

Is Brad Pitt Ruining Your Love Life?



We know how effective media is in shaping our perspective and even our values, including our self-image. We know that being bombarded with images of beautiful men and women molds our vision of attractiveness. As we mature, we know it's fantasy, and that even Hollywood beauties don't look that stunning without professional hair, make-up, wardrobe and lighting.

By now, you've probably seen the Dove video called "Evolution." It shows how an attractive woman morphs into a fabulous knockout through professional hair, make-up, lighting, and yes, even Photoshop.

How do these unrealistic images affect your dating life?

1. They can influence your expectation of a man's looks. Very few men, especially middle-aged men, look anything close to

George Clooney, Brad Pitt, Johnny Depp, Colin Firth or Pearce Bronson. While we realize these men personify an unattainable ideal, some small part of many women want – and perhaps expect – their guys to look as yummy.

2. The Photoshopped images of pencil-thin people on magazine covers and in movies exacerbates women's feelings of inadequacy. Actresses like Cher, Teri Hatcher, Vanessa Williams, Julia Roberts, Helen Mirren, Glenn Close and Ellen Barkin are sparkling in their perfection – with personal trainers, private chefs, and perhaps a bit of nip-tuck. How many real-life middle-aged women do you see looking like that? Just as women have unrealistic expectations of a man's looks, so, too, men have an idealized expectation that women should look like these air-brushed fantasy females.

So it seems like a lose-lose for both genders.

We think (hope?) that as one matures, people realize that these movie star looks are really just fantasy. But unfortunately, I've found both men and women hold themselves and their potential dates to standards that nearly no one meets in real life.

So what can you do?

1. Play up your own physical attributes: Got beautiful eyes? Don't hide them behind glasses. Get a makeover if you haven't had one in years, or make an appointment with a free personal shopper at a department store to help you dress to look your best.

2. Realize that there are many good people underneath a few bags, sags and extra pounds: While we know that goodness has nothing to do with outer appearances, we sometimes get caught up or put off by what we see. I've gone out with many wonderful men who aren't gorgeous. The thing is, they got more attractive as I got to know their kind hearts, senses of humor and caring natures.

Dating Goddess is the author of the 13-book Adventures in Delicious Dating After 40 series. For information on her books and her blog, go to <http://www.DatingGoddess.com>.

Prince William and Kate Middleton Set Good Relationship Examples



By Roy Sheppard

Here in the UK, we are being drenched with Prince William and Kate Middleton stories in the media. They are *everywhere!*

Unlike the loved-up celebrities who can't wait to show off the latest in a long line of soul mates, what's different about Prince William and Middleton is their quiet togetherness.

They already exude a sense of being an 'us,' rather than part of a 'me + me' relationship. Their focus is on each other, and they're not trying to convince their friends or the world that they're together. They just are.

They royal couple each have what I describe in my book, *How to Be The One* – a well-developed Emotional Core, the emotional equivalent of a strong physical core stability known to anyone who has ever practiced Yoga or Pilates. The emotional 'muscles' they have developed in life include: a healthy self-esteem, an appealing attitude to life, a deep sense of inner happiness and kindness towards others.

Faced by the world's media at a press conference announcing their engagement, did you notice how William so gently reassured and supported his bride-to-be, knowing how nervous she must have been? That's classy. But you don't have to be royalty to be considerate. So, for the next month, commit yourself to the following:

1. Instead of focusing on what you want from a date, put some effort into being that sort of person for them. Adopt or develop those same qualities you value so much in others. You want someone loving, trustworthy, reliable and considerate? Well, how would you score on those same qualities?

2. William and Kate are best friends. Decide to be nice to everyone you meet and everyone you date. Just be friendly with *no* agenda. And forget the so-called 'dating rules.' Let's face it, they mostly encourage you to treat people like you dislike them!

3. Those who have exhausted "just having fun" are looking for someone special with whom to share their lives. There are men and women out there who create idealized fantasy figures in their heads, and no one can live up to them. My fear is that millions of people will keep looking, but will fail to realize that their wish list may be completely unrealistic. Happy,

long-lasting relationships are based on trust, love and commitment; but there seems to be a lot of confusion about the definitions of those qualities. In my book, I talk about how commitment has been diluted into “Commitment Light,” a diet cola version of the quality.

Invest time developing your emotional core. You’ll pass more ‘auditions,’ which will open up options. Plus, you’ll be able to share the limelight with an A-list partner in a Blockbuster relationship, rather than a low-budget soap opera!

Hunting for Love Later in Life



By KB in NYC

We all know that dating is a minefield, right? But here’s the

thing; getting older doesn't help. A lot of 40-year-old men only want to date 25-year-olds. And here's why: a woman in her 30's or 40's knows what she wants. She's been around the block a few times, and she's less willing to compromise. She's less easily impressed and she is, in a word, more discerning.

Now that's not necessarily a bad thing, but it does make dating harder. Also, when man hunting at an older age, you tend to want different things. At 24, a cocktail and a great make out session will suffice; at 40, not so much.

Hollywood is filled with fabulous women, all of whom have achieved enormous success and are finding themselves single in their mid-30's and 40's – think Jennifer Aniston, Charlize Theron, Sandra Bullock and Sheryl Crow.

The thing is, these celebrities are pretty much set: they have millions of dollars in the bank, they look fantastic and if motherhood tickles their fancy, there's always adoption. And yet, they can't get the man thing right. Famous or not, who doesn't want to get the man thing right?

Whether you're single by choice or on a serious manhunt, the parameters are kind of the same. Be honest with yourself and the men you're dating about what you want. If it's marriage and kids, then own that.

You may not be in your 20's anymore, but that's no reason to act desperate. Like Jen taking back John Mayer after he had publicly humiliated her? That had a whiff of desperation to it. Know what you have to offer, and never accept anything less than you deserve, no matter how desperate you may be to "put a ring on it."

