

Five Secrets Truly Happy Couples Know



By Lesli Doares

Reality shows focus on hooking up, finding a spouse and the wedding. Movies and books end at the beginning of a couples' life together or as the relationship is ending in divorce.

There is very little focus on the time married. Ben Affleck got in trouble at the Oscars when he publicly thanked his wife, Jennifer Garner, and the work their marriage has been for the last ten years. Wow, who wants to sign up for that? So, how does any couple keep their marriage healthy and happy over the years?

Five simple rules to keep you in love through the years:

1. Give at least one genuine compliment each day to your partner about something that matters to them. It will make them feel noticed, appreciated and loved. Having it be important to them really lets them know you are paying attention.

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2. Spend at least 30 minutes of quality, one on one, time together each day. This allows you to get past the relationship killing exchange of information and tune in to what is happening in each other's lives at a more intimate level.

3. Continue to date. The two of you fell in love by spending time together and having fun. Once the routine of day-to-day life with work, kids and chores goes on for a few years, it's easy to lose track of that. Having regular dates, where the purpose is to have fun and reconnect, not analyze the relationship or discuss issues, keeps the spark alive.

4. Go to bed at the same time. Shut down the technology, turn off the television, forget about the never finished housework and spend some quiet time together. Keeping different schedules makes connecting physically much more difficult and that is not good for long term happiness.

5. Change up your sex life. Get out of the "it's Tuesday, you know what that means" routine. Spice things up by trying different times, places and activities. Have fun figuring out how to outsmart the kids in finding private time. Don't make it so hard that you just give up.

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Each of these rules builds from the one above and each one deals with an aspect of intimacy. Truly successful couples follow them diligently and that's how they stay out of the

headlines.

Lesli Doares is a marriage consultant/coach and the author of "Blueprint for a Lasting Marriage: How to Create Your Happily Ever After with More Intention, Less Work". Find her real and practical relationship advice at www.afearlessmarriage.com. She tweets @LesliDoares.

Celebrity Couples that Work Great Together



By Kristyn Schwiep

Keeping up with Hollywood's most talked-about relationships

can drive you crazy. From weddings, pregnancies and hook-ups gone wrong Cupid has come up with a list of our top celebrity couples who work great together amidst all the Hollywood fame:

1. Blake Shelton and Miranda Lambert: Country music royalty, Shelton, 36, and Lambert, 29, have been happily married for two years. Recently the country stars have been in the middle of rumors regarding their shaky relationship, but Shelton has nothing to hide from Lambert. According to *People*, Shelton gives Lambert full access to his phone. "That's really the kind of trust we have. There are no secrets," Shelton says. Trust is the basis of all great relationships, and there is no doubt that these country starlets are doing it the right way.

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2. Portia de Rossi and Ellen DeGeneres: DeGeneres, 55, and de Rossi, 40, married in 2008. They are one of Hollywood's favorite beloved gay couples due to the fact that they live their lives as honest and openly as possible. Though the couple doesn't want to have kids, de Rossi tells *Rolling Out*, "We are the best of friends and married life is blissful, it really is. I've never been happier than I am right now." Best friends make the best partners.

3. Justin Timberlake and Jessica Biel: One year after their wedding, Timberlake, 32 and Biel, 31, are still happily in love. The happily married man dishes to DeGeneres that he still enjoys sneaking a peek at his beautiful wife. According to *People*, Timberlake gushes that if he only starts to make bad decisions – for the rest of his life, he has made one really good decision and that was marrying his best friend. Apparently, they are even planning on having a baby.

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4. Ben Affleck and Jennifer Garner: After 8 years of marriage and three children, Affleck, 40 and Garner, 41, have managed

to make their relationship work against the Hollywood odds. Even after thanking Garner for working on their marriage at the 2013 Oscars and throwing everyone into a tizzy, Garner wasn't worried. According to *E Online*, Garner said what he was trying to say was, "Look, what we have is really real and I value it above all and I'm in it with you and I know you are in it with me." It's refreshing to see that these two Hollywood starlets have managed to make their marriage work and that they value each other.

What celebrity couple do you think work best together? Share your thoughts below.

7 Ways to Know If It's Really Love





By LaKesha Womack, Author of *"Is She The ONE?"*

Love... What is it? How do you know when you have found it? For some it is easy to determine but for most of us, we need a sign, a couple of clues...

Love is a choice. When you love someone, you have to remind yourself, sometimes daily, that this is the person that you choose to be with. No one is perfect so they will make you mad, make you feel like breaking down but if it is really love, you would rather be with them than without them. The temptation to escape your situation, even temporarily, will come at every turn. You will have a choice to stay or to go, if it's really love you will choose to stay.

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Love requires time. Always remember quality over quantity. Sometimes people get confused and think that you have to spend every free moment with another person; however, you want to be sure that you are giving the best of yourself to that person instead of the most. You need to be present and living in the

moment when you are with them. Focus on creating meaningful conversations and moments that build a solid foundation for your relationship.

Love is a priority. You make time for what's important to you. Just as you should choose to spend time with the person you love, that person should be priority in your life and not an afterthought. This does not mean that you must center your life around another person but if you find that you are not considering how your decisions will affect him or her, you probably aren't in love.

Love is unconditional. When you really love someone, you don't try to change them. You love them "because of" who they are and not "in spite of" what you see. You don't look at their flaws and think of ways to change them rather you realize that their assets and flaws combined create the person you love. Love should be inspiring and uplifting.

Love makes you vulnerable. When you love someone, you let down your guard and let them in. You make yourself emotionally available to share with the other person. You talk about feelings, your past, your present and your future. Most importantly, you are honest. Effective communication requires trust because once you let your guard down and begin sharing, you trust this person to take care of the information you are sharing and to accept you as you are.

Love requires compromise. You will not always be right nor will the other person always be right but you must be willing to meet each other in the middle. You will know its love when you willingly give in to make the person happy and they do the same for you.

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Love requires commitment. When you love someone, you don't want anyone else. When you love someone, you give it your all. You leave nothing on the table. You don't hold back.

There is no Plan B.

LaKesha Womack is the author of "Is She The ONE?" a relationship book written for men who think they are ready to get married but want to be sure. It provides ten exercises for a couple to use and determine whether they truly know each other well enough to commit the rest of their lives to each other. Network with LaKesha on Twitter (@LaKeshaWomack), Facebook (MsLaKeshaWomack) and LinkedIn (WomackCG) after you visit her personal blog (LaKeshaWomack.com).

Should You Listen When Your Parents Advise You to Break Up?





By Jennifer Harrington

As if relationships aren't challenging enough, many people face an additional obstacle when they discover that their parents do not support the romance and advocate a breakup. While it's always important to be true to yourself, love can sometimes be blind and sometimes outside opinions can be helpful in evaluating your relationship. After all, your parents have known you the longest and only have your best intentions at heart. So, how do you know when you should listen when your parents advise you to break up? Here are some of Cupid's tips:

Take their counsel to heart

When your parents voice their concerns about your romance, it is only natural that your first instinct will be to fight back and reject their opinions. Once you've had a chance to cool down, take some time to objectively assess what was said about your relationship and partner. Evaluate if their concerns are problems that can be addressed. If the situation can be addressed, do everything in your power to show your parents

that you heard their feedback and that you're taking steps to make things better. It's more likely that your parents may be concerned about something that can't easily be changed. Regardless, it is essential that you try to understand why your parents are counseling you to break-up.

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Solicit feedback from other loved ones

It's important to also talk with other family and friends to see if they agree with your parents' advice to end your romance. Seek out opportunities to honestly and openly speak with other loved ones about your relationship, and figure out if others agree with what your parents are saying. Your parents are people entitled to their opinions (which may or may not be valid), but if others echo their remarks, it's time to take notice that your relationship may be more flawed than you realized.

