

What to Do On New Year's Eve If You're Single



By Eleanore Wells

By now, every person on earth (or in the U.S) has most likely participated in at least one conversation where New Year's Eve plans were the topic. Some people look forward to it, others dread it. Those who look forward to it usually have something pretty special planned. Those who dread it usually don't. Lots of people harbor anxiety over New Year's Eve, primarily, because of what seems to be the intense pressure to do something – something festive, something big. I think single women feel this even more than most.

But, really, it's not necessary. While I like the idea of

celebrating the passing of one year into another and all the hope and optimism that can bring, I do reject the notion that one has to mark this occasion in a big way. It's possible to have an enjoyable New Year's Eve without the forced exultations that seem to mark the holiday... and without a date.

Related Link: [Readying Your Single Self for the Holidays](#)

A few things to think about:

Get Out of Town. Not running away, but taking an opportunity to totally mix it up for a moment: new surroundings, new activities, new people... new you, for a short while. Of course, the New Year's Eve week is one of the most expensive periods to travel, so make sure you really want to do it.

Go Party. If you're invited to a big party and you're up to it, go and have a blast – even if you don't have a date. A few years ago, I went to a friend's big New Year's Eve shindig with mixed emotions. I didn't have a date and knew the party would primarily be made up of couples. But a few of them were people I knew and wanted to see so I got dolled up – making sure I looked extra good...which made me feel extra good – went to the party and had a good time. I deliberately got there late so I wouldn't have to spend so much time there in case I felt a little self-conscious. I ate, drank, and mingled, and then I left. You only have to stay as long (or as short) as you want to. At midnight, I was wishing the cab driver a Happy New Year. But I had a nice time for the 1-1/2 hours I was there.

Have Your Own Party. It doesn't have to be a big deal. In fact, I usually prefer something small. Invite over a few people you like, order take-out (or cook, if you're so inclined), pop some bubbly and enjoy yourself. This is actually one of my favorite ways to spend New Year's Eve. I only want to bring in the New Year with people I know and really like.

Give Your Time. Lots of volunteer organizations can use an extra pair of hands, helping out with parties they throw for their customers or providing other services. Helping others is great way to bring in the New Year.

Go to Church/Temple/Mosque. Bringing in the New Year with fellow worshipers can be fulfilling.

Work Off Holiday Pounds. Lot of gyms and sports organizations are open for a workout or group run. You may as well get started chipping away at the pounds you put on during the holiday season.

Related Link: [Celebrity Nutritionist and Trainer Jackie Keller Says, "Those Who Workout With Support From Their Partners Do Better Overall"](#)

Do Nothing. You don't have to do anything... but only do nothing if that's what you really want to do, not because you are feeling pouty about your options or lack of.

Really, we should all relax. Ringing in the New Year can be pretty fun, but it's only fun if you're doing it in a way that works for you. So that's what you should do on New Year's Eve: whatever you want to do!

Happy New Year, everybody!

A First Date on New Year's Eve: Should You?



By Rachel Seliger, JDate for GalTime.com

The arrival of a New Year is an exciting time, but New Year's Eve has also morphed into one of the most pressure-filled holidays for singles. Don't stress yourself out – there are lots of great ways to have a fun and festive New Year's Eve, with or without a date.

Who says you need to be attached to have a great NYE? For starters, focus on the things you do have – friends, family, health – and then follow my tried and true tips to have your best single New Year's Eve yet.

– **Gather your single girlfriends for a glammed-up girls-only night, and ring in the New Year together in style.** Who needs a guy when you have great friends, champagne and cute new pumps!

– **Everyone appreciates a little "me time."** Save yourself the

stress of dealing with crowds, long lines and a bunch of weird people you don't know – treat yourself to your favorite movie, Chinese takeout and a great night's sleep. Wake up on Jan. 1 feeling refreshed and ready to greet the New Year with vigor (and no hangover)!

– **New Year's Eve is the perfect opportunity to spend time fostering life's most important relationships: those with family.** Being with loved ones will take your mind off any qualms you may have about being single on New Year's Eve.

– **Get out of town!** Find a cute B&B or boutique hotel in a nearby city, or book a flight to visit an old friend. A quick trip is a great way to dodge the dreaded question of "What are your New Year's plans?", and you definitely won't run into anyone you know!

– **Why not break the mold and set up a first date?** This might seem hard to believe, but you are NOT the only person spending New Year's Eve single. By looking online you'll find plenty of single guys who also don't have New Year's plans, and would love to spend the night getting to know someone. If you're lucky, it might even end with a New Year's kiss.

Aside from these tips, my best advice about being single on New Year's is to not worry about having the perfect night – don't do something that's supposed to be fun just because you feel pressure. Instead, reflect on all of the positive experiences you had in 2012, start planning for 2013 and look forward to a year full of opportunity!

First date, girls' night out or a quiet evening solo? What's your dream New Year's Eve on your own?

Holiday Break-Ups Are Awesome!



By Dudeologist Marcus Osborne for GalTime.com

Okay, so maybe that headline is hyperbolic. Unless you're one of those sickos who gets off on hurting people, no one is really thrilled about those soul crushing break ups. You know the kind where you feel the nausea gauge rising the moment one of you begins a statement with, "So I think you and I should..."

Yeah, you know.

And that's just the beginning, right? Your family and friends, whether they're being supportive or just nosy, all want the scoop. Scoop you're not entirely certain you're ready to

share. And what's worse, social media has become the Paul Revere of the twenty-first century. The second you change that status update to "single", Facebook jumps on its little horse and starts riding across the internet screaming, "Marcus is single! Marcus is single! Marcus is single!" to your two thousand Facebook friends....fifteen of which I actually *know*.

Not at all awkward.

Whether you were the instigator of the break up or not, someone was mature enough to take a broad look at that situation and realized that it wasn't optimal for either of you.

By euthanizing that relationship you've not only saved yourself from potential long-term emotional disaster, you've created an opportunity for yourself. This is a fresh start. As awful as it is to look into that mirror at the puffy remnants of an hour of crying, there's a dark cloud that's been lifted. Because let's face it, you knew things weren't right before that break up didn't you? Well guess what? Problem solved!

Now you've got the chance to turn your attention to family and friends. Here's your opportunity to inhale life from a whole new perspective. From that of the single, happy, independent, grounded woman. And THAT women, to us guys, is ridiculously hot.

Crazy hot.

So when you show up at parties and events you own that room. You own the all the potential in that room. Because whether it's a new job, new place to live, or a brand new love interest, the fact that you've only got to answer to yourself in each new situation makes those choices completely your own. How sweet is that? And from a completely hedonistic point of view, if you're so inclined, you're free to indulge your inner *Samantha Jones*. Don't lie....you've thought about it.

I won't pretend like each break up is like winning the lottery, just merely pointing out that especially during the holiday season, millions of people are going through or are contemplating whether now is the right time to end their current relationship. Just do it. As a guy I'd rather just have the band aid ripped off...particularly before I buy you gifts.

Just sayin'.

There's no "right" time to do it. So you may as well get it over with. And as adults, we've all been through this. It's not easy, but you know you always bounce back. So let's get this thing over with so you can really enjoy this break up and embrace it like the awesome thing it'll turn out to be!

5 Resolutions That Can Help You Find "The One"





By Ashley DelBello

The year is coming to a close and you still haven't found that special someone. So if you're truly ready for love, why not make it your 2013 resolution? While love does seem to happen when you're not exactly looking for it, there are things that you can do to work toward that goal. Cupid spoke to a few relationship experts and came up with five resolutions to help you get closer to finding "The One." Keep reading to find out what they are:

1. Show yourself some love. "Start dating yourself and do for yourself what you want someone to do with you – stop waiting around and treat yourself well. Once you get an appetite for that, not only will you be better able to find someone because your best self will be out there, you also won't stick around for what doesn't feel right," said clinical psychologist Ramani Durvasula, M.D.

It might sound cliché, but it wouldn't be said if it wasn't true – you need to love yourself before you can have a healthy relationship with someone else. So go ahead, take yourself on

a trip to somewhere you've always wanted to go or simply order in dinner and have a glass of wine or two. As long as it's all about you.

2. Get out of your comfort zone. "Commit to putting yourself out there at every opportunity. It doesn't matter where you go or what you do, as long as you can meet other people there. Even going to a movie with a friend can lead to something more – you can start a conversation with a cute guy in line. You simply never know," advised author and marriage/family therapist, Jane Greer, Ph.D.

Go even further and make a resolution to do one thing a day outside of your comfort level – a concept that is explained in Durvasula's "You Are WHY You Eat," a book on making better choices in health, love and life. "Go out for coffee alone, join that online site, tell your friends that you are ready to meet people – one thing a day. Then once a week, do something unique – visit the planetarium, take a cooking class or join the yoga class in the park. Try and make it something where there will be other people. I acknowledge that it can be the loneliest in a crowd, but they are not going to come to your front door," added Durvasula.

