

Celebrity Couple Sarah Michelle Gellar and Freddie Prinze Jr.: How Does A Couple Cope With Illness?



By Dr. Jane Greer

It's been a tough few months for [celebrity couple](#) Sarah Michelle Gellar and Freddie Prinze Jr.! Freddie is reportedly on the mend, but it has been a long haul. The actor underwent spine surgery, and it looks like he will make a full recovery. While his celebrity wife, Sarah Michelle Gellar, has been supportive throughout the process, it can be very difficult to deal with illness in the family. It's a stressful time for everyone involved, individually and as a couple. In the end,

it can either strain a relationship, or it can ultimately strengthen it.

There are certain steps you can take to try to better deal when you or your partner is ill, or recovering from an injury or surgery, to make sure it doesn't tear you apart.

When you are dealing with illness and recovery, the uncertainty and anxiety you might feel can totally drain you. There can be so much going on that it is easy to lose sight of the bigger picture. The sick partner is not him or herself, and the healthy partner must become the caretaker, not sure when or if their loved one will be what he or she once was. When the ill person isn't available the way he or she usually is, the other person might feel unsupported, angry, overwhelmed, frightened, and even alone. That can get even worse if the sick person becomes demanding and takes the other for granted, or is constantly unpleasant because of the pain or discomfort they are feeling. Also, that person might be afraid and worried about the future, putting even more of a damper on the household. The healthy one might resent having to carry the lion's share of the household work. They might feel burdened and overloaded, in addition to all the other emotions they are already experiencing.

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As with so many other issues in a relationship, resentment can creep in when the communication creeps out. So often if you are the healthy one, you might feel you have no right to complain or ask anything of your sick loved one. If they feel

bad and yell, so be it. If they tell you they need you to cancel the plans you made to be out of the house for a few hours, what choice do you have? But that is not the case at all. In order to get through, there has to be a give and take.

Talk about it.

The first step is talking about it, and sharing your feelings. Of course the person who is ill is going through an awful time, but you are going through it with them. There isn't just one person being affected, there are two. It is very challenging to navigate that difficult road of juggling helping and supporting with honesty and advocating for yourself and your needs. It can be hard to give yourself permission to be upset. But it is so important that you are able to share your thoughts and feelings, and work together to acknowledge what you are both experiencing and thinking.

Related Link: [Celebrity Couples Who Shy Away From the Spotlight](#)

Have mutual empathy.

The life you shared (and presumably enjoyed) before your partner got ill is no longer the life either of you is living while the recovery is taking place. Without mutual empathy, that reality and all the stress you are both feeling can take a toll because most people eventually run out of emotional stamina. Talk about how you are each feeling, what is working and what isn't. Discuss what you have lost, and what you hope to get back. Come together as a team and be aware of a recovery plan. What is a realistic timeline to expect to get back to normal? That will give your partner time to rest without feeling pressure from you, and it will give you something to look forward to.

Freddie and Sarah are now closer to the other, healthier side of this. They are facing this challenge head-on, and hopefully will find it makes them stronger as they go forward.

Dating Advice: Is Trick-or-Treating with Your Love Life a Good Idea?



By Mario P. Cloutier and Diane Sawaya Cloutier

Yes, it's that time of year again. Soon we'll have legions of little devils and princesses running high on sugar, banging on our doors and willing to put on their best act in the hopes of stocking up on more sweets. Quite frankly, we love Halloween. For us, it's an opportunity to bask in the excitement of the smiling faces at our door and share some love.

But when it comes to love, is Halloween a metaphor for what your love life has become? Could trick or treating describe the type of encounters you have with romantic partners? We have some dating advice for you.

If you keep attracting the wrong individuals or repeating the same mistakes in your choice of partners, you may be prey to the trickery behind this cast of characters and missing out on the treat:

The desperate treat beggar:

This one will keep his finger on your doorbell until you open the door... even if the lights are out! He is so needy, he'll do ANYTHING to seduce you—disguise his true self, compromise his values, lie, accept mistreatment, and more. This is a role nobody should ever take on. Disguising oneself to become love-worthy is not sustainable in a romantic relationship.

The deceiving treat giver:

This person appears to be nothing but giving, but she's only passing out rotten apples and stale candy. Do you know why? Because she loves the deception! She loves to cheat and oftentimes she'll pursue more than one relationship at a time. Be wary, because this person can frequently be found offering her "treats" on multiple online dating sites.

The savvy treat seeker:

This one has a specific strategy to her treat collecting. You'll never see her knocking on a door with limited candy supplies. She's after the big, opulent, flashy treats—the full-size chocolate bars and the like. As a result, she will

completely disregard more modest offerings, even if they were lovingly handcrafted for the occasion. Such treat seekers find instant gratification, but rarely end up in a fulfilling relationship.

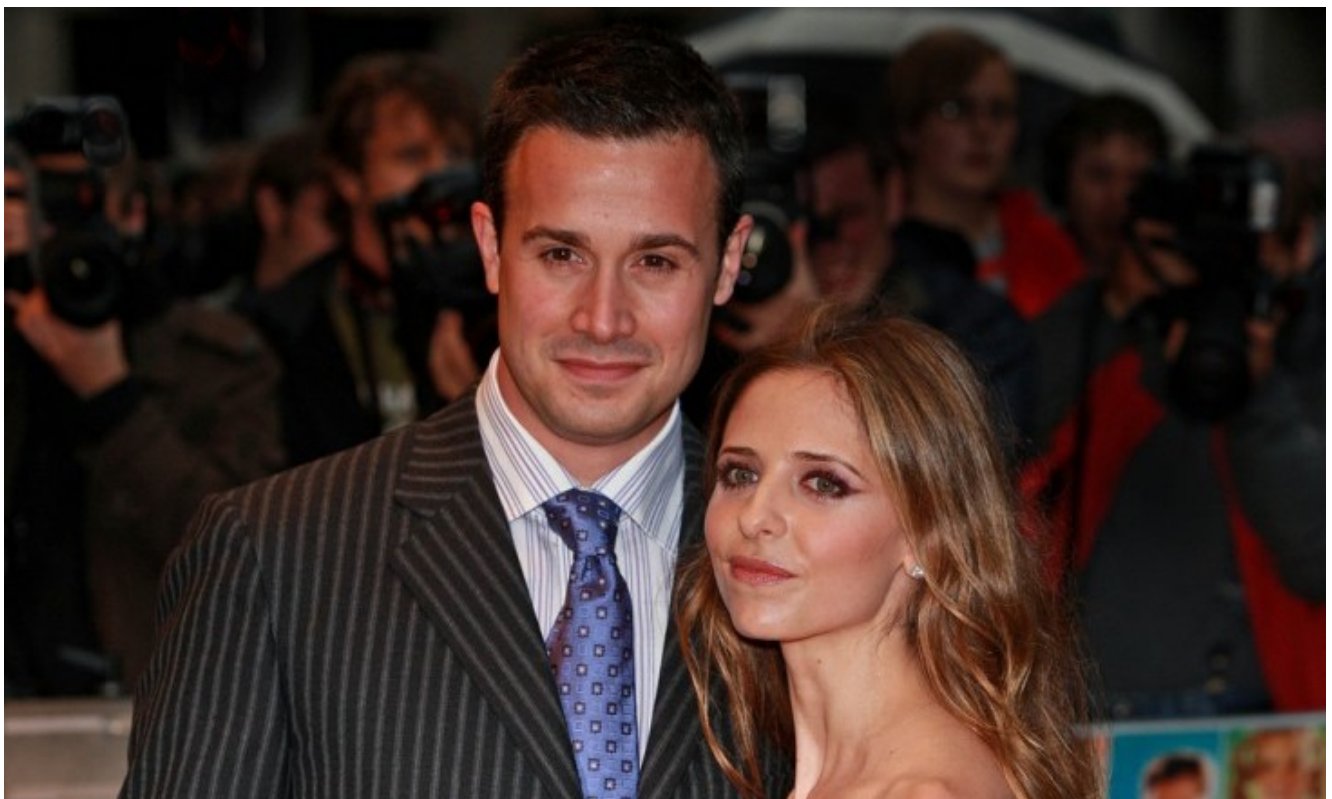
The leveraging treat giver:

This guy gets a kick from negotiating and... he never stops! "Ok kids, who's willing to count to 100 for these two candies here?" And, once you've performed it, he cranks up his request! "Alright, now do it backwards." He's the perpetual "I'll give you this if you give me that" kind of person in his relationships. The ultimate "what's in it FOR ME!" kind of guy. Even if you like the looks of his treats, the question is, do you really need that?

If you have known one or more of these characters, we have only one piece of advice to give you: Take control of your FEAR. Identify what it is that prevents you from slamming the door on these pretenders, and start to confront it. Don't fall for the same tricks or settle for mediocre treats. Otherwise, you'll end up trick or treating a lot more than just your love life.

Authors and relationship coaches Diane and Mario Cloutier found each other in 1998 after they both had experienced unfulfilling relationships. Their new book, ReLovenship™ – Look Within to Love Again (Xclamat!on Media, 2015) gives inspiration, hope and a step-by-step methodology to people who have had romantic disappointments and are still looking to find "the one." Mario Cloutier is founder and chief creative officer of Xclamat!on Marketing. Diane Sawaya Cloutier enjoyed a successful career in managerial roles with Fortune 500 organizations before focusing fulltime on the couple's ReLovenship™ book and seminars. Learn more at www.ReLovenship.com.

Dating Advice: Dinner Date Dos and Don'ts



By Jessica Tom

For most of my career, I've been immersed in two things: love and food. For years, I was the Community Director at an online dating site, meaning I helped thousands of people in all things romantic. I'm also the author of *Food Whore: A Novel of Dining and Deceit*, a book about a young woman who secretly writes the *New York Times* restaurant review because the real critic has lost his sense of taste. Cue lots of drama.

So, I guess you can say I'm an expert in dining and early-stage dating. Dating while dining? Well, I have a couple thoughts on that. Here's some dating advice:

Do: Share some – if not all – dishes. It's more intimate. And, hey, if you like the person, you're sharing saliva anyway.

Don't: Eat off each other's plates. You're not a dog.

Do: Read up on the restaurant. A little background knowledge is a good thing and can help you both get situated.

Don't: Go overboard. You want some mystery.

Related Link: [Date Idea: Feed Your Heart with a Sushi Sampling](#)

Do: Have a drink to take the edge off and lighten the mood.

Don't: Test your limits. Tipsy is cute. Drunk, not so much.

Do: Order adventurously. Approach dates with an open mind ... and that includes with the menu.

Don't: Get something that's totally foreign. Maybe not the best time to get spicy alligator sweetbreads, ya know?

Do: Order courses that are subtly sexy: ricotta with honey and speck, dates stuffed with goat cheese, sticky toffee pudding.

Don't: Order cheesy "romantic" courses like chocolate fondue. (Though chocolate in general is always okay.)

Related Link: [First Date Outfit Ideas: Dinner and Movie](#)

Do: Tell him if you have a restaurant or cuisine in mind.

Don't: Try to run the show over multiple dates. Sometimes it's nice to be surprised (and let him do the surprising).

Do: Notice how he treats the waitstaff.

Don't: Pursue if he's an asshole to them, even if he's sweet to you. Red flag central.

Do: Get dessert!

Don't: Get so stuffed that you'll feel like a balloon about to pop afterwards. Especially if the restaurant isn't the last stop...

