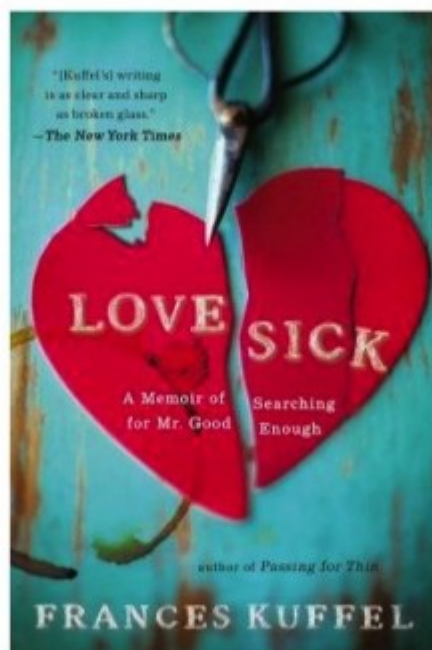


'Love Sick: A Memoir of Searching for Mr. Good Enough' Recalls the Humorous and Insightful Journey of Looking For Love



By Brittany

Stubbs and Laura Seaman

Love Sick: A Memoir of Searching for Mr. Good Enough is a sharp and irreverent memoir recalling Frances Kuffel's quest to replace her on-again, off-again lover with someone new and preferably less unstable. As Shakespeare said, the course of true love never did run smooth, but for Kuffel, it seemed like

one pothole after another. Fifty-three and never married, she opens her mind to all possibilities: She goes out with an Orthodox Jew, is almost the victim of a scammer, stays out all night with a man twenty years her junior, encounters food fixations and shoe fetishes, and generally reads a lot of strange emails. Brazenly honest and insightful, the author comes through the experience with a new understanding of love and, most importantly, herself.

For starters, what inspired you to write this memoir?

I fell in love with a younger man with whom I had a friends-with-benefits situation. He did not reciprocate my feelings, although he very much wanted to remain friends. The best way to get over a broken heart is to fall in love with someone else, and as a memoirist, I could see my challenge was ripe for writing about.

Related Link: ['He Texted' Authors Lisa Winning and Carrie Henderson McDermott, Discuss Dating in the Digital Age](#)

Your determination to find love is inspiring. What kept you going through the rough patches? What would your advice be to other women who are having a difficult time and thinking of giving up?

There were rough patches, and then, there were really rough patches. It took a while to go out on some decent dates, and it was my friends and their senses of humor that buoyed me through the tough times. I have always said you go out with other people, but you date your friends: It's friends you go to with the stories, and it's friends who laugh it off with you, psychoanalyze with you, tell you to get over yourself, or hand you tissues.

My advice to other women is to give yourself a certain amount of time for several days a week to read profiles and answer messages because people who are constantly logged in look a

little desperate. If you see your Saturday night coming up without a date, do something with friends or on your own that you keenly enjoy. Take a break if you have a great date that doesn't lead to a second one – respect your heart. And get out in the world! One problem with online dating is that it's solitary until you meet someone. Remain a citizen. And the big one? DON'T TAKE ANYTHING PERSONALLY.

Your book mostly focuses on your search for love past age 53.

What are some of the differences you noticed between dating in your twenties as opposed to dating in your fifties?

It's an entirely different activity. There was biological imperative in our twenties, pushing us to make babies. Looks mattered more then than now, to a certain extent. Dating in your fifties means forgiving weight, hair loss, hair color, etc. I did a lot of group activities in my twenties too – a gang of friends would go out for pizza and beers or to the movies or “just hang out.” We paired off within the gang. I don't have a gang like that any more, and what social circles I move in tend to be dinner parties or the occasional outing.

We had school and new careers in our twenties, but we could also stay up all night. Now, we have positions in our careers and less energy. Many people have children or grandchildren, which entail a whole other set of obligations. We're also more entrenched in habits and hobbies. If someone announces himself to be a golfer on his personal ad, he's saying, “This is what brands me; it's where my leisure hours go.” We were more amorphous in our twenties, more willing to try golfing or give it up, according to whom our partner was.

Related Link: [Find How Strong Women Find Love in “The Alpha Woman Meets Her Match”](#)

As you wrote this book, I'm sure you learned a lot looking back at your dating experiences. If you had to pick the most valuable lesson learned about dating, what would it be?

If I'm not comfortable dating myself, I'm not ready to date anyone else. If I can't treat myself with the same care, tenderness, romance, admiration, and surprise that I would expend on someone else, I'm going to get short-shrifted by a man. And when it's all over, I'll be empty and blaming myself for the failure.

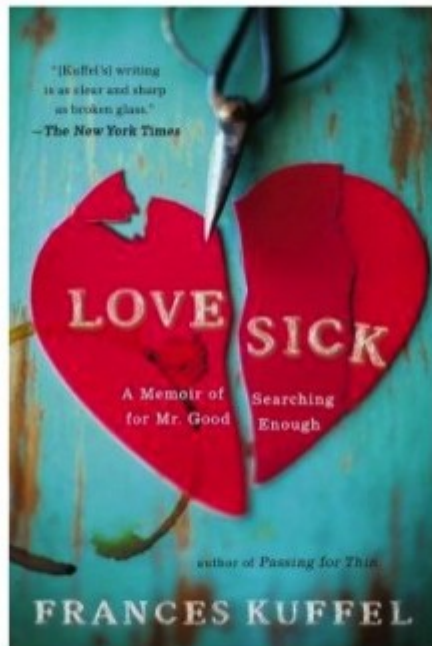
You've spoken a lot about weight loss in your books and in interviews. How has your journey with the loss and gain of weight impacted your search for love?

When I lost weight, I gained the confidence to really try dating for the first time in my life. I kept enough of that confidence to keep dating as I regained weight. My weight has turned a few men off. It's turned a few men on too – and I tend to hear about that because not many guys are going to say, "You're too fat." They'll just fade out instead of risking rudeness.

I say I kept "enough" confidence. I know I'd be a higher ticket item if I were a size 10 than a 22. But I've come to understand that weight is a journey – in my case, it has been one of a few journeys that define my life. If I don't accept where I am today, I'm not going to accept myself at size 8, which as it turned out, I didn't really.

Learn more about Frances Kuffel in her new book, Love Sick: A Memoir of Searching for Mr. Good Enough.

Weddings



By [Courtney](#)

[Omernick](#)

The designer wedding dress, the insane guest list, the mile high wedding cake, and more! Celebrity weddings, what's not to love, right? Even if we can't throw as big of a wedding bash as Kim and Kanye, it can be fun to imagine what our own lavish wedding would look like. Below are 10 of our favorite celebrity weddings.

1. Kim Kardashian and Kanye West: Of course they're number one; they're wedding was plastered everywhere, and the pictures from it were some of the highest viewed photos on Instagram...ever! The party started a week before the actual wedding date (Saturday, May 24) in Paris where Kim, Kanye, and

a few of their family members relaxed before the big day. Their “I do’s” were exchanged outside in Italy next to a giant wall of flowers. Guests such as LaLa Anthony, Joyce Bonelli, Monica Rose, and more were in attendance.

Related: [Social Media Etiquette for Your #Wedding Day](#)

2. Emily Blunt and John Krasinski: Another Italian wedding! The two actors tied the knot back in 2010 and used George Clooney’s Italian villa on Lake Como to do so. It was an outdoor ceremony and the guest list included George Clooney (obviously), Matt Damon, Meryl Streep, David Schwimmer, and more.

Related: [The Most Publicized Celebrity Pregnancies](#)

3. Kendra Wilkinson and Hank Baskett: The former Playboy Playmate and NFL star were married on the front lawn of the Playboy Mansion in June 2009. Wilkinson wore a \$20,000 duchesse-silk gown (that she co-designed) that had more than 55 yards of fabric and was covered in 1,2000 crystals with R-Mine Bridal’s Armine Ohanessian. Talk about glitz and glamour! Their guest list included Hank’s teammates from the Philadelphia Eagles, Hugh Hefner, Holly Madison, Bridget Marquardt, Jon Lovitz, and more famous faces.

4. Katie Holmes and Tom Cruise: In November 2006, seven months after the birth of their daughter, Suri, the two actors were married at the 15th-Century Odescalchi Castle outside of Rome. The bride and groom both wore Armani, and their guest list included Victoria Beckham, Jennifer Lopez, Mark Ronson, and others.

5. Celine Dion and Rene Angelil: Back in December 1994, the singer married her manager at the Notre Dame Basilica in Montreal, Canada. Dion wore a Mirella and Steven Gentile gown that included a 20-foot train and took over 1,000 hours to complete. Oh, we almost forgot to mention Dion’s seven-pound tiara that was made of 2,000 Australian crystals...

6. Nicole Kidman and Keith Urban: The couple was married on June 25, 2006 in an all-candlelight ceremony that took place just after sundown in Sydney, Australia's Cardinal Cerretti Memorial Chapel on St. Patrick's Estate at Manly. Kidman wore a dress by Nicolas Ghesquiere for Balenciaga. The black-tie event included friends such as Russell Crowe, Hugh Jackman, Naomi Watts, and Rupert Murdoch.

7. Gwen Stefani and Gavin Rossdale: These two rockers had not one, but two weddings back in 2002! First, they were married in London and then had their second ceremony two weeks later at a private home in L.A. Stefani wore a dip-dyed silk faille gown that was created specifically for her so she could show off her girly, yet punk, personality. Brad Pitt and Jennifer Aniston were among the many stars in attendance.

8. Khloe Kardashian and Lamar Odom: Who could forget Kim's sister Khloe's crazy nuptials to LA Laker, Lamar Odom? The couple tied the knot just one month after they started dating! The ceremony took place at a private residence in Beverly Hills, and the couple said their vows in front of triple arches of white roses created by celebrity florist, Mark's Garden. The bride wore a Vera Wang gown and was walked down the aisle by her step-father, Bruce Jenner.

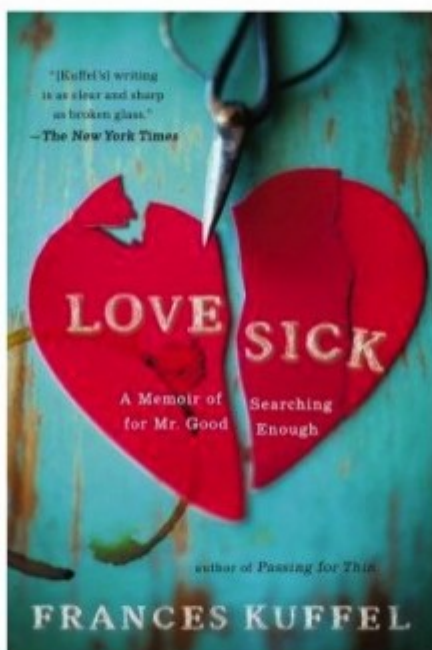
9. Katy Perry and Russell Brand: When the singer and actor wed back in 2010, it was nothing short of magical. Perry wore an Elie Saab Haute Couture gown and \$7,000 Casadei heels to their ceremony at Rajasthan, India's Amani-i-Khas resort. And, don't forget! The two entered their ceremony by riding on top of an elephant! How's that for extravagant?

10. Ellen DeGeneres and Portia De Rossi: The talk show host and model/actress wed in 2008 at their home in L.A. among their closest family and friends. Although the couple didn't have their wedding in an elaborate location, certain items included on their special day sure made for an elaborate event! Both brides wore designs by Zac Posen and Mark's Garden

provided the candles and flowers. Later that evening, all guests dined on an all-vegan menu prepared by the couple's personal chef, David Silberkleit.

What's your favorite celebrity wedding? Share below.

Are Your Dating Standards Too High?