3. Resolve to be in the best shape of your life – this doesn't just mean your physical health. "It means that if there is an area of your life that is not working, then you need to make a resolution to restore balance in that area. If you have been ignoring health issues, then you should make a resolution to go to the doctor. If your finances are a mess, then you should make a resolution to get help from an accountant," said life coach and dating expert, Jason Weberman of North Star Coaching.

Whatever it is (and it may be more than one thing – that's OK!), figure it out and focus on improving that area of your life so there won't be any obstacles in your way of finding "The One" – and more importantly, having a long and healthy

relationship with that person.

4. Break unsexy habits. “This should be the year that you vow not to think negative thoughts every time you step out of the shower. Set the expectation to have at least one positive thought about your body when you look in the mirror,” says founder of Pure Romance and relationship expert Patty Brisben. “As the year progresses, keep adding positive self-talk until you are completely in love with the person staring back at you.”

It’s true – confidence is hot and attracts others to you. So stop talking about how gross you feel or how you wish you were better at your job and do something about it. And then believe it.

5. Have fun. Love happens when you least expect it so don’t put too much pressure on yourself to find that special someone...and don’t forget to enjoy the journey as well! Overall, it’s about knowing (and loving) yourself and then putting yourself out there so you can find someone that is not only worthy of you, but someone who is right for you and who you can have a great life with.

Tell us: What will your New Year’s resolution be?

Hugh Jackman On Wife’s Miscarriages, The Joys Of Adoption



By Jenny Schafer for Celebrity Baby Scoop

The road to parenthood wasn't easy for *Wolverine* star Hugh Jackman and wife **Deborra-Lee Furness**.

During a Tuesday appearance on [Katie](#), the *Les Misérables* star opened up about adopting their two children – son **Oscar**, 12, and daughter **Ava**, 7.

“To be clear, Deb and I always wanted to adopt. So that was always in our plan,” the Australian actor, 44, said.

“We didn't know where in the process that would happen but biologically obviously we tried and it was not happening for us and it is a difficult time,” he added. *“We did IVF and Deb had a couple of miscarriages. I'll never forget it the miscarriage thing – it happens to one in three pregnancies, but it's very very rarely talked about.”*

“It’s almost secretive, so I hope Deb doesn’t mind me bringing it up now,” he continued. “It’s a good thing to talk about it. It’s more common, and it is tough. There’s a grieving that you have to go through.”

But as soon as Oscar was born, “all the heartache just melted away,” the proud papa said.

“Many of you are parents, you guys know you can’t prepare for that moment. Nothing can prepare you,” he shared. “You can’t even explain how incredible it is and that avalanche of emotion that comes and how it opens up your heart, how it frustrates you, how it angers you, how everything is just all the sudden how alive you are as a parent.”

A Present is Worth a Thousand Words: What a Gift Says About Your Relationship





By Rachel Seliger

The holiday season has finally arrived, and with it comes festive parties (hello, candy cane cocktails!), delicious fare (potato latkes, anyone?) and glee-filled gift-giving (who doesn't love a white elephant party?). Yet, while giving gifts can fill your heart with warmth and joy as you watch your loved ones tear open those carefully-wrapped presents, it can also bring anxiety as you try to decipher what to give everyone on your list. And it only gets harder when it comes to giving a gift to a new love interest!

Rachel Seliger, Community Manager for JDate.com, the leading online community for Jewish singles, is here to help with advice on what gifts *really* mean when they're coming from a significant other. Check out the gifting-pedia below for definitions of what certain gift choices may say about your relationship:

Related Link: [What Gifts Say About Your Relationship](#)

A Jacket = "You'd look much better in this cut." While giving

clothing is fun, it may come off as though you're saying, "You'd look much better in this cut/color." If you don't give your new mate clothing that matches their personal style, you're saying you want to see them in something different, which may signal that you're trying to change them. Whether there's any truth to it or not, it's best to stick to nondescript accessories when giving gifts. Perhaps something like...

Mittens = "You warm my heart." Mittens are a sweet and thoughtful way to say, "I like you... a lot!" Unlike jackets, sweaters or boots, mittens typically come in just a few styles (meaning you can't screw up and get your hipster boyfriend a pair that looks like it belongs on an investment banker). And if you are lucky enough to receive a pair, it means the object of your affection wants to warm your fingers like you've warmed their heart.

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

Candles = "I know nothing about you." I once got a wrought iron candle holder from my college boyfriend. I opened it and wondered "What about me screams candles?" Unless you're some kind of candle-maven, this gift basically screams unoriginal and may mean you don't know each other well enough to pick out something more personal.

Concert Tickets = "You make my heart sing." If your mate surprises you with a pair of concert tickets for a big show they knew you would love, you've found a keeper! Not only did they think about what you would actually like, but they're also making fun plans with you in the future, so you can be sure they're in this for the long-term)!

Gift Cards = "I didn't care enough to actually go out and buy you a present." The gift card is the relationship kiss-off. Giving this gift basically says you are either lazy or just didn't care enough to put any thought into your present. Do

not give this gift! You can do better.

A Box of Chocolates = "You're the sweetest thing I've ever laid eyes on." Giving sweets to your sweet signals your relationship is so yummy that your mate's love is about to give you a sugar rush! If your partner is associating you with the deliciousness that can only be found in a box of chocolates, then you have certainly found a satisfying relationship. But just as eating the entire box of candies in one weekend will make you crash, moving too fast in your relationship may leave you with a similar result!

Basketball Season Tickets = "I'll pretend to like anything you like." As a huge University of Kansas basketball fan, I would personally love it if someone bought me season tickets. However, if the person you're dating suddenly becomes obsessed with your hobbies, going as far as to buy you tickets to a sporting event they previously didn't even know existed, then you may be dating a people-pleaser with no hobbies of their own. Take it as a compliment, but suggest your partner join a book club, karate class or writing program to get a handle on who they really are!

A Homemade Gift Certificate = "I'm broke, but you mean the world to me." Let's be real, homemade gifts have become a lot more popular since the recession hit. Drafting a "Free Home-cooked Meal" certificate is a sweet and inexpensive way to show you care. If you're going to give this gift, make sure you follow through with your promise or your partner may think you are unreliable.

Expensive Jewelry = "I want to impress you." Ah, every girl's dream! While we usually love anything that sparkles, this gift can also say, "I want to impress you," or worse, "I messed up – please forgive me!" Give this gift with caution – once you've given something expensive, you can't go back! After receiving a Tiffany's bracelet, no one wants to follow up with an 80s-throwback snap bracelet.

An Engagement Ring = “I’m madly in love with you.” So you wake up on a magnificent Saturday morning to find Mr. Right has made you breakfast in bed, and at the bottom of your mimosa is the most brilliant diamond ring you’ve ever seen! If you’re madly in love and have been waiting for this moment, then a mazel tov is in order! Congratulations – you’ve just discovered the gift of true love.

Rachel is JDate’s Community Manager. She’s here to break down the rules of dating, share first date tips and offer words of encouragement when dating gets tough. Hit up her Tumblr page at www.Jdating.tumblr.com for more insightful advice. Or, learn what makes Rachel tick by visiting her JDate profile!

10 Rules for Couples Gifts





By Johanna Lyman for GalTime.com

Do you love the season but not the shopping?

I love the holidays, but I'm not a fan of buying gifts. I'm one of those rare women who don't like to shop. I agonize over buying the perfect gift, but I'm not great with paying attention to details, so I never know what the perfect gift might be. This year, I decided to think outside the gift-giving box and come up with my best tips for making it all easier.

1. Be blunt when you talk to your Santa. If there's something special you want from your man, ask for it directly. I know, I know, it's uncomfortable to ask for what you want. But don't you think you deserve it? Your man is not a mind reader, even if he loves you beyond all reason. He won't think you're being pushy if you give him a few ideas, in fact he'll love you for it. Trust me on this one.

2. Splurge on yourself. Give yourself the gift of a makeover or splurge on an outfit that makes you feel like a million

bucks. The holidays can be a difficult time for people with self-esteem issues (in other words, most of us). One way to keep from getting the holiday blues is to do something that tell you "I'm worth it." Because it's true: you are worth it.

3. Your time and talents and donations count as gifts. Another great way to get happy during the holidays is to give the gift of your time, talents and treasures to those in need. Donate toys to the Marines, pick a couple of tags off a Christmas tree at the bank and buy the requested item for a needy child, and/or volunteer with your sweetie at the local soup kitchen. Maybe Christmas, as the Grinch discovered, isn't about "things, after all." Short on time? Make a donation to the local food bank so families in need can have a happy holiday meal.

4. Give him something he loves even if you don't love it. Now onto some actual gift ideas. If your man is into video games, go to a gaming store and ask the sales associate what the most popular new games are then buy one of those for him. I know you probably hate his Xbox, but that's not the point. The gift is for him, not you. He'll love you even more for getting him a game when he knows you're not a fan of gaming.

5. Help him cheer on his team. If he's into watching professional sports, get him tickets to the next home game. If those are too pricey, opt for an officially sanctioned jersey. The non-sanctioned jerseys and t-shirts are usually pretty cheesy and he'll love you for knowing the difference, especially if you don't care about his team.