JESSICA TOM is a writer and food blogger living in Brooklyn. She has worked on initiatives with restaurants, hospitality startups, food trucks, and citywide culinary programs. She graduated from Yale University with a concentration in fiction writing and wrote the restaurant review for the Yale Daily News Magazine. Connect with her at www.jessicatom.com and @jessica_tom. "Food Whore" is her first novel. Order it on Amazon!

Celebrity Couple Kylie Jenner & Tyga: Is Fighting Good or Bad?





By Dr. Jane Greer

Current [celebrity couple](#) Kylie Jenner and Tyga recently revealed that they enjoy focusing on the fun things in life and “don’t really fight” in their relationship. They admit to disagreements occasionally, but not all-out fights. One of the ways they do this, they said, is by ignoring negativity. While this can create a very enjoyable and pleasant relationship in the moment, if it means brushing disputes under the rug for fear of where they might lead, it is possible it can create difficulty down the road.

It is important for all couples to address any concerns or differences of opinions so they can learn to work through conflict together. Here’s some [relationship advice](#).

Focus on points of contention.

Being hesitant to delve too deep might prevent people from being able to truly share their feelings and needs. With that in mind, the question becomes is fighting in a relationship good or bad? Arguing in and of itself can be very upsetting, so it isn't surprising that some people look to avoid it completely. The problem is that if you do that, you will close off an important channel of communication that can eventually lead to a better place. There are few couples who don't occasionally encounter a disagreement, feel annoyed with the other, or have concerns about something. When that happens and the issues are sidestepped and left alone, they can fester and grow into bigger problems that, if they go on long enough, can be destructive to the relationship.

Related Link: [Relationship Advice: When to Stop Wearing Your Wedding Ring](#)

Establish methods and listen.

In order to continue as a couple with a strong foundation, you need to have methods to work out the clashes that inevitably arise between you. An intense fight might not be the way to do that, but often an argument is the first attempt at addressing what is bugging you. Being able to voice your concerns in a respectful way so that your partner has a chance to hear what's on your mind and not get defensive is a good place to start. This enables you to take an important step toward listening and understanding each other so you can reach a compromise that feels fair and balanced to you both. The key is working to get beyond that first intense burst of anger when your temptation is to lash out and hurt the other person. If you get stuck there it can work against you as a couple. The real goal of an argument is to problem-solve so that you can find a better way of handling things going forward.

Related Link: [5 Celebrity Couples That Fight Dirty](#)

Manage your anger positively.

The first step is to steer clear of name calling, blaming, criticizing, or attacking your partner. While that lets your anger out in the moment, it can leave your partner feeling wounded and wanting to retaliate against you, which shuts down your attempt to work things out. The aim is to reach a point where you feel cared about and know that what matters to you is also important to your partner, so that you can trust that your needs will be met. Another tip is to pay attention if things are getting too heated and out of control. When that happens, take a deep breath and hit the hold button. Use this skill to take a break so you can both cool off before you broach discussing the topic again. One important aspect of hitting the hold button is that you agree on a time when you will resume the conversation so it is not left hanging, giving either one of you the chance to feel resentful.

When you resolve an argument it can play an important role in helping you feel closer and more intimate with each other since you're able to get beyond it and feel understood. Although Kylie and Tyga's choice is not to argue, making room to do so could be a good choice for you.

Relationship Advice: When to Stop Wearing Your Wedding Ring





By Dr. Jane Greer

Actor Brian Austin Green was spotted making a trip to the grocery store, smiling and still wearing his wedding ring despite his split from Megan Fox. He appeared to be in good spirits. After five years of marriage, the couple decided to part ways about six months ago. Yet the fact that he is still wearing his ring brought a lot of media attention. There is so much to think about when you are separating and considering divorce that sometimes that tiny detail about when to take the ring off either falls to the bottom of the list or becomes too overwhelming to face.

Deciding when to slip it off is a personal choice, with no right or wrong answer. Here's some relationship advice.

The wedding band itself can hold a lot of meaning not only to

the people in the marriage, but also to everyone around them who sees if they are or are not wearing theirs. It is a marker to the world that says they are in a committed relationship, or possibly, if they have broken up but continue to wear it, that they are still dealing with aspects of their relationship and are not completely ready to let go.

When people keep wearing their ring post-split, it might be that they are not ready to transition their identity from being married and part of a "we" to being single and just a "me." That shift can be challenging and daunting, and the ring itself can continue to give them a sense of security so they don't have to be out there on their own in the world just yet. Or, it may be a simple signal that they are not ready to start dating and want to give a very clear message that they are unavailable. Or, when there are children involved as there are with Brian and Megan, continuing to wear a ring might be a subtle sign that the parents are still connected so the kids can have the ongoing sense of family.

When is the right time?

All of this leads to the big question: is there a right time to take it off? That answer is different for everyone, and will vary greatly from person to person. It doesn't matter when you do it, but what does matter is knowing and understanding what it means to you when you finally decide to stop wearing it. For most people, when they take their ring off it is a statement that they have taken a definitive step into their new single life. It can be a long road to get over a break-up or a divorce. It takes time for both partners to heal and recover, but first they have to accept it is over and begin to move forward. Removing your ring is part of the process of letting go. Only time will tell when Brian will be ready to do that.

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and third Tuesdays are Shrink Wrap on Call, second Tuesdays are HuffPost on Call, and the last Tuesday of the month is Let's Talk Sex! Email your questions dealing with relationships, intimacy, family, and friendships to [Dr. Greer](mailto:askdrjane@drjanegreer.com) at askdrjane@drjanegreer.com. Connect with Dr. Jane Greer on www.facebook.com/DrJaneGreer, and be sure to follow [@DrJaneGreer](https://twitter.com/DrJaneGreer) on Twitter for her latest insights on love, relationships, sex, and intimacy.

Relationship Advice: Don't Give Up on True Love as a Single Parent





By Diane Sawaya Cloutier (with Mario P. Cloutier)

A well-known proverb tells us: “Don’t judge a man until you’ve walked a mile in his shoes.” I’ve walked many miles in the shoes of a single parent trying her luck at dating, and my aim is not to judge, but to encourage and advocate with some important [relationship advice](#).

I know first-hand what it’s like to be a single mom. While I was fortunate to benefit from an amazing support group, I remember that phase of my life as one that brought many fears and questions, often in the form of self-doubts. I felt lonely, and I truly thought that few others could relate to my situation. This was some 25 years ago, in a world that was certainly different from today’s for single parents. For instance, the likes of “xyzSingleMomsMingle.com” had not yet arrived. Facetime couldn’t help me keep an eye on the little one when I went out. And less people were becoming single parents by choice. Still, when it comes down to the real anxieties and worries single parents face, has much really changed?

The troubling concerns that single parents say torment their

lives today sound identical to the ones I wrestled with more than two decades ago: “Am I a good enough mom?” “Will we be okay financially?” “When will I be able to find some time for myself?” “Am I going to be alone for the rest of my life?” And, the BIG one: “Will I ever be able to love and truly be loved again?”

I don't pretend to have all the answers to these pressing questions, but, on the BIG question, I do have some pieces of relationship advice for you. Here's what I've learned:

The journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step. Everything starts with a decision—a choice we make. What is yours? Are you just looking to meet someone, or are you seeking to love and truly be loved? This may sound simplistic, but it is the first step of any true love journey.

Decide not to settle.

After my divorce, I found myself back on the dating scene as a single mother. It took me several failed relationships before I made a choice that changed my life. I decided I would no longer settle or compromise for anything less than a lasting, blissful relationship. And I was resolute in my decision, even if this meant remaining alone with my son for the foreseeable future.

Make it a B.Y.O.S.

Party invitations refer to B.Y.O.B. My advice to you is don't jump into a new relationship unless you Bring. Your. Own. Self.

Early on, I was undermining what I really wanted from a relationship when I first started dating someone. I camouflaged who I really was just so I wouldn't have to be alone. To fill a void, I made the focus on what I thought the person I was dating wanted from a relationship instead of whether the person could fulfill my needs. Trust me on this: Once you make the choice to no longer settle or compromise on anything less than a lasting relationship, you are more likely to find your soul mate.

You're in charge.

Make a conscious effort to figure out the non-negotiables, or "personal laws" you require from a relationship. Once you've established your own needs and your own self-worth, you will have a clear picture of the shape your next relationship will take. Remain steadfast and unbending about your personal laws. This will help you avoid pitfalls in your quest to find your ideal relationship, and it will show others that you care enough about yourself to not compromise what you feel is important.

For me, my #1 personal law was: My son has to be embraced, not just accepted. I'd been in situations where I knew this wasn't the case, and it didn't feel right. This became a non-negotiable condition for me. Personal laws are by nature...personal! There's no one set of requirements. But, if you fail to establish them—or worse, if you don't implement them as you embark on your next relationship, chances are this will end up as a deal breaker later on.

After experiencing it firsthand, I strongly believe a single parent can love and truly be loved again. However, if you're looking for a lasting, fulfilling relationship, keep in mind:

- When we continue repeating the same stuff, we can't expect different results;
- Everything is a process, and anything of great value is worth the wait;
- Faith without work is a waste of time.

Diane Sawaya Cloutier found her soul mate and husband, Mario Cloutier, in 1998 after they both had experienced unfulfilling relationships. Now, authors and relationship coaches, Diane and Mario Cloutier's new book, ReLovenship™ – Look Within to Love Again (Xclamat!on Media, 2015) gives inspiration, hope and a step-by-step methodology to people who have had romantic disappointments and are still looking to find "the one." Mario Cloutier is founder and chief creative officer of Xclamat!on Marketing. Diane Sawaya Cloutier enjoyed a successful career in managerial roles with Fortune 500 organizations before focusing fulltime on the couple's ReLovenship™ book and seminars. Learn more at www.ReLovenship.com.

Breaking Up: Dating Advice for the Breaker and Breakee





By Jim Hjort, LCSW

Humans are wired to thrive on close interpersonal connections, so when a relationship and love life comes to an end, often at least one of the parties will hold hard feelings. Perhaps blame, regret, vulnerability, disappointment, fear, or any number of others. This is when dating advice becomes the most important.

If there's an impulse that's stronger than the one to seek close connection, it's the one to protect ourselves from injury.

Temporary empowerment.

As a result, when intensely negative breakup feelings arise, their cousins—anger and self-righteousness—often follow close behind. Those feelings can provide a temporary feeling of empowerment, as opposed to feeling helplessly stuck in an

unpleasant situation. Unfortunately, the fireworks that anger and self-righteousness can induce tends to create even more lasting animosity, which provides fertile ground for negative thoughts and feelings to multiply.

Prevention of Openness.

That, in turn, can prevent both people from having the psychological and emotional openness necessary to recognize the next relationship opportunity that comes along—and nurture it. Not to mention, such a negative state of mind impacts your ability to generally enjoy life and function in healthy ways.

A breakup is a stage of your relationship.

In order for both parties to emerge from a breakup as healthy as possible, you need to remember something that is simple, but easy to forget in the presence of strong emotions: the breakup is a stage of your relationship, just like any other. That means that all the rules of healthy communication and respect for your partner still apply.

For starters, recognize that any partnership exists through a interaction between each party's need for something from the other, and the other party's willingness and ability to fill it. Fundamentally, a breakup happens when sufficient numbers of these pairings can't or won't be made.

Be open and honest.

Therefore, the healthy approach is the open and honest one: let the other person know what need of yours isn't being met, or what need of theirs you are unwilling or unable to meet. (The "it's not you, it's me" speech isn't really accurate: it's both of you whose needs and willingness and ability to fill them have to fit together, like two pieces of a jigsaw puzzle.)