By Liz Kim

There's nothing wrong with knowing what you want in a future boyfriend or girlfriend; in fact you *shouldn't* settle for just

anybody. But there comes a point when unrealistic standards may actually be what's keeping you from finding Mr. or Mrs. Right. If you are turning down a potentially great relationship because he has a funny hairstyle or she has "man hands" a la *Jerry Seinfeld*, then it's time to reevaluate your priorities and loosen up a little instead of spending every Friday night alone in your room. Here are some signs that your standards are too high when it comes to dating:

1. You model relationships after what you see on the big screen: "Love means never having to say you're sorry." "You complete me." "I'll never let go, Jack." Although *Love Story*, *Jerry Maguire*, and *Titanic* are beautiful films that celebrate the power of the love, they've also done a pretty good job at shattering realistic expectations when it comes to dating and relationships. We all want a love like Jack and Rose, but even our idea of these people is false because Hollywood is scripted. With good editing and a staff of writers and makeup artists, any relationship can seem perfect. If you're keeping track of your relationship by comparing it to what you see on the big screen, you are setting yourself up only for failure and heartbreak.

Related: [Ways To Help Single Friends Find a Partner](#)

2. You have unrealistic physical standards: We all have a "type" that we're attracted to whether it be blue eyes or long brown curly hair. And while physical attraction does play an important role in dating, there comes a point when your standards just become ridiculous. "He's tall, kind of muscular, kind hazel eyes, great with kids...*but* he has this tiny birthmark on his left cheek that's too distracting. I can't go out with somebody with a distracting birthmark." Sound like you? Don't let the little details get in the way of the big picture.

3. You can't remember the last date you went on: You don't

realize this at first but after you've turned down date after date you eventually find yourself on the couch (again), on Saturday night (again), wrist deep into a pint of Ben and Jerry's (again), re-watching all 7 seasons of *The Golden Girls* (again). If you don't want this to happen to you, then it's time to reevaluate what you're looking for. If you refuse to budge on your standards, be prepared for many many nights alone.

4. You've been told (repeatedly!) that you're too picky: If one or two people say you're picky, then it's worth nothing but you probably don't have to be too concerned about it. If you're hearing again and again from most of your friends and family that you are way too strict with your standards, then you might have a problem. Sometimes we forget to look at ourselves from an outsider's perspective and don't realize how we're behaving.

Related: [10 Blind Date Etiquette Rules](#)

5. You are a stubborn repeat offender: If Chad is the eighth guy you've gone out with surfs and has sandy blonde hair and a penchant for guitar playing, and it hasn't worked out, break out of your mold. Clearly you don't fit with the "type" you date and now it's time to branch out and maybe go out with Jamie, the kind of nerdy barista from the corner coffee shop who always give you extra caramel drizzle and who may not have blonde hair and clearly can't surf but has a great smile. You've taken a chance with 8 Chads already so taking one more chance with somebody new can't hurt.

6. The problem isn't you, it's him/her: This one plays off of #5. If you're consistently dating the same type of person over and over again and it's always a nightmare, we hate to break it to you but it's probably you. If you are one for order and routine but your dream date is someone who is always spontaneous (and kind of unreliable), in theory this sounds like an opposites attract type of situation but more often

than not you'll walk away unhappy and unsatisfied.

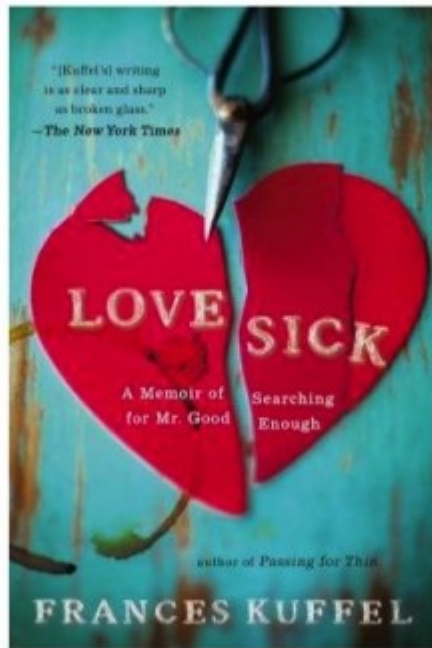
7. You've more than once regretted dumping somebody: Well now you've done it. You turned down Jamie because he was into comic books and a few months later you see him walking down the street with his new girlfriend. They're holding hands and can't take their eyes off of each other. Was he always so cute? You instantly regret turning him down because now he's happy and in love and you're still along and sulking.

Imagine going to a buffet with tables and tables of food you've never tried before but sticking only to french fries. You know you like french fries but all the salt makes you bloat and they're not too good cold. Maybe it's time to try another dish? The beauty of dating is that if it doesn't work out, you never have to see the person again. Instead of boxing yourself in with strict dating standards, maybe it's time to take a chance and date outside of your comfort zone. Who knows? Maybe he or she will bring out a side of you you didn't you had.

Do you think your dating standards are too high? Tell us in the comments below.

Cupid's Weekly Round-Up: Your Ideal Man





By Shannon

Seibert

Women are constantly consumed by the search for the elusive Ideal Man. But who is he, really? For some, he's tall, dark, and handsome. For others, he's a sensitive blonde who is passionate about nature. But how far will these characteristics really take your relationship? We've pulled these five articles from our partners to reveal what qualities your dream man should possess, no matter what:

1. He's someone worth bragging about: Okay, so your mother isn't exactly impressed by your latest prospects. Chances are, if they aren't measuring up to Mom's standards, they aren't worth your time. The Ideal Man is someone who you'll be proud to bring home and show off to your friends and family. For example, Kendra Wilkinson-Baskett brags about her man Hank Baskett and his amazing parenting skills for their two children. (CelebrityBabyScoop.com)

2. He'll leave the past in the past: Jealousy is a monster that we all wish to keep at bay. The Ideal Man will not talk poorly of his past, nor of yours, but use it as a learning

experience. Not speaking ill of an ex reflects wonderfully on his personality and character. He will be comfortable in his own skin and will reassure you that his past will not become his present. (YourTango.com)

3. He'll make you feel comfortably uncomfortable: You'll not only feel right, but you'll feel protected. The Ideal Man will allow you to be fully yourself, and he'll also push you into uncharted territories. He won't be afraid to challenge you or disagree with you. After all, in a strong relationship, you need that type of mental stimulation. (GalTime.com)

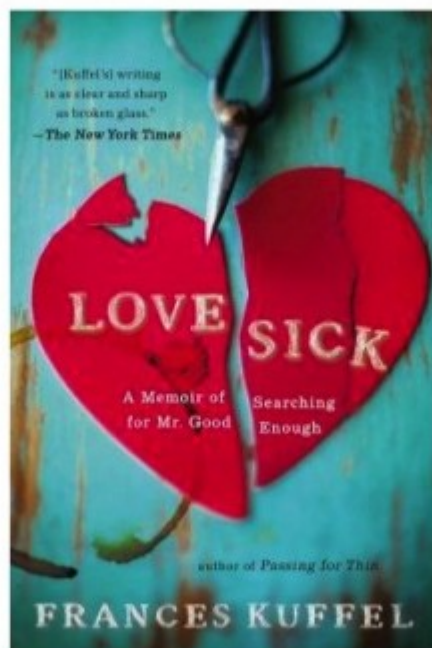
4. He'll be the most intoxicating drug: Passionate, all-consuming love is something that every woman wants. And if you look hard enough, it's not a lofty goal. The Ideal Man should not only be compatible with you physically but emotionally as well. Don't underestimate the power of love and what it can do to a person, for your perfect love is like your own brand of heroin. (GalTime.com)

5. He'll affirm why it didn't work out with anyone else: Past heartbreaks may have hurt, but they also served as guidance to get you where you are today. The Ideal Man will have the arms that will feel like home. He'll be the answer to any question you ever had, and you'll be the solution to all of his problems. It will click, just like that. (YourTango.com)

What is your Ideal Man like? Tell us in the comments below!

What Are Some Superstitions

You Fear? Try Them Out for Date Night!



By Leslie Chavez

Friday the thirteenth doesn't have to be unlucky when it comes to love. In fact, you can turn the unlucky into a few unique date ideas. What are some superstitions you fear? Face your fears and spend the day together seeing how many superstitions you can prove wrong.

Admit it: Being a little scared is kind of fun! Plus, it gives you an excuse to hold on to your man just a little bit tighter. According to LiveScience.com, "Many superstitions stem from the same human trait that causes us to believe in monsters and ghosts: When our brains can't explain something,

we make stuff up.” The rush of knowing that you’re doing something that’s considered unlucky will give you a little rush of hormones and a heart-racing thrill that also produces a sensation of pleasure. Push the superstitious limits and have a silly time challenging the infamous day.

Related Link: [Take a Risk and Be Daring](#)

Trying out superstitions is your excuse to be bad, so think of everything you’re not supposed to do today and *do it!* Open up an umbrella inside and dance around together, challenging the rain of misfortune to come down. If you’re feeling really brave, take a small mirror and crack it – but be careful not to cut yourself! There is a belief that mirrors don’t just reflect your image; they hold parts of your soul. This is why breaking mirrors is believed to be such bad luck, but look at it as a way to free yourself of unwanted vanity.

If you see a ladder, take a walk underneath it. One theory holds that walking under a ladder has to do with its resemblance to medieval gallows and is therefore something you should avoid. However, the thrill is harmless, and you can add it to the list of rules you broke today. Spot a black cat? Let it cross your path; heck, call it over and pet it a bit! It can’t hurt you, right?

When you’re at dinner that night, spill a little salt on the table while seasoning your veggies. Can’t you just see him grin mischievously at you from across the table, thinking of what bad things you can do next? Doing these little reckless things together will make you feel brave and bring some spice into your relationship.

Related Link: [Freaky Friday](#)

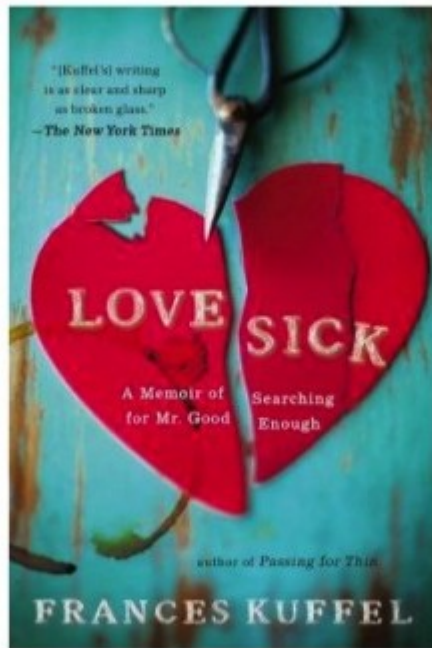
Sometimes, doing something wrong can feel so right, and developing unique date ideas so that you are spending the day breaking these ridiculous superstitions will make you feel fun, foolish, and carefree. Remember that the misfortune that

comes with Friday the Thirteenth is all superstition, so you should make it through the day with all of your original luck intact. Fingers crossed!

Cupid wants to know: How will you celebrate Friday the Thirteenth?

Exclusive Celebrity Interview: Beauty Expert Kym Douglas Says, "Fall in Love as Often as You Can"





Interview by

Brittany Stubbs. Written by Laura Seaman.

Kym Douglas, known around the world for her beauty expertise, is a woman of many talents, as shown by her frequent television appearances, radio spots, and multiple books. Her motto “bliss happens” is an inspiration to people everywhere as she helps them find ways to be healthy, feel beautiful, and live their lives to the fullest. As she says in our exclusive celebrity interview, “It’s not about trying to look younger; it’s about trying to look your best.”

Exclusive Celebrity Interview with Beauty Expert

The beauty guru started out on *The Ellen Degeneres Show* nine years ago on a one-time guest segment. “Ellen isn’t interested in lipstick and rouge or beauty products. It’s never going to work,” everyone kept telling me. But the moral of the story is similar to dating: You might count someone out because of your differences, but it may turn out to be something great.” And

now, Douglas is the show's only regular contributor and says that she and the host bring out the best in each other.