6. Turn TV into a great gift. Does he have a favorite television series, or is he a history buff? There are plenty of boxed DVD sets that make great gifts. The History of World War II in an 8-DVD set will keep him entertained for hours. The side benefit of this gift is that while he's watching the DVDs, you can have a guilt-free girls' night out.

7. Spice it up with a gift you'll both enjoy. If you want to get him something you'll both enjoy, opt for a weekend getaway. Inside the gift box, include some lingerie for yourself, with details of the trip folded on top. Remember, this is a gift for him. If you're going to enjoy it as well, it's nice to make it special for him.

8. Turn up the volume. For music lovers, there are plenty of options. Satellite radio for his car, a boxed CD/DVD set of his favorite band complete with never before seen live concert footage, or even an iTunes gift card. Concert tickets are a great idea too; get him two and tell him to take his buddy. Then you can have another guilt-free girls' night out.

9. Skip the chore-related gifts. Whatever you do, do not buy him something that you want. Also, do not buy him a tool that he needs to complete a project you want him to work on. That's selfish and transparent; it's like him buying you a vacuum cleaner.

10. Stay focused on the two of you. You may have noticed that only one of my gift suggestions was something that you would enjoy together. There are two reasons for that. First of all, gifts are supposed to be for the receiver, not the giver. Second, as important as it is to spend quality time together, it's equally important to spend time apart. That's why getting him a gift that gives you time to yourself or time with your girlfriends is a double win. Healthy relationships develop between healthy individuals, and knowing how to spend time alone is one way to cultivate being a healthy individual.

Happy shopping!

Is Being Center Stage Ruining Your Relationship?



By Michelle Rebecca

When you and your partner have a fight, do you blog, Tweet, change your status on Facebook and call all of your friends to let them know about it? If so, you might be endangering your relationship by sharing too much information with others.

As many celebrities (e.g., Kim Kardashian, Tom Cruise, Madonna) have discovered, it's hard to nurture the tender bud of a healthy romance in the harsh glare of the public eye.

Related Link: [Kim Kardashian 'Doesn't Want Battle' with Kris Humphries](#)

The Anatomy of a Fight

All couples argue, and everyone who has ever been in a relationship would probably admit to saying or doing something he or she later regretted. Normally, couples work through these less than ideal moments. Only the two of them, give or take a couple of very close friends, ever know that the unpleasantness took place at all.

Contrast that with the experience of an A-List celebrity who gets into it with her partner and exchanges some angry words with him in public. Those words won't be forgotten as tempers cool. Instead, they will be repeated on every entertainment show and analyzed between the covers of every magazine.

If the fight was shocking enough, marriage counselors may even come out of the woodwork to speculate on the future of the relationship.

Related Link: [Sherry Amatenstein Dishes on 'The Complete Counselor'](#)

Long after the celebrity herself has made up with her partner and is ready to move on, her fans will still be talking about those few ill-advised words hurled in what should have been a private moment.

Limiting Public Access

Whether you're a movie star or a contractor estimating software sales agent, there's a lot to be said for keeping your personal relationships...well, personal.

Take a moment to think about celebrity couples who have flung open the doors on their private lives. How many of them are still together?

Now, think about celebrities who have consistently declined to turn their personal lives into public fodder. I'm thinking of names like Rowan Atkinson (married since 1990), Julia Roberts,

who learned the hard way about the cost of conducting relationships under media scrutiny (now happily married since 2002), and Meryl Streep (married since 1978).

Are you beginning to see a trend?

How Does All This Apply to Me?

Okay, so maybe you're not a celebrity, but you can still make choices about whether you invite others to take an intimate look at your relationship. You can decide whether to make your latest dust-up with your partner the most talked about event of the week among your social circle or whether to resolve matters quietly between the two of you.

Most people find that the rift between you and your loved one heals far more quickly when your spat stays private.

Maybe the next time somebody says, "Talk to me, girlfriend," your response should be, "No, thanks!"

Michelle is an aspiring writer and blogger with a passion for the Internet, specifically social media and blogging. She loves how social media connects people across the globe, and appreciates that blogging gives her the opportunity to voice her thoughts and share advice with an unlimited audience.

6 Great First-Date Questions (and 4 to Skip)





by Rachel Seliger for GalTime.com

There's a lot that goes into making a first date great – picking the perfect spot, wearing the right clothing, having a positive attitude and, of course, maintaining good conversation.

So you have a first date coming up – good for you! You've already accomplished the hardest part, which is landing that romantic meeting. I always try to look at a first date as an opportunity – even if you don't meet the man or woman of your dreams, you can chat with a new, interesting person.

Below are some of my go-to topics and questions for first dates. I like to pick subjects that can lead to multiple conversation paths and, at the same time, help reveal more about my date.

1. Ask, "What attracted you to your job?" instead of the overused, "What do you do for a living?" which sounds like you're at a networking event. Get to the root of your date's 9-to-5 by asking more about his or her ambitions and character

than his or her job title.

2. Take note of his or her interests and then dig a little deeper. If you're having the first in-person meeting with someone you met online, use bits and pieces of information from his or her online dating profile to keep the conversations flowing. The profile is there for a reason – study it, but don't look like a crazy stalker. Instead of gushing, "I love the Arctic Monkeys, too!" say something like, "I love checking out new music, and I'm really into indie rock. How about you?"

3. Ask, "Are you close with your family?" This question works great because it subtly reveals a number of things about your date, and can lead to several other conversation topics. You could end up discussing siblings, extended family, funny childhood memories or the place your date grew up. Just remember to ask follow-up questions. For example, if your date answers, "Yeah, I'm close with my sister," ask, "Where does she live? How often do you see her? How far apart are you in age?"

4. "Want to try the [weird menu item]?" What are first dates for if not adventure? This question can reveal how daring your date is. But it isn't reserved for just the bold – maybe you're looking for someone more grounded, who will reply, "No, thanks. I'll stick to the chicken." In addition, this question can lead to other stories, such as that time your date tried a really strange food when traveling in South America.

5. Tap into current events. If there's a big holiday coming up, ask what his or her plans are for the day – working, spending time with family or friends, traveling, etc. However, one newsy topic you should avoid is politics. Especially in the current national climate, this can be a contentious subject; you don't want to get into a debate at the dinner table!

6. If you run out of things to say or your mind goes blank, don't panic! Honesty goes a long way in overcoming awkwardness. Just laugh and fess up, with something like, "I've been really looking forward to this date, and now that it's here, I'm a little nervous!"

As an added bonus, here are some of the most cringe-worthy first date conversation attempts I've heard from friends, colleagues and fellow online daters. Whatever you do, avoid the following – trust me, even silence would be better.

1. Never comment or make suggestions regarding your date's body parts or physical appearance. Unfortunate real-life examples include: "You have such a great body, it would be a shame if you gained weight from eating [food currently on the table]" or "Would you ever consider plastic surgery?"

2. Don't bring up money – this includes salary, the cost of your meal, spending habits or even the national debt. Money is a sensitive topic, and while finances are an important topic for long-term partners to discuss, it's not first date fodder.

3. Never bring up an ex. Dating histories should be shared in a relationship, but not on the first date! In particular, don't tell your date he or she reminds you of your previous partner – like showing your date pictures of an ex that you still have on your phone.

4. In general, avoid anything too heavy (e.g. my parents just got divorced, I just got divorced, I just got out of rehab). Heavy topics are best left for later. But that's not to say one should be dishonest, ever; it's just too soon to share such personal information on the first date.

Remember, your date is just as excited and nervous as you are, and is also pondering how to make conversation with you. So during your pre-date prep, keep in mind that you'll want to have answers ready for him or her! If all else fails, there's always the weather.

5 Ways that You and Your Honey Can Give Back During the Holiday



By Courtney Allen

'Tis the season to be jolly, especially with the one you love. Take advantage of this year's exciting end with your significant other by spreading holiday cheer the best way possible: by giving back. Show thanks for everything in your life, including your sweetie, by bringing fortune into the lives of others. Here are five great ways for you and your honey to wrap up the year right:

1. Organize dinner at a soup kitchen: Go above and beyond this year by offering to plan, prepare and serve dinner to the less fortunate at your local soup kitchen. Get creative with your love as you plan a delicious three-course meal and put together a spirit-filled set-up.

2. Deliver Christmas presents: Join a church or work group to deliver Christmas presents to deserving families who cannot afford to buy gifts. Surprise them at their door with lots of love and holiday wishes. Let the spirit of giving fill up your heart with your sweetie by your side.

Related Link: [How to Ring in the New Year like a Celeb](#)

3. Help build a house: Pull out the nails and the hammers and go to work with Habitat for Humanity to build a new home for a family in your community. Provide a family the best Christmas gift you could ever give. Create a fulfilling experience with your darling that you will never forget.

4. Adopt a family: Commit to providing an unfortunate family with necessities, cooked meals and unconditional love for an entire weekend. Get to know the family by visiting with your man. Make the holidays worth more than any gift you could receive by bringing joy into someone else's life.

