal with these issues. Snooki is pregnant, and the question remains as to how that may affect her career as a reality TV star. Here are two ways to look at

it:

The Pessimist

If you look at the situation from a negative point of view, being pregnant could destroy Snooki's career. From this viewpoint, Snooki's fame is based on being a wild and crazy party girl who takes the freedom of being single to deliciously tacky extremes. This is what viewers have become used to, and this is what they want to watch. It won't be any fun to see her settle down into motherhood. Pregnancy could ruin Snooki's "brand."

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The Optimist

Though there's no denying the potential ruin of Snooki's career, there's another more positive way to look at the situation as well. It's possible that it's mostly Snooki's personality, rather than her crazy antics, that keeps viewers interested. If that's the case, then Snooki's pregnancy won't stop her from continuing to be a star. If people watch her because they feel they can relate to her, then they will be eager to see what will happen next in this new phase of her life. Her pregnancy and motherhood could even give the show a boost for viewers who were becoming tired of the endless partying.

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What's true for Snooki is true for everyone. You don't need to have satellite TV providers beaming your life story across the world in order to think about your personal "brand." The key is to make your brand about the things that will last throughout your lifetime, such as your personality, intelligence and skills, not about the things that will change, such as being young, single and childless.

If your image at work is based on being cute and perky, think about the traits you have that will last over the long haul.

If you're a partier like Snooki or a young rebel, realize that you are likely to make a transition to a calmer and more stable stage of life eventually. Don't put all your career eggs in the basket of who you are right now. Hook people on your long-lasting qualities and abilities, and you'll be able to use life's changes to your advantage. You don't need to be a Guidette to learn this lesson from Snooki.

Tech writer EJ Parfitt has been writing for a short time now and has already picked up steam with several tech and sports sites. During his free time , you're sure to catch him competing in local chess tournaments in downtown Fort Lauderdale, Florida.

Love Advice For Making Your Long-Distance Relationship Work





By Jemima Lopez

He lives in L.A, and she lives in London. While having a trans-Atlantic relationship is tough, if there's anything British celebrity couple David and Victoria Beckham prove, it's that long-distance relationships *can* work. Married for 12 years, they just welcomed their fourth child. Their American counterparts, Hollywood couple Brad Pitt and Angelina Jolie, have made it work too. Despite separation between films, they've managed to stay in a committed relationship for seven years, and they share six children.

But non-celebrities have remote relationships too. In fact, more than 3.5 million Americans were in a long-distance relationship in 2005, according to the latest statistics. With the development of new technology, that number is most likely on the rise. While us common folks can't afford to jet set or send extravagant gifts, that doesn't mean our long-distance relationship can't last just as long. Use this love advice to help maintain your relationship and love like the stars:

Love Advice For Long-Distance Couples

1. Use all forms of communication: Let's get the obvious out of the way: Physical interaction is scarce, so communication is key. Text messaging, instant messaging, or even Facebooking is a start, but make your "communication" more interactive. Here are some examples:

Related Link: [Five Ways Social Media Can Help Your Relationship](#)

– **Date nights:** "Skype dates" are the norm – a designated time couples agree to video chat. But try to have a *real* date instead. Each week, pick a movie and a meal to prepare or purchase. Arrange your laptop, screen facing you. Eat and engage in conversation like in a restaurant. Then, pop in the movie. This way, you can hear and see each other's reactions to scenes. Bonus: Other movie-goers won't tell you to pipe down!

– **Send photos:** Sending self-portraits are great, but always try to send photos of things that you find interesting or funny. It will allow your mate to become more in-tune with your personality and give them some insight into your world.

– **Make videos:** Hearing someone's voice and seeing their face is more personable than a text. But people don't always have time to videochat. Instead of sending a text, create a 30-second SMS video. Your significant other can view or respond when they have time, and it's still special. There are apps that deliver "voice text messages," like Voxer.

Related Link: [Do's and Don'ts of Flirtexting and Sexting](#)

2. Send them a package: Sending your partner a gift for no reason is great love advice that can keep a smile on their face. Remember that you can also treat your boo to lunch

or dinner because it's easy to get online and order a pizza that can be delivered to his or her front door. You can send traditional letters too. There is something incredibly personable about seeing someone's handwriting.

How to Strengthen Your Relationship and Love

3. Schedule monthly trips: You can talk for hours, but unless you see each other in the flesh at least once a month, your relationship will most likely fizzle. There are exceptions, like military relationships, which don't have the luxury. But for those that can travel at their own leisure, take turns planning monthly visits.

4. Be secure: Lastly, most remote relationships fail due to lack of trust. While understandable, if there is no trust, you shouldn't be together. Try not to let your jealousy get the best of you. That said, never completely ignore your intuition either. If something doesn't feel right, speak up.

Jemima Lopez is a freelance blogger and writer who writes for Zen College Life, the directory of higher education, distance learning, and best online schools. She welcomes your comments at her email: lopezjemima562@gmail.com.

3 Ways to Use Celebrity Media To Assess Your Relationship



By Samantha Peters

Anyone who follows gossip news is probably well aware that the celebrity media gets plenty wrong and is far from an authority figure. But, even when the media is wrong about the status or longevity of a celebrity relationship, for example, it knows how to interpret individual and publicly-displayed signs. It knows how to assess, even if it can't always see the full picture.

The celebrity media's outsider assessment skills can actually be used by anyone who seeks to examine their own relationship.

Now that Valentine's Day has come and gone, and now that the seasons have begun to change, it's as good a time as ever to take a step back and do just that. It's time to figure out if your relationship is growing, stagnating or declining. How is your [chemistry](#)? How happy and excited does your significant other make you feel? Though difficult, these are all good

questions to ask.

Related: [How to Master Being in a Relationship](#)

That said, rather than answering these oft-abstract questions, try to instead assess your relationship from a more public, outsider perspective – and let the celebrity media give you a hand.