Take a page out of Jen, Cheryl or Sandra's books and surround yourself with great people. Friends make the world go 'round, and being happily single is about having your emotional needs

met.

It's such a cliché, but oh-so true: be comfortable in your skin, even if it requires Artefill to keep it looking as good as it once did.

We are a society obsessed with aging, and yet many celebrities are just getting better the older they get. From Halle Berry to Kate Winslet, Jenny McCarthy and Susan Sarandon, age certainly hasn't gotten in the way of dating fabulous men. Which leads one to contend that if age is just a number, attitude must be everything.

PR maven KB is a self-proclaimed 'lover, dater, blogger, believer.' She is the author of KB IN NYC, a no-holds barred account of her dating hits and misses, and her search for love in New York. With a penchant for red nails, five star hotels and a sultry wit to match, she explores what it means to be in your woman perfect early-thirties navigating this brave new world that we find ourselves in.

A New Hollywood Trend: Dating with Kids





By Kelly Seal

Considering dating someone with kids?

Celebrities without children are daring to date single parents these days, at least according to the tabloids. Rocker Matt Bellamy recently started dating single mom Kate Hudson. Brad Pitt became an adoptive father to Angelina Jolie's oldest son shortly after their relationship took off. And let's not forget Jake Gyllenhaal's romance with Reese Witherspoon, single mother of two.

I have to admit, I never thought I'd be dating a man with children, let alone marry him. I don't have any myself, and had never dated any single dads previously. It's one thing to figure out the twists and turns of being in a relationship, and quite another when you add children to the mix. And yet I decided to pursue this path, not only because I fell in love with my husband, but because I saw him as a compassionate, caring, and loving father with his kids.

Whether this is a new trend in Hollywood or not, dating a single mom or dad comes with its own unique challenges. If you find yourself in this situation and are looking to navigate your way through, here are some considerations that may help guide you in the right direction.

1. Are you looking for a long-term relationship? Perhaps you've fallen for a single mom or dad, but you aren't really sure if it's just a fling or something more substantial. Until you decide that you are in it for the long-term, don't meet the children. They do not need more instability added to their lives, and it's more confusing when girlfriends or boyfriends come and go. Take your time so you really know what you want.

2. Be flexible. Single parents are going it alone, so remember if a child gets sick or has a change in schedule, the parent has to take care of things. If you planned a nice evening out or a trip with your beloved and it gets canceled due to the kids, recognize that sometimes you have to go with the flow.

3. Do you want to form a relationship with the kids, too? When you date someone with kids, you're also entering a relationship with his/her children. If you are uncomfortable with the idea of taking the kids places or getting to know them, you may want to reconsider.

Kelly is a writer and former speed dating host. She writes regularly for Womens Online Magazine, Examiner.com, and DatingSitesReviews.com, and blogs about dating and relationships at www.kellyseal.com.

**Gwyneth Paltrow Slams
Celebrity Couples Who Teach**

Important Lessons

Relationship



By [Jessica DeRubbo](#)

Recent *Glee* guest Gwyneth Paltrow is making headlines lately. Even though she's part of a high-profile celebrity relationship herself, she is speaking out against "unnecessary" celebrity couples. In fact, she went so far as to tell CNN, "It's just unnecessary to be a public couple, and to have your couple-dom or whatever be its own entity. It doesn't make sense to have that in the public world."

Alright, Gwyneth, I see your point. There are definitely famous couples who live for the spotlight, which is pathetic. One obvious example is former *Hills* stars Heidi Montag and Spencer Pratt.

I don't know about you, but I'm under the impression that their every move is to garnish media coverage. And then there's LeAnn Rimes and Eddie Cibrian. Has anyone else

noticed their everyday presence in tabloids lately? They cheated on their respective spouses with each other and then they spend months defending their indiscretion to the media. Is that necessary?

Even Taylor Swift is becoming a constant presence in the celebrity relationship world. While she doesn't currently have an 'other-half,' I'd be shocked to see someone who *doesn't* know that Taylor Swift is single and loving it. I've read at least three interviews in the last month where she refers to her singleness. Okay, we get it already!

Yes, I see Gwyneth Paltrow's point. She even refers to her own relationship, saying, "When I see high-profile relationships now, I think, 'Oh my God' even though I'm technically in one. But we sort of don't do anything public, we try to keep it behind the scenes as possible (sic).

Because it just generates more interest...it just undermines the quality of your life." That being said, there's certainly a lot to learn from those high-profile pairs that Gwyneth Paltrow speaks about. Celebrity couples can teach us about our own personal relationships. Consider the following:

1. Heidi Montag and Spencer Pratt: You may roll your eyes at their publicity stunts, but through that negativity you realize that you want to avoid being like them in your own life. They convince you that it's probably best not to discuss every detail of your relationship to anyone who will listen.

2. LeAnn Rimes and Eddie Cibrian: This singer and actor duo made the mistake of cheating on their significant others and then defended their decision to do so, even though many would agree that infidelity is morally wrong. LeAnn Rimes and Eddie Cibrian help you realize that if you find yourself falling in love with someone who isn't your current partner, you should call it quits and come clean about any wrong doings.

Apologize and move on. And whatever you do, don't rehash the

past in public!

3. Taylor Swift: She's not only been linked to John Mayer, Taylor Lautner, Joe Jonas and Jake Gyllenhaal, but she's turned around and written songs about it. And right now, Taylor Swift is embracing the single life, calling it "wonderful." What have we learned from her? Being single is okay! Dating is okay! Instead of sulking in a dark corner and lamenting your current solo status, enjoy the experience while it lasts. If Taylor Swift can do it, so can you.