Assess the situation

Ultimately, you have the right to choose who you want to date – and you may fundamentally disagree with the opinions others have about your love life. However, when the people closest to you don't like the person you love, it can make your life very complicated and potentially unpleasant – and you have to decide if you are ready for those possibilities and if your partner is worth it. Ask yourself if your love is strong enough to survive such adversity. Everybody has different relationships with their families; you know your family dynamics and yourself well enough to figure out if you can imagine a happy future without your parents blessing your relationship.

Related: [5 Celebrity Exes Who Became Famous After the Break-Up](#)

Love is a powerful influence and motivator in life – but this

applies to love you experience with your family and friends, not just who you date or eventually marry. While love can be complicated, it should always bring positivity and well-being to your life. Be mindful of your parents counsel and don't be afraid to take some time away from your romance if it helps you figure out what you need and what will make you the happiest long-term.

What are some other way to deal with your parents' relationship advice? Share below.

Do the Chicken Dance: Tips for Surviving Wedding Season Single





By Rachel Seliger, JDate Community Manager

The summer months are known for a few things: warm nights, pool parties, BBQs and of course, weddings. For singles, wedding season is exciting, but it can be overwhelming when you feel like you are always the bridesmaid and never the bride.

JDate, the leading online Jewish singles community, recently surveyed members and discovered that 31 percent of singles daydream about their future wedding before they are engaged. Daydreaming is harmless, but in the meantime, with wedding season in full swing, you might have to put those dreams on hold and support a few others.

To help arm the single wedding goer this season, I've compiled a list of tips that will guarantee you have an amazing time and celebrate the new couple in style.

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Define +1: If your invitation includes a +1, it doesn't necessarily mean your guest has to be a romantic partner. Of

course check with the bride and groom first, but it might be a good idea to bring a close friend or family member as your partner in crime.

Reserve your seat: If you are flying solo, don't be afraid to make sure the bride or groom knows you want to sit with the other singles! Not only is it a great way to make friends you won't be sweating through the whole ceremony about sitting with a group of couples who might ask the infamous question, "when are you getting married?"

Reconnect with old friends: However you are related to the bride or groom, there are probably other guests that you know at the wedding. Maybe it's old friends from your childhood who you lost touch with or a relative of the bride and groom. Don't be afraid to say hi and spark a conversation. Everyone loves to reminisce!

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Do the chicken dance: You are never too old to flap your wings! Popular wedding dances like the chicken dance are perfect for singles because they don't require a partner and are an opportunity to find your next dance partner. Now get out there and shake your feathers.

Rachel Seliger is a dating guru and Community Manager of JDate.com, the premier online community for Jewish singles. When she's not shopping for her next pair of great heels, she is busy blogging on JDate's exclusive tumblr blog tumblr.jdating.tumblr.com/ featuring great first date outfit ideas, tips to make your JDate profile shine and more.

10 Relationship Behaviors You Think Are Odd... That Are Totally Normal!



By Laura Seldon for GalTime.com

What's "normal" and what's not when it comes to dating, love and relationships? Think you and your partner align with the average couple? Or are your relationship behaviors totally out there? We've asked several therapists, marriage counselors and relationship experts from around the country to shed some light on relationship behaviors that seem odd at first, but are actually quite normal. Take a seat and see how you and your mate compare!

1. Changing feelings

Once upon a time you loved rocking the highest of high heels. These days, however, you're much more apt to throw on a pair of flats. It may sound simple, but your ever-evolving feelings on shoes can help to serve as a reminder that feelings come and go – and that's OK.

"Love is a living entity," explains Karen Sherman, Ph.D. "And just like people have good days and bad – so will there be periods where the lovin' feelings just won't be there. Hang in, focus on the positive and the feelings will come back."

2. Going through "adjustment periods"

"If you decide to marry, even if you've lived together, the first year is likely to be bumpy," warns Sherman. "You are now in a legally committed relationship, the dynamics change and there is a period of adjustment. Having lived together doesn't prevent this adjustment period."

So, if you and your better half are not in a state of bliss at every moment, it doesn't mean your relationship is doomed – it just means you're normal.

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3. Enjoying different hobbies

He's into fantasy football and you're into shopping? Better yet, you're into fantasy football and he's into shopping? Either way, it's totally normal for you and your main squeeze to have different interests.

"You don't have to like all the same things to have a healthy relationship," notes Sherman. "What matters is having the same values." So go ahead and enjoy your fantasy football draft, and then swoon over the new shoes your man just bought online. You both deserve to enjoy your hobbies without feeling guilty.

4. Needing alone time

Are you the kind of person who would take yourself out for a date night for one? If so, you are not alone.

“Washing a car, walking a dog or exercising alone are signs of a healthy relationship with a secure attachment,” says Lanada Williams, a licensed counselor in Washington DC and Maryland. “Remind yourself, the individual you met still needs time to breathe and thrive.”

5. Being slow to compliment

When is the last time you told your partner how hot they looked? We’re all guilty of holding back compliments, and, according to Licensed Marriage and Family Therapist Holly Cox, it may even be something you’re doing on purpose!

“When you give a compliment to anyone, but particularly someone you like a whole lot, you’re putting yourself on the line,” explains Cox. “Clients tell me they are often afraid their partners will reject the compliment – or worse, say something along the lines of, ‘Wow, you’re finally noticing everything I do around here. Uh-huh. What do you want?’”

Although this may be normal behavior, that doesn’t mean it’s OK. Remember to compliment your partner and accept the praise they give you!

6. Having trouble getting in the mood

Every married couple has experienced one of those nights (or mornings) where one member of the duo is ready for a racy romp, but the other is ready for a mellow nap!

“Virtually all couples have sexual desire problems sooner or later,” says Licensed Psychologist Dr. Kate Roberts. “Couples often go long periods of time without having sex and then once they start up again, their sex life continues on its own.”

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7. Withholding information

Sure you told your partner about that expensive purse you just bought – you just chose not reveal how much you dropped on it!

“Couples often have different priorities for discretionary income and it’s not uncommon for them to keep their secret stashes of clothes, toys, candy or other discretionary items,” says Dr. Roberts.

Just remember it’s never healthy to lie about how much you spend. If your partner asks how much you blew on that new pair of Jimmy Choos, keep it real. Lying to your partner – especially about money – is never going to lead you anywhere good.

8. Sparring, bickering & fighting

As two different people with two different philosophies on life, you’re bound to disagree at one point or another.

“Fighting is normal,” explains Therapist Dana Ward. “While some couples may think fighting is the sign of a bad relationship, it actually is very important. The key is fighting with a purpose.”

So, whether you are fighting about something as trivial as how to fold socks, or as significant as a job transition, make sure to fight the topic – not each other.

9. Finding other people attractive

You may be utterly in love with your partner, but that doesn’t mean you can’t admire a hottie with a great set of legs.

“You can and should appreciate all the beauty and dashing good looks all around you,” shares Ward. However, she notes,

“Attractive and attraction is different. Find other people attractive, but stop short of allowing yourself to be attracted to them.”

10. Getting scared and pulling away

Pulling away, taking a time out, going on a break – we’re all human, and being vulnerable with someone else can at times be scary enough to make you run for the hills!

“Sometimes when things are getting very serious men, in particular, may pull away while they decided to move forward,” explains Relationship Coach Stef Safran.

However, just because one person in the relationship needs a breather, it doesn’t mean your relationship is in desperate need of an SOS. It just means you’re human!

Now that you’ve read through these 10 strange relationship behaviors that aren’t actually weird at all, hopefully you feel a little better about your own relationship. If you still think you’re odd, though, then embrace the quirks that make your relationship special and take a line from Holly Golightly in *Breakfast at Tiffany’s* – “It may be normal, darling; but I’d rather be natural.”

Should You Have a Second Date When the First One Was OK?





By Kerri Sheehan

Everybody dreads first dates. They're awkward, uncomfortable, and how many times can you really tell a relative stranger about your life goals? Many people look for that initial spark when on a first date and without that present won't even consider a second date. How do you know when opting out of a second date is a mistake? Here's some advice:

Is there some form of chemistry?

