

11 Good Reasons to Keep Your Relationship Status Secret



By Kelly Rouba for Galttime.com

You know that euphoria that fills you up when you first start dating someone? That fun and excitement of entering a new relationship that makes us want to shout it from the rooftops for all to hear? That feels really good. But sometimes, sharing the news widely isn't a good idea. Sometimes, we should keep the rooftop-shouting only within range of our closest friends – at least for a little while – before we broadcast it online.

Carlee, of New Jersey, kept her relationships status quiet when she got back together with her ex-boyfriend.

“When I broke up with him, I hid my relationship status so I didn’t have to deal with people asking me what happened. I kept it hidden even after we got back together a couple months later, until I was sure things were okay between us and so people wouldn’t interfere in our relationship,” Carlee said. “Now that we’ve been back together for a while, it’s unhidden again.”

April, of New Jersey, understands Carlee’s quietness, which is why her Facebook status always indicates she is in a relationship even though she is currently single.

“I also want to avoid people asking questions like ‘what happened’ or just knowing information I may still be sensitive to,” April says, adding that she also keeps that status for safety purposes. “I don’t want unnecessary people sending me inappropriate messages or text messages.”

Relationship expert and dating consultant Stacie Ikka says displaying your true relationship status on Facebook isn’t necessarily a bad idea, but there are instances when it’s smart to hold off on announcing who you are dating or if you are involved with someone at all to your online circles.

Here’s when she says it’s best to keep your relationship status quiet.

1. IF YOU GET A LOT OF UNWANTED POKES, WINKS AND INVITATIONS

Some people see a “single” status on Facebook as an invitation to be in contact, overtly flirt or even harass someone. If you are getting invitations that make you uncomfortable, consider leaving your relationship status blank.

“If you are single and not necessarily looking to use Facebook as a dating site and simply selected that status because you thought that all fields in your profile needed to be filled out—BEWARE!,” Ikka says. Sometimes other singles, and even people who are in relationships already, prey on women who

announce that they are on the market.

2. IF YOU DON'T WANT OTHER PEOPLE TO INTERFERE IN YOUR RELATIONSHIP OR ROMANTIC BUSINESS

“For a relationship to develop between two people in a way that leads to a healthy future, it is often best that the details and status of that relationship be contained among the two people involved—and the select few they choose to confide in,” Ikka advises.

This also goes for those who are entering a new relationship.

“Moving from a casual to a committed relationship can often be tricky,” Ikka offers, “and opening up that relationship to an online audience, which is presumably broader than one’s immediate social circle, opens the relationship up to commentary—some of which could be damaging, especially if the relationship is new.”

Consider keeping your status quiet for a certain amount of time or until the two of you feel secure in this new arrangement. Like Carlee, you may also want to consider updating your status at that point without sharing it widely through your newsfeed.

3. IF YOU WANT TO EASE SOME OF THE PRESSURE

“If the couple has not discussed how or whether they are going to ‘announce’ their union on Facebook, and one party goes ahead and changes their status, it might make the other party feel uncomfortable or put unnecessary pressure on that person,” Ikka says. “Even if it was a joint decision, it exposes the relationship to scrutiny, observations, and involvement that is not necessarily appropriate during the early phases of a relationship, where the focus should really be on whether attraction, compatibility, common values, and shared interests will survive the long-term.”

4. IF YOU WANT AN EASIER BREAKUP

Splitting up can be more complicated if a thousand of your Facebook friends can see your status.

“Breakups are painful in the best of times,” reminds Ikka. And changing a status from “in a relationship” to “single” or even “it’s complicated” can draw attention right in the middle of that pain. “Even if that attention comes in the form of support and sympathy to an already difficult, personal, and emotional experience.”

5. IF YOU’RE FED UP WITH JUDGMENT ABOUT YOUR LOVE LIFE

Facebook is not your diary or a private conversation with your best friend. It’s a loudspeaker to every one of your coworkers, high-school frenemies, mom’s friends, and siblings you are connected with on the social network. Not all of them may get the situation, or you.

“If you are the type of Facebook user who updates your relationship status on a regular basis and that status is changing with a frequency that others may deem abnormal, you are opening yourself up to judgment, ridicule, and the potential for losing credibility amongst your Facebook network,” Ikka says bluntly. “So, if you are sensitive to other people’s opinions, think carefully before changing your relationship status and ask yourself why you’re doing it.”

6. IF YOU OFTEN GIVE IN TO PEER PRESSURE

In many relationships, Ikka says, one person is more guarded about their personal life and details. The other person may be more forthcoming and therefore have no issue with listing their relationship status online.

“It’s not uncommon in these circumstances for the more private individual to feel pressure to change their status for fear of not appearing loyal or committed to their partner or the

relationship,” Ikka notes.

Resentment can build, she says, and the private person may let that spill over into real-life interactions with their partner.

“It’s usually a sign of bigger problems,” Ikka adds.

Avoid this friction by discussing what works best for both of you, even if that means the more open person lists a status and is understanding if the more private partner doesn’t.

7. IF YOU DON’T WANT TO HEAR FROM A NOSY OR AGGRESSIVE EX

Want to nix any opportunity for your ex to get back in touch, troll around your profile or hunt for more information about your new relationship? Then consider keeping your status set at a lower volume.

Showing you’re in a relationship can be an invitation for exes to peer into your current love life, Ikka says.

“Although nosy exes always have their offline ways of determining your relationship status, putting your relationship status on Facebook – especially if you are naming the person you’re in the relationship with – only encourages ‘stalker’-type behavior and may prompt them to attempt to sabotage or disrupt your new relationship,” she warns.

Those who are in the process of divorcing may also want to avoid displaying their relationship status, especially if they’ve begun seeing someone new.

“If you are in the process of a separation or a divorce, it might not be a good idea to draw attention to your relationship status for the benefit of any children involved, especially if they are on Facebook, and to protect yourself throughout any court proceedings.”

8. IF YOU HAVE OVERBEARING PARENTS

Have parents who are anxious for you to get married or just be partnered up?

Stating that you are in a relationship could give your “parents false hope, further fodder for offline marital pressure, and render them an even greater annoyance as well as promote unnecessary involvement in your personal life,” Ikka warns. Keep in mind, “even if they’re not on Facebook, they will find out...and FAST!”

9. IF YOU’RE NOT UP FOR EXPLAINING COMPLICATED CIRCUMSTANCES

Although it might be tempting to select the “it’s complicated’ relationship status, Ikka advises against it.

Why?

“You are professing to the Facebook world that you are in relationship that is not completely fulfilling you and that you are settling,” she explains. “We all know you deserve better than that – even if you don’t believe it yourself. Again, you are opening yourself up to unnecessary judgment, loss of credibility, perhaps pity, and vulnerability. All relationships have their complications, but if you’re with the right partner, then your status would simply read ‘In a Relationship.’ Anyone who’s ever been in a relationship understands that things are not always perfect and, at times, may be complicated.”

10. IF YOU DON’T THINK OPEN RELATIONSHIPS HAVE TO BE AN OPEN BOOK

“While in this day and age, society may be more accepting of alternate forms of relationships, like polyamorous, bisexual, transgender, homosexual, etc., this is another category that leaves you wide open to judgment,” Ikka cautions. “People will naturally jump to conclusions. For example, they may believe you have commitment issues or that you are promiscuous or whatever else this status conjures up in their imaginative

minds.”

You don't have to be responsible for other people's concerns, criticisms or even their assumptions. But if you have a tendency to get wrapped up in them or if you would rather put your kind of relationship up for public scrutiny, then consider educating and informing others about in ways outside of social networks.

11. IF YOUR PROFILE IS FOR PROFESSIONAL USE

Facebook, for many folks, is a professional networking tool, an avenue for job-hunting or a way to stay in touch with clients. Many companies also use Facebook to check up on their employees or to survey someone's social presence before a job interview.

“If you are using Facebook for business purposes or suspect your personal information could get back to your employers or associates, then you may want to keep your page purely professional, this includes keeping your relationship status hidden,” Ikka advises.

10 Ways to Make a Good First Impression on Your Mate's Parents





By Nic Baird

What's the worst that can happen when you meet your partner's parents? Projectile vomit over dessert. But, really, what are the chances of that? Obviously be yourself, because anything else is too hard for something so stressful. If it makes it easier you can be reserved at first, and let your hair down as you size up the situation. Here are the standard rules to follow when meeting the parents for the first time:

1. Presentation: It could be that your partner's family is a commune of hippies and they don't care if you wear a ball gown or a burlap sack, but it's not a good idea to go into your first encounter with this assumption. Dress smart, but don't overdress. It has to show that you put effort into your appearance without any flash or sex appeal. Pretend you're dressing for a job interview at the library.

2. Grace: Most parents want to like you, and will try their best to establish good relations for the sake of their child. In some cases you might be prodded or even goaded. If this happens then the only correct response is to remain untouched.

Don't fight back, and keep smiling. You will demonstrate your power by your lack of aggression and offence.

3. Enthusiasm: If it feels like a chore, that's reasonable. If the pressure of the date is pure torture, that's not unreasonable. As soon as you ring the doorbell, your gut might urge you to just hide in the bushes and slink away unseen. Resist. You must be ecstatic to have been granted an audience with these most respected figures. Or at least it should seem that way.