As an example of how to do this, we're going to look at the ongoing relationship between actor Leonardo DiCaprio and Victoria's Secret model Erin Heatherton. Heatherton is just the latest in a long line of tall, thin, blonde models that DiCaprio has been known to date. From her perspective, although Leo is 15 years older (sugar daddy definition, anyone?), we can't blame Erin for finding his charm and his fame too irresistible to ignore.

Based on their relationship (and on the celebrity media's reaction), here are a few factors that any couple can assess:

Family Involvement

Love them or hate them, but our families usually know us better than we'd ever like to admit. In fact, they can probably form a pretty solid opinion of whether a relationship will work – or should work – in the long run. At the beginning of January, Leo took Erin out for an upscale New Year's Day brunch – with his mom. The celebrity media reported Erin and Leo's mom chatting, laughing and generally hitting it off. This was interpreted as a good sign for their relationship. *How would the paparazzi view the time you and your significant other spend with family members?*

Related: [Zoe Saldana Goes on a Movie Date with Bradley Cooper's Mom](#)

Time Together

A good relationship is one in which couples find ways to truly enjoy the time they spend together. All too often, the paparazzi spots a celebrity couple lounging on the beach for hours on end without communicating, or sees them sitting and sharing a silent dinner together. While a less communicative couple is not in and of itself a sign of a stagnant relationship, it certainly compares less favorably to the couple spotting laughing and interacting in a lively manner.

When Leo and Erin took a romantic vacation to Mexico last month, they were photographed zip-lining their way all around Cabo San Lucas. According to the celebrity media, this was another positive sign. *When outsiders view your relationship, do they see it as fun and enjoyable?*

Public Plans

Amidst recent news that Leonardo was spotted in Sydney (where he is filming *The Great Gatsby*) with top Australian models, but no Erin in sight, speculation emerged that the couple had [broken up](#). However, Leo, Erin, nor either celebrity's publicist has been willing to make any comments about the relationship in the first place. Some in the media have interpreted this as a sign that nobody involved believes that the couple has much of a future. *What do you and your significant other tell friends about your future plans?*

These are just a few things to consider while assessing your relationship. Although the celebrity media is not always to be believed, and even though Leo and Erin are certainly not reflective of every couple out there, you can still learn from their publically-displayed actions – and from the media response – when trying to determine where you and your significant other currently stand.

Samantha Peters is a passionate follower of Hollywood celebrity relationship gossip. She loves blogging about ways to sustain successful relations, which sometimes requires

assessing your relationship using a little celebrity media. Samantha lives in beautiful San Diego, California, and makes frequent trips to west L.A. to go shopping and celebrity spotting.

5 Ways to Stop Sabotaging Your Relationships



By Jacquee Kahn

My mother always told me to work on myself first, and from there, everything else will follow. Little did I know that this would become a practice for me as I became a relationship

“guru” for my friends (and later, clients).

News flash ladies: If you’re having a hard time with dating and relationships, it’s not about the men. It’s not because they’re players or commitment-phobes. It’s about YOU.

I meet incredibly smart, beautiful and talented women who have completely lost themselves in relationships. When they were single, they were confident and independent. But once in a relationship, those attractive qualities dissolved and these same women became needy, insecure and emotionally broken.

It’s time to stop undermining your relationship by first working on yourself. Here are five ways to get rid of those bad habits that sabotage relationships:

1. Be Yourself: Don’t be so eager to please your man that you lose yourself and become completely disempowered. Tom Cruise’s line in the film “Jerry McGuire” may be “You complete me,” but it’s simply not true. You don’t have to be in a relationship to be a complete person.

Related: [Simple Ways to Please Your Man](#)

2. Know You’re Worthy: We often become so desperate to make relationships work that we do whatever it takes to please our partners, much to the detriment of ourselves. So, don’t be needy, clingy or desperate. These behaviors are a huge turn off and usually create the opposite effect.

Related: [How Decoding Your Love Map Can Heal a Broken Heart](#)

3. Keep a Loose Grip: Refrain from holding on too tight. If your man pulls away, let him go. Don’t show insecurity by begging, pleading or trying to manipulate him to stay. If he comes back, it’s because he wants to, not because you forced him to.

4. Don’t Accept Less Than You Deserve: Don’t accept crumbs by

allowing yourself to settle for a “friends with benefits” or a “booty call” situation when what you really want is a committed relationship.

5. Save Yourself: Don't look outside of yourself to be rescued. Take ownership of your personal happiness, because all relationships start and end with YOU.

Jacquee Kahn dispenses “Super Nanny”-style tough love to women in need of relationship help. The author of Girlfriend 911: Decoding Dating and Rescuing Relationships One Girlfriend at a Time, her no-nonsense, straightforward advice points toward the foundation of the book.

How Decoding Your Love Map Can Heal a Broken Heart





By Rachel Sussman

When it comes to celebrity breakups, many of us spend plenty of time analyzing their trials and tribulations. We identify on many levels with our favorite Hollywood couples by getting inspired by their romances and mourning their losses. In fact, we even tend to fear that the same types of failures they experience can happen within our relationships as well.

Whether you're a celebrity or not, there are numerous ingredients which go into determining whether a connection exists between two people. Love, attraction and pheromones are key components, but there are many others that dictate the choices we make as well, and they happen from the very beginning of our lives. It's important to remember that genetic/biological, social/cultural, and psychological issues determined your partner selection, romance and grieving period. In other words, they're part of your personal "love map." Through interpreting your love map, you will understand how important events from your past shaped your individual personality development and self-esteem, which directly correlates to your relationship behavior.

Here are two celebrity examples where creating a love map would be invaluable:

Demi Moore and Ashton Kutcher

Since the beginning of their relationship, Demi Moore and Ashton Kutcher's romance fascinated the public. They're both attractive and accomplished actors, and, of course, there's the famous age difference. Sadly, Moore has suffered from depression and grappled with addiction since the pair's split.

In a recent interview, she said, "What scares me is that I'm going to ultimately find out at the end of my life that I'm really not lovable, that I'm not worthy of being loved."