Some people needed immediate chemistry whereas others are content to go on a second date if the first date presented no red flags. Good chemistry can come from a lot of different ingredients. A strong physical attraction, shared interests, or compatible personalities can all be indicators of that wow factor sort of chemistry. Situations like these generally lead directly to second date. If you sensed some sort of chemistry, but you're not really sure that it was the strongest you've experienced then a second date couldn't hurt your cause. Maybe your date was having an off night that messed up the spark and the chemistry will be stronger the second time around. That

second chance could land you a new lover.

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Don't stress

It's okay not to want to give a second chance. What if your date said or did something that really truly upset you? Did you have a battle with an eating disorder and your date happened to make a dig at girls who don't eat? Or maybe your date said something bad about teachers, not knowing that your own mother is a teacher? If so then it's more than okay to put this date in the dud pile. There is absolutely nothing wrong with knowing someone isn't right for you from the get-go.

Think of what you have to lose

Unless you're one date away from Mr. Right, then accepting the invitation for a second date doesn't impede your life in anyway. Dates can be pretty fun as long as you enjoy whom you're going on the date with. If you rated the date as okay then going on a second one could even produce better results. Even if the second date once again doesn't wow you then you could have made a good friend in the process of trying to date him.

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Ultimately it's up to you whether or not you want to go on a second date when the first one wasn't all that special. Don't feel bad about turning down the offer for a second date, but also don't say no too soon as your feelings may change after you get to know the person better.

How do you decide if you should go on a second date? Share below.

Why You Should Hold 'Marriage Meetings'



By Matty Staudt for GalTime.com

I have been with my wife for over 10 years. We have an amazing relationship that is full of love and understanding. We rarely argue, never fight and are genuinely each other's best friends. The one thing that we have recently realized though, is that we don't really communicate everything that is on our mind or bothering us about the other person. We are so busy keeping each other happy that we don't make time to talk about the little bothers that can build up.

Most couples come to this point after awhile together and instead of making the time to talk, they let the little things sit and don't address them, when they probably should. The problem with this is, similar to a pressure cooker, people end up storing too much little stuff and eventually it turns into a big thing that explodes. Exploding is never good and instead of issues being resolved, they become a giant whirlwind of accusations.

So we have started doing something new that I think has made a great relationship even better. Once a week we have a "Marriage Meeting." This is a time that we set aside once a week to talk about things that might be bothering us, or to just tell the other something that we appreciate about them. There are some rules that sound easy, but can be a little more challenging than you would think.

1. The meeting should be held at the same day and time every week. No skipping! Because if you skip one, the next thing you know you're skipping two...then three.... And so on.

2. Each partner has one turn to state something that is on their mind or bothering them.

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3. One partner talks, the other listens. This is not a discussion. Anything said is to be listened to only... No responding. This gives each person time to think about what the other has said and then work on a solution.

4. If there is nothing bothering one partner, then they should use the meeting as a time to tell the other something that they appreciate about them or mention something they liked about them during the past week.

5. Again... NO RESPONDING. This can be somewhat difficult, because the initial, knee-jerk reaction is to defend oneself. But this is a meeting not an attack and anything said should

be given time to resonate.

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6. Each partner should take what was said and try to work on it the following week. At the next meeting you can discuss what you did about the issue or how you tried to resolve it – IF in fact there was an issue to be resolved.

These meetings have been great for us. They have allowed us the opportunity to A) discuss issues that we would normally suppress and B) voice our appreciation for things that might otherwise go unrecognized.

I believe these are fantastic tools for any relationship at any stage. Give it a try and let us know how it works for you. You can email me at matty@straightmalefriend.com

3 Things a Couple Can Do to Combat the Top Risk Factors and Save a Marriage





By Mark Baer

Marriage is a wonderful institution that affords couples significant psychological, emotional and financial benefits, in addition to being a commitment of their love to each other. Almost certainly, nobody enters into a marriage, expecting that it will end in divorce. However, over the years, certain risk factors that contribute to the likelihood of divorce have become increasingly clear. The following is a list of 5 of the top risk factors for divorce:

Quality of interaction

Researchers have been able to predict with 90 percent accuracy whether or not a couple will divorce within 5 years, based upon the quality of their interaction. Negative interaction is highly predictive of marital distress.

Related: [5 Ways to Stop Sabotaging Your Relationships](#)

Having divorced parents

Children of divorce have a higher rate of divorce,

particularly when their parents' divorce was a complete surprise to them. Such surprises cause children to lose trust in their relationships.

Marrying at a very young age

Marrying before age of 26 increases the likelihood of divorce, particularly earlier on in the marriage. As might be expected, this has to do with maturity. In fact, our brains do not reach full maturity until around age 25. Is it realistic that a lifetime commitment entered into before reaching maturity will last a lifetime?

Lack of a college education

There happens to be a correlation between income and education level. Since poverty causes a tremendous strain on marital relationships, the lack of a college education is a top risk factor.

Manner in which a person reacts to problems and disappointments

People who have strong or defensive reactions to problems and disappointments have a higher risk of divorce than those whose reactions are more reasonable and who have learned the art of non-defensive communication.

As with most things in life, some things are easier to address than others. The following is a list of the top 3 things couples can do to combat those risk factors:

Marital education programs

Studies published in the Journal of Family Psychology and in other highly respected organizations indicate that participation in marital education programs leads to more satisfying marriages and more than doubles the likelihood that couples will stay together. Those programs teach couples communication and problem solving skills, and how to maintain

and intensify fun, affection and sexuality. Please note that “counseling” and “marital education programs” are not one and the same.

Therapy

If one or both spouses suffer from trust issues with regard to relationships or have a personality tendency to have strong or defensive reactions to problems and disappointment, it might behoove them to seek therapy in an effort to resolve those issues.

Related: [Five Celebrity Divorces We Really Weren't Expecting](#)

Return to school

It's never too late to return to school and complete high school or its equivalent and enroll in college. This may require making certain sacrifices, especially when people are already experiencing financial difficulties. However, if income and level of education are related and you don't obtain additional education, how do you otherwise address the strain that poverty takes on a marriage?

Mark earned his B.A. in Economics-Business from UCLA. From there, he went on to earn his law degree from Loyola Law School. He also completed extended studies in International and Comparative Law at Cambridge University in England. Mark is a public speaker and regular contributor and legal expert to a number of outlets including: The Los Angeles Times, Forbes, The Wall Street Journal, REUTERS, TIME Magazine, The Pasadena Star News, KTLA Morning News as well as numerous ABC, CBS, NBC, CW, and FOX affiliates around the country.

Celebrities Who Dated Out of Their League



By April Littleton

Everyone has heard the saying “opposites attract,” but we still can’t help but wonder how certain celebrities end up with some of the people they date. Is it their personality? Or maybe it’s because of their outlandish style. Whatever the case may be, some of the most average-looking celebrities end up with the most stunning beauties in America. Here’s a list of celebrities Cupid thinks date out of their league:

Jermaine Dupri and Janet Jackson: Everyone was stunned when the producer, rapper and songwriter confirmed to the public that he was dating Janet Jackson. The duo dated for eight

years until they finally called it quits in 2009.

Related: [5 Celebrity Couples that Waited for Marriage](#)

Jamie Kennedy and Jennifer Love Hewitt: Kennedy dated his *Ghost Whisperer* co-star from March 2009 to March 2010. However, the relationship wasn't smooth sailing when harsh criticisms about their love affair hit the newsstands. In an interview for [People](#), Kennedy said dating Jennifer Love Hewitt wasn't easy when no one wanted them together in the first place.

Marilyn Manson and Dita Von Teese: This isn't the first time the musician, actor and painter landed such a hottie. Manson was engaged to Rose McGowan from February 1998 to January 19, 2001 before he met Dita Von Teese on the set of one of his music videos. They became a couple on his 32nd birthday. They married in 2005 only for Von Teese to file for divorce a year later due to irreconcilable differences. In an interview with the *Sunday Telegraph*, she said, "I get the impression he thinks I was unsupportive, but the truth is I wasn't supportive of his lifestyle, and someone else came along who was."

