

Can She Ever Forget Her First Love?



By Chandler Jones

You've just met the perfect woman: she's beautiful, sexy, and best of all deeply in love with you! There's just one problem: you are not her first love. Can she love you more than she loved her first flame? Was he better than you in bed? Does she think of him while making love with you?

A common belief is that one's first love is also the most powerful. In fact, a lot of people say that you never forget your first love. What does this mean?

I've talked with various women about the subject, all of them married to men who are not their first loves. To my surprise,

they all essentially told me the same thing. They said that the first love is mostly passion and the second love is much deeper.

When a woman is in love for the first time, she thinks he's the only one for her and that she has no choice in the matter.

Without him, she 's lost. When she loves for the second time, however, she knows that there are a lot of other men available to her, but she's choosing to be with the one she loves because she feels that he is the best one for her. The first time, a woman can love a guy simply because he was the first, and for no real reason other than that. It can be full of fear and insecurity – something that's fuel for passion, but nothing much more than that. The second time around, it's because she's able to see his fine qualities and love him for who he is. She's loves with all her heart because she knows her man deserves it.

Celebrities are no exception to this new rule. Zac Efron and Vanessa Hudgens met on the set of the Disney Channel movie *High School Musical* and continued to date for almost four years. Having met as teenagers, they were each other's first true love. Now, having split, both are moving on. Both Efron and Hudgens have been spotted with new potential mates, and although they will most likely never forget each other, it may be time for more than passion.

This is all fairly good news if you're the second in line, but we haven't gotten to the biggest questions yet. Does she think of him when she's in bed with you? Does she truly love you? Consider this. If she truly loves you, then she enjoys every moment the two of you are together, which includes every touch, every caress and every kiss.

Over time , your first love becomes just another story tucked away in the corner of your mind. So, if you're the one she's chosen, fear not! Just concentrate on being the love of her

life, and forget about her first love, as she's probably already done.

Visit www.DatinginForSingles.com now for the full scoop from Chandler Jones on expert dating and seduction techniques. Make sure to download your FREE library of seven eye-opening ebooks on how to flirt, kiss on the first date and be a better lover.

Cupid Exclusive: 'Bachelor Pad' Winners Natalie Getz and David Good Dish on Love, Dating and Reality TV





By Krissy Dolor

If you want to know the key ingredient to winning (no Sheen pun intended), look no further than last summer's *Bachelor Pad* winners: Natalie Getz and David Good.

Even though these two former contestants didn't strike a love match on their respective *Bachelor*-franchise seasons, this dynamic duo made their mark as the first couple to win the ABC spin-off reality show, *Bachelor Pad*, where 19 past contestants competed for a grand prize of \$250,000.

Throughout the show's run, this couple focused on making their way to the finish line. If there's anything we can learn from watching Getz and Good, it's that three important traits are needed to keep any relationship moving forward: loyalty, trust and friendship, which they exemplified. While most romantic couples aren't competing for anything but each other's hearts, these elements can have you and your partner come out winning too – whether it's for love, marriage or happiness.

Cupid had the opportunity to speak with Natalie and David about love, dating and how their lives have changed since

Bachelor Pad ended. Read on to see what they had to say:

1. Did being on a reality dating show change your perceptions/expectations about dating?

Natalie: Yes. It has helped me further the exploration of my youth and single life, making me ready to move on and actually commit to someone. Instead of pushing away the nice guy, now I'm ready so I will embrace him (wherever he is) with open arms and an accepting outlook towards a future.

David: Being on the show did not necessarily change my perception/expectations about dating. However, dating and meeting girls since the show has a little. You really have to have your guard up so to speak, because you never know if someone is just trying to be with you because you were on TV or if they are legitimately interested in you. It's weird that someone would be like that to me, but a lot of girls really get into these shows.

2. What has your dating experience been like since *The Bachelor/The Bachelor* and *The Bachelor Pad* ended?

Natalie: I've definitely dated my fair share of men, but now realize to be upfront right away if I don't see a future. I also am able to better identify who is right for me versus liking a guy for the wrong reasons.

David: It's been great! I travel all over the country on my book tour and get to meet a lot of people and a lot of beautiful girls. The negative about that is that I am not in a good place to start a new relationship being gone all the time, so it's like a double-edged sword. Waiting for "that one" to really catch my eye you know.

3. Based on your personal experience as a Bachelor/Bachelorette contestant, do you believe that love can be found on reality TV?

Natalie: I absolutely do. Before the show, I was a non-

believer, but the casting department goes to extreme lengths to ensure the most compatible contestants to the bachelor/ette's personality. If they chose someone there for the right reasons, the end result will be a success. Jillian and I have a similar personality, which explains why I've had a bit of a dating history with her season, hahaha!

David: I do believe that love can be found on reality TV, 100 percent. It's funny, too, because before the show I did not think so and now I really do. They pick some great people to be on these shows, and I think if you hit it off on there, that down the line you can make it work.

4. What piece of dating advice can you give to our single visitors?

Natalie: Don't look for it, let it come to you. If you have any hesitations, leave the situation. And if the right person enters your life when you aren't ready? Don't push them away, but take it slow. Start out with a friendship so that you don't ruin a great thing!

David: Start out all your relationships with brutal honesty. If you start out with that, then down the line you don't have to lie about things or dig yourself out of holes, and you are free to be yourself and love openly.

Cupid thanks Natalie and David for their time! For more on ABC's *Bachelor Pad*, visit ABC.com.

Don't forget to watch the season finale of season 15 of *The Bachelor* with Brad Womack tonight, **Monday, March 14 at 8 PM/7 PM Central!** And visit us tomorrow for our very last *Bachelor* recap! See you then!

A Cupid Event: Finding Mr. Bright at Bloomingdale's



Need a little something to get your dating life back into the “spring” of things? Take a trip to Bloomingdale’s in New York City and let Benefit introduce you to Mr. Bright, a brightening kit that is quite a catch! Makeup experts will clue you in on all the essentials for a luminous complexion, while Cupid’s Pulse founder and editor-in-chief [Lori Bizzoco](#) will offer advice and insight on dating in today’s celebrity centered world – just like the site does every day! Space is limited, so call 212-705-3483 to book your appointment. Hope to see you there!

Who: Benefit and Cupid’s Pulse

What: Finding Mr. Bright

Where: Bloomingdale's, 59th St. & Lexington Ave.
1000 Third Avenue
New York, NY 10022
Main floor, Cosmetics

When: Saturday, March 19 at 1 PM and 3 PM.

Cupid Exclusive: 'Bachelor Pad' Couple Tenley Molzahn and Kiptyn Locke Talk Love and Dating



By Erika Hymowitz Vujnovich

America fell in love with Tenley Molzahn and Kiptyn Locke when they each competed on *The Bachelor* (season 14) and *The Bachelorette* (Season 5). Their mission? To find a love of their own. However, it wasn't meant to be at the time, and both ended up runner-ups on their respective seasons, forced to jump back into the dating pool.

Fast forward to last August as they took another chance at love on *The Bachelor* spin-off, *Bachelor Pad*, where 19 unforgettable contestants from past seasons lived together under one roof to compete for a grand prize of \$250,000.

Despite losing the competition, Tenley and Kiptyn embraced their stint on the show and literally danced their way to the final four, finding themselves moving in a "Locke" step towards a true relationship – with each other.

Even before their appearance on *Bachelor Pad*, the two developed a solid friendship based on their tremendous respect for one another. They were there for each other during their days of public heartbreak, and that support set the stage for what ultimately came to be.