Fans may also recognize the beautiful blonde from *Home & Family* on the Hallmark Channel. "I think it's a wonderful show," she says. "It's just so real – real values, real issues. There's beauty, cooking, making your home reflective of who you are inside."

Kym Douglas Shares Beauty Tips and Dating Advice

Being the expert on beauty, we asked the TV personality to share some of her summer secrets for looking your best – and she drew from personal experience. Recently, Degeneres sent her to Hawaii for a segment, and her hair had trouble with the heat. However, a dab of deodorant along her hairline and on her neck kept the sweat from frizzing up her luscious locks.

Another seemingly odd beauty tip involves egg whites. "Before a date night with my husband, I'll wear a mask of whipped egg whites on my face. It helps tighten up my skin so I feel comfortable wearing less makeup." And we all know: The less makeup you pile on, the less chance that it will melt off in the heat. An easy and inexpensive way to conquer the summer weather!

When it comes to summer makeup trends, Douglas knows exactly what's in this season. "The biggest thing is dark, full brows," she says. Everything else on the face is muted and light to give your eyes a great pop without having to wear a lot of heavy makeup.

In terms of hairstyles, Douglas says it's all about the braids – "whether it's a braid wrapped around the crown of your hair or a small braid on the side." No surprise there, as we've already seen celebrities like Beyonce and Blake Lively rock

this style.

Related Link: [Tabatha Coffey Says It's Important to "Connect and Continue to Get to Know Your Partner"](#)

While these trends may come and go, Douglas notes one simple trend that's here to stay: "I really think that, if I had to sum it up in one word, I would say that 'fresh' is the goal for beauty. Try to look fresh!" she explains in our exclusive celebrity interview.

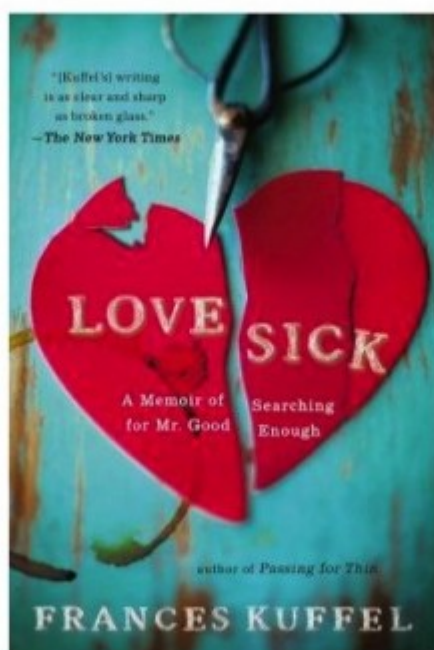
This summer look is bound to get a man's attention, and Douglas knows a thing or two about a summer relationship and love. In her experience, summer love was always the best type of love. "It was something about the free feeling and the happiness of summer. I always fell in love with a new guy, and he would be the love of my life at that time." Douglas still remembers the names of them all and encourages others to enjoy their summer flings: "Fall in love as often as you can!"

Related Link: ['RHOA' Star Phaedra Parks Talks New Book and Marriage: "Remember What Made You Fall in Love"](#)

Since then, Douglas has found the real love of her life and started a family. She now "has it all" with her husband, her son, and her successful career. She had always wanted these things but didn't know how to make it happen. So when she first went on *The View*, she looked to Barbara Walters for life and relationship advice. "I asked her what it took, and she told me, 'You can have it all; you really can. You just can't have it all at the same time.' I really took those words to heart."

You can see Kym Douglas regularly on Hallmark Channel's Home & Family weekdays at 10 am ET/PT.

Date Idea: Live Out Your Fairytale



By Leslie Chavez

Once upon a time, in a land far away, there was a place where chivalry prevailed, where it was acceptable for fair ladies to wear flower garlands, and where a princess could always count on being rescued by her Prince Charming. But fear not, dear maidens, for this enchanted image need not remain only fantasy. This weekend, let whimsical romance take over and live a few days in make-believe.

Related Link: [Dress Up](#)

Head to the nearest medieval fair and see the world of knights and queens come to life! After picking up a sword for your man and a piece of handcrafted jewelry for you, take a leisurely walk through the marketplace on your way to the big joust. You'll be on the edge of your seat watching the lance-armed knights battle it out for her majesty. To settle your nerves after all that excitement, grab two mugs of ale before experiencing the festive music and entertaining jesters of the town. However, be aware of the peasants, pirates, and wenches that also roam the streets – although there's no doubt that your gallant knight will surely come to your rescue if need be.

If the realm of poetry and plays is of more interest to you, check out a summer Shakespeare festival and immerse yourself in his beautiful prose, filled with star-crossed lovers and noble cavaliers. Spend the day in the grass, listening to the expressive words of one of the world's greatest poets. Many festivals also include talks, readings, and classes that allow you to gain more insight into the romantic, chivalrous world portrayed on the stage. Submerge yourself in the imaginary love stories and embody the intense passion of Shakespeare's knights and maidens.

For a more intimate experience, create a magical evening at home. Together, prepare a small Middle Ages feast of roast chicken, honey cakes, and mead, fit for the king and queen that you are. While you're at it, listen to some instrumental tunes worthy of a royal ballroom waltz.

Related Link: [Expand Your Tastes](#)

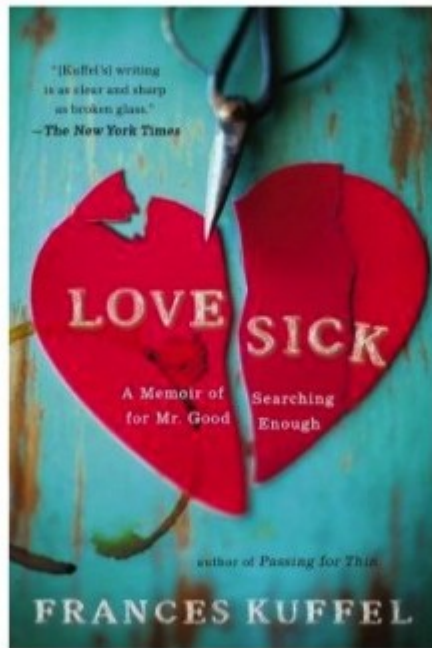
After dinner, you can relax with the remainder of your mead and a fantasy TV marathon, be it *Game of Thrones* or the romantic tales of Disney's finest: Charming, Phillip, Eric, and the Beast. Either way, get ready for a night so jam-packed

with true love's kisses and acts of bravery and charisma, it will definitely inspire your prince to follow suit. You'll both be so enamored by the romantic storylines of these old-fashioned and courtly characters from another time that it'll bring meaning and magic back to the words, "And they lived happily ever after."

What is your fairytale date? Share with us in the comments below!

Cupid's Weekly Round-Up: Being Your Own Person in a Couple





By Shannon

Seibert

A growing misconception about relationships is that the partnership defines who you are as a person. First and foremost, you have to do what is best for *you* and be your own person. This doesn't mean you love your sweetheart any less; it just means that you know who you are individually. It takes two strong halves to equal a united whole, so we have pulled together these five articles from our partners to make your relationship stronger than ever:

1. Don't marry your self-esteem to your man: Basing your happiness off of the circumstances of your relationship is just a ticking time bomb heading for the inevitable explosion. If you're in a foul mood the entire day because you and your man are disagreeing over where to put the new couch, there may be a deeper problem. A woman who creates her own happiness is beautiful, and a woman who shares her happiness with someone she loves is even more beautiful. (YourTango.com)

2. Establish your independence: Much like our favorite independent woman Kourtney Kardashian, you can be in a strong,

loving relationship while holding your own. Kardashian is a spokesperson, model, and partner in numerous businesses apart from her man, but she still has the utmost love and respect for him. They are even expecting baby number three! (CelebrityBabyScoop.com)

3. Focus on yourself: Sure, we all know that inner beauty is just as important as outer beauty...but sometimes, we just want to feel pretty. Take some time to focus on your skincare and haircare rituals with these beauty tips from actress Amanda Seyfried. (GalTime.com)

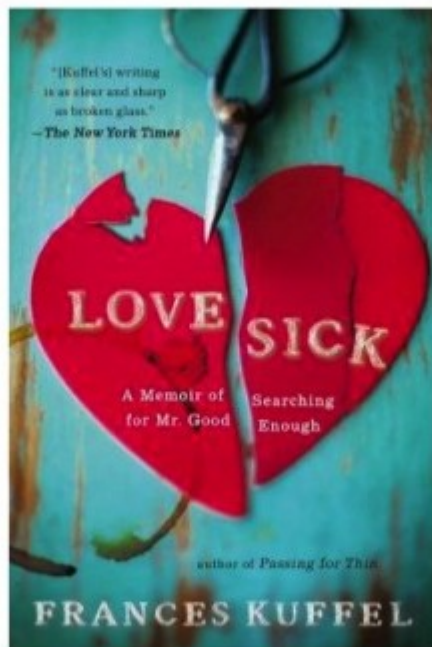
4. Have outside interests: What is the point in coming home to tell your honey about your day when you spent the entire day doing everything together? Having separate interests is actually liberating in a relationship. It gives you an outlet to be your own person without having to take someone else's opinions into consideration. So embrace your passion! (YourTango.com)

5. Don't wait on the approval from your loved ones: Your friends and family are important to the decisions you make, but you can't give them the reigns and just ride their opinion wave. If you're happy in your relationship, don't let your pals and relatives make you feel otherwise. Be confident in your feelings and learn to trust yourself. (GalTime.com)

How do you stay true to yourself when you're in a relationship? Share with us in the comments below.

What Singles Can Learn From

Weddings in 'Save the Date: The Occasional Mortifications of a Serial Wedding Guest'



By Liz Kim and
Brittany Stubbs

Weddings come in as many varieties as there are brides and grooms, and with them come some great receptions and some equally terrible ones. With each ceremony, you play a different role, and at a time where people are getting married later in life, weddings give us a little peek at what we want and don't want in our relationships. And when you've gone to as many weddings as author Jen Doll, you get a pretty good handle on wedding guest culture. In her memoir *Save the*

Date: The Occasional Mortifications of a Serial Wedding Guest, she recounts many of the different weddings she's been to in her life (which is nearly 30 at this point!) and what they have taught her about herself and love.

What inspired you to write *Save the Date: The Occasional Mortifications of a Serial Wedding Guest*?

From the time we are very young, wedding culture surrounds us in so many ways. I grew up seeing pictures of my parents' wedding, watching televised weddings of celebrities and fictionalized wedding stories, and, of course, perusing photos of myself at weddings as a child. As a kid, I thought about my own future wedding; I considered it something that was just inevitable. You grow up, you fall in love, and you get married. But as I got older, I realized it's not always that simple – and just because it's not simple doesn't mean it's not good.

I was inspired to look at my own wedding-going life because I think we've all been there in some way or another; while the specific stories may be different, the things we face at weddings – in the external situations or with our interior selves – are in many ways universal. The feelings we bring to these events play into our experience, just as those weddings also shape us and our feelings. I wanted to write about it so we could start to talk about it. Wedding guests have their own stories too.

Related Link: ['Never Have I Ever' Author Katie Heaney Says Love Should Be "a Supplement to a Full Life"](#)

What would you like readers to learn from reading *Save the Date*? Do you have one message you're hoping they take to heart?

I'd like people to come away with a sense of openness and possibility, to be relieved of some of the anxiety we tend to bring to weddings, and to feel that there is a community of

wedding guests who have all been there too. I'd like for people to feel like they can tell their own wedding guest stories. We can have each other's backs! I'd also like people to feel that they don't have to judge themselves so harshly for failing to live up to old expectations. We should all just be the real selves that we are, acknowledge our inherent complications and occasional mortifications, and try to be good to ourselves and each other as we learn and grow and have as much joy as we can in life.

Since you've been to your fair share of weddings, can you give our readers a few of your dos and don'ts when attending a pal's nuptials?