4. Confidence: Parents who smell a reasonable amount of fear on your person will not be upset. This could even delight them as a form of respect, or give you an endearing quality. An attempt at a confident presentation is all they ask. If they want you to try the mechanical bull in the basement and you don't have a heart condition, then there's only one choice.

5. Engage: Ask questions and be part of the conversation. Show an interest in topics they bring up, and try to bring new material to the discussion. Look them in the eye, talk at a reasonable volume, and, once again, smile.

6. Restraint: Especially for the first meeting, show restraint in your affection towards your partner. Groping and French kissing will disgust even the most liberal of parents. There's some leeway once you've established your presence, but the restraint you show in front of them demonstrates the respect they crave, and in most cases, the respect they deserve.

Related: [5 Ways to Reconcile Arguments With In-Laws](#)

7. Foresight: Even if you're uncomfortable looking to the future, this is a favourite topic of parents. What are your dreams and aspirations? What skills are you developing? How will you be a valuable addition to my child's life? You're not going to answer these questions outright, but it will be in the subtext when you describe your plans. Talk about yourself.

Don't talk about the apartment you hope to inhabit with their progeny.

8. Maturity: These people are older than you. They should be older than you, but if not this applies regardless. Keep your jokes and comments at a level above theirs. This isn't your grandma, but it's somewhere in between her and the school playground. Be mindful not to go too far.

9. Commitment: While it might seem like a good idea to describe yourself as hopelessly in love with your new soul mate, parents don't respond to this as well as you might think. Nobody is good enough for their child until they prove themselves. If this is your first encounter, you should demonstrate that you're serious about the relationship without planning the wedding day.

10. Etiquette: This is a skill that must be developed. It's more than being polite and thoughtful, though those are the essentials. Things to compliment: the house, the meal, the music, and anything of personal significance. Manners involve clearing the plates without offering, and sitting back down when they urge you to stop. You're a guest and you have to pay tribute to their hospitality.

What are some other tips for meeting your partner's parents? Share your ideas below.

'The Bachelor' Performer Sarah Darling Feels at Home

on New Tour with Scotty McCreery



By Whitney Baker

Sarah Darling is one lucky lady: she gets to appear on this season's *The Bachelor* not once but twice. Tonight, additional footage from her concert in Whitefish, Montana, will air on *The Bachelor: Sean Tells All* special. Plus, we'll get to see never-before-seen shots from Sean Lowe's one-on-one date with Lindsay Yenter. Sharing her personal excitement, Darling said, "Tonight's show is going to be amazing! I'm so excited to hear what Sean has to say about all of the ladies, especially Tierra."

Related Link: [Exclusive Interview: Sarah Darling Talks 'The](#)

[Bachelor,' Country Music and Her Top Pick for Sean Lowe!](#)

Darling got a firsthand look at Lowe's connection with Yenter, so does the country star think the contestant has what it takes to get the final rose? "I'm a little surprised that she's in the final three – I guess the wedding dress was a good choice!," referring to Yenter shocking Lowe on night one by stepping out of the limo in a wedding dress.



Still, with Lesley gone – Darling's frontrunner when we last spoke to her – she has to pick a new top choice. "My favorite remaining lady is Lindsay, of course!"

Performing on *The Bachelor* proved to have bigger perks than just meeting the handsome Lowe. Sales of her single "Home to Me" increased by 220 percent following her first appearance. Of this impressive jump in numbers, Darling shared, "Being on the show definitely introduced my music to new fans, and I'm really thankful for that opportunity."

Related Link: [The Bachelor 17, Episode 8: Home Sweet Home](#)

She's also expanding her fan base on the Weekend Road Trip Tour with Scotty McCreery, which kicked off on Valentine's Day. "This past week has been a dream come true. This is my first national tour, and I could not be out with a better guy. Scotty is such a great artist, and we're having so much fun," Darling said of McCreery, whom she watched on *American Idol*. "The McCreerians have really welcomed me with open arms, and I'm loving this tour already!"

For those of you lucky enough to attend one of their shows, be sure to watch closely. “We even have a special number that we perform together each night!”

Don't miss 'The Bachelor: Sean Tells All' on ABC tonight at 9 p.m./8 p.m. CT! You can check out Darling's 'Home to Me' EP on iTunes and catch her on tour with Scotty McCreery.

7 Signs You Might Be in Love



By Bethany Heinesh of DatingAdvice.com

For thousands of years, women have sought to love and to be loved. Yet we have no greater answer to the age-old question “What is love?” than when we started. There have been many

poems, books, songs and plays written about love, but no one has yet to truly capture its essence.

Even the world's greatest philosophers have pondered the notion of love but have been unable to analyze its implications. I would venture to say there are as many definitions of love as there are people. After all, love is in the eye of the beholder.

Here are seven simple signs to look for so you'll know what love looks like when it shows up and makes your heart skip a beat. You might be in love if...

1. You're thinking about him 24/7.

When you're in love with a man, he haunts you like the boogeyman. He lurks in the shadows of your mind and overpowers every independent thought you can muster. If he's all you think about, you've got it bad, girl.

Related: [Date Idea – Find Romance in a City of Love](#)

2. You're talking about him 24/7.

When your friends have to stage an intervention because you babble about him incessantly, you're in over your head. You've passed the point of no return – you're love struck.

3. Your co-workers notice something is “different.”

People may say you look younger, you've lost weight or you did something to your hair. When other people detect a radiance emanating from you, they may not be able to pinpoint exactly what's going on, but they know something's changed.

Related: [How to Tell If He's 'The One' After One Date](#)

4. You catch yourself shopping for him.

There's something about having a new man in your life that

makes you want to fuss over him. I can't tell you how many times I've had to leave a cart full of clothes I wanted to buy for my boyfriend in a department store. Once I realized he might not be ready for me to buy his underoos, I came to my senses.

*"It gets even better once you
get past the lovey-dovey haze."*

5. You think every love song is being sung to you.

Oh, how I remember being love struck, singing at the top of my voice in my car to Mariah Carey songs while cruising down the freeway. There's something about love that makes us say, "La,la,la!"

6. The seconds feel like hours when you're apart.

I truly believe our perception of time gets contorted when we're in love, a theory I believe will eventually be proven through the miracle of science. When you're with the object of your affection, time seems to fly. When he leaves, it's like agony until he returns. Somehow, life just goes at a different rate of speed when you're in love.

7. You rearrange your life to accommodate his.

If he now has a drawer at your place, you're saving your money so you can go to Spain together, and you spend every lunch hour talking to him on the phone, let's just say you've shifted your focus from life as single woman to becoming a "we."

Of course, these rules apply to the new and blossoming relationship, and love takes on a different form as it evolves. Unfortunately, the obsessively wonderful experience of falling in love eventually dissipates and routine usually takes its place.

So many women aren't prepared for what happens when newly found romance wears off. We often think the relationship isn't working and begin looking for someone else to rekindle those feelings with.

Take my advice – stick around for the next stage. It gets even better once you get past the lovey-dovey haze and get real.

Get more dating advice, tips, how-to's and Q&A's for men and women from the experts at DatingAdvice.com.

JLo and Casper Smart: Should You Get a Puppy Together?



By Jane Greer, PhD for Galttime.com

When is puppy love the smart choice?

Jennifer Lopez and boyfriend Casper Smart [introduced](#) the newest member of their family to the public recently via Twitter – a brown boxer puppy they've named Bear. Lopez, who has four-year-old twins with ex-husband Marc Anthony, has been dating Smart since 2011. This step seems worth noting – not only for them but for all couples who might be wondering what the next phase of their partnership might be.

It is easy to get caught up in the excitement of your love and just want to enjoy the day-to-day, but at some point things must grow in one way or another. Sometimes the next step is decided for you, with an unplanned pregnancy for example. Other times, a couple may hastily get ahead of themselves, moving in together or taking on more responsibility than they might be ready for. Or maybe they already have kids who are begging for a new sibling. Often when partners find themselves biting off more than they are ready to chew, the relationship can implode.

Instead of being taken by surprise, one way to test the waters of how you and your partner might handle responsibility in your shared life together is to get a pet. It will give you a sense not only of how your partner will be in a traditional role, but also how you'll take to it. Think of it as a practice run. Having a pet, especially if it's a puppy, requires some of the necessary behavior that occurs when you have a baby. Your schedule changes so you can take care of the dog – walk him, feed him, train him, and comfort him when he whines during the night. It will tell you a lot about how much each of you will be able to sacrifice your personal needs and work as a team to cover all the bases. Pets might be really cute, and melt your heart, but there is no denying how much hands-on obligation they require. In many ways, it is its own

form of parenthood.

Puppies might bring puppy love and tug at your heartstrings, but they pack a punch when it comes to accountability – as does building a life with another person. JLo and Casper are doing it right, they are dipping their toes into the pool of settling down more before taking that jump. They brought home Bear before adding to their already existing family, allowing them the time to find the balance between love and reality.

The bottom line is that if your biological clock is ticking and you think you want a baby, but you're wondering about the timing and what it will mean to your relationship, take control rather than letting yourself be pushed into anything before you're sure you're ready. Instead, do a dry run with a pet – after all, you are never too old for puppy love.

Supernatural Love Story, 'Beautiful Creatures' Hits Theaters!