When you're doing this, be sure to use "I" statements to own

your perspective, instead of attributing thoughts, feelings, and motives to the other person. (For instance: “When you disappear for days without calling, I feel like I don’t matter to you.”)

Own your decision.

If you’re the breaker, own your decision and explain it. If you’re the breakee, try to devote your mental resources to listening and comprehension, rather than formulating a rebuttal while the other person is speaking. The breaker has made a decision; try to understand it. And then, restate what the other person has said in your own words, both to make sure you’ve understood them and to convey that you’re trying to do so.

Arrive at a mutual understanding.

Approaching a breakup with the goal of arriving at a mutual understanding tends to defuse the natural, defensive anger response. It also provides both of you with clear information and a matter-of-fact perspective on what happened, eliminating the unknown, which tends to spawn negative rumination and feelings just as much as animosity.

This thoughtful, healthy approach certainly won’t eliminate the pain of a breakup, but it can greatly reduce your suffering about it, which is different. With a solid understanding of what happened, you can also move forward with less “baggage.” Best of all, you might even come to understand your needs (and shortcomings) better, so that your next relationship has a better chance of success.

Jim Hjort, LCSW, is the founder of the [Right Life Project](#), where he helps people overcome roadblocks to self-actualization as a licensed psychotherapist, RightLife Coach and mindfulness meditation instructor. The Right Life Project helps people understand the ways they can manage the different dimensions of their lives (psychological, social, physical,

and vocational), in order to be happier and more fulfilled, and to reach their full potential.

Are Celebrity Couple Emma Stone and Andrew Garfield Overcoming Jealousy?



By Dr. Jane Greer

It's rumored that celebrity couple Emma Stone and Andrew Garfield are having issues lately, stemming from the fact that Stone is close to her colleague Ryan Gosling. The possibility has spawned a lot of discussion about jealousy and how the

famous couple might move forward from here. While the two of them have not addressed the situation publicly, additional reports surfaced suggesting the pair have resolved their issues.

It's very important to tackle jealousy head-on rather than letting it simmer within the relationship.

Believe it or not, your partner doesn't have to be working with a movie star, as is the case for Emma and Andrew, for you to feel the green-eyed monster in full force. In fact, most people go through this at one time or another, especially if their loved one is working closely with someone who is attractive and smart. When this happens, it is hard not to be rattled by the possibility that they could fall for this person and you could wind up losing them. So, what can you do to keep your fear and jealousy from taking over, and possibly creating more of a problem with your relationship than actually exists?

Recognition.

First, recognize that acting jealous can actually cause tension between you that may drive you apart rather than bring you closer. If you are feeling threatened, you may accuse your lover of doing something he or she isn't doing, lash out in anger, or just generally make things so unpleasant that you unwittingly push them away from you and possibly in the direction of the other person.

Focus on your connection.

The bottom line is that it is always uncomfortable knowing there are appealing men or women around whom your lover might

come into contact with and find attractive. However, the real key to staying together happily is to focus on the connection you two share, rather than putting an emphasis on that perceived interloper. In other words, pay attention to ways to build on and strengthen your intimacy and closeness. If you are having problems over sex and/or money, for example, then now is a good time to invest your energy into problem solving and finding ways to compromise and resolve them, so that you can feel more confident, happy, and safe in your relationship. This way you use your energy productively to focus on considering and loving each other, rather than use it to act on your anxiety and possibly end up having it work against you.

Eliminate the space.

When you are in sync and feel harmonious, it can eliminate any room for someone else to come between you. It can also help to ask for reassurance, making sure to avoid placing blame but rather raising your concerns and giving your significant other the chance to bring clarity to what is actually going on that will help you feel better. Despite jealous feelings occurring, when you have a strong foundation and trust each other, you can feel secure that you are the person your partner wants to be with. Hopefully, that will be the case, too, for Emma and Andrew.

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Celebrity News: Nicki & Miley Publicly Express Anger



By Dr. Jane Greer

In latest celebrity news, singer celebs Nicki Minaj and [Miley Cyrus](#) had a public spat at the 2015 VMAs, hosted by Miley. During the live broadcast on Sunday, Nicki called Miley a “bitch” for talking about her in the press. According to an insider, “Nicki was livid with Miley and decided to air her feelings onstage.” In fact, it was reported that MTV staffers had to keep Nicki and Miley away from each other for the rest of the night to avoid a confrontation.

It's hard to know if their fighting was staged to enhance the celebrity news or if it was authentic. Either way, it raises the question of whether shouting about your feelings in public when you're upset is the best way to get your message across.

In Nicki's case, there might have been a strong desire to reach her fan base and share her rage toward Miley. Maybe she thought it was the only way to save face. That being said, this really isn't that different from fighting with a partner in front of family and friends at a holiday meal.

So when you're irked at someone, what's the best way to let them know – talk to them in private about it, or let the whole world know? I have some relationship advice:

Very often when we are mad at someone who has hurt our feelings, our inclination is to get back at them by letting others know what they did to make us feel mistreated and wronged. In fact, that dynamic is the hook of reality TV. Doing that, though, and being vocal about the bad energy between you, may unwittingly put the people around you in an uncomfortable position by making them feel like they have to choose sides.

Related Link: [Miley Cyrus Moves On After Celebrity Break-Up from Patrick Schwarzenegger](#)

Sometimes people get so caught up in the anger of the moment that it can spill over beyond their private world, as we saw

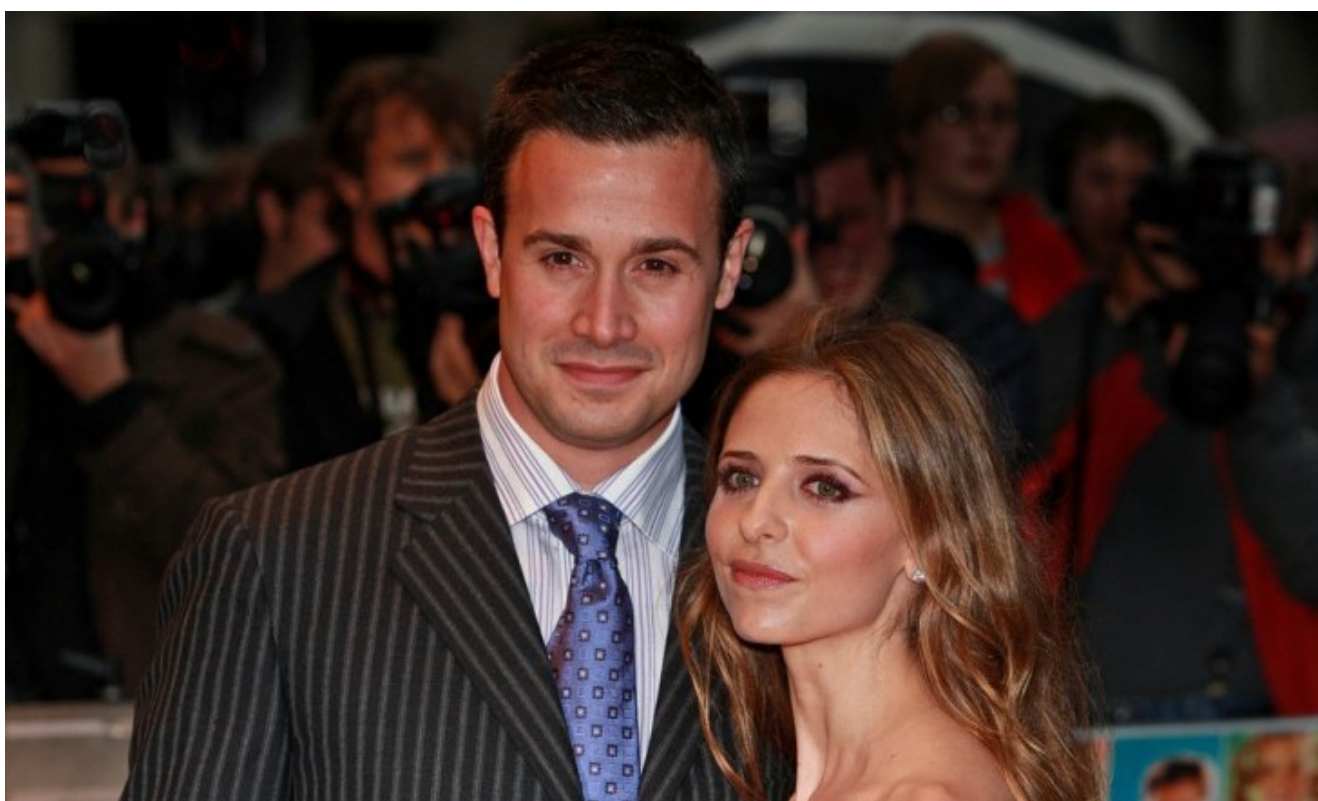
with Nicki and Miley. Before you let that happen, ask yourself if this is a relationship and love worth saving. If you decide it is, then the best thing to do is to go right to the source and address the cause of your distress directly with the person who upset you in the first place. Tell them what they said and did to set you off, and give them a chance to apologize and explain. It will also give the person the chance to clear up any miscommunication or misunderstanding that may have occurred between you. Fighting out in the open just serves to fan the flames of the fury, but a straight conversation might clear the air and even help to salvage your relationship.

Related Link: [Nicki Minaj Fires Back at Celebrity Ex Safaree Samuels After He Releases Telling Single](#)

This year's VMAs were also witness to a number of bad feelings being soothed, such as between Kanye West and Taylor Swift. That is testimony to the fact that no matter how angry someone might be at one time, it is possible to get over it and move beyond it. The rage can diminish and you can let it go. Who knows? Maybe at next year's awards show we will see a different exchange between Nicki and Miley.

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Top 5 People Tools for Relationships and Love



By Alan C. Fox

I describe [relationships and love](#) as a “journey from me to us.” As romantic as that sounds, it also implies a lot of hard work. Two unique people with distinct tastes, thoughts, feelings, ambitions, and personalities are now sharing a single life. And no matter how perfectly compatible you are, you’re bound to face challenges along the way.

I'm a pragmatist at heart and so I like to use "tools" to help me navigate the challenging terrain of relationships and love. In fact I've developed many of them for my new book on relationship advice and love advice, *People Tools for Love and Relationships: The Journey from Me to Us*.

Below are my top five pieces of relationship and love advice:

1. Be (not find) the right person: Many of us spend years of our lives searching for the perfect person to build a life with. But we're often disappointed to find that our prince or princess charming turns out to be imperfect. It's just as important to learn how to be the right person as it is to find the right person. Work on perfecting yourself, rather than endlessly searching for that perfect other.

Related Link: [Love Advice: How to Make Your Partner Happy in 5 Minutes a Day](#)

2. The Best Defense is No Defense: While having a strong defense is helpful on the battlefield, being defensive in your relationships can cause serious problems. If your partner is upset with you or offers criticism, rather than automatically defending yourself, try adopting an "intent to learn," and quietly listen to their point to learn what they have to say.

Related Link: [Dating Advice: 10 Kissing Tips to Read Before Your Next Makeout Session](#)

3. It's a Movie, Not a Snapshot: It's all-too-easy to lose sight of the big picture during times of emotional strain and conflict. In times like these you need to remember that your relationship is more like a movie than a snapshot. It's a series of events and memories, and not a single particular event.

4. More Is Not Always Better: I often refer to relationships as "a journey from me to us," because sharing your life with another requires surrendering a degree of your independence. Each of you should maintain your own interests, hobbies, and time to yourselves.