Related Link: [Create a New Years Resolution with your Partner](#)

5. Spend time at a nursing home: Spend a day visiting the elderly at a nursing home in your city. Help put a smile on the some of the sweetest faces in the world. Sing Christmas duets with your favorite guy as the residents enjoy your prepared egg nog and gingerbread cookies to bring just enough holiday cheer to their day.

How will you and your man give back during the holiday season? Share your stories with us.

Readying Your Single Self for the Holidays



By Eleanore Wells

Every year this time we have to think about what to do for the big holiday season. Holidays can be challenging to just about everybody. There are decisions to be made, plans put in place, and money to be spent. And while this is true for everyone, many single people feel an extra layer of stress.

In fact, I heard from a single friend who is feeling particularly lonely and is dreading the coming holiday season. She isn't close to her family and the holidays are a

time that kinda puts a spotlight on it. I, teasingly, reminded her of Cameron Diaz and Kerry Washington, two sexy ladies who have described themselves as “happily single.” I said, “Do you think Cameron and Kerry are worried about the holidays? I’ll bet they’re looking forward to the festivities...and you should be, too.”

I reminded her that she should put her friends to good use. Having a variety of friends can help a lot this time of year. Even though she has kids, I know Gayle King will be taking in some of the festivities with Oprah and Steadman. It helps to have people you like to hang out with. And isn’t that what the holiday season should be about: spending time with special people? I know that’s not what it’s always about, but that’s what it *should* be about. I’m a proponent of avoiding people who don’t make me happy. If I can’t avoid them completely, Plan B is to spend as little time with them as possible.

Related Link: [How to Communicate with Your Ex Over the Holidays](#)

I’m fortunate to have a loving network of people around me. I make it work. I host Thanksgiving for what I call my “straggler” friends: it includes single people, those who can’t or don’t want to get with their family, people whose plans changed at the last minute, and couples without children. (I have to draw the line somewhere).

Christmas I spend it with my family and I’m not really expected to do much except show up. But there’s always what to do about New Year’s Eve. I never want to spend it alone, but I don’t always want a big party either. When I have a beau, I spend it with him. When I don’t, it’s with cool friends whose company I really enjoy. I won’t spend New Year’s Eve with people who aren’t special to me. That’s not how I want to bring in the New Year.

Related Link: [Miranda Lambert Says Blake Shelton Loves to Decorate for Christmas](#)

The holidays get a bad rap, though, because they're often quite good: there's the feeling of festivity in the air, the parties, the gifts, the music, and catching up with people you like but haven't seen in awhile. And some things about being single are actually better during the holidays because we have more flexibility and fewer rules about what one is supposed to do. Here are a few:

– You don't *have* to get a tree. Trees are festive, but the needles, the watering, and the space it takes up –especially in a small apartment–...well, they're a lot of work. If you have kids and/or a husband, you might not be able to get away with not having a tree. It would be way too bah humbug. But when you're single, you can be more creative. Put up a wreath, buy a few poinsettias...and done!

– You don't have to spend a whole lot of time in one place. As a single person, it's very believable that you have additional plans, and that's why you can't spend the entire day at Aunt Mary's. Take advantage of that. Stop by for a while, hug everyone, have a glass of something...and then be on your way.

– No baking or cooking. And if you do, people make a very big deal about it. "Wow, look at what the single lady pulled off?"

– And just as good, no one really expects you to send holiday cards. These days, holiday photos of well-dressed children and/or children placed in really cool, interesting spots (at the family beach house, Macchu Picchu, etc.) are the norm. If you don't have children, no need to send a card. No postage, no paper waste, and no idea-generation on cute outfits or cool spots for the pictures. If you're married and don't send cards, you could be stricken from every card list, no matter

how old or dear the friendship. But as a single person, no one seems to mind.

– You don't have to accompany the husband or kids to parties you don't really want to go to.

– No in-laws to fight with or about. This is always an issue with my married friends and they tell me this fight can get old really quickly...and yet it must be had every year.

The holidays should be fun. I think it's important to *manage* situations that you don't enjoy.

As a single person, I think it's particularly important to nurture your relationships because I really don't think we're necessarily supposed to go through life completely alone and that's where good friends come in...during the holidays, and all the other days.

Don't lose your mojo by dreading the holidays. Celebrate in a way that works for you! Happy Holidays!

Read more about the joys and realities of being single in Eleanore's book "The Spinsterlicious Life: 20 Life Lessons for Living Happily Single and Childfree", her very popular blog, The Spinsterlicious Life at www.EleanoreWells.com/blog, and her Spinsterlicious Facebook Fan Page.

8 Great Winter Dates





By GalTime Writer, Kelly Rouba, for GalTime.com

Date ideas that will melt your heart

As the weather gets colder and the nights get longer, it's tempting to just stay inside and cuddle up with your partner under a warm blanket while watching a good movie. And while alone time is always nice (and necessary), don't let the winter weather stop you from getting out with your special someone and creating memories that will last a lifetime.

"[Women] should make time for winter dates because it gives their partner a chance to show off his or her romantic side, more so than just walking down the beach on a summer day or having a picnic in the park during the spring. Winter dates scream romance!" says Tierra Fields of New Jersey.

As far as romantic winter dates go, Fields says nothing beats a good old -fashioned carriage ride. Some towns also offer festive trolley rides during the holidays, which is a nice way to see the sights while enjoying each other's company.

Dating expert and founder of the match site Sitting In A Tree,

Stacie Ikka says that there are many wintertime activities that can make for memorable dates and that couples should take full advantage of those opportunities.

“Any opportunity to date is a good opportunity to date, weather conditions notwithstanding,” she says. “If you’re using cold temperatures as a reason not to get out there, what other excuses are you making and what other self-imposed obstacles are you creating for reaching the love you so richly deserve?”

So if you and your partner are ready to get out of the house but still aren’t sure what to do, try one (or more...or all!) of Ikka’s 8 best suggestions for heart-warming winter dates.

Go ice skating

Even if you can’t make it to the famed Rockefeller Center to ice skate, hitting a local rink can be just as fun. Holding hands as you skate around the ice and then sharing a cup of hot chocolate to warm up afterwards makes for a nice afternoon or evening out.

Visit a gourmet coffee shop and order a personalized concoction for each other

“My boyfriend used to do this all the time and while it drove the baristas a little crazy, it was a simple adventure and indulgence for us,” Ikka said, recalling, “He would go up and order while I waited at a table or in the car, come back proudly holding a coffee cup, and I’d—on cue—ask, ‘So, what’d we get this time?’ I can only imagine it would be that much more fun with someone you don’t know as well.” As an added bonus, some coffee shops have nice fireplaces to snuggle up by while sipping your special drink. (Be sure to be mindful of personal preferences and allergies when ordering!)

Hit the hills on a tobogan or sled

If weather conditions permit, going sledding or tobogganing is the perfect way to establish physical contact without crossing too many personal boundaries. It is also great exercise, and it may take the damper out of an otherwise bleak winter afternoon. Plus, it is way more exciting than the typical “coffee date!”

Build a snowman

Sound silly? Consider that there’s something about reliving childhood activities that tends to conjure up feelings of nostalgia, comfort, playfulness, and warmth—all of which go a long way in alleviating dating fatigue or dread. If you find yourself having too much fun and don’t want the date to end, consider grabbing some soup afterwards to warm up and carry on some good conversation.

Visit a bakery and then spread some holiday cheer

My favorite date begins with stopping at your local bakery or coffee shop to purchase some hot chocolate and donuts to give away. Before doing so, set a reasonable budget (perhaps \$20 between the two of you). Then step outside to whatever Winter Wonderland awaits you and share your goodies with strangers, the homeless, neighboring retailers, or whoever you know is in need. It’s a great way to observe your date’s social skills, and it’s a relatively selfless, pay-it-forward endeavor. This activity also takes some of the pressure and focus off of you and your date so you’re not stuck staring at each other across the table!

Cook together

Assuming it’s a blustery winter day and going outside just isn’t an option, try picking out some new or unusual recipes and then make them together. There’s nothing like enjoying good comfort food on a cold winter’s night, and then snuggling

up in front of a movie to digest.

Recreate your first (or pivotal) date, if you met during the winter

If your partner planned it the first time, perhaps you can plan it the second time. Be sure to add a few touches that demonstrate how the relationship has grown or how that first date was so instrumental in allowing the relationship to evolve.

Volunteer together at a soup kitchen or homeless shelter

This activity not only allows you both to give back to your community, but you're doing a good deed while getting to spend time with each other. It's a win-win.

Keep in mind, this list just scratches the surface. There are endless possibilities when it comes to planning a winter date. Just don't let them slip by!

Small-Screen Costars Who Turned Their TV Romances into the Real Deal





By Jennifer Ross

It is not surprising that when actors have chemistry on-screen, feelings can keep rolling after the director screams “cut!” The lines between fiction and reality can get blurry with all those hormones raging. No matter how professional an actor claims to be, when it comes to love, sometimes you just can’t fight the resistance for too long. For many TV fans, the reel-to-real romance is exactly what they want. Take a peek at some of Hollywood’s romantic couples, on-and-off screen.