By Meghan Fitzgerald

Richard LaGravenese, Oscar nominee, directs the new supernatural love story, *Beautiful Creatures*. The movie is based off the first novel from the series by Kami Garcia and Margaret Stohl. Ethan Wate (Alden Ehrenreich) is a 17-year old boy in a small Southern town of Gatlin, South Carolina. He constantly has the same dream surrounding a mysterious girl standing in the middle of a Civil War Battlefield. He wants to meet her, however, a lightning bolt erupts and kills Ethan before he can get to her. Ethan is trapped at home with his father, his father still in despair from the death of Ethan's mother. His town is not up to date with the 21st century. Ethan's way to escape is through books. One day, his life is shaken up when Lena Duchannes, (Alice Englert) comes into town. He is immediately drawn to the mysterious character. It is apparent that being around her is dangerous however, he ignores the thought. Ethan begins to get in over his head.

Should you see it: Would we mention a movie you shouldn't see? Of course not! Over here at Cupid's Pulse, we know that the cast, plot, and producer shows how great of a movie this will

be! Do you love Edward Cullen and Ron Weasley? Do you enjoy a romance story that will keep you on your seat? If you loved *The Twilight Series*, or any of the *Harry Potter's* you will love this new star-dropping movie!

Who to take: Hello girls night! This is the perfect movie to spend your Friday girls night on. Enjoy this new twist of a love story with the people you love most in life. Hitting theaters on Valentines Day, this is also the perfect date movie. Suspenseful enough where you can grab your mate's hand for support, and also romantic enough where you want to share the feeling with your beau. This movie is also for all ages; having something in it for anyone! Definitely a movie to see ladies and gentlemen!

Ethan realizes that Lena has super powers which puts himself in danger with his life and the town. Ethan discovers that Lena is a Casper, with supernatural powers she is not capable of controlling. Their romance is threatened by Lena's dark past and her upcoming sixteenth birthday. A life changing event called The Claiming, deciding her fate: Light or Dark. The trailer shows the deep southern love between characters, Lena and Ethan. Florence and the Machine directs the flow of events throughout the trailer. It is obvious of the strong magical power throughout the movie. There is a difference between the Light and the Dark which is prominent in the trailer. The love amongst Ethan and Lena is portrayed in the trailer, even with outside forces attempting to pry them apart.

When should you undergo a change for love?

Cupid's Advice:

Experiencing love in life is a revolutionary event. Your life twists and turns by love, making you a better person in the end. In each relationship your encounter, you will change a little bit each time. Whether it be substantial or not, you

will change. When you change, and why you change is the challenging part of love. You do not want to change everything about yourself, however, there will be minute things which you might change. Changing yourself for love is hard, determining how much to change is harder. Cupid has some advice:

1. "The one": In your life, you shall find "the one." Finding "the one" in life is not easy, you have to rummage your way through the bad ones to find your love. When you do find the one person who you can not live without, you may have to change some things. Not saying that you need to change your entire self however, if they are worth it; it is acceptable to change a little.

2. Compromise: Relationships require full attention and communication with two people. It is inevitable that you and your partner will not agree on everything. To make the love stronger, it is sometimes necessary to change using compromise. If you don't like monster truck rallies and your beau does? Make a slight compromise and attend a couple events. Do you think your partner really loves your parents? Or the other way around? When you love someone, it is okay to compromise.

3. Change is beneficial: Change makes you smarter, it makes you more flexible, it makes you realize that anything is possible. Change is not only beneficial to you however, it is beneficial to your mate. Change helps you go with the flow, helps you float along with your relationship and make the love come easier.

Have you ever changed from love? Explain below!

Why a Blind Date Might Be Good For You



By Jennifer Harrington

For singles, there are two words that can stir feelings of fear and excitement: blind date. Why such an intense reaction to these two little words? Simple: it's because there is the fear of the unknown and the excitement of the potential of meeting that special someone. So if you're still on the market and undecided if blind dates are really for you, here are a few reasons you may want to take the plunge and consider accepting a set-up:

1. Your friends and family know you best: Family and friends are often the ones who offer to set up blind dates. These are

the people closest to you and know you best, and most likely, they know what qualities are most important to you in a potential mate. Also, you will have something in common (your mutual connection) with your blind date to help get the conversation started. So, put some trust in your inner circle and let them help you find “The One”!

Related: [The Last Blind Date](#)

2. You gain important dating experience: Whether your blind date is a success or disaster, every time you go out on a date, you get experience which will only help you as you continue on your dating journey. Most importantly, dates give you an important boost in self-confidence. After each date, look for the positives and honestly assess how the date went. This self-evaluation can help you as you consider and go on future dates.

Related: [How to Ease Your Nerves Before a Blind Date](#)

3. You know celebrities do it: Despite fame and fortune, celebrities also go on blind dates! Jenny McCarthy admitted in 2011 to a blossoming romance with sports agent Paul Krepelka, after begging her friends to set her up with men. Jenny confided in an interview with *US Weekly*: “I told everyone I know, Please, I can’t pick them. As a friend, find me a man.” Also, a little-known Hollywood fact: Jennifer Aniston and Brad Pitt met on a blind date! While the couple eventually divorced, their romance started on a blind date in 1998, after Jennifer’s long-time crush on Brad.

4. You know it may work: Blind dates always come with the potential of meeting somebody really great. But you will never know unless you accept the date and go into it with an open mind. If you need extra inspiration to accept the blind date you’ve been offered, think back to Charlotte’s quote from *Sex and the City*, “I’ve been dating since I was fifteen. I’m exhausted. Where is he?”. Mr. Right could be your blind date,

so always accept the date!

Blind dates – friend or foe? Tell us in the comments about your blind date experiences!

Marc Friedland Explains Why the Winner's Envelope is Now an Iconic Part of the Oscars



By Whitney Baker and Rachael Moore

For 27 years, Marc Friedland, also known as the “godfather of the invitation” and “stationer to the stars,” has perfected

the design, elegance and timeliness of an invitation. Having developed wedding invites for everyone from Brad Pitt and Jennifer Aniston to Larry King to Timbaland, Friedland and his team understand the importance of using the personal style of the bride and groom to create a unique invitation.

“We look at all of our events as experiences and recognize them as great moments to be remembered. People sometimes forget about the food and the décor, but the invitation serves as a keepsake to bring back the memory of that time,” he shared. “It takes the personality of the couple and brings that to life. I try to capture their essence in everything I do.”

Before Friedland can develop the invitation, the bride-to-be has to decide how she wants to announce her upcoming wedding to her friends and family. The main issue is trying to fit the authenticity and individuality of her relationship onto a slip of paper. “The invite is the first piece that commemorates the bride and groom together as a couple. Each wedding invitation should be unique and distinctive – just like every romance is unique and distinctive.”



Related Link: [How to Handle Wedding Season as a Single Gal](#)

Los Angeles-based Friedland, who is the founder and creative director of Marc Friedland Couture Communications, has done

much more than establish nuptial memories. Given his talent and extensive background, it's no wonder that, in 2011, he was tapped to be the first designer and producer of the Academy Award's hand-crafted envelopes and announcement cards. "Prior to me coming up with this special design, it was just a standard-issue printed envelope, which was used for informational purposes only. What I proposed was elevating the winner's envelope into an iconic piece. Just as the Oscar statuette is iconic, we felt that the envelope also needed its own presence," Friedland shared.

Well, the final product certainly stands out in more ways than one. The four-ounce creations are made of a beautiful gold, iridescent and metallic material that "picks up the light in just the right way." In order to produce the 96 envelopes (24 for each category with 4 sets being made) and the 488 nominee cards (122 total nominees with 4 sets in total), Friedland has a team working for 252 hours. Ultimately, the envelopes are only touched by 48 people – 24 presenters and 24 award winners – but they are seen by over a billion viewers worldwide.

Of the design, the stationer explains, "We wanted to make sure it captured some of the richness of the golden age of Hollywood but was also relevant to today."

The only adjustments made to the envelopes since 2011 have been for structural reasons. "When I originally designed it, it wasn't meant to be reinterpreted each year – just as the statuette isn't changed each year. To make the card easier to open, we took out the seam a little bit; it's almost dummy proof now."

For this year's show, which will air on ABC on Sunday, February 24 at 7 p.m. EST, Friedland also created the invitations for five Oscar-related events. With a total of 15,100 invitations being sent for the events, it took over 300 hours to produce them. Of course, Friedland put personal touches on each of the invites. He explains that his team

“approached the task in a way similar to how a designer would approach a fashion collection.” First, he picked a color palette of very rich jewel tones and gave each event a signature color: black diamond for The Governors Awards; sapphire for The Nominees Luncheon; emerald for The Scientific and Technical Awards; amethyst for The Foreign Language Film reception; and ruby for The Oscars.

Related Link: [Taylor Swift and Jake Gyllenhaal Reunite at Oscars](#)

Additionally, as if this work isn't remarkable enough, Friedland crafted an online collection of cards for Oscar viewers at home. With The Oscar Collection By Marc Friedland on Evite Postmark, audiences everywhere can throw their own parties using the signature Academy-sanctioned designs – free of charge! To make your viewing party even more fun and interactive, you can also download the designer's Oscar Bingo game to play as the stars glide across the red carpet and onto the stage.

Even though most of his work is already completed, Friedland still suffers from a bit of anxiety on the big night. Watching from his seat in the audience, he hopes that “there are no mishaps with people getting the winner's cards out of the envelopes. It's such a tense moment, and we want to make sure nothing goes wrong.”