Cupid's Pulse had the wonderful opportunity of exclusively interviewing Tenley and Kiptyn, and asked them a handful of questions based on their dating experience on and off the show. The key lessons they learned in their quest to find love are here for Cupid's Pulse readers to embrace and take to heart:

1. Did being on a reality dating show change your perceptions/expectations about dating?

Tenley: Being on *The Bachelor* really helped me regain confidence and trust in dating. I put myself in a very unique position dating a man that was dating several other women; I

really had to let go and not think so much and just enjoy my time with him. Because of that, I really do believe that I'm different now in my relationship.

Kiptyn: Big picture – it really didn't change much. The one thing the ol' super speed-dating factor of *The Bachelor* did do was teach me to reflect, process and communicate things sooner.

2. What has your dating experience been like since *The Bachelor/ette* and *Bachelor Pad* ended?

Tenley: Well, I came out of *Bachelor Pad* with my special someone, so it's changed in the best way! I have someone in my life that I may have not met had I not been through the experience of the show. I also love that we have both been through very similar experiences. I think that is something that the two of us share that would be hard for anyone else dating either of us to understand.

Kiptyn: Since *Bachelor Pad* I've only dated one woman, Tenley. We went from being friends to romantic, to now a strong combination of the two, and it's all good. It's been an adventure and we've grown together a lot.

3. Based on your personal experience as a Bachelor/Bachelorette contestant, do you believe that love can be found on reality TV?

Tenley: I believe it's possible. But my own relationship with Kiptyn was built on a friendship at first. Our relationship began because we were put in a setting where our chemistry couldn't be denied anymore, but I know that our friendship away from cameras gave us a great foundation.

Kiptyn: Answering honestly, I do think you can find love on TV, but it helps a ton to have a real world foundation in place first.

4. What piece of dating advice can you give to our single visitors?

Tenley: Be yourself when dating. Never try to mold yourself into someone else just for the person you're dating. I always think of *Runaway Bride* – know who you are; you want to be with someone who has fallen for you, because you are who you are!

Kiptyn: There's nothing wrong with being single and there's no rush to get into a relationship. When you look for someone, don't look for who is good "on paper"; look for who makes you feel the best – it's about compatibility.

There certainly is no rush. Take the time to understand yourself and what you're ultimately looking for in a relationship. There's nothing better to base a relationship on than friendship, and that friend of yours, who you never thought of in that special way, might be the one. Just like Tenley and Kiptyn, you may find love when you least expect it!

Visit us tomorrow for a preview of the season finale of ABC's The Bachelor!

Cupid Exclusive: Former 'Bachelor Pad' Exes Elizabeth Kitt and Jesse Kovacs Offer Advice on Dating and Love





By Kari Arneson

Elizabeth Kitt and Jesse Kovacs are no strangers to finding love on reality television, as they both competed on *The Bachelor* and *The Bachelorette* series respectively – Elizabeth on season 14 with Jake Pavelka and Jesse on season 5 with Jillian Harris. The two seemed to find love as they cozied up with one another during last summer’s reality hit spin-off series *Bachelor Pad*, but like the majority of *The Bachelor* franchise unions, their relationship didn’t last after the cameras stopped rolling.

Oftentimes, lack of communication in a relationship can lead partners down two totally different paths: Kovacs wanted something more casual while Kitt wanted to fall in love. Nevertheless, the couple’s strong bond and competitive spirit led them into the final six, just a few steps away from winning the big pot of cash.

With another season of *Bachelor Pad* coming this summer, we asked Elizabeth and Jesse for their insight on dating, relationships and finding love on reality TV:

1. Did being on a reality dating show change your perceptions/expectations about dating?

Elizabeth: I think watching myself on the *The Bachelor* and *The Bachelor Pad* really helped point out some areas I can improve upon in terms of my approach to dating. With Jake I could tell I was very guarded, and unable to open myself up to finding love with him. On the *Bachelor Pad*, I was too open with falling for Jesse Kovacs. I knew he didn't have the same feelings for me, but I chose to ignore that and I hoped it would change. I think the more I pushed for it, it pushed him away. (Had the roles been reversed, it would have pushed me away as well!)

Jesse: Yes, being on a reality dating show did change my perceptions and expectations about dating. You have to make the most of your time. If you're not feeling it, then call it like it is and shut it down. But if you like the person and see some potential, you have to let them know so it's not a waste of time for both parties.

2. What has your dating experience been like since *The Bachelor/ette* and *Bachelor Pad* ended?

Elizabeth: I think my dating experiences are a little different since the shows. I am definitely stronger in who I am, and what I'm looking for in a relationship. I keep my heart open, but I'm a little more cautious about who I give it away to. There is a balance. It's a bit more challenging as well, since I don't typically like to date guys who recognize me from the show. I can see why real celebrities have trouble dating. The fame aspect can be tricky.

Jesse: It's been strange. I found someone now that had no clue I was ever on these shows, but before that I was going out with girls who already knew me and had their opinions.

3. Based on your personal experience as a Bachelor/Bachelorette contestant, do you believe that love can

be found on reality TV?

Elizabeth: I think love can find us anywhere. A lot of people are skeptical about the *Bachelor* process, but I'm a believer. Does being on the show ultimately mean you're going to fall for the Bachelor? No. I didn't fall for Jake. But I think it CAN happen if it's meant to be. There are some relationships that have formed after the fact at our *Bachelor* reunion parties too, so you just never know. You have to have an open mind, and you can't be afraid to take a chance.

Jesse: Absolutely. There is no difference from meeting someone randomly at a Christmas party that you're not invited to, or on a TV show. Both are weird situations, but it could happen.

4. What piece of dating advice can you give to our single visitors?

Elizabeth: Keep an open mind when it comes to finding love. I think we decide at a young age what our life is going to look like, and sometimes it doesn't always turn out the way we thought. But if we keep an open mind and an open heart, it can turn out to be even better than we ever dreamed! Be optimistic. Learn from past relationships. Don't be in a rush. And most importantly, loves finds us, we don't find it. In the meantime, enjoy your single life!! Every day should be a new adventure, whether you're alone or with someone. Life is precious, and life is short...so live it up!!

Jesse: Stop having dating rules. "I only do this," or "I only date this kind of guy," is a bad way to start. Having an open mind and taking the pressure off finding the perfect guy on paper will allow some you to meet some really great people.

Stay tuned tomorrow as we hear from Bachelor Pad power couple, Tenley Molzahn and Kiptyn Locke.

For more information on *The Bachelor*, *The Bachelorette* and

Bachelor Pad, visit ABC.com.

Former 'Bachelor' and 'Bachelorettes' Pick Chantal O'Brien Over Emily Maynard For Brad Womack



Cupid Exclusive!

With *The Bachelor* final rose ceremony less than a week away, single women are placing their bets on who they think ABC's two-time *Bachelor*, Brad Womack, will give that final rose to

on March 14.

It's down to this season's two fan favorites: soft-spoken southern mother Emily Maynard and sassy, slaphappy divorcee Chantal O'Brien. Based on Womack's infamous dumping of both DeAnna Papas and Jenni Croft in season 11, many fans wonder if he'll leave his final two picks heartbroken as well.

While everyone has an opinion, nobody can be sure what will happen. Even *Bachelor* reality TV spoiler sites like Reality Steve have reported different endings before next week's season finale. That's why Cupid's Pulse took this question to the experts: six rose-loving revelers from past seasons – David Good, Natalie Getz, Tenley Molzahn, Kiptyn Locke, Jesse Kovacs and Elizabeth Kitt.

After all, who better to ask than former *Bachelor* and *Bachelorette* contestants who appeared not once, but twice (just like Womack) on the *Bachelor* franchise? Each of them competed last summer for a chance to win \$250,000 on ABC's *Bachelor* spin-off show, *Bachelor Pad* – which Chris Harrison officially announced will return this year for a second season during last night's *The Women Tell All* episode.

