

How to Know When It's Time for the First Kiss



By Carlos Kotkin

There's no way around it. First kisses are usually pretty awkward, and yet they're almost always memorable. Even celebrities commit their first kiss experiences to memory. Recently, a group of celebrities including Tom Green shared recollections of their first smooch with [People](#). For instance, Jerry O'Connell was stunned when his first kiss took a French turn. Vince Gill's first lip lock involved intense face slamming that kept him from breathing. James Van Der Beek's extremely romantic first smooch took place in a ... handicapped bathroom? A handicapped bathroom? Seriously?

Even after you've gotten the hang of it, a kiss at the end of a first date can sometimes be just as awkward. These situations bring you back to your teenage years when you were kissing your teddy bear for practice. To top it off, for guys, making the first move is often a nerve-wracking experience ... and as they say, timing is everything. Here are some things to consider:

A Concrete "No"

It's no secret that dating can be an awful experience every now and then (or nine times out of ten). The worst part of a first outing is the potential for an awkward goodbye at the end of it. Indeed, I've experienced my fair share of goodbyes. Sometimes it's crystal clear when a woman isn't interested in a first kiss ... or a second date, for that matter. At the end of one date, I received a firm business-like handshake along with a "Good luck to you," before she power-walked in heels across the parking structure to her car. In that case, I knew leaning in for a kiss wasn't a great idea.

Related: [Five Conversations to Avoid on the First Date](#)

A Strong "Yes"

Other times, women I've gone out with have miraculously been attracted to me. In one case, at the end of a date, a young lady asked me point blank, "Are you going to kiss me or what?" This was a strong indication she wanted me to, um, kiss her.

Related: [Five Reasons Why Opposites Attract](#)

No Man's Land

But then there's that middle ground – that neutral date when you're out with someone and you feel like things could go either way. It's the no-man's land of dating. Unfortunately, this is where I've ended up most of the time. I've been in

situations where I've thought, "This person either can't stand me or is head over heels." I'm not embarrassed to admit I've been on a date at the movies and as the movie was ending, I've thought, "Oh, no. It's over. We're going to say our goodbyes pretty soon. Oh no..." Ladies, while in no-man's land, your date will search for the slightest clue that you're more than friends. The gentlest touch from you, laughing at our stupidest jokes or a twinkle in your eye are all strong indicators. (By the way, it's totally possible to see twinkles.) The bottom line is, things like that give a guy hope.

While I can't point out which specific clue will lead a guy to lean in, I *can* emphasize what *not* to do. I was on a dinner date once that lasted for hours. We ended up in my apartment, where she sat on the couch, giggling at my yearbook photos.

When I leaned in, she moved away in surprise, saying, "I'm not interested in that. Sorry." I apologized profusely, declaring it was my bad. Even though the atmosphere was incredibly awkward afterward (I thought), she stayed for another hour as if I had never made a move. We talked about Hawaii, and she finally left. When she did, I had a newfound admiration for the woman who shook my hand and power-walked away in heels.

Carlos Kotkin is the author of PLEASE GOD LET IT BE HERPES: A Heartfelt Quest for Love and Companionship. He is a ten-time Moth StorySLAM winner, including two-time winner of the coveted GrandSLAM, and has been featured on NPR's The Moth Radio Hour, KCRW's UnFictional, and the popular podcast RISK! He lives in Los Angeles. For more on Carlos, visit his website at www.carloskotkin.com.

Five Bad Relationship Habits and How to Break Them



By Marianne Beach, GalTime

We've all heard the infamous break-up line: "It's not you, it's me!" But what if it really *is* you that's been sabotaging your relationship— without even knowing it?

Psychiatrist Rebecca Gladding, MD, co-author of "You are Not Your Brain: *The 4-Step Solution for Changing Bad Habits, Ending Unhealthy Thinking, and Taking Control of Your Life,*" offers us the top five bad relationship habits we slip into...and how to break them once and for all.

Bad Habit #1: Pointless arguments

How to Break it: Stop, assess and refocus

Gladding says: If you find that what started off as a legitimate difference of opinion over something specific has devolved into either of you bringing up old issues or simply trying to make a point to win the fight, you need to stop the conversation and take stock of what's happening.

Rather than blame either person, simply note what just happened, take a breath if you need to and refocus the conversation on the original point. Say something neutral, like "I think we got off track, you were saying before that you thought/felt," or "I think we got off track, what I'd really like to talk about is..." By not placing blame and keeping to the original topic, you can avoid saying something that you both might later regret.

Related: [3 Habits Guys Find Most Annoying](#)

Bad Habit #2: Making assumptions

How to Break it: Ask instead

Gladding says: We've all done this. He does or says something that you take one way, when he really didn't mean what you thought he just implied; or, he doesn't do something in the way you expected him to.

Rather than assuming his intentions, thought process or feelings, ask him to help you understand where he's coming from. You might be surprised to learn he had actually thought something through more than you assumed, was planning to do something later or didn't realize how you might take his comment. So, when it's not clear, ask him."

Bad Habit #3: Endlessly seeking reassurance

How to Break it: Ask once (or twice), and then move on

Gladding says: Although it's important to ask him how he feels or what he's thinking, there is a limit to this. For example, if you repeatedly ask him the same questions to get reassurance or more information about a prior event or conversation, he might begin to think you did not believe or trust him the first time.

Rather than asking him about the same topic/event several times, ask once or maybe twice, get the answers you need, say what you need to say and then move forward.

Related: [What to Do When He Pulls Away](#)

Bad Habit #4: Checking his email/texts

How to Break it: Have a talk about trust

Gladding says: This is very tempting— and people do it for all kinds of different reasons. Is he talking with an ex? Is he cheating on me? Is he getting me that ring? Invading someone's privacy in this way almost never leads to a good outcome and often results in mistrust and resentment. Rather than snooping, look at his behavior. Is he acting like he normally does or has something changed? For example, is he coming home at night at the usual time? Is he following his usual routines? Is he attentive and loving with you or is he distracted?

The bottom line is that if you do not trust him, checking his email and texts is not going to improve your relationship.

You might need to have a conversation with him about your concerns and/or consider whether you trust him enough to be in a relationship with him at all.

Related: [Can We Have TOO Much Communication and Honesty?](#)

Bad Habit #5: Having serious conversations via electronic media

How to Break it: Wait to say it face-to-face

Gladding says: Although emoticons have helped some people, having a serious conversation via email/text is a big mistake. Not only are you unable to tell his tone, you are missing eye contact, body language and other vital information. And, while the phone or Skype might be an alternative in urgent situations, it's still not the same as being in the same room with someone.