Macaulay Culkin and Mila Kunis: The world never understood the relationship between these two celebrities. Culkin began dating the *That '70s Show* actress in May 2002. The couple stayed together for nearly 9 years – longer than anyone would have guessed. On January 3, 2011, Kunis' publicist confirmed their breakup. The duo remain friends while Kunis has moved on to Ashton Kutcher.

Kris Humphries and Kim Kardashian: Even though the *Keeping Up with the Kardashians* star is in a happy relationship with Kanye West and is a new mom to baby North, we can't forget about her brief marriage to Kris Humphries. The basketball player began dating Kardashian in October 2010. They became engaged in May 2011 and married that same year in August. The

wedding was highly publicized and even had its own two-part TV special. However, the marriage didn't end in bliss. Just 72 days later, Kardashian filed for divorce.

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Russell Brand and Katy Perry: To this day, we still don't know what the *Teenage Dream* singer saw in Russell Brand. The couple began dating after meeting for the second time at the 2009 MTV VMAs. The pair became engaged in December of that year and married in a traditional Hindu ceremony in October 2010. Just 14 months into the marriage, Brand filed for divorce via text message and never spoke to Perry again.

What other celebrities do you think date out of their league? Comment below.

Top 3 Common Dating Mistakes College Students Make





By Chau Nguyen, "America's Hottest Dating Coach"

No parents, no rules and unlimited alcohol can trigger a lot of heartbreaks for many unsuspecting college students. Look at what happened to Justin Bieber and Selena Gomez. They have great songs, but their relationship is a train wreck! Protect yourself by learning the top 3 common mistakes college students make in dating.

1. Thinking that dating doesn't exist in college anymore.

I've interviewed hundreds of college students and asked them one question, *"Does dating still exist in college?"* Some students would tell me, *"Of course! I'm in a relationship right now,"* and others would say, *"No way! Dating is taboo in college."*

Everyone has an opinion on this topic, but the truth is that dating *does* exist in college.

Even if all of your college friends are hooking up, there are many others who are in exclusive relationships. So if you want to be in a serious relationship, remember there are guys who

are looking for the exact same thing right now.

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2. Believing that you have to put out.

One college woman at the University of California, Irvine told me, *"All the girls are putting out, so if I don't do it, I can't compete with them."*

All her friends immediately nodded in agreement. That's a huge misconception among smart and beautiful college women. If they just want to explore their sexuality, then by all means, be safe and have fun! But many of the guys I interviewed told me that they would never consider getting serious with a woman after having a one-night stand with her.

Is that a double-standard? Completely. It's not fair for women, and I can sympathize with that. That's why the best cure for this is to control the pace of the interaction.

Women *do* have the power to veto. If you think he's moving too fast, stop him. He will respect you for standing your ground, and more importantly, you will respect yourself more.

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3. Waiting too long to bring up the "relationship status" talk.

Most women understandably hesitate to bring this topic up because they worry that it might scare the guy away. So they just play along until they find out that he's been hooking up with other girls on the side.

You don't have to force him to be your boyfriend the first day you meet him. But you need to make one thing very clear early on—is this going to be an exclusive relationship, or are you both free to date other people too? Just be sure to approach

him from a place of confidence.

Tell him, *"Hey, I'm curious. We obviously like each other. So where is this going?"*

If he wants to be exclusive with you, you've hit the jackpot! If he doesn't, you've saved yourself a lot of time, energy, and heartache. Either way, it's a win-win situation for you.

Chau Nguyen, "America's #1 Dating Coach for Tech Guys," helps men and women skyrocket their confidence and succeed in dating. He is the founder of The One Who Gets It. For more information, please visit www.TheOneWhoGetsIt.com or follow him on twitter @datingcoachchau.

Does It Matter If You Have A Lot In Common?





By Matty Staudt for GalTime.com

Whenever anyone starts a relationship or meets someone, the first thing people want to know is, "What do you have in common?" On the surface this seems like a good question and one that warrants serious thought. The more I think about it, though, and think about my wife and I, it seems to me that what you have in common is not the most important thing. In fact, having things not in common makes for a more interesting life in the long run.

Here are some things I DO NOT have in common with my wife... and I believe add to our relationship rather than take away from it.

Music

Yes, we can agree that the Beach Boys were awesome and everyone loves the 80's, but when I really want to crank up my tunes, my wife is not around. I like to pump metal, rap and even country from time to time. And when I do, I like it full blast. My wife does not. So, on car trips we have to find

alternatives to music, or just have conversations while driving. We have amazing talks and love our road trips because we are not just zoning out to music, but rather talking about things we don't talk about in our daily lives. I still pump my music too loud, I just do it alone in traffic.

Related: [Absence Shouldn't Make the Heart Grow Fonder](#)

Food

We love to eat. Let me repeat, we LOVE to eat! Going out to dinner is one of our favorite things. But when it comes to our favorite foods, we are total opposites. I love sushi, she can't stand it. She likes SPAM, yes, SPAM. How can two polar opposites in the food department find common ground? We find new places that have food we both have never tried and on occasion she lets me go to sushi while she gets whatever hot food they offer on the menu. Food is important in relationships, but it is not a dealbreaker. That is unless they are vegan.

Sports

I love them, she can't stand them. I thought this would be hard to make work, but after pushing her to go to a few baseball games, we have found that she actually enjoys going to the ballpark. Sure it's for the beer and dogs, but still we do it together and we are both happy about it. If I need to watch sports, that is a good time for me to do my own thing with friends and let her do something for herself. (That usually means shopping.)

Related: [Why You Should Hold 'Marriage Meetings'](#)

Friends

I am a person who needs to have a lot of friends around and hates to do anything alone. My wife would be fine to keep her own company 90% of the time. We make it work because we are

each other's friends. She fills that gap I need and when she needs her alone time, I head out with my boys. Happy, Happy, Happy.

My bottom line is that not having things in common is not always a bad thing. It opens doors for both people to explore new options and new ways of thinking. Not having the same interests makes life so much more interesting for you in the long run. Let's face it, agreeing on everything is boring and having someone who challenges you and your comfort zone makes for a much more interesting long-term life.

5 Tips for Creating a Perfect Online Dating Profile





By Kristin Mattern

It's time. You've decided to enter the world of online dating. Perhaps you've already been online for a while, but aren't getting the desired results. Either way, you're ready for love and looking to put yourself in the best light possible while searching for that special someone. Here are five expert tips for creating the perfect online dating profile:

1. Keep your screen name classy: This is the first thing people see when they're searching for a sweetie. Think of this as your first impression, so choose wisely. There's a big difference between HuggieBear73 and CALLMEBIGPAPA. eFlirt founder, and dating expert Laurie Davis notes, "Some traits resonate better face-to-face than wire-to-wire. Humor tends to be one of these. Unless the written word is your thing, something funny you say IRL might come off differently on screen." This doesn't mean you have to be boring; choose something catchy and clever. You have to stand out after all! Pick a name that speaks to you, and is attention getting without being overly outrageous.

Related: [The Good, Bad and Ugly of Dating Advice Guides](#)

2. Pick your pics: Place flattering pictures of yourself on your page. Just like your screen name, this is the first thing a potential partner will see. You want a pretty pic to grab attention. Choose pictures of yourself that you not only look great in, but also catch you doing activities you enjoy. “In profile photos, makeup is a must, but photo editing is a don’t,” says Davis, “Let’s face it; ultimately you’re looking for someone who loves every pixel off screen.” Davis also recommends only putting up four to seven images, to ensure your profile isn’t overly time consuming to look through. Also, be sure to use current pictures. Sure, you looked amazing on that cruise six years ago, but you might look different today. Your pictures should be good looking, but also a current reflection of how your appearance is now.

3. Go for the highlights: Pretend your profile is your personal highlight reel. “Everyone should aim to emit a friendly vibe,” suggests Davis, “Check your baggage at the door. It’s TMI up front. Instead, keep the focus on you. After all, that’s why matches are clicking on your avatar—they want to know more!” Use your profile as your time to shine. Do you have any awesome accomplishments, or neat talents? Think about whom you are trying to connect with. Do you LOVE to horseback ride? Highlight your passions to attract a honey with similar interests.