The verdict: None of the former reality stars chose fan favorite Emily Maynard, who **83 percent*** of Cupid's Pulse readers picked as their favorite for Brad in this week's poll.

Here's who the former contestants chose and what they had to say about it:

1. Elizabeth Kitt (*The Bachelor*, season 14): Brad should choose Chantal O'Brien. They really seem to have a connection. Chantal seems really down to earth and open to falling in love. It looks like he feels natural and comfortable with her.

2. David Good (*The Bachelorette*, season 5): Chantal O'Brien has a great family and a beautiful mother. Her father seemed

legit like someone I could hang out with and that's huge, so I go with her.

As we saw in the hometown episode, Brad met Chantal's dad, Mike, and the two bonded over past issues with their own father's and the fact that they're both self-made men. Compatibility with your partner's family is a strong sign that your relationship has staying power. Given that Emily's daughter took a while to warm up to Brad, Chantal scores higher in this category.

However, Cupid believes the most important aspect in a relationship is the compatibility that you have with one another, which is what Kiptyn Locke and Tenley Molzahn found at the end of *Bachelor Pad*. In fact, they both agreed with Elizabeth and David and said Chantal would be a good pick for Brad.

3. Kiptyn Locke (*The Bachelorette*, season 5): Who Brad will choose is on him; it's all about compatibility. Judging by what I've seen on TV, I'm liking Chantal O'Brien for him.

4. Tenley Molzahn (*The Bachelor*, season 14): I adore Emily, like everyone. But I don't see Brad and Emily together. I see him with a more bold personality like Chantal O'Brien.

Tenley also mentioned that Shawntel N. could have been a possible choice.

5. The next person to pick Chantal was **Jesse Kovacs** (*The Bachelorette*, season 5), but Chantal wasn't Jesse's only pick; he also favored Michelle Money. "I seem to like the ones who are a little tilted. I just think that would be some entertaining TV," he said. This was definitely true while Michelle's reign on the show lasted, but Brad sent Ms. Money packing before hometown dates.

6. Only one person didn't mention Chantal at all: **Natalie Getz** (*The Bachelor*, season 13). She thought Shawntel N. would have

been the right choice because she is so “sweet and simple.” Unfortunately, Shawntel’s hometown tour of her family’s funeral parlor wasn’t the type of romantic introduction Brad had in mind when he committed to meeting her family.

What’s more interesting than who they chose is who they *didn’t* – early front runner Emily! Elizabeth summed this up by saying, “Emily is beautiful and sweet, but she seems very guarded, and I think that scares Brad.”

While Cupid has made it no secret that we are also “Team Emily,” we tend to agree with the others – Chantal is Brad’s best pick. From what we’ve seen on the show, it seems like Brad is never going to be himself with Emily – how can you be comfortable with someone who constantly makes you sweat and stutter?

However, during last night’s Women Tell All episode, Michelle said that after watching this season, she thinks that Brad needs someone like Emily. “She’s soft,” she said. “She’s not me.”

So – is Michelle on the “Money” with this one? Did Brad propose to southern belle Emily in South Africa or did he choose sassy and confident Chantal? Be sure to watch ABC on **Monday, March 14 at 8PM/7PM Central Time** for season 15’s finale of *The Bachelor* to find out!

Visit us daily for more in-depth interviews with these six former contestants as they dish about dating, relationships and love after reality TV! We’ll have something Bachelor-related every day until the final rose ceremony!

*Percentage as of post publication on March 8, 2011**

Hall Pass with Owen Wilson, Jason Sudeikis, Jenna Fischer and Christina Applegate



Two married men (Owen Wilson and Jason Sudeikis) are given free week passes by their wives to do whatever their hearts desire with other women. The dream come true quickly turns into a nightmare when their wives (Jenna Fischer and Christina Applegate) start abiding by the rules of the *Hall Pass* as well. It doesn't take them long to discover that this agreement was more imperfect than ingenious as they realize that their marriages are put to the ultimate test.

Is it ever healthy to practice an open marriage?

Cupid's Advice:

Having consent to see other people while you're married doesn't necessarily mean there aren't going to be any problems. Cupid had some things to consider:

1. Jealousy: Whether they admit it or not, some people get jealous in a relationship when their partner is even so much as talking to the opposite sex, let alone sleeping with them.

If you and your mate are considering having an open agreement, make absolutely sure that your consent isn't halfhearted or the jealously won't eat at you (and your marriage).

2. Attachment: When you spend time with someone that makes you happy, there's a good chance you'll want to keep them around. Therefore, if you or your partner are having an affair with someone refreshing and new, you may just find yourself too attached to say goodbye. In fact, you might have to say farewell to your marriage instead.

3. Children: Even if you and your partner don't have kids of your own, you probably have younger siblings, neices or nephews closely watching your choices. Being intimate with someone other than your spouse might confuse those looking to you for a role model.

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Celebrity Couples Who Have

Stayed Together



By Erin O'Riordan

Why do some celebrity couples end up as a train wreck, while others seem to withstand the test of time? Different strategies work for different power couples. For some, private time is the glue that cements them. For others, it's a conscious decision to put marriage and family before work or making time for grand romantic gestures.

Check out what works for these four celebrity pairs:

Beyonce and Jay-Z: They are one of the world's great couples. Jay-Z has an undeniable charm, a laugh to die for and a fantastic smile. The key to their happiness may lie in their equal success – both reportedly make around \$80 million yearly. Celebrity couples have survived even without equal

success, though, so what works for Jay-Z and Beyonce might be their commitment privacy. The couple is notoriously private about their relationship, keeping the magic between them and not opening up their bedroom to the world.

Faith Hill and Tim McGraw: Married since 1996 and some of the hottest entertainers on the country music scene, these two owe their success to spending time together. Even with their busy touring schedules and McGraw's burgeoning movie career, they try never to spend more than three nights away from each other's sides.

Jada Pinkett Smith and Will Smith: He's the only actor ever to have scored eight consecutive films that grossed over \$100 million domestically. Okay, so Will Smith is the biggest movie star ever. Jada's also had some megahits, notably the Matrix series, and she's taken turns as a writer and director. Still, Jada insists she would let her career go before allowing it to interfere with her relationship with Will. Maybe that's why they've been together since 1997. Of course, it doesn't hurt that this super-cute couple only seems to get better looking with age.

Heidi Klum and Seal: The former Victoria's Secret model who stays involved with America's Next Top Model, is known for her fabulous figure and gorgeous face. He's known for his legendary singing voice and the uber-romantic ballad "Kiss From a Rose." The pair met in 2003 and married in 2005. The fact that he's English and she's German never seems to be an issue for this playful pair, often caught in public frolicking with their four children. The romantic duo renews their wedding vows ever year on their anniversary.

Erin O'Riordan writes hot and steamy romantic fiction. Her short story "Post Op" appears in the Evernight Publishing anthology Indecent Encounters. She also reviews books of every description at <http://www.erinoriordan.blogspot.com>.

Iyanla Vanzant Helps You Get Through What You're Going Through with 'Peace from Broken Pieces'



By Krissy Dolor

Wouldn't it be great if someone could shed a little light on why relationships end? Well you're in luck – *New York Times* bestselling author Iyanla Vanzant offers some insight in her latest work, *Peace from Broken Pieces: How to Get Through What You're Going Through*. In addition to speaking about the ending

of her marriage and what she's learned from past relationships, Vanzant recounts her past TV experience (including being featured on *Oprah* and having a self-titled show, which was produced by Barbara Walters) and her daughter's illness and death. Despite the hardships she has endured, Vanzant has managed to pull through and find success, all while offering advice to those who need a little boost of their own. In addition, *Peace from Broken Pieces* reveals just how much our past relationships influence our decisions, and why it's important to recognize patterns in ourselves.