Gwyneth Paltrow may make a valid point in her rant on high-profile celebrity couples, but I highly doubt those who crave the limelight will leave the tabloids anytime soon. As long as they exist, we can use these stories to gain insight into the multifaceted world of dating and relationships.

Dating: First Impressions – Part II





By Alex V. of The

Urban Dater

Reality. If reality was an actual person, I'd probably punch it in the neck. Why? Sometimes, or most times (depending on how much baby Jesus thinks I suck) reality really is a jerk. Only sometimes, though.

I'm a dork, I gigantic geek bag! It's true. No, really, it is! I was a nerd before it was cool, dammit! However, there's just no helping a person's uninformed perception aka ignorance. You see, being a dork and an odd ball, dating women was often lost on me. No women wanted to date a geek like me, I thought.

You never heard about Dustin Diamond dating a hot girl, now did you? If you did, surely you chuckled at such a ridiculous rumor. However, the coolness of nerds and geeks has sky rocketed over the years, with shows like *Beauty and the Geek* and the rise to stardom of actors, like my hero, Seth Rogen.

Seeing that, the king of chubs and geeks, Seth Rogen was dating super-hottie Lauren Miller, for, at the time, four years, gave me hope that a geek like me could find a hottie of my own as well; and found one I did! The nerd wins!

My girlfriend, I tell my friends, is a lot prettier than a

dork like me deserves. I'm sure Seth Rogen felt the same way, too! Once we get passed the looks and the superficial associations and self-stylings, we're all looking for love, ultimately. It's not just about looks, after all. Right?

There was something about this person that made me fall for her, many somethings, if you will.

– The person has got to make you laugh. No question about it. The women I've loved were the ones that made me laugh. No doubt about it.

– Are they open minded? Is your would-be partner in crime willing to pony up when you want to go on an adventure?

– Will they help you clean your place after a raging party at 3am? Just having the support is important.

– Do your friends like your significant other? This, by far, has been the biggest difference for me. Most of the women I've dated, my friends didn't get along with. With my girlfriend, now, all my friends simply adore her. They would probably dump me, if I dump my girlfriend!

– Do they make you believe you can do anything? My girl does. She's my biggest fan; my biggest cheerleader. The girl supports all of things I'm working on... That's huge. Seth Rogen? You better believe he needs a cheerleader after a box office bomb... I'm just sayin'.

It's pretty amazing what becomes clear once we set perceptions about beauty and status aside. No?

Dating: First Impressions –

Part I



By Taylor Cast of

The Urban Dater

First impressions are incredibly important, and even more so when it comes to dating. People make a snap decision when they meet someone if that person is going to be a friend or potential date. Instant decisions are an innate process in us, and most of the time we don't change our mind. I have met men who in theory are exactly what I want, but they failed to impress, and I lost the urge to pursue dating them. Or men who in their dating profiles are good looking, they have great "stats," and then they misspell something. For example, the last guy to message me said in his profile that he is "very intelligant." Afraid not pal.

When we first meet a person we size them up, make judgments and decide if this person is going to get us naked. My roommate will not date a man who shows up with dirty shoes. So if his white sneakers have the slightest tinge of dirt on them, she is done with him. I eliminate men based on their

literary knowledge. It may be silly, but we all do it. A guy friend of mine wouldn't even entertain the idea of dating a brunette, because blondes were his "thing." We decide that a person isn't for us based on that first minute or so.

Now pretend you're a famous celebrity: a star whom the world knows. Every detail of your life is published for the masses to consume. Oh, and you're single. No, thank you. I can't imagine what it is like to date as a celebrity, where most of the public thinks they "know" you. To have all of those preconceived notions out there about you and then to meet someone and show them who you really are. How difficult must it be to be Jennifer Aniston? Most of the public pities her for the end of her marriage and inability to find a partner. Can you imagine what it's like for her to meet someone and go on a first date?

Dating is difficult enough, but to have the obstacle of being incredibly famous must at times feel like an incredible burden. I'm sure Jennifer Aniston has her own ideas of what she wants in a man, and first impressions must count ten fold to her than any of the rest of us. That man has to follow in the steps of Brad Pitt. BRAD PITT. I don't know if there could be bigger shoes to fill.

For the second part to this series, visit us on Thursday for The Urban Dater's male perspective from Alex V.

My Love Relationship with

Celebrities and Fame



By Royal Young of

Interview Magazine

Charlie Sheen's recent escort escapades are good for a raunchy laugh, but they are part of a trend in bad celebrity behavior that has poisoned my own ideas about passion. I have always chased fame – which never seemed to match up with love – despite the fact that my devoted parents have been together for almost 30 years. While I'm sure there are plenty of Hollywood homebodies with happy marriages, we are constantly bombarded with the burning Bentley car wreck of celebrity relationships.

Growing up as a reserved Jewish boy already predisposed to solitude who would only come alive when performing, I decided I would never need to use my heart. Spotlights were flirtatious, and applause was better than the attention I couldn't get from pretty girls my own age. I turned into a hungry ghost, too self-obsessed to want anything but vague,

vacuous fame – at any cost.

I was raised on the Lower East Side in the '90s (before its multi-million dollar reincarnation) and went to LaGuardia "Fame" High School. I chased gaudy glamour after graduation and skipped college for empty extra roles in music videos, sleazy modeling gigs, sex exchanged for money and promises of lines in movies that were never made – all which led to failed, fledgling relationships. I wore outlandish, revealing outfits for attention, and was thrilled when shutterbugs snapped my portrait for a street style section picked up by Gawker, where, to my glee, I received so much hate mail. Yet without any long-term girlfriend – since I pushed away every person who tried to get close to me – I felt empty.