4. Save some for later: Keep a little mystery going. Don’t write your whole life story on your profile. Love is about intrigue; give just enough information to get someone interested. Make some flirty allusions and sassy hints. You aren’t trying to write a novella. Two or three paragraphs for the “About Me” and a couple of sentences under categories is a good rule of thumb says *HuffingtonPost*. Davis also notes that you should “Nix ultimatums. This is a first impression and negativity could turn off even the most awesome match for you.”

Related: [10 Tips to Being Successful With Online Dating](#)

5. Be an original: You're the only you there is! When creating your own profile, don't copy other people, use clichés or regurgitate generic lines like, "I am a great listener." Instead, be specific and explain who you are. Tell a short story about yourself and your perfect mate. As Davis reminds us, "Online dating isn't about being the hippest hottie on the digital block, it's about meeting your One. So while you're writing, remember to consider what might raise an eyebrow from that ideal keyboard cutie." Be yourself, after all you're looking for a special someone to love you not some made-up version of you.

For more information on eFlirt expert Laurie Davis, you can check out her book or website www.eflirtexpert.com/

The New Dating Game





By M. Hill

Have I been out of the dating field so long that they've completely altered the whole arena without me even knowing? I'm talking about *STYLE* dates. Are you familiar with these things, you know, dates with a theme?

Here's one type: **Prankster Date**. Example: Pretend to be a couple looking to buy a new car, maybe. Doesn't that sound like fun – totally yanking the chain of someone trying to earn a living? Or why stop there? Why not pretend to be a married couple looking to put an aging parent in a home? Together you can tour assisted living facilities and giggle behind the backs of those showing you around. Oh, what fun! They say prankster dates *do* bring out your playful side.

Related: [3 Dating Types for Single Ladies](#)

Another is the '**Best Of**' **Date**. Examples may include trying to find the best ice cream parlor in town or, say, the best microbrewery. In these instances, while getting to know each other, couples can eat themselves into oblivion or drink

themselves into oblivion – the *best of* both worlds – either way, chances are good each will end up vomiting – and, really, what better way to get to know someone than when they're at their worst?

Or how about this: **Scavenger Hunt Date**. This is apparently the adult version of that childhood classic *I Spy with my Little Eye*. Example: "Would you like to go to the boardwalk and see how many people we can spot wearing hats?" I don't think I need to add any additional commentary on this one, do you? Seriously, could you imagine being asked out on a date like this? I mean if you're already in a relationship and happen to be out taking a walk and decide to throw in something like... like... nope, not even then, forget it. Unless you're looking to date a seven-year-old, I'd say this indicates your search for Mr. Right (or Mrs.) is far from over.

I'd be remiss if I didn't mention the **Errand Date**. Pretty much self-explanatory, and again, picture you're not in a relationship with this person, you're being asked out on a date. "Say, if you're not doing anything this weekend, the hull of my boat needs refinishing..." It's not a euphemism. The theory behind this one is that tedious chores become fun dates. Could you imagine? Think about it, yard work, grocery shopping, house cleaning, ooh, laundry – you know, with this line of thinking the fun is nearly limitless – and why not get to know someone by sorting through their dirty laundry? This is what seems to interest people nowadays, anyway.

Related: [Five Ways to Cut Down on Dating Costs](#)

I don't know. It's probably just me (it usually is), but does anyone ever just do dinner and a movie anymore? Maybe this sort of date could regain its popularity if it had a trendy name? What do you think about **The Retro Date**? Call me old-fashioned, but I kind of like the sound of that.

M. Hill is a 40-something year old Northeast transplant living

in Scottsdale, AZ who authored the book The Ones That Got Away – A Dating Memoir which is really just an elaborate answer to the question, “Why are you still single?”

Why So Many Women Couldn't Care Less About Getting Married



By Marcus Osborne for GalTime.com

I don't know how or why or when it happened, but somewhere along the line I realized that I have an inordinate amount of

female friends. It's been a blessing and a curse really. The majority of my closest friends are female. I'm living proof that men and women really can be "just friends."

One of the stellar benefits of having close platonic relationships with women (I'll save the negatives for another column – because believe me, particularly in the dating game, there are many!) is you get some compelling, honest insight on what makes women tick. After all these years, I think I've got a pretty decent understanding of the ladies. I'll never completely figure you all out – I won't even attempt that Herculean task – but I think I know enough to stay out of the doghouse!

Your SMF's receive a fair amount of e-mails. As one of the founders of StraightMaleFriend.com, I thank you. Lord only knows where we'd be without you and your correspondence. From those e-mails and the regular correspondence with you and many of my friends, I've noticed a surprising trend.

Women who couldn't care less about getting married. Seriously.

This is not to infer that the general female populace has suddenly become anti-marriage. Not only do I not harbor that belief, but the preponderance of evidence clearly indicates that matrimony is still the preferred path of life's journey. But what I have seen is an ever-expanding legion of women who are quite content with their lives sans a husband. Women who are cool to the idea or just flat out not interested in being a wife.

Related: [6 Clues To Look For in a Keeper](#)

What's really been fascinating is how many of these ladies still aren't comfortable sharing that perspective with other people because of the way the information is/would be perceived. And it really gets touchy when they announce that

they're not interested in having kids. Just the other day, I was told, "Marcus, you know how some people's biological clock is ticking? Mine's not broken – it's just not even there."

Now understand, as a guy, this is fairly unbelievable news. What woman doesn't dream about getting married? What woman doesn't have her entire wedding mapped out by the time she sees her first Julia Roberts movie? Are you kidding? Of course you want to get hitched ... you're a woman!

Well, that's simply not the case.

Related: [Dating Advice: Deal Breakers That REALLY Matter](#)

Apparently there are a lot of women who could give a rat's a** about having a relationship, in general, not to mention marriage in particular. And I find it fascinating, brave and a spectacular display of self-honesty to admit it. As open-minded as we all like to think we are, those women get the collective stink-eye. We're a unique society that way. We promote women's strength and independence, but we're perplexed when they exercise that independence by NOT wanting to get married, by NOT wanting to have kids, by being ... a real life Samantha Jones if she chooses.

I'd love for you to share your thoughts here ... whether you are or aren't married, how do you feel about it? If you aren't and have no intention or couldn't care less about doing so – why? Furthermore, how do you feel about the women who choose to forgo the institution altogether? Let's hear your thoughts...

Top 7 Tips to Win the Love of Someone Rich or Famous – When You Are Not!



By Aimee Elizabeth, author of “Relationships & Dating Sucks!”

Everyone wants the Cinderella (or Cinderfella) story to happen to them – but how do you keep the interest of your new fancy romance and get your happily every after? Here are the secrets you need to know.

1. Treat them like anyone else. Celebrities are used to being catered to, as if they are “better than” everyone. Show that you consider yourself an equal, and you will not only surprise them, you will intrigue them.

Related: [The Most Powerful Tool to Help You Find Your Soul Mate: Intuition](#)

2. Don't rearrange your life to suit them. By keeping your own schedule and "having a life," you will sometimes be unavailable – unlike everyone else they have dated before you. They will wonder what could possibly be more interesting than themselves, making you much more attractive to them.

3. Don't act like a crazed fan. Blubbering about how you've seen every movie they ever made will only make you look like a lunatic and turn them off. No one wants a stalker.

4. Be who you are. Don't be intimidated by fame or fortune. People are turned off when you show insecurity. Don't brag, but be proud of whatever path you have chosen in life.

5. Never ask them to buy you anything. Nothing is a bigger turnoff than a gold digger who is too lazy to even hide it. If they offer to buy you an expensive gift, tell them that their company is the best gift they can give you. How often do you think they hear that?

6. Reciprocate. Be sure to plan and pay for dates you can afford, and treat your celebrity. Cook dinner, bake brownies, think of something fun that you know they will like. Your thoughtfulness, and willingness not to treat them like an ATM machine, will be noticed.