As for Friedland's picks for best actor and best actress, he thinks it's going to be a tough call this year: “there are so many good contenders, and it's going to be really close.” Be sure to tune into the 85th Academy Awards to see who walks away with the coveted awards – and don't forget to check out Friedland's beautiful designs.

For more information about [Marc Friedland](#), check him out on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#) and [Pinterest](#).

Date Idea: Get Dorky Together



By Deanna Atkins

Just because Valentine's Day is over doesn't mean that you can't continue the love fest. It's the perfect time to get as dorky as you want with your beau.

Stay in for the night and break out your favorite *Star Wars* movie or a more action-packed selection from *The Bourne Trilogy*. Feeling like a comedy? Get "groovy, baby" with your love, and put on *Austin Powers*. If you're up for it, you can wear a laugh-out-loud, 70s-themed outfit. Don't be afraid to act out the characters or scenes you're watching, even if that

means pausing the flick to reenact a light-saber battle or practice your best Dr. Evil voice.

Another way you can get dorky (and impress your man) is by playing a few rounds of video games. Dabble in some Xbox Live so you can each talk to one other through the microphone in your headsets. It will be a fun way to connect, especially if you play Nazi Zombies in *Call of Duty*. Your goal will be to slay the living corpses using shotguns, molten cocktails and machine guns while simultaneously protecting one another. If blood and gore isn't your style, dig out your retro Nintendo 64 to play some old-school *Mario Kart*. Racing each other head-to-head will be a friendly competition that could continue all night.

You and your honey can also choose to stay in and build a gigantic fort in your living room. If you want to get out of the house for a bit, unleash your inner nerd with a trip to a planetarium. Gaze at the stars as you get lost in the dreamy atmosphere. You can take turns testing each other's constellation knowledge or just enjoy learning something new together. You could also visit a nearby museum. Whether your guilty pleasure is biology, natural history or modern art, there's a geeky institution for you!

If you're feeling creative, set up a scavenger hunt that you know your other half will enjoy. Accompany your partner on the hunt, giving him or her clues along with a handmade treasure map. This activity will give you a ton to bond over.

Showing your sweetheart how much you love him or her is as easy as being yourself. You don't need to go to a five-star restaurant to have an amazing time together.

What are some ways to be a dork with your loved one? Share below!

10 Steps to a Remarkable Relationship



By Harriet Lerner, Ph.D.

This Valentine's Day, give your partner the best gift of all – a remarkable relationship! Dr. Harriet Lerner, one of our nation's most loved and respected relationship experts, reminds us that while it takes two people to couple up, it only takes one to make things a whole lot better. Here's how:

1. Warm your Partner's Heart. Make a concerted effort to focus on the positive. Do three little things every day that make your partner feel loved, valued and special.

2. Dial Down the Criticism. People become more allergic to criticism over time. Remember this: No one can survive in a marriage (at least not happily) if they feel more judged than admired.

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

3. Apologize. You can say, “I’m sorry for my part of the problem” even if you’re secretly convinced that you’re only 28% to blame.

4. Don’t Demand an Apology. Don’t get into a tug of war about his failure to apologize. An entrenched non-apologizer may use a nonverbal way to try to defuse tension, reconnect after a fight, or show he’s in a new place and wants to move toward you.

Related: [What Kim Kardashian Taught Me About Marriage](#)

5. Stop Being So Defensive. Defensiveness is the archenemy of listening. The next time your partner has a criticism try to listen only to understand—that is, no interrupting, offering advice, defending your position, or correcting facts. Save your defense for a second conversation.

6. Say it Shorter! Your partner may avoid conversation because it feels awful to him. Sometimes the culprit is the sheer number of sentences and the intensity in our voice. Slow down your speech, turn down the volume, and make your criticism in three sentences or less.

7. Sweat the Small Stuff. When you say you’ll do something, do it! Never assume that your overall contribution to the marriage compensates for failing to do what you say you’ll do, whether it’s picking up your socks or moving the boxes out of the garage by Sunday.

8. Know Your Bottom Line. Be flexible in changing for your partner 84% of the time, but don’t sacrifice your core values,

beliefs and priorities under relationship pressures.

9. Be self-focused. Connect with friends and family, pursue your interests, and be of service of others. If your primary energy isn't directed to living your own life as well as possible, you'll be over-focused on your partner in a worried or critical way.

10. Choose happiness over winning the argument. Your partner's happiness and the tone of your marriage mean a whole more than who is right and who is to blame. Don't lock yourself into negativity at the expense of your happiness and well-being. Step aside from old anger and hurt.

Harriet Lerner, Ph.D., author of Marriage Rules, is a clinical psychologist whose many acclaimed books have topped six million copies in combined sales. She is a dynamic, sought-after speaker who has appeared on The Oprah Winfrey Show, CNN, and NPR, and she hosts The Dance of Connection blog on psychologytoday.com.

Long-Term Relationships: 5 Ways to Keep the Spark Alive





By Christina Steinorth MA MFT

I wanted to get away from the more standard type of Valentine's Day articles that seem to surround gifts and intimacy, so I asked this question on my Facebook page: *What topic should I write about for Valentine's Day?*

While I received many great answers, one that seemed to pop up more than others was: *What about an article for those of us who are in long-term relationships or have been married for many years?* I gave it some thought, and my fans were right—there isn't a lot of advice relating to Valentine's Day and long-term relationships.

I loved the idea.

As many of you know, come April, I will have been married to my husband for 14 years (we've been together for almost 16). While we don't have the hot, crazy, spark of love we may have had at the start of our relationship, what we have now is something far sexier—a deep understanding and admiration for each other that makes our love life even *more* passionate than

it was when we first got together. We didn't get to this point by accident though—it has taken a lot of work and as well as consistent effort on both of our parts.

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

Here are my five best tips for those of you who are in longer term relationships to keep your spark alive:

1. Start doing things together. A lot times, especially in longer term relationships, we start to live our own lives so to speak and do less and less things with our partners. Start doing activities together three to five times a week—go for a walk, go for a bike ride or shop for and cook a meal together once a week. It will bring you closer and give you shared experiences to bond over.

2. Touch each other and do it often. Touch doesn't need to be sexual to draw us closer to our partner. Rub each other's shoulders from time-to-time. Hold hands when you walk. When we touch each other, it helps us feel more connected with one another.

Related: [What's Love Got to Do With It?](#)

3. Be someone your partner will *want* to spend time with. Put the nagging and criticism aside and be charming, fun and engaging again—our partners are more drawn to us when we're happy.

4. Reconnect with each other for at least ten minutes a day. Do it either before you get out of bed in the morning, or before you go to sleep at night or any other time during the day that you can sneak off and have ten minutes of uninterrupted conversation. Power down all of your electronics, make eye contact and just talk. It doesn't need to be serious—just talk about your day and what your plans are for tomorrow. Have light hearted chit-chat—it will help stop you from drifting apart from one another and it will help

bring the spark back.

5. Act loving even when you don't feel like it because people will always remember how you make them feel. If you don't have loving words to share, loving actions can go a long way too.

Christina Steinorth MA MFT is a psychotherapist and a popular relationship expert on radio and in print. Her advice has been featured in publications such as Wall Street Journal, USA Today, Woman's Day, Fox News Magazine, and The Chicago Tribune, among many others. Her critically acclaimed new book is 'Cue Cards for Life: Thoughtful Tips for Better Relationships' (Hunter House, 2013). Learn more at <http://www.christinasteinorth.com>.

Ways to Forget Your Singledom This VDay





By Meghan Laslocky

If you're single on Valentine's Day, don't be grumpy about it! If you're proactive and plan ahead, there are a thousand ways you can enjoy VDay, even if you're flying solo. Here are a few ideas:

1. Get a good workout in, either at the gym or outside. Really, there is nothing like a little rush of endorphins to chase away the VDay blues. Remember that there could well be tons of other singles doing just the same thing at the gym, so keep your eyes peeled. Get your workout done early in the day, before work or during lunch, so that you have the evening free for other plans.

Related: [How to Make Your Lady Feel Special This Valentine's Day](#)

2. Gather your single friends for a rollicking night at home. If you're up for cooking, here's a great recipe for burgers with spinach and arugula pesto that goes well with a Zinfandel. Or you might want to consider this totally amazing

butternut squash gratin, which you can assemble the night before and then just pop in the oven. (Pair that one with a nice Viognier.) If you don't cook, then order takeout for a crowd! After dinner, play a board game like Pictionary or Scattergories, battle of the sexes style.

3. Get your friends together for a whiskey tasting (whisky is the new black, after all). Kink it up with blindfolds. In a blind taste test, who can tell the difference between an Irish whiskey and a single malt scotch, or a bourbon and a rye?

Related: [Surviving Valentine's Day](#)

4. Movie night! A few suggestions if you want to stay in: "Lost in Austen" is a hilarious 3-hour British mini-series in which 21st century Jane Austen fan switches places with Pride and Prejudice's Elizabeth Bennet. If you want to steer clear of love stories all together and you're game for dark, quirky foreign comedy, check out the Danish film "Adam's Apples," with Mads Mikkelsen. Or head to the cinema and laugh your socks off over Bruce Willis jumping through glass ceilings in "A Good Day to Die Hard."