At 24, I realized I hadn't been in a normal relationship for ten years. Sure, I've hooked up with models and had two seconds of screen time in some indie movies, Boy George once winked at me and I've partied with Yoko Ono, but I suddenly craved the comfort of a real lover. For the first time in my life, I wanted the stability and support my parents seemed to have, working through their issues as a loving team. But I had no idea where to start. I no longer wanted to be a fame shark, get featured on Perez Hilton, or go dancing with the stars. I knew none of that would make me feel like I had a home or a heart, or allow me to be satisfied with who I was: a shy loner who longed to fit in with a loud, lascivious crowd. When it came to love, I realized there were no rules except for letting go; I just wish there were some tabloids that could teach me how.

Royal Young just completed his debut memoir *Fame Shark*. He works with *Interview Magazine* (www.interviewmagazine.com) and you can follow him at [Twitter.com/RoyalYoung](https://twitter.com/RoyalYoung).

Thoughts from a Single 30-Year-Old



By Jessica Downey of Chicago Now's All the Single Ladies
Christina Aguilera recently divorced Jordan Bratman, and she is about to turn 30 in December. I am at the opposite end of things – I just turned 30, and I have never been married (read that as I am totally and completely single).

When I was 20, I thought that I would be married or at least in a really serious relationship by the age of 30. And it's not that I think 30 is old by any means or that I had some sort of timeline but at that time, 30 just seemed so far away.

I mean, 10 years is a pretty long time; plenty of time to meet a guy, fall in love and get married.

Obviously as I went into this year, I figured out that marriage probably wasn't going to happen. Technically, it

didn't take me that long to figure it out, but I mean, you really never know what can happen. But as my birthday got closer and closer, I kind of liked the idea of having a boyfriend or at least a date by my side on that day.

When the day actually came, I honestly have to say that I wasn't all that sad that I didn't have a man by my side.

Actually, I wasn't sad at all. I looked around me and saw all of the amazing friends and family that went out of their way to make the day special for me. I also realized that I have accomplished a lot in life since I was 20.

Now that I am actually 30, I can honestly say that not having a significant other really doesn't feel any different than when I was 20. I mean, things around me have changed. I now live in a completely different place. Certain characteristics about me have also grown and changed, but honestly being single doesn't feel any different for me.

I am not trying to take anything away from the whole concept of finding someone that you truly love. But I do believe that there are many other things in life that you can also be happy about. Things that are important as well. And while the once 20-year-old girl thought she would be married by this time, the 30-year-old woman knows that she just hasn't met the right guy yet.

Jessica Downey is a freelance writer who writes about dating and single life in Chicago. All of her ramblings can be found on her blog on ChicagoNow.com. She also writes for badonlinedates.com and has written for examiner.com.

Celebrity Trademarks Offer Dating Advice for Singles



By Laurie Davis,
Founder of eFlirt Expert and eFlirt Expert VIP

We've all heard the line "If you've got it, flaunt it." Now, some of the biggest celebrities in the business are proving that your best physical assets mean *everything*. To many of them, that's several million. Hollywood's finest are getting their vital parts insured – the physical attributes that give them star power – and it shouldn't come as a surprise that these body parts are often the things that we're most attracted to in the opposite sex. Whether on the silver screen or at the local watering hole, your trademark asset sets you apart for all of the other singles out there. Simply showing off your physical assets can help you snag that cutie sans cheesy pick-up lines. Celebrities have proved that our flirting assets can literally be one in a million. So, just how much are we talking?

Jennifer Lopez insured her booty for \$27M. Heidi Klum's legs are worth \$2.2M. Tom Jones' chest hair is insured for a cool \$7M. Frankie Jakeman, the British male stripper, insured his ... well, you know ... for \$1.6M. Troy Polamalu of the Pittsburg Steelers had his hair insured for \$1M by Head & Shoulders. Dolly Parton's chest is worth \$300,000 per breast. And, Aquafresh White Strips insured America Ferrera's teeth for \$10M.

Some of these celebrities have literally made entire careers by paying attention to their strengths and flaunting it, so the bottom line is: you need to know what physically sets you apart when a match meets you! Which of your attributes do *you* enjoy the most? Playing up your trademark while you're flirting, whether it's shaking your derriere on the dance floor or flashing your pearly whites from across the room, will help get your crush's attention. If you're having trouble identifying that stand-out trait, ask your friends for some insight. Also, small enhancements can go a long way, too. If your eyes are your trademark, work on getting that perfect, natural makeup look that makes your lashes longer and eyes bigger.

But, now that our lives have gone digital and so much technology is involved in our day-to-day, you have digital flirting assets as well. Some singles spend all day on Facebook and others are addicted to announcing their every move on Foursquare. While celebrities aren't insuring their thumbs yet, they are certainly following suit. Ashton Kutcher is a Twitter-aholic. Steve Jobs is the king of apps. And everyone has a digital trademark, just like they have a physical one. Knowing what you got and how to flaunt it online will up your eFlirting game instantly. By determining where you enjoy your time online, you can structure your digital life to put yourself in the right virtual opportunity to meet matches.

The key is to make your online life work *for* you, not against

you. For example, if you know that you are better with real-time flirting than you are over email banter, try to catch your crush on instant messenger whether you're communicating on Facebook or Match.com. iPhone addicts who are always out and about might have a blast meeting matches via location-based dating apps like Meet Moi or Skout. If your best digital assets are photos, flaunt them in front of your matches on DailyBooth or Zoosk.

Using the right platform is half the battle and the other half is using the right language that allows your personality to jump off the virtual page. You want to sound like you would in person, but enhanced for the online black and white text. Exclamation points help send energy through the computer screen, terms of endearment used at the perfect moment can make things more personal and emoticons can show excitement. So whether you're injecting a darlin' into conversation or ending a sentence with a wink, know what will speak to your personality while resonating digitally with your potential dates.