I can't tell you how many fights get started this way when really it was a misunderstanding in how someone read the text and assumed subtext. In most cases, the entire misunderstanding could have been avoided if the two people talked in person. This is why I always recommend meeting in person if you need to discuss something important, especially if there is a chance one of you might misinterpret what's being said.

You've Cheated, So Now What?





By Melissa Caballero

You've done the unthinkable. You've cheated. But whether it was a one-night stand or an ongoing affair, something has to be done. You must find the courage to confront yourself, your life and your relationship. The aftermath of cheating is not an easy obstacle to maneuver through, but you are not alone. Reaching deep within can reveal many of the answers to those heart-wrenching questions that are most likely burdening your conscious. Whether you're a celebrity couple overcoming the adversity of the paparazzi exposing your cheating-capades or an everyday couple trying to find your way, here are a few tips on how to handle your embittered situation:

1. To tell or not to tell. If your affair was truly a one time lapse in judgment, it may be most beneficial to keep this information to yourself. Although you might think it will take a huge weight off your shoulders to confess, you will only be hurting your partner and destroying any trust that exists between you. If you choose to keep it quiet, remember

not to blab to your friends or post eluding comments on Facebook, increasing the risk of your partner finding out.

You must only do this if you truly believe you will never cheat again.

However, if after you've cheated you feel there is no way to exist in your relationship without revealing your wrong doing or if in fact you want to end things and move on, disclosing the information may be the right choice for you. Without disclosure, it may not be possible for you and partner to move on in a truly honest relationship.

2. Work it out or end it. Was this really just a one-night stand or are you finding yourself chronically hooking-up?

Infidelity often happens because something is missing in the relationship. After you've cheated, you may realize you the made the biggest mistake of your life. If this is the case, you need to communicate with your partner about how you're feeling, and what's lacking in your relationship. Doing so, will make it easier to fix these things as a couple. This doesn't necessary mean you have to confess, but simply use your infidelity as a learning curve.

However, the lesson may very well be that you are no longer committed and you need to move on. Your actions may have been a subconscious act to sabotage your current relationship

Related: [5 Reasons Why Power Men Like Arnold Schwarzenegger Cheat](#)

3. Accept the consequences. Whether you fess up or not, every action has a reaction. Being unfaithful is a detrimental behavior and will impact your life drastically. If you do expose these actions to your partner, you have to be prepared for the worst. You cannot expect your partner to brush off this information or even forgive you. If you mutually decide to overcome this hurdle together, you must give your partner space and time to heal. You must also give

constant reassurance that you have learned from your mistake and are willing to move on honestly and faithfully. If you and your partner are committed to each other post cheating, the healing process may bring you even closer together.

Related: [NY Ink's Ami James Chats about New Season and Inking Your Partner's Name](#)

4. Find forgiveness within yourself. Mistakes happen. Rather than beating yourself up, step back and forgive yourself. Doing this allows you to free yourself mentally. While you are still responsible for your actions, this release of emotion can allow you to work on yourself, your relationship- whether it is the current one or a new one- and help you to change your bad habits and find personal growth from within.

How did you and your partner handle a cheating situation? Share your comments below.

5 Celebrity Couples Who Should Rekindle Their Romance





By Samantha Mucha

There are some things in life that go together like peanut butter and jelly or a refreshing glass of lemonade on a hot summer day. Some of our favorite celebrity couples compliment each other in the same way. Although many of our most loved duos have split and moved on, there's no shame in wishing they would reunite. Think way back to Britney Spears and Justin Timberlake; they always seemed like the perfect couple on "The Mickey Mouse Club." What would life be like if all of our favorite Hollywood couples got back together? Here are a few Tinseltown twosomes we would love to see re-spark their old flames:

1. Jennifer Aniston and Brad Pitt: So maybe Pitt allegedly cheated on Aniston, but who didn't love them together? This seemingly perfect blonde couple seemed as if they were going to live happily ever after, but that changed once Pitt filmed *Mr. and Mrs. Smith*, and Angelina Jolie stepped into the picture. Both Pitt and Aniston denied that Jolie was the

reason for their divorce filing in 2005.

Related: Brad Pitt Trashes Marriage to Jennifer Aniston

2. Jennifer Lopez and Marc Anthony: A recent split for this dynamic duo came as a surprise to most. With such high intensity careers, however, it was almost expected that the couple would eventually butt heads. Although Lopez approves of Anthony's new girlfriend, it's simply not possible to replace this previously successful and passionate couple.

3. Demi Moore and Bruce Willis: This former duo's divorce came as a shock to the public. The pair had three children and a seemingly happy marriage, so a separation seemed almost impossible. After over 10 years of marriage, though, the couple agreed to divorce without disclosing a reason and came to a fair settlement. They're close friends to this day.

Related: [Demi Moore Proves There's Hope After Divorce](#)

4. Jessica Simpson and Nick Lachey: With this pair, a reality television series had no positive outcome other than revenue. According to *People*, Joe Simpson, Jessica's father and manager said, "Do they fight? Hell yes, they fight. Have there been moments when Nick has wanted to leave Jessica or Jess has wanted to leave Nick? Absolutely." Their reality show, "Newlyweds," was a first of its kind, allowing a look into celebrity marriage bliss; but apparently the show falsely depicted the couple. Life on the show appeared happy, but behind the scenes, these two were arguing to the point of demise.

5. Britney Spears and Justin Timberlake: This former young couple met as members of "The Mickey Mouse Club" in front of the cameras as teenagers. After three years of dating, it seemed that Spears and Timberlake were meant for each other. Unfortunately, fame and fortune took a toll on their relationship, as they battled drama sparked by rumors.

What other celebrity couples do you think should rekindle their romances? Share your thoughts below.

Is Dating Your Ex Off Limits?



By Erika Mionis

After a tough breakup, many people gorge themselves in the nearest pint of ice cream and attempt to forget their sorrows. Shortly thereafter, it's common for them to experience a rush of self-confidence; they're determined to enjoy being single. However, the rush and the ice cream

therapy can't last forever.

It's easy to assume going back to your ex is okay if you have a change of heart. And in some cases, it's acceptable to retry a failed relationship. However, it's important to fully analyze your breakup, your ex and your plans for the future before rekindling the flame. Here are a few things to consider:

The cause:

Even the most pointless breakups happen for a reason. Before restarting your relationship with your ex, make sure to figure out why the two of you split up in the first place. If your breakup was caused by a petty argument, feel free to reconsider the relationship. If the parting of ways was the result of a wrongdoing on your partner's part, think about moving on. Though there are exceptions to every rule, for the most part, people don't change. Starting a relationship with someone you don't trust may only lead to more distress in your life.