Moore's unworthy feelings most likely existed long before she ever met Kutcher. According to multiple reports, she experienced a difficult childhood and both of her parents were alcoholics, which undoubtedly influenced her relationship choices and her behavior in those relationships. By creating her personal love map, Moore would be able to work through her pain in order to regain strength and health.

Related: [Demi Moore Proves There's Hope After Divorce](#)

Heidi Klum and Seal

Heidi Klum and Seal also recently went through an unexpected split. Many of us were thrilled to see a beautiful bi-racial couple with a large blended family who were happily wed. That said, Seal's hard childhood inspired him to create beautiful music, but it also affected him negatively as well. It's been reported that he was raised by a foster family, which would have influenced his personality development during his formative years. Apparently his emotional problems, in particular his inability to control his anger, had become too much for Heidi to take. In this case Seal should decode his love map to understand his psychological makeup. Heidi, on the other hand, should interpret her love map in order to discover what factors from her earlier life led her into the

arms of a volatile man in order to expedite her emotional recovery.

Related: [Heidi Klum and Seal Confirm Separation](#)

Creating and interpreting a personal love map will enable anyone, celebrity or not, to heal and recover from a bad breakup. It will also allow you to understand and change behaviors that may be negatively impacting your romances – and that is definitely something worth striving for.

Rachel A. Sussman, LCSW, is the author of The Breakup Bible, a licensed psychotherapist and the founder of Sussman Counseling, a psychotherapy practice specializing in treating couples and individuals with relationship dilemmas. She is an official relationship expert for Cosmopolitan, Destination Maternity and Celebuzz.com and has appeared on the Today show, the CBS Early Show, Martha Stewart Living Radio, and elsewhere. She holds a BA from Emerson College and a master's from NYU. For more information, visit: rachelasussman.com.

4 Wedding Styles of the Rich and Famous





By Lauren Martina, ASID and Katherine Shell Benson

When it comes to upcoming trends, we can guarantee that the hottest engaged celebrity couples will be showcasing the latest and greatest. In fact, we had so much fun pairing the most talked about celebrity brides-to-be with the wedding styles that everyone is talking about! Here's our forecast for what we think we will see in 2012!

Anne Hathaway: When we think of Anne Hathaway, we think of vintage elegance. Between her classic fashion style and the grace she exudes each time she walks out of her door, we believe that a *Vintage Elegance* wedding is what fits her best. Although her wedding will be in NYC, this very popular style can be scaled up and used in any setting from penthouse rooftops to grand hotel ballrooms.

Jessica Simpson: Very Southern and hand done outdoor weddings are huge right now and are not going away any time soon. One of the things we love about Jessica Simpson is that she is authentic, and this is the type of wedding we can see her having this time around ... very intimate, Southern and hands on.

Britney Spears: Although this is not her first rodeo, we believe she has found the one this time! With two adorable boys, and the reputation of sometimes going against the grain (which isn't so bad sometimes when an electric razor isn't involved), we can't imagine Ms. Spears in a traditional white dress. This is why we are pairing her in a colored Vera Wang dress, which is one of 2012's hottest trends.

Jessica Biel: *Luxe Weddings* are all the rage right now, and if you go to any Canadian wedding source (Canada is always a step ahead when it comes to wedding trends), you will see what we mean. Who better to have one than Jessica Biel? We envision her wedding very luxe with champagne and gold trims, acanthus leaves and lots of layered texture. We can see her and Justin Timberlake with this fabulous Luxe cake from The Cake Opera Co. Love this!

For more of the hottest trends and wedding day ideas, come see us on our blog at www.bellabaxterevents.com/blog.

How to Know When It's Time for the First Kiss





By Carlos Kotkin

There's no way around it. First kisses are usually pretty awkward, and yet they're almost always memorable. Even celebrities commit their first kiss experiences to memory. Recently, a group of celebrities including Tom Green shared recollections of their first smooch with [People](#). For instance, Jerry O'Connell was stunned when his first kiss took a French turn. Vince Gill's first lip lock involved intense face slamming that kept him from breathing. James Van Der Beek's extremely romantic first smooch took place in a ... handicapped bathroom? A handicapped bathroom? Seriously?

Even after you've gotten the hang of it, a kiss at the end of a first date can sometimes be just as awkward. These situations bring you back to your teenage years when you were kissing your teddy bear for practice. To top it off, for guys, making the first move is often a nerve-wracking experience ... and as they say, timing is everything. Here are some things to consider:

A Concrete "No"

It's no secret that dating can be an awful experience every now and then (or nine times out of ten). The worst part of a first outing is the potential for an awkward goodbye at the end of it. Indeed, I've experienced my fair share of goodbyes. Sometimes it's crystal clear when a woman isn't interested in a first kiss ... or a second date, for that matter. At the end of one date, I received a firm business-like handshake along with a "Good luck to you," before she power-walked in heels across the parking structure to her car. In that case, I knew leaning in for a kiss wasn't a great idea.

Related: [Five Conversations to Avoid on the First Date](#)

A Strong "Yes"

Other times, women I've gone out with have miraculously been attracted to me. In one case, at the end of a date, a young lady asked me point blank, "Are you going to kiss me or what?" This was a strong indication she wanted me to, um, kiss her.

Related: [Five Reasons Why Opposites Attract](#)

No Man's Land

But then there's that middle ground – that neutral date when you're out with someone and you feel like things could go either way. It's the no-man's land of dating. Unfortunately, this is where I've ended up most of the time. I've been in situations where I've thought, "This person either can't stand me or is head over heels." I'm not embarrassed to admit I've been on a date at the movies and as the movie was ending, I've thought, "Oh, no. It's over. We're going to say our goodbyes pretty soon. Oh no..." Ladies, while in no-man's land, your date will search for the slightest clue that you're more than friends. The gentlest touch from you, laughing at our stupidest jokes or a twinkle in your eye are all strong indicators. (By the way, it's totally possible to see twinkles.) The bottom line is, things like that give a guy

hope.