Remember, your best assets are all right there in front of you, whether it's in the mirror or the computer screen. So if you got it, flaunt it!

Celebrity Couples Make a Blessing Out of Interfaith Relationships



By Erika Hymowitz

Vujnovich

Chelsea Clinton/Marc Mezvinsky, Naomi Watts/Liev Schreiber, Tom Cruise/Katie Holmes and even Brad Pitt/Angelina Jolie are among the numerous celebrity couples attempting to make an interfaith relationship work. While it's nice to believe the old saying "love conquers all," there are often many challenges an interfaith couple faces. Speaking from experience, I entered into an interfaith marriage five years ago. It has taken a tremendous amount of respect and understanding between me and my husband to make our relationship work and to be able to provide a stable foundation for our children.

[ABC News](#) says that one in three U.S. couples is in a religiously mixed marriage. However, back in June, the [Chicago Family Law Blog](#) highlighted the issue and cited data taken from a 2001 American Religious Identification Survey, which show couples in mixed-religion families were *three times* more likely to be divorced than those who were of the same faith. The [New York Times](#) also wrote on the issue this past

summer, following the high-profile marriage of Chelsea Clinton and Marc Mezvinsky. Clinton, a Methodist and Mezvinsky, who is Jewish, pushed the issue of mixed marriage into the spotlight again.

Whether mixed-religion marriages are becoming the new norm or not, if you are in such a relationship and are questioning whether or not it can work, here are a few things to consider:

1. Don't ignore the differences: Religion often contributes to who we are. As such, it's crucial not to disregard religious beliefs. One of the top mistakes that couples make is that they believe their love for one another will conquer all interfaith marital problems. This is not always true. Take the time to discuss your beliefs. You may find that your partner feels the same way, or you may realize you come from completely different backgrounds.

2. Look for clergy counseling: If you're looking for that mixed marriage blessing, you'll want to consider speaking with clergy from your place of worship. When my husband and I first considered getting married, we immediately went to meet with my Rabbi. He was very open to the idea of us getting married, with the understanding that we will raise our children in the Jewish faith. A member of the clergy will help outline the challenges you may face as a couple as well as give advice on how to best approach your respective families, who may not be as accepting.

3. Think of the children: The last thing you'll want to do is make a child decide which religion they want to follow. Before you even have children, you and your spouse should decide how you want to raise them. Lay the foundation from the beginning, and be honest with each other about your wishes. You don't want to confuse your child, but rather give them a solid sense of faith and culture. There is nothing wrong with celebrating all holidays, but make sure that as

your children get older, they have a belief system.

What Celebrity Marriages Can Teach Us About Love



By Sherry

Amatenstein, LCSW, and author of *The Complete Marriage Counselor*

It sounds simplistic, but the primary key to a successful marriage, whether the couple are superstars or just plain folk, is for the pair to make each other a priority.

This advice is easy to say, of course, but hard to implement, especially when your every move is followed by Twitter, Facebook, 24/7 cable news, and paparazzi. In the case celebrity couple John Travolta and Kelly Preston, their union

endured the scrutiny that arose after a blackmail attempt surrounding the death of their autistic son. No couple is immune from trauma and strife, but they must band together in the face of the trouble, instead of becoming separate camps.

Travolta and Preston exhibited grace under unimaginable sorrow and pressure, and their union seemingly emerged stronger for the ordeal.

Compare that grace to the four star bad judgment exhibited by David Arquette, by blabbing to Howard Stern about how his estranged wife, Courtney Cox, was tired of being his mother and had given her blessing to his having sex with other women.

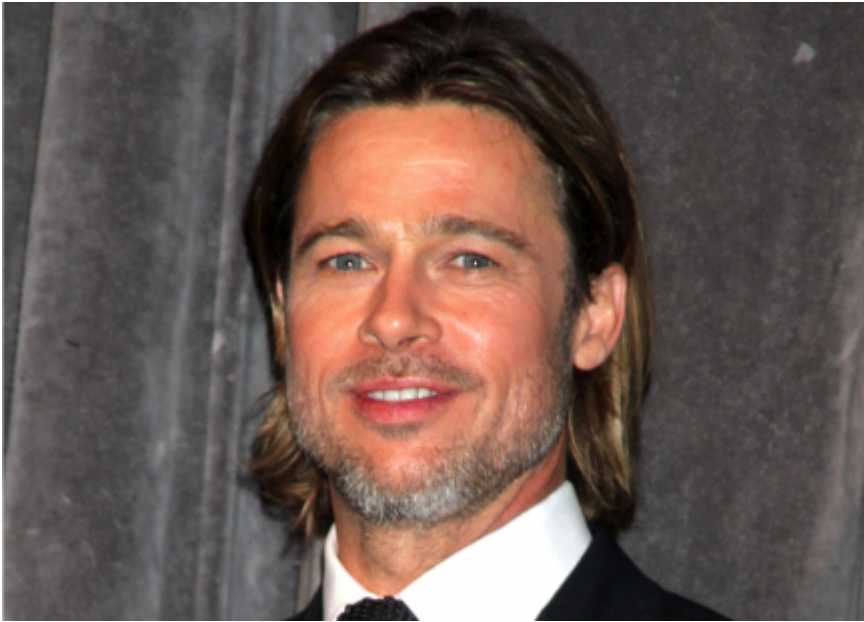
He added that sex with Cox was scheduled to some degree. Loose lips may not sink ships, but certainly can further puncture troubled marriages.

Another lesson to be gained from Arquette is his seeming unwillingness to compromise. On *The View*, he professed to love his wife, the mother of his child, but says she wants a quiet, calm life, while he (seven years younger) still wants to party. Is this really a gulf that cannot be bridged if both partners agree to give a little?

If star couples in love exhibit a little more Travolta and a lot less Arquette, perhaps the shelf life of these unions will be longer than a carton of milk!