7. Do not post about your dates on any social media. Celebrities are constantly avoiding the paparazzi and crave privacy. If you turn your relationship into a media frenzy, they will drop you like a hot rock.

Related: [3 Ways to Use the Psychic Edge to Find Mr. Right](#)

Everyone wants someone who loves them for them – not for what they have. Follow these tips and you can end up like Matt Damon, who married a former bartender, Luciana Barros, in 2005

– and they just renewed their vows. Or like Julia Roberts, who married cameraman Danny Moder, in 2002 and they have 3 kids together. Always remember, the best way to stand out from the crowd is by behaving normally.

Aimee Elizabeth is the author of 3 best selling books, including Relationships & Dating Sucks! Internet Dating Horror Stories, Dieting Sucks! Eat Anything & Lose Weight and Poverty Sucks! How to Become a Self-Made Millionaire. Aimee is also a multi-millionaire, successful real estate investor, guest speaker and consultant. You can find her books on <http://www.AimeeElizabeth.net> or on Amazon.com.

Absence Shouldn't Make the Heart Grow Fonder





By Matty Staudt for GalTime.com

Recently I took a job that will require me to be gone 5 days a week and I will only see my wife on the weekends. Luckily it's only for a few weeks because I'm on day 3 and I can tell you it already sucks. I truly enjoy being with my wife and being apart is really tough on both of us.

I bring this up because I was thinking about that expression, "Absence makes the heart grow fonder." I've realized that that's not the way it should be. I appreciate all my time with my wife and all absence is doing is making us both sad. Heck, even our dogs are bummed I am gone. (At least that's what she tells me.)

I think too many couples take for granted the time they spend together, and to be honest, most guys I know can't wait to do stuff without their wives. It's not that they don't love their wives, they just like to have that individual time away. I think society, in general, has kind of ingrained in people that it's an acceptable thought for men. I don't think it is.

Related: [Why You Should Hold 'Marriage Meetings'](#)

Now don't get me wrong, I think some time apart is healthy and I know my wife and I are that annoying couple that likes to do everything together. We do it for a few reasons that I'm going to share with you.

She's my best friend.

I know it's cliché that your wife should be your best friend, but I see a lot of couples that don't feel this way or have forgotten with time. Remind yourself that your mate is and should be the person you enjoy having fun with. Whether we are simply sitting together, watching TV, talking or out on the town, she is the person I want to do all of those activities with.

I am a better person with her around.

I know I am a better person with my wife by my side. If ever I don't think so, my friends are quick to remind me. Especially when I put on my jerk hat when I'm out by myself. If you are not a better person with your mate, think about why you aren't and whether or not it's something you can improve on.

Related: [Does It Matter If You Have A Lot In Common?](#)

We make each other laugh.

Laughing together is KEY. If you meet a couple that doesn't make each other laugh, then I will guarantee you it's not a healthy relationship. Whether it's doing my underwear dance for her or sharing an inside joke, we laugh a lot. Are you laughing a lot with your partner?

So absence may make the heart grow fonder, but it shouldn't.

You should enjoy every day and minute with the one you love. If this is not the case, then maybe you are not with the right person. Treat every day as if it were the last day you will see your mate for a very long time. Make each other laugh, be best friends and strive to bring out the best in one another.

What do you think? Do you travel or does your spouse? How do you keep the closeness?

Celebrity Couples With Similar Wardrobes



By Kristin Mattern

Talk about seeing double! Celebrity couples take coordination to the next level by donning matching outfits that could beat out the Bobbsey Twins. These starlet couples don't just love each other, they love their well-matched wardrobes as well! Stars are expected to have harmonious attire when they're strutting down the red carpet, not only does this emphasize their relationship status, but it also makes for stunning photographs. However, celebs don't just try to compliment each other's looks just for events, they also end up in look-a-like ensembles on their off days when they're going out for a walk, or just hanging out.

Why do celebrity, and everyday, couples like to rock the "twins" look? In an article for [YouBeauty](#), Psychology Advisor and Professor of Psychology Art Markman, Ph.D., explains that when people spend a lot of time together, they start to think similarly. For example, couples often finish each other's sentences. "This also happens with appearance," Dr. Markman notes, "Couples mimic each other's taste and will also influence each other directly. That is, if you know your partner likes a particular style or color, you will start to wear that more often. If your partner likes that style or color, then he'll wear that as well." Check out these celebrity couples with their copycat clothes:

Related: [Celebrity Couples: More Like Us Than We Want To Admit?](#)

1. Prince William and Kate Middleton: The Duke and Duchess of Cambridge keep it classy and sophisticated when they match their outfits. A *Yahoo Shine* article shows the two sporting similar white ten-gallon cowboy hats for a rodeo in 2011.

2. David and Victoria Beckham: [US Weekly](#) shows this posh pair posing in expertly matched attire, with David's tailored pant suits color coordinating with Victoria's beautiful dresses. This power couple always looks their best, but they are

especially stunning in their similar ensembles.

3. Mila Kunis and Ashton Kutcher: These two know how to show their team spirit with matching Cubs Tees. Back in 2012 [The Huffington Post](#) reports that the two were seen wearing identical outfits of blue Cubs Tees, jeans, sneakers and baseball caps while rooting for their favorite team in a NYC sports bar.

4. Kim Kardashian and Kanye West: Well known for their duplicate outfits, these two are a knock out duo when dressed alike. Kardashian has undergone what [The Huffington Post](#) calls “Westification,” and the starlet commented she “dresses more for my man than for myself!” to *US Weekly*. No matter how these outfits came together, [ET News](#) pictures the star couple looking sensual in all cream.

5. Jennifer Aniston and Justin Theroux: Since this couple already has a similar taste in clothing, it isn’t surprising they often end up wearing the same outfit. Wearing matching fedoras and black leather jackets in a picture on [Cosmopolitan](#) the two look adorable, like a matched set!

Related: [Top 7 Best-Dressed Celebrities of 2013](#)

6. Mariah Carey and Nick Cannon: This celeb couple looks white hot in more than the matching angel costumes they wore one Halloween. [NY Daily News](#) shows the pair while vacationing in Aspen and looking glamorous in the winter wonderland setting while wearing white from hat-covered-head to boot-clad-toe; their dog even got in on the action by wearing an adorable little white jacket!

What do you think of coordinating celebrity couples? Do you and your sweetie match outfits sometimes? Let us know in the comments below.

Reap the Benefits of Cutting Costs on Your Big Day



By Rev. Randy Williams

For many couples, planning a wedding can be financially exhausting. If not planned carefully enough, the most important day of your life can leave a hole in your pocket shortly after you tie the knot. Although every woman yearns for a dream wedding, they also want a dream house, dream car and a family to go along with it. With the average wedding costing over \$20,000 nowadays, many newly engaged couples are becoming wiser and planning their weddings on a budget. If you and your significant other find yourself walking a financial

tightrope just to get married, then you might want to consider setting a strict budget for a wedding ceremony that is more easily affordable.

Regardless of the size or planning, every wedding can cost a substantial amount money. You are going to have to pay for a venue, food, marriage licenses and invitations. One way to begin planning for an affordable wedding is to cut down on costs and avoid unnecessary expenses. Below is a list of ways you can cut down on some of your wedding costs:

Rent your tuxedo and wedding dress: There is no sense in paying a small fortune on something that you and your partner will only be wearing once. There are many places where you can rent classy tuxedos and beautiful bridal gowns.

Related: [5 Conversations Every Couple Should Have Before Getting Married](#)

Get creative and make your own invitations, decorations and centerpieces: By taking a trip to the local arts and crafts stores, you can save money on pricey invitations and buy materials to make your own.

Look for family and friends that can donate their talents: If you have a family member or friend that's a photographer, DJ or pastor, ask if they can provide a discount or possibly lend their services for the occasion.

Utilize the same venue: For most couples, renting two separate venues for the wedding ceremony and reception can be costly. Consider reserving one location and using the same furniture and decorations for both events to save some bucks.