We spoke with Vanzant via phone earlier this year. See what the author had to say:

You've been through many hardships from early on in your life, especially with your daughter's death and illness in 2003. What keeps you motivated?

What I do is inspire people. My goal is to remind people of who they are, what they're capable of, and to encourage people to do what they're capable of doing. Inspiration is so limited. And I don't want to just inspire people, but get them to do something about it. We each have a gift, and we each have a purpose. And your gift is not for you – your gift is for the world. I have a gift of reminding people – educating people – about the truth of what they are. That's why I write, that's why I teach. In my low moments, that purpose pulls me forward. I mean, I have challenges and issues like every other human, but I try not to let them hinder me as I go on.

Your latest book, *Peace from Broken Pieces: How to Get Through What You're Going Through*, talks about the dissolution of your marriage. What has that experience taught you about who you are as a person?

Well, the core of that book is family pathologies, things we inherit from our family. They are unconscious. I come from a

family comprised of dysfunctional relationships. After being in a relationship for 40 years, eight of which I was married, I discovered that the relationship was dysfunctional because it was based on a poor foundation. The foundation was built on me trying to get acceptance, acknowledgment and approval from my father. In turn, this is what I had been requiring, expecting and demanding for 40 years. When I realized that he [my husband] could not give this me, the relationship no longer had a purpose. Often our relationships are in response to our unfulfilled childhood needs, which is what I did. And letting this go led to the demise of this relationship.

In addition, what has that experience taught you about pursuing future relationships with men, and people in general?

I think what I've learned is that – actually, what I *should* say is what I've learned again, (laughs) because I did know this already – but your relationship with yourself is reflected in everything. If you don't think you're enough, your relationships won't be enough. If you think you're not worth it, your relationships won't be worth it.

The other thing I believe I learned is the absolute necessity to be authentic: know who you are, what you want, what you need to do to get that, and what you *do* to get that. If you're not authentically there, eventually, your relationships are going to crumble.

What's the number one piece of relationship advice you wish to share with our readers?

Tell the truth. Tell the truth about who you are, about what you need, what works and what doesn't work for you. And also, that relationships don't "happen." Relationships unfold. So you have to be clear and conscious about *why* you're in this relationship. Sometimes we meet someone and fall in love ... but the truth of who you are will unfold. And you have to be willing to stand in that truth. You meet someone, in social

situations, relationships, etc., but as soon as there's a problem you're ready to run. But instead of running, you have to say, *Why is this in my life?* Relationships are classrooms, you know? (Laughs.) So if you want to learn and grow in a relationship, you have to tell the truth.

What's the most important lesson that you've learned through your experience that you think everyone should know?

I think that regardless of what is going on around you, that you must make peace a priority. A peace of mind, peace of heart – in your experiences, peace must be priority. Without peace, you have internal conflict and external drama. When it gets hard, go for the peace.

We create the peace based on how we react and respond. So go for the peace. When things get dramatic, go for the peace. When things get chaotic, go for peace. Because when you have the peace on the inside, you'll experience the peace on the outside.

Cupid thanks Vanzant for her time! *Peace from Broken Pieces: How to Get Through What You're Going Through* is available on Amazon. For more information about her efforts, visit her website, Inner Visions Worldwide.

Marriage Is a Loaded Word





By Kenneth Weene, PhD.

We got engaged on April Fool's day. That was a propitious start. At least she couldn't claim that I didn't have a sense of humor about the whole thing. Prior to that, I'd only agreed to getting engaged-to-get-engaged one evening at the restaurant called Big Chicken Fry (honest).

Before you get the wrong idea, I loved her, I was committed to her. In my head we were going to grow old together. My concern was the word – marriage.

I've always been about words; not just what they mean, but what they imply. Throughout my career as a therapist, my concern about the word "marriage" has been borne out. The word creates expectations. It changes and codifies roles. It imposes mental burdens where before there were none.

To come to terms with these burdens, some couples live together before marriage. They think it will give them a good sense of what their lives will be like after they tie the knot. If they're satisfied, they then marry. Then, things immediately go downhill. Celebrity couples are no exception.

David Arquette and Courtney Cox is one couple that comes to mind; Lisa Bonet and Lenny Kravitz is another.

“What happened?” they ask me, their new marriage counselor. It just took that one word. Suddenly the humor and spontaneity was gone. In its place were those burdens and those darn expectations. It started in the little things: “Why isn’t my laundry done?” “Didn’t you take the garbage out?” It then escalated: “Why do you need so much cash in your pocket?” “Whose parents are we visiting for Christmas?” And then it reached fever pitch: “Shouldn’t we start thinking about kids?”

Sadly, having children often creates the expectation of marriage, an expectation that is often a mistake. Ashlee Simpson and Pete Wentz obviously shouldn’t have married, as they’re now getting a divorce. To their credit, Naomi Watts and Liev Schreiber have children and haven’t changed their marital status. They seem happy to this day.

And then there’s the expectation that marriage is forever. Forever is such a long time! (My approach was to consider it a three-year contract with option to renew.) That expectation leads to one of the easiest mistakes to make, which is investing in one member of the couple. Don’t put your spouse through school. There, I’ve said it. That’s a prescription for the spouse’s mid-life crisis. Marriage is too fraught with obligation as it is. Don’t add more.

“Marriage” is a word loaded with meaning and danger. Maybe that’s why some couples never marry. Oprah Winfrey and Stedman Graham lived together for many years without calling it marriage. Yet, it can be wonderful. My engagement was 43 years ago, and my wife and I are still together and in love to this day. The key is to rethink it by giving the word meaning with which you can live comfortably. For me, it’s all about humor, symmetry, and equality – not responsibility,

obligation and expectation.

A New Englander by upbringing and inclination, Kenneth Weene is a teacher, psychologist, and pastoral counselor by education. He is a writer by passion. A poet and fiction writer, Ken's novels, Widow's Walk (2009), and Memoirs From the Asylum (2010), are both published by All Things That Matter Press.

Finding Love After a Breakup: Should You Jump In?



By Kelly Seal

When someone leaves us broken-hearted, our natural reaction is to find love again as quickly as possible. Unfortunately, healing a broken heart takes time and patience. It's necessary to spend some time alone so you can build your own strength and move on to a happier, healthier relationship in the future.

Like us, many celebrities move from one relationship to the next, hoping that this will ease their pain and help make the transition easier. Eva Longoria started dating Penelope Cruz's brother Eduardo shortly after her split with Tony Parker. Jake Gyllenhaal quickly started dating after breaking up with Reese Witherspoon, leaving a trail of girlfriends behind including Taylor Swift, Carey Mulligan and Jennifer Aniston. While romance creates a sense of happiness and excitement for a brief time, eventually old pain can start to resurface.

If you've recently endured a break-up, try giving yourself some time off and do the following before rushing back in to the dating pool:

Allow yourself to grieve: A break-up is a huge transition. When you've been with someone you love, it's natural to feel pain and anger. Allowing yourself to grieve over the relationship is part of letting go.

Hang with uplifting friends: We all have friends who can lift our spirits, be supportive and are just fun to be around. If you spend time around people with positive energy, it has an affect on your mood and can help lift your depression. Avoid friends who would rather complain about exes; this won't help you move on.

Do things that make you happy: Maybe you haven't been surfing in a few years, but have always enjoyed it. Or perhaps you put off taking those cooking classes because you didn't have time. Now is the perfect opportunity to do things you enjoy,

and remember why you liked them in the first place.

Get to know yourself again: Sometimes, we feel so lost after a break-up we don't even know who we are without our exes. If you feel adrift, try doing something new, whether it's going to a new restaurant or paragliding on a Saturday afternoon. Trying new things lifts our spirits and puts us back in touch with the part of ourselves that is willing to take risks and grow.