While I can't point out which specific clue will lead a guy to lean in, I *can* emphasize what *not* to do. I was on a dinner date once that lasted for hours. We ended up in my apartment, where she sat on the couch, giggling at my yearbook photos.

When I leaned in, she moved away in surprise, saying, "I'm not interested in that. Sorry." I apologized profusely, declaring it was my bad. Even though the atmosphere was incredibly awkward afterward (I thought), she stayed for another hour as if I had never made a move. We talked about Hawaii, and she finally left. When she did, I had a newfound admiration for the woman who shook my hand and power-walked away in heels.

Carlos Kotkin is the author of PLEASE GOD LET IT BE HERPES: A Heartfelt Quest for Love and Companionship. He is a ten-time Moth StorySLAM winner, including two-time winner of the coveted GrandSLAM, and has been featured on NPR's The Moth Radio Hour, KCRW's UnFictional, and the popular podcast RISK! He lives in Los Angeles. For more on Carlos, visit his website at www.carloskotkin.com.

5 Low Profile Online Dating Strategies





By Heidi Lee Munson

Dear Heidi Lee,

Help! I think I'm a Toad!

I'm on an online dating site, and I lie about who I am ... I use my sister's photo. I play down my interests – leaving out that I'm Jim Carrey's ex and a former Playboy model. I feel guilty for lying, but I can't be honest because of stalkers, psychos and creeps. I want a regular, low-key guy who can throw back a burger and a beer in a bowling alley ...

Don't these guys have the right to know up front that my world is paparazzi and tabloids? Do I have the right to lure them with false promises of an All-American romance with the girl next door?

Who am I to lie to these men? A Toad?

xoxo,
Jenny

Related: [Fishing For Mr. Right – Types of Guys to Throw Back](#)

Dear Jenny,

Even asking such a question shows that you are a strong, lovely and thoughtful woman. Whether a Big Screen Celeb or a Midwest Farmer's Daughter, you and your future Prince Charming have the right to be honest with each other now.

Fortunately, my friend, you've found a Midwestern girl. I understand your unique need for privacy within the Toad Kingdom as well as your pull toward the rugged sexiness of the strong, meat-eating types. In small towns, we are all celebrities in our own right. Toads who recognize us may be interested in our career status, income or somewhat gullible reputations. So, Ms. All American in L.A., let me share a few small town girl strategies to help you avoid the Toad label :

5 Small Town Strategies for a Celebrity

1. Communicate proactively: Initiate conversation first to have control over the flow of it, and reveal yourself as early as appropriate.

Related: [How to Communicate to Get What You Need](#)

2. Go au natural: Use a natural picture of yourself – a naked face with a warm smile – preferably with a shadow from a tree or a ball cap shielding your true identity.

3. Minimize exposure: Hide your profile when you are talking to a handful of promising men.

4. Use geographic camouflage: Register your account using a zip code outside of your location to throw the Toads off your trail.

5. Be a rhinoceros: Grow a thick skin, doll. Even the best laid plans have holes. Not only does a rhino have thick skin, but he or she can crush the Toad in one mighty step.

Most importantly, have fun! I'm proud to hear that you chose online dating to meet "the one". We Citizens of the Toad Kingdom share good company having you here. Thanks!

Warmest Regards,

Heidi Lee

P.S. May I offer you a copy of my eBook, *How To Toad Proof Your Online Dating Profile?*

From struggling single mother to Happily Married Author, Marketer, Blogger and Online Dating Professional, Heidi Lee Munson kissed the toads so that you don't have to. From Couch Potato Toad to Lounge Lizard Toad and Freeloader Toad to Bad Toupee Toad, Heidi Lee kissed them all.

Top 5 Celebrity Love Mistakes We Should Avoid





By Abiola Abrams

Some of us view Hollywood stars as lifestyle role models. You want Sofia Vergara's lipstick, Beyonce's curly hair or the Balenciaga bag that everybody and their mother was rocking on the red carpet recently. While it's cool to mix celeb style with your own once in a while, it's important to remember that the people who entertain us with movies, TV and music are just that – people.

That said, the famous are more human than we realize, and some of our favorite celebrities have one thing in common that we should never seek to emulate – their tumultuous relationships.

In fact, let's learn from the love, sex and dating mistakes of the stars.

Here are some celebrity relationship snafus to avoid:

Love Mistake: Never Being Single.

It seemed like Jennifer Lopez was barely divorced from her crooner hubby Marc Anthony before stepping out with sexy back up dancer Casper Smart. Before that, she made a seamless

transition from her Bennifer engagement to her JenAnthony marriage. What's up with that?

Going from relationship to relationship is a mistake. Taking a break between longtime loves is the best way to heal and ensure that we come to the next marriage or engagement as whole human beings.

Related: [10 Love Lessons from Bruce Springsteen](#)

Love Mistake: Marrying too soon.

Kim Kardashian and what's-his-face Humphries had the 72-day fairytale heard 'round the world. It seemed like Kimmie was set to continue the Dash girls tradition of meeting and immediately ending up happily ever after. Look at her little sister Khloe and her b-ballstar Lamar Odom. Their less than one month courtship has yielded a relationship that's still going strong.

Bottom line? Khloe and Lamar are a wonderful fluke. Marrying someone before you've even had the "where will we live" conversation is a huge mistake. Sorry, Kris Humphries!

Related: [Kim Kardashian's Divorce – A Reminder About Relationship Mistakes to Avoid](#)

Love Mistake: Stealing someone else's lover.

Man and woman stealing is a time honored Hollywood tradition.

See LeAnn Rimes, Tori Spelling, Angelina Jolie and even old school movie star Elizabeth Taylor. It's a big world out there. If your love cheated to be with you, then how can you ever trust that this pattern won't be repeated? The answer is, you can't.

Karma is a mean goddess, and hell hath no fury like karma scorned. Just sayin.'

