

Five Things Men Look For In a Wife



By Steven Zangrillo

Listen, it's not easy for men. We understand that it's a two-way street, this dating thing. Tried and true, we young professionals hit the bars, clubs, gyms, restaurants and other various hot spots perceived to be breeding ground for potential girlfriends and spouses. Some of us have even taken the plunge into the e-dating world. We come up empty handed more often than you would think. Maybe that isn't surprising to you, but it's routine to us. All too often, the cute girl on the stairmaster ends up being nothing more than just that – a cute girl. You see, we have a natural tendency to judge (harshly), and often build up our own barriers against accepting a woman into our lives past the first few dates.

That said, we do have a few important criteria. Below are five things men look for in a wife:

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1. Focus

That is, stop looking at your phone when I talk to you. This thing we look for can be displayed with variance in several different ways. When we're describing anything to you, be it an event of the day, idea we have, or anything else, it's because we care about your opinion on the matter. Your focused feedback on all things is important to us. We're looking for a life partner, someone to be our go-to when we need it most. Stay focused.

2. Truthfulness

We expect honesty in dialogue. Even the smallest details matter. If you don't like that dish we ordered for dinner, say so. If you aren't a fan of the way we floss and sing Blink-182 simultaneously, pipe up. Nip things that bother you by telling the truth about how you feel. The more you sweep things under the rug, the bigger mess you will find yourself cleaning up later. No conversation is worth saving over a white lie.

3. Steadiness

That "Keep Calm And Carry On" catch phrase is a beauty... because it's rooted in reality. If we're surveying you as a potential wife, it means we're taking you seriously. We're all about you, we love you, and we're going to spend a lot of time, money and energy making you the happiest person to have ever walked this earth. We are preparing to give ourselves to you. Just as we have to present ourselves as stable, able life mates, you must do the same. If you've still yet to sow some of your wild oats, then this relationship isn't for you.

Be here, now, and present. Have your job, family and money in order. Don't let this commitment go into the deep end if you're still wearing swimmyies.

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4. Positivity

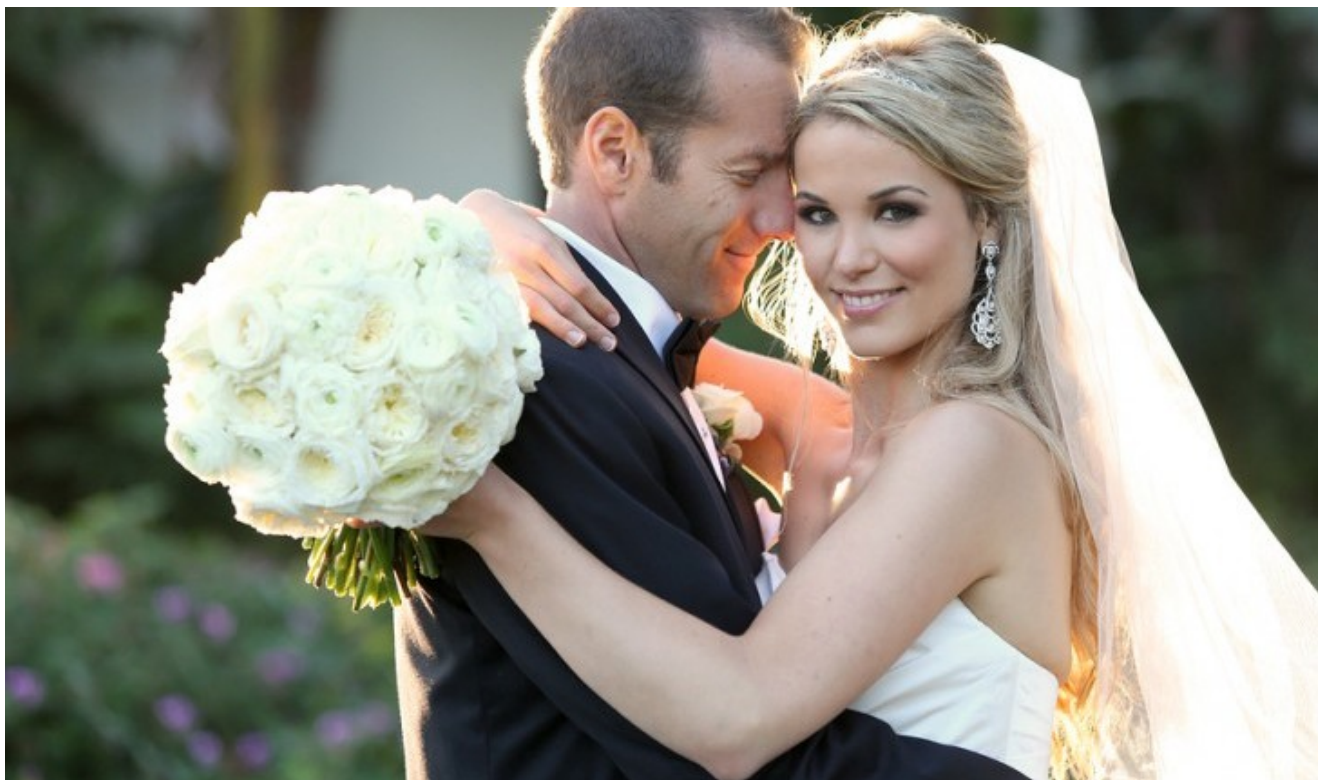
Pretty simple, right? No one likes a Debbie Downer, especially one that they'll be sharing their life and assets with. You will be sharing a bed, bathroom, kitchen, home, family and life together. It would seem that the best way to approach that would be with positivity. Although it's still important to tell the truth about things that bother you, it's also important to be... you know... enjoyable. Think of all of your negative friends and family. When you're planning a night out, you probably hesitate to call them. If you can't call those people, why would you marry one?

5. Love (NOTHING else)

It always comes back to love, doesn't it? We look for women to share love with us. Love is the stuff of marriage. If you're in need of financial help, the government has programs for that. It's important to be at similar stations in life so you have a reciprocal and positive marriage experience. We want to marry because we're in love, not because it's a sound financial decision.

What are some other things men look for in a wife? Share your thoughts below.

Valentine's Day Advice: 5 Love Languages Defined



By Top Dating Sites

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

This harmonious convergence of events speaks to all the communication tools that noted relationship expert and author,

Dr. Gary Chapman, extols in his series, *The 5 Love Languages*.

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

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

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

2. Quality Time – Quality time *doesn't* mean giving anything up. It *does* mean creating time together. What you do or don’t do isn’t important. What *is* important is that you are together.

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

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

4. Acts of Service – When you oiled the hinges on the screen-

door that was driving your mate crazy you were “speaking” a language of love. When you finally notice that you haven’t tripped over a pair of shoes on the stairway in quite some time, it’s because someone else was “speaking” to you in a language of love.

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

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

Dr. Chapman isn’t exploring deep mysteries. His observations and teachings involve everyday people, living everyday lives. What people do within that context is what ultimately decides how many “languages” you are fluent in.

**Valentine’s Day Advice: 10
Tips for a Romantic (and**

Green) Marriage Proposal



By Kate Harrison

Valentine's Day is one of the most popular days of the year to propose. As this special day approaches, men across the country are struggling to find the best way to pop the question. Take a load off boys, because Green Bride Guide eco-wedding expert Kate Harrison has some engaging ideas to inspire your inner romantic while reducing your impact on the earth.