Possibility of forgiveness:

If your ex was the one who ended the relationship, reconnecting with each other will be even more difficult. Work on the small personality issues that your partner may have disliked and ask your ex for another chance. Though this will take time, eventually you will be a better person because of it. If your breakup was caused by a personal mistake on your part, your ex may not consider dating you again. Be prepared to accept rejection.

Your ex:

Is your ex really worth it? Trying to rekindle the flame will take enormous effort on both of your parts. You should only date again if you truly feel that your ex could be "the one."

Related: [Ten Signs You're Dating a Jerk](#)

The future:

Don't run back to your ex if you feel optimistic about the future. If you have a close friendship with someone that could potentially lead to more, go for it. Contemplating the past may be a waste of time. There are probably better relationships still to come.

Related: [How to Campaign for a Better Relationship](#)

Would you give your ex another chance? Share your comments below.

The Fragile MALE Ego? Not So Fast!





By [SMF](#) Marcus Osborne for [GalTime](#)

That headline should not be read as a knock against the X chromosome set. Consider it more an objective observation. Yes, I said, “objective.” Hey, being a guy doesn’t kill my ability to see a situation fairly. As a matter of fact, as I think more about this topic, I’m thinking mine may be the lone voice of impartiality here.

Constantly worried about hurting your man’s ego? Think again. It seems that women are actually more emotionally insecure than they think.

For as far back as I can recall, men have been derided for the fragility of their egos. It’s been noted a gazillion times by professional therapists, pop psychologists, and basically anyone looking to take a shot a guy’s emotional fortitude.

Sure, I’ll own up to some of the common insecurities men commonly and constantly battle. We love feeling “manly”, which means many of us have no idea what to do with ourselves

when you tell us that you can fix your own sink or change your own tire.

"You can??? Well what the hell am I supposed to do while you jack up that car? Good lord...I think I'm about to...pass out...getting...dizzy..."

Related: [Love Advice Q&A: Is It Weird That My Man Always Texts Instead of Calling?](#)

No doubt we struggle with some fear that you'd leave us if George Clooney (or George Clooney-lite) came sniffing around. This mainly due to the guilt we feel for knowing we'd do the same if there was a late night knock on the door and Halle Berry was on the other side.

And we sure as heck worry, no matter how many times you tell us not to, about whether it's *big enough*. Quick piece of advice, never look at your guy's "manliness" and proclaim, "Honey, it's big enough for *me*." Because then we know it isn't.

But what about the ladies? You want to talk fragile egos? Hoooo boy! Any man will tell you (if he's got nothing to lose) that woman have a fairly hefty, Microsoft-esque market share in emotional insecurity.

Ever see what happens to a lady's self esteem if her guy turns down sex a couple of times? "Well why not? Are you not attracted to me? Is there someone else? Am I getting fat? You like my sister, don't you!"

Errrrr--no. I just wanna watch the Raider game.

You can't mention her age without risking a stay in the doghouse. You had better not, ever, EVER, answer the question, "Do I look fat in these jeans?" in the affirmative. Bad things have happened to those who have. Guys, by the time they're all grown up, understand the delicate dance males must

perfect in order to answer certain questions without answering certain questions. "Do you look fat in those jeans? Honey, you look great in *everything*...but you look amazing in those pants with the elastic waistband."

Related: Q&A: [Can I Ask My Boyfriend to Delete Facebook Pictures with His Ex?](#)

Whatever we say, it's got to be said just right so as not to send our partners into an eating disorder. Ask your guy. He'll tell you how he has to either avoid or massage a certain issue with you because he knows how easily you come unglued over the most innocuous comment. And even compliments can be a scary proposition.

Dude: "Wow, sweetie. Your hair looks great today!"

Dudette: "What? What's wrong with my hair every other day?!"

Oh, and the look-at-the-darkside, dot-connecting ability of ladies is unparalleled. To a guy, a toilet seat left up is just a toilet seat left up. To a woman, it's a direct reflection of a man's parental acumen. You left the toilet seat up again. That means you don't listen to her. And if you don't listen to her, that means you don't really care about her feelings. And if you don't care about her feelings, how could you possibly [love](#) and nurture your child's feelings? You, sir, have proven beyond a shadow of a doubt, that child protective services should be on high alert should you ever become a father!

So yeah, guys carry a boatload of insecurities. But women drag around their fair share, too. Let's not so gleefully point out one's flaws when we could all probably use a little therapy!

5 Low Profile Online Dating Strategies



By Heidi Lee Munson

Dear Heidi Lee,

Help! I think I'm a Toad!

I'm on an online dating site, and I lie about who I am ... I use my sister's photo. I play down my interests – leaving out that I'm Jim Carrey's ex and a former Playboy model. I feel guilty for lying, but I can't be honest because of stalkers,

psychos and creeps. I want a regular, low-key guy who can throw back a burger and a beer in a bowling alley ...

Don't these guys have the right to know up front that my world is paparazzi and tabloids? Do I have the right to lure them with false promises of an All-American romance with the girl next door?

Who am I to lie to these men? A Toad?

xoxo,
Jenny

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

Dear Jenny,

Even asking such a question shows that you are a strong, lovely and thoughtful woman. Whether a Big Screen Celeb or a Midwest Farmer's Daughter, you and your future Prince Charming have the right to be honest with each other now.

Fortunately, my friend, you've found a Midwestern girl. I understand your unique need for privacy within the Toad Kingdom as well as your pull toward the rugged sexiness of the strong, meat-eating types. In small towns, we are all celebrities in our own right. Toads who recognize us may be interested in our career status, income or somewhat gullible reputations. So, Ms. All American in L.A., let me share a few small town girl strategies to help you avoid the Toad label :

5 Small Town Strategies for a Celebrity

1. Communicate proactively: Initiate conversation first to have control over the flow of it, and reveal yourself as early as appropriate.

Related: [How to Communicate to Get What You Need](#)

2. Go au natural: Use a natural picture of yourself – a naked

face with a warm smile – preferably with a shadow from a tree or a ball cap shielding your true identity.

3. Minimize exposure: Hide your profile when you are talking to a handful of promising men.

4. Use geographic camouflage: Register your account using a zip code outside of your location to throw the Toads off your trail.

5. Be a rhinoceros: Grow a thick skin, doll. Even the best laid plans have holes. Not only does a rhino have thick skin, but he or she can crush the Toad in one mighty step.