When you've gone through these steps and feel like it's time to start meeting people again, go for it. Just be sure to take your time and keep living your own life. Look at dating as a chance to meet many different kinds of people, rather than a way to get back into a relationship. The right man or woman will come into your life when you're ready to move on.

The Law of Attraction Between Celebrity Couples





By Yolanda Shoshana, Luscious Lifestyle Diva

Biker boy and ex-husband to America's sweetheart, Jesse James recently declared that 2010 was the best year of his life. That declaration definitely made some people raise an eyebrow or two. Since when does a messy divorce and the possibility of losing your child constitute the time of one's life? But according to James, it all led to him finding love with Kat Von D. When he announced his engagement to Von D, people said they are perfect for each other, which was not necessarily a compliment in their case. That said, there's no doubt that the law of attraction was working its magic when the two of them met.

Simply speaking, the law of attraction is when "like" attracts "like." Take a look at Jesse James and Sandra Bullock's different places in life. Clearly, they had perspectives and ideals that simply didn't match, whereas James and Von D are on the same page.

Another example of the law of attraction at work is between celebrity couple Angelina Jolie and Brad Pitt. They ended up

together not just because of physical attraction, but also due to other attraction elements. Chances are there were issues in the Pitt and Aniston marriage, which allowed Jolie to swoop in. Now, people see Aniston as a woman who can't find love, while I see her as a woman who likes freedom, loves her body, likes a good looking dude, and just wasn't about to have a tribe of children. Aniston's attraction to Pitt didn't last because they simply have different energies and wants in life. In other words, they broke the law of attraction.

The law of attraction is a key ingredient when it comes to finding the love of your life. To utilize it in your search for love, all you have to do is ask, believe and receive with full clarity. As simple as that sounds, people get impatient when it comes to the "believe" part. While it would be fabulous if the love of your life arrived five minutes after you incorporated the law of attraction, it doesn't happen that way. Sometimes it takes time for the opportunity to present itself, but know that it's well worth the wait.

**Just Go With It featuring
Adam Sandler, Jennifer
Aniston and Brooklyn Decker**





Plastic surgeon playboy Danny (Adam Sandler) attracts women in a rather unique fashion – by pretending he’s stuck in a bad marriage in order to ease tension and give them a false sense of trust. Then the unthinkable happens. Danny meets a woman (Brooklyn Decker) he actually sees a legitimate future with, and gets caught in his “bad marriage” routine. To try to repair the damage, he comes up with an off-the-wall plan and asks his loyal office manager (Jennifer Anniston) to play the role of his future divorcee. Eventually, even her two kids to get involved in his growing lie. *Just Go With It* comically begs the question: how far should you go to win someone’s heart?

How far should you go to make a relationship work?

Cupid’s Advice:

People do crazy things in the name of love, but there has to be some boundaries. Cupid has some thoughts on what yours should be:

1. Be honest: As easy as it is to create an alter-ego like Danny did in *Just Go With It*, when you're going for a real relationship, it won't work. Stay true to who you really are, and let things play out from there.

2. Respect boundaries: If you're really interested in someone, you're going to have to play by the rules. If he or she is already seeing someone, you'll have to be patient. Settle for being in the background until the time is right.

3. Simple gestures make a difference: When you're wooing someone, chances are he or she will remember you for your simple romantic gestures, such as opening the door or pulling out the chair. It's those little quirks in your personality that make all the difference.

Release date: February 11, 2011

Cupid's Kiss Rating: 3 out of 5

Sexting: Good, Bad or the New Lipstick on Your Collar?





By Emily Macintosh of My Life On Match

If you've read my blog, you know that I popped my sexting cherry this year. I found sexting to be flirty, scandalous and fun, but I also found it to be a bit dangerous. If I took a picture of myself and sent it, would he show it to his friends? Could it end up on the Internet? What if I go missing on a hike and that's the last picture they have of me to show on the 6 o' clock news? In this new age of technology, is sexting just another step in the dating world or is it the new way to cheat (and think you're not going to get caught)?

Several celebrities have jumped on the sexting and technology train this year, too. Couples like Ashton Kutcher and Demi Moore and Lamar Odom and Khole Kardashian have been publicly showing their love for each other over Twitter. But, sexting is different. It's meant for the two people who are involved and not the rest of the world. Unfortunately, because cell phone records are not as private as we sometimes would like to believe, some celebrities have gotten into some serious scandals in less than 30 seconds, 10 words and the press of

the “send” button.

In the last few months, several of those couples have broken up due to sexting scandals. *X Factor* judge Cheryl Cole separated from her husband, footballer Ashley Cole, after rumors surfaced about his sexting with a topless model. Tony Parker and Eva Longoria also split after Parker was caught having a “sexting affair” with one of his basketball teammate’s wives. Brett Favre also found himself in the middle of a media storm when he sent revealing photos of himself to a *Sports Illustrated* columnist!

And, no, this isn’t just an athlete thing. Let’s not forget Michelle “Bombshell” McGee ,who shared her sexts with *InTouch* Magazine as proof of her affair with Jesse James.

Sexting can be fun and may spice up a relationship when it gets bland, but remember, technology is our “big brother.” In one click (fwd, RT, send), your sexts could be in the wrong hands.

**Let Alan and Denise Fields
Help You Plan Your Dream
Wedding, Even On a Tight
Budget!**





By Krissy Dolor

Now that Valentine's Day is over and done with, a new season is quickly approaching: Wedding season! And let's face it – you need all the help you can get. However, according to the WE tv Networks Wedding Report, the average wedding in 2010 cost \$24,000, which is a 23 percent increase from 2009. For many people, especially in today's economy, that budget may not always be realistic. And even if it is, why spend money when you don't have to? That's where the Fields come in. Alan and Denise Fields have been called the “wedding watchdogs” for their consumer books that offer advice to couples about to tie the knot. Needless to say, top dogs in the wedding industry didn't take kindly to the Fields' money-saving tips, and the couple was publicly ostracized for their efforts. Luckily, Oprah Winfrey (yes, *the O herself*) suggested the *Bridal Bargains* to her viewers, and the Fields went on to sell 400,000 copies. The authors recently released the 10th edition of their best-seller, which includes tips on how to save up to 40 percent on brand new, big name wedding dresses, ways to save 70 percent on wedding invites, and even

advice on how to plan a green wedding. The Fields can show you that cheap doesn't necessarily mean tacky, and there are always ways to save on your dream day. Now you have more to spend on your honeymoon!

We spoke with Ms. Fields via email last month. Take a look at what she had to say:

You relaunched the 10th edition of Bridal Bargains last November – what inspired the relaunch?

We typically release a new version of the book every two years. This year was particularly great for us as it is our 10th edition. So we've been writing about weddings for 10 years now. Trends change, prices change and we want to keep the information fresh for our readers. Every year there is a new crop of brides and we don't want to give them out of date information.

The notion of what's cheap and what's expensive vary, depending on a couple's budget. What's your limit, when you have to say, "That's too expensive"? And does it change depending on what you're buying (flowers vs. wedding dress, venue vs. invitations, etc.)?

Good question. We always advise couples to sit down (with each other and anyone else who is contributing money to the event) and figure out what your priorities are. So if you decide that photography and reception food are important, then you can allocate a larger percentage of the budget to those items. If flowers aren't that big of a deal, you'll be prepared choose smaller bouquets, less expensive arrangements, and so on. But we also try to help couples have the best looks for less. That way you have to make fewer trade offs.

We see that you've added a section about green weddings, which is awesome! What do you say to couples who are planning a wedding and assume that green weddings are expensive to plan?