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

1. Location: No one likes to say they got engaged next to the

laundry machine. Pick a location or restaurant that she loves or take her to your favorite green spot. Whether a mountaintop or an organic restaurant, your soon-to-be fiancée will appreciate a carefully selected location.

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

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

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

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

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

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

6. Customize a puzzle: Once it's put together, it reads, "Will you marry me?"

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

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

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

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

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

Valentine's Day Advice: Five Unconventional Date Night Ideas





By A Bullseye View

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

Stay in and cook fresh pasta

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

Get glam and smile

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

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

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

Learn something together

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

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

Give a personalized gift

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

Volunteer

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

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



By Rebecca Garland

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

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

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

Cook Together

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

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

Dinner and a Movie

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

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

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Casual Romance

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

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

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

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

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





By Vicky Oliver

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Top 10 Whitney Houston Songs

Inspired by Love



By Daniela Agurcia

The beautiful 48 year-old, Whitney Houston was found unresponsive in her Beverly Hills Hotel bathtub on Saturday, February 11. The six-time Grammy-winning legend's tragic death took our country by surprise, and only one-day before the 54th Grammy Awards. A tribute was paid to her last night by Jennifer Hudson. All around the world, people are mourning and celebrating the life of Whitney and her songs that will forever be remembered as some of the greatest of all time. She lived her life with an open heart and sang about love and passion. She wrote about love, all kinds of love more than any other artist we have come to know.

Here are Whitney Houston's top ten songs inspired by Love:

- 1. I Will Always Love You:** Houston's "signature song" and number one on the singles charts in almost all countries.
- 2. Greatest Love of All:** Houston based this song on family to represent the love and appreciation she has for those who has supported her throughout her singing career. The greatest love of all is family.
- 3. Saving All My Love for You:** A dramatic song about a love affair with a married man, and the singer is saving all her love for him.
- 4. You Give Good Love:** A sensual R&B groove for the one you love.
- 5. My Love is Your Love:** During a time of marital difficulties for Houston, she sings this to reassure us that she will remain strong with love.
- 6. Love Will Save the Day:** A fast tempo song, filled with love and excitement.
- 7. Nothin' But Love:** A reminder that there's nothing but love for anything positive that has come out of the difficulties in life.
- 8. For the Love of You:** All about the greatness of being in love.
- 9. Love is a Contact Sport:** These lyrics will veer you towards making the right moves towards the one you love.
- 10. I Was Made to Love Him:** A song about how special people can fill your life with the inspiration and love.

Do you have a Whitney Houston song that has always been a love inspiration for you? Share below.

Valentine's Day Advice: Follow Famous New Yorkers



By Jeryl Brunner

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

So this Valentine's Day, instead of going for the quiet table at the dimly lit restaurant, opt for something a bit more

lively that will spark conversation. Honestly, I've been told that the circus makes a nice date option, and is good for people watching and observation. ("Look at that clown juggle 14 plates! Get a load of that tightrope walker!") But since the circus isn't in town, I turned to famous New Yorkers and their favorite romantic New York City spots for advice:

1. Let me sell you a bridge

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

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

2. Be a karaoke king (or queen)

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

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

3. Pizza, much hotter than you think

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

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

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

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

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

5. Drink in that view

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

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

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

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

Valentine's Day Duos: 5 Hollywood Relationships That Spiraled Out Of Control



By Katanya Royster

Relationships can be hard work, and they require a lot of effort to be put in from both ends. When you both commit, it makes it all worthwhile- in most cases. While many relationships start off on a high note and continue on the path of blissfulness, others plummet to a place of irreconcilable differences, physical altercations and repeated infidelity. They end up heading straight to Splittsville. In fact, all you have to do is ask the following couples:

1. Chris Brown and Rihanna: Typically, the phrase “first love” invokes visions of butterflies, sunsets and all things untainted. But, in 2009, we saw an ugly side of first love. Singer, Chris Brown, was accused of assaulting his popstar girlfriend, Robyn “Rihanna” Fenty. At the time of the assault, Brown was 19 and Rihanna was 20. After pictures of Rihanna’s badly beaten face surfaced, fans immediately took sides. Some were ready to dismiss Brown’s actions as a forgivable misstep, while others were relentless in their criticism of him. Either way, it was the worst possible ending to a seemingly beautiful love story. Or was it? Recent tweets make it seem as if reconciliation may be on the horizon.

Related: [5 Celebrity Couples We Want to See Reunite](#)

2. Russell Brand and Katy Perry: A shocked public let out a collective gasp when Russell Brand filed for divorce from his wife of 14 months. Failed Hollywood marriages are no surprise, but for some reason, we thought these two would be different. So what if Brand is a recovering sex addict and Perry is the daughter of evangelical ministers? We still thought this couple had a fighting chance. Brand’s boredom with the couple’s sex life and his inability to be alone, may have contributed to the couple’s marital problems, reported *US Weekly*.

3. Kim Kardashian and Kris Humphries. Many thought Kim and Kris’ lavish wedding was a publicity stunt. So, when Kim filed for divorce after only 72 days of marriage, no one was shocked – except maybe Kris. The NBA star claimed he was surprised by Kim’s actions and that he wanted to make the couple’s marriage work. After the split went viral, Kim was embarrassed and, in a rare move, retreated from the public eye while her ex-hubby was booed in NYC during a basketball game. Thus, if the marriage was a publicity stunt, it may have been the worst one in history.

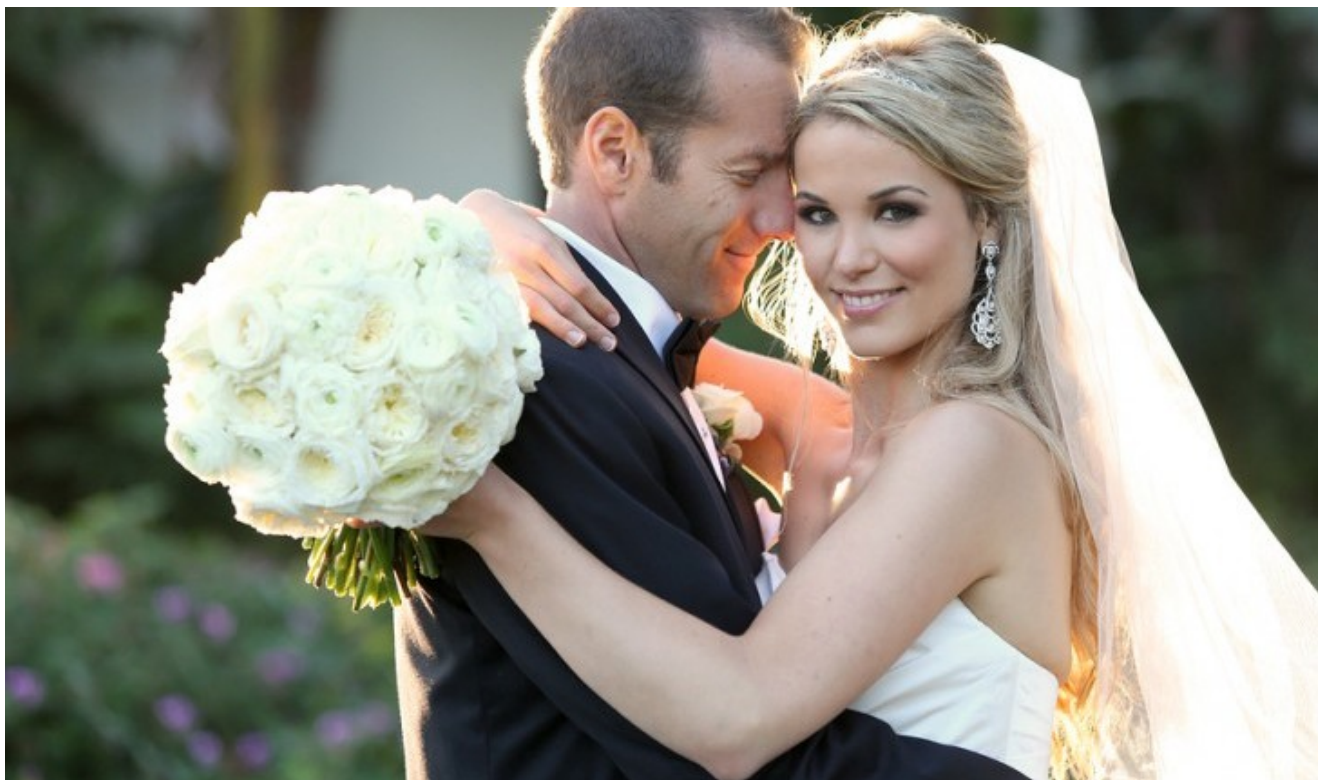
Related: [What Kim Kardashian Taught Me About Marriage](#)