5. Apologize: This is the simplest and most effective thing you can do when fighting with your partner. Yet it's often the most difficult, especially when you're convinced that you're right, which is most of the time, if not always. You have to put aside your pride and be willing to compromise on some points, even when you feel strongly about them.

Alan C. Fox is the author of "People Tools for Love and Relationships," as well as two other bestselling People Tools books. He is a real estate investor, philanthropist, mentor, and founder of Rattle poetry journal. Visit www.peopletoolsbook.com.

Ben Affleck: Can You Forgive a Betrayer in a Romantic Relationship?



By Dr. Jane Greer

[Ben Affleck](#) and [Jennifer Garner](#)'s [celebrity divorce](#) announcement may have sounded amicable, but allegedly their celebrity marriage was shattered by Ben's partying and inappropriate behavior with other women. There were rumors of cheating, which may have caused Jennifer's trust in Ben to be forever damaged. Insiders close to the couple say there was suspicion throughout their marriage, adding that Jennifer tried to leave him a few times, but Ben would always convince her to stay.

So what can a couple do if a cloud of suspicion is affecting their

relationship and love life?

It can be incredibly difficult to forgive someone after a betrayal, and even more challenging to trust them again even after you've forgiven their infidelity. Sometimes, despite a couple's best efforts, it's difficult to get past it and stay together.

Explore rebuilding the relationship.

After finding out your spouse has been unfaithful, or exhibited other negative behaviors that defy the vows you said to each other at your wedding, the knee-jerk reaction is often to get angry and get out. But a lot of times there is so much at stake – family life, financial situations, the fear of starting over – as well as so many attachments and good memories, that the one who was betrayed is willing to try to stick it out. Even in the face of hurtful behavior it is hard to balance that against what came before. Those who are able to deal with the anger and disappointment are even able to rebuild the relationship into a healthier and stronger connection than it was before. Maybe that's what Jennifer was hoping for, and why she stuck around so long.

Remember when Ben accepted the Oscar for best picture in 2012 and he thanked Jennifer, saying that marriage is hard work, but it is the best kind of work? He took a lot of heat for saying that, but in truth it is a lot of work, especially when it is peppered with things that lead to mistrust and betrayal. He was probably referring to all the effort it took to preserve the celebrity love they shared and their family life in the face of the things he had allegedly done.

Determine what needs to change and follow through.

It can take a long time before someone is ready to say it's over. The beginning of the healing process is the same for

those who do get through a betrayal, as well as for those who try to but ultimately don't. That first step is determining what needs to change – whether it is keeping secrets, seeing other women, gambling, or some other addiction or behavior that might make it difficult for the other person to live with them. The most important step is the follow through. The person with the negative behavior has to demonstrate that he or she has stopped doing whatever it was that has brought them to this point. If that doesn't happen, then there are no grounds to keep the relationship going.

End the relationship if nothing changes and disappointment persists.

Ben might have promised he would change over and over again, and Jennifer most likely wanted to believe him. Maybe she gave him numerous chances to show he meant it. But in the end, evidently he did not do what he said he would. When you are left swimming in a pool of broken promises, disappointment and betrayal, it is inevitable that the time will finally come that you can no longer give the other person the benefit of the doubt and allow them to continue to try to earn back your trust. No matter how much you love them, you reach a point when you no longer believe your partner can really change. This is when the relationship comes to an end.

That might explain Ben's speech at the Academy Awards, as well as why they persevered for as long as they did. Unfortunately, though, the damage was too great and perhaps the promises of change were too empty to keep them together in the end.

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@DrJaneGreer on Twitter for her latest insights on love, relationships, sex, and intimacy.

Mariah Carey: Moving Quickly in a Celebrity Relationship?



By Dr. Jane Greer

Singer Mariah Carey is already talking celebrity marriage with her new boyfriend, James Packer. Typically, it's the woman who's eager to start talking marriage, sometimes even early in the relationship. Although they've only been dating for a matter of days, James already believes he wants to marry

Mariah. The duo in a new [celebrity relationship](#) have visited several countries together since last week.

Deciding to get married is a big step for so many reasons, and thinking about doing it when you are just beginning to get to know each other might not always be the best idea.

Consider reality.

When two people fall in love, anything seems possible. You might quickly begin to think about spending the rest of your life with that person, and even fantasize about how wonderful it could be. That is what love does – it makes everything look wonderful. The trouble is, a lasting relationship is made up of much more than the immediate chemistry and romance people experience when they first come together and the rest of the world falls away. That world doesn't stay away forever, and when it creeps back in with finances, job responsibilities, the possibility of having children, and other things that take place during daily life, it is helpful and important to have a strong foundation underneath you to know how to deal with these things as a unit.

Related Link: [Mariah Carey Reunites with Celebrity Ex-Husband Nick Cannon for Easter with Twins](#)

Understand each other fully.

If you have time to get to know each other, allowing you to establish and understand your commonalities, shared goals and values, methods of communication, and ability to compromise

and problem solve, you will be in a much better place to make your joint life work. These are the nuts and bolts that determine whether or not you will be able to go the distance together. Too often when you lead with love, moving too quickly, you eliminate and edit out the opportunity to experience your partner in the real world and you might not be equipped to deal with the curve balls that life sends your way.

Take time.

Time also allows you to establish a good balance between the me and the we, which is necessary in sharing a healthy relationship. The risk of rushing in to making the decision to spend your life with someone you don't know well enough, despite the fact that you think you do, is that you can wind up in a situation that requires making concessions that feel more like sacrifice rather than compromise. If it starts to seem that you are giving up what is important to you, it can be the beginning of your partnership no longer working effectively. So unless you have had the time to navigate your shared life and the demands that it entails, you might want to slow down a little.

Related Link: [Nick Cannon Opens Up About Split From Mariah Carey](#)

Move forward when it makes sense.

When, then, is it okay to start that conversation about happily ever after? It's probably best to begin once you've determined you're exclusive and your individual worlds are clearly merging into a joint world. That's the point at which you can look toward creating a future together and therefore discuss marriage, whereby you and your partner can see yourselves continuing together over the course of your lives. Look to avoid bringing marriage up out of the blue because if there's nothing concrete to attach it to, then the

relationship may not be at that point and you may scare your partner off by being too premature with the idea. He or she may completely push back as a result. Sometimes talking about moving in together before bringing up the subject of tying the knot is a good starting point. There are times, however, when people are forced to talk about marriage sooner than they might otherwise – if one person has to move to another part of the country (or even the world) for a career opportunity, for example.

Don't get too caught up in the excitement.

The bottom line is that everything looks great at the beginning of a relationship and it is easy to get caught up in the excitement and fanfare. Be aware though of looking too far ahead. Give yourself a chance to be sure you are truly compatible before you walk down the aisle. Keep in mind also that if you are just coming out of a relationship and dealing with the aftermath of rejection, it can make this new relationship even more attractive and can be a way to put the pain in the past. If that is the case it is even more important that you take a deep breath and leave yourself the time you need to make sure this is right for you, so that you don't wind up getting blinded by love and perhaps make another mistake.

It seems that Mariah and James don't have these qualms and are ready to get serious and move forward with a shared life together. Only time will tell if they are moving too fast.

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Single Celebrity Ariana Grande: Tearing Down Double Standards?



By Dr. Jane Greer

Singing sensation and [single celebrity Ariana Grande](#) wrote an elaborate, empowering essay about male and female double standards after her celebrity break-up with rapper Big Sean.

She said, “If a woman has a lot of sex (or any sex for that matter)... she’s a ‘slut.’ If a man has sex... HE’S. A. STUD. A BOSS. A KING... If a woman even TALKS about sex openly... she is shamed!”

Ariana touched on one of many examples of double standards when it comes to relationships and love and is hitting a nerve because what she wrote about does often seem to be true.

Choose a course of action.

In today’s world, women want to be able to make mindful choices when they decide to be intimate and sexual with their partner. But that isn’t always easy to do. When a woman has an active sex life, she might be viewed as being loose. On the other hand, men are expected to seek it out, and if they brag about a few notches on their belt then they are respected and thought of as manly. Women are finally looking to move beyond these images and not let them hold them back anymore. Along those lines, the most recent *Bachelorette* openly said she made a conscious decision to be intimate with one of the men she had met on the show, because a sexual connection is such an important part of a relationship that she wanted to have a sense of their chemistry before they moved too far forward. She chose a course of action, and so can you.

Related Link: [Single Celebrity Ariana Grande Says She Doesn’t Want to Be Called Big Sean’s Celebrity Ex](#)

Be the manager of your sex life.

If you consider what you stand to gain by exercising your sexual expression, as well as what you stand to lose if you are not in touch with it, you will see how important it is to be the manager of your sexual life. By challenging these stereotypes that have trapped, confined and limited women for too long, you can work to redefine your sexual identity and what it means to you in terms of your happiness and your sexual esteem. If, for example, you want to be intimate with someone when you first meet them, if you are on vacation and want to have a fling, if you are at a wedding and want to have a romantic escapade, or just a one night stand, the most important thing is to know what you are doing and why you are doing it. In other words, own it. This means recognizing that you are with that person to enhance your sexual experience and pleasure, and still feel good about it regardless of whether or not it leads to something more serious down the road.

Related Link: [Ariana Grande and Big Sean Step Out as Celebrity Couple at Grammy Awards](#)

Sit in the driver's seat.

If you are in the driver's seat, you can give yourself the permission to say "yes" to your desires and feel empowered by them when it comes to your sex life decisions, rather than feeling bad about yourself. The essential thing to be aware of is that whatever your action may be you are doing it by choice, one that you are making for yourself and thereby can feel confident about. When you do this, you free yourself from blame and judgment so that you will not feel objectified or used in any sexual experience you share. You no longer have to be in a position where you are compromising your own values or worrying about what other people think.

Be honest and guilt-free.

It follows that if you are in a new relationship and your partner asks how many sexual encounters you have had, you can

have a clear sense of your history and how it came to be, free from guilt. You will be able to level the playing field so that what was once only acceptable for men can also be acceptable for women. Saying no always remains a powerful choice as well, what matters most is that you are determining what is going to be most comfortable for you. In this way, you will be a woman who takes charge, is in control, knows what you want as well as what you don't want, and will be better able to build your inner security which will reflect in your emotional and sexual wellbeing.

Former 'Bachelor' Chris Soules: Is it Over Before it Begins?





By Dr. Jane Greer

Former [The Bachelor](#) star [Chris Soules](#) and fiancée Whitney Bischoff announced they have mutually and amicably decided to call off their celebrity engagement. Chris shared that the split has been “really tough,” but they continue to be supportive friends. Despite the fact that the way in which couples meet on *The Bachelor* and *The Bachelorette* is so exciting, it seems many of the relationships and love don’t work out in the long term. Even so, the show carries intrigue for the viewers in the same way it does for the participants.

It gives everyone the chance to think about the possibilities of meeting someone new and starting over, finding Mr. or Mrs. Right, and having the sense that anything

can happen, the world is your oyster. It can seem like a dream come true.

Being a contestant on one of these reality shows is available to only a few people, but many of us have had the experience of meeting someone new in a more exciting than real life situation such as on vacation or at a big event like a wedding. When that happens, there can be an immediate connection, and the sense that you have known that person all your life. Those feelings can be fueled by chemistry and the attraction you have for one another, as well as the fanfare of the situation in which you met. In the same way that people meet on *The Bachelor* and *The Bachelorette*, it can be a key in the ignition that turns the relationship on, but then how do you keep it in motion? And why do so many of these relationships, whether they begin on the television show or in an out of the ordinary setting, end sooner rather than later?