Election Day Celebrity Style





By Kaitlyn Monteiro

With this year's 2010 midterm elections coming to a close today, we aren't seeing the celebrity star power that we witnessed in 2008. Make no mistake; it's not the Presidential election but it's still an important time to vote. According to experts, Hollywood is staying home this election period. Why the lack of star power now? Where's Brad and Angelina? Demi and Ashton? Whether we like it or not, these famous folks can influence public opinion. If you and your partner are ready to vote but don't see eye-to-eye when it comes to politics, there are still ways that you can make a stance while maintaining a healthy relationship:

1. One way to achieve neutral ground is by educating others. Instead of focusing your attention on who you're voting for, put the spotlight on the traditional lack of voter turn out instead and help increase the numbers.
2. Stand behind a group. While Jay-Z has made it clear in the past Presidential election who he was voting for, this time around he's working with the Vote Again 2010 campaign headed by HeadCount, a nonpartisan organization that works with musicians to promote participation in democracy. Find ways to get involved with groups that share the same political viewpoint as you.

3. Avoid trying to change your partner's opinion. You're with them because of the person they are, not the political candidate they support. Respect that they have the right to an opinion that differs from yours. Don't ridicule your significant other's views on certain issues – instead, listen and work to understand their stance.

Without becoming a political celebrity staple, celebrity couples are taking on a more open-minded and neutral stance when it comes to the midterm elections, and you and your significant other can try this out too. While issues dealt with during political elections can be the breaking point for some couples, that doesn't mean that Republicans, Democrats, and all parties alike cannot find mutual grounds in the dating world.

Wicked Celebrity Breakups





By [Jessica DeRubbo](#)

Let's face it: It's not often that breakups and divorces are civil and lacking in drama. In fact, most are ridden with angry fights, jealousy and revenge. America's A-list celebs prove that theory better than any other group! Consider Bristol Palin, Courteney Cox and Mel Gibson.

Bristol Palin

After revealing that she was expecting a baby during her mom's run for Vice President, a teenaged Bristol Palin announced her engagement to baby daddy Levi Johnston. Things eventually turned sour, however, when the couple called it quits and both of their families turned to the media for revenge. Johnston bad-mouthed Palin's family in an attempt to destroy it in a famous interview with [Vanity Fair](#). He said that Sarah Palin originally wanted to keep her daughter's pregnancy a secret and then adopt the child as her own when he was born. When the couple decided to try to make it work again recently, things went downhill pretty quickly. Bristol talked to the tabloids herself this time, claiming that she called it quits with Johnston due to his being in an intimate music video with singer, Brittani Senser. Johnston had apparently told Palin that he was going to Hollywood to film a hunting show. Even now, as Bristol stars on this season's *Dancing with the Stars*,

Johnston had something to say about it, remarking that she never once danced with him while they were together. Big or small, the drama won't seem to leave this couple alone! Unfortunately, with a son in the picture, the two will have to eventually make it work in a civil way.

Courteney Cox

Everyone's favorite *Friends* actress Courteney Cox isn't innocent to relationship drama either. Although we have yet to hear much from her camp after her split from husband David Arquette after 11 years, Arquette has been very vocal. What started out as a united statement to the media, saying, "The reason for this separation is to better understand ourselves and the qualities we need in a partner and for our marriage.

We remain best friends and responsible parents to our daughter and we still love each other deeply. As we go through this process we are determined to use kindness and understanding to get through this together" quickly led to Arquette's shocking radio interview with Howard Stern. The actor commented on the couple's sex life, among other things.

"We're not having sex, and I completely understand," he said. "She's in a place of wanting to be real and emotional.

She's an emotional being. She's an amazing woman. If it doesn't feel right, she doesn't feel like bonding in that way." It's been reported that Cox is more than unhappy about her former flame's big mouth (I know I definitely don't blame her!), but it remains to be seen where the two will go from here. It's so sad when a celebrity couple who seems to have it all together shocks us with buried anger and bitterness!

Mel Gibson

And then, of course, there's the case of Mel Gibson. After being married for 28 years to Robyn Gibson, Mel left his wife for Russian entertainer, Oksana Grigorieva. The couple dated for two years before breaking up, at which point Gibson allegedly lost it and began leaving abusive messages for his

ex. The crazy messages were recorded and eventually leaked to the public. In them, Gibson uses explicit language and is very hostile toward Grigorieva. At one point, he says, ““You’re a f–ing mentally deprived idiot. You’re a f–ing using whore ... I own you.” At another point, Grigorieva says, “You control me, like marionette ... I walk on eggshells with you.” Fighting words! The duo have been in a legal battle ever since. Personally, I’d want it all over and done with as quickly as humanly possible, wouldn’t you?

Drama, drama, drama! Some celebs just can’t avoid it. And when you add an anger-ridden break-up or divorce into the picture, A-listers seem to lose all control.

Top 10 Celebrity-Inspired Halloween Costumes





By Kari Arneson

Lady Gaga

It seems impossible that just a couple of years ago, no one had ever heard of Lady Gaga. Now the international pop superstar is one of the most stylish and controversial stars of her generation. But for Halloween, which outfit (out of thousands) should you choose? Try some of her most well-known, like the blue swimsuit from her "Poker Face" music video or one of her famous VMA outfits. Warning: Be careful with the meat dress.

The Bachelor

This is the perfect costume for the single guy looking for love. All you have to do is put on a nice suit and some hair gel, and you're good to go. And don't forget the most important part of the costume: roses. Hand them out to the cutest girls at the party.

Katy Perry

Nostalgic for the summer? Now that the weather's turned cold, celebrate summer 2010 with the artist who delivered its biggest hit. Dress like Katy Perry in her candy-themed "California Gurls" music video with a blue wig, candy-covered dress and, if you're feeling adventurous, some whipped cream,

too!