4. Kobe and Vanessa Bryant: In 2003, Kobe was accused of sexually assaulting a 19-year-old hotel employee. Kobe proclaimed his innocence, but admitted to infidelity and famously apologized to his wife, Vanessa, with a \$4 million ring and a custom-made Lamborghini. It seems that Kobe's relationship patchwork was a bit like someone putting a Band-Aid on broken leg – a nice gesture, but it didn't actually fix the problem- a cheating husband. In 2011, after 10 years of marriage, Vanessa finally filed for divorce citing "irreconcilable differences,". Either way, a woman scorned, plus a husband worth \$150 million dollars, minus a prenup, equals trouble. With that kind of money up for grabs, this downward spiral may have only just begun.

5. Tiger Woods and Elin Nordegren. Tiger Woods' fame had just as much to do with his clean cut image as it did with his amazing golf game. However, a one-car accident near Woods' and Nordegren's Florida home changed his reputation forever. A parade of women subsequently emerged and admitted to having affairs with the golf pro. In an attempt to save his marriage, the father of two spent six weeks in a rehabilitation program for sex addiction. Nonetheless, Nordegren filed for divorce granted on the basis that the couple's marriage was "irretrievably broken." Nordegren was awarded an undisclosed settlement amount thought to be in the neighborhood of \$100 million dollars.

How did you know when you or a friend's relationship was over? Share your stories below.

4 Ways to Exorcise Your “Ex” This Valentine’s Day



By Marianne Beach, GalTime.com

It's a new year but you're still stuck on that old guy. And now the most romantic holiday of the year is fast approaching. Wouldn't Valentine's Day be the perfect time to exorcise that ex and move on for good?

Kelly McGonigal, psychologist at Stanford University and author of the new book *The Willpower Instinct: How Self Control Works, Why It Matters, and What You Can Do To Get More of It*, thinks so. "Valentine's Day is all about declaring who you care about most," she declares. "And if you've thrown away enough time on a go-nowhere relationship, the person at the

top of your V-Day list should be *you*.”

Sounds good, right? But maybe easier said than done. After all, an “ex” habit can be hard to break.

“Anything that reminds you for your ex can bring back a flood of feelings,” says McGonigal. “You may look back with ‘euphoric recall,’ remembering only the highs and none of the lows. Even if the relationship was a disaster, you may not want to believe that you wasted your time and heart on a jerk.”

Related: [Celebrity Couples Who Called It Quits in Summer 2015](#)

So what does it take to break the “ex” habit once and for all? McGonigal says you’ll need a good dose of self-control with a dash of self-compassion. And she has four great tips, based on the latest science of willpower to help you move on.

4 Ways to Exorcise Your “Ex” this Valentine’s Day

1. Find a Role Model.

Science shows that we can catch willpower from people we admire, and strengthen our resolve just by bringing them to mind. Look to your own life, pop culture, or the news for a “ditch-the-ex” role model. Who’s your favorite example of a strong woman who kicked a man to the curb, and is doing just fine on their own (or on the rebound!)? Think of yourself as following in her footsteps, and bring her to mind when you’re tempted to stalk your ex on Facebook.

2. “I Won’t” Is Easier When You Have a New “I Want.”

The best way to make an old habit less tempting is to find a new addiction. The bad news is you can’t order a new crush from Zappos. So how do you replace the longing for an ex without jumping into a new relationship? Find a new goal – like running a race for charity or writing your own romance novel – or return to an old passion you’ve left behind, like

cooking, bellydancing, or blogging. When that “something’s missing” feeling comes up, get busy on your goal instead of fantasizing about getting back with your ex.

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

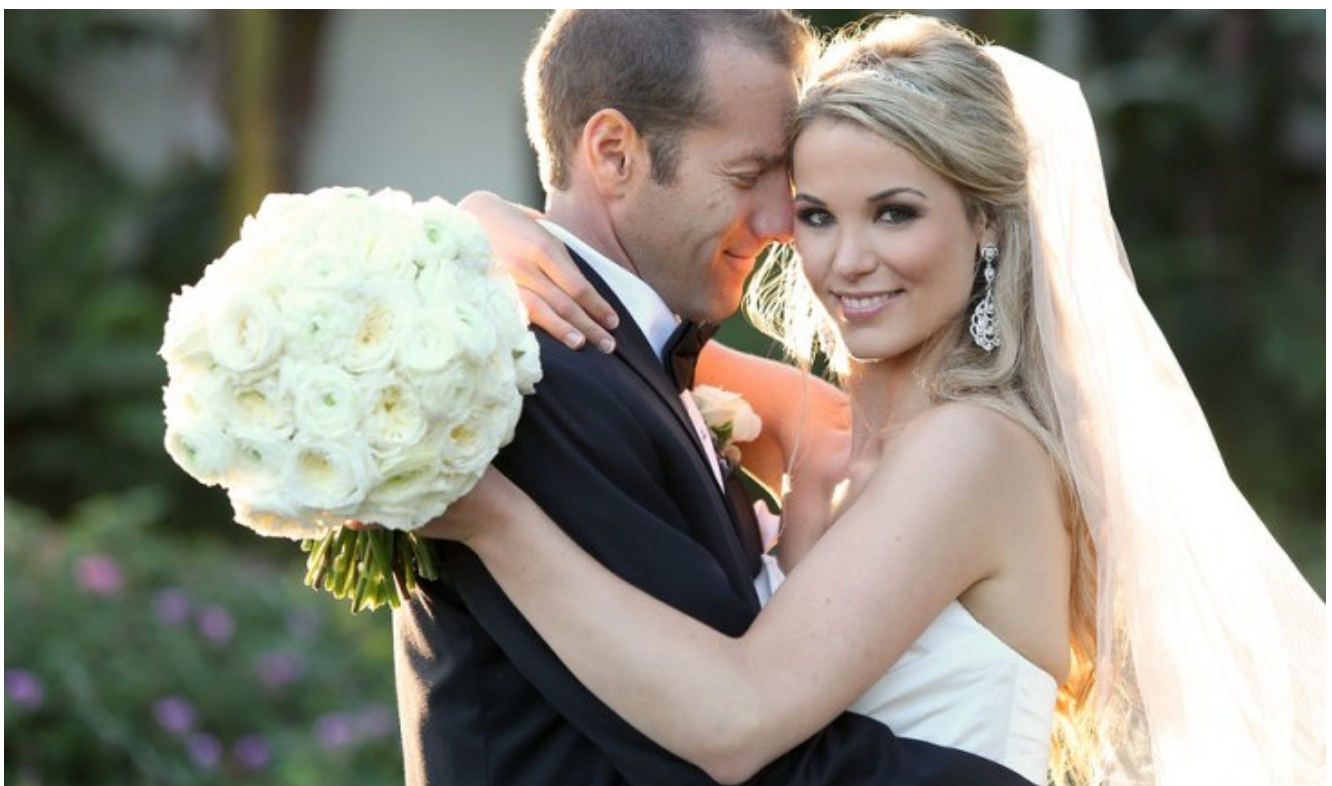
3. Take Care of Yourself.