Related Link: [Patti Stanger Explains How to Reconnect Like Ashton Kutcher and Mila Kunis](#)

1. Ashton Kutcher and Mila Kunis: What started out as a dysfunctional high-school relationship between characters Jackie Burkhart (Mila Kunis) and Michael Kelso (Ashton Kutcher) on Fox’s *That ‘70s Show* finally came to reality earlier this year. The cute Wisconsin couple was on-and-off again for the first 4 seasons of the show, which began airing on August 1998. However, it wasn’t till about a decade later that Kutcher, 34, and Kunis, 29, decided to date off-screen.

Before that time, Kutcher was married to ex Demi Moore. Now, sources report to UsMagazine.com that Kutcher has always had a thing for Kunis.

2. Lea Michele and Cory Monteith: *Glee* fans everywhere simply adore the on-screen relationship between characters Finn Hudson (Cory Monteith) and Rachel Berry (Lea Michele). Fortunately, the off-screen actors are just as happy to turn Finchel into a reality. The twosome, playing a high school couple, has been dating since last fall. Michele, 26, has gushed to *People* that she loves working with Monteith, 30. "He really, really inspires me, and he motivates me and I think he's just so talented," the *Glee* club diva professes.

Related Link: [Nina Dobrev Admits to Fighting Feelings for Costar Ian Somerhalder](#)

3. Anna Paquin and Stephen Moyer: The complicated on-screen relationship between characters Sookie Stackhouse (Anna Paquin) and Bill Compton (Stephen Moyer) on the *HBO* show *True Blood* has unfortunately ended. However, the real life union between the actors is still going strong. Married in 2010, the couple began dating back in 2008. Growing their family, Paquin, 30, recently gave birth to twins last month. No news yet as to the gender or names of the newborns. Although the twins were born a few weeks early, both babies and mom are said to be doing fine, according to Usmagazine.com. The twins are the first children for Paquin while Moyer, 43, has two additional children Lilac, 10, and Billy, 12, from a previous relationship.

4. Will Chase and Debra Messing: On the *NBC* television series *Smash*, a steamy love affair ensued between Broad lyricist and musical's co-writer Julia Houston (Debra Messing) and musical theater star Michael Swift (Will Chase). Although Messing's character broke off the affair and struggled to save her on-screen marriage, off-screen she and Chase, 41, have been continuing their hot yet private relationship. Just last year,

Messing, 44, ended her 10 year marriage to theater guru Daniel Zelman. Prior to his relationship with Messing, Chase also left his wife of 2 years, actress Stephanie Gibson. It looks like both of them made the right decision and are happily enjoying each other's company.

What small-screen couples would you like to see dating in real life? Tell us below.

**12/12/12 is the Last
Consecutive Number Sequence
Date to Marry This Century**





By Jennifer Ross

Seeing triple? 12/12/12 is quickly approaching. This is the last of the popular consecutive date sequences, like 10/10/10 and 11/11/11, to come around for the next 1,000 years – our lifetime! Many people consider it lucky to be alive during these years, and even more people consider it lucky to fall in [love](#) and get married on one of these iconic dates.

Related Link: [Create a Celebrity-Style Wedding](#)

According to the sixth annual survey from David's Bridal, "What's on Brides' Minds," an estimated 43% of brides have considered planning their wedding on an iconic date such as this one. Earlier this year, on 10/11/12, thousands of couples were married. David's Bridal estimates that more than 7,500 brides will marry on 12/12/12 – compared to only 485 who married on this day last year. That's a 1446% increase over the prior year!

The people at David's Bridal spoke to a lot of amazing brides getting married on 12/12/12 who have great stories. Here are five of the most popular reasons to choose this date:

1. Couples got engaged on 11/11/11 or 10/10/10.
2. The triple number sequence is good luck to people interested in numerology.
3. Because the date is iconic – the last consecutive number sequence of the century.
4. It is easy to remember; husbands will have no excuse if they forget their anniversary.
5. In the Chinese culture, even numbers are lucky.

Related Link: [Secrets to Staying Married for 50 Years \(Or More\)](#)

Another reason couples chose this date is so that they can save a little money by getting married in the middle of the week since 12/12/12 lands on a Wednesday. Talk about being resourceful!

If you are unable to plan your wedding in time for this iconic date and are upset about missing the last consecutive number sequence of our lifetime, don't fret. Next year, there will be an order sequence date: 11/12/13. However, you might want to start planning soon; this number is officially the last sequence number for the century.

For more information, click check out the blog at www.Blogs.DavidsBridal.com.

Extravagant

Hollywood

Couples' Gifts Within Reach of Your Budget



By Shelly Cone

Ah, to be in love around the holidays! The peace, the goodwill ... and the gifts. Of course, any holiday gift from your loved one is special, but if you happen to be in [celebrity relationship](#), you can bet that special comes with a high price tag. As the holiday season draws near, we can only guess at what some of the most celebrated Hollywood couples are buying for each other. But based on what some celebrity couples have already given each other this year, it's likely there will be some luxury under their trees.

Hollywood Couples' Over-the-Top Gifts

There's no word yet on what gifts newlyweds Justin Timberlake and Jessica Biel will exchange for their first Christmas as a married celebrity couple, but with thoughtful Timberlake, it must be something good. When they wed earlier this year, he gave his new bride four stackable wedding rings that matched her 18-karat celebrity engagement ring.

Jennifer Lopez's celebrity love Casper Smart will likely be waiting with anticipation at what lays under the tree for him this Christmas, considering Lopez gifted him with a white Dodge Ram truck for his 25th birthday this year. And when [Kim Kardashian](#) went birthday shopping for beau Kanye West (maybe she's hoping for a ring this Christmas?), she selected a \$750,000 Lamborghini as a gift. Wonder how she'll top that!

Then, of course, there's the queen of gift-giving [Angelina Jolie](#), who reportedly has bestowed on her husband a \$1.6 million helicopter with flying lessons and a \$12,000 olive tree, among other things. Last Christmas, she gave Brad Pitt his own waterfall in California so that he can build his dream home.

Related Link: [Angelina Jolie Buys Brad Pitt a Waterfall](#)

Shop Like You're In a Celebrity Relationship

So if you're not a member of the elite or in a Hollywood couple, how do you express your million dollar love without spending that much? Maybe you can't buy your loved one a waterfall or a helicopter, but you can buy a gift that can help satisfy a passion for travel. Gifts for travelers can be extravagant or fit into any budget. If you are in California,

a simple hike to the Nojoqui Falls in the Santa Ynez Valley or water rafting on the Kern River can easily fit into any budget and may be a fun substitute for giving your love a waterfall this Christmas. Just remember to gear up with some gifts for hikers before your trip!

For an even more budget-friendly gift, print out photos of him in his various travels and frame them in variety of sizes in a montage to his international experiences. Make sure the photos capture him looking his most worldly and he'll be ecstatic about showing off your gift.

Related Link: [What Your Gifts Say About Your Relationship](#)

Maybe your honey isn't so much into travel, and instead, the waterfall is the thing that calms the senses of your practicing yogi sweetie. Help your gentle one find their peace without having to book a trip away from home. Some yoga DVDs can help them find their center. Add some yoga accessories, and you'll be their hero – the kind, sensitive hero with the great abs.

Who wouldn't want a luxury car? Unless you're a socialite or a member of Hollywood royalty, keep dreaming. We'd all like that spectacular sports car as a gift, but the average person will be overjoyed over any gifted vehicle. Show your love you care for them as well as the environment with an eco-friendly (and budget-friendly) Honda fit. For less than \$20,000, you can give your better half the nimble and fun to drive car that U.S. News and World Report ranks the number one affordable small car. With 28/35 miles per galloon, the Fit will prove to be a great fit for your bank account and your environmentally responsible sensibility.

But perhaps you want to put a sparkle in her eyes. While I'm sure the new Mrs. Timberlake is thrilled with her bling, it may not be in your best interest to buy the girl in your life a ring, unless she is The One. If you want the bling but want

to keep things on the lighter side or maybe you've already given her that sparkler and want to buy her something fashionable, check out DuePunti Diamond Rings. The ultra affordable rings come in a variety of fashionable colors perfect for stacking along with a .02 ct. diamond ring in the center of each one. Your lady can mix and match or wear them all. And with the price, you can afford to buy several!

Your wallet may not be loaded, but there's no doubting the love in your heart. Take a cue from those extravagant gift-giving celebs and buy something fantastically thoughtful but totally within reason. You don't have to spend Kardashian money to give someone a happy holiday!

Shelly Cone is an award-winning journalist, copywriter, humor columnist and the owner of Beach Betty Creative. She writes for the love of it, laughs because she can't help it and knows how to pick the perfect gift every time.

5 Secrets from My Date with Tina Fey and Amy Poehler





By Karen Siff Exkorn for GalTime.com

Tina Fey shares her lip gloss and talks to Amy Poehler in crazy gibberish

I'm pretty sure it's every woman's dream to go on a date with Tina Fey and Amy Poehler. Or at least it was mine.