Related Link: [Chris Soules and Celebrity Love Whitney Bischoff Celebrate His 'DWTS' Performance](#)

It probably has a lot to do with the fact that these couples aren't having the opportunity to experience the other person under typical circumstances. On the show, for example, there is an intended outcome, goal, and timeline for a decision to be made which can disrupt the regular flow of getting to know each other. In the case of those couples who meet in other places, on a whirlwind vacation or swept up in the romance of the wedding they are attending, the same can be true because things might move faster than they would otherwise. It's all about the excitement and celebration – capturing relationships at the very beginning, where almost everyone starts out excited about falling in love. For many people, however, making a relationship succeed requires work that has to kick

in once you're past the first stage of making the connection. This entails being able to communicate effectively with each other, dealing with compromising, sharing goals, and finding a balance between personal lives and their life as a couple. Those are the elements that make a relationship durable and enduring.

Related Link: [Former 'Bachelor' Chris Soules Spends Time with Family in Iowa Post Celebrity Break-Up](#)

The inability to navigate their way through these important steps, paired with the idea that they are no longer in a glamorous world or on a television set, can very often diminish desire. The more frustrated, disappointed and angry you get, the faster you can lose your footing and grasp on what is keeping you together, and the more likely you are to get turned off to your partner.

Of course, it helps to know what you are looking for before you embark on the search for a new mate, whether through participating in a show like this or not. In other words, consider the values, temperament and energy level you are hoping to find in a new partner. Do you hope to be with someone who is a go-getter, or on more of an even keel? Are you searching for someone who is ambitious and looking to make a lot of money, or someone who is more creative and not so focused on the finances? The most important thing in all of this is figuring out how you feel when you are with the other person, and how he or she makes you feel about yourself. If all of that falls into place, it might be worth making the effort to stay together even after the band goes home or the camera people are no longer a part of your time together.

For Chris and Whitney, getting back to the ordinary elements of living and away from the show may have shed a light on a reality they no longer wanted to be a part of. At least they are making the best of it and continuing their friendship.

Jennifer Aniston's Celebrity Engagement: How Long is Too Long?



By Dr. Jane Greer

Actors [Jennifer Aniston](#) and Justin Theroux celebrated their [celebrity engagement](#) in August of 2012, and their wedding has been much-anticipated by their many fans. However, reports last week revealed the two have been fighting and are now living separately. Justin has asked Jennifer to be patient, but being no closer to a celebrity wedding date after being engaged for over two years “makes her feel like a fool.”

Couple that with the fact that they both have incredibly busy schedules, and it's no surprise that they are having a hard time scheduling their wedding.

The fact that this celebrity couple has been planning to get married for over two years raises the question, how long is too long? Is there a shelf life to an engagement?

What's holding you back?

That may depend on whether the issues getting in the way are practical ones or emotional ones, and if the couple will be able to give themselves time to work through and get past them. Consider first what is holding you back from setting a date and walking down the aisle. If you both have full-time jobs, for example, or are celebrities like Jennifer and Justin, the demands of the office and of upcoming projects might make it very difficult to plan a wedding.

Where will you live?

On top of that, there's the expectation that once you are married you will share a home base. If you are living in separate parts of the country or world, or have a work assignment far away from where your partner spends most of his or her time, deciding where to call home might not come so easily. Sometimes that requires one person to compromise and make a choice that could end up feeling like a sacrifice he or she isn't ready to make. So whether it is a work commitment, or even an illness in the family that is time-consuming, and thereby keeping you from saying, "I do," you might find

yourself in a perpetual state of engagement.

Are you used to your long engagement?

You may even adjust to a long engagement, and it can become what you are used to. So if it works for both of you, then there may not be any rush. Sometimes the end goal of marriage is no longer front and center, and you might not feel compelled to take the next step. You are each happily doing your thing, and haven't taken the time to figure out how to officially merge lanes. Getting married would be nice, but right now it doesn't feel necessary. If that is the case, the shelf life on an engagement can be evergreen.

Are your feelings in the right place?

If the thing that is holding you back has more to do with your feelings than with logistics, take stock of what is going on so you can better understand it and deal with it. Has one of you been married before, maybe even suffered a betrayal as was the case with Jennifer, and therefore may be feeling afraid to take the plunge for fear something similar might happen again? Or, like Justin, has one of you never been married? If that is the case there is the possibility that the fear of a change in identity and the concern over what there is to lose, such as personal freedom, is what is creating the roadblock.

Practical vs. Emotional

Layer the two together, the practical piece and the emotional piece, possibly even throwing in a financial piece, and it is no wonder some people take longer to get to the altar. If one of you is pushing to do it sooner than the other, things might get complicated. But if you are both willing to wait it out, and you are able to work through some or all of these issues, then there is really no downside to waiting. The bottom line is, there is no clear expiration date on an engagement unless you plan to call off the relationship itself. As long as you are on the same team, and are aware of what is keeping you

from taking the plunge, you could stay engaged for years or even decades.

Only time will tell if Jennifer and Justin fall into the category of both being okay with the long engagement, or if they will start to move apart in terms of what they each wish for. Hopefully, though, they will be able to move forward in their joint life together, proving their commitment to each other is enduring whether they are married or not.

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Katharine McPhee's Celebrity Divorce: Can You Stay Friends With an Ex?





By [Dr. Jane Greer](#)

Katharine McPhee's celebrity divorce from ex-husband Nick Cokas may have been messy, but the two seem friendlier than ever. They were spotted getting breakfast together last week, and Nick even caressed her face during the meal.

This celebrity couple has remained amicable since the split, which raises the question: is it possible to continue to be friends with an ex?

Are there any lingering issues?

There are several things to consider when trying to decide if it is a good idea to be your former partner's pal. The first is to think about how your relationship ended and if there are any lingering issues. If there is still a lot of anger and

resentment between you, and you continue to be at odds sorting out the logistics of your new lives and what that means, then you might not be ready to be friends yet. In other words, if you are still trying to iron out the difficult details of dealing with kids, sorting through your things, sharing friends, and deciding how to deal with family events, the likelihood that these complications will raise your already brewing frustration level is pretty high. If the “we” world that was dismantled is still requiring a lot of directions and maps to navigate through, and the journey hasn’t been smooth or easy, it is probably too soon. With that in mind, trying to stay close at this time might only serve to fuel the negative energy and keep the anger going.

Are you still upset?

Along the same lines, if you are still feeling upset, bitter, and blame your ex for what has happened between you, then you will probably need time to heal and deal with those feelings before embarking on a new phase of your relationship and love life. If this is the case, don’t pressure yourself. Give yourself the time and space you need to process these emotions, so that there is the chance that you can get to a more peaceful point in the future and you will be able to be sociable with each other.

Are you considering the feelings of a new partner?

Finally, if you or your ex is now involved with a new person, that person’s feeling should also be taken into consideration. If it makes them uncomfortable, or they would rather you didn’t maintain a connection with your former spouse, that will probably have an effect on your decision to try to remain friends and to what extent.

Sometimes the viability of maintaining a friendship goes back to how your relationship began. If you were friends before you were romantic with each other, it might feel natural to fall

back into that pattern. The bottom line is that being friends with an ex works for some people and not for others. At the very least though, once things settle down, the goal of being friendly is a good one so that you can work together and not have to divide cleanly into separate camps.

Hopefully Katharine and Nick can continue to stay on good terms with each other while still experiencing new happenings and new loves in each of their lives.

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Famous Couple Brad Pitt & Angelina Jolie: When is it Time to Seek Help?





By [Dr. Jane Greer](#)

Famous couple [Brad Pitt](#) and [Angelina Jolie](#)'s [celebrity marriage](#) has been reinvigorated by couples' counseling. Although things are on the mend now, there was trouble in paradise less than a year after they tied the knot. Not only did Brad see ex Jennifer Aniston alone, but he also didn't accompany Angelina to the Critics' Choice Awards in January. After months of fighting, they decided to seek the help of a therapist.

Now they plan to always keep counseling in their lives, because they say it has transformed their marriage and helped them fall in love with each other again. And they are not alone.

Cameron Diaz and Benji Madden have enlisted some outside support after just five months of marriage, as they work to put a strong foundation beneath them. This proves that it is never too early to get help.

Related Link: [Brad Pitt and Jennifer Aniston Are Scheduled at the Same Film Festival](#)

The secret to having a lasting relationship and love life is to not let the anger and resentment build up to the point where it drives you apart. A lot of people don't realize that a lasting union is full of angry and questioning feelings which go hand in hand with the adoring ones, not unlike a seesaw. I call them "love you, mean it" and "hate you, mean it" moments, which I talk about in my book *What About Me? Stop Selfishness From Ruining Your Relationship*.

Related Link: [Brad Pitt Confirms Celebrity Wedding with Angelina Jolie Will Happen 'Soon'](#)

It is natural to shift in and out of these emotions. The challenge is to make sure the positive ones always balance the negative ones so that they don't consume you. The goal is always to continue to or to get back to loving and feeling connected to your partner. What happens, though, when that becomes more and more difficult to do, and you aren't able to get past the anger anymore? How do you know when it is time to bring in a trained professional to help you sort out the issues?

Even in today's sophisticated age, people are often reluctant to air their marital problems with an outsider, especially when it comes to sexual troubles. There are many reasons for this which include feeling embarrassed, the fear that you think something is really wrong with you or your partner, the concern that you will be told there is something wrong with your relationship that is unfixable, or maybe you do want to go but your partner doesn't. There are also those people who

think that because the idea of divorce hasn't come up things can't be that bad, so you don't really need help.