Obviously, more couples today want to have the great wedding without the huge carbon footprint. The good news is there are many strategies to green your wedding that are actually less expensive. For example, the best way to green your invites is to make them all e-invites. Yes, traditionalists frown on this, but if you're committed, use the Internet. There are some great free- and low-cost services that offer graphically attractive e-invites. Evite.com is one example that is completely free. PaperlessPost.com is another service with even nicer invites, but they do have a small charge – still less than paper invites. Also, consider flowers and food grown locally. You don't have the huge carbon footprint of shipping orchids from Hawaii, you meet some of your goals for shopping locally, and it's often less expensive.

Why do you think many brides (and/or grooms) feel the need to plan an expensive wedding?

Grooms probably don't often want to have the huge production. □ But brides often dream from a young age about their wedding. And there are so many wedding reality shows and celebrity examples that seem to push the extravagant wedding. Finally, parents sometimes want their kids to have the wedding they didn't have – occasionally you have to remind them who's wedding it really is! With the economy still sputtering, it's just not realistic. So often typical couples recognize this and tone it down. We try to explain that your goal is not the "perfect wedding" but rather a "fun wedding." And fun doesn't mean expensive, over-the-top, budget-busting gowns or flowers or food.

What's the number one tip you wish to share with your readers, one that everyone – no matter what they're budget is – should know about and use?

Negotiate. Everything is negotiable: every price, every item. This is probably the first time in their lives when a couple has the opportunity to brush up on their bargaining

skills. For example, give a vendor your budget and ask them what miracles they can perform within that budget. Too often brides and grooms are given a price list and think they have to choose from that. We're amazed at how much you can get when you ask.

Cupid thanks Ms. Fields for her time! *Bridal Bargains* can be purchased on Amazon. Also, check out their companion guide, *Bridal Bargains Wedding Planner*. And to read more on the authors and their other work, visit their website at www.WindsorPeak.com. Happy planning!

Dating a Playmate



By Bridget Marquardt, former star of *The Girls Next Door*

Originally published on Appitalism.com

As a television personality and former “Girl Next Door,” men often think they know me personally. But just because I’m accessible, that doesn’t mean I’m obtainable!

The truth is, while having men pay attention to you when you’re out at dinner or at a club is flattering, the constant flood of cheap lines and cheaper cologne can quickly ruin an evening.

So what’s a guy to do when he wants to land the girl of his dreams? Drop the posturing and player image, listen to what the woman has to say, and take...it...slow. In order to get things rolling in the right direction, I’ve come up with several apps currently available at Appitalism.com that are certain to take your dating skills to a new level:

50 Things Girls Wish Guys Knew(Free for the iPhone) – Are you struggling with your relationship? Let’s face it, you can never know everything about a girl! But don’t worry – here are 50 things that all guys should really know about girls.

Seduction Discussion (\$0.99 for Android) – A mobile discussion app for discussing all things related to the art of seduction. Discuss meeting girls, picking up women, closing the deal, advanced PUA techniques, love and relationships and more!

Dating Tips (\$0.99 for the Android) – No one is a dating expert; even the most beautiful and wealthy people all struggle with matters of the heart. Everyone can learn something about how to date more, how to attract the types of people we want to attract and how to make sure initial chemistry blooms into an enduring relationship.

'How About' Giving Online Dating One Last Try?



By Jenna Barbieri

Some people spend [Valentine's Day](#) doing extravagant things with their loved ones, while others spend it alone in front of their computers. Does the latter sound like you? Well, what would you do if I told you that this year, sitting in front of the computer might actually be the start to your ideal Valentine's Day? Would you think I was lying? Yeah, so would I. Which is why I did some research after hearing all the hype about [HowAboutWe.com](#).

Before I say anything else, let me point out that HowAboutWe is a dating site ... but it's not actually a dating site. Most people are hesitant to attempt online dating, but the only part of the actual dating that takes place on this site is the proposal. According to their homepage, "It's a site all about dates – inventing dates, scrolling through dates, asking people out and going on the dates you really want to go on."

It's no secret that connecting online has become an ideal dating option, which is why there are thousands of dating sites already out there. What separates HowAboutWe from the rest is the wait time (or lack thereof). HAW is straight to the point: What's your ideal date? Have you always wanted to go sky diving over beautiful scenery while holding hands with a significant other? Type it in and instantly connect with those who share your interest – it doesn't get easier than that. In the meantime, look through your own date proposals until you find one right for you.

Once someone accepts your dating proposal or vice versa, the rest is natural. The type of date itself already tells you a lot about the person, and you're immediately thrown into an activity you both enjoy. If the date lacks that special spark, take comfort that you've found a friend who shares similar interests as you, all while continuing to date other people who also share your hobbies until you find the person that's right for you. Who *wouldn't* want to be asked out on a regular basis?

So instead of spending Valentine's Day alone, How About YOU take a chance on HowAboutWe? It's more than just a great way to meet people; it's a great way to meet the right people.

*Interested in giving it a try? HowAboutWe.com is offering our readers a **SPECIAL DISCOUNT of 33% OFF** their service, just in time for Valentine's Day! Use promo code VDAYFUN. For more information, visit their Facebook page and follow them on*

Twitter: @howaboutwe.

Have a 'Delicioso Night In' With Aarón Sánchez This Valentine's Day



By Aarón Sánchez, celebrity chef and TV personality

This Valentine's Day, forgo waiting hours on end for a table at a busy restaurant when you can have a fabulous night in right at home. Not only is it a great opportunity to intensify connections with family, friends and significant

others, but it's much easier on the wallet! Celebrity chef and TV personality Aarón Sánchez agrees, and has some easy tips to creating your own "Delicioso Night In." You can join the Delicioso movement [here](#). Not only does this give you the opportunity to take part in great conversations, but by joining the movement, you're automatically entered for a chance to win the ultimate Delicioso Night In, prepared by Chef Aarón himself in New York City. After flying to New York for this special evening, one lucky winner and three other people of his or her choosing will be whisked away to Veracruz, Mexico, the home of Kahlua. In the meantime, enjoy the following tips from Chef Aarón to start your Valentine's Day off right:



The Nose Knows

You don't have to be a chemist to create memorable aromatics for your next evening of entertaining at home. In my home of Veracruz, there is a huge influence of African spices that were brought over when Cortez sailed across the Caribbean. Let such robust spices (think cloves, canela – the *real* cinnamon, cardamom, and black pepper) help set the mood with the help of a standard frying pan. Toast the spices just to their smoking point, and the room will fill with an inviting – and delicious – bouquet.

Team Chef

It's like that old saying goes: those who sauté together, stay together. Collaborate on a menu and invite your guest(s) to

help you bring the menu to life. Start the party early and enjoy cocktails as you cook; I like to keep it simple with a glass of Kahlua on the rocks with a splash of ginger ale. Cooking your creations together as you enjoy cocktails will allow for plenty of lean-in moments over the stove top, and eating those creations will be the reward for your labors over delicious conversation.

Pairing is Caring

When prepping for a perfect evening, pairings are a fun way to turn any meal into a special occasion and spice up the fun. Plan three courses and pair each with a small cocktail; use one base spirit in three different ways. Keep in mind when choosing your menu to pick a spirit that embodies the flavors you are working with; for example Kahlua – from the heart of Veracruz, Mexico – will bring out beautiful notes of vanilla, another Veracruz staple that pairs lovely with complex and robust dishes that involve such flavors as molé.

Forget the Utensils

Feeding someone can be a loving, playful proposition (especially sans fork). In Mexico, we love to entertain with botanas – small bites – that incorporate foods indigenous to the region like seafood and black beans. Reconnect with your partner over a selection of botanas like plantains, garnachas (a small fried masa topped with pork or chicken), mushrooms, or fresh cut fruit. Watch those teeth.

Three Valentine's Resolutions

That Last!