So there I was, at the Beacon Theater in New York City, attending an event to benefit autism called Night of Too Many Stars. Hosted by Jon Stewart, the evening featured Ben Stiller, Seth Rogen, Stephen Colbert, Harvey Keitel, Carly Rae Jepsen, Katy Perry, Sting, and many more, including, Tina Fey and Amy Poehler.

Jon Stewart announced that one of the live auction items was to "spend a date night as the new best friend of Tina Fey and Amy Poehler." The next thing I knew, the bidding began and I raised my hand high in the air. Cut to minutes later, I found myself onstage at the Beacon Theater—with another winning bidder and my new best friends Tina and Amy! After an intimate bonding experience in front of 3,000 audience

members, we were whisked outside for a photo shoot that was later shown on a jumbo screen at the theater.

By spending a date night with these two incredibly talented and amazing women, I learned a few things.

5 BFF Secrets I Learned with Tina Fey and Amy Poehler

1. They have a special language

You know how most best friends can complete each other's sentences or know how the other is feeling just by a glance? Well, Tina and Amy have that, and more! It's almost like they relate on a psychic level. When we were backstage, they decided to come up with a skit that would involve us, only they didn't want us to know what they were planning. They started communicating in what seemed like a combination of gibberish and charades. Even though we were seated right next to them, we had no idea what they were up to. Speaking very quickly, gesturing wildly, and giggling in agreement, Tina and Amy managed to create a spectacular skit in only minutes.

2. They are who you think they are

If you already guessed from their movies and interviews that Tina and Amy are fabulous, smart, funny women, then you're right. These women are the real thing. Some actors just "act" like they're nice, when they're really not. A producer friend of mine interviews celebrities and shares horror stories of how some actresses are all "smiling and nice" when the cameras are on and all "bitchy and diva-esque" once the cameras are off. Tina and Amy could not have been nicer during the time we spent together. They not only treated us with love and respect, but they also treated the cameraman, crew and all of the fans who crowded around to watch us during the photo shoot with the same love and respect.

3. They don't engage in "Tripping the Head Cheerleader" behavior

Being a woman in show business (or any business for that matter) can be a challenge. Business is competitive, and women not only have to deal with the competition from others, but also with that ever present glass ceiling. I should know. I've had my own management consulting business for over 20 years. Tina and Amy are in a business that's typically controlled by men, and yet, they've risen to the top. Why? Because, instead of trying to beat each other up or engage in undermining behaviors (as I've seen many women do), they support each other and nurture each other's careers. You've seen their work together on SNL and in the movies—these women are each other's head cheerleaders. If more women could learn to support each other and cheer each other on, we could use that collective energy to break through that glass ceiling once and for all.

4. They're both caring moms who care about more than just their own kids

Tina has her beautiful daughters Alice and Penelope, and Amy has her adorable sons Archie and Abel. You can tell they're caring parents by the way they gush about their kids. But their caring goes beyond their own kids. They both generously donated their time and talent to appear at this benefit for autism education, and were interested to learn more about children with autism. Because of my personal relationship with autism, I shared our son's story of recovery. We talked about the ongoing need for autism education as more and more children are being diagnosed. And we all wept while watching Katy Perry perform an incredibly moving duet with a young girl with autism whose dream was to meet her singing idol one day. (If you haven't seen it, it's worth watching on YouTube.)

5. They share lip gloss

In an attempt to lighten the mood (since I started getting teary-eyed writing my last entry), I've decided to share my last bit of insider information about Tina and Amy. Tina carries lip gloss. Amy does not. So Tina shared her lip gloss with Amy. And when Tina overheard me saying that I wished I'd brought my own lip gloss, she generously offered to share hers with me. Yes, it's true. *I shared Tina's lip gloss.* As I smeared the gloss on my lips with the wand that had just touched both Tina and Amy's lips, I secretly hoped that their brilliance might rub off on me. I'm still hoping...

Get Back In the Dating Game This New Year





By Shelly Blagg

Now that it's almost a New Year, it's time for the new you to jump back into the dating pool! We all know dating can be exciting and nerve racking at the same time, made much worse by over thinking things. However, if you know you're ready to date, the best advice I can give is, JUMP IN! To ease into dating, go out with a group of people or another couple until you find your "dating feet". This can help with the pressure of those first date jitters. I can say I've gone out on many dates with best friends as the "buffer" and all proved to be successful. If you're with your best friends, you'll always have a great time, whether or not you find yourself being attracted to your date.

Most people getting back into the dating pool also have the problem of over sharing, which tends to do more harm than good. Here are some quick tips:

Related Link: [Is Divorce the Best Option?](#)

Keep the conversation light.

You're not making a lifelong commitment. Leaving things to the imagination is healthy, can be exciting, and keeps the other person interested to learn more about you.

Be yourself.

Make sure to be yourself because chances are, if they don't like you now, they're a waste of your time. Figure out what you want because if you sacrifice who are you right away, you're only cheating yourself.

Related Link: [Dating After Divorce: How Soon Is Too Soon?](#)

Make the best of it.

Lastly, remember, this is your time and it's up to you to make the best of it. There are going to be bad dates, but you will have some amazing ones as well. Each one is a new experience, that at some point, will catapult you into a lifelong relationship, or a shipwreck story to tell your friends. Either way, it's your ride so take it and go off into the dating world when you're ready.

Divorce2Dating is a networking tool to assist recently separated or divorced individuals find new relationships. Sheila Blagg and her team at Divorce2Dating.com are committed to providing support for those in interested in counseling, legal services, and guidance for rebuilding their future. The goal at Divorce2Dating.com is to offer assistance, whether needed for saving a marriage or supporting an individual through their divorce, bringing to light the emotions involved in every aspect of divorce.

How To Have An Extraordinary Date At The Bookstore



By Alex Karpman

I hate to be Debbie Downer, but at the rate brick and mortar book stores are closing, I don't know how much longer this awesome date venue will be available. Doesn't it feel like just yesterday that there was all the uproar about how the mega-book stores were killing off the mom and pop book shops?

Remember the movie *You've Got Mail* and how disgusted you were when Joe Fox's (Tom Hanks) Fox Books forced Kathleen Kelly's (Meg Ryan) *Little Shop Around the Corner* out of business? And now Amazon and e-commerce is killing off the mega-book stores. My point is ... make sure to head over to your local book store ASAP while you still can to enjoy this awesome date. Check out the video below to see how Olga and I had a blast

exploring the travel, architecture, joke and sexuality sections of the bookstore:

What's your take on this date idea? Share your thoughts below.

Datevitation.com is happy to offer free shipping on our books only to CupidsPulse.com readers. Just enter the code – cupid – at the checkout page, and you'll be discounted the \$3.50 that we normally charge for shipping. The free shipping code expires on Dec 15.

This is a guest post Alex Karpman, founder of Datevitation.com, the web's first custom love coupon platform where you can create a one-of-a-kind gift book full of fun things to do with your sweetie, or send electronic love coupons via email or facebook. Alex and his wife Olga also offer free step-by-step video guides to romantic tips and date ideas (similar to the video below) on the [Datevitation Blog](http://Datevitation.com).

Advice for Meeting His Parents





By the Editors at JDate.com for GalTime.com

You never get a second chance to make a first impression. That's why making sure you come across as the likable, charming and delightful person you are is so important during an initial meeting, especially when the face-to-face is with the parents of the guy or gal you're dating!

While meeting ma and pa can certainly be intimidating, Rachel Seliger, Community Manager for JDate.com, has five sure-fire tips to guarantee that a meeting with the parental units goes as smoothly as possible. Here's what Rachel told us:

1. Give it a Hot Second: My current boyfriend (who I met on JDate) introduced me to his parents on the THIRD DATE. He's lucky he's so sweet and that his parents are so great, or it might have been a major red flag! Give your new found love a hot second before you schedule a brunch with mom, dad, grandma or any other member of the family you haven't seen since Independence Day. In fact, you should even go one step further and officially have the "Are we exclusive?" talk before introducing your new partner to any family members.

2. Give Adequate Prep Time: While it's best to wait until you've had "the talk" to meet the parents, you still need to actually tell the person you're dating that you're planning a meet-and-greet. Did I mention that when I met my boyfriend's parents, he didn't tell me where we were going? He said it was a "surprise." That was the understatement of the year! Give your honey time to prepare for the meeting, so they can think about what to say, how to dress and all those important factors.

3. Dress for Success: Luckily I never dress ultra-casual (my go-to "casual" outfit is skinny pants, a silky blouse and statement jewelry), so when I unexpectedly found myself at my boyfriend's parents' house on a Saturday afternoon, I was ready! When dressing for a first date with the parents, you want to dress to fit in, but still show your true personality. Wear something that not only makes you comfortable, but confident as well. The more confident you feel, the less nerve-racking meeting the parents will feel. And it goes without saying that you should NOT wear something that's revealing or suggestive.