Most importantly, have fun! I'm proud to hear that you chose online dating to meet "the one". We Citizens of the Toad Kingdom share good company having you here. Thanks!

Warmest Regards,

Heidi Lee

P.S. May I offer you a copy of my eBook, *How To Toad Proof Your Online Dating Profile?*

From struggling single mother to Happily Married Author, Marketer, Blogger and Online Dating Professional, Heidi Lee Munson kissed the toads so that you don't have to. From Couch Potato Toad to Lounge Lizard Toad and Freeloader Toad to Bad Toupee Toad, Heidi Lee kissed them all.

Power Celebrity Couples:

Hollywood Relationships That Command Our Attention



By [Whitney Baker](#)

Some [celebrity couples](#) have the “it” factor that just draws us in and makes us interested in everything happening in their lives. Other Hollywood relationships have to work a bit harder for our attention, but still, we can’t help but take notice. They make headlines because of their enviable romances, high-profile careers, and cute kids, and we anxiously await their next moves. Below are five power celebrity couples that, for better or worse, never fail to command our attention:

Power Celebrity Couples

1. Prince William and Princess Catherine: The royal wedding lived up to everyone's expectations, and the Duke and Duchess of Cambridge have continued to capture our attention – and our hearts – ever since. It seems that these lovebirds garner media coverage for every move they make, even when they do something as mundane as grocery shopping.

Related Link: [Prince William and Kate Middleton's New Year's Eve Plans](#)

2. Mariah Carey and Nick Cannon: Whether Carey is flaunting her post-baby body, Cannon is doing one of his many hosting gigs, or the duo is showing off their adorable twins, this famous couple seems to have a hand in everything. The attention-seeking family will certainly be captured in tabloids in May this year as Roc and Roe celebrate their first birthdays and Carey and Cannon mark their two-year wedding anniversary.

3. Brad Pitt and Angelina Jolie: These superstars manage to juggle two demanding careers and multiple charitable commitments all over the world, all while raising six children under the age of 10. Despite their busy lives and hectic schedules, they still manage to make time for date nights.

Related Link: [Angelina Jolie and Brad Pitt Celebrate Her Film with Dinner](#)

Private Hollywood Relationship Still Grabs Attention

4. Beyoncé and Jay-Z: This celebrity duo is famously private, but that doesn't mean they command our attention any less. Having been together for over a decade, [Beyoncé](#) and [Jay-Z](#) have been seen at sporting events and concerts as well as on

romantic celebrity getaways. They recently received even more attention for their culinary choices: The new parents were both following a partially vegan diet in order to keep their energy up for their first child's arrival. Their daughter, celebrity baby Blue Ivy Carter, was born on Jan. 7.

Related Link: [Kelly Rowland Accidentally Reveals Sex of Beyoncé's Baby](#)

5. Nicole Kidman and Keith Urban: This marriage between Hollywood royalty and a country music superstar appears to be a match made in celebrity heaven. They continuously support one another at award shows, showing their love for each other on the red carpet. Urban credits Kidman for helping him overcome his alcoholism, calling her an "extremely pure spirit." The low-key couple has settled in Nashville to raise their daughters, Sunday Rose and Faith Margaret.

Who are your favorite power celebrity couples? Share your comments below.

Exclusive: Former 'Bachelorette' Winner Jesse Csincsak Rescues Mother and Son from Same Area as First Date with His Wife



By Daniela Agurcia and Steven Zangrillo

When Former 'Bachelorette' winner Jesse Csincsak treads deep into the Colorado woods, he should bring a few lotto tickets with him. On Friday, February 17, the Breckenridge local was snowmobiling 15 miles in the middle of the backcountry in Vail when he came across a lost mother and her son. Mother, Hilary Skye, and son, Dillon, had been stranded before Jesse came to the rescue. This isn't the first (or second) serendipitous encounter to sneak up on the professional snowboarder as he's navigated the trails of the Rocky Mountains. Last year Thomas Pazerunas had also lost his way 15 miles behind the Vail Resort with no cell service until Csincsak helped him.

As if playing backwoods Superman wasn't enough, Csincsak also

notably brought his wife, 'Bachelor' Season 13 contestant Ann Csincsak, out into the same backcountry chill for their first date.



Meeting a new flame's friends is hard enough in the first place... but on a weekend getaway in -10F degree weather? Very bold. Ann made it through without a hitch. That's the textbook definition of a "keeper." Ann is proud of Jesse for the lives that he has saved and when asked if he's a hero Jesse says, "I'm paying Karma forward and would want someone to do the same for my wife and son." Looks like Ann has a keeper as well.



So, while it is definitely ill-advised to foray off the trail through the woods in 9 feet of snow, isn't it nice to know that Jesse could swoop in to save the day at any minute? Maybe the chances are unlikely, but it's nice to see someone fusing star power and humility with such harmonious ease. Be it first dates, hitting the slopes, or completing acts of heroism, it looks like the snowy ranges of Colorado are a place of serendipitous success for Jesse Csincsak.

Photos: Courtesy of Jesse Csincsak

Top 5 Celebrity Love Mistakes We Should Avoid





By Abiola Abrams

Some of us view Hollywood stars as lifestyle role models. You want Sofia Vergara's lipstick, Beyonce's curly hair or the Balenciaga bag that everybody and their mother was rocking on the red carpet recently. While it's cool to mix celeb style with your own once in a while, it's important to remember that the people who entertain us with movies, TV and music are just that – people.

That said, the famous are more human than we realize, and some of our favorite celebrities have one thing in common that we should never seek to emulate – their tumultuous relationships.

In fact, let's learn from the love, sex and dating mistakes of the stars.

Here are some celebrity relationship snafus to avoid:

Love Mistake: Never Being Single.

It seemed like Jennifer Lopez was barely divorced from her

crooner hubby Marc Anthony before stepping out with sexy back up dancer Casper Smart. Before that, she made a seamless transition from her Bennifer engagement to her JenAnthony marriage. What's up with that?

Going from relationship to relationship is a mistake. Taking a break between longtime loves is the best way to heal and ensure that we come to the next marriage or engagement as whole human beings.

Related: [10 Love Lessons from Bruce Springsteen](#)

Love Mistake: Marrying too soon.

Kim Kardashian and what's-his-face Humphries had the 72-day fairytale heard 'round the world. It seemed like Kimmie was set to continue the Dash girls tradition of meeting and immediately ending up happily ever after. Look at her little sister Khloe and her b-ballster Lamar Odom. Their less than one month courtship has yielded a relationship that's still going strong.