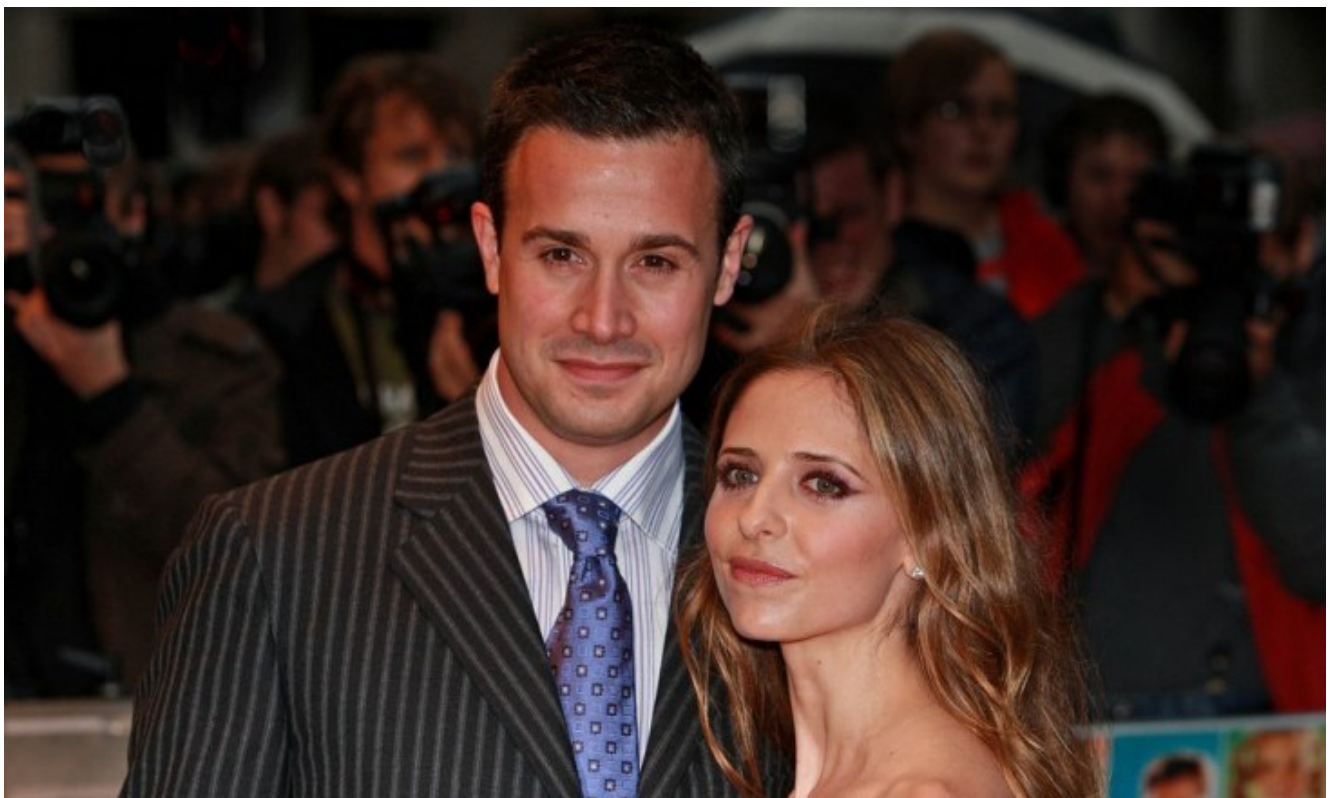
It is terrific that Brad and Angelina realize and appreciate that they have a big relationship, sometimes even bigger than the two of them, and they were able to seek assistance from a counselor who can help them deal with their issues. The same is true for Cameron and Benji. You certainly don't have to be a celebrity to have issues that can weigh down your relationship and start to interfere with the love you share, but they are good examples to follow. If you are resisting therapy, try to shift your way of thinking. Know that there isn't anything wrong with you or your partner, but there is something in your connection that warrants finding help and relief. Allow your fears to propel you forward instead of holding you back. Your seeking help is not a sign of weakness in any way, but rather a measure of strength, courage, and commitment to your relationship. It proves that you care enough to not give up and find what it takes to make things better.

Keep in mind that making a relationship successful is work. If you don't do that work now, you will have to do it later either by taking your marriage apart or learning to live with unhappiness. Why not spend that energy working to find a way to stay together and live happily? A therapist can help a couple learn to communicate and identify the problem areas in their relationship, so that they can learn how to compromise and put the pieces back together. Brad and Angelina seem to be doing just that. They appear strong and are a positive testimony to the value of knowing when to get help and getting it. Hopefully the same will be true for Cameron and Benji.

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Reality Star Kim Kardashian: How Does a Marriage Survive Infertility?



By Dr. Jane Greer

[Kim Kardashian](#) recently opened up about her fertility struggles, as she and [Kanye West](#) have been trying to have another baby for several months. Kim is even seeing fertility doctors to try to diagnose the issue. However, they've had no luck so far, despite trying "as many times a day" as they can to conceive.

Infertility or struggles to have a child can strongly affect a relationship and love life like reality star Kim Kardashian's, sometimes even leading to divorce.

Rather than sex being simply about pleasure, it is now connected to the goal of getting pregnant. When that doesn't happen right away, couples find themselves feeling disappointed month after month. This can impact the desire to have sex with each other spontaneously, and as a result affect their intimacy.

It's interesting, because making the decision to have a baby feels like a solid taking control of your future, often without even thinking about how hard it might be or what obstacles could get in the way. You have made this life-changing choice, are ready to begin, and expect it to happen. But then, it doesn't happen right away. The first month comes and goes and you get your period, then the second month. As the time passes, uncertainty comes into play, leading to waves of anxiety that this thing you want so much isn't happening.

These feelings build sometimes without your even realizing, and before you know it six or more months have gone by and suddenly what at first felt like taking control of your future feels like anything but. On the contrary, you feel like it is

completely out of your hands. That is one of the most distressing parts of living through infertility. You thought a few months ago that you were taking the reins, but really, you have completely handed them over. Now where all the hope and excitement once was is pressure and tension. How, then, can a couple live through this daunting experience without its taking a toll on their marriage?

The challenge is for couples to work together to strategize a plan for navigating their way through the steps, options, and choices that are available to help facilitate and achieve pregnancy. And there are many: fertility drugs, diagnostic procedures, in vitro fertilization, or choosing an egg donor, to name a few. Try to decide as a couple what each of you are willing to do both emotionally and financially to achieve your goal. After that, arrive at a timeline to determine how long you are willing to spend on each phase before moving on to the next. These decisions will bring some sense of control to what otherwise feels like a floating in space experience. In addition, it will allow you to know that if one thing doesn't work, there are still other options to turn to.

The most challenging piece of all of this is to try not to let this consume who you are as a married couple. Do your best to go on with the other parts of your life and do the things you have always liked to do together. Despite the fact that sex now has a functional side to it that it didn't have before you were trying to have a baby, you want to find other ways to keep the fun and joy alive between you. Spend time with friends you both like, schedule a dinner out, enjoy a weekend away, or plan a lazy day just the two of you full of your favorite food and activities. Make time to build in the smaller pleasures so they can be the glue that keeps you together during your difficult journey.

The most important thing is to support each other and go through this as a team, which will keep you close and connected. That appears to be what Kim and Kanye are doing.

Kim is still looking towards a second pregnancy, and hopefully she and Kanye will be able to welcome a new addition to their family soon enough.

Relationship Advice: 11 Steps to Finding a Husband Online



By Rajiv Satyal

I know how you can do it. Because that's how my fiancée got me.

1. Availability: A lot of us want the fairytale spotted-

across-a-crowded-room-sweep-us-off-our-feet story (yes, men, too), but you've got real life to let it happen. A great piece of relationship advice is, don't leave the biggest decision of your life to chance. Get online and make it happen.

Related Link: [Dating Advice: The Psychology of Online Dating](#)

2. Context: I was on several online dating sites: Match, eHarmony, Coffee Meets Bagel, and OkCupid (where we met). I was also on Shaadi.com (the Indian JDate). Sure, every now and then, you find a white girl on there and wonder, "Is she lost?" But OkC has that cool factor. And that's where she was.

Related Link: [5 Pieces of Love Advice From Celebrity Couples in Long-Term Relationships](#)

3. Name: Her handle was "calvinnhobs," which was quirky and silly. Try to avoid too-common interests like FoodGirl and TravelLady. Everyone likes food and travel. Share something specific to you personally.

4. Visuals: Distant shots or only of your eyes don't tell me much. It's like a university guidebook. The pretty ones showed their campuses. The not-so-pretty ones had, like, a closeup shot of a brick. Don't be shy.

5. Growth: OK, I know this can sound condescending but... she had some grammatical errors in her profile. I'm a total grammar geek, so it told me I could bring something to the table. It's kind of like how women view a man who can't quite dress – she can't wait to take him shopping. If this seems too nitpicking, welcome to online dating.

6. Mother Figure: Couples will do lots of things together. But for couples who want them, the single biggest thing we'll do is raise kids. As such, I'm looking for a mother. I search for clues to determine whether you're a caretaker/caregiver. "I enjoy helping others through volunteering and teaching... I always enjoy a good night cooking a great meal... Things I could

never do without: Family.” Boom.

7. Specificity: She painted the picture of who she was. “I love all things science too, so if you can stand someone talking about the latest cholesterol guidelines, the latest pics from the Mars rover, and even the effects of global warming over coffee...you are very cool!”

8. Outreach: I was touched and flattered that she messaged me first, especially since she was in Texas and I was in California. I’d gotten to the point that I’d also increased my radius to the max: the options are something like 25 miles, 50 miles, 100 miles, desperate.

9. Humor: She was funny, using words like “snazzy” to describe my shoes, quotes from standup comedians, funny capitalizations. Little things, victimless humor. Expose your fun side, but save the really edgy comebacks for when we know each other. We’re looking for life partners, not bowling buddies.

10. Patience: She messaged me on April 30. I didn’t respond until May 14 as I was traveling. OK, so the first few days were my trying to play the game. But after that, I really did get busy. And what did she do? She waited. My love advice is, people who write you RIGHT BACK come off as needy. Almost everybody says, “I don’t want any drama.” I don’t think that’s true. No drama at all is boring. We all want a little – but just a little. And after she and I sent several messages back and forth, I asked her for her phone number, and we were offline.

11. Commitment: Within six months, we were engaged. I actually proposed to her when opening for Kevin Nealon. At that point, we figured it was probably time to disable our OkC profiles. I sent her one last note. And she replied – after a day.

Yesterday – 11:01am

Wow. So, I don't normally do this kind of thing. But you're really cute. I'd totally, like, marry you or something.

Today – 6:50am

You're kinda cute too, I'd think of marrying you only if Kevin Nealon is there. Love you fool!!!!

Rajiv Satyal is a standup comedian from Cincinnati, Ohio, whose witty, universal, and TV-clean act resonates around the world by covering everything from racial issues to soap bottles to his favorite topic – himself (and his relationships). This University of Cincinnati engineer and former P&G marketer has repeatedly opened for Dave Chappelle, Maz Jobrani, Tim Allen, Kevin Nealon, and Russell Peters. Rajiv has garnered 4 million+ YouTube views, performed on three continents, and been featured on NBC, NPR, Nickelodeon, Fx, Netflix, Times Now, TV Asia, and Pandora, as well as in The Wall Street Journal, Advertising Age, The Huffington Post, India Abroad, The Cincinnati Enquirer, and the LA Times. You can find Rajiv regularly performing at the Laugh Factory and Improvs in Los Angeles, acting in commercials, doing improv, on TV, on XM and Sirius Satellite Radio, or admiring himself on his Funny Indian Fan Club on www.facebook.com/funnyindian.

Relationship Advice: How Do You Know When Prince Charming Is Actually Prince Alarming?



By Justin Lavelle, BeenVerified.com

When you hear someone say that they met their significant other online, you wouldn't think twice, as online dating is one of the leading ways singles meet potential suitors. Although it's commonplace to meet people online, there are always risks associated with dating people you don't know. You might end up connecting with someone who has a fake profile and is more interested in scamming you rather than determining if you're Mrs. Right. But how do you know if you're dealing with someone who has a fake profile? And what are the red flags you should look for? Fortunately, there's [relationship](#)

[advice](#) to navigate the online dating scene and figure out if you're dealing with prince charming or prince alarming.

Relationship Advice: Tips to Help Protect Yourself When Dating Online

1. It's a big red flag if your online interest asks you for money, especially if it's early on and you've never met face-to-face. Scammers will often ask for money on behalf of a sick relative, a short term loan to pay rent, or travel money to visit you if he lives out of state.

Related Link: [Match.com Studies Singles in America](#)

2. Be careful if he avoids meeting you, especially if he says he will be out of the country. There's a reason that scammers don't want to meet face-to-face. If they're running a game, they will come up with all kinds of excuses to avoid meeting. Some may use work travel as an excuse, others may say they have shared custody of his kids and it's his weekend to keep them, or that an ill mother needs to be taken care of. Listen to this relationship advice: Pay close attention to what they're saying.

3. Dating experts say to meet relatively quickly in person and in a public place. It's advantageous to meet face-to-face to see if you have chemistry and if he is who he claims to be. It's far easier to walk away from a bad situation before you feel an attachment. Choose a place that has foot traffic in case you need to call out for assistance. Always tell a friend or family member where you'll be and what time you'll be there. It might be wise to have a bail out call come 30 minutes into your meeting, just in case you need an escape strategy.