By Melissa Orlov, marriage consultant and author of *The ADHD Effect on Marriage*

How often have you found that the requisite roses (slightly wilted at the edges) don't do that much for you? This year, for a truly meaningful [Valentine's Day](#), don't focus on a single romantic gesture. Instead, consider making Valentine's Day the 'New Years' of romance – a time for making resolutions that will create lasting change for your relationship.

The good news? There is science behind how to do this. Here are three resolutions that can make Valentine's Day *matter* for a change:

We will teach ourselves to argue. Significant marital research suggests that couples who argue using the right words, who are

conscious of how to start and end a conversation, and who avoid accusatory or critical rhetoric in the middle can use disagreement to strengthen their marriage, rather than weaken it. So forget about what you are fighting about and focus instead about how you disagree. Healthy conflict puts you on a path to resolve your differences. Unproductive conflict, or avoiding conflict all together, means that your problems don't get solved, only aggravated.

We will address ADHD in our relationship. If you have a child with ADHD, patterns of significant inconsistency in at least one spouse, chronic nagging and anger, or very uneven distribution of responsibilities in your relationship, then ADHD may be creating serious problems for you. Learning how ADHD impacts adult relationships will help you overcome the many challenges you currently face.

We will change the proportion of positive interactions to negative ones. University of Washington researchers, including John Gottman, have determined that healthy relationships include at least five times more positive interactions than negative ones. So every time you create a negative reaction in your relationship, you need to self-consciously make up for it by creating five positive ones! Saying 'I'm sorry' is a good start, but it's only one-fifth of the work you need to do – so get to it!

Melissa Orlov is the author of The ADHD Effect on Marriage, and has been featured in the NY Times, on CNN, Today and more. Her website is www.adhdmarrriage.com. For more, Orlov suggests For Better: The Science of a Good Marriage by Tara Parker-Pope and The Relationship Cure by John Gottman, Ph.D. You can also follow Orlov on Twitter: @msorlov.

Must-Dos for a Memorable Valentine's Day



By Babe Scott, author of *Delicious Dating*

Heidi Klum is going to say it with a surprise box of confetti hearts, cute underwear and chocolates. Katy Perry is said to be buying Russell Brand a lilac-colored Bentley. So how are *you* going to make your guy feel like the only man in the universe on [Valentine's Day](#)?

It's a given that your beau will romance you with a candle-lit dinner, but what will you do to ensure this night of love will be forever brulée-torched in your memories? Here are a few tips:

Dress to Impress

Ditch your Bridget Jones-style orthopedic underpants and usual denims. Your man is booking a delicious meal in an attempt to ignite your sensual appetite, so the least you can do is make an effort.

Men are very Pavlovian when it comes to clothes, and what turns them on is a fitted dress and soft, figure-hugging fabrics. The Little Black Dress is always a good standby – a little cleavage, a spritz of perfume and high heels should have him salivating. Take a cue from Heidi, and make sure that what's underneath is equally enticing. Forget the Spanx, and put on those sexy knickers and a push-up bra.

Give Him a Gift

You might not be buying him a Bentley, but that doesn't mean the effort is all his. Give him a token of your appreciation and affection – maybe a guy necklace, a compilation CD of both of your favorite songs, or even a framed photograph of you together. You want this gift to remind him of you every time he sees or wears it, so avoid the generic.

Create Some Ambiance

Chances are, you'll be at your place later, so make sure you have all the ingredients to whip up his favorite cocktail and snacks. Remember to tidy up, and set the stage with dim lighting and soft pillows. Have candles and mood music at the ready, put some flowers in a vase, and get your best and softest clean sheets on the bed. It's the little details that count. Maybe have some strawberries and sparkling wine, if not Champagne, in the fridge for the morning.

The night doesn't stop once he pays the check. You want to continue the romance when you get home, and nothing says, "I don't care" more than a messy apartment and an unmade bed.

If you plan out every detail, you'll be in for a delicious night!

Babe Scott, a self-declared “manthropologist,” is the author of Delicious Dating: The Single Girl’s Guide to Decoding Men by Their Wining and Dining Styles. A magazine publisher in her native Australia, Babe broke bread with more than 100 men, and interviewed more than 200 men and women to reveal how to judge a man’s potential as a lover and husband by what and where he eats. Learn more at www.BabeScott.com, and follow her on Twitter: @DeliciousDating.

4 Great Valentine’s Day Gift Ideas for Her



By Gunter Jameson

Men, for 364 days of the year, get to do things like fix cars, hook up electronics, and be a general handyman for the women in our lives. One day a year, we are asked to do something else to show our love – something a little more romantic. On [Valentine's Day](#), it's our job to shave off our manly exterior and be the cute and cuddly teddy bears that our women want us to be. The time has come once again to buy gifts for our wives or girlfriends that tell them how much we love and appreciate them. This is not a time for utilitarian gifts, like a mixer or a car stereo, so if you're stumped as to what you should buy for your special someone, here are a few ideas that should point you in the right direction:

1. Chocolates and flowers: It may be cliché, but flowers and chocolates are a really great gift on Valentine's Day. Even though they're not practical, that's the point! They don't serve any other purpose except to look pretty, smell good and taste delicious. If you bring a little beauty and a piece of chocolate goodness into the life of your woman, she will love you right back.

2. Hand-dipped strawberries: Chocolate-dipped strawberries are one of those rare treats that are so simple to make, but are very special and unique. The sweet chocolate and juicy strawberry combined make a flavorful and slightly sensual treat that will delight your woman's palette and tell her that you love her, both at the same time. And she won't want to eat them alone; get ready to snuggle up and share. Want to score bonus points? Suggest making chocolate-dipped strawberries together.

3. Heart-shaped jewelry: Yes, it might seem a little cheesy, but heart-shaped jewelry is a great way to get into your woman's heart. Pendants, earrings, bracelets, necklaces, rings and more; it almost doesn't matter, as long as it looks beautiful. Your mate will know that you love her and that you had to embarrass yourself by walking into a jewelry store –

and of course, that's part of the present.

4. A weekend away: Clearly, if you have the money, a weekend away is one of the best gifts you can give to your special lady this Valentine's Day. All she wants to do is feel special by spending time with you without distractions, and doing things you both enjoy. Stay at a cozy bed and breakfast or at an upscale hotel. Get couples massages or spa treatments. As long as the two of you are together and relaxing, she'll love it.

The most important thing about Valentine's Day is that you make your wife or girlfriend feel special – like she's the only woman in the world. If you can help her feel that, then she'll know you love her. Plus, you can then go back to doing manly things the other 364 days of the year.

SELF: Reasons to Like February 14 Regardless of Your Relationship Status





From *SELF* Magazine

Love being single because...

1. You stay slimmer. Women who live alone gained less weight (about 9 pounds over a five-year period) than newly married women, a study from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill notes. “Men have a higher calorie allowance, so if you have whatever he’s having, you’re going to gain weight,” says Tara Brass, M.D., medical director of Columbus Park Collaborative.

Advice for all from SELF: Shared meals and social obligations can wreck any woman’s diet. Make sure you don’t match every forkful with your man – just because he finishes his entire plate doesn’t mean you have to. When dining out with friends, suggest that you both order something healthy, then split a dessert. Everybody wins!

2. You snooze more soundly. Sleeping solo has its perks: Two thirds of people who share a bed say their partner snores, costing some of them an average of 49 minutes of sleep per night, a National Sleep Foundation survey shows. “The noise

created by snoring can be as loud as a kitchen blender,” says Carol Ash, D.O., a sleep specialist in Jamesburg, New Jersey.

Advice for all from SELF: Use a white noise machine for more peaceful slumber, Ash suggests, and avoid alcohol or caffeine for four hours before bedtime.