Love Mistake: Getting a mistress pregnant.

Arnold Schwarzenegger sure did seem preachy about family values as the Republican governor of California, didn't he? Little did we know that the Governor was not only sleeping with the maid, but he'd had a love child with her as well. Oy vey.

Obviously, this is a relationship no-no to be avoided at all costs.

Love Mistake: Bashing your ex.

When we watched Kelsey Grammer's previous wife Camille Grammer battle the divorce demon on "The Real Housewives of Beverly Hills," our hearts broke for her. Her A-list husband cheated and ran. Sure, she had choice words about him on her reality show, but then Mr. Grammer behaved deplorably by bashing his former Mrs. in an interview with Pierce Brosnan.

A smarter move is always to take the high road. See Jennifer Aniston for lessons on grace under fire. Okay, it didn't work out, and she moved on. Sure, it's probably messy. Life is a contact sport.

What are some other celeb love snafus? Dating different versions of the same jerk a la Halle Berry, returning to the scene of the crime like Rihanna or falling apart after a breakup like Demi Moore are all examples *not* to follow.

Ah, le love. You're much better off copying a celebrity hair cut than imitating their love styles. Here's to shiny, happy and healthy relationships!

Abiola Abrams is a lifestyle expert and host of "Abiola's Kiss and Tell TV." Her next book is entitled The Official Bombshell Handbook. Find her fun and scandalous love advice and interviews at <http://www.AbiolaTV.com>. She tweets @abiolatv.

From Bad Dates to Fireworks: How Different Dates Lead You to Your Knight



By Lindsley Lowell

Just because Valentine's Day is over doesn't mean single women can breathe a sigh of relief. Talk of spring romance is just around the corner, and many single women are still not feeling the love. For them, Valentine's Day was more like *Valencrime's* Day. It's hard for women, especially those over 35, to believe that there's true love out there for them.

When friends and family tell you that you're too picky,

thereby implying that you should settle, remember to close your ears. Instead, listen to what your heart is telling you. The fact is, your close ones don't have to live with the guy ... you do.

Love is an easy concept in theory, but when you have been on many a horrific date and feel like the only men you are meeting are dingalings, the thought of a knight in shining armor in your future remains looking like a fairy tale. Most of the guys out there are far from Princely and are not nearly so charming.

Related: [How to Avoid the Reality Show Relationship Curse](#)

But if you give up on love, that's a sad, sad day. I, personally, feel like it took me 753 years to find my knight, but in the end, it was worth it. I suffered through some heartbreak and plenty of gruesome dates, but I also had some good experiences as well. Had I stayed with one of my ex-boyfriends, I would surely be divorced or unhappy right now.

You have to put yourself out there! You have to meet true love halfway.

Even though dating can be frustrating, you can learn a lot from your dates ... even the bad ones. Here's what I learned:

Crappy Dates

I have too many bad dates to mention. One prime example is the guy who looked cute in his online photos, but then showed up wearing a beret and Mr. Magoo glasses. He spent the hour having a conversation with my high heels. He hadn't mentioned his foot fetish in his profile! Or, there's the time I was set up with a French dude who seemed great when I met him at a party, until he called to make a date and informed me that he could not take me to dinner because he had no job and no money, so if I liked, we could "go for a walk." Needless to say, I told him to take a walk right out of my life. Better

yet, there's the guy I met on Match.com who kindly paid for our first date (a drink and some sushi), and then the following week demanded that I pay him \$21.43 for half the date because I declined a second date. He stalked me until I had to report him. Needless to say, crappy dates are hard. But, they also tell you what kind of guy you don't want.

Related: [It's Time to Stop Asking, 'When Will It Be My Turn?'](#)

Nice Dates

These are pleasant ... and that's it. You can compare it to a brown paper bag and white toast; they're useful, but boring as hell. The guy is nice. He has a nice job. He looks nice. Unfortunately, there's no spark, so he may as well be a gay guy or your cousin. The bottom line is, if your knees aren't weak, your heart's not fluttering and you're not all hot and bothered, this will *not* be your knight. True love requires passion and chemistry.

Woohoo! Dates

These types of dates are fireworks, the brass ring or the Holy Grail. Unfortunately, they do not come around that often.

When they do, it's euphoric, and he could indeed be your knight if this happens. People often say "You just know" when you meet "the one," and I agree. It was fireworks on my first date with my now husband. As long as the guy feels the same way, you're all set. Congratulations. If the guy turns out to be emotionally unavailable, or just not feeling the fireworks, you need to let it go. And even if the woohoo date doesn't end up being your knight, these dates remind you that it is possible to have someone treat you well, like you should be treated. DON'T forget this feeling. This is what will bring you to your knight!

Lindsley Lowell is a former career dater, honorary love doctor for all of her friends, and writer. While dating in a sea of mediocrity for what seemed like 742 years, Lindsley was forced

to put pen to paper for cathartic purposes and document the hilarious, tragic, and heartfelt stories. Her new book MY KNIGHT IN SHINING ARMOR IS COMING...HE'S JUST STUCK IN TRAFFIC is a beacon of hope for all the single women out there who are told by society, friends and family to throw in the towel and settle. In 2011, she founded www.Ladiesinthepink.com – a site for women to share, inspire, create and laugh. She lives in California with her knight in shining armor and her dog Miss Winnie.

Valentine's Day Advice: 5 Love Languages Defined



By Top Dating Sites

Do you remember that special moment? You know, the time you put down the artificial midge-fly you were tying so that you could spend time with your husband, and you rubbed the back of his neck while telling him how special he was? Meanwhile, he was giving you the pair of mittens he knitted for you, after he heard you say your arthritis was kicking up. Well, congratulations, because you two were speaking *all five* languages of love at once.

This harmonious convergence of events speaks to all the communication tools that noted relationship expert and author, Dr. Gary Chapman, extols in his series, *The 5 Love Languages*.