Eliminating wedding costs and setting a budget will save you money for things that come after the wedding is over. The money saved on a wedding and the accompanying reception can be used for a down payment on a house, your honeymoon or to pay

off debt from credit card balances and school loans.

Related: [Four Dates and a Wedding](#)

By cutting down unnecessary expenses and planning a wedding on a budget, you can enjoy the biggest day of your life without worrying too much about the financial woes that follow.

Rev. Randy Williams is licensed, ordained, and is an active local pastor in Cave Creek, AZ. He has a Bible college degree and a seminary degree. He has been a minister since 1986. He has experience working with brides and officiating hundreds of wedding ceremonies since 1988.

His approach and style to weddings and marriage preparation is casual and relaxed. He is very committed to preparing the couple for a life-long marriage, not just the perfect wedding day. For more information, visit Rev. Randy Williams official website: <http://phoenixweddingpastors.com>

8 Things Your Wedding Can Do Without





By Kendal Perez for GalTime.com

According to a survey conducted by The Knot, couples spent an average of \$28,427 on their wedding and related events last year. It's no surprise that weddings are big business, and yet it's tough to imagine dropping 300 Benjamins on a single-day event.

There are lots of ways to trim wedding expenses, especially with the number of DIY crafts available to eager brides on Pinterest. However, there are some things your wedding can do without entirely that add up to big savings. Read on for eight such recommendations.

1. Summer setting

The cost of a wedding is not only impacted by the season, but also by the time and day of the week. For example, a Saturday afternoon wedding in July will cost you more than a Sunday-morning ceremony in March. The impact of timing on the overall cost of your wedding cannot be overstated, so check Turbotax.com has a handy infographic for insight into

the best budget-friendly times to get married.

Related: [Love Advice: 3 Signs He's the Right Guy to Be Your Valentine](#)

2. Enormous guest list

The best way to save money on your nuptials is to keep the guest list small. The number of people you invite impacts every cost associated with your event, from location to invitations to menu. The smaller the wedding, the more intimate the event. Plus, it means fewer headaches all around for those involved in planning the big day.

3. Save-the-Dates

I'm not sure when we decided one wedding invitation wasn't enough, but this trend is the bane of budgets the world over. While invitations aren't the costliest part of a wedding, they're the most redundant and unnecessary. If key people can't make it unless they pencil you in a year in advance, pick up the phone or send them an email. Everyone else considers two-months sufficient notice.

4. Custom invitations

With save-the-dates off of your list, you can invest lots of money in the invitations, right? Wrong. Gold-flecked cardstock and lace-trimmed envelopes will be lining wastebaskets within moments of receipt, or at the very most a few days post-ceremony. Thankfully, you can find customizable wedding packages online for a fraction of the cost. For the truly frugal, free wedding printables abound, and you can buy cheap printer ink using Inkjet Willy to cut the cost of at-home printing.

5. Wedding favors

Wedding favors look charming in style shoots, but are ultimately a waste of money. Leave them out and I guarantee

guests won't gripe about the lack of personalized M&M packets or monogrammed matchstick books. In fact, they may thank you – it's one less tchotchke to feel badly about tossing in the trash.

6. Full bar

A cash bar is a surefire way to save money and annoy your guests at the same time. Meet your guests halfway with complimentary beer, wine and a signature cocktail. You'll have fun creating your very own wedding drink, and you'll save on the cost of offering every spirit and mixer known to man. For signature cocktail inspiration, peruse [this gallery](#) of tasty offerings.

Related: [How to Balance a New Relationship and Love with a Booming Career](#)

7. Multi-course meal

The most expensive element of my wedding was the food. Despite guests' declarations that it was the best wedding spread EVER, I lament the cost. Before you deliberate over the chicken or the salmon, consider a more condensed eating experience to save money. Early-evening weddings can get away with cocktail hour accompanied by appetizers or small plates. Mid-morning ceremonies can have fun with brunch fare for much less than typical dinner spreads.

8. Location, location, location

Believe it or not, destination weddings can actually cost less than traditional ceremonies. The cost of travel and accommodations can be a deterrent for most guests, making your overall price tag potentially less. It all depends on the location, of course, but ultimately it's a good option to consider if you've always wanted to get married on a beach.

Avoiding the Top 3 Dating Myths



By Ashley DelBello

Dating isn't easy – especially if you're in a large city like Los Angeles or New York. It seems like everyone gets easily distracted by the next best thing that comes along or really isn't looking to settle into anything serious. What makes it harder is that we have these ideas of what we should and shouldn't do that are large misconceptions and don't make finding that special someone any easier.

So what are these common dating myths that we fall into a trap

of believing?

Myth #1: You have to play the game and can't let on that you're actually interested. This is true when you first start dating someone new. There does need to be a sense of mystery or "the chase," but you can't be too unavailable or act too nonchalant. In a previous [Cupid's Pulse article](#), we spoke with relationship expert [Melanie Mar](#) and she cautioned that while there does need to be some element of that chase, it has to be balanced.

Related: [Should You Date Your Brother/Sister's Best Friend?](#)

"If a woman is being non-responsive in the beginning of a relationship when a man is actively engaging and pursuing her, she definitely will experience a feeling of control, but it will be short-lived. Eventually he will grow tired of chasing someone who acts as if she's not interested – even if she truly is – and he will stop the chase," said Mar. So, don't follow these so-called rules of "the game" too closely as you risk losing out on someone really cool. If you're interested, show it – just don't overwhelm the guy.

Myth #2: Online dating is a last resort and only the desperate do it. Not true. Online dating is becoming more of the norm. In fact, there are 40 million people in the United States who have tried online dating and one in five dating site users go on to marry someone they met online. Go ahead and ask around – most people you know have probably experimented with online dating. And they're probably cool people because they're your friends, right?

Myth #3: You have to wait 24 hours until you can text after a date. Also not true. If you like someone and had a good time with them – let them know. It tells them that you're interested and gives the guy permission to ask you out again. Men can't always tell if you're into them or not – especially if you're playing "the game" so they do need that

encouragement to ask you out again.

You also don't need to wait a certain amount of time before you text someone back – we all know that unless we're in a meeting at work, at a movie or some other rare instance in which our phone is not on us, we pretty much tied to our phones 24/7. So go ahead, text someone back immediately if you want to.

Related: [Is Your Perfect Man Criteria Keeping You Single?](#)

Lastly, I want to impart how important it is to just be you.

We hear that all of the time, but all too often we don't really HEAR it and we get caught up in trying to perfectly phrase our answers to questions or acting how we think the person we're newly dating wants us to. Doing this comes with a price. For example, this recently happened to me and I was too nervous and not comfortable enough around this person to just be me (which should have been red flag No. 1). And after about six weeks and several dates, I got an email that he didn't think we had enough in common to move to something more serious – which I don't think is exactly true. He was saying nicely that I'm not that into you, but had I just relaxed and been myself I wouldn't have been as quiet or always thinking about what I should do or say next. In the end the outcome may not have been any different, but I would have at least not been left with this unsettling feeling about what would have happened if I had been more of myself.

Dating is hard – don't make it harder by following misconceptions that don't let you be true to yourself and most importantly, just relax and have fun.

What are some other common dating myths that need debunking? Comment below.

Top 3 Questions about Open Relationships



By Natalie Vartanian

The way I see it is there are so many models for being in a relationship. Some people are naturally monogamous. Some people are not. Some people need variety. Some don't.

Instead of assuming a closed relationship is for you, or an open relationship is for you, really ask yourself the questions and be honest about your feelings. To help with that, here are the top three questions asked about open relationships:

1. How do you classify a relationship as Open?

Open simply means you are choosing to open up the physical part of the relationship. If you want to flirt, kiss, go on a date or have sex with someone besides your primary partner, that is totally fine. With your partner or alone. You may even choose to have multiple partners (relationships) that are equally weighted in commitment and energy/connection.

What people love about open relationships is the freedom to talk to other people. Pursue them romantically if they want. It is a belief in the idea that you can love more than one person and have an intimate relationship with more than one person. Without feeling bad or wrong about it.