If you have concerns about the person your friend is marrying or about the marriage, do not get drunk and decide it's the right time to talk to her about it. I would recommend, if it's possible, addressing your concerns beforehand. She has her feelings, and you have yours. You are not the same people, and all that is reasonable and fair. But if you are good friends who love each other and want to stay close, you have to tell each other how you feel.

As for drinking in general, it's so easy to overindulge at a wedding. Waiters are constantly refilling your glass, sometimes without even asking! So just be careful. Sometimes, in the festive atmosphere, things turn a bad corner without you noticing, and then it's too late to get a handle on it.

And oh yeah, if you hate the bouquet toss (I hate the bouquet toss), leave the room!

You reference the single woman's perspective in your book. What have you found to be the most difficult part about being a single woman at weddings? Do you usually bring a date or go solo?

I have gone to weddings in each and every way it is possible to go to weddings as an unmarried person. I think the most

difficult part of going to a wedding as a “single woman” (and probably guys feel this too) is just about going to anything alone. It’s nerve-racking to show up by yourself, and you can feel awkward. But this also means that going as a single person to a wedding can be really expanding. You learn to be on your own and feel the power and freedom that comes with that. You can move seamlessly between conversations; you don’t have to worry that your date isn’t having a good time. You are just you. That’s kind of awesome.

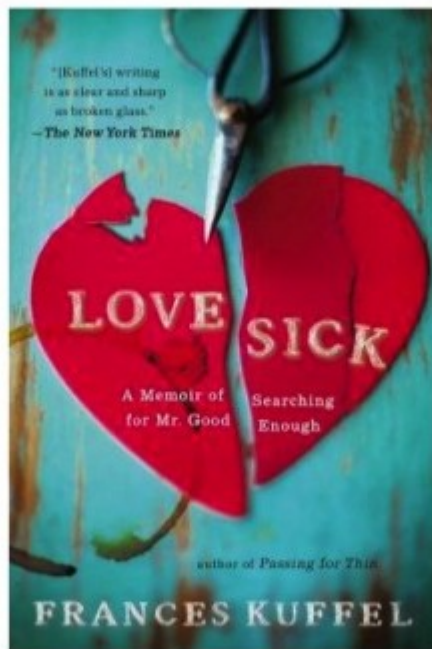
Related Link: [‘The Bridesmaid’s Manual’: A Guide to Wedding Planning And Friendship](#)

Any advice for other singles attending a wedding or two this summer?

It can be really fun to go to a wedding on your own! If you are going by yourself to a wedding, I recommend really owning it. If it’s in a nice destination, stay for a few more days before or after. Treat yourself to a massage, a new dress, a great haircut. Admit how you’re feeling to yourself – because with repressed feelings come disaster, at least in my experience. Even if you are feeling a whole lot of confusing or complicated emotions, admitting that fact frees you up a bit. You can say, “Yes, that’s there. I feel that, but I don’t have to let it determine how I’ll behave or prevent me from having fun in this moment.”

You can get your hands on ‘Save the Date: The Occasional Mortifications of a Serial Wedding Guest’ on Amazon. Keep up with Doll on Twitter @thisisjendoll.

Co-Parenting Teenagers in the Summertime



By Lisa LaBelle

Co-parenting and planning summer visitation with teenagers can be challenging and emotionally draining. Hopefully, plans can be worked out peacefully with your ex-spouse – consider Reese Witherspoon and Ryan Phillippe for a celebrity example – but there are many who are not so fortunate. The error comes when parents choose to not give their teenagers a voice in planning their time. They don't stop to think about the consequences that occur when their teenagers aren't able to participate in activities and events that are important to them, through no fault of their own.

The solutions are simple. Here are some tips to help with co-

parenting during your teenager's summer plans:

Related Link: [Keep Talking to Your Kids After Divorce](#)

Give your teenager a voice:

It's important to sit down one-on-one with your teenager and simply ask what they want their summer to look like. Does your teenager have scout camp, sports camp, music and art classes, academic work, dance camp, team sports, or a summer job? Remember it's not about you; it's about your teenager. Next, have your teenager write out their summer goals, responsibilities, and commitments. Give your teenager a voice in both the verbal and written word.

Be your teenager's true advocate:

Listen to your teenager and offer supportive input. Do your best to work around their activities. Talk with your ex about your teenager's summer commitments peacefully. Encourage your ex-spouse to come and attend any events too. For example, it may be a scout camping trip that he could chaperone with your son or coming to cheer for your teenager in a dance competition.

Encourage your teenager to use their voice:

Encourage your teenager to respectfully use their own voice with both you and your ex-spouse. It's important for your teenager's self-worth to speak directly to both parents concerning their summer plans. It may take some time for your ex-spouse to adjust to your teenager making their own plans, but it will increase mutual respect.

Be supportive of your teenager *and* ex-spouse:

You, as the custodial parent, will have the role of being supportive to your teenager and your ex-partner as they work out their summer plans. If your ex attempts to bring you into

the decision-making process, you simply remind them you are there to offer support, cheering them on in making their plans “together.” After a few times of responding in this peaceful, supportive manner, your ex-spouse will not feel the need to reach out to you for assistance.

Related Link: [How to Cooperatively Co-Parent After Separation or Divorce](#)

Remind your teenager you're there:

Verbally remind your teenager that you are there to be a support as they make summer plans with their other partner. Knowing you are there will naturally build confidence in your teenager's ability to communicate directly with your ex-partner. You are there to be the main support and to reinforce the importance of your teenager's voice as plans are being made.

As a co-parent, stay close to your teenager, cheer them on, and encourage them to use their own voices for all summer and year-round planning. The results will be worth it. Communication between you and your teenagers will increase, and a long-lasting, healthier relationship will be the outcome. Your teenager's own self-respect will improve knowing they do have a voice and that they matter.

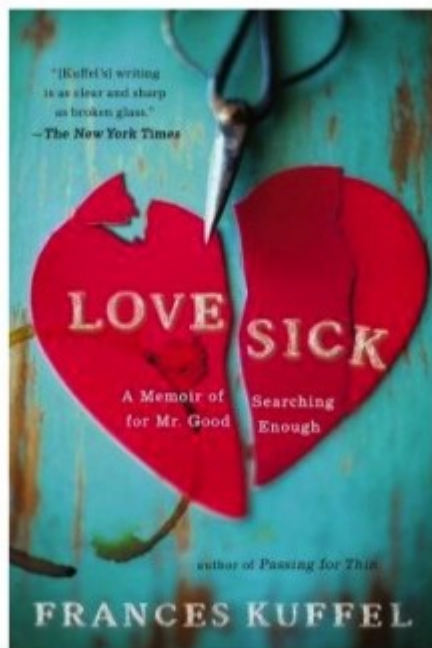


Lisa LaBelle is co-founder and co-executive director of Hope After Divorce and Divorce SupportCenter.com. She holds a B.S. degree in Education, and is completing her master's degree in clinical mental health counseling with an emphasis in marriage, child, and family therapy. Lisa is a family and child advocate. She is co-author and co-editor of Hope After Divorce and Divorce Experts Weigh

In. Lisa is the co-host of the Life After Divorce CL3 Agency blogtalk radio show. She is a contributing expert for

DivorceSupportCenter.com, FamilyShare.com, CupidsPulse.com, and Newport Lifestyle Magazine. You can contact Lisa by visiting www.divorcesupportcenter.com.

How to Make Out with a Girl



By Todd Valentine

Kissing was once the bane of my dating life. Like many of you, I was shy and worried about offending girls or making them feel uncomfortable. It took nine months of dating before I had my first kiss. Watch any romantic movie, and you'll notice

that there is so much emphasis on the kiss. The kiss is the catalyst for getting physical. But, **kissing is just one step in physical escalation**, and it probably shouldn't be the first. A kiss can happen spontaneously—like on a dance floor—but typically you need to get physical in other ways first. One way is to make a move that doesn't involve kissing. If it's well received, continue. If not, back off and try again. When a woman says, "no," sometimes this really means, "not yet." Girls can be reluctant to make a move for fear of being labeled slutty, so it's your responsibility to make the interaction physical. Okay, so *how* do you actually make out with a girl? Below are four techniques that work for me:

1. Triangular Gazing

Look from her eyes, to lips, to eyes, to lips, and so on. This should be done slowly, and ideally, in silence. It conveys that you want to kiss, and it won't get you in trouble. If she goes silent too, or leans in, kiss her. If not? Try another technique.

Related: [5 Ways to Have a Stress-Free First Date](#)

2. Eskimo Kiss or Neck Bite

The Eskimo Kiss is another move that builds arousal. Rub your nose against hers and say, "Come here—but no lips!" If she's into it, kiss her, but I would suggest pulling away. You can kiss next time. With the **Neck Bite**, you're getting physical, but the girl isn't technically a participant, so she won't feel slutty. Plus, a bite often arouses a girl *more* than a kiss. Lead with, "I need to tell you a secret," then go for a nibble.

Related: [Five Tips for Falling in Love in 2014](#)

3. Eyes-Closed Kiss

"Close your eyes. I want to show you something." She closes

her eyes, you kiss her. Again, this releases the girl from feeling “slutty.” Use this technique if other signals are there but she keeps shying away from kissing. The girl usually knows what you’re up to but will often be glad you relieved her of the responsibility.

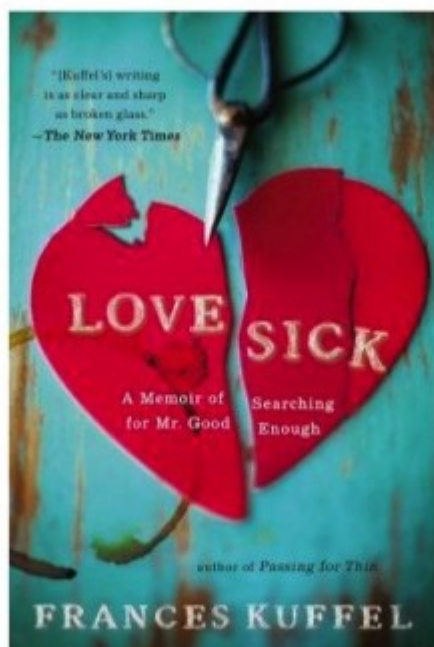
4. The Gangster

This is one of my favorites, but it requires courage. It works when you’re not close enough to a girl to kiss her (maybe there’s a table between you). Say, “sh,” go silent, put down your drink, walk around the table, set down *her* drink, and kiss her. The move itself is so ballsy, and it will be less awkward to go for the kiss than to stop in the middle.

My overall advice is: **Go for it**. Girls want you to take charge. Get into a sexual vibe so she does too. Slow down, look into her eyes, think sexual thoughts, and use **these four techniques**. If she responds well, great. If she doesn’t, try again. Even if she doesn’t kiss you, I promise she’ll respect you for the attempt.

Todd Valentine is a global authority on attraction and seduction. For more insights on kissing and dating, check out his blog valentinelife.com and his channel [youtube.com/rsdtodd](https://www.youtube.com/rsdtodd).

5 Reasons to Move In with your Mate



By Laura Seaman

Moving in with your partner is a big step. Sure, maybe you've spent the night at each other's apartments before, or gone on a trip where you shared a hotel room or lake house, but this is something else entirely. Living together means more than just sharing a house (which is a big responsibility on its own), it means sharing bills, personal space, and secrets that may have been hidden before. Despite the intimidation that comes with this decision, there are a few good reasons to take the plunge and move in with your mate:

Share the Cost

Living together gives you half the rent and none of the transportation costs that came with two separate living spaces

and the drive it took to visit one another. That's one utility bill, one water bill, and one gas bill. You'll also only be using one set of furniture. Just be sure that splitting these costs doesn't lead to conflict. Establish ahead of time who will pay which bills and how much each of you will pay. With another living companion, paying the bills might be a bit more complicated, but they will be much less expensive.