Dr. Chapman, also a Baptist minister, has achieved world-renown as a Biblical scholar in the field of personal relationships. His best-selling series concentrates on ways that people can convey their true feelings to others in ways that are easily accessible to all parties. In the condensed form above were elements of what Dr. Chapman teaches. A few notes about these “languages” appear below. These techniques apply not only to spouses, but to all interpersonal relationships:

1. Words of Affirmation – Find something nice to say to somebody. It really isn’t difficult; it just takes a little bit of effort. Show that you notice something positive about another, whether it’s an endearment, or “seeing” a new hair-do or a hobby achievement. Some people call it giving “strokes” because it is a verbal “petting”. To understand it better, turn the tables and imagine the feeling you get when somebody sincerely says something nice to you. That’s what we’re talking about.

Related: [Communicate This – Signs that Kim and Kris Were Doomed](#)

2. Quality Time – Quality time *doesn’t* mean giving anything

up. It *does* mean creating time together. What you do or don't do isn't important. What *is* important is that you are together.

3. Gifts – It isn't the size of a package or the gleam of a gemstone that matters in gift-giving and gift-receiving. The important thing is that it lets people express positive emotion in a tangible way. Those who prefer to communicate in the 'gift' love language, put a lot of thought into the gifts they give.

Related: [10 Holiday Gift Ideas for that Special Someone](#)

4. Acts of Service – When you oiled the hinges on the screen-door that was driving your mate crazy you were "speaking" a language of love. When you finally notice that you haven't tripped over a pair of shoes on the stairway in quite some time, it's because someone else was "speaking" to you in a language of love.

5. Physical Touch – Unless you are both professional alligator-wrestlers, physical touch probably doesn't need to be more than an unexpected touch or small caress to speak loudly in one of the least-developed "languages" of love.

One of the aspects of Dr. Chapman's teachings that has been most helpful for couples is learning how to identify one another's preferred love language. We often try to show love to others in ways that we appreciate, instead of in their own 'love language' and then are baffled by their lack of appreciation. When one person's primary love language is 'gifts' and the other's is 'words of affirmation', they are each speaking a foreign 'love language' to their partner.

Understanding this can be very helpful in any relationship, but especially in the ongoing relationship of marriage.

Dr. Chapman isn't exploring deep mysteries. His observations and teachings involve everyday people, living everyday lives. What people do within that context is what ultimately decides

how many “languages” you are fluent in.

Valentine's Day Advice: 10 Tips for a Romantic (and Green) Marriage Proposal



By Kate Harrison

Valentine's Day is one of the most popular days of the year to propose. As this special day approaches, men across the country are struggling to find the best way to pop the question. Take a load off boys, because Green Bride Guide

eco-wedding expert Kate Harrison has some engaging ideas to inspire your inner romantic while reducing your impact on the earth.

“For a great proposal, the key is to be both thoughtful and creative,” says Harrison. “Like your wedding day, your proposal should be all about her, so put her first in every way and you can’t go wrong.”

1. Location: No one likes to say they got engaged next to the laundry machine. Pick a location or restaurant that she loves or take her to your favorite green spot. Whether a mountaintop or an organic restaurant, your soon-to-be fiancée will appreciate a carefully selected location.

Related: [Date Idea: Star Light, Star Bright](#)

2. Look the part: Shower with your organic bath products, wear an outfit you know she loves, and put on a non-toxic deodorant or cologne. (Check the Environmental Working Groups Skindeep database to see how yours ranks today.)

Related: [5 Ways to Get Him to Propose By Labor Day](#)

3. Make it a party: Surround her with the people she loves the most for an engagement with an audience. Keep some chilled organic sparkling wine on hand to pass around after you pop the question.

4. Daily gifts: Create a count-down to Valentine’s Day with little gifts each day like fair trade chocolates, heart-inspired socks or underwear, movie tickets, and love notes.

5. Summon a crowd: Does she love an audience? Purchase tickets to a concert or theatrical presentation, and propose in front of a crowd.

6. Customize a puzzle: Once it’s put together, it reads, “Will you marry me?”

7. Go vintage: Buy a Lite Brite board on eBay and write the words "Marry Me" in pretty colors.

8. Flowers: Shower her with organic, fair trade or locally grown flowers. You can buy freeze dried petals online and sprinkle them in the tub, on the bed, or even in the car. Use them to spell out your proposal, or tie a note to a bouquet.

9. Candles: Light up the bedroom with soy, palm or beeswax candles.

10. Get nerdy: Create your own original poem, write your own song, or make a YouTube video to ask for her hand in marriage.

Kate wrote The Green Bride Guide (Sourcebooks, 2008), after planning her own green wedding in 2007, and founded www.greenbrideguide.com in 2009. In 2010, she created the country's first green wedding professional certification class – a four week, online course – with the Wedding Planning Institute to help wedding planners learn about eco-friendly alternatives.

Valentine's Day Advice: Five Unconventional Date Night Ideas





By A Bullseye View

The old dinner and a movie routine can get old fast. This Valentine's Day, it's time to spice things up. Whether you want to go out or stay in, these non-traditional activities are sure-fire fun:

Stay in and cook fresh pasta

There's something about tackling a project like fresh pasta that's really fun. It's special, delicious and only requires two ingredients (plus you, of course!). To start, you'll need all-purpose flour and eggs. If you don't have a pasta maker, you can roll dough out with a regular rolling pin and cut it with a knife. With a little time and effort, you'll have a fine-dining experience that you made from scratch, together.

Get glam and smile

In the age of digital cameras, unflattering Facebook shots and constant TwitPics, it can be hard to find a decent photo with your significant other. So, why not get all gussied up and

pose like a pro? Hire a professional shutterbug or just ask a willing friend.

Related: [Valentine's Day Advice – Indulge in Simple Pleasures](#)

Learn something together

Take a class – a cooking class, language class, kickboxing class, massage class – it doesn't matter! As long as it's fun and a break from your daily routine, you'll both learn something new and have fun while doing it. Participating in the experience together is what's important.