Sarah/Bristol Palin

Is teen activist Bristol Palin becoming more famous than her political mom? The teen mother is on this season's *Dancing With the Stars*, the #1 show on TV, and has millions of fans across the country. If you want to go the more traditional route, go with the now-classic Halloween costume: Sarah Palin. Hey, it worked for Tina Fey!

Edward Cullen

One of the most popular book series of the past decade, the *Twilight Saga*, has produced three blockbuster movies so far, rocketing its actors to superstardom. Robert Pattinson plays the brooding vampire, the romantic lead and the subject of many a teen girl's fantasies. Get the look with some white makeup, a gray peacoat and a bouffant hairdo. All you have to do now is practice your pout. Add some fangs if you're feeling daring.

Jersey Shore couple

Although they may not be an actual couple, The Situation and Snooki are undoubtedly the breakout stars of MTV's *Jersey Shore*. Besides the obvious GTL (gym, tan, laundry), get Snooki's poof with lots of hairspray or a wig. For the Situation, three words: abs, abs, abs. You might need some time to prepare for that one...

Justin Bieber

While the Biebs was blowing up the charts this year, Halloween costume-makers were busy making, you guessed it – the Justin Bieber wig. All you need to complete this costume is some baggy jeans, sweet kicks, and the hair. Screaming 12-year-old girls are optional.

Kim Kardashian

This reality TV bombshell is one of the most talked-about celebs on the planet. With her hit show Keeping Up with the Kardashians under her belt and the new Kourtney and Kim Take New York coming soon to a living room near you, the curvy brunette is a perfect costume idea. Try a wig or extensions to get Kim's long dark locks, a bandage dress, and if you need it, a little help in the chest area will complete the transformation!

Mad Hatter

If you're a fan of Johnny Depp and/or huge top hats, this is the costume for you. Replicate the iconic character played by Depp in this year's Alice In Wonderland with a tall, raddy-looking hat, long pinstripe pants and a colorful blazer.

Avatar

So a tall blue alien with long hair and very little clothing might not be the most traditional costume, but will no doubt be the most recognizable. Avatar, the highest-grossing movie ever made, came out last year and the Na'avi people featured in the movie are still all the buzz. You can find plenty of blue body paint and full Avatar costumes at most Halloween stores.

Social Do's for Dating Mark Zuckerberg



By Vicky Sullivan

In the opening scene of the recent box office hit, *The Social Network*, the fictional Mark Zuckerberg (Jesse Eisenberg) insults girlfriend, Erica Albright (Rooney Mara,) by debasing her background and education. She then says, "Dating you is like dating a stair master." And quickly dumps him. 500 Million friends and billions of dollars later, the real Zuckerberg and girlfriend Priscilla Chan, who he met while studying at Harvard, have just become Palo Alto's 'it' couple. It must be tough dating a billionaire at the helm of one of the world's most influential websites. Especially, when you have lawsuits and the paparazzi following you. However, Chan has stuck with Zuckerberg through it all. According to [People](#), the couple live together in a modest rented house. Shortly after the release of the film, the reclusive Zuckerberg briefly let cameras into his home on a live broadcast of *The Oprah Winfrey Show*. In response to the movie, Zuckerberg said, "The last six years have been a lot of coding and focus and hard work. But, maybe it would be fun to remember it as partying and all this crazy drama." Perhaps, he isn't that much of a stair master after all.

How do you keep your relationship in perspective when you're dating someone rich and powerful?

Cupid's Advice:

Most people dream of being swept off their feet by someone with wealth, success, and fame. If you find yourself in that situation, here are a few things to remember:

1. Be yourself: Money can change everything or nothing at all. So when it comes to dating someone with wealth, remember they're just a regular person like everyone else with the same needs and insecurities.

2. Don't get intimidated: Your partner is and always will be your equal. Try not to feel that your partner is out of your league. After all, they chose you for a reason.

3. Jealousy isn't an option: Jealousy shouldn't be a part of any relationship. However, when it comes to the rich and powerful, there is bound to be competition. Try not to let it get to you.

5 Signs That George Clooney May Actually Commit





By Kimberly Dawn

Neumann of Dating Diva Daily and author of *The Real Reasons Men Commit*

Recently there have been all kinds of tabloid rumors working to put a chink in the bond between George and his stunning Italian amore-du-jour Elisabetta (sex and drug scandals anyone?). Though Elisabetta has chalked a lot of it up to envy (okay, we'll admit we're a little jealous but seriously...that wouldn't cause us to implicate her in a drug debacle), later this summer there was also a flurry of speculation that E and G were about to become EG (in other words, they were possibly EnGaged).

While more recent reports have explained that the reported left-hand ring flash was actually a napkin ring with which she was playing at dinner (on her left hand while waving it to the paparazzi...ummm...okay, whatever), the reality is that there may actually be some validity to the idea that good ole' George is in a commitment frame of mind when it comes to his latest gal.

Here are some signs that George (and any man for that matter) may be ready to commit that go beyond how ridiculously stunning Elisabetta looks like in a bikini:

1. He makes room for his woman in his home and his life: In

George's case that means that Elisabetta has been spotted frequently at Clooney's Lake Como villa. Any man that welcomes a woman into his home with such open arms is exhibiting commitment-mindedness.

2. He takes the relationship public: In the non-celeb world, this usually means that a man is willing to tell all his friends, family, coworkers about the lady in his life. In George's case that also means telling the tabs, the Oscar voters and the red carpet mavens. So, it is wise for him to remain mum on a gal unless he's serious. George has shown no qualms about displaying his affection for Elisabetta on a very public stage.