See Their Habits (and Vice Versa)

There are plenty of habits you may not get to see while you're dating someone. People tend to hide their bad habits when they're trying to impress, so you might have a pet peeve they haven't revealed. When someone is at home, they're much more comfortable with themselves and they can't help but show their little quirks. It may be something as little as biting their nails, or something difficult to ignore, such as counting having to walk through a doorway three times. It's important to see these habits before taking your relationship too much further, because there might be one habit that pushes you over the edge, and the sooner you find this out the better.

Related: [What You Need to Know Before You Move In Together](#)

Seeing the Ugly Side

When you're dating, situations rarely arise that will bring out a person's temper. While living together, you have the chance to see their tempers flare. This may not seem like a pro, but you will be thankful for it in the future. Moving in with your partner is taking your relationship to the next step and seeing a side of them that they wouldn't normally show you. This step may not be pleasant, but it's very important and cannot be overlooked if you hope to maintain a stable relationship.

Learning to Share

With one place to live, one set of furniture, and maybe even a pet, sharing is essential to staying in a happy relationship. It may be something we learned as children, but it seems to get harder as we get older. It's difficult to share a home; that's why so many people argue with their families growing up. Once you learn to share more of your home with your partner, you can then learn to unwind and share more of yourself. It will be the most open and honest that you've ever been with each-other, and that is something you might not get when being apart.

Related: [QuickieChick's Video Dating Tips: Moving In with your Man](#)

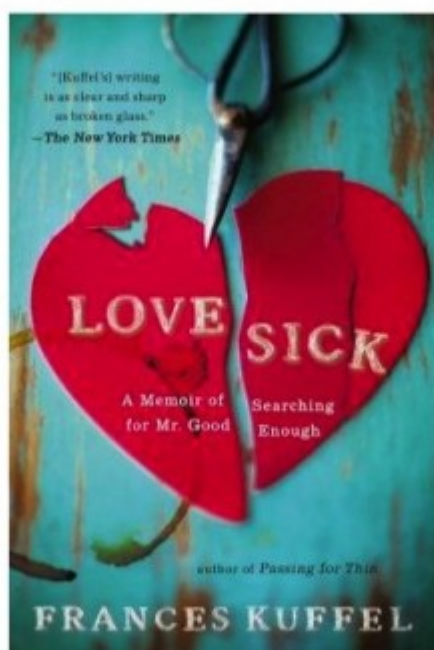
Long-Term Decisions Come Up

Living together is a big step in a relationship. For many, it means further commitment; it's a trial-run before marriage. However, what if not everyone involved feels that way? When going on a date, the subject of children and marriage isn't likely to come up. But when you're living together, you and your partner are bound to talk more, and these serious subjects will likely come up. This is the perfect way to find out if your mate made the move to become something more, or if maybe you both have something more to talk about.

Living together can be tough, and many people advise against it. However, it's these hardships that truly make it worth the risk. If your relationship can't make it through the step of living together, how can it make it through marriage? The pros might not be as happy or pleasant as expected, but as with all learning experiences, it is necessary.

Do you think it's a good idea to move in with your mate? What's your experience? Let us know in the comments!

The Most Publicized Celebrity Pregnancies



By Shannon Seibert

There is nothing more exciting than welcoming little bundles of joy into the world. In the realm of celebrities, baby news is always the best news. Over the years, our beloved starlets have enticed us with their unique maternity wear, adorable pregnancy announcements, and awe-inspiring sentiments about expecting. We've pulled together the best of the best, with some of the most publicized pregnancies over the past few

years.

1. Catharine 'Kate' Middleton: Undoubtedly, Kate had one of the most followed pregnancies of all time. With the whole world watching with avid anticipation of the birth of royal baby, the duchess served as a maternity style-icon throughout the duration of her pregnancy. Kate kept her style classy, utilizing simple silhouettes, classic dresses, and comfortable coats as her staple pieces. She and husband Prince William, welcomed a baby boy, George Alexander Louis, on July 22, 2013. We weren't even surprised when her baby-weight seemed to melt away mere weeks after bringing George into the world. Bow down to the Duchess of Cambridge.

Related: [Ginnifer Goodwin Opens Up About Her Pregnancy and Wedding](#)

2. Kim Kardashian: She and now fiancé, Kanye West, welcomed a baby girl, North West, on June 15, 2013. Kim's pregnancy is most famous for three reasons: A. Her crazy maternity wear. B. Her famous hubby-to-be (#Kimye5eva) and C. 'North West' is the name of her baby. In terms of wardrobe Kim made some daring choices. The reality star has served as a style icon for years, and during her pregnancy she still didn't disappoint. She never shied away from leather pants or killer six-inch heels. Also, with Kanye at her side, the two are obviously a power-couple. But most importantly, the adorable North West is both wide-eyed and beautiful like her mother, and already has a dominant personality like her father.

3. Mila Kunis: Currently, the actress and Ashton Kutcher are expecting their first child. Mila's pregnancy has graced Google's top search list since the news broke. The engaged couple began dating in 2012, four years after they costarred together on That '70s Show. Mila is also a Wonder Woman mommy-to-be, keeping up with yoga, publicly rocking skinny jeans, and emphasizing her pregnancy glow by canoodling with Ashton. With her and Ashton's killer looks and crazy

personalities, the baby is bound to be a legend.

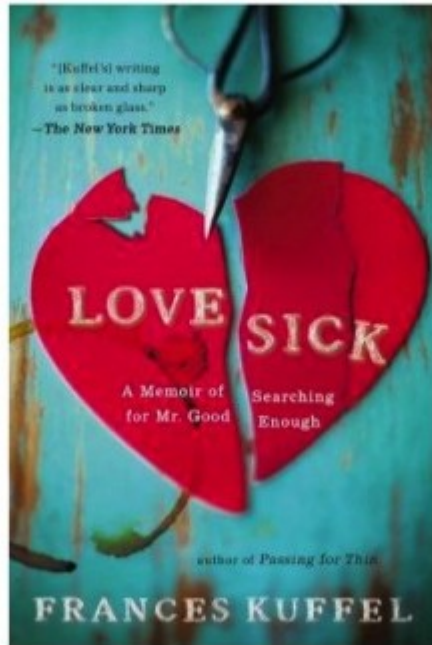
Related: [Kristi Yamaguchi "Surprised" by Parenthood](#)

4. Gisele Bündchen: Mother of two, both of the Brazilian beauty's pregnancies were for the books. From controversial pregnancy and motherhood comments to bikini baby-belly photos, the former Victoria's Secret supermodel never failed to impress us. An advocate of breast-feeding, healthy eating, and natural birth Gisele has set the standards for women. Benjamin, now four resembles his daddy's spitting image. Vivian is now 14-months-old, and has been seen rocking UGG baby booties and designer jeans to match her glowing mama. Of course with a hubby like Tom Brady, we really aren't shocked that both kiddos adorn the tabloids with their cuteness.

5. Scarlett Johansson: This woman can actually do it all. The renowned actress is expecting her first baby with fiancé, Romain Dauriac and is still currently filming for *The Avengers: Age of Ultron*. As a mother-to-be and a -bride-to-be, Scarlett seems determined to balance work, love, and family while retaining her own individuality. Not only will she give birth to a stunning child, but will undoubtedly have a glorious wedding as well.

Have any baby-momma tips or tricks to share? Tell us about your pregnancy in the comments below!

Date Idea: Write a Book



By Leslie Chavez

The act of writing can be so romantic. It's a creative way to reflect on an experience and express your feelings on a special moment in sweet, expressive language. Just think of John Keats, Lord Byron, or William Wordsworth penning their observant and emotional poetry. They'll be sure to inspire you to create a written keepsake with your love.

Be each other's muses as you construct a work that reflects your relationship. If you both love reading, put together a book of your favorite quotes from literature and poetry. You can go back to the book every now and then and take a trip down memory lane, reminiscing on what quotes you chose and why you chose them.

Related Link: [Take a Trip Down Memory Lane](#)

Sharing with each other why these words are important to you will make you feel more emotionally connected. Or take it to the next level and do a special exercise: Pick a poetic quote that reminds you of your man and have him do the same for you. Flattery with beautiful verse is such a turn on. Indulge in a little *wordplay*, if you will.

If you both enjoy cooking, develop your own special cookbook. Jot down your favorite recipes to make together. You can even include drawings or funny stories about your experiences when making a specific recipe. Did you stop and have a flirty food fight? Is this something that you made on one of your first dates? Document your experiences! Each time you turn to your special cookbook, it will help you remember the sweet moments that you've spent together. This reminder will give you more than just a meal to savor.

If you want to get even more creative, write a short story, poem, or love sonnet together. Throw some ideas around and don't be afraid of what the other person thinks. Being able to express creative ideas with your partner without feeling self-conscious brings your trust for each other to a whole new level.

Related Link: [Publish a Love Sonnet](#)

Let yourself be silly. No matter how crazy an idea seems, tell your love; the worst thing that can happen is that you'll laugh at each other, only elevating your mood and enhancing creativity. When you guys finish your masterpiece, you'll be able to say that you created a work of art together, serving as each other's inspirations.

You can even write about your own relationship. According to new research from Northwestern University, a few minutes spent writing about your relationship can protect your bond. In the exercise, couples were asked to write about an argument that they recently had from a neutral third-party perspective. When

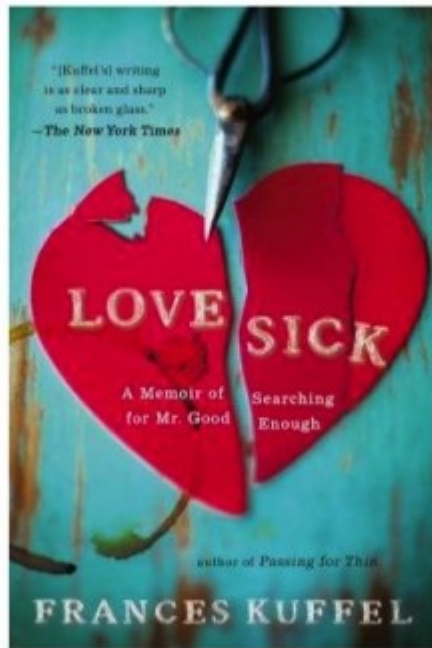
doing this activity, they were much better able to contemplate what the best, most logical solution to a problem in their relationship would be. According to the article, “The reflection and contemplation involved in writing makes for a healthier relationship and reduces the amounts of distress couples feel about arguments.” What a relief!

So whether used to reflect or to create, writing serves as an intellectual experience you and your muse can connect with and benefit from.

Have you ever written something special with your love? Tell us in the comments below!