Related: [Dating Advice: Find Out If Men Really Want the 'Cool Girl'](#)

Give a personalized gift

Flowers and sweets – although delicious – aren't your only gift options. Give your beau a special something that will keep you in their minds (and hands) all day long – a custom photo phone case. CaseMate and Target give you the creative reigns on shatterproof, scratch resistant cases for iPhones, iPod Touch, BlackBerry and Samsung. Upload a cute snapshot of the two of you and start designing cases together. Best part? Their phone will stand out from the crowd *and* everyone will know they're taken!

Volunteer

What's the total opposite of an expensive night on the town? Spending a few hours, or even a full day, volunteering at a local charity or organization. Get those good vibes pumping by volunteering as a couple. You'll feel great about your partner *and* you can spread some of your love to others.

Valentine's Day Advice: Romantic Home-Dates for Busy Parents



By Rebecca Garland

Forced to stay home for Valentine's Day with the hubby? You're not alone, as many celebrity families prefer to stay close rather than head out on romantic dates while dealing with the hassles of a babysitter or, in the celebrity case, overtime pay for the nanny.

Can you imagine Brad Pitt and Angelina Jolie turning up for a special with the paparazzi underfoot looking for clues about the latest celebrity plastic surgery? No – celebrity parents, especially in big families like the Jolie-Pitts, are looking

for a bit more privacy when it comes to celebrating Valentine's Day. And you can enjoy romance at home, too. Here's how:

Cook Together

Often parents focus on getting food on the table rather than the simple joys that baking can bring. Feed the children early, and pack them off to bed. Then, come back to the kitchen for an evening with entrees and wine just for the grown-ups. Cooking together can be intimate by preparing the meal together, setting the table for two and feeding each other bites in exactly the same way you would if you were paying \$100 per plate.

Related: [Celebrity Couples With The Biggest Age Differences](#)

Dinner and a Movie

If the idea of cleaning the kitchen twice is overwhelming, take the easy road and send out for take-out. While one of you puts the kids to bed, the other drives to the local steakhouse or seafood restaurant for some delicious food to go. Those waiting for a table might realize you have the right idea as you hurry home with your fine dining. Set the table in the living room, and enjoy the meal by candle light.

Then, with the leftovers put away, pop in your favorite romantic comedy and put your home theater to good use.

Related: [5 Ways to Reignite the Spark In Your Relationship](#)

Casual Romance

Valentine's Day deserves a bit of special treatment, but if setting tables and driving out for food doesn't put you in the mind for romance, why not keep it casual? Busy parents know that the most romantic thing you can do is simply spend time together without any obligations or interferences. Order a pizza with your favorite toppings – you don't need to make

concessions for the kids this time – and kick back to watch an uninterrupted marathon of all of those shows the two of you have recorded on the DVR.

Picture the two of you on the couch, your feet in his lap while both of you hold a container of delivered Chinese food or pizza for dinner. If you think the evening needs a bit more of a kick, throw your normal sweatpants over some silky lingerie, and use those commercial breaks wisely...

Rebecca Garland is a professional freelance writer working hard to populate the internet with meaningful, interesting content. With advanced degrees in information science and business, Rebecca enjoys a variety of topics including relationships and seduction. Learn more about Rebecca on her professional website, www.internetauthor.net.

Valentine's Day Advice: Nine Gift Ideas for the Frugalista





By Vicky Oliver

According to Wikipedia, Valentine's Day didn't become associated with romantic love until the High Middle Ages when the tradition of courtly love flourished. Ever since, the day has been fraught with symbolism tinged with traces of anxiety.

We all want our gifts to communicate the appropriate amount of love, but we're sometimes unsure how to accomplish that.

Questions abound. Should you buy him a sexy card or tickets to a basketball game? Should you present her with costly French perfume, and if so, what brand? What, if anything, will he "read into" that scented soap-on-a-rope? Will she take those teardrop earrings to mean more than you intend—or quite a bit less? And then, on the other end of the love spectrum, what if you simply can't afford to shower your loved one with the gifts that he or she deserves?

If you're watching your money (and these days, who isn't?), the good news is that we live in an era when the grand gesture can be more meaningful than a present costing hundreds of dollars. And with a little forethought, yours will convey

just the right amount of love. Here are nine gift ideas for the frugalista with a heart of gold, but a wallet running on empty:

Related: [4 Great Valentine's Day Gift Ideas for Her](#)

1. Invent a signature drink for your sweetheart. Is he of Russian descent? Perhaps the drink should contain Russian vodka in his honor. Does she hail from Florida? Maybe the drink should be made with fresh-squeezed oranges instead. Are you dating a redhead? Consider adding ginger as one of the prominent drink flavors. For added fun and hijinks, print up the recipe on cardstock so that your loved one can order the libation with ease at restaurants and bars. Be sure to put some personality into that recipe card.

Related: [What Does Your Date's Drink Say About Him?](#)

2. Get inventive with the I.O.U.s. These ingenious notes can save you a small fortune ... or even a large one. Instead of running around trying to find the perfect present for your paramour, take half of an afternoon to design a pretty I.O.U. certificate on your computer for "one free home-cooked meal." Then fill in his name, print out the document, wrap it with a ribbon (that came straight from another gift), and you're done. Cupid will attest, the quickest way to a man's heart is (still) through his stomach.

3. Name a star. It's a symbolic gesture that has little to do with science, but much to do with love and affection. Plus, it can add a real bright spot to your relationship. Call a star after a girlfriend, boyfriend, or even "just a friend" for under \$15. Every time that special person in your life stares up at the heavens, he or she will be sure to think of you fondly.

4. Shop your closet. "Love consists of desiring to give what is our own to another and feeling his delight as our own," Emanuel Swedenborg wrote. Passing on something that was yours

to someone you cherish is not merely about the value of the item itself. Hopefully, the gesture will strike an emotion, and you'll have a chance to see your own joy reflected back in the recipient's face. Please note: Never relinquish something that you can't live without should the relationship combust.