Bottom line? Khloe and Lamar are a wonderful fluke. Marrying someone before you've even had the "where will we live" conversation is a huge mistake. Sorry, Kris Humphries!

Related: [Kim Kardashian's Divorce – A Reminder About Relationship Mistakes to Avoid](#)

Love Mistake: Stealing someone else's lover.

Man and woman stealing is a time honored Hollywood tradition. See LeAnn Rimes, Tori Spelling, Angelina Jolie and even old school movie star Elizabeth Taylor. It's a big world out there. If your love cheated to be with you, then how can you ever trust that this pattern won't be repeated? The answer is, you can't.

Karma is a mean goddess, and hell hath no fury like karma scorned. Just sayin.'

Love Mistake: Getting a mistress pregnant.

Arnold Schwarzenegger sure did seem preachy about family values as the Republican governor of California, didn't he?

Little did we know that the Governor was not only sleeping with the maid, but he'd had a love child with her as well. Oy vey.

Obviously, this is a relationship no-no to be avoided at all costs.

Love Mistake: Bashing your ex.

When we watched Kelsey Grammer's previous wife Camille Grammer battle the divorce demon on "The Real Housewives of Beverly Hills," our hearts broke for her. Her A-list husband cheated and ran. Sure, she had choice words about him on her reality show, but then Mr. Grammer behaved deplorably by bashing his former Mrs. in an interview with Pierce Brosnan.

A smarter move is always to take the high road. See Jennifer Aniston for lessons on grace under fire. Okay, it didn't work out, and she moved on. Sure, it's probably messy. Life is a contact sport.

What are some other celeb love snafus? Dating different versions of the same jerk a la Halle Berry, returning to the scene of the crime like Rihanna or falling apart after a breakup like Demi Moore are all examples *not* to follow.

Ah, le love. You're much better off copying a celebrity hair cut than imitating their love styles. Here's to shiny, happy and healthy relationships!

Abiola Abrams is a lifestyle expert and host of "Abiola's Kiss and Tell TV." Her next book is entitled The Official Bombshell Handbook. Find her fun and scandalous love advice and interviews at <http://www.AbiolaTV.com>. She tweets @abiolatv.

Top 10 Academy Award Nominations if the Oscars were Based on Love



By Matthew Dougherty

What if the Oscars were solely based on love? For all of us hopeless romantics out there who drool over prince charmings like Ryan Gosling in the Notebook, this would be our kind of Oscars. We all love living vicariously through these glamorous celebrities and adore when they get swooped off

their feet and fall madly in love both in real life and in romantic movies. After all, it gives us hope and encourages a little fantasy in our own lives! If only the Academy Awards were based on love, then our top 10 Oscar nominations would be:

1. Best Romantic Movie: *Midnight in Paris*

Woody Allen has an uncanny ability to reach staggeringly romantic depth within his films, which is surprising coming from someone with those glasses. His latest, *Midnight in Paris* reminds us of his mastery over film by depicting the struggle of staying true to your own desires while trying to combine your life with another's, something every married couple can relate to. Owen Wilson's journey into 1920s Paris is not only entertaining but it, proves that love can overcome any obstacle when shared with the right person.

Related: [Top 10 Most Romantic Movies](#)

2. Best Couple Overall: George Valentin and Peppy Miller in *The Artist*

Jean Dujardin steals the show as the strong silent type in this old-school, black and white film. Jean and Berenice Bejo allow their affection to scream off of the screen in *The Artist*. With a film that depicts how important it is to have a partner that stands with you, supports you and sometimes even carries you through life, we're shown that love is more than words – it's an action.

3. Best Chemistry: Margaret and Denis Thatcher in *The Iron Lady*

There was never any question that Meryl Streep would be amazing as Margaret Thatcher, but who knew this biopic would focus much more on her relationship with Thatcher's devoted husband Denis (Jim Broadbent)? With years of history backing

this love story, Streep and Broadbent play off of each other with ease and create one of the most believable couples in cinematic history, which is fitting as their romance is based off of one of the truest romances to date.

4. Most Desirable Male: Billy Beane in *Moneyball*

Brad Pitt portrays the legendary and awe inspiring Billy Beane, who took the Oakland A's from rags to riches, with determination and spark. By channeling his softer side, Pitt showcases the purest of all loves by beautifully capturing the special relationship between a father and his daughter. With conviction and a wit that will leave you hanging on Pitt's every word, more women may just start tuning into MLB games this spring

Related: [Hottest Movies From The Fall](#)

5. Most Desirable Female: Marilyn Monroe in *My Week With Marilyn*

We already know that Michelle Williams is absolutely adorable, but by donning the blondest of blondes and an infamous white dress, we learned that she is also a fantastic actress. Playing cultural icon Marilyn Monroe would be a daunting task for some, but Williams' charm, beauty and ability to understand all sides of the human experience leaves us simply wanting more. She perfected the icon's every mannerism, reminding us why the public fell so deeply in love with Monroe, while also giving us a window into the troubled star's much darker world.

6. Best Kiss: Ron Weasley and Hermione Granger in *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows Part 2*

After ten years, seven movies, and plenty of awkwardly sweet moments, Ron and Hermione finally kissed before even defeating the villain, in this year's Potter flick, *Deathly Hallows Part 2*. The Weasley/Granger kiss was so passionate (and overdue) it

transcended the Potter industry, reaching the hearts of even the least enthusiastic fans. A moment that came to a head after a long history of platonic want is one we can all relate to, and one that left a little lip-shaped imprint on our hearts.

7. Most Heartbreaking Moment: Matt King says goodbye to his wife in *The Descendants*

George Clooney's character, Matt King, in *The Descendants* has it rough. After his wife ends up in a coma from a boating accident, his relationship is thrown into the spotlight when he finds out that his wife was cheating on him. . Armed with loyal friends and two daughters who still need their mother, Clooney's journey is both heartwarming *and* heart wrenching. The final good-bye between King and his wife has our vote on the most heartbreaking, tear jerker moment. We laughed, we cried and we remembered why we want to marry George Clooney!

Related: [5 Classic and Memorable Summer Fling Movies](#)

8. Most Unexpected Couple: Lisbeth Salander and Mikael Blomkvist in *The Girl With the Dragon Tattoo*

There are so few reasons to suspect that Lisbeth Salander will get involved with Mikael in the beginning of David Fincher's version of the Swedish bestseller. After all, he's involved with someone else and Lisbeth is several years younger. But then, in an odd twist, Mikael receives a gunshot wound to the head and Lisbeth is there by his side to take care of him. She makes the the first sexual advance, resulting in a very peculiar love story. Mixing violence with love makes sense for this very dark, confused character. But, I can't say we saw this 'coupling' coming. And unfortunately, when the film draws to an end we realize that neither did Mikael.

