

Fishing For Mr. Right – Types of Guys to Throw Back



By Kelly Rouba, GalTime.com

How to Navigate the Rough Seas of Online Dating

If you're like me and haven't found Mr. Right yet, chances are you've tried or may consider trying an online dating site. Over the past few years, I've created profiles on a few sites and never had so much as one date come of it. In fact, I decided to give up on online dating altogether last year after I discovered the one guy I was planning to go out with had a girlfriend.

However, I recently decided to jump back in the online dating pool after my housemate and best guy friend encouraged me to

keep at it, so I gave it a try on one of the popular free sites.

To my surprise, my inbox has seen a steady stream of invitations from my male counterparts. I've also actually gone out with a few of them – the first of which I thought had real potential until he revealed his true colors a month into dating. As stunned as I was to see his alter ego emerge, I realize now that the signs were there and I should have proceeded with greater caution.

Since then, I've vowed to guard myself and created a list of men and equated them to various types of 'fish' as a reminder of who to watch out for during my quest to find love. To all the lovely single ladies out there who are also searching for their soul mate among a vast sea of fish, I hope this list will help safeguard your heart as well.

The Blowfish–

This guy wants one thing and that's to get in your pants! He will come on fast and strong and may even disguise himself as Mr. Nice Guy on the first date or two before he reveals his kinky side. In fact, one guy I dated did just that. He went out of his way to charm me and win me over – even having his mom bake me cookies twice – before his conscience finally kicked in and he decided he had too much respect for me to use me for sex.

Moral of this story: Take it slow. All will reveal itself in time, and the real deal will stick around because he knows you are worth waiting for. So if you catch a blowfish, toss him back!

The Clownfish–

Everything is a joke to this guy, including dating you. If you go out with him, expect to be embarrassed as it's likely he will be surrounded by his drinking buddies and will succumb

to their typical childish antics and rowdy, obnoxious behavior. The good news is a clownfish is easy to spot thanks to his goofy and drunken profiles pictures, so steer clear!



The Starfish–

Every woman deserves to be treated like a princess – and by that I mean adored and respected. A starfish will never do that because he is too into himself. While his narcissistic personality may not always shine through online, it will on your first date.

My last date was a mild version of the starfish, and he dominated the evening with conversation about himself. He never even asked me one question about myself and, in the process, he revealed too much about himself. I quickly learned he is 8 years sober, broke and doesn't really have the job title he proclaimed. The guy later texted me to let me know he was nervous on our date and will be "calmer" on the next date. Umm, what next date?

The Clam–

This guy may seem friendly at first, but as things start to heat up and you want to get to know him better, he will quickly "clam up." Dating someone secretive and tight-lipped only breeds suspicion and that's no way to lay a foundation for an honest and open relationship. Move on quick!

The Mussel–

Anyone got a mirror? This guy will need it since he will be more into himself than admiring you. It's easy to spot Mr. Mussel, though, since all his profile pictures will feature his abs and biceps (and are often devoid of his head for some odd reason). If you don't let yourself get caught up drooling over his brawn (remember, you need a guy with brains too!), you'll look for smooth sailing.

The Shark–

Beware of sharks! These guys are ruthless and tough, and there's not a romantic bone in their bodies. Fortunately, sharks are also easy to detect since their profile names often have the word "death" or "dark" right in it and their image is equally as frightening. Need I say more here?

The Snake–

The snake is a guy who is looking to create trouble in your life. As a prime example, my housemate's crush found me online and asked for my number so he could text me contact information for some contractors who could repair my basement wall. After I gave him my digits, he instead hit on me via text and asked for more of my pictures. (He never did give me the contractors' contact information, either.)

Not wanting my housemate to find out from someone else about what had occurred, I felt obligated to tell her what happened so she wouldn't think I was trying to steal her crush. Sadly, she bought his bs response hook, line and sinker after she confronted him. The good news is that you can be spared this type of agony if you keep an eye out for snakes!

The Hammerhead–

You will find yourself beating your head against the wall with this guy. He always wants things his own way and will pout or whine until you give in – or he'll just walk away. And let

him because there's no reasoning with him and all relationships should involve compromise so both parties are happy.



The Goldfish-

This guy likes the finer things in life and will blow through his entire paycheck to get what he desires – from sports cars to gold chains (Notice I didn't say your heart?). It's all about making him look good and there likely won't be much left to spend on you, if he even wants to spare some change. Instead, look for a guy who is willing to pamper you too!

The Guppy-

New at dating, this guy just wants to play the field. He is unsure of what he wants, except for sex of course, and he is nowhere near settling down or even interested in a monogamous relationship. Fortunately, on some dating sites, you can tell when another user is online. So if the object of your affection is still on the prowl or barely setting aside time for you, move on!

Now that you've read these pearls of wisdom, hopefully you'll know who to avoid during your search. As a helpful hint, look

for “the oyster.” There’s a treasure inside this guy that is worth waiting for. Happy fishing!

Celebrity Couples Who’ve Made the World a Better Place



By Erika Mionis

Celebrity. For some, the word implies arrogance, narcissism, and superficiality. For others, it implies kindness, charisma, and power. While it’s true that both definitions have their part in celebrity culture, more and more celebrity couples are trying to change those stereotypes by turning their focus

towards charity and humanitarian efforts. Here are some of the main culprits:

1. Brad Pitt and Angelina Jolie: It's no secret that longtime partners Angelina Jolie and Brad Pitt like to give back, especially when it comes to adopting children from impoverished countries. Jolie, a Goodwill Ambassador for the UN since 2001, has traveled to over 20 countries in attempts to raise refugee awareness. Brad Pitt, though relatively new