Related Link: [Julie Spira Discusses 'The Perils of Cyber-Dating'](#)

4. Accept the fact everyone tells lies, even little white ones, so decide where you draw the line. Online daters want to put their best foot forward. Men may say they're a couple of inches taller than they are in reality, and women may not accurately describe their body type. Many online daters accept superficial lies as part of the deal. My dating advice is to decide what is acceptable for you.

5. To avoid identity theft scams, try Google's reverse image search. Take a few minutes to search the profile's pictures, and if the reverse search shows up across hundreds of pages, it's highly likely that the person is being deceitful and is using someone else's images as his own.

Related Link: [Relationship Expert Reveals What to Do Before You Begin Online Dating](#)

6. When chatting online, make sure the flow of conversation makes sense to ascertain if you're talking to a live person or a robot profile. Mix up the conversation; see if the person continues to track with you. If they're unable to switch gears, it could be a robot responder giving predetermined responses.

7. Relationship experts say if his profile is comprised of only one photo and the text is basically empty, they could be a scammer. People who don't want to be held accountable to the content of their profile will simply leave it blank. If they're too lazy to take the time to self-disclose and post some self-descriptive text, then you should probably take a pass.

8. If his Facebook account has fewer than 100 friends, there's a reason to be suspicious, especially for younger users. Most people on Facebook have more than one hundred friends. There could be an explanation; he may be new to social media or a teacher that is trying to remain private. Delve deeper into his reasons. This doesn't necessarily apply to older users, as

the average person over 55 is more likely to have smaller amounts of followers.

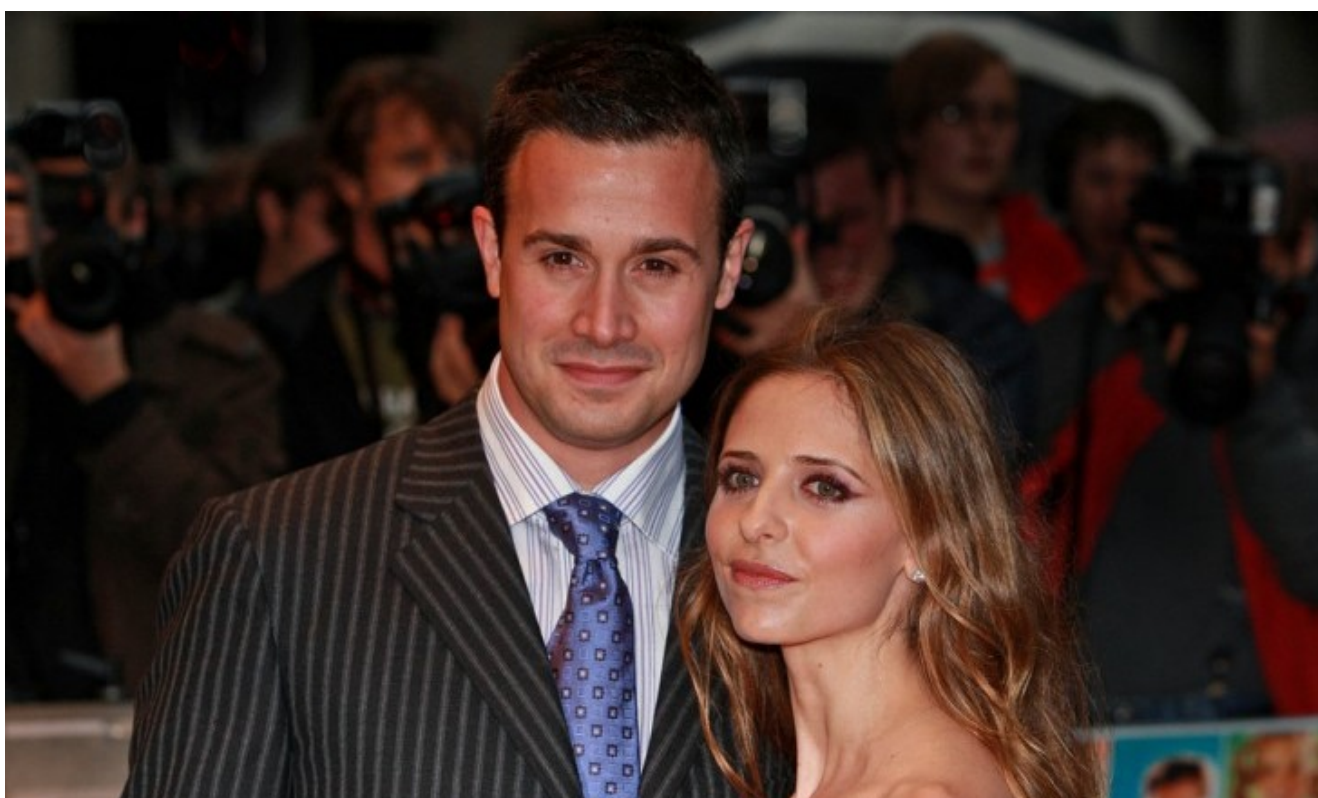
Related Link: [Online Dating Advice: When To Jump Back Online After A Breakup](#)

9. If people claim to be famous or know famous people, it could be to lure you in. Some women get star struck and might continue in conversation with someone they aren't interested in if there is hope of meeting someone rich and famous. Take their stories with a grain of salt; don't continue the dialogue if you're not truly interested.

10. Research as much as you can about the person before you meet face-to-face. Search their name on Google, search all social media profiles and ask friends if they know them. You might find out that the person has a criminal record or may be in a serious relationship and love already! Also, you can do a thorough background check on the person via BeenVerified.com, which consolidates information from public data sources to make it a one-stop shop for accessing personal information.

Justin Lavelle is the social media and blog content director for BeenVerified.com. BeenVerified is a leading source of online background checks and contact information. It helps people discover, understand and use public data in their everyday lives and can provide peace of mind by offering a fast, easy and affordable way to do background checks on potential dates. BeenVerified allows individuals to find more information about people, phone numbers, email addresses and property records.

Dating Advice: What Katie Holmes Can Teach Us About Post-Divorce Hooking Up



By [Christina Pesoli](#)

Rumored celebrity couple Katie Holmes and Jamie Foxx. Are they or aren't they hooking up? *US Weekly* says "yes," they're a new celebrity couple. Jamie Foxx says "no." And, because Katie Holmes is Katie Holmes, she won't even dignify the question with an answer. But regardless of how you feel about this rumor, the story makes obvious the following: hooking up is no longer exclusively for the twenty-something and under crowd. Post-divorce hooking up is now a thing.

But, how can you tell if post-divorce hooking up is right for you?

To maximize your chances of waking up in the morning with no regrets, consult the relationship advice flowchart before getting your groove on:

1. Are you actually divorced?

- a. No? Do NOT hook up. Random hookups before your divorce is final are one of the top causes of completely avoidable divorce drama. Get your divorce done first; then, get your freak on.
- b. Yes? Proceed to the next question.

Related: [5 Pieces of Love Advice From Celebrity Couples in Long-Term Relationships](#)

2. Are you wearing beer goggles?

- a. Yes? Do NOT hook up. You want your decision to hook up to be made with complete clarity. And nothing clouds your judgment like beer goggles or worse yet, vodka vision.
- b. No? Proceed to the next question.

Related: [Jennie Garth: Can You “Win” the Celebrity Exes Challenge?](#)

3. Are your kids with you?

- a. Yes? Do NOT hook up. The last thing your kids need is to be traumatized by walking in on you doing the wild thing with some random guy.
- b. No? Proceed to the next question.

4. Are you in a public place?

- a. Yes? Do NOT hook up. Have a little consideration for those around you. Hooking up should only be done in private.
- b. No? Proceed to the next question.

5. Is the guy you're thinking about hooking up with young enough to be your kid?

a. Yes? Do NOT hook up. Look, I'm not trying to be all ageist, but you're bordering on being really creepy.

b. No? Proceed to the next question.

6. Is hooking up with this guy something you hope to keep secret?

a. Yes? Do NOT hook up. Nothing ever stays a secret—especially not hooking up.

b. No? Proceed to the next question.

7. If/when word spreads about this hookup, are you likely to feel embarrassed or humiliated?

a. Yes? Do NOT hook up. Word WILL spread. So, make sure you're cool with that.

b. No? Proceed to the next question.

8. Is there a significant chance you will regret this?

a. Yes? Do NOT hook up. And even if you think the idea is awesome when you're in the heat of the moment, think long and hard before hooking up with a coworker or neighbor. Having to repeatedly run into someone makes it hard to put the whole thing behind you if you do end up regretting it later.

b. No? Go for it!

Christina Pesoli practices family law with Noelke Maples St. Leger Bryant, LLP, in Austin, Texas. She is the author of Break Free From the Divortex: Power Through Your Divorce and Launch Your New Life (Seal Press). She has written extensively on the topic of divorce, providing advice and support designed to help people avoid common mistakes that make divorce take longer and cost more. She also writes advice columns for CultureMap Austin and Divorce Magazine. You can find more of her articles on her website: christinapesoli.com.

Jennie Garth: Can You “Win” the Celebrity Exes Challenge?



By [Dr. Jane Greer](#)

It's been less than two years since actors Jennie Garth and Peter Facinelli finalized their [celebrity divorce](#), but already both are engaged to new partners. After Peter announced his [celebrity engagement](#) on March 16, Jennie's engagement to her new boyfriend of only a few months was confirmed last week.

The question is: Is this a coincidence, or a “battle of the celebrity exes”?

Sometimes one person will try to “win” their breakup by not being the one left alone while their ex has found new love. Even though you may be relieved that your relationship and love has ended, seeing your ex get into a new relationship or get engaged to someone else can potentially drive you to get involved quickly with someone you might otherwise not be so interested in. Additionally, it can also trigger you to take the next step with your own new partner so you don't feel your ex is getting on with their life and you're the one being left behind.

The Many Facets of Divorce

There are many facets of divorce that people have to go through, and there is no question that one of the most difficult is dealing with your ex when they move on and become involved with someone else. Whether he or she is starting a new relationship or is making the ultimate commitment by getting engaged or married, it can reverberate through you and oftentimes makes you feel like you are experiencing an ending all over again. This can be true whether you are in a new relationship or not. Inevitably you feel a loss knowing someone has taken your place. Regardless of whether the relationship ended at your former partner's hand or your own, it is hard not to look back at what was good when you were together, and feel bad that it didn't work out. That can be the case even if you are in a new, healthy relationship.