4. Come Bearing Gifts: Do not, I repeat, DO NOT show up empty-handed when you meet the parents for the first time. I don't care whether it's a bottle of wine, a bouquet of roses, a small box of chocolates, or even a personalized key-chain (ok, avoid that last one), but you should definitely bring something. Bringing a gift not only shows that you respect your mate's parents and are excited to make this new connection, but you'll also make your own parents proud (and who isn't constantly striving for that?).

5. Seal the Deal: This last tip is the toughest part. By now, you've discussed the meeting, had time to prep, figured out what you'll wear and bought a small gift as a way to say, "Nice to meet you, I'm really into your son/daughter!" Now it's time to put on your game face.

Show up to the meeting on time, be friendly, listen carefully to what both parents are saying, respond with some kind of engaging story of your own and go with the flow. In other words, just be yourself – but be the best version of yourself! Offer to help clear dishes at the end of dinner and remember to say how much you enjoyed yourself at the end of the night, and you won't have to worry about figuring out how you can get that impossible second chance at making a first impression!

How to Find Love Amidst Holiday Crazy



By Courtney Allen & [Jessica DeRubbo](#)

The ever-so jolly holiday season sets the stage for one of the most romantic times of the year. But no worries, single gals and guys! There is more than enough love to go around. Even in the midst of the frantic, last minute gift shopping and preparations for throwing an unforgettable party to kick off the New Year, love is in the air ... and not just for the ones who are taken. The holiday season provides plenty of opportunity to meet a honey just in time to snag a kiss under the mistletoe.

Anything can happen during the holidays, so follow this [relationship advice](#), and keep your eyes and options open for potential love in these places:

1. Christmas party: [Celebrity couples](#) don't have all the fun around the holidays – you can, too! Holiday parties are an absolute must during the Christmas season. Take complete advantage of the endless party invites this year. Throw on a fancy red dress or suit, and go to a Christmas party or two. Make the extra effort to introduce yourself to the attendees. Sip on eggnog, and embrace the holiday spirit with new friends... and maybe even a future date!

Related Link: [Date Idea: Volunteer Together this Holiday Season](#)

2. Speed dating: Speed dating may be year-round, but the holiday season makes the experience extra special and will bring out twice as many people. Take a chance, and explore a new way of meeting potential love interests. You never know who you might meet as you shuffle from table to table, enjoying the company of other singles. If you're worried about

going alone, bring some adventurous friends along for the ride.

3. The mall: There is no place that is packed with tons of people during the holidays quite like the mall. Slow down your hectic Christmas shopping and truly enjoy others around you as they collect items to mark off their own list. Chat with the tall, handsome guy shopping for a Marc Jacobs watch or the sweet brunette bagging your tennis shoes. Love can find you anywhere- even in the mall.

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

4. Singles night: Although you may feel like you're the only one flying solo during the holidays, you're most definitely not. Classy clubs, snazzy lounges, and even church groups often have specific nights dedicated to those who are single and ready to mingle. Grab a few of your girlfriends or best guy friends and have a fun night out with singles just like you.

How do you plan to find love this holiday season? Share your ideas with us!

5 Bachelor and Bachelorette Couples We Can Learn From





By Sara Dawkins

It has been announced that the most recent couple from *The Bachelor* series has split. Shocking. You mean to tell us that finding love in three weeks in front of cameras, a herd of people and being thrown into extravagant romantic dates didn't really build the solid foundation that a couple needs to work out? You could have fooled me. Now that Emily Maynard and Jef 'with one F' Helms are over, we can take a minute to look and learn from other *Bachelor* couples:

Trista and Ryan Sutter: That's right they have the same name ... because they actually got married! And two kids later, they boast of a happy and healthy relationship together. This is rare in Bachelor history. They proved that you can find love, but only if you work hard on it and get past all the fame that comes with reality TV. Congrats to them and we look forward to them being the only successful couple for many more years!
Lesson learned: Barrel through the muck.

Related Link: ['Hope Springs' Is This Summer's Guide to a Healthy Relationship](#)

Jake Pavelka and Vienna Girardi: Who doesn't love a good train wreck? This couple was doomed from the start. Way-too-sweet-for-his-own-good Jake chose bad girl Vienna to be his [bride](#). It didn't take long before there were rumors that Vienna cheated on him, and the next thing you know, both were destined to hang on to their 15 minutes of fame by going to the media. It was very messy, much like Byron Velvick and Mary Delgado's breakup. Police were involved, so enough said. **Lesson: Don't go for the bad guy/gal and be mature in a break up or you will end up looking like a train wreck.**

Related Link: [Five Reasons Men Are Attracted to Celebrity Bad Girls](#)

Jason Mesnick and Melissa...errr...Molly Malaney: Another successful *Bachelor* couple, but this marriage happened in the round about away. Jason was originally smitten with the bubbly and beautiful Melissa Rycroft only to dump her on national television for doe-eyed runner up Molly. Despite the outrage from fans and the media, this couple managed to make it through and get married. They just recently announced they are expecting their first child together! **Lesson: Go with your gut and make the right decision first.**

Ali Fedotowsky and Roberto Martinez: Ugh. This one was a tough one to get over. Not only were Ali and Roberto cute together, but they actually seemed to be happy in front of cameras. After 18 months they decided to call off the engagement and end their relationship. **Lesson: Pretty people break up, too. Also as much as you want it to work out, sometimes it just doesn't.**

Charlie O'Connell and Sarah Brice: This is an oldie, but a goodie. And yes, Charlie is bro's with actor Jerry. Charlie chose blonde bombshell Sarah way back in 2006 and they broke up in 2007. They got back together in 2008 and then after 5 years, called it off again. It was a mutual break up, as they were both citing they fought over the same things the first

and second time around. Who knows, maybe the third time's the charm? **Lesson: You break up the first time for a reason, don't forget why.**

Sara is an active nanny as well as an active freelance writer. She is a frequent contributor of <http://www.nannypro.com/>. Learn more about her <http://www.nannypro.com/blog/sara-dawkins/>.

Why You Shouldn't Buy Her a Ring for the Holidays



By Marina Sbrochi for GalTime.com

Hey, guys: Do you feel pressured by all the engagement ring ads you see on TV, billboards, radio and magazines? If you don't cough up two months' salary are you less than a man? Is someone putting the high pressure on you to get her a ring for the holidays? Are her parents giving you the stink eye every time you come over and don't ask her father for her hand? Is she dropping hints like, "I really like round diamonds better than emerald cut, you know, in case you were wondering."

Here are three reasons to skip the little velvet box presentation at Christmas, Hanukkah, at a big family gathering, over hot cocoa, on New Year's, while ice skating or on a carriage ride through the city.

1. Diamonds shouldn't be produced out of pressure

NEVER EVER EVER do anything because you feel pressured to do it! You don't **need** to buy anyone a ring. Are you feeling the pressure because you are inundated with ads telling you that you would be a lesser man if you didn't come through with the latest four stone, fancy cut engagement ring this year? They've got your number my friend. They know your girlfriend is watching. They know she looks at those beautiful rings in the magazines that she ever so "carefully" leaves open on the table.

You only buy someone a ring if they are the love of your life. You only buy them a ring if can't live without them. Then and only then do you put your hard earned cash down for an engagement ring.

I won't even go into the fact that diamonds aren't rare and they are crazy overpriced. That's another story.

2. Holiday engagements are so cliché

A ring for the holidays is so predictable. Be original, dude. If she really is the love of your life, make the engagement a surprise! Don't give it as a holiday gift. Don't be cheap

and think, "Hey, I was going to buy her a ring anyway, might as well make it a gift and I don't have to give her something else." Don't be that guy. Step outside the box and put yourself in her shoes. She's seen the ads, she wants something special. Pick some time when she really won't expect it and make it memorable. Remember, it is not to be combined with another gift or event so her birthday is off limits, too.

3. Timing is everything (and nothing)

Most woman have a magic number in their heads of how long they will wait until the ultimatum pops out. For some it is a year, some three years. I say phooey! Let me explain: I definitely think you need to date someone for at least a year at a minimum before you even think about marriage.