Stress is the #1 trigger for any addiction, including old flames. Feeling overwhelmed, exhausted, or anxious triggers a physiological need to connect, and you crave what psychologists call “contact comfort.” Stress also makes your brain focus on potential reward, and ignore potential risk. So you’re likely to imagine the warm embrace of a romantic reunion, and forget the shame or regret you felt after the last hook-up. Pre-empt stress-induced longing by treating yourself to some serious self-care. Schedule a girls’ night, pull out that yoga DVD, get a manicure and massage, or whatever calms your nerves and lift your spirits.

4. Beware the White Bear.

There’s one guaranteed way to make sure you *never* forget your ex: try to push him out of your mind completely. Psychologists call this the “White Bear Effect.” If you try not to think about a white bear, one will pop into your mind. This is true for all kinds of temptations. Dieters who try not to think about chocolate become obsessed with it, and eat more of it. Smokers who try not to think about cigarettes only end up smoking more. One study even found that if you try not to think about an old flame, you’re more likely to dream about him! So when an ex comes to mind, don’t panic, and certainly don’t take it as some kind of sign! Remind yourself why he’s an ex, then put your attention back on someone you really care about – *you*.

Valentine's Day Outfit Ideas: Sophisticated



By Sarah Thaman

Excited about an upcoming Valentine's Day date? Even if you're going out with your husband or long time bf, it's a great excuse to shake things up and go out for a night on the town. Lost on what to wear? Never fear! I'm here with different looks that are sure to please you and your man. Here's the final of the three looks:

This Valentine's Day look is great if you're meeting up with your date after a long work day. Switch out your shoes for a

flash of metallic and a big cocktail ring to jazz it up. Keep your makeup minimal and freshen it up with a highlighter to give your face a subtle glow. When swiped down the bridge of the nose, the Cupid's bow, and near the temples, highlighter gives your face a gorgeous, fresh look. The pop of seafoam green in the fold-over clutch adds a surprising and polished detail. Again, keeping with the "fresh" and sophisticated look.

Enjoy a romantic night out looking fabulous! For more Valentine's Day inspiration visit this Gal's Guide to Valentine's Day at handbagheaven.com!

While Sarah Thaman may not be a professional stylist, she prides herself on choosing fashion that looks polished and classic, and she's always helping friends choose their date outfits. Although she's a writer for Handbag Heaven by day, outside of work she takes joy in being a matchmaker, a newlywed, and a momma to her precious puppy, Luna.

Video Exclusive: Food Network's Anne Burrell Gives Valentine's Day Cooking Tips





center>

Food Network star Anne Burrell knows a thing or two about spurring the fires of romance over the flame of a hot stove.

Cooking has always been revered as a mutual romantic touchstone, and no day is better to exploit this fact than on Valentine's Day. Be it chocolates or spaghetti with a nice bolognese sauce, treating your partner's palette with care can lead to delicious consequences. Anne dishes on how to cook for your partner this Valentine's Day, using the kitchen as an aphrodisiac atmosphere where love can only grow.

For more videos from CupidsPulse.com, check out our YouTube channel.

Check Out 'The Vow' This Valentine's Day



By Matthew Dougherty

With Valentine's Day coming up, this movie is sure to be a hit. Rachel McAdams and Channing Tatum star as Paige and Leo, a happily married couple whose lives could change forever after a fateful car accident leaves Paige without the memories of their entire relationship. To make matters worse, Paige believes she is still engaged to her ex, who likes the idea of having her back. Leo must make her fall in love with him all over again.

Should You See It? Don't expect quality cinema here, but it should be a fun way to spend a night at the movies.

Who To Take: Take your mother to this one, or maybe your best friend – someone you know will enjoy the movie as much as you will and enjoy spending time with you. This is probably a bit too sappy to bring a boyfriend to, especially since the same

weekend a *Star Wars* movie is getting re-released in 3D.

Don't want a forgettable relationship? Here are some tips to make memories that neither of you will ever forget.

Cupid's Advice:

In *The Vow*, all of Paige and Leo's great memories are gone, but Leo is willing to relive them to get her back. In the unlikely chance that this happens to you, you want your boyfriend or husband to do the same thing! Here are some ways to create memories you will want to revisit all the time.

1. Do something different. Typical dates are a lot of fun but there are only so many times you can do dinner and a movie. To mix things up go to an amusement park or take a day trip to somewhere neither of you have been before.

2. Keep it simple. Not every date has to be an extravagant affair. Some of the best memories can be made by doing something you would never think of doing. Stuff like stopping by the local toy store or going to the beach at night are simple, yet different enough to stand out when you think back on them.

3. Chemistry. Memories can be made simply by having great chemistry with your partner. This is where inside jokes come from that you could be joking about in your twilight years. The memories you are making will only be worth it if you have good chemistry.

What are some of your greatest date memories? Share your experiences below.

Valentine's Day Love Advice: Does Your Relationship Add Up?



By Donetta Huffman

Finding out if you and your sweetheart are meant to be is sometimes a gut feeling, judged by your relationship's strengths and flaws. However, many couples (more often women) seek clarity by visiting psychics and astrologers. Whether for fun or to validate some serious decision-making about the fate of a relationship, these 'supernatural' predicting methods are a trend for young women looking for advice. If you're a numbers gal, numerology may be the thing that you crave.

Numerology is the study of the symbolism of numbers to determine a couple's life path, destiny, soul and overall compatibility. It can lead you to some interesting romance facts. You may have heard about numerology, but thought it was a complicated mathematical process that was difficult to master. Don't worry; it's not like those hard to memorize, crazy x-y equations that made your palms sweat and gave your stomach butterflies while taking high school algebra tests. It's much simpler and can be easier applied and utilized in your everyday life. The math is fairly simple. Here's what you do:

Related: [How to Define Your Aura to Find Lasting Love](#)

First, take the birthday of your boyfriend, husband, fling or love crush and add the numbers together one-by-one. For example, Justin Timberlake was born on: 1-31-1981. So add $1+3+1+1+9+8+1$. The sum that you get should be double digits. In this example we get the number 24. Now add those two numbers together to get the single digit Life Path for that person. In this case, Justin's Life Path number is $2+4=6$. This number has a meaning that numerology specialists use to decode relationships.