Cupid's Weekly Round-Up: Defining Your Relationship





By Shannon

Seibert

Lately, it is becoming seemingly more difficult to define a relationship than it is to find one. The two of you have been hanging out for a couple of weeks, and you send each other flirty “I want to see you” text messages when you’re apart, but you don’t want to seem too pushy for a commitment. We’ve pulled together these five articles from our partners to help you figure out your next step:

1. Talking about it can help: Opening up a can of worms can be scary at first, but it’s always better than wondering about those “what if?” scenarios. If you’re really starting to develop feelings for him, you need to let him know. Look him in the eyes, remain calm, and be confident with each word you speak. A stimulating conversation could be just what the two of you need in order to progress in the right direction. (GalTime.com)

2. A strong friendship is a great foundation: One of our biggest fears when we start to have feelings for someone is that we’ll be trapped being “just friends.” For some couples,

the unforeseen future stemmed from this stage. For example, newlyweds Kim Kardashian and Kanye West began a slow and steady friendship, and now, they are happily married with a beautiful daughter. (CelebrityBabyScoop.com)

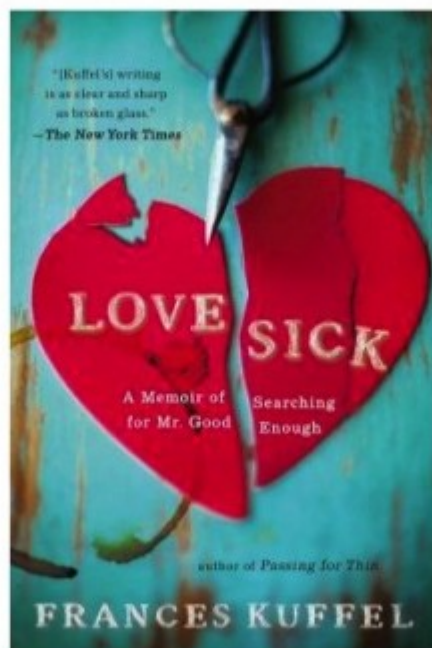
3. "Hooking up" is not an exact science: Casual relationships have become increasingly popular in recent years, therefore changing the rules of the dating game. We start out thinking that the idea of a no-strings-attached encounter is the perfect temporary solution until we figure things out, but eventually, it becomes one powerfully-enticing cocktail that will leave you with a nasty love hangover. (YourTango.com)

4. Sometimes, the wait is worth it: When it comes to mixing the mental and physical elements of relationships, things can get a little hairy. How far is too far? The answer to that, of course, is wherever you're comfortable. Never let a man dictate the happiness of your relationship or allow him to make you feel like you have to measure up to his expectations. (GalTime.com)

5. Don't rely on subtle hints: Men aren't exactly rocket scientists. We want to believe in the fairy tale we read about in Nicholas Sparks novels, but this is the real world, and sometimes, in the real world, women need to be their own heroes. Here are 50 ways to say what is weighing on your heart – without even opening your mouth. (YourTango.com)

How do you know how to define your relationship? Tell us in the comments below!

The Height Factor: Short Men and Tall Women



By Marni Battista

Choosing a mate involves enough numbers to make the process a math equation, but daters of both genders place the most importance on a lot of the wrong ones. From a bird's eye perspective, it doesn't make sense to prioritize such an uncontrollable physical characteristic as height, but as superficial as it may seem, biology is at work here. Women tend to go for taller men because of the masculinity and protectiveness it implies, while men seek out more petite girls who make them feel like a strong lumberjack of a guy.

I could tell you all day long that height is irrelevant in the long run and that, by following this primal urge, you're effectively ruling out a painful number of worthy potential partners who could make you feel just as meek or manly as someone who meets your height requirement would. But since it would be fruitless for me to simply suggest we all fight Mother Nature, here's a Dating with Dignity guide to how men and women who weren't blessed with traditionally ideal genes can exude the right qualities.

Related Link: [Why Hating Your Body is Destroying Your Love Life](#)

How Short Men Can Measure Up

If you're the guy who was always chosen last to play basketball in gym class and are a regular at the tailor to have new pants hemmed, you may have low expectations for your love life. If you hone other parts of your appearance and personality, however, you'll communicate power, presence, and an ability to protect no matter your magnitude:

Confidence: Many men express confidence by overcompensating and acting like a jerk, but simply being comfortable and carrying yourself accordingly will do. Don't forget that confidence is also associated with ambition and an overall happiness with your looks and personality. If you're not quite there yet, perhaps you're better off working on yourself for a while before hitting the dating game hard; it'll benefit both you and your romantic prospects.

Appearance: Height aside, overall appearance is an undeniable attraction factor – especially when attempting to snag a lady's initial interest. Take care to dress well but also in a way that suits you, both size- and personality-wise. A well-groomed man with an eye for fashion can make a lack of height unnoticeable. Similarly, maintaining your physical shape can give a solid sense of that protective quality women seek in

men.

Personality: While you may feel as though you have to embrace an abrupt and coarse demeanor to make up for your lack of height, kindness still matters and is especially desirable in a long-term mate. Believe it or not, kindness can still be considered masculine, so long as you express it with that confidence you've honed and refrain from becoming a doormat. Simply treat others, especially your lady, with respect, consideration, and compassion and stand up for what you believe in. That's sexier to us than being able to slam dunk a basketball.

Related Link: [Guys Edition: How to Behave like a Gentleman](#)

How Tall Women Can Appear Down to Earth

Many men find height in women imposing, no matter how charismatic and warm you may be. The key to attracting a man who may normally shy away from taller gals is to exude femininity and appear approachable, even if that means doing the approaching yourself.

Confidence: Though making the first move may seem like the opposite of appearing less intimidating, it may be your job to break the ice. Use your feminine wiles and approach him in a flirty, natural way to avoid seeming forward or "ballsy." Once he's had the chance to talk to you for just a few minutes, he'll likely see what a warm and welcoming person you are, and all the rest will fall away.

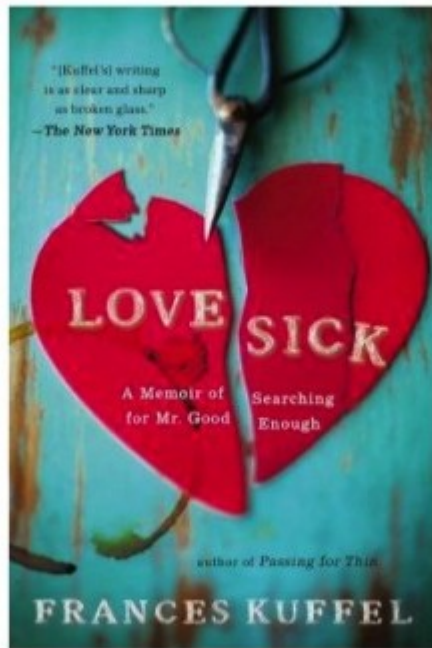
Appearance: You may be inclined to slouch to appear shorter, but improving your posture makes you appear more self-assured. Be sure to smile often and openly. Don't be afraid to sling a smile at the cute guy in the next aisle at the grocery store or across the bar; it's the most surefire way to express your effusive personality and make someone feel more comfortable and open to approaching you.

Personality: If you're into soccer and fly-fishing and have an active career, by all means go for it – but try to balance it out through your relationship's dynamic. Allow yourself to be vulnerable and maybe even have your new guy take care of some of the fix-it tasks around your apartment early on, even if you're fully capable of handling them yourself. Making your man feel needed and giving him ample chance to take care of you will make your height difference irrelevant.

***Marni Battista**, founder of Dating with Dignity, is an expert dating and life coach with a 10-step system to manifesting love for your self and others. You can contact Marni at marni@datingwithdignity.com.*

5 Celebrity Couples That Adopted





By Louisa Gonzales

Lately, Hollywood has been flooded with celebrity baby news and baby bumps! However, many celebrities have chosen adoption over having a biological child. Here are five [celebrity couples](#) who recently adopted:

Celebrity Baby Adoptions

1. [Angelina Jolie](#) and **Brad Pitt**: It wouldn't be right if we didn't put these two at the top of our list. They met back in 2005 while filming *Mr. & Mrs. Smith*. Soon after, they began their celebrity relationship and now have six children together, three of whom are adopted. Jolie adopted her first child, Maddox Chivan Thornton Jolie, a Cambodian infant born on August 5, 2001, with her then-husband, Billy Bob Thornton. The actress adopted her second child, Zahara Marley Jolie, who was born in Africa on January 8, 2005, without Pitt. However, Pitt later adopted both kids. The famous couple adopted Pax Thien from Vietnam on March 15, 2007. Initially, Jolie filed

alone because of the country's regulations, but Pitt adopted Pax when they went back home. Pitt and Jolie's first biological child, Shiloh Nouvel Jolie-Pitt, was born in 2007, and twins Knox Léon Jolie-Pitt and Vivienne Marcheline Jolie-Pitt were born in 2008.

Related Link: [Brad Pitt and Angelina Jolie Enjoy Weekend Getaway Without Kids](#)

Even If A Celebrity Couple Goes Through A Divorce, A Family Can Still Be Maintained

2. Tom Cruise and Nicole Kidman: Back when these two A-List actors were a famous couple, they adopted two children: daughter Isabella Jane, born in 1992, and son Connor Anthony, born in 1995. The pair first hooked up in 1990 on the set of *Days of Thunder* and married later that same year in Colorado. However, this Hollywood relationship came to an end when they announced their separation in February 2001 after Cruise filed for a celebrity divorce. Both Cruise and Kidman share custody of the two children.

3. Katherine Heigl and Josh Kelley: The former *Grey's Anatomy* actress and musician are no strangers to adoption. The pair married back in 2007 in Utah and have two adopted daughters. This celebrity couple adopted their oldest daughter Nancy Leigh (nicknamed Naleigh) from South Korea in 2009. They expanded their family in 2012 when they adopted their now three-year-old daughter Adelaide, who was born in Louisiana.

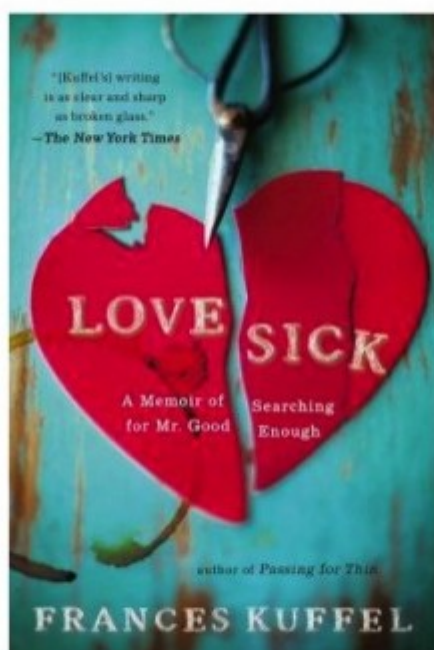
Related Link: [Katherine Heigl and Josh Kelley Step Out with Newly Adopted Daughter](#)

4. [Hugh Jackman](#) and Deborra-Lee Furness: The *Wolverine* actor and his wife married back in 1996 in Toorak, Victoria, a suburb of Melbourne. The pair adopted two kids: Oscar

Maximillian, born May 15, 2000, and Ava Eliot, born July 10, 2005. The Aussie actor and actress decided to adopt after they were unable to conceive naturally and through IVF. Jackman and Furness continue to advocate for adoption while raising their two children.

What other famous couples have adopted? Comment below!

Are Your Dating Standards Too High?



By Liz Kim

There's nothing wrong with knowing what you want in a future boyfriend or girlfriend; in fact, you *shouldn't* settle for just anybody. But, there comes a point when unrealistic standards may actually be what's keeping you from finding Mr. or Mrs. Right. If you are turning down a potentially great relationship because he has a funny hairstyle or she has "man hands," a la *Jerry Seinfeld*, then it's time to reevaluate your priorities and loosen up a little. Below are a few signs that your standards are too high when it comes to dating:

1. You model your relationships after what you see on the big screen: "Love means never having to say you're sorry." "You complete me." "I'll never let go, Jack." Although *Love Story*, *Jerry Maguire*, and *Titanic* are beautiful films that celebrate the power of love, they've also done a good job at shattering realistic expectations when it comes to dating and relationships. We all want a love like Jack and Rose, but our idea of these relationships is false because Hollywood is scripted. With good editing and a staff of writers and makeup artists, any relationship can seem perfect. If you're keeping track of your relationship by comparing it to what you see on the big screen, you are setting yourself up for failure and heartbreak.

Related: [Ways To Help Single Friends Find a Partner](#)

2. You have unrealistic physical standards: Whether it's blue eyes, brown hair, or a certain height, everyone has a "type." And while physical attraction does play an important role in dating, there may be a point when your standards become too high. "He's tall, muscular, has kind hazel eyes, and he's great with kids...*but* he has this tiny birthmark on his left cheek that's too distracting. I can't go out with somebody with a distracting birthmark." If this sounds like you, you're letting the little details get in the way of the big picture.

3. You can't remember the last date you went on: You don't

realize this at first, but after you've turned down date after date, you'll find yourself repeating the same scenario: it's Saturday night, and you're on the couch wrist deep in a pint of Ben and Jerry's and re-watching all 7 seasons of *The Golden Girls*. If you don't want this to happen, then it's time to reevaluate what you're looking for. If you refuse to shift your standards, then be prepared for frequent nights alone.