9. Cutest Kid Romance: Hugo and Isabelle in *Hugo*

It's rare that a children's film is able to capture the

believability of that all too important “first love”, but Scorsese got it right in his first ever kiddy flick. Asa Butterfield and Chloe Grace Moretz are not only fun and adorable, but they show us the tender simplicity of youthful love, and who could ever tire of that?

10. Hardest to Watch Romance: Simin and Nader in *A Separation*

A jarring escape from the norm, this film depicts the uglier side of love with an Iranian couple desiring a divorce, but finding themselves unable to do so without government permission. With a daughter in the middle of their broken family and a mix of legal trouble, the two are forced to work together despite their desire to split. The tension, heartbreak and uncertainty felt by Simin and Nader is sometimes torturous to watch, but the truth behind it also makes the entire relationship beautiful.

So there you have it! What do you think of our picks? Any movies that got nominated for Oscars that we missed? Sound off below!

What Does Astrology Tell Us About ‘Bachelor’ Ben Flajnik and His Quest for Love?





By Lori May

Benjamin Flajnik, also known as “Bachelor Ben,” is the latest contestant on The Bachelor to go looking for love. With the season drawing closer to the final episode and live special, more and more fans of the series are perplexed by who Benjamin Flajnik is—and what is he really looking for in a Lady Love?

What does Astrology tell us about Benjamin Flajnik and his quest for love?

Benjamin Flajnik is a Virgo (Sun Sign placement), based on the public information of his birth date being September 10th, 1982, in California. As an avid fan of The Bachelor, I have tuned in since the beginning of Ben’s season only to be repeatedly amused by just how much of a “typical Virgo” Ben seems to be. Below are a few highlights of the traits, interest, and behaviors of Bachelor Ben’s that led me to apply the “typical Virgo” stamp of approval.

Virgo Man traits Ben exhibits:

Need for Flexibility: Ben has repeatedly commented, both to the camera and to various female contestants, about how much he values and appreciates flexibility. The ability to “go with the flow” seems very important to Bachelor Ben, which is typical not only of Virgos but also the other Mutable Zodiac Signs (Gemini, Pisces and Sagittarius, specifically).

Desire for the Outdoors: Several of the girls have stated that they enjoy how rugged Ben is, and how outdoorsy or hands-on his dates have been. Virgo men are typically very good with their hands, have an affinity for the outdoors, and love to take a chaotic situation and make sense of it. Taking the girls fly fishing, paddling down the Panama Canal, or on a scenic picnic during a one-on-one date are all extremely appropriate endeavors for a Virgo.

Guarded Emotions: Many viewers have been concerned that Ben Flajnik seems too reserved, even shy, to be a successful Bachelor. Virgo men tend to keep their emotions in check, not only because of their Mutable nature but also because—like fellow Earth Signs Taurus and Capricorn—emotions are often confusing and even overwhelming to the very logical, practical Virgo man’s mindset.

Related Link: [The Bachelor Season 16 Episode 7: Ann and Jesse Csincsak Weigh in on Ben Flajnik’s Ladies in Belize](#)

Emphasis on Activity: Ben puts a lot of emphasis on physical activities during his dates, even one-on-one adventures, such as his deserted island date with Kacey B. The women’s ability to be productive with him during these physical activities seems very important to Ben, which is very true to Virgo’s hands-on nature. The ability to work as a couple and accomplish something tangible is extremely appealing and possibly even mandatory in Ben’s potential wife.

Dislikes Being Questioned: The women that have challenged

Ben's decisions and actions do not seem to receive a very receptive response. For example, Emily's decision to approach Ben about fellow contestant Courtney on two occasions caused Ben to visibly "draw back" from the conversation. Virgo men do not appreciate having their decisions and opinions questioned by others—a very Earth Sign trait—and more than most men, they have a tendency to respond to such questions as though it's a slight towards their manhood.

Avoids Emotional Outbursts: The women who have consistently seemed overly emotional or unstable have not lasted long this season (i.e., Jenna and Blakely). Alternatively, the more reserved, laid-back ladies seem to put this Virgo Bachelor at ease. One exception to this rule is Courtney, who is consistently intense and even romantically aggressive towards Ben during their alone time.

Related Link: [The Bachelor Season 16 Episode 6: Ann and Jesse Csincsak Weigh in on Awkward Kissing Scene and Serial Nudist Courtney](#)

Attracted to Physical Qualities: On the subject of Courtney, Ben seemed to be immediately intrigued by her after first seeing her during the introductory segment of the premiere episode. This spark of chemistry and physical attraction seems to have Bachelor Ben very much under Courtney's spell, which is one weakness most Virgo men share when in love: A tendency to be blinded by physical attraction and chemistry, and to value those connections above a more practical, logical assessment of partners.

What do you think of Benjamin Flajnik's Virgo behavior? Check back with us here at CupidsPulse.com for further explorations into Bachelor Ben's Astrology, and our theories about who will go home next—and which girl should stay!

Most Beautiful Famous Couples



By Jessica Smith

Beauty comes from the inside and out, and the radiance of love can be the most profound beauty people can exude. There are plenty of beautiful celebs in Hollywood, and when two gorgeous celebrities are matched together, they turn heads and leave us awe-struck. Here are ten of the most beautiful famous couples that Hollywood has to offer:

Beautiful Famous Couples

1. Prince William and [Kate Middleton](#): The Duke and Duchess of Cambridge have earned the number one spot on our list. They've been married less than a year, but ever since Princess Kate elegantly walked down the aisle, she has taken the world by storm with her class and beauty – and let's not forget her great fashion instinct.

2. Tom Brady and Gisele Bundchen: Fame, fortune, and beauty – this Hollywood couple has it all. They've been married for almost two years, and they're definitely turning heads. The New England Patriots quarterback and his supermodel wife have an 18-month old son and are making big plans for a new mansion.

3. Brad Pitt and Angelina Jolie: You can't mention celebrity couples without this dynamic duo making the list. Pitt and Jolie have been fighting human rights as a couple for six years, and they exude beauty inside and out with their celebrity love for one another and their love of helping people in need.