Take a look at these three celebrity couples below to see if numerology ranks true for these Hollywood Sweethearts:

Justin Timberlake and Jessica Biel

These two have very compatible numbers, Justin is a 6 and Jessica an 8. Both are goal-oriented and do not shy away from responsibilities. These two may pursue their goals in different ways, but as long as they play off of each other's strengths, their relationship has a chance to last. In addition, Jessica has an 8 Soul and Personality and Justin has an 8 Destiny, so the couple feels like they understand one another on a deeper level. Jessica feels protected by Justin, with his nurturing 6 Life Path. They actually share numbers

with an actress who eventually became a princess. Grace Kelly transformed into Princess Grace when she left Hollywood and married Prince Rainier of Monaco in 1956. This is still known as one of the greatest [love stories](#) of all time.

Related: [Justin Timberlake and Jessica Biel Show PDA at Dinner Party](#)

LeAnn Rimes and Eddie Cibrian

This couple got off to a somewhat rocky start, as they were both married to other people when they met. LeAnn is a Life Path 2 and Eddie is a Life Path 6. Considered one of the most loving unions, this is a romantic combination, as both numbers [love](#) easily, without holding back. Neither number is afraid to show their true feelings. Also, with LeAnn's 2 Life Path, she sees herself in Eddie's 2 Personality. His 6 Life Path recognizes her 9 Soul, thus having a deep artistic connection. LeAnn and Eddie are in great company when it comes to lasting relationships. With the same number combinations, Hollywood icon Bob Hope and his wife Delores were married for 69 years, while Kelly Ripa and Mark Consuelos have it all – three lovely children and very busy, successful careers.

Brad Pitt and Angelina Jolie

Somewhat of a curious combination of numbers, with Angelina's 5 Life Path and Brad's 4 Life Path. This can sometimes be a challenging combination, as 4's usually like routine, whereas 5's love change and the unexpected, but that is where the initial attraction might have started. They are so different, but could have found admiration in these qualities. Angelina not only has a 6 Soul, but also a 6 Destiny – it is no wonder she keeps having and adopting children. 6's are the maternal, paternal number. When she met Brad, she saw this in Brad's 6 Personality. The qualities they show to the world are that of loving parents. With Angelina's adventurous Life Path 5,

life with her promises never to be boring!

Originating from the most well-known Greek mathematical thinker, Pythagoras, Numerology predates Tarot, and is quickly becoming the biggest craze in self help. Semi-Circle Numerology cards can give people the ability to feel powerful in the realization that they have been sent here for a purpose and given many tools to accomplish life's mission.

For more information on Donetta Huffman and Numerology or to purchase one of her many services, visit [www.semicirclemnimerology.com](http://www.semicirclemntimerology.com).

Valentine's Day Advice: Indulge In Simple Pleasures





By Renee Lee

It doesn't matter if you live life in the fast lane, with family in the suburbs, or somewhere in between, Valentine's Day is a time to take a moment to appreciate yourself and those we love. My rule of thumb is to remove all pressures associated with the holiday and instead indulge in life's simple pleasures. Because I am a Matchmaker here in NYC, I've ended up working in a very celebrity focused market. Therefore, let's take a look at recent heart break and hookups as examples on how to make Valentine's Day that much sweeter.

Treat yourself to chocolates

Going through a Demi Moore style break up is awful! The dread of Valentines Day looming ahead can feel more excruciating than the idea of an all day screening of *The Notebook*. But the key thing to remember is the Diva you are within. Forget the "I am no one, until someone loves me" stigma, and instead take a moment to be kind and celebrate the most awesome love of all – the love for yourself! Why be upset you didn't end

up with some sad drugstore chocolate, when you truly deserve something as sophisticated as Frangelico Truffles? These truffles, created by my favorite sweet liqueur, are the perfect simple pleasure when it comes to treating yourself.

Plus, once you realize your worth in chocolates, you will never again accept a boy to do a man's job.

Bring back the first meal you had together

For couples like Justin Timberlake and Jessica Biel who have been through the break-ups, shake ups, and make ups, why not take a moment to celebrate the joys of what brought you to the strong place you are in now? A great way to go back to the simple pleasures for dinner is to cook the first meal you ever made together. For a gift highlighting your life together, create a photo book of your life so far, with the last page saying "to be continued..."

Predict your own future

This will be the first Valentine's Day that Justin Theroux and Jennifer Aniston spend together, so why not get a little frisky? Jennifer is probably over tabloids predicting her future, and perhaps your family and friends do the same thing to you. This time it's your turn. Create her own future with some custom fortune cookies. Nothing will be more of a surprise than an after dinner dessert that holds sexy hints to your next move for the evening.

Dedicate and decorate cupcakes

It's Heidi Klum's first Valentine's Day with just the kids and no Seal, so a great idea is to make cupcakes with a heart.

Put all the family members names in a hat, and have each person grab one or two. For the person you selected, you will decorate a cupcake as a dedication to them. No matter if it's for an ex-husband, best friend, book smart cousin or meddling sister, it's a creative way to remember those who make your life sweeter.

So this year, take a minute, de-stress and think about those simple pleasures that make life sweet; whether it's a Frangelico truffle, time with your children or something as easy and nice as a meal and a great book.

Renee Lee is a Matchmaker in NYC and has a Master's Degree in Counseling from New York University's Department of Applied Psychology. She's been featured in publications such as OK! Weekly, In-Touch Weekly, People Magazine, and The New York Daily News, and also hosts her own radio show "Your Dating Truth with Renee Lee."

Valentine's Day Date Ideas: Five Unique Ways to Spend the Holiday





By Erika Mionis

Valentine's Day is the one holiday completely dedicated to our love lives. If you're single, you'll survive. If you're in a relationship, then congratulations! Now you can worry about gifts and date ideas for the coming holiday. Though there's nothing wrong with the classic dinner date, you can be sure you and your significant other won't be the only couple with the same idea. Here are a few unique date ideas to make this Valentine's Day one you'll never forget:

1. Hot air balloon ride: Hot air balloon rides are well worth the expense. Find the nearest hot air balloon company (it may be a bit of a drive, depending on where you live) and set out to see the sunrise or sunset. Most companies offer a light breakfast or dinner after the ride. Hot air balloons can easily carry up to five people, so try splitting the cost with another couple.

2. Horse-back riding: For the animal-loving couple, a date on horseback can be fun and romantic. Most ranches offer trail rides that bring you through isolated parts of nature. Make

sure to talk over lunch or dinner afterward, as loud conversation mid-trail often startles the horses.

3. Hiking: Tough out the last of winter on an outdoorsy date with your partner. Make sure to pick a trail that suits your athletic abilities, because though exercise is fun, it's hard to feel attractive when you're sweating and gasping for air. Pack a picnic for a quick lunch/snack once you reach the end of the trail or the top of a mountain.

4. Paint pottery: Decorating pottery is a fun and creative way to spend the holiday. You can work as a team on a single pottery piece, or you can each work separately and compare your craftsmanship. For the especially artsy couple, try making pottery instead of just painting it.

5. Play games: Try visiting an upscale arcade to play some pool. To make the game a little more interesting, decide on a friendly wager, like a massage exchange. After the game, grab some quarters or tokens and visit some of the other games in the arcade. Your next competition comes in the form of skee ball.

Do you have any Valentine's Day date ideas? Feel free to share them below.