5. Go see a comedy show. Valentine's Day makes for great fodder for comedians! Check out your local comedy clubs for what's coming up on February 14.

6. Peruse local listings for creative singles events. Some bookstores host Valentine's Day speed dating events geared toward readers, bars host "no love song" karaoke nights, and some cities like San Francisco even host flash-mob style V-Day pillow fights!

So, if you're single, there's no reason why V-Day has to feel like D-Day. All it takes is some creativity and positive thinking and just about anyone can have a fun, memorable Valentine's Day.

Meghan Laslocky is the author of 'The Little Book of

Heartbreak: Love Gone Wrong Through the Ages' (Plume/Penguin).

Making Valentine's Day Fun Again!



By Eleanore Wells

When did Valentine's Day become such a BIG deal? At some point when I wasn't looking, it went from being a lighthearted, fun, semi-holiday to another over-the-top, loud, commercial holiday that comes with feelings of annoyance and angst for so many. It's not really about who you love anymore; instead, it's about gifts and lavish displays of...well, I'm not sure what.

As a kid, I loved this holiday. I got such a kick out of giving out cards with big red hearts on them to all the people who made me happy. I gave them to my parents, my teachers, my favorite classmates, my playmates and even my mailman. Back then, Valentine's Day was fun, and it was an excuse to tell the people who make you happy how much they mean to you. Romance had nothing to do with it when I was ten years old.

Years later, I received a beautiful bouquet of roses from a guy I'd broken up with about seven months earlier. We weren't really speaking, and he's not the sentimental type, so I was more than a little suspect. I called the florist and learned that, back when we were still dating, he had set up an automatic "send her flowers on Valentine's Day" thingy. So each Valentine's Day, when I was so pleased with his thoughtfulness, he really hadn't given it much thought at all. Well, maybe the first time...

Related Link: [How to Make Your Lady Feel Special This Valentine's Day](#)

I laughed and said nothing. It took him another two or three years to remember that he had me on automatic delivery, and I continued to enjoy my flowers each year. It had nothing to do with him or the romantic day. I just like pretty flowers.

Then, there was the guy who "surprised" me with a ginormous ten-pound box of chocolates. It was a surprise because I don't really like chocolate, and he certainly should have known that because we'd talked about it many times. I guess he only *pretended* to be listening.

Jennifer Lopez has been quoted as saying, "Love to me is someone telling me, 'I want to be with you for the rest of my life, and if you needed me to, I'd jump out of a plane for you.'" Can you imagine the pressure her guy feels on Valentine's Day?!

For too many single women, Valentine's Day is a loud reminder that they have no man (or woman, in some cases) in their life to love. It's a loud reminder of their sad, lonely lives...even though, on most days, their lives are not very sad and not that lonely. And the lead-up to it is fraught with anxiety because "whatever will she do" on this day when happy couples all over the country are celebrating? (Even though that isn't really happening.)

Related Link: [5 Tips for Single Moms to Survive Valentine's Day](#)

When I'm not in a relationship on Valentine's Day, I like to enjoy a dinner or some other outing with people who make me laugh. Not a gloomy, woeful dinner with whiny people who are miserable about being single, but a fun dinner with interesting and delightful people who happen to be single...single for now or single forever.

And that – or something on the list below – is what I recommend for everybody. I wish Valentine's Day were less about romance and more about an opportunity to remind people that you love them or tell them for the first time that you enjoy their company, that they matter to you. Let's reclaim Valentine's Day and experience it like we did when we were kids by injecting some much-needed lightheartedness into it.

1. Go bowling or plan some other group outing for people you know and enjoy but may not see as often as you'd like. It's a great excuse to reconnect!
2. Volunteer at a nursing home or children's organization and surprise them with Valentine's Day cards and trinkets so they can share in the day's fun too.
3. Treat yourself – and maybe even someone else – to flowers. Flowers can brighten anyone's day.
4. Buy a pack of Valentine's Day cards and give them to

anybody and everybody you want.

Let's make Valentine's Day about love instead of romance: love of great people, love of laughter, love of life. And you don't need a date for that!

Creative Dating on a Dime for Valentine's Day



By Mary Humphreys for Galttime.com

Valentine's Day is coming and romance is in the air. So what if you are looking to meet someone new but are tight on funds? Don't worry, you don't need fancy dinners and limo rides to

spark a romance with someone. All you need is a personal connection, and we've come up with some great date ideas that can create connections on a budget.

Get online to go offline

Hanging out at a club or going on blind dates can get expensive while you are trying to find that special someone. Get out of the bars and onto your computer. With free trial periods and coupon codes galore, you can try out even the most popular paid dating sites without making the commitment of paying full price. That way you can set up as many dates as you'd like. And the beginning of the year is the most popular time to start dating online, so now's a great chance to check out the largest pool of new daters.

Let's Take This Outside

Planning something active outdoors is one of the best ways to spark a connection with another person. And depending on your city and the weather, there are lots of great active dates you can plan.

Act like a kid: If your town's a winter wonderland right now, suggest doing some of your favorite activities from childhood. Grab your ice skates and head to an outdoor skating rink. Dive headfirst down a hill on your sleds. Have a snowball fight from your opposing snow forts. Build your own Frosty the Snowman. Or just fall into the fresh snow and make snow angels. You can even pack a thermos of hot chocolate to keep you warm in the cold.

This will help break the ice (no pun intended) and help showcase your playful side, and hopefully give you a glimpse at his inner child. Any of these activities are guaranteed to spark laughs and some deep conversations about how each of you grew up. It's perfect for that getting-to-know-you stage.

Get active and release some endorphins: If the weather's a little warmer, try working up a little bit of a sweat. Go for a hike; it'll give you plenty of quiet time to get to know each other and nature is a perfect backdrop to spark conversation when there's a lull. Go for a bike ride through the park. Exercise will also release endorphins in your body that will help in making that love connection.

Stay-At-Home Romance

Looking for a date that won't make you and your honey head out into the cold? These dates are probably better suited for a little later on in the relationship, but they can be great, cozy ways to get to know each other better.

Movie theater-style movie night: Take a trip to a local grocery store to pick out all your favorite movie snacks and either grab a great movie rental or use an online video streaming service like Netflix or Amazon Instant Video and throw yourselves a theater-style night at home. Bonus if it's cold outside, so you have an extra excuse to cuddle.

Top Chef meal: Pick out a recipe or two that you've wanted to try and go out to buy the ingredients together at a farmer's market or a local grocery store. Then cook up your creations at home and give yourself ratings. For extra fun, come up with a challenge to complete, like incorporating an unusual ingredient or technique.

Hometown Tourist

If you've never played tourist in your hometown, now's the time. Look online for free walking tours or just head out to the most popular tourist attractions and take your camera.

Try a history lesson: Hit up some of the most famous landmarks and tourist attractions in your city, although avoid any tourist traps, they tend to overcharge unsuspecting tourists. Take a tour of an old, historic building. Learning new

information will not only give you something to talk about, but will also give you something to bond over on future dates.

Use culture to spark a conversation: Often museums offer free entrance once a month or on specific days, and looking at art is a great way to spark a conversation. If you check ahead of time, you may be able to get a great deal on entrance.

Get close on an adventure: Looking for something a little more obscure? Check out Geocaching. Using a GPS device or your smartphone, you can locate hidden containers left all around the world by other Geocachers, get your hands on some cool little treasures, and leave your own artifacts behind. Geocaches are stashed in a wide range of places, from hidden city nooks to remote wilderness spots, so you can explore wherever you are.

We're Breaking Up: Virgin Mobile Presents National Break Up Day





By Nicole Cavanagh

Tomorrow is Valentine's Day, which is supposed to be the day of love, right? Well, it may surprise you to hear that a recent survey conducted by Virgin Mobile found that 59 percent of people said that, if they were planning to break up with a boyfriend or girlfriend around Valentine's Day, they would do it before the big day in order to save money.

While you may be a hopeless romantic ready to celebrate a day full of bliss, others have decided now is the best time to move on from a bad relationship. 42 percent of people surveyed said they have stayed in dead-end relationships because they were scared to make a change and try something new. If you want to break up with someone but feel like you can't because of Valentine's Day, you don't have to feel bad any longer! Why not cut the loose ends and put some extra money and happiness back in your pocket? Why put off for tomorrow what could be done today?

For that reason, Virgin Mobile has proclaimed February 13th to be "National Breakup Day." Finally, people across the country

have an incentive to break free from a troubled relationship before they spend Valentine's Day with an unworthy partner. Just in case you don't know how to break the news, relationship experts from OkCupid are taking over the @VirginMLive Twitter handle. Use the hashtag #CupidConfessions to ask questions and learn how to make your online dating profile more desirable, so you can mend your broken heart and find someone new.

Even if you are newly single this Valentine's Day, remember that you aren't alone. Check out these statistics below:

1. Half (50 percent) of Americans ages 18-24 have experienced a breakup via texting, email, or social media, with 26 percent of that age group experiencing a breakup through text message specifically.

2. 10 percent of people have experienced a breakup on or around Valentine's Day (same week), with that number being 17 percent for 18-24 year olds.

3. When asked about when they change their Facebook relationship status after a breakup, 84 percent said within two days, including 41 percent doing so immediately so others know they are back on the market.

4. 43 percent said the silver lining in a breakup is a chance to find a better, more rewarding relationship, while 26 percent cited freedom to do what they want.

Let's face it – we're pretty much in a relationship with our phone carrier too. A carrier can either put a smile on our faces with their excellent service and low rates or bring us to tears when we drop that important call or a huge bill comes at the end of the month. So why not celebrate National Breakup Day with your phone carrier as well? Virgin Mobile will pay up to 100 dollars of termination fees for any customer that switches to Virgin Mobile, making it even easier to leave their unhappy relationship with their current phone carrier

and save an average of 1,000 dollars (compared to two-year contracts with other carriers). Also, for today only, Virgin Mobile USA will give online customers 100 dollars off the purchase of a new Samsung Galaxy SII 4G on a Beyond Talk no-contract plan.

Q&A: How Can We Celebrate Valentine's Day In a Special Way If My Boyfriend and I Are Apart?



Question from Candace M.: *My boyfriend and I are both traveling for work on Valentine's Day, but we don't want to miss out on celebrating the romantic holiday. How can we share our love for each other in a unique and special way even though we're miles apart?*

Answer from Our Love Experts:

Tristan Coopersmith, Love Stylist: Valentine's Day is all about expressions of love that go outside of your normal handholding, "love ya's", dinner and a movie, etc. Valentine's Day is about passion! It is about over the top "I love you's!" It is about celebrating your unique love in a memorable way.

So when your love is distanced by miles and maybe even a time zone, your best bet is to use technology to your advantage. Instead of sending a dozen roses, send a dozen love texts. Instead of a reservation-only prix-fixe dinner date, opt for a candlelit Skype dinner for two, complete with an Evite. Instead of a decadent dessert with one spoon, try sending a box of homemade goodies. And as for the naughty lingerie show, you can keep that one... thank you, FaceTime!

Happy Valentine's Day, lovers!

[Suzanne Oshima, Matchmaker](#): Trust me, with this unique idea, your boyfriend will have the best Valentine's Day ever! Starting two days before Valentine's Day, surprise him with a few teaser messages. Send him steamy text messages and take photos of you in sexy lingerie, giving him subtle hints about what you have in store for him on Valentine's Day.

Then, on the big day...

His first gift: Surprise him and have the hotel staff deliver him breakfast in bed with all his favorite foods.

His second gift: Send him some more sexy photos and messages in the morning and afternoon.

His third gift: This gift must be sent to the hotel in advance, just make sure they don't deliver it to him until that night. Give him a super sexy video of you, your hottest panties sprayed with your favorite perfume and a few aphrodisiac foods (like almonds, bananas and chocolate).

After he opens his third gift, end the night with a live Skype session with you.

Your boyfriend will be so excited to see you when you're both home again...so be sure to answer the door in a racy outfit. Your man will think you're the hottest woman ever!

For more information on our three relationship gurus, click [here](#).

If you have any questions you would like answered by our experts, please submit them on our [Contact Page](#).

How have you celebrated a holiday when you and your loved one are apart? Tell us in the comments below!

'DATA, A Love Story' Author Amy Webb Tells Us How to Find Love Online Based On Her Own Experiences





By Michelle Danzig

After countless failed dates, author and digital strategist Amy Webb decided to try online dating in a whole new fashion. To better understand what makes an online dating profile attractive, Webb created an online dating profile disguised as a male. Then she created nine more.

In her book *DATA, A Love Story: How I Gamed Online Dating to Meet My Match,* Webb brings the expression “put yourself in someone else’s shoes” to an entirely new level. Dating can be hard enough without adding the pressure of creating an online dating profile that represents you at your best.

Using the data recovered from the multiple profiles and their different characteristics, Webb discovered what information is needed to help you boost your online profile, ultimately helping you get the most out of your experience. We had the opportunity to interview Webb about her new book, learning the dos and don’ts of online dating and how to make your online dating profile more appealing.

I find it so fascinating that you created a fake, male profile (actually 10 of them) to “game” the online dating system. Why did you take this approach? What surprised you most about your female competition?

My goal was to make the best possible profile that I could. In order to do that, I wanted to find out more about my competition, and the only way to figure that out was to sign up as a man. The first time I did that, it was really shocking to me to find this big of gap. I was looking for a very specific type of guy, a very specific type of relationship. So I created a profile that had all of the attributes of the type of guy that I wanted. I asked myself, “If these are the women attracted to the same men as me, how can I present myself better online so I can get the guy instead?” That’s what it was really about.

I was surprised to find out that people were lying about their height, although I think we all round our numbers a bit. Men are rounding up on their height; women are rounding down, which I also found interesting. I was always told that men are typically the ones making the first moves. What I realized was that people who are really great at online dating and seem to be really popular are the ones who aren’t afraid to make the first move, male or female. They were willing to reach out first, which was a happy surprise.

Related Link: [5 Low Profile Online Dating Strategies](#)

You gathered a lot of data and uncovered specific characteristics that make an online profile “attractive.” What are some of the top characteristics?

Well, photos matter, but that’s common sense. It’s obvious when the photo is eight to ten years old. The photo should always be current and, of course, make you look great. Women should show some skin, and there should be no one else in the photo.

Keeping the profile shorter rather than longer is always a good thing. Creating an online profile is really branding and marketing yourself. You should always be optimistic in what you're saying; try not to sound negative. I think the most important thing to keep in mind is that the dating part doesn't happen online; the dating part happens in real life.

What are some key characteristics that users should eliminate from their profile?

I've never dumbbed down who I am, but one thing I learned is that you can't list all your accomplishments. When you first meet somebody, you wouldn't give them a five minute speech about your life (although we've all certainly met people like that), so why on earth would you do it online? Try to paint a picture for whoever is looking at your profile; make it seem like you're approachable and like you're a really fun person to be around.

After you analyzed your data, you went back and changed your personal profile based on what you learned. What changes did you make?

I changed everything. I had to scratch the entire thing and start over again. From the photos to the description – everything.

Related Link: [No More Excuses: 10 Ways to Ditch Bad Dating Habits](#)

The majority of our visitors are single women looking for love. What advice can you give them for finding someone online or even offline?

Figure out exactly what you want. I think a lot of people who are in unhappy relationships aren't being honest with themselves. Everyone who is looking for someone should start off with his or her own list of attributes, and they should be very specific. Market yourself appropriately. Digitally, that

means using the right information and presenting yourself the right way. However, in the real world, it's the same thing. Make sure you look and feel your best. Have a lot of confidence and present yourself well when you meet people.

You can purchase a copy of 'DATA: A Love Story: How I Gamed Online Dating to Meet My Match' in bookstores and online from [Amazon](#). For more information about Webb, please visit [DATALoveStory.com](#) or follow her on [Twitter](#).

5 Ways to Find a Last Minute Date for Valentine's Day



By Susan Trombetti

[Valentine's Day](#) is fast approaching ladies, so instead of spending another year sitting at home and sulking if you're [single](#), it's time to take action. Just because it's two weeks away, doesn't mean you can't have a date. Follow these simple and fun steps to land that date night on the most [romantic](#) night of the year.

1. Get on Facebook. Check out friends of friends. When you spot the right guy or girl for you, be sure to email your friend to ask if it is okay to email or friend request after getting the scoop on him or her. You want to make sure this person is single and truly available. After all, you are looking for more than a Valentine's Day [date](#). You need to find your [true love](#), and if he/she is hung up on someone else or is a player, this just won't work.

Related: [Is That You, Mr. Right?](#)

2. Online Dating. Don't overlook this because this is where the single people are (okay, they are supposed to all be single). They are looking for a valentine's date, too. I like EHarmony. I feel if you are a quality catch, have a great professional photo in your hot red dress, and you get some help writing your profile, you will have a ton of potential dates. The problem will be who to pick, but then that is a good problem to have. Just be sure to pick people for all the right reasons.

Related: [3 Benefits of Meeting People Online](#)

3. Think of Valentine's day as a fun excuse, whether you are a guy or a girl, to just ask anyone out you have been dying to ask out but didn't have the nerve. It's a great time to ask the person you have been crushing on for a long time, or that single coworker on another floor.

4. Pass out those drug store valentines cards that you used to give and receive when you were a little kid in 1st grade. Hershey kisses work well with the cards, or by themselves. Pass them out to every single person you can find. It is bound to be received with a smile, and you should line up at least a few dates if you go about it in a fun way. Pass them out to singles in your apartment building, job, or even starbucks. Try your local bookstore. Just get creative and find some cute single, and go for it. It's corny, but it's one of the few times you can get away with it.

5. Every neighborhood has a social calendar of events with Charitable functions, or just fun things to do. Be sure to check out the calendar in advance of Valentine's day and go out and meet someone at one of these events. There are a lot of single events also around this time. Be sure to attend and meet someone. Be bold and put yourself out there and show your interest.

So what happens if you don't land that Valentine's Date. Don't sweat it too much. Rally up your single girlfriends and head out to your favorite spot. There's bound to be groups of single men hanging out, just like you and your girlfriends.

Susan Trombetti is an expert matchmaker and member of the Professional Matchmakers Association. She has helped many discerning singles discover long-term relationships and partnerships that are both rewarding and fulfilling through her business, [Exclusive Matchmaking](#). She's also been featured in several top dating/relationship magazines and websites including Cosmopolitan and iVillage.

How to Deal with Someone Difficult in Your Relationship



By Elizabeth Davis

The reality of human interaction is one of both inevitability and need for acceptance since it often goes against one's favor. This is especially true for those who are difficult to deal with, and one may even become your better half. For better or for worse, it's still a drag when you have to deal with a partner who may not be as agreeable as you would have hoped.

It's understandably hard to stay calm and collected when the stress of having to deal with someone difficult on a daily

basis starts getting to you. Of course, the last thing you need is to lash out and go crazy all of a sudden, which is not a very good thing for anyone. Here are a few things that you can remember in order to deal with such a person:

Marcus Aurelius, the great Roman emperor, wrote in his Meditations these words of wisdom.

“When you wake up in the morning, tell yourself: the people I deal with today will be meddling, ungrateful, arrogant, dishonest, jealous and surly. They are like this because they can't tell good from evil. But I have seen the beauty of good, and the ugliness of evil, and have recognized that the wrongdoer has a nature related to my own – not of the same blood and birth, but the same mind, and possessing a share of the divine. And so none of them can hurt me. No one can implicate me in ugliness. Nor can I feel angry at my relative, or hate him. We were born to work together like feet, hands and eyes, like the two rows of teeth, upper and lower. To obstruct each other is unnatural. To feel anger at someone, to turn your back on him: these are unnatural.”

That's pretty deep, but also quite insightful about how we can look at the people around us, including those who are close to us. Maintaining a relationship is about patience and acceptance, so if you're in love with someone who may be difficult at times, then you need to follow a few things in order to get the most of the situation.

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

Be Objective

Face that person in a calm and objective way, looking at the facts and ignoring the bad things. You have to be able to see the fundamental truth while still being able to see the silver lining. Even when things get bad and even downright bizarre, staying objective and getting the facts straight should give

you that edge to keep yourself together, despite the negativity that can take down almost anyone.

Maintain a Mature Attitude

The topic of maturity has always been a convoluted one, and there is a tough question regarding what makes one mature. In any case, it's not something that can be acquired overnight. Such a mindset requires practice and the careful building up of patience amidst adverse situations. Maturity is about being able to balance everything you have in life, and it's definitely hard to pull off. But if you really do care about that person, then you should be able to find a way somehow by being mature about everything.

Be Assertive

Sometimes, you do have to put your foot down and make yourself heard whenever things do get too far. Of course, don't do it in a hysterical way, but in a conducted manner that will both make you understood and sympathized with at the same tie. Call the person out without provoking antagonism, which is easier said than done. Just remember to do it out of necessity rather than anger, and you'll somehow find a way to deal with the person's mischief and immaturity without having to resort to anything drastic.

Related: [Why Amazing Confident Women Remain Single](#)

Have a Sense of Humor

The British Royal Marines are perhaps one of the most elite group of soldiers anyone can ever encounter in this world. In the face of war and adversity, they remain calm and capable of facing even the most life-threatening obstacles. They're also known for the one trait that every Royal Marine is required to have, which is a sense of humor. As strange as it may seem, it's that ability to smile and joke around in the face of adversity that makes them so strong.

That is also the trait that can help any person get through the toughest of times in life, including a relationship with a “difficult” person. Being able to laugh during bad times is a great load off anyone’s shoulders. So there is no need to be so serious and that person could eventually realize the folly of what has been done as you laugh and joke about what has transpired. Of course, as long as you don’t do it in a mocking and condescending manner.

Elizabeth Davis has 20 years of experience as a relationship adviser. She writes and shares more relationship tips and marriage advice on her blog RelationshipsAdvice.co.

10 Most Outrageous Celebrity Valentine’s Day Gifts





By Michelle Danzig

With the most romantic day just around the corner, you may find yourself pressured to find the perfect gift to surprise your sweetie. In today's economy, it's hard not to find yourself in the cards, candy and flowers section of the department store, looming over the inevitable three-hour wait for dinner reservations this Valentine's Day. But what would your holiday be like with some extra, disposable income? Look no further than these 10 celebrities who emptied their pockets and went over-the-top with these outrageous Valentine's Day gifts for their significant others:

1. Courteney Cox: Before their recent split, Cox once purchased her then-husband, **David Arquette**, an antique Carousel horse. The estimated cost of an antique can range anywhere from \$3,500 to \$45,000.

2. Jay Z: With an estimated cost of \$24,000, the rapper and record producer bought his now-wife, **Beyonce** a Platinum covered mobile phone. I wonder if she picked that up while she was dancing in the club with Lady Gaga?

3. George Clooney: Even though it seemed like a fling, in 2008 Clooney splurged \$40,000 for girlfriend **Sarah Larson** on a hotel suite at the Hugh Hefner Sky Village in Las Vegas's Playboy Tower at the Palms Casino Resort. Not only that, but the two had dinner at the exclusive Nove restaurant while watching the Cirque Du Soleil tribute show to the Beatles at the Mirage Hotel and Casino.

Related: [Extravagant Celebrity Gifts Within Reach of Your Budget.](#)

4. Angelina Jolie: If you were anticipating another adoption, think again. Jolie bought hubby **Brad Pitt** a 200-year-old olive tree for £12,000—a little over \$19,000—for Valentine's Day last year. The olive tree was planted at the couple's chateau in France and is said to be a symbol of peace and longevity.

5. David Beckham: The sexy soccer star bought wife **Victoria Beckham** an \$8 million Bvlgari necklace and flew chefs in from her favorite restaurant in London to Spain to prepare dinner.

6. Justin Bieber: Although sadly the teen power couple is no longer involved, the 18-year-old pop star spent \$2000 on singer and Disney Channel star, **Selena Gomez** by buying out an entire florist of his roses, tulips and daisies. Talk about being Justin's girlfriend...

Related: [Valentine's Day Advice: How Successful Women Can Ditch Dating Duds](#)

7. Jerry O'Connell: The *Stand By Me* star once planted over 800 grapevines in the home he shares with fellow actress and [wife](#), **Rebecca Romijn**. The estimated cost of this fruitful investment is \$52,000.

8. Howard Stern: The over-the-top radio personality designed and gave his now-wife, **Beth Ostrosky** a 5.2 carat emerald-cut engagement ring valued at over \$250,000 on Valentine's Day in 2007.

9. Katy Perry: Before filing for divorce in 2012, the singer purchased hubby **Russell Brand** a lilac-colored Bentley Brooklands. Interested in buying this for your sweetie? The base price for a 2009 model is nearly \$341,000.

10. Mike Tyson: Known for some previously extravagant gifts, the former undisputed heavyweight champion purchased a \$2 million bathtub for ex-wife **Robin Givens**.

Get a crazy gift for Valentine's Day? Share your story below!

'Big Brother' Couple Jeff Schroeder and Jordan Lloyd Discuss Living Together, Dieting and Watching 'The Bachelor'





By Michelle Danzig and Rachael Moore

Jeff Schroeder and Jordan Lloyd instantly had chemistry when they met on the set of *Big Brother* in 2009. Building a strong friendship first, they formed an alliance on the show and became huge targets in the eyes of their competitors. “Being friends was our only option. We knew there were some romantic feelings, but we didn’t express them because we wanted to win,” said Schroeder.

But being just friends didn’t last long. After Lloyd defeated the rest of her houseguests, walking away with the cash prize, and Schroeder was voted America’s Favorite Houseguest, their relationship developed into something more intimate. This gradual shift from friends to lovers helped them with their communication skills. As she explained, “We are so open with each other and never hold anything back.”

Two months later, CBS asked the pair to take part in *The Amazing Race*. Their diverse personalities were tested on the show and their relationship certainly felt the pressure. “We wanted to strangle each other,” Lloyd shared. “We still needed

to get to know each other better since we were newly dating.”

Related Link: [Ryan Danz and Abbie Ginsberg Tell Us How They Bonded on ‘The Amazing Race’](#)

After they were eliminated from the race, Schroeder and Lloyd returned to their separate homes in Chicago, Illinois and Charlotte, North Carolina respectively, pursuing a long-distance relationship. They tried to see each other two or three times a month and felt that, by putting forth an equal amount of effort, they could make their relationship work.

However, long-distance relationships are never easy, no matter how hard you try. Schroeder advises other couples to “be patient because everything happens for a reason.” Having a goal that you want to pursue with your significant other is also important. “We knew we were always going to move in together; we just didn’t know where because we are from two totally different places.”

“Having complete trust in one another made us worry less about where we were going and who we were seeing,” he added.

After dating and living apart for two and a half years, the couple moved in together in a small apartment in Los Angeles. By taking this next step, they discovered that they were complete opposites, not only competitively but also with food and television. “The way we eat is totally different. I like fried food, and Jeff likes seafood,” Lloyd said of her man.

As for their varying tastes in television, the DVR is a huge help. The adorable pair enjoys watching TV together, even though they like different shows. However, they do share CupidsPulse.com’s love of [The Bachelor](#) and have been hooked since the first episode. “Nobody ends up getting married, but we can’t stop watching,” she said.

Related Link: [The Bachelor 17, Episode 6: Chemistry in Canada](#)

“We think Tierra is so dramatic and we just can’t wait to see what happens,” Schroeder added.

With their relationship going strong, the *Big Brother* couple will be celebrating Valentine’s Day in a really special way. They’re both participating in DietBet, a nationwide dieting challenge where they promised to shed pounds as their gift to each other. Over 367 players are a part of the program, which will end just before the romantic holiday, and vying to win a portion of the \$18,350 pot of prize money; together, the participants have already lost a collective 1,170 pounds. Whoever reaches the goal of dropping four percent of his or her weight will split the pot.

Schroeder and Lloyd believe that DietBet is a great motivator because, with so many people watching and supporting you, you can’t fail. To meet their goals, they often do yoga together. “I thought yoga was just stretching, but it’s totally different. I didn’t know it would help me so much,” he revealed. While he also goes to the gym to lose weight, he inspired his girlfriend to run along the beach to get fit.

To stay healthy, the pair also goes food shopping together. They buy a lot of fruit and like to try new recipes to encourage each other’s healthy eating habits. But if someone brings cheese in the house, all bets are off!

They’ve both found success with the program, losing around 10 pounds each. They are confident that they are going to win DietBet, and if they do, they will be giving their earnings to charity.

Next up for the active couple? Schroeder will be developing some projects for the summer, while Lloyd plans to return to school to get her cosmetology license. And, of course, they’ll be tuning in to see who wins Sean Lowe’s heart on *The Bachelor*!

Also follow them on Twitter: @jeffschroeder23 and

@BBJordanLloyd.

Top 5 Don'ts of a First Valentine's Date



By Susan Trombetti

As Valentine's Day approaches, the nerves are building up for many young couples. Maybe you've been dating for months, maybe you've been on a few dates or maybe you're friends, but want to take that next step in your relationship. Whatever situation you're in, don't let the expectations surrounding this day get to you. If you're spending the first Valentine's

Day with your new honey, follow these tips:

1. Don't make your first date on Valentine's day: I don't like this idea. Valentine's Day isn't a day to get to know someone. This date also leads to easy let downs. There will be too high of expectations for one person or both, which can be awkward if it's the first time you go out on a date.

Related: [How to Make Your Lady Feel Special This Valentine's Day](#)

2. Don't leave your wallet or purse behind: You want to be romantic and chivalrous on the most romantic day of the year, so at least offer to pay even if he/she doesn't let you.

3. Don't be on your cell phone or other device: This is pretty much a no-no on any date, but especially don't screw it up on this night by being preoccupied by your phone. You need to let you're date know that they're the most important thing at that moment in time, which means not responding to texts, emails or calls you may get.

Related: [Surviving Valentine's Day](#)

4. Don't talk about your ex: Leave this conversation at the door unless you want your new partner to run. If you're on a date and all you can talk about is your ex-boyfriend or girlfriend, than your date is obviously going to think you're not over that person, which is probably true if you're too focused on them anyway. That person is your ex for a reason, realize that and try not blow this date because of the person in your past.

5. Don't drink too much: We all know that too much alcohol can lead to embarrassing and regretful behaviors, so forget that third glass of wine and keep it classy on this night. This is especially true for those spending their first Valentine's Day together, because new partners can be less forgiving of some

of your actions caused by drinking.

Valentine's Day shouldn't be a make or break in your relationship. Yes, as a couple you should celebrate it, but don't let it stress you out too much. Take it for what it is. Do something to show your partner that you love them and keep it light hearted and fun at the same time.

Susan Trombetti is an expert matchmaker and member of the Professional Matchmakers Association. She has helped many discerning singles discover long-term relationships and partnerships that are both rewarding and fulfilling through her business, Exclusive Matchmaking. She's also been featured in several top dating/relationship magazines and websites including Cosmopolitan and iVillage.

Biggest Break-Up Mistakes





By Amy Hoglund for Galtime.com

Break-ups can be absolutely horrible, especially when it's not expected. Sometimes our heart makes us act, think, and do crazy things. What may seem like a fantastic idea at the time turns out to make you feel even worse about yourself afterwards. I'm a personal fan of just cutting all contact, which means deleting their number, Facebook, email, and giving back all of their personal belongings, or at least tossing them out! But we all know it's much easier said than done.

SO, WHAT ARE THE BIGGEST MISTAKES PEOPLE MAKE AFTER A BREAK-UP? Writer, Editor & Creator of "Your Boyfriend's Best Girlfriend" gave GalTime a list. Let's count up to the worst.

#5 Broadcast your pain...in song

We all love to listen to our break up music. Songs like "I'm a Mess" by Anthony Hamilton comes to mind. You may even find yourself cry-singing along. However, there is no need to make your depressed musical debut on YouTube for all the world to see. This is one part of the break up you should suffer in silence.

#4 Beg

Sure, all of those romantic movies show the poor sap coming with his tail between his legs pleading to get back with the love he lost. Yeah, well, it does not work like that in what we call reality. Apologizing is one thing, but begging is a bit of an overkill. Will the person really respect you, once you are back together? Probably not. Value yourself enough to have a spine.

#3 Get back together too soon

Some break ups are necessary. If you have issues in the relationship, time apart may be exactly what the love doctor ordered. However, if you rush to get back together, without working on the issues, you may find yourself back in the same predicament sooner than you think. Take time to work on your issues while apart.

#2 Develop (or nurture) a vice you can't handle

Break ups can be devastating. Life altering even. But the way you react to them, will determine how much they actually affect you in the long run. Sure you can turn to the comfort of a vice like overeating or not eating, having a drink or whatever. Just be mindful that the results of drowning your sorrows may mess you up for some time. So choose your vices wisely.

#1 Seek revenge

It may seem like a great idea to get some "get back" against the one who broke your heart. But you really are only hurting yourself in the long run. Maybe the break up is temporary, but your actions could make it permanent. Most people will tell you, revenge has a way of reversing course and smacking the heck out of the perpetrator.

All in all...suffering a break up is hard. The key is to go THROUGH the break up, and not DWELL on the break up.

So what can you do to get through a break-up with some grace?

Contributor ASK DAN AND MIKE suggest you break ties, set boundaries and surround yourself with true friends. Here are there best tips.

– Get over it! We know this is harsh, but it’s the reality that you need to work towards. It’s a process, it won’t happen overnight, but you’ll get there.

– Release all tethers. Get any necessary items back ASAP. Put all of his/her stuff in a box and give back to him immediately.

– Erase his numbers from your phone, because we’ve all drunk dialed and made that embarrassing “booty call.” Avoid the “I Need You Now” behavior.

– Break social media ties for example unfriend on Facebook, quit following them on Twitter, Instagram, Pinterest, Google+ and block them on any and all dating sites you subscribe to.

– Surround yourself with friends and family to eliminate alone time.

– Take a break from mutual friends that you have.

– Put yourself out there and begin dating immediately. It will help build self confidence and eliminate the feeling of loneliness.

How Celebrity Couples

Overcome Their Stressful Lives



By Whitney Baker

While it's tempting to think that celebrity couples never experience the ups-and-downs of real life, that's not always the case. Like everyone else, they must survive personal heartbreak, career letdowns and various forms of rejection – and they must do it all in the public eye. Of course, being a Tinseltown twosome means that they have money and means to overcome their stressful lives, perhaps by doing one of the activities below.

1. Learning something new: Although stars are often on set for long hours or traveling for various commitments, there is

always downtime during their hectic schedules, giving them time to pick up a new hobby. For instance, Curtis Stone, who has a son with fiancée Lindsay Price, hopes that he and Price can learn how to speak Spanish and then teach their son the language.

Related Link: [Celebrity Couples Who Have Turned Over a New Leaf](#)

2. Taking an extravagant vacation: Thanks to their hefty paychecks and flexible jobs, stars can jet off to Mexico or the Caribbean on a whim. Some of them even own their own private planes, making it extra easy to take a last-minute vacation. After co-hosting ABC's *New Year's Rockin' Eve* with Jenny McCarthy, Ryan Seacrest headed down to St. Barts for some fun in the sun with his long-time girlfriend Julianne Hough. This trip provided some much-needed R&R for the busy couple: Seacrest is gearing up for the twelfth season of *American Idol*, while Hough is promoting her upcoming movie *Safe Haven*. Likewise, Reese Witherspoon, Jim Toth and their three children spent the holidays in Hawaii.

3. Enjoying normal, domestic activities: Sometimes, just doing basic, everyday chores helps alleviate the pressure that comes with being rich and famous. When their schedules align and Carrie Underwood and husband Mike Fisher are both at their Nashville home, they like to keep things simple: they often spend time cooking and watching television together. Underwood likes to keep a similar routine when she's on tour, often doing her own laundry on her days off.

4. Donating to charities: While stardom certainly comes with stress, it also includes many wonderful perks. One way for stars to fully appreciate how blessed they are is by giving back – and no couple does this better than the Duke and Duchess of Cambridge. Kate Middleton is making sure her charitable donations reflect on her pregnancy; in January, she gave both a hamper of new baby products and a package of baby

clothes to one of her favorite causes, East Anglia Children's Hospices.

Related Link: [Recovering Neuroscientist Don Vaughn Talks About Finding Love and Changing the World With Music](#)

5. Adopting a puppy: Similarly, many celebrities show their goodwill by rescuing dogs from local shelters. These furry creatures provide them with constant companions despite their busy schedules. At the start of the New Year, Miley Cyrus and Liam Hemsworth adopted a Chihuahua-mix puppy, Bean, who joins their family of four other rescued dogs. Likewise, Katherine Heigl – who even started her own animal companion charity – and husband Josh Kelley have a full house: they're raising their two daughters alongside seven rescued dogs.

How do you and your partner handle stress? Tell us in the comments below!