4. You've been told (repeatedly) that you're too picky: If one or two people say you're picky, you shouldn't be too concerned. However, if multiple friends and family members are pointing out that your standards are too strict, then you might have a problem. Sometimes, we forget to look at ourselves from an outsider's perspective and don't realize how our behavior is affecting our life.

Related: [10 Blind Date Etiquette Rules](#)

5. You are a stubborn, repeat offender: If Chad is the eighth guy you've gone out with who surfs, has sandy blonde hair, and a penchant for guitar playing, and it hasn't worked out, break out of your mold. Clearly, you don't mesh with your "type," and now it's time to branch out. Try asking out the hipster barista from the corner coffee shop who can't surf, has brown hair, and always gives you extra caramel drizzle and a smile. You've taken chances with eight Chads already, so trying something new can't hurt!

6. The problem isn't you, it's him/her: This one plays off of number five. If you're consistently dating the same type of person over and over again and it's always a nightmare, we hate to break it to you, but it's probably you. If you are one for order and routine but your dream date is someone who is always spontaneous (and kind of unreliable), more often than not, you'll walk away unhappy and unsatisfied.

7. You've more than once regretted dumping somebody: Well, now you've done it. You turned down Jamie because he was into

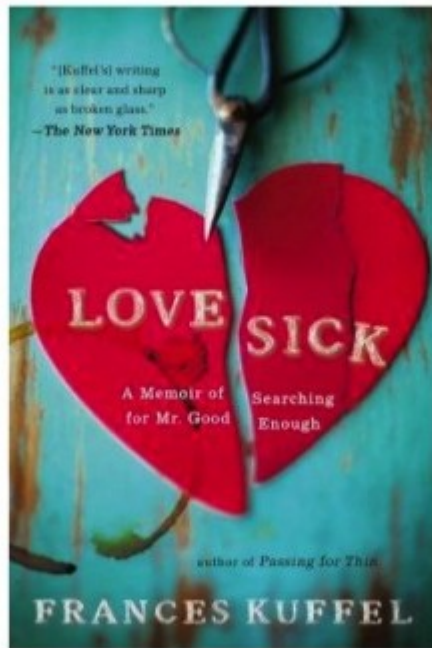
comic books, and a few months later you see him walking down the street with his new girlfriend. They're holding hands and can't take their eyes off of each other. You think to yourself, *was he always so cute?* And instantly you regret turning him down. Now, he's happy and in love and you're still along and sulking.

Imagine going to a buffet with tables and tables of food you've never tried before but only selecting to eat french fries. You know you like french fries, but all the salt makes you bloat and they're not good cold. Maybe it's time to try another dish. The beauty of dating is that if it doesn't work out, you never have to see the person again. Instead of boxing yourself in with strict dating standards, it might be time to take a chance and date outside of your comfort zone. Who knows? Maybe he or she will bring out a side of you you didn't know you had.

Do you think your dating standards are too high? Tell us in the comments below.

Adventure Date: Do Something Daring





By Leslie Chavez

If you're tired of your go-to movie and dinner date, shake things up this weekend then plan an **adventure date** that will lead to a spontaneous and exciting day that you'll both be talking about for weeks to come. Get inventive and think of something that you two have always wanted to do together but have never found the time, money or...courage.

Try skydiving! In addition to the adrenaline rush, this adventure date will help you de-stress, forget about your worries, and enjoy the simplicities of life with your love. Being in a situation where you feel like you're doing something dangerous or overcoming an exhilarating challenge with your partner will bring you closer together. Plus, what could be more intimate than grasping on to each other as you plummet quickly to the ground with the air rushing past your face at unimaginable speeds? Oh, the things we do for love!

Related Link: [Dare to Romance](#)

Indoor rock climbing can be another adventure date. You can

experience the vertical world of bouldering from the safety of an indoor gym. Climb along sheer drops and sculpted edges and feel the rush as you clutch onto the rocks twenty feet above the ground. You can encourage and support each other as you bound up the wall and race to the top.

It will also give you a chance to admire your man's strength – and his sexy back muscles! Reward yourself with some ice cream or a smoothie afterward, and you can swap climbing strategies for next time. IndoorClimbing.com has a great directory of gyms all over the country for you to choose from.

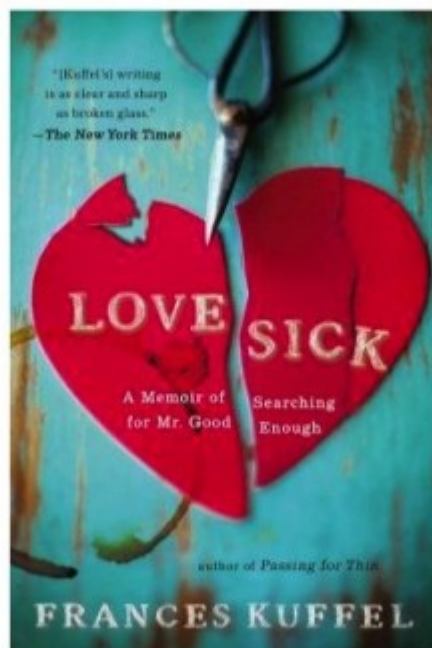
If you have a need for speed, then go-karting is the perfect adventure date for you. Experience the thrill of driving fast and battle it out with your lover to see who can get the quickest lap time. Guys love a girl who's a little competitive and brings her A-game. Lap him at the last second, and it'll drive him wild. Trying any new sport is sure to bring some extra excitement to your romance.

Related Link: [Try an Unusual Sport](#)

For something a little more romantic, head to the beach at night. Bring a blanket and a bottle of wine and gaze up at the beautiful star-filled sky. You'll feel like you're doing something bad by being on the deserted sand in the middle of the night. Savor the intimate moment together under the stars on your own private oasis. If you're feeling a bit more adventurous, you might even suggest skinny-dipping in the moonlight.

Have you been on a spontaneous date before? Share your story below!

Social Media Etiquette for Your #Wedding Day



By Laura Seaman

Sharing your engagement on Instagram, sending out rehearsal dinner invites via Facebook, and getting wedding ideas from Pinterest – social media is everywhere these days, and weddings are no exception. Well, for most people anyways. According to the eighth annual “What’s on Brides’ Minds” survey by David’s Bridal, 44 percent of brides think that digital rules are important at weddings, while 14 percent are completely banning cell phones from their special days. That means no photos, tweets, or status updates! It’s rumored that Kim Kardashian and Kanye West have set this rule for their

wedding this weekend.

Even if social media isn't allowed at your ceremony and reception, that doesn't mean it won't be part of your wedding at all. Page after page of Pinterest boards are dedicated to wedding décor ideas, and brides are known to bring a friend to judge their dress over Skype if she can't be there in person. These are both simple ways to use technology to make your wedding exactly how you want it.

Related Link: [Are You Too Young for Marriage?](#)

Other couples use social media to make their wedding an Internet sensation. There's the usual practice of putting wedding photos on Facebook, but some people go the extra mile and put videos of their wedding on YouTube or broadcast the entire occasion via video chat. In fact, 36 percent of people surveyed thought that Skype was a good way to open the chapel doors to guests who can't attend in person.

The survey further shows that many brides have acknowledged the role social media plays and have their own dos and don'ts for their weddings. For example, 62 percent of brides believe that the bridesmaids should not post photos of the bride in her dress before the ceremony, while 58 percent of brides think that they or their husbands should be the first people to post wedding pictures. A smaller number of brides – only 22 percent – think that they should be the only ones posting wedding photos at all.

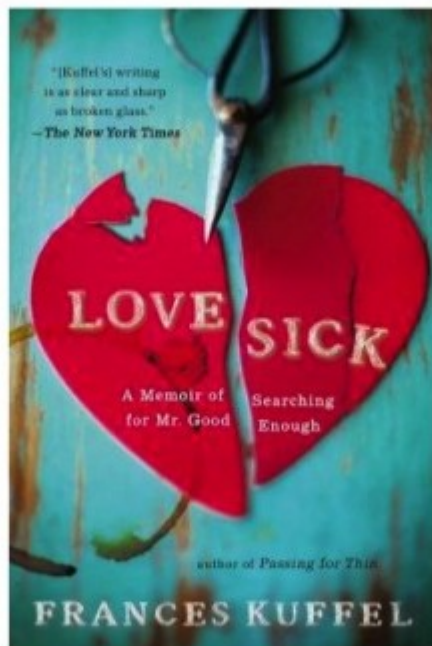
Related Link: [4 Questions to Ask Yourself Before Getting Married](#)

Of course, pictures aren't the only way to let people know about your wedding. 56 percent of brides will update their social media profiles with their new name within a day of the wedding, and 10 percent will even do it while the wedding is still happening!

So whether you plan on letting your wedding become the next YouTube sensation or you're going to put cell phones on hold like Kimye, it's clear that social media will probably play some part in your big day. Just don't forget to #livehappilyeverafter!

**What is your opinion on social media etiquette at weddings?
Let us know in the comments below!**

Create Lasting Love with 'Marriage Meetings'



By Brittany

Stubbs

Despite the scary divorce rates, couples *can* make love last; they just need to learn how. Dr. Marcia Naomi Berger, a psychotherapist and clinical social worker, has created a way for couples to keep their relationships strong and healthy by encouraging an interruption-free meeting each week. Following an agenda, a marriage meeting includes the kind of appreciation that fosters intimacy and paves the way for collaborative conflict resolution.

In her new book *Marriage Meetings for Lasting Love: 30 Minutes a Week to the Relationship You've Always Wanted*, Berger teaches you how to effectively communicate and connect with your spouse each week with step-by-step guidelines. The communication tips and techniques explained in her book are the same ones that Berger has used to guide hundreds of couples towards deeper, more lasting love. Although the title of the book is *Marriage Meetings*, don't let that fool you. This book is not just for married couples but for anyone in a committed relationship, and the skills you use in marriage meetings will transfer to and benefit all relationships in your life.

Can you explain what a marriage meeting is for our readers?

A marriage meeting is an occasion that happens once a week between married or committed couples. Ideally, they last from 30-45 minutes with an agenda that covers 4 areas of a relationship: Appreciation, Chores, Planning Good Times, and Dealing with Problems or Challenges. The purpose of these meetings is to increase romance and intimacy, to foster team work, and to resolve issues that come up in any relationship.

Related Link: [Dr. Sue Johnson Discusses How to Develop Your 'Love Sense'](#)

You make the point that marriage meetings are for all couples,

not just those going through a rough patch, correct?

Definitely. Ideally, a couple will begin having marriage meetings when things are fairly calm. The meetings aren't designed to fix a crisis; they are more of a proactive kind of solution for preventing problems from building into a crisis.

Besides having 30-45 minutes of uninterrupted time with your partner, are there any other ground rules for having a successful marriage meeting?

Absolutely. There's a whole chapter on preparing for your meeting. One rule is scheduling the meeting at a time where neither partner is tired, hungry, or intoxicated.

Also, both partners should be in a calm state of mind so they're able to communicate in a positive and respectful manner, even if they might be upset about something. Make sure that your phones are off and that there's no television in the background – or anything else that will distract one another. Another rule is using the positive communication skills described in detail in the book.

What is the main difference between having a marriage with your partner versus going to a counseling session?

Marriage meetings are for couples that have a healthy relationship. Couples that go to therapy can also have a healthy relationship and maybe just one aspect they really need to work on. But in my experience as a couples therapist, couples often come to therapy after they've let their relationship deteriorate to the point that they're not able to have a civil, respectable conversation about the issues they're dealing with or not dealing with.

What would you say to a couple or specific partner that is hesitant about trying marriage meetings?

I would encourage everyone to read the book and truly

understand what the meetings entail before making up your mind. In every relationship, there's always room for growth and improvement. Even if everything is going well, these meetings and skills are simply a tool to make your relationship even better.