3. You have steamier sex. Single gals report fewer bedroom issues such as lack of interest, low arousal and anxiety about sex than married women, a study from University College London reveals. “Excitement over a new crush creates a surge in neurotransmitters that crank up your sex drive,” Dr. Brass says.

Advice for all from SELF: As you grow more committed, novelty can keep your love life hot. “Try new positions and locations, role-playing and, yes, even toys, which have been linked to increasing your chance for orgasm,” suggests Debby Herbenick, Ph.D., a research scientist at Indiana University.

4. You enjoy more me-time. Single women luxuriate in seven extra hours a week that married women spend doing chores, finds research from the University of Michigan at Ann Arbor. “Women increase their housework after marriage; men reduce theirs,” says study author Frank Stafford, Ph.D. (Thanks, guys.)

Advice for all from SELF: Leave the dishes in the sink, and reduce stress by taking a Zumba class or diving into a book.

Love being coupled because...

1. You're probably not hung-over today. Married women are 20 percent less likely to binge-drink than back when they were single, a study from Northwestern University at Evanston, Illinois, indicates. Putting a ring on it may prompt women to put their wilder days behind them. And knowing your partner is watching may help you keep each other's vices in check.

Advice for all from SELF: Drinking a moderate amount of alcohol can be good for you. But indulging too heavily may increase your risk for breast cancer. Stick to no more than

one drink per day.

2. You catch the happiness bug. Women who live with a mate tend to brighten up when their partner is in a good mood, according to a study from the University of York. “Emotions are highly contagious, and so is happiness,” explains study author Nick Powdthavee, Ph.D.

Advice for all from SELF: The trickle-down glee can come from anyone we know and like, Dr. Powdthavee says, so take a friend out after her promotion or send a note of congrats for a relative’s new baby and bask in her joy, too.

3. You have better health care access. Single women are 60 percent more likely to lack health insurance than married women, a Centers for Disease Control survey suggests. “Having a spouse increases your odds that you will have employer-sponsored coverage,” says Mark Rukavina, executive director of the Access Project, a health research and advocacy organization.

Advice for all from SELF: Visit HealthCare.gov to search for the most affordable plans in your state and to find out how reform will improve your access.

4. You keep your brain going. Couples who marry or live together are half as likely to develop dementia later in life than those who live solo, a study in *BMJ* notes. Constant social interaction between partners (even bickering) may strengthen the connection between brain cells and prevent cognitive decline.

Advice for all from SELF: Paired up or not, everyone can benefit from healthy social connectivity. With stronger mental health, you’ll fare better with any health hurdles that come your way, suggesting all women build connections by prioritizing church or charity as well as friendships. How about throwing a February 15 party just for fun?

Keep on top of all fitness, healthy eating and wellness news with SELF Magazine. For more tips, follow SELF on Twitter:

This Is That Love



By Celeste Friedman, author of *Single 101: 101 Reasons to Celebrate Being Single*

As a singer-songwriter, I can be guided by my muse at anytime of the day or night. Several years ago, it whispered into my ear while I was on my way to join my friends for services at their church. It was a two-hour drive on a brilliant, sunny Sunday morning in northwest Ohio. Passing the cornfields, farms and grazing horses, I was simply enjoying the beauty of the day. I thought of how sweet it was that my friends had

invited me to share that wonderful summer day, and began to think about their amazing love story. Suddenly, it hit me. They had won the lottery in love and happiness. Before I reached my destination, I had written the lyrics to the chorus and finished the song after returning home.

Tammy and Scott have that love that we all dream of or read about in fairy tales. Whenever you see them together, they have contentment in their smiles and joy in their eyes. On April Fool's Day of this year, they will celebrate 14 years of marriage, and with three talented, growing boys, they still have "that love." Life's challenges along the way have made them even stronger, and the light in their faces glows brighter. However, their dream didn't come true as they started out in life.

After high school, they went their separate ways, off to different parts of the country and marriages that were destined to end. Scott returned home many years later to discover that Tammy was single. She claims that her face literally hurt from smiling so much after they were reunited, and they've been inseparable ever since. Falling instantly and deeper in love than ever before, fate had opened a new door for both of them.

You can find their song on my CD, "Every Tear I Know" on CDBaby and iTunes. For Valentine's Day, I'm sharing the lyrics exclusively on Cupid's Pulse. I hope you have or find what everyone dreams of!

"This Is That Love"

I could think of many reasons

Why this is sweet and oh, so pleasin', this love

And every time I look into your eyes

It seems I've been there countless times

And each time feels like new

Chorus:

This is that love I've heard about
This is that love I've read about
This is that romance, fairytale, sure to last without fail
What everyone dreams of, this is that love

I could count on every star in the sky
Make a wish and it's sure to fly, this love
And whenever hard times come along
Love makes a right out of every wrong
You reach out and touch my hand

Repeat Chorus

Bridge:

Every time you hold me close at night, I can feel you smiling
Ooh, this love, it's a wondrous thing

Repeat Chorus

c. 1998, Celeste Friedman, Songs For Charlie Music, BMI

Celeste Friedman is a Grammy-nominated singer/songwriter who recently released her first book, Single 101: 101 Reasons to Celebrate Being Single. Check out [our interview](#) with her and visit her at www.single-101.webs.com for more information. You can follow her on Twitter: @Single101Nation and @Songchirps.

10 Tips To Keeping Your Valentine





By Brenda Novak, *New York Times* and *USA Today* bestselling author

With [Valentine's Day](#) approaching, it's easy to start pondering your love life. The "what if's" begin to run rampant, and the future is undoubtedly a big focus. If you can't imagine your life without your current partner, you need to start thinking about how you plan to keep him or her. Brenda Novak, bestselling author of more than 30 Harlequin romance novels, has some tips on how to do just that, which she's garnished from her own experience and research:

- 1. Avoid negative thought patterns:** Allowing yourself to mentally or verbally tear down your significant other is like gnawing at the bond that holds you together.
- 2. Remember that this person means more to you than anyone else:** This includes your parents and your kids. People who live their entire lives for their children are often disappointed to find that they have no relationship left once the kids head out on their own.
- 3. Be more flexible and forgiving with your spouse than mere**

friends and neighbors: We expect our spouses to “understand” our stress or limitations – in other words, put up with our crap. Instead, reserve your patience and kindness for the person who means the most to you.

4. Understand that relationships work on a spiral: The more thoughtful you are with your loved one, the more fulfilled and happy he or she will be, and the more he or she will be interested in giving back to you.

5. Don't get too practical: Some couples forgo the flowers, the cards, the dinner dates and the chocolates in favor of saving money. But what's worth more to you? A few bucks (or even a house or a car), or a relationship that will likely affect your whole life and the lives of your children?

6. Try to do something nice for your spouse every day: Even if it's just a chore he or she typically does, these thoughtful touches will act like a hedge against the tough times.

7. Be physical and touch a lot: These little reminders that a spouse cares are nurturing to the soul and send wonderful signals to your children. Your kids will feel secure and happy because *you're* secure and happy, and they'll be more loving because of the example you've set.

8. Remain loyal: Have the grit it takes to stick together through thick and thin.

9. Be unselfish: It might seem otherwise, but life isn't all about you, how you're feeling and what you want. Worry more about whether you're being a good spouse than whether your spouse is being a good mate to you, and you'll be glad you did.

10. Take care of yourself: You don't have to be model-thin or in the first blush of youth, but be the best you can be – mentally and physically. In other words, be someone you'd

like to be with.

Brenda Novak and her husband, Ted, live in Sacramento and are proud parents of five children – three girls and two boys. When she's not spending time with her family or writing, Brenda is usually working on her annual fund-raiser for diabetes research – an online auction held on her at www.BrendaNovak.com every May. Follow her on Twitter: @Brenda_Novak. Still want more? Check out her special Valentine's Day giveaway [here!](#)