3. He has a sincere desire to please and make his woman happy: Elisabetta was quoted recently in Italian Vanity Fair stating "I feel good, I feel light. Like when I was 18 years old." She goes on to add that George pampers her like she's never experienced before and that he is the person to whom she owes the color that is back in her life. He is clearly working to make this woman happy.

4. He is supportive and complimentary: In that same interview, Elisabetta said that Clooney is very supportive of her and always close. A man who is there for and builds up his partner is definitely more commitment-ready because he cares about his partner's sense of self and well-being, not just his own. "If you feel loved, you always feel beautiful," she says. Ah, well put. And if Elisabetta is feeling that kind of love from George then he's clearly invested in this relationship.

5. He recognizes that he can be independent and in a relationship at the same time: One reason George has previously said that he'll remain a confirmed bachelor is that he always felt the women he was with didn't understand the demands of his work and how it might take him away for long stretches. However, with Elisabetta, George seems to be

comfortable since she's clearly independent and strong enough to stand on her own two feet if he has to go away. Though marriage may not be the end game here, George is exhibiting signs that this woman will be in his life for more than a blip. Sorry to all you Mrs. Clooney hopefuls out there, but the signs (for now) seem to be lining up in Elisabetta's favor.

Kimberly Dawn Neumann is a New York City-based dating/relationship writer and coach whose work has appeared in such publications as Cosmopolitan, Maxim, Marie Claire, and online for Match.com, Yahoo, AOL, MSN, and iVillage. She is the author of two books, The Real Reasons Men Commit and Sex Comes First and an advisory board member for CanDoBetter.com. Her blog-zine is Dating Diva Daily.

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.

Single Celebrities Who Rock (and Rule)!



By Terry Hernon

MacDonald of singlewomenrule.com

A happy marriage may be among life's greatest pleasures, but there's a lot to be said for living single. For too long, single men and women have been portrayed as unlovable, irresponsible, selfish, or childish. (The media tend to portray single celebs in their 20s as sexy, but once she – and in this case, it's usually a she – turns 30, the question, "Is there anyone special in your life?" comes with increasing frequency and feigned concern.)

It's time to celebrate two unmarried women who make single living desirable, and they're both well over 30. If you're not there yet, they'll give you plenty to aspire to; if you

are, they'll give you reasons to be cheerful.

Susan Sarandon

The young woman who played the grating but endearing Janet Weiss in *The Rocky Horror Picture Show* went on to draw acclaim for her performance in *Atlantic City* and ascended from there.

She built a reputation for being the wise, sexy, and – later on – the older woman men find irresistible. (After 40, she solidified her status as a sex symbol – not a sex object – in *Bull Durham* and *Thelma and Louise*.)

And, while she's sexy, she's also one to beat the odds. According to IMDb.com, doctors Sarandon that she'd never have children. She had the last of three at 45. Today, she's 64, living on her own terms, having recently ended a 21-year relationship with *Durham* co-star Timothy Robbins.

Marisa Tomei

According to IMDD.com, this 46-year-old actress says of marriage, "I'm not that big a fan of marriage as an institution, and I don't know why women need to have children to be seen as complete human beings." Tomei does enjoy relationships, though, having dated many attractive men, most recently actor Logan Marshall-Green, who is 12 years her junior.

Since hitting it big in the 1992 comedy *My Cousin Vinny* (her performance was ridiculed by the likes of Charlie Sheen), Tomei earned considerable respect for her work in *Welcome to Sarajevo* and *In the Bedroom*. She garnered an Oscar nomination for *The Wrestler* in 2008 and will co-star with Kevin Bacon, Steve Carell, and Emma Stone in *Crazy, Stupid, Love*, due for release in April 2011.

While Tomei's acting made her famous, what we at SWR really love her for is her work on behalf of women's causes, most

notably Equality Now.

MTV's Video Music Awards: What You Missed



By [Jessica DeRubbo](#)

Well, the MTV Video Music Awards have come and gone yet again, and the celebs in attendance this year didn't disappoint!

Some of the more notable duos walking the white carpet this year were Justin Bieber & Selena Gomez, Usher & Justin Bieber, *Jersey Shore's* Ronnie & Vinnie and Stephanie Pratt & Lo Bosworth, according to [Hollywood Life](#). And, of course, there was the much-anticipated awards show participants Taylor Swift and Kanye West. After last year's debacle where West barged on stage during Swift's acceptance speech, he was on his best behavior. The two stars separately sang two brand new songs

addressing last year's event, "like a pair of dueling attorneys making closing statements in front of a jury," according to Tris McCall at the New Jersey [Star-Ledger](#).

That's not to leave out the host of this year's VMA extravaganza. E!'s popular comedienne Chelsea Handler took the podium, and the question is: how did she measure up? Here are three reviews that seem to sum it up:

1. "As the live portion of the show began, Handler turned in a moderately funny Gaga sendup, appearing amid red-lycra-clad dancers wearing a dollhouse on her head. Though, again, it felt a little like Host the VMAs Paint-by-Numbers – Gaga's both the easiest and the lamest (not to mention the most willing) target around," said Jennifer Armstrong in *Entertainment Weekly's* PopWatch.

2. "And then there was the awkward plight of the night's host, Chelsea Handler. She was among the worst in the show's history – purposefully out-of-touch, with brief, alarming flashes of off-color racial humor," said Jon Caramanica of the [New York Times](#).

3. "But there was little smooching or feuding on Sunday, despite some nudging from the host. 'I want to encourage everyone to be on their worst behavior,' comedian Chelsea Handler declared in her opening monologue, a string of flat punch lines that felt a few degrees below crass," said Chris Richards in *The Washington Post's* Click Track.

Although the VMAs usually make for some stories full of cat fights and on-stage duels, the show was pretty tame overall this year. But with the best ratings since 2002, according to Just Jared, Chelsea Handler can't complain!