I would also tell anyone hesitant that these meetings aren't meant to make anyone feel criticized; they focus on positive appreciation and encouragement. Men, who are usually more hesitant at first, often like the meetings even more than women because the meeting structure is positive and direct and there's a time limit. I even encourage the less-verbal partner to speak first to ensure they'll be heard.

Related Link: [Aaron Paul Says 'Marriage is Easy'](#)

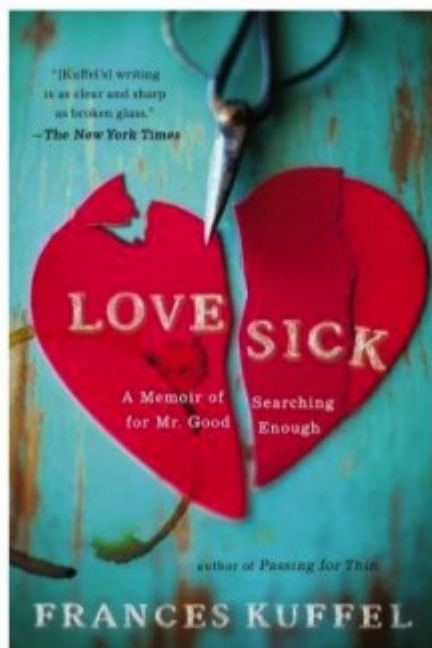
Besides marriage meetings, what advice do you have for our readers to make their love last?

Use those positive communications skills every day. It may be difficult when something is going wrong, but don't forget to acknowledge all the things still going right. Ask for what you want in a respectful way rather than just stating what is going wrong. For example, instead of saying, "You never bring me flowers," say, "I would love for you to bring my flowers." And if he doesn't want to bring flowers, ask yourself if it's really such a big deal. Let go of those little things, buy your own flowers, and focus on the positive things.

In a marriage, you have to remind one another that you're in it together. It's not going to always be a fairytale and you're going to have to put in energy and effort every day to make it better and continue to be strong.

To purchase Marriage Meetings for Lasting Love: 30 Minutes a Week to the Relationship You've Always Wanted, check out Amazon or your local bookstore!

Divorce with Dignity



By Tammy Greene

for [Hope After Divorce](#)

It would be hard to ignore the latest buzz in celebrity couple news. There has been little else talked about than the separation and impending divorce of Hollywood darling Gwyneth Paltrow and front man rock star Chris Martin. This marriage of 10 years has been closely protected and kept out of the public eye, so news of the breakup has come as a surprise and a blow to their adoring fans.

There has been endless speculation on what went wrong in their

relationship, but it is, at this time, just speculation. After recent news of many Hollywood breakups, it certainly would seem that celebrity status puts an added stress on a marriage that many are not able to rise above. Although no divorce is easy, it does appear that this illustrious couple has figured out the ever-elusive secret of how to have a diplomatic and uneventful dissolution. Even as they head for divorce, this celebrated couple has much to teach us about relationships and separation.

What You See Is Not Real

The actress has built her brand on having it all together. We admire her for her strong family bonds, her pulled together style, her clean eating and healthy lifestyle, and up until a few weeks ago, her seemingly fairytale marriage. But here is the truth: What you see on the outside is not what is real. What has been portrayed through magazines, commercials, and movies is not reality. Celebrity or not, we all are dealing with our own private stuff. Everyone from your next-door neighbor to Oprah Winfrey has their own inside struggles of which we are not privy.

The lesson here is don't believe everything you see. Celebrities are people, too. Like the rest of us, they, too, are just trying to get through each day with the appearance that they have it all together.

Related Link: [Maintaining a Positive Image After Divorce](#)

Children Come First

The biggest tragedy in most divorces is its effect on the children. There is the very real concern that there will be long-term effects on the well-being of the kids. With two children, Apple, age 9, and Moses, age 7, this is sure to be among the top concerns of this A-list couple too, and it seems they have not taken this responsibility lightly. Martin and Paltrow announced that they have come to an agreement to share

custody of the children. They have made it clear that it is top priority that the children's transition is as easy as possible.

Granted, while not all relationships can end as amicably as this one seems to have, there is a lesson to be learned about ensuring that their children are made the priority in the midst of divorce. Though not always possible, the goal should be to make sure that the children still have both their parents in their lives. Even though Mom and Dad don't live together, they are still a team when it comes to parenting. Though surely difficult, couples like Paltrow and Martin show us that it can be done.

Related Link: [How to Cooperatively Co-Parent After Separation or Divorce](#)

Maintain Your Dignity

These two stars have been known for protecting their personal lives fervently. Even in the face of divorce, they are keeping the reasons and terms behind the decision for separation private and personal. In a country where divorces have become increasingly ugly and cruel, it is certainly a breath of fresh air to see two people maintaining their kindness and dignity in what is certain to be a challenging time. It is understandable that not all relationships come to an end in such a civil manner. Certainly, there are reasons for a split where maintaining a polite relationship of any kind is impossible.

That being said, it is important to always aim to be the bigger person. So many divorcees allow the process of separation and divorce to turn them into someone that they are no longer proud of. As of yet, it doesn't appear that this superstar couple will be among that list. We look to celebrities to help guide us through parenting, aging, trends, diets, exercise, and relationships. Even though many

relationships in the spotlight end in a whirlwind of drama, it is nice to see that some Hollywood couples work hard to ensure their separation is done with privacy, compassion, and dignity. Paltrow and Martin appear to be shining examples of just that.

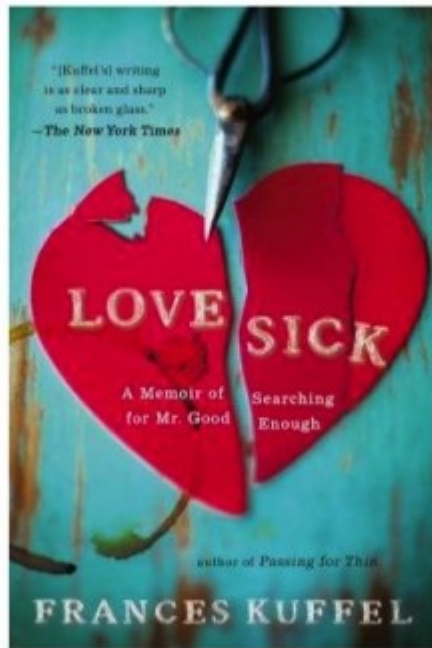
**Do you think it's possible to remain friends after a divorce?
Let us know in the comments below!**

For more information about Hope After Divorce, click [here](#).

Tammy Greene is a graduate of the University of La Verne. She has worked as a Child Life Specialist and social worker assisting families who have children with illness or mental disabilities. Tammy is a producer of the national PBS children's television show, Curiosity Quest. She has a blog, Married and Naked, where she shares personal lessons learned from her own life, offering helpful ways to navigate through the challenges of marriage. Tammy is happily married to her high school sweetheart and is the mother of two. See Tammy's Curiosity Quest website at www.curiosityqueststore.com. Follow her blog, MarriedandNaked, at www.married-and-naked.com.

10 Date Ideas for the Married Couple with Kids





By Sanetra Richards

Finding time to go out on dates with your spouse can be difficult. The both of you may have hectic work schedules that always seem to get in the way. And it is not just the two of you ... the kids are also in the equation! No matter how hard you may try, planned or spontaneous dates rarely ever happen. Even if you do actually go out, you constantly find yourself worrying about the kids – is the babysitter reliable, what they are doing, and should you hurry back home. Well, fret no more! Cupid has 10 suggestions to help you and your spouse get away from your routine and schedule some date time for each other:

1. Every day alone time: Who says you can't have a date every day of the week? Believe it or not, it's possible! Join your partner in something that is a part of their daily routine, whether that means an early morning workout or late evening planning session. Quality time with your partner can make a huge difference, especially if you are doing something that brings you together at the start of each day and/or at the

very end. Maybe even put the kids to sleep at an earlier time just to have that hour or so to wind down together.

2. Weekend getaways: A short vacation is not only what you may need individually, but also as couple. Work can definitely become overwhelming and you just want a day (or two, maybe three) to sit back and enjoy each other's company, without the pressure and stress of work interfering. A trip to a cabin or a resort sounds nice, right?

Related Link: [Date Idea: Spice Things Up](#)

3. Amusement park: Married couples tend to become accustomed to the the following routine: work, kids, sleep, repeat. Sometimes it's easy to forget what fun feels like. An amusement park is a great place to channel your inner child. Take your spouse on a date to a nearby theme park – enjoy the roller coasters, attractions and games, but most importantly don't forget to laugh!

4. Dance night: What better way to show off your moves than dancing? Schedule a night for dancing it up at your local club. Try something as sassy as salsa or as precise as square dancing. The goal in all of this is to simply have fun.

5. Fishing: Envision a nice day out by the lake, relaxing in a chair, with a fishing rod in the water awaiting a tug. Hardly any disruptions besides the noises of nature and sound of the water. You and your spouse will temporarily be worry-free.

Related Link: [Date Idea: Hot or Cold Night](#)

6. Park picnic: One of the most classic (romantic) dates of all time is a picnic in the park. Create a basket full of you and your partner's favorites, maybe take an activity you will enjoy (frisbee, kites, etc), and voilà! Maybe even consider bringing the kids along and making it a family day.

7. Pick a hobby: Choose an activity that the both of you love

to do together. Perhaps yard work, such as gardening or mowing, is therapeutic – use this as a bonding experience and call it a date!

8. Pamper & Polish: Every once in a while, your sweetheart deserves a little TLC (tender, love, and care). Why not be the one to give it to them? Schedule him/her a session at a local spa or create your own at-home spa. If you would rather channel your inner romantic and set up your own spa, here are a few tips: make sure the environment is set nicely – well-lit and scented, relaxing music, and full of peacefulness. Then, give them the best massage they could possibly imagine (with the help of your favorite scented oil). They will appreciate the thought and touch.

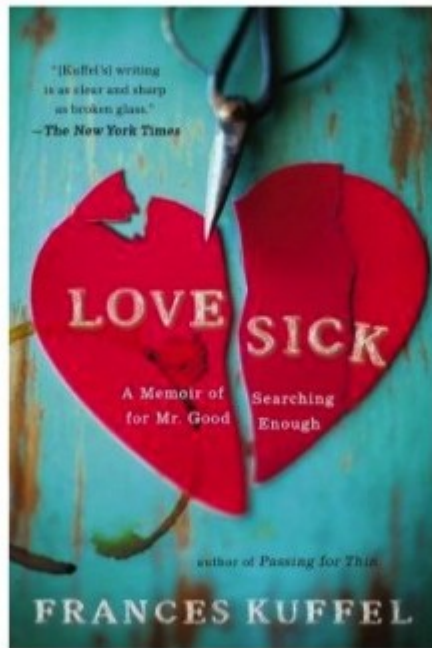
Related Link: [Date Idea: Be a “Cheap” Date](#)

9. Comedy show: Laughter is good for the soul, right? Search for tickets to your favorite comedian’s show and ask your honey to join you for the night. Get a few laughs in while enjoying the evening.

10. Road trip: Hop in the car and GO! A road trip entails lots of jokes along the way, singing songs on the radio, sightseeing, etc. Make a day out of it – travel down the roads with the most scenery. Take photos to capture the memories and most importantly, enjoy the ride.

10 Celebrity Moms Over 40





Page 1 of 10



Mariah Carey

Always known for living big, Carey not only had twins, Moroccan and Monroe, at the age of 42, but they were born on April 30 -- Carey and husband Nick Cannon's third wedding anniversary! To celebrate the special occasion, the couple

renewed their wedding vows in the hospital with help from Rev. Al Sharpton. But the pregnancy wasn't easy. She suffered a miscarriage in 2008, followed by acupuncture and hormone treatments to boost fertility before getting pregnant. Mariah Carey and Nick Cannon. Photo: Juan Rico/Fame Pictures