4. David and Victoria Beckham: There's plenty of spice in this duo's life, and we've watched these stars transform into responsible parents over the span of their twelve year romance. Victoria gave birth to their fourth child, daughter Harper, a few months ago, and their kids would certainly be included in the list for most beautiful celebrity kids.

5. Penelope Cruz and Javier Bardem: The Spanish actress and her beau make a lovely couple as fans watch them raise their son Leo after being married for just over a year.

6. Nick Lachey and Vanessa Minnillo: These newlyweds have been married for less than a year, and they described their celebrity wedding as a dream come true. Hopefully, having their wedding televised didn't leave these two lovebirds with

the reality TV show curse!

7. Orlando Bloom and Miranda Kerr: This famous couple can't get any sexier. The twosome has been married a little more than a year, and it's hard to believe they've already had their first child. If you saw Kerr modeling Victoria's Secret lingerie in this year's fashion show, then you probably saw her hubby watching her enviable post-baby body glide down the catwalk and giving her a standing ovation.

8. Adam Levine and Anne Vyalitsyna: They're sexy, and they know it. Their celebrity romance seems hot and steamy as they pose nude for magazine covers and Vyalitsyna appears in his music videos. You could see the infatuation in Adam's smile as he and his girlfriend locked eyes as the Victoria's Secret model strutted her stuff down the catwalk recently.

Celebrity Love is Stronger Than The Rumors

9. Will Smith and Jada Pinkett: Apart from the recent rumors of a celebrity divorce after being married for fourteen years, this power couple is still together and we're cheering for their recovery. The pair – and their famous children – are a force to be reckoned with, and their talent seems unstoppable.

10. [Ryan Reynolds](#) and Blake Lively: This young duo is one of the newest Hollywood couples to step onto the scene, and they're leaving their mark. It looks like the *Gossip Girl* may have finally found her man. The two can't seem to get enough of their love for each other, and for fans, there's nothing like living vicariously through a young and hopeful couple.

What other beautiful Hollywood couples would you add onto the list? Share your comments below.

From Bad Dates to Fireworks: How Different Dates Lead You to Your Knight



By Lindsley Lowell

Just because Valentine's Day is over doesn't mean single women can breathe a sigh of relief. Talk of spring romance is just around the corner, and many single women are still not feeling the love. For them, Valentine's Day was more like *Valencrime's* Day. It's hard for women, especially those over

35, to believe that there's true love out there for them.

When friends and family tell you that you're too picky, thereby implying that you should settle, remember to close your ears. Instead, listen to what your heart is telling you. The fact is, your close ones don't have to live with the guy ... you do.

Love is an easy concept in theory, but when you have been on many a horrific date and feel like the only men you are meeting are dingalings, the thought of a knight in shining armor in your future remains looking like a fairy tale. Most of the guys out there are far from Princely and are not nearly so charming.

Related: [How to Avoid the Reality Show Relationship Curse](#)

But if you give up on love, that's a sad, sad day. I, personally, feel like it took me 753 years to find my knight, but in the end, it was worth it. I suffered through some heartbreak and plenty of gruesome dates, but I also had some good experiences as well. Had I stayed with one of my ex-boyfriends, I would surely be divorced or unhappy right now.

You have to put yourself out there! You have to meet true love halfway.

Even though dating can be frustrating, you can learn a lot from your dates ... even the bad ones. Here's what I learned:

Crappy Dates

I have too many bad dates to mention. One prime example is the guy who looked cute in his online photos, but then showed up wearing a beret and Mr. Magoo glasses. He spent the hour having a conversation with my high heels. He hadn't mentioned his foot fetish in his profile! Or, there's the time I was set up with a French dude who seemed great when I met him at a party, until he called to make a date and informed me that he could not take me to dinner because he had no job and no

money, so if I liked, we could “go for a walk.” Needless to say, I told him to take a walk right out of my life. Better yet, there’s the guy I met on Match.com who kindly paid for our first date (a drink and some sushi), and then the following week demanded that I pay him \$21.43 for half the date because I declined a second date. He stalked me until I had to report him. Needless to say, crappy dates are hard. But, they also tell you what kind of guy you don’t want.

Related: [It’s Time to Stop Asking, ‘When Will It Be My Turn?’](#)

Nice Dates

These are pleasant ... and that’s it. You can compare it to a brown paper bag and white toast; they’re useful, but boring as hell. The guy is nice. He has a nice job. He looks nice. Unfortunately, there’s no spark, so he may as well be a gay guy or your cousin. The bottom line is, if your knees aren’t weak, your heart’s not fluttering and you’re not all hot and bothered, this will *not* be your knight. True love requires passion and chemistry.

Woohoo! Dates

These types of dates are fireworks, the brass ring or the Holy Grail. Unfortunately, they do not come around that often.

When they do, it’s euphoric, and he could indeed be your knight if this happens. People often say “You just know” when you meet “the one,” and I agree. It was fireworks on my first date with my now husband. As long as the guy feels the same way, you’re all set. Congratulations. If the guy turns out to be emotionally unavailable, or just not feeling the fireworks, you need to let it go. And even if the woohoo date doesn’t end up being your knight, these dates remind you that it is possible to have someone treat you well, like you should be treated. DON’T forget this feeling. This is what will bring you to your knight!

Lindsley Lowell is a former career dater, honorary love doctor

for all of her friends, and writer. While dating in a sea of mediocrity for what seemed like 742 years, Lindsley was forced to put pen to paper for cathartic purposes and document the hilarious, tragic, and heartfelt stories. Her new book MY KNIGHT IN SHINING ARMOR IS COMING...HE'S JUST STUCK IN TRAFFIC is a beacon of hope for all the single women out there who are told by society, friends and family to throw in the towel and settle. In 2011, she founded www.Ladiesinthepink.com – a site for women to share, inspire, create and laugh. She lives in California with her knight in shining armor and her dog Miss Winnie.

Five Things Men Look For In a Wife





By Steven Zangrillo

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

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

1. Focus

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

2. Truthfulness

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

3. Steadiness

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

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

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

4. Positivity

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

5. Love (NOTHING else)

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

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

Valentine's Day Advice: 5 Love Languages Defined





By Top Dating Sites

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

This harmonious convergence of events speaks to all the communication tools that noted relationship expert and author, Dr. Gary Chapman, extols in his series, *The 5 Love Languages*.

Dr. Chapman, also a Baptist minister, has achieved world-renown as a Biblical scholar in the field of personal relationships. His best-selling series concentrates on ways that people can convey their true feelings to others in ways that are easily accessible to all parties. In the condensed form above were elements of what Dr. Chapman teaches. A few

notes about these “languages” appear below. These techniques apply not only to spouses, but to all interpersonal relationships:

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

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

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

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

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

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

5. Physical Touch – Unless you are both professional

alligator-wrestlers, physical touch probably doesn't need to be more than an unexpected touch or small caress to speak loudly in one of the least-developed "languages" of love.