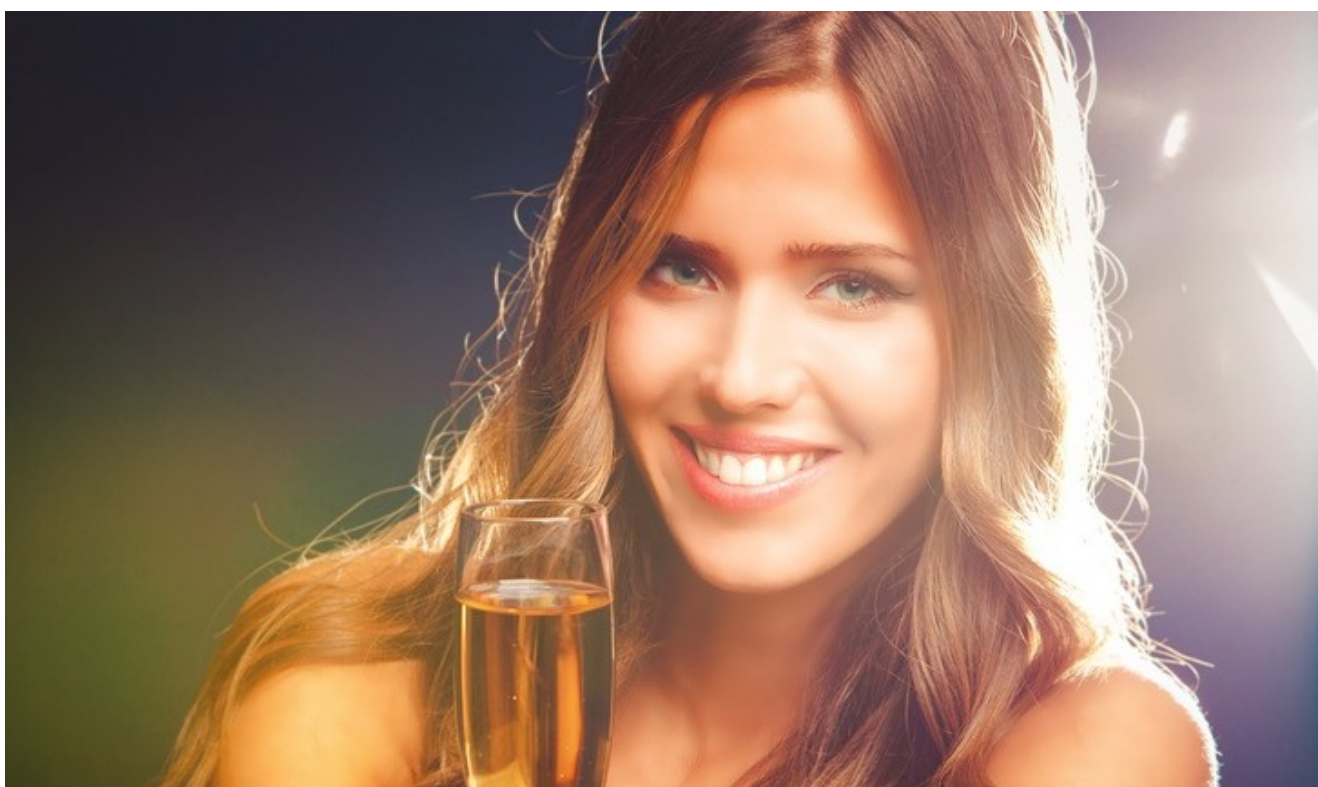
However, there is no magic number to feel like you want to spend the rest of your life with someone. If you aren't feeling it by year two, she probably isn't it for you. Just because you have dated for two years does not mean you have to come up with a ring. This is the completely wrong reason! If she doesn't do it for you – do her a favor and break up with her. No one wants to be a consolation prize.

That being said, if she is the love of your life and it's going on five years and she wants to get married but you aren't feeling the ring, you need to ask yourself why. Do you *not* want to be married? That's cool, if she's cool with it. But if she isn't, and you still feel she is the one, there are definitely bigger issues at hand. Seek some professional help to sort it out.

I'm not against engagement or marriage or this whole ring thing. I am against doing it for the wrong reasons. If you feel forced or pressured, you may end up with divorce papers and that ring will be at the pawn shop. Do both of yourselves a favor and propose ONLY if she is the love of your life!

Did you get engaged at the holidays? Would you advise it to someone else? Share your comments below.

5 Reasons Why Men Are Attracted to Celeb Bad Girls



By Joshua Pompey

There is just something about a bad girl that men can't seem to resist. We know they are bad for us, but that sure doesn't stop us from feeling the way that we do, especially when it comes to the celebs who we crush on. Look no further than the overwhelming attention paid to stars like Megan Fox, [Angelina](#)

[Jolie](#), and Lindsay Lohan during the heights of their popularity. Don't forget: It wasn't that long ago when Jolie's [celebrity news](#) was focused on her carrying a vile of blood around her tattoo-laced body and lip locking with her brother on national television!

Why Celeb Bad Girls

Take a trip a little further down memory lane, and you may recall a time when bad girl [Britney Spears](#) dressed up as a schoolgirl and crushed the competition (like good girls Mandy Moore and Jessica Simpson). When it comes down to it, the allure of a bad girl makes a lot of sense. Here are a few reasons why men can't resist these types of women:

Related Link: [What Attracts Us to Bad Boys?](#)

1. The promise of sexuality: When men see a bad girl, the look and the attitude conjures images of a woman who is free with her sexuality. Women such as Fox ooze sexuality, making us believe that a night with her will be different from any experiences we've ever had. This is enough to make any man weak at the knees when contemplating the sexual revolution that could enter his life.

2. The excitement a bad girl brings to the table: Life can be boring sometimes. Many of us fall into the same day-to-day routines, week after week, month after month. But not with a bad girl. With a bad girl like celeb Lohan, we know we will be in for one heck of a ride, full of exotic trips, random adventures, and potential trouble. This trouble may not be good for relationships and love, but it sure is exciting.

3. The promise of a chase: Men will always want what they can't have. When men chase after bad girls, they know they may be setting themselves up for mistreatment, frustration, and neglect, but the allure of that chase is enough to outweigh the negatives. Deep down, we all want to be the ones to

conquer the Jennifer Lopez's of the world and get them to settle down.

Related Link: [3 Reasons Nice Guys Shouldn't Finish Last](#)

4. The look: Pull up pictures of some of the most notorious bad girl, and you will find one common thread: All of them look and dress incredibly sexy. Men are extremely visual creatures. We become excited by the over-sexualized visuals a bad girl presents. When choosing between the pretty girl in the turtleneck and the bad girl who shows off what she has, our primal sides want the bad girl that stimulates us visually.

5. The attitude: The way a female carries herself can work wonders for her appeal. An average looking woman can become extremely attractive by walking, talking, and acting as if she has it going on. Bad girls such as Jolie give off a vibe of living in their own world, and everyone else is just in their orbit. This attitude of complete confidence can be liberating to men who feel constrained by society. There is something very sexy about a woman that marches to the beat of her own drum.

Joshua Pompey is an online dating expert and author of The REAL Online Game series. For plenty of free advice, visit <http://getrealdates.com>.

Does it Matter How Old You Are When Your Parents

Divorce?



By Jane Greer, PhD for GalTime.com

jessica simpson's parents file for divorce

Tina and Joe Simpson, parents to pop stars Jessica and Ashlee, have filed for divorce after 34 years of marriage, citing "discord or conflict of personalities." There have been rumors that Joe had an affair with a young man, though the couple denied any third-party complications, saying it was an amicable split.

Whatever the reason, whenever there are children involved – even grown children – it is hard not to wonder how the kids are taking it. Jessica Simpson has said she is [sad](#), but remains focused on the priorities of her own life – raising her new baby Maxwell and managing her post-partum weight loss.

Ashlee has not yet spoken publicly about her parents' split.

We all can appreciate the enormity of divorce, and the toll it takes on everyone involved, especially the children. With that in mind, it is easy to understand why sometimes parents who are unhappy make it a priority to stay together while the children are young, raising them as a unit until they reach adulthood, before they make the move to break up. The idea, or hope, is that if they wait until their children have their own lives with their own careers and families, then maybe the divorce won't have such a big impact. Maybe it will be just a small blip on their radar screens.

WHAT TO EXPECT AS AN ADULT WHEN YOUR PARENTS DIVORCE

While it might be true that, as an older person, you are better equipped to deal with that sort of emotional trauma. It also may be true that you are not dependent on your parents in the same way a young child is. However, it doesn't minimize the fact that the family you have always known, the image of which you carried around with you your whole life, no longer exists.

Whatever age you might be when a divorce occurs, it is likely that you will have a strong reaction to it. After all, it is the demise of the family you knew as a child from which you drew much of your emotional security. At the very least, you can expect it to be jarring. You may go through a potpourri of feelings, beginning with a sense of abandonment because the parents you've counted on are no longer there for you as a team. You may also feel rejected, taking their decision personally, and wonder if your mother and father don't love you enough to stay together. You might even feel betrayed, and want to blame either one or both of them. Ironically, if your parents had an extremely contentious or stormy marriage, you might even find yourself feeling relieved that they are getting divorced, and then guilty for feeling that way.

HOW TO COPE

Make room for the idea that your parents' divorce – no matter how old you are – can have a big impact on you. Increasing your self-awareness can help you cope so you can handle the negative feelings and keep them from spilling over into your own relationships.

Be patient with yourself and your parents, recognizing that it is their marriage and, no matter how close you might be, it is impossible to fully comprehend what goes on between two people unless you are one of them. Remember that your parents don't have a problem with you or with the family as a whole, but some unresolvable problem with each other. With that in mind, you will hopefully be able to side step the blame, and avoid being forced to take sides or being pulled into their battle.

Finally, determine the sort of relationship you want to maintain with each of your parents separate from the anger and animosity that is going on between them.

It is still so early for Jessica and Ashlee to process their feelings about their parents' divorce. But hopefully, they will be able to move forward without losing too much, and be able to hold onto what is important to them. And if your parents are separated, divorcing or apart, here's hoping you have the support to move on, too.