Valentine's Day Outfit Ideas: Sweet





By Sarah Thaman

Excited about an upcoming Valentine's Day date? Even if you're going out with your husband or long time bf, it's a great excuse to shake things up and go out for a night on the town. Lost on what to wear? Never fear! I'm here with three different looks that are sure to please you and your man. Here's the second installment:

If the sophisticated and sexy styles aren't really you, go for a sweet look with pinks and reds! After all, it is Valentine's Day. Take a cue from the holiday's signature colors and pull together a feminine ensemble. Don't worry, this "sweet" look won't be too candy hearts and lollipops. This dress hits on the color-block trend and the sheer fabric makes this look extra flirty. A red wedge offsets the outfit, and the quilted handbag makes for a great shoulder bag. Use a light pink makeup palette to keep your face soft and pretty.

Enjoy a romantic night out looking fabulous! For more Valentine's Day inspiration visit [Handbag Heaven's Gal's Guide to Valentine's Day!](#)

While Sarah Thaman may not be a professional stylist, she prides herself on choosing fashion that looks polished and classic, and she's always helping friends choose their date outfits. Although she's a writer for Handbag Heaven by day, outside of work she takes joy in being a matchmaker, a newlywed, and a momma to her precious puppy, Luna.

Top 10 Most Romantic Movie Locations



By Matthew Dougherty

The big day for romance is coming up, which means it's time to

figure out where you might spend the holiday. Here are ten locations from great movies that if you can afford to visit, and if they are real, they would be a perfect spot to spend Valentine's Day with your significant other.

10. Hawaii- *Forgetting Sarah Marshall*

In *Forgetting Sarah Marshall*, Jason Segel's character goes to Hawaii to get over his recently ended relationship. On the trip he finds a new love in Mila Kunis. They spend their time together going to bars, hanging out on the beach, and exploring the beautiful islands. Hawaii proves to be a land of love in this great romantic comedy.

Related: [Celebrities Who Love to Vacation in Hawaii](#)

9. Forks, Washington- *Twilight*

The atmosphere may be gloomy, but love is in the air in this small northwestern town. Whether you are into vampires or werewolves, Forks has everything you would need for a perfect Valentine's Day. The true challenge will be trying to find a date who won't bite.

8. Aboard the Titanic- *Titanic*

Unfortunately, the Titanic is buried under water, but it was such a beautiful ship. And, while the plot may be mostly fictional, Kate Winslet and Leonardo DiCaprio make their love so believable that you forget what has to happen in the end, making that iceberg all the more tragic. Titanic was a perfect place to meet someone and if it hadn't sunk, it would have made a great Valentine's Day vacation.

7. Hogwarts- *Harry Potter*

Like any other high school, Hogwarts is a place full of drama. Whether it's the return of the Dark Lord, or the hero's first kiss, Hogwarts never feels too far off from your ordinary

Muggle high school. The second half of the series saw Harry date his best friend's sister while Ron and Hermione finally get together. No love potion required.

Related: [The Most Romantic Destinations in the United States](#)

6. 1920s Paris- *Midnight in Paris*

Paris on its own is perhaps the most romantic city in the world, but as portrayed in *Midnight in Paris*, the 1920s was the time to be there for true romance. Running into such legends as Ernest Hemingway and F. Scott Fitzgerald, Owen Wilson's character eventually falls for a beautiful French girl, played by Marion Cotillard. This beautiful city becomes the stem from which their love blossoms.

5. The American South- *The Notebook*, *Gone With the Wind*, *Forrest Gump*

A lot of great love stories take place in the South. One of the earliest and most famous is *Gone With the Wind*, which took place in Georgia. Forrest Gump and Jenny both grew up in Alabama. *The Notebook* took place in South Carolina. Clearly, the South is the place to be for love.

4. Beast's Castle- *Beauty and the Beast*

In this tale as old as time, Belle is taken to a beautiful castle full of lively characters and one beast. But as the story goes, the beauty falls in love with the beast in this magical place. Furniture speaks when Belle and the beast choose not to.

3. Any 1980s High School- *Sixteen Candles*, *Ferris Bueller's Day Off*, *The Breakfast Club*

High school is a time where everyone at least partly grows into who they are meant to be. A lot of that has to do with relationships. In the 1980s, director John Hughes made three movies that got high school perfectly, while having that '80s

stamp on them. *Sixteen Candles*, *The Breakfast Club*, and *Ferris Bueller's Day Off* all showed high school romances at their best.

Related: [Weekend Date Idea in the Big Apple](#)

2. New York- *Manhattan*, *When Harry Met Sally*, *Spider-man*, *New Year's Eve*

New York City is the setting for numerous love stories. Woody Allen saw the romance of the Big Apple in his film *Manhattan*.

When Harry Met Sally shows Billy Crystal and Meg Ryan fall for each other in the populated borough. Plus, who can forget the upside down kiss Spiderman and Mary Jane shared? The most recent romance in New York was *New Year's Eve*, a film showcasing a large number of romances. Clearly Manhattan is the place to be for love, but one other movie location beats it out...

1. Casablanca- *Casablanca*

Arguably the best love story ever told aside from Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*, *Casablanca* is a classic film that is all about its location. Humphrey Bogart stars as Rick Blaine, the owner of a nightclub in Casablanca. An old flame comes back into his life, and they end up rekindling their love. It is the ultimate love story, but since Casablanca is in Africa, you may just want to rent this one instead.

What other movie locations would you want to visit on Valentine's Day? Share your thoughts below.

Valentine's Day Outfit Ideas: Sexy



By Sarah Thaman

Excited about an upcoming Valentine's Day date? Even if you're going out with your husband or long time bf, it's a great excuse to shake things up and go out for a night on the town. Lost on what to wear? Never fear! I'm here with three different looks that are sure to please you and your man. Here's the first one:

Go for an understated, sexy look this Valentine's Day. Instead of baring it all, choose a dress with a fair amount of coverage, and just the right amount of skin. This one-shoulder body con dress is sure to do the trick. Plus, it's

navy, which happens to be the new black. Keep accessories nude and minimal to bring the focus to your face. A nude lip and smokey eye would pair beautifully with this look, and so would a low messy bun. The clutch purse with a large buckle is a great match for this look! Be fierce and fabulous in this sexy look.

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Date Idea: Cheer for Your Favorite Football Team





By Ché Blackwood

Super Bowl Sunday is in just a couple of days, so it's time to start prepping for the big day! This event is synonymous with snacks, tackles, and fun. Not to mention, it's a great way to get hyped with your honey or engage in a little friendly competition with your pals. Fuel your partner's appetite by whipping up their favorite dips and other game-day treats – it'll be love at first bite. Below, you'll find Cupid's [dating advice](#) on ways to make the most of the biggest sporting event of the season.

Dating Advice to Plan the Perfect Super Bowl Sunday

You and your other half have been waiting all season to see which team is going to take it all home. Will it be the Denver Broncos, led by quarterback Peyton Manning and the best defense in the NFL, or the Carolina Panthers, led by quarterback Cam Newton? Take a cue from one of our favorite celebrity couples [Carrie Underwood](#) and Mike Fisher as well as their celebrity baby Isaiah Michael and host a homey

get-together for the occasion. Plan ahead of time to save you trouble in the long-run.

Related Link: [Throw a 'Gilmore Girls' Viewing Party and Get Love Advice from the Series](#)

A viewing party is the best way for you lovebirds to enjoy the spirit of the game with your closest friends, and the right decorations, food, and activities will make your party unforgettable. Make sure you have your team's jersey ironed and ready to be worn for good luck. If you really want to go all out, then decorate your living room and/or backyard with your team's paraphernalia. It can be as easy as picking up some streamers and balloons in orange and blue or blue and black. If you have pets, don't forget to get them something to show their team spirit as well!