How to Stop Looking Backward and Start Looking Forward

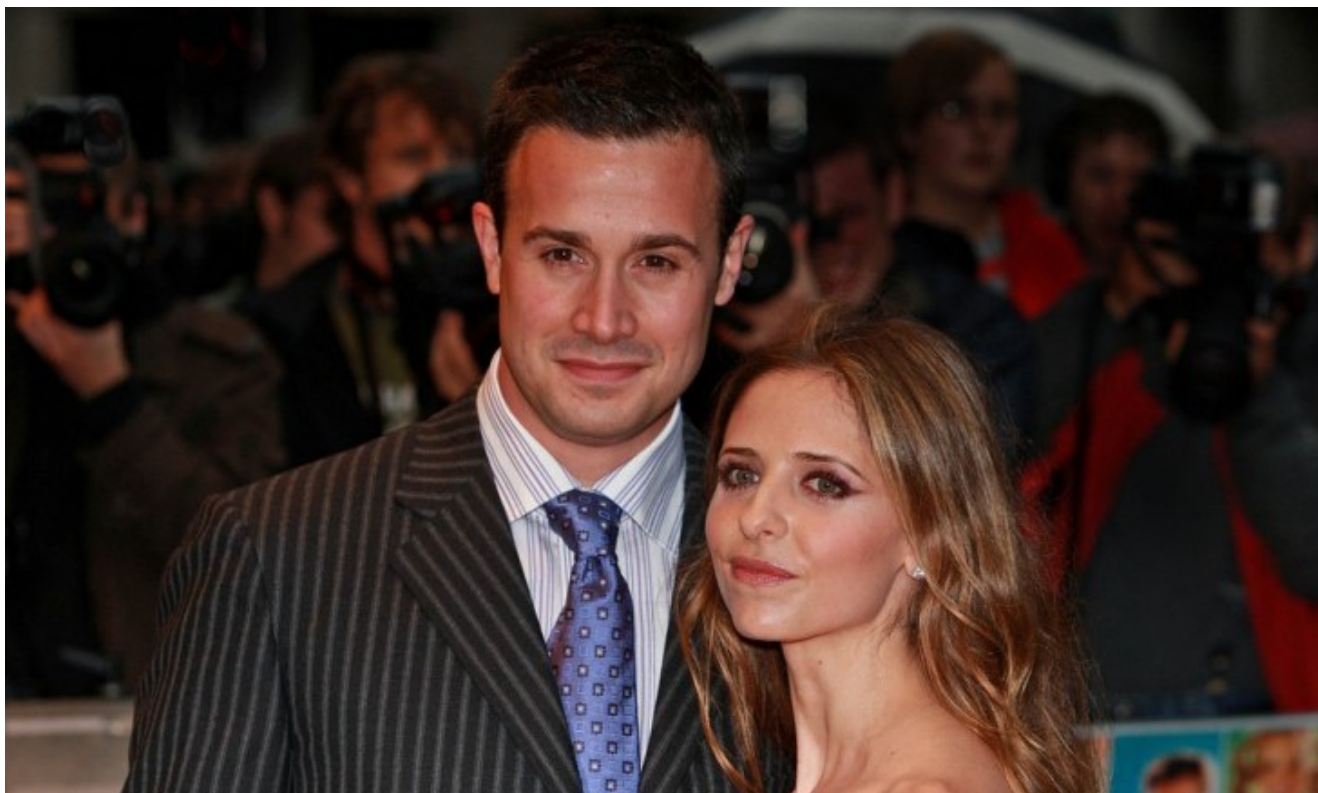
First, know that feeling envy, sadness, and regret is natural and understandable. The trick is learning how to deal with it

so those feelings don't consume you. The most important thing is to keep in mind that what you shared with your ex was once special and helped form you into the person you are today. You stayed together for as long as you could, while it worked for both of you, but it ended because it was no longer generating the happiness the two of you signed on for. If your ex is now happy and has moved on, that can be a signal for you to be doing the same thing by either looking for the relationship you always wanted but weren't able to have with your ex, or by shaping the new relationship you're in to make sure it is fulfilling and gratifying in a way your old one wasn't. Instead of living in the past, look to the future so you can stop feeling unhappy and empty about what you missed out on, and finally secure what you wanted all along. In other words, stay focused on yourself so you can build your own happily ever after.

As far as celebrity exes Peter and Jennie are concerned, at least they have each moved on with their new lives respectively and, in doing so, they appear to be in sync once again.

Please tune in to the Doctor on Call radio hour on HealthyLife.net every Tuesday at 2 PM EST, 11 AM PST. First and third Tuesdays are Shrink Wrap on Call, second Tuesdays are HuffPost on Call, and the last Tuesday of the month is Let's Talk Sex! Email your questions dealing with relationships, intimacy, family, and friendships to [Dr. Greer](mailto:askdrjane@drjanegreer.com) at askdrjane@drjanegreer.com. Connect with Dr. Jane Greer on www.facebook.com/DrJaneGreer, and be sure to follow [@DrJaneGreer](https://twitter.com/DrJaneGreer) on Twitter for her latest insights on love, relationships, sex, and intimacy.

Dating Advice: The Psychology of Online Dating

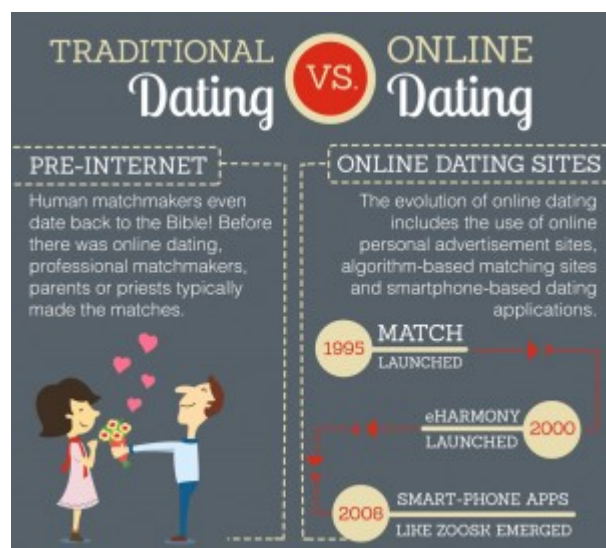


By Jill Kapinus

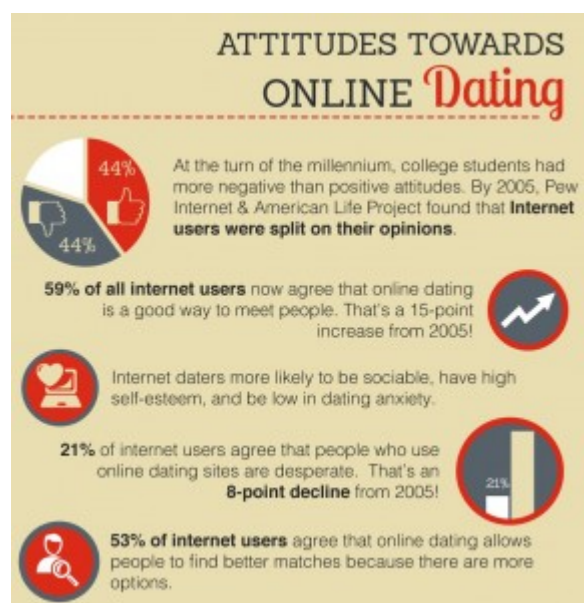
Have you ever wondering just who, outside of the people you know, is using online dating to meet potential partners? And whether people actually think it works? We can't quantify love—heck, we can't even define it!—but we can look at some relationship advice and the statistics of online dating.

What makes a person reach out or respond to a virtual stranger? What

about the stigma that has lurked in the shadow of online dating since its outset? Let's reveal some dating advice below.



The Pew Research Center has conducted surveys that look at these aspects of online dating and how they've changed from 2005 to 2013. Back in 2005, 44% of respondents thought that "online dating is a good way to meet people." In 2013, that number rose to 59%—a pretty positive climb.



The stigma around online dating seems to also have taken a

positive turn as well, as 53% of internet users agree that online dating allows people to find “better matches” because there are more options.

Related: [Relationship Advice: Social Tips from Ben Franklin and Other Maxims Masters](#)



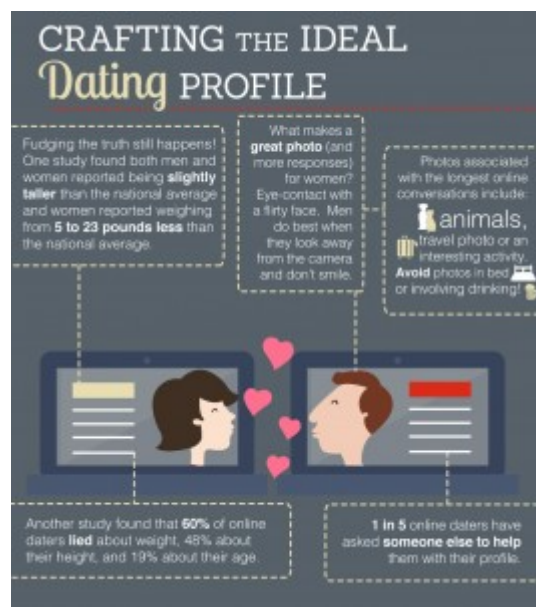
One thing that may always be consistent is that people tend to embellish the truth when it comes to self-describing. One study found that on average, men listed their height as being slightly taller than the national average and women listed their weight as 5 to 23 pounds less than their actual weight. And while women whose profile pictures that featured eye contact and a “flirty face” garnered more responses, men who looked away from the camera and didn’t smile received more replies.

Related: [Relationship Advice: 3 Ways to Handle Unmet Expectations in Marriage](#)



No matter what draws someone to online dating, it seems that

the popularity is increasing, with new online dating apps and websites popping up all the time. So, take our love advice. If you feel like branching out of your typical dating comfort zone, you're not alone! Take this dating advice and take a fun photo of yourself, ponder what your "type" is, and give it a whirl!



What are some other pieces of psychology behind online dating? Share your thoughts below.

A native of northern New Jersey, Jill works as a copywriter in the education industry. She has also written for the healthcare, home mortgage, and home furnishing industries.

Love Advice: Can Jennifer Lawrence and Bradley Cooper's Work Marriage Work?





By Dr. Jane Greer

The on-screen chemistry shared by actors Jennifer Lawrence and Bradley Cooper is so true to life, it's hard to believe it isn't real. The two can be seen everywhere from *Silver Linings Playbook* to *American Hustle* to their upcoming project, *Serena*. Both admit to being each other's work spouses, but insist there is no sex in their faux celebrity marriage. Having a close relationship with someone at work can happen to anyone, not just celebs. You don't actually have to be "playing" husband and wife on screen to feel like you are just that, to an extent. It can happen in any job setting.

The love advice question is, how entangled can you become with a work spouse, and where do you draw the line so the relationship

doesn't negatively affect other parts of your life?

Define Boundaries

Defining the boundaries and being clear about how far and where you can take the connection can, in fact, make the friendship better and allow you to fall into the zone where flirting can be fun, but safe. It also makes room for your chemistry to kick in because it eliminates the constant question of whether or not you're going to take this relationship to the next level. You know the answer is "no," so that gives you room to express yourself more freely.

Attraction is Good

Many friendships between men and women are punctuated by attraction which is never acted on, but keeps the relationship exciting and alive. In the end, though, it isn't just about that energy and flirtation. It is more about knowing each other well, working well together, having each other's backs, and especially experiencing the security of the trust you share. While people often joke that the relationship has the dimensions of a marriage, it is, in fact, really about the camaraderie.

Know the Limits

The most important piece of love advice when it comes to work marriages is if you aren't in a romantic relationship outside of work, knowing the limits of your "work marriage" is important so you won't end up disappointed if it never goes beyond what it already is. If you are dating or married to another person, knowing those limits is even more important so it doesn't spill over the walls of the office and create jealousy or a perceived threat to your partner. With that in mind, if you are spending time with your "work spouse" outside

of work, invite your significant others to join you. That way they will feel included in your friendship instead of excluded. Along those lines, if you spend personal time together, make sure it is work-related, rather than simply going out to have a good time, so that there is no question about what you are doing when you're together.

As "work spouses" and actors, Jennifer and Bradley might be put in more questionable situations than most who are close and share an office because of the specific roles they are playing. Even so, as long as they hold onto the agreed upon boundaries, they will be able to leave their "work marriage" on the set and live their personal lives without complications.