5. The gift that shows what you *would* give if money were no object. Five years into your relationship is your dream of spending "April in Paris" together *still* just a dream? Show her that you haven't forgotten with a destination charm. A company called latitude longitude&charms and jewelry will print out the exact coordinates of your fantasy location on a sterling silver stamped tag. You'll get all the credit for taking her there—at a fraction of the cost.

6. Say it with music. When love is in the air, why not pretend that you're an on-air personality and burn a CD of the tunes that remind you of your sweetheart? If you have been dating for over a year, the songs might harken back to the night you met. Or the CD might include the melody that played when you first kissed. Sweet dreams are made of this.

7. Something, anything, in her or his color. Some women look dashing in pink. Some guys look fetching in emerald green. When you know your lover's favorite color and then buy a present in the precise shade, it shows an extra degree of thought. These gifts needn't be costly. Scarves, hats, and gloves in every color of the rainbow can be purchased for under \$10 at your local street vendors. Even something as frivolous as a pink pen can bring a smile to the right face—hers.

8. A message in a bottle. Do you feel like Shakespeare in love, but just need a little help writing the poetry? For about \$100 less than a bottle of perfume you can give your love interest something permanent, creative, and emotionally stirring. An online company called Timeless Message will help you select a limited edition antique bottle and even craft a

message for you if need be. What if you actually *are* the next Shakespeare or the second coming of Hallmark? Have no fear! It's easy to write your own sentiment (and not be dependent on the sentimentality of others).

9. Something a tiny bit Bohemian. I once ate chocolate spaghetti. It wasn't the finest meal I had ever sampled, but it was so over-the-top that I savored it anyway. (If you're giving chocolate pasta as a gift, be sure to find a recipe that you actually *want* to try. There are several online.)

If you have just started dating, Valentine's Day is a built-in opportunity to move your relationship forward by mutually exploring a new level of intimacy. On the other hand, if you have been dating or married for a while, Valentine's Day presents the perfect chance to rekindle the romance and remember why you fell in love in the first place. No matter what you spend on your significant other this Valentine's Day, don't forget to say, "I love you."

Vicky Oliver is the award-winning author of The Millionaire's Handbook: How to Look and Act Like a Millionaire, Even If You're Not (Skyhorse Publishing, November 2011) plus four books on career development, including the bestselling 301 Smart Answers to Tough Interview Questions (Sourcebooks, 2005) and 301 Smart Answers to Tough Business Etiquette Questions (Skyhorse Publishing, 2010). She lives in New York City, where she helps people turn around their careers and their lives.

Valentine's Day Advice:

Follow Famous New Yorkers



By Jeryl Brunner

Someone once told me that when it comes to dating, especially early on, it's important to place you and your date into the epicenter of something fun and amusing. So, in case you aren't clicking or the conversation is generally going south, the environment around you can pick up the slack, offering instant entertainment.

So this Valentine's Day, instead of going for the quiet table at the dimly lit restaurant, opt for something a bit more lively that will spark conversation. Honestly, I've been told that the circus makes a nice date option, and is good for people watching and observation. ("Look at that clown juggle 14 plates! Get a load of that tightrope walker!") But since the circus isn't in town, I turned to famous New Yorkers and

their favorite romantic New York City spots for advice:

1. Let me sell you a bridge

For the ultimate people watching and architecture viewing, do what makes John Oliver and Ana Gastayer go breathless: Walk across the Brooklyn Bridge. “Something as simple as walking across the Brooklyn Bridge can be a heart-stopping experience,” explains Gasyeyer. “As a New Yorker there are a few moments that you can repeat over and over again that echo the original experience of coming here if you weren’t born here.”

Related: [Take a Walk on the Wild Side of the Caribbean](#)

2. Be a karaoke king (or queen)

Pals Jason Sudeikis and Will Forte say there’s nothing like bonding over karaoke in a private room. The pair and their friends will hit Sing Sing or Boho Karaoke and belt REO Speedwagon standards like “I Can’t Fight This Feeling,” TV theme songs (think *Family Ties* and *Good Times*) or tunes from Shrek. As Sudelkis notes, “You sing six or seven songs in an hour and can take chances. You can take risks.”

Related: [Justin Bieber Serenades Selena Gomez During AMA Rehearsal](#)

3. Pizza, much hotter than you think

How about a road trip for pizza and more compelling people watching? Kevin Spacey prefers Joe’s, while Daniel Boulud says Di Fara rules. Owner Dom DeMarco, says Boulud “makes each pie one by one. People line up out the door to get in.

It’s the old-fashioned Brooklyn pizza—thick, bready dough, good tomato sauce ... He adds more cheese after it’s cooked and lets it melt over the hot pizza, rather than cook the cheese too much.”

4. Never underestimate the zoo, sing-alongs and gardens

For interesting people (and animal) watching, head over to Alex Rodriguez's go-to spot, the Central Park Zoo. Then, mosey on over to Meredith Vieira's beloved Strawberry Fields and sing along with the musicians crooning Beatles tunes.

Combine that with a trip to the Conservatory Gardens, Bette Midler's favorite locale. The six-acre tucked away refuge is filled with bronze sculptures and fountains.

5. Drink in that view

Thirsty? Follow Gayle King's lead and have a drink at the 35th floor Lobby Lounge at the Mandarin Oriental Hotel.

Nothing enhances date buzz like a killer view with the twinkling lights of Manhattan as your backdrop.

So go ahead, step out of the same old heart-shaped box this Valentine's Day. You may just discover some seriously cool shared treasures.

Jeryl Brunner is the author of My City, My New York: Famous New Yorkers Share Their Favorite Places, www.mycitymynewyork.com. She has also contributed to O, the Oprah magazine, Parade, National Geographic Traveler, Delta Sky, Travel + Leisure, Huffington Post and many other publications. Jeryl lives in New York City, adores walking though Central Park and has downloaded an embarrassing number of show tunes on her iPod.