Since everyone is feeling competitive, you can organize a contest for "best dish" or "best game-day attire." Then, you can hand-make voting cards, and on the day of the game, everyone can decide whose food and whose outfit they like best.

Related Link: [Date Idea: Cheer on a National Sports Team](#)

If you are lucky enough to live near the stadium, plan a tailgate in the parking lot for this date idea. You don't need a view of the field to have a good time, and sites like Tailgating.com can give you tips on making the most out of your parking lot party. If you and your date are cheering for opposite teams, make a friendly wager on the game.

What do you and your dearest have planned for Super Bowl Sunday? Dish your dating advice in the comments below!

Valentine's Day Advice: How Successful Women Can Ditch Dating Duds



By Jane Atkinson

A few weeks ago, on the new hit show *Whitney*, one of the characters was freezing her eggs in order to delay finding a partner and having children. Is this a sign of the times?

Both women and men are waiting longer and longer to get married for the first time, according to the Census Bureau, and fewer women are having babies before their 40th birthdays, the Centers for Disease Control reports. Interestingly, more and more women are having babies well into their 40s. Could it be that it has become more difficult for couples to connect

romantically?

Related: [Romance Resolutions for 2012](#)

“Women are likely to be more independent and professionally successful than they were a generation or two ago, and that’s wonderful, but it can come with baggage,” says Jane Atkinson, author of *The Frog Whisperer: A Three-Step Approach to Finding Lasting Love*. “We’re less likely to think about the energy we’re putting out to others, particularly the opposite sex, and that energy has a lot to do with how people react to us.”

The thing is, finding Mr. or Ms. Right requires taking your eyes off of work and focusing on yourself more. What can you do to become the person *you* would want to date? Atkinson offers some tips for finding “the one.”

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

Figure out what you’re looking for: Have you thought hard about what kind of person you’re looking for? One trick is to visualize your perfect day. Are you at the beach? Traveling? Is the man with you quiet or chatty? Is the woman serious or funny? Does he want children? Does she go to church? This will help you identify the characteristics and values of your Mr. or Ms. Right so you can recognize them when he or she comes along.

Get happy in your own head: Once again, it’s all about attraction. Putting out positive, confident energy will attract the same. Besides, it’s never a good idea to rely on other people to make us happy. If you need to recover from old hurts, lose weight or find a job, take care of that business first.

Think you’re ready? Test yourself with this quick quiz.

1. Are you happy with yourself? (Or are you miserable because you’ve put on 50 pounds since your divorce?)

2. Are you looking for someone to rescue you or take care of you? (If you answer “yes” to this one, you may not be ready.)
3. Is there room in your life for a relationship? (Or do you have three kids and work a 60-hour week?)
4. Has enough time passed since your last relationship? (Or are you still wounded?)

Now, get yourself fabulous. Rather than, “Why can’t I find a good man?” ask yourself, “Who do I need to become to attract the man (or woman) who is perfect for me?” It’s not about changing you; it’s about being your best you. Part of that is your mojo – your self-esteem. If your mojo is slipping, you’ll attract control freaks, players and jerks. Pump it up with a makeover, a workout, a sincere inventory of your attributes.

Get out there! Put on your sexy jeans get yourself out the door. Where to start looking? If you enjoy working with your hands, volunteer for a Habitat for Humanity project. If you’ve always wanted to learn Italian, take a class. If you love to do yoga, check out a new studio (ladies, you’ll find a surprising number of guys there.) Perhaps you find a new church or take a class on Buddhism. The list of meeting spots for singles is a long one: bookstores, dance clubs, supper clubs, book clubs, gyms, golf courses, rowing clubs, dog parks.

Atkinson’s tips come from real-life experience. At 40, she realized she’d been [kissing](#) a lot of frogs and found not one prince. She applied the model she developed for her business, tweaked it and came up with “The Frog Whisperer” – *and* a prince of a husband.

Although it was never in her playbook to have children, when she got married, she became an instant stepmom and grandmother (G-Ma) to now 4-year-old Jayden. Looking back, she realizes it sure beat freezing eggs and starting down the difficult road to conception in mid-life!

Jane Atkinson is the author of The Frog Whisperer and The Frog Whisperer Journal as well as a Positive Practice audio CD to help women (and men) get mentally ready for meeting their perfect mate. She lives in London, Ontario, with her husband of four years, John.

5 Ways Nice Guys Can Finish FIRST



By Romance Recovery's Johanna Lyman for GalTime.com

Listen up guys everywhere – I'm tired of hearing that nice guys finish last. Women, at least emotionally mature women,

want a man who is nice, not a jerk. They just don't want a doormat.

Think nice, not passive. Doormats are no fun to date, but most women want to see their friends (and themselves) dating a nice guy.

To help you guys understand the difference, I came up with a list of things a man can do— nice guy or not— to finish first.

1. Act confident. If you don't believe you can get a date, you definitely won't. But remember, confidence doesn't mean arrogance and it doesn't mean you're self-absorbed. How do women perceive confidence, you ask? Smile and maintain good eye contact to start. I don't mean stare her down, or give a smoldering, "I know you want me" look (that's not nice). Just be direct and open. Your eye contact should say, "*I'm interested in getting to know you better, I'm curious about you.*" Put your drink down between sips (sips, not gulps) rather than holding onto it like a pacifier. And use your body: lean in every once in awhile for more intimacy. Just don't forget to pull back again to give us space. Non-sexual touch is great too: rest your hand lightly on her forearm after a laugh, or give a shoulder nudge to emphasize a point.

Related: [Do Nice Guys Always Finish Last?](#)

2. Ask her questions about herself. This is a no-brainer for the nice guy, because you are genuinely interested in her. If you're not a natural nice guy, this is the best tip you can get for your money. Women can't stand it when men are so self-absorbed they only talk about themselves. We want to know about you, but we also want to know that you remember we're real people, not just a piece of meat.

3. Stop trying so hard to please. It's ok if we don't agree on every single thing. We want to know you have a spine of your own. Have a strong opinion about something and let us know

about it. That doesn't mean you aren't open to a differing opinion, but it's ok to "agree to disagree." I'll give a small example: when we ask where you want to go for dinner, have an opinion. It's irritating to hear, "I don't know, what do you want to do?" all the time. I'm sure you think the same thing; you'd rather hear our opinion, even if you disagree.

Here's a clue: both men and women think that someone who knows what they want out of bed will also know what they want (and not be afraid to tell us) in bed, and that is sexy as hell.

Related: [Four Biggest Mistakes MEN Make in Bed](#)

4. Make her laugh. Even if it's at your expense once in awhile, the number one aphrodisiac for women is laughter.

Think improv, not knock-knock jokes. Life is pretty funny all by itself, so you don't have to be cracking jokes all the time. Nice guys are great at self-deprecating humor, so just be careful not to overdo it. It's even ok to gently poke fun at her once in awhile, as long as it's not a joke about her personal appearance. Seriously guys, no matter how confident a woman is, jokes about her appearance are always taboo. Consider it our Achilles heel.

5. When the time comes, be the sexual initiator. I know you don't always want to be the one to initiate, but biologically women are hard-wired to expect men to initiate sex.