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

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

Valentine's Day Advice: 10 Tips for a Romantic (and Green) Marriage Proposal





By Kate Harrison

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

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

1. Location: No one likes to say they got engaged next to the laundry machine. Pick a location or restaurant that she loves or take her to your favorite green spot. Whether a mountaintop or an organic restaurant, your soon-to-be fiancée will appreciate a carefully selected location.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Kate wrote [The Green Bride Guide \(Sourcebooks, 2008\)](#), after

planning her own green wedding in 2007, and founded www.greenbrideguide.com in 2009. In 2010, she created the country's first green wedding professional certification class – a four week, online course – with the Wedding Planning Institute to help wedding planners learn about eco-friendly alternatives.

Valentine's Day Advice: Five Unconventional Date Night Ideas





By A Bullseye View

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

Stay in and cook fresh pasta

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

Get glam and smile

In the age of digital cameras, unflattering Facebook shots and

constant TwitPics, it can be hard to find a decent photo with your significant other. So, why not get all gussied up and pose like a pro? Hire a professional shutterbug or just ask a willing friend.

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

Learn something together

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

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

Give a personalized gift

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

Volunteer

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

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



By Rebecca Garland

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

Can you imagine Brad Pitt and Angelina Jolie turning up for a special with the paparazi underfoot looking for clues about the latest celebrity plastic surgery? No – celebrity parents, especially in big families like the Jolie-Pitts, are looking for a bit more privacy when it comes to celebrating Valentine's Day. And you can enjoy romance at home, too. Here's how:

Cook Together

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

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

Dinner and a Movie

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

Related: [5 Ways to Reignite the Spark In Your Relationship](#)

Casual Romance

Valentine's Day deserves a bit of special treatment, but if setting tables and driving out for food doesn't put you in the

mind for romance, why not keep it casual? Busy parents know that the most romantic thing you can do is simply spend time together without any obligations or interferences. Order a pizza with your favorite toppings – you don't need to make concessions for the kids this time – and kick back to watch an uninterrupted marathon of all of those shows the two of you have recorded on the DVR.

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

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

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





By Vicky Oliver

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

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

If you're watching your money (and these days, who isn't?), the good news is that we live in an era when the grand gesture

can be more meaningful than a present costing hundreds of dollars. And with a little forethought, yours will convey just the right amount of love. Here are nine gift ideas for the frugalista with a heart of gold, but a wallet running on empty:

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

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

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

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

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

4. Shop your closet. "Love consists of desiring to give what

is our own to another and feeling his delight as our own," Emanuel Swedenborg wrote. Passing on something that was yours to someone you cherish is not merely about the value of the item itself. Hopefully, the gesture will strike an emotion, and you'll have a chance to see your own joy reflected back in the recipient's face. Please note: Never relinquish something that you can't live without should the relationship combust.

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

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

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

8. A message in a bottle. Do you feel like Shakespeare in love, but just need a little help writing the poetry? For about \$100 less than a bottle of perfume you can give your love interest something permanent, creative, and emotionally

stirring. An online company called Timeless Message will help you select a limited edition antique bottle and even craft a message for you if need be. What if you actually *are* the next Shakespeare or the second coming of Hallmark? Have no fear!

It's easy to write your own sentiment (and not be dependent on the sentimentality of others).

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

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

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

Top 10 Whitney Houston Songs Inspired by Love



By Daniela Agurcia

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

any other artist we have come to know.

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

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

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

Valentine's Day Advice: Follow Famous New Yorkers



By Jeryl Brunner

Someone once told me that when it comes to dating, especially early on, it's important to place you and your date into the epicenter of something fun and amusing. So, in case you

aren't clicking or the conversation is generally going south, the environment around you can pick up the slack, offering instant entertainment.

So this Valentine's Day, instead of going for the quiet table at the dimly lit restaurant, opt for something a bit more lively that will spark conversation. Honestly, I've been told that the circus makes a nice date option, and is good for people watching and observation. ("Look at that clown juggle 14 plates! Get a load of that tightrope walker!") But since the circus isn't in town, I turned to famous New Yorkers and their favorite romantic New York City spots for advice:

1. Let me sell you a bridge

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

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

2. Be a karaoke king (or queen)

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

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

3. Pizza, much hotter than you think

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

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

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

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

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

5. Drink in that view

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

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

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

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

number of show tunes on her iPod.

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



By Katanya Royster

Relationships can be hard work, and they require a lot of effort to be put in from both ends. When you both commit, it makes it all worthwhile- in most cases. While many

relationships start off on a high note and continue on the path of blissfulness, others plummet to a place of irreconcilable differences, physical altercations and repeated infidelity. They end up heading straight to Splittsville. In fact, all you have to do is ask the following couples:

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

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

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

3. Kim Kardashian and Kris Humphries. Many thought Kim and Kris’ lavish wedding was a publicity stunt. So, when Kim filed for divorce after only 72 days of marriage, no one was shocked – except maybe Kris. The NBA star claimed he was

surprised by Kim's actions and that he wanted to make the couple's marriage work. After the split went viral, Kim was embarrassed and, in a rare move, retreated from the public eye while her ex-hubby was booed in NYC during a basketball game. Thus, if the marriage was a publicity stunt, it may have been the worst one in history.

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

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

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

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

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



By Marianne Beach, GalTime.com

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

Kelly McGonigal, psychologist at Stanford University and author of the new book *The Willpower Instinct: How Self*

Control Works, Why It Matters, and What You Can Do To Get More of It, thinks so. “Valentine’s Day is all about declaring who you care about most,” she declares. “And if you’ve thrown away enough time on a go-nowhere relationship, the person at the top of your V-Day list should be *you*.”

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

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

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

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

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

1. Find a Role Model.

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

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

The best way to make an old habit less tempting is to find a new addiction. The bad news is you can’t order a new crush

from Zappos. So how do you replace the longing for an ex without jumping into a new relationship? Find a new goal – like running a race for charity or writing your own romance novel – or return to an old passion you’ve left behind, like cooking, bellydancing, or blogging. When that “something’s missing” feeling comes up, get busy on your goal instead of fantasizing about getting back with your ex.

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

3. Take Care of Yourself.

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

4. Beware the White Bear.

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

an ex, then put your attention back on someone you really care about – *you*.