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2. What about fear of getting emotionally attached to someone or jealousy?

That may very likely happen: the attachment, care and love you feel when you are intimate with multiple people. Doesn't mean you won't encounter confusion or doubting your feelings for your primary partner (or any of your partners).

Being unemotional and detached is not the point. The point is enjoying the freedom, ability to love without definition and being open to the range of emotions. It is all part of the journey and self-exploration.

An open relationship requires a lot of communication and honesty, and self analysis. Jealousy is a natural part of open relationships. Identify the jealousy and deal with it appropriately.

Ignoring jealousy will inevitably lead to resentment and eventually heartache. There is a great article on jealousy as part of the list of resources included at the end of this post.

3. Any tips or lessons learned for someone contemplating an open relationship?

There are so many pieces to a relationships besides physical, such as emotional, mental, spiritual, etc. So while the physical part of your relationship is important, it is not the end all be all either.

You have got to be clear about your level of desire and comfort up front and throughout the relationship. Open relationships are fluid. Once decided/agreed upon, it does not set it in stone. They can open, close, shift, expand, etc depending on where each other partners are in their level of comfort.

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Remember to continually keep the lines of communication open and that will alleviate unnecessary stress on the relationship and allow it to be a thoroughly enriching experience.

Natalie Vartanian, CPCC, ACC, is a certified life coach, talented writer, speaker, workshop facilitator and an expert when it comes to sex and relationships. She knows it's possible to have amazing love in an unconventional way. She works with individuals and couples to build better relationships and help them amplify the communication and intimacy, which always results in better sex. She has also worked in organizations such as Google to develop personal development curriculum and present around the importance of designing relationships in the classroom to educators, as well as personal leadership for education outreach professionals. Her work has been featured in Forbes.com, Good Men Project, Your Life Your Way and CTI's Transforum Blog. You can find her at <http://nataliethecoach.com>.

Mastering the Art of the 'Plus One'



By Sarah Gooding for GalTime.com

The summer is upon us, and it has brought a new love interest with it! Your mind is drifting off to clear skies, beaches and breezy summer dates – we know. However, if you're in your late 20s or early 30s, you may have found the summer months becoming suspiciously less and less about lazing in the sun and spending endless afternoons on your favorite patio. Your coveted weekends out of the office are becoming increasingly filled with wedding showers, bachelorettes and of course, the big day itself. Luckily your invite to the next wedding

includes a Plus One, but there are also some major unknowns that come along with the first wedding you and your new guy attend together. Will he have fun? Will you have to babysit him the whole night? Will your friends and family like him? What if you're the Plus One? Will he be attentive? Will his friends and family be inclusive? Will he feel he needs to be by your side all night?

As the Dating Coach for PlentyOfFish, I receive many letters from our female users asking for dating advice; particularly when a relationship is first taking off. In light of wedding season, here are some tips that will ensure your first wedding together won't be your last:

If he's the Plus One:

Introduce him to your friends before the wedding. A wedding shouldn't be the first time your new beau is meeting all of your friends and family members. The focus of the day will be on the bride and groom, not getting to know new people. Plan a casual get-together before the big day and use it as an opportunity for your friends to get to know your new guy and vice versa. If a wedding is not the first introduction, it's still a nice gesture to host a dinner party for all your friends and their significant others who will also be attending the wedding. This is simply another opportunity for your date to get acquainted with your friends and feel like he's part of your close-knit group.

Related: [Dating Advice: Are You Dating a 'Mad Man'?](#)

Ask your best friend's boyfriend or husband for help. The last thing you want to do is look after your date all night. He likely won't be a fan of this either. An easy way to ensure you're not babysitting your date but also not leaving him alone for too long is to enlist the help of one of your guy friends, preferably the significant other of one of your close

friends. They'll likely be spending time together in the future (if things work out) so they'll have an incentive to get to know each other, too. While you're enjoying yourself on the dance floor with all your best girlfriends, your date can engage in some needed guy talk while bonding over drinks with a cool, new dude.

Don't force your date to dance (or do anything for that matter). If your date doesn't suggest a dance, don't force it. You want him to feel comfortable and he may not be the time to show his moves until at least a few months in. Aside from dancing, be careful not to force anything on your date at a wedding. Try to avoid asking 10 different people to take your picture or suggesting he try to catch the garter if you can sense he isn't into it. You don't want him feeling pressured to be the perfect Plus One or that you are much more serious about the relationship than he is.

Related: [Relationship Advice: Making Marriage Work Like Beyonce](#)

If you're the Plus One:

Offer to contribute to the gift. According to etiquette, unless your name is on the invite, you don't technically need to contribute to the gift. That said, it's a nice touch to at least offer. You are getting a nice dinner and a beautiful night out of the deal. If he declines, offer to pick out a nice card instead.

Mingle. The last thing you want is for your date to feel that he needs to stay by your side all night. This is likely an exciting night for your date and a chance for him to catch up with all of his close friends. Don't sulk in the corner or attach yourself to his hip. Show him you're outgoing, independent and can make friends with anyone. All it takes is a 'Hello, I'm _____. How do you know the groom?' A little liquid courage also doesn't hurt.

Blend in with the crowd. You want to be on your best behavior at wedding, particularly when you don't know the bride and groom very well. For one night only, do your best not to stick out from the crowd or embarrass your date. When it comes to attire, stay away from pants and anything white. Also, while drinking is usually part of most weddings, be careful not to drink too much. You wouldn't want to have to cut your night short.

5 Celebrity Couples that Waited for Marriage



By April Littleton

The decision to have sex isn't one that should be taken lightly, but it's a personal choice. You may choose to wait until the love of your life comes along or you may not (just make sure you're always safe). In Hollywood, many celebrities are quick to hop into bed with the next star they see standing next to them on the red carpet, but this isn't true for every person who has the spotlight shining down on them. Some celebrities pledge abstinence because of their religious beliefs, while others hold out until marriage out of respect for themselves. Here are five couples who waited until their big day:

1. Kevin Jonas and Danielle Deleasa: Kevin Jonas, the eldest of the Jonas Brothers was very outspoken about his decision to abstain from sex prior to getting married. As a symbol of his beliefs, he wore a punk rock purity ring from Tiffany's on his ring finger. Jonas married his longtime girlfriend and former hairdresser, Danielle Deleasa, on December 19, 2009. The purity ring was replaced with a wedding ring, and now, the happily-married pair is expecting their first baby.

Related Link: [Celebrity Couples Who Cannot Wait to Become Parents](#)

2. Mariah Carey and Nick Cannon: After her marriage with music executive Tommy Mottola came to a halt, Carey decided to remain celibate with Nick Cannon until they exchanged meaningful "I Do's." In a December 2008 interview for *Mirror*, Carey said, "I definitely don't want to push it on anybody else. But we both have similar beliefs, and I just thought that it would be so much more special if we waited until after we were married." The happy couple have been married for five years now and are parents to twins, Monroe and Moroccan Scott, age two.

3. Tina Fey and Jeff Richmond: The *Saturday Night Live* alum was a virgin until she met her husband and composer of 30

Rock, Jeff Richmond, at the age of 24. The couple dated for seven years before finally marrying in a Greek Orthodox ceremony June 3, 2001. The famous pair is now parents to two daughters, Alice Zenobia and Penelope Athena.

4. Adriana Lima and Marko JariÄž: In 2006, Lima told *GQ Magazine* that she had no plans to have sex until after she was married. The Brazilian Victoria's Secret model married Serbian NBA player, Marko JariÄž, on Valentine's Day 2009. Since then, the duo have become parents to Valentina and Sienna.

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5. Jessica Simpson and Nick Lachey: Although this couple has since broken up and moved on to different relationships, no one can forget these lovebirds from the early 2000s. Because of her religious background, Simpson announced she would remain a virgin until her marriage to Lachey. The pop stars married October 26, 2002, but unfortunately, things ended in divorce only four years later.

What are some other celebrity couples who waited for marriage? Share below.