Especially in the beginning, don't be afraid to grab your woman and plant a juicy kiss on her. See #1 on the list; confidence is a huge turn-on. You can look for clues about how you're doing without appearing too eager to please. Here's a clue: voice inflection is key. "Do you like that?" is wimpy; "Do you like that?" is not. The first implies she might not like anything you're doing, while the second (said with confidence) implies that she likes it all and that in particular.

Elena Azzoni Breaks Down Gender Roles in 'A Year Straight: Confessions of a Boy-Crazy Lesbian Beauty Queen'

Cupid's Pulse
* Celebrities. Love. Opinions. *



By Steven Zangrillo

Whether you classify yourself as straight, gay, lesbian or bisexual stock, there's clearly an intrinsic value and emphasis that our sexual orientation and relationships play in our

overall identity. As our society has matured, we continue to poke and prod at these sexual boundaries, blurring the lines with each passing day. The concept of “sexual fluidity” is beginning to overtake the archaic and rigid ideals of classifiable sexual identity.

Elena Azzoni has chronicled the ever-shifting perspective on sexual roles by actually engaging in the shift herself. A lesbian for most of her life, Elena was suddenly entranced by her yoga instructor during a class. This lustful interaction drove Elena to open the doors to the hetero-dating world. We had the chance to speak to her and attain some perspective on gender roles, sexual attraction, and how our the values in our society have begun to shift from one end of the spectrum to the other.

What was it about the encounter with your Yoga Instructor that “flipped the switch?”

That is the great mystery, it’s been everyone’s biggest question. After coming out as a lesbian I never expected to be attracted to men again. I always had seen him as a very handsome, aesthetically pleasing man. I had never really saw him in a sexual way, but it was literally that moment where he was laying on top of me during pigeon pose, pressing his chest down onto me. I’m not sure what happened, but all of a sudden I went wild.

Related: [‘Project Runway’ Judge Michael Kors Gets Married](#)

It seems that sexual attraction spurred this journey. Was it about the sex or was it something more?

It wasn’t just the sex, maybe more like a “man-hunt.” I studied Gender and Sexuality Studies in college, which was all about de-constructing gender and saying “No! Women and men are actually the same! We’re just socialized to act differently.” Once I started this man-quest, however, I

realized that we are so different. There was sort of a joint fascination with that adventure in the hetero-dating world, coupled with the initial yoga lust.

Give us your perspective on the emotional advantages that both men and women bring to the table. What are the differences?

It's funny because I find that my straight friends ask me that same question now. I'd have to generalize a little bit to answer that. In general, I've found my personal experiences with women to be more mutually analytic and empathetic. If there's a problem at your job, for example, I find that women partners would want to talk it out and would generally empathize. Men, on the other hand, would drive right to the point and try to find a logical solution instead of having an emotional conversation about it. They're very different approaches, but I've learned to appreciate them both.

Do you think that being gay is a choice or a genetic occurrence?

I would almost say that it's neither for me, I don't believe who you [fall in love](#) with is a choice. I do believe that for some people it is totally genetic. Some of my friends swear they were born gay. My place on the spectrum is definitely different, and it's one of the reasons why I wrote this book.

There's something to be said about the concept of sexual fluidity. There's great research that's been done, specifically by Lisa Diamond. It was found that most people don't fall into these strict categories of Gay, Lesbian, and Bi-Sexual. A woman can be married to a man for 25 years, get divorced, and suddenly fall in love with a woman. You know, that doesn't mean she was a repressed lesbian before. I would say that, for me, the best way to describe it would be "sexual freedom."

Related: [Same Sex Marriage Legalized in New York State](#)

Given this "sexual freedom," did you begin to place an

emphasis on mutual values over the gender of your partners?

Quite honestly, it comes down to who you fall in love with. That's tied into your values, because the partner you choose is supposed to balance you. You're choosing a better half.

What would your advice be to gay, lesbian, and bi-sexual people who are looking to start dating the opposite gender, or have had interest in exploring those ideas?

Don't do it!!! ...I'm only joking! I guess it would be my hope for everyone to be true to themselves. There is equal pressure on either side because we have such strict sexual identities these days. Those roles served their purpose, but I feel that we can evolve past that. My experiences with this book and subject matter have shown me that what I've done isn't a very abstract concept. A lot of people have related to my experiences. Many lesbian women and straight women that I've spoken with have worries about being ostracized by their respective communities. It's my advice to them to not subject themselves to these social restrictions. You could be passing up a fulfilling relationship.

Do you think our sexual identities are starting to shift and change socially?

We are, as a society, a lot more open to it. There's much more conversation about it. Look at all the gay characters on television now, for example.

Of all of the experiences in your book, which situation yields the best lesson for readers?

In the book I talk about the first few months of dating Theo. I had been trying to relate to him as though he was a woman, not the best idea. He was working as a cook in Martha's Vineyard while I was down in New York. Every time he didn't call for a few days, my mind would go wild. Naturally, I would delete his number from my phone and write him off

completely. I would come up with about a million different scenarios and over-think everything. Sure enough, every time this happened he would end up calling like “Hey, babe. I was just watching the game when you called! I miss you.” It was always something so simple that I would extrapolate into something crazy. So, the lesson is that whatever scenario you’ve conjured up in your mind, take that and divide it by 1500. It’s probably even less than that.

Visit Amazon to pick up your copy of Elena Azzoni’s new novel, *A Year Straight: Confessions of a Boy-Crazy Lesbian Beauty Queen*. You can also follow her on Twitter and Facebook.

Five Signs Your Relationship Won't Make It Until Valentine's Day





By [Whitney Baker](#)

For many couples, the lead-up to Valentine's Day is an exciting time filled with promise and possibility. The cold weather offers an excuse to snuggle up, while the holidays are the perfect reason to shower each other with love and affection. Unfortunately, many relationships aren't so lucky.

According to a recent study in *Men's Health*, the time span from Christmas to Valentine's Day is one of the most common break-up times of the year.

Regardless of the month or season, when your relationship is over, you just *know*. But if you're still on the fence, unsure what to do about your love interest, here are five red flags you should watch for in your relationship. Otherwise, you probably won't make it to Valentine's Day:

1. Too much fighting: The holidays are a special time to share with your significant other; they should be filled with fun, [food](#) and family, not fighting. If you find yourself unhappy more often than not, it may be time to [call it quits](#).

Related: [The Holidays: 8 Ways to Ruin Your Relationship](#)

2. Finding other priorities: New Year's Eve marks the start of a new year and the chance for a new beginning. That said, who better to kick things off with than the one you love? If you'd rather hang out with your friends or spend a low-key night with your family, you need to consider why. Spending time with your partner should be a priority, especially on such a fun holiday.

3. No connection left: Lack of similarity emerges over time, and these differences can either bring you closer together or tear you apart. You need to feel connected to your partner, and something as simple as an impersonal present or thoughtless holiday card can be enough to make you feel distant and misunderstood.

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

4. Nothing to say: When your relationship is new, you always have something to talk about, but as time goes on, conversation may become stale and forced. Remember that communication is key for every successful relationship. With nothing left to say, it may be time to start looking somewhere else for love.

5. Making plans alone: The beginning of January is typically a time to reflect on the year behind you and plan for the year ahead. If you and your partner have a strong and stable relationship, then the two of you will make plans *together*. Thinking about events, vacations and getaways that take you away from your significant other could mean you're ready for a fresh start in more ways than one.

Cupid wants to know: How did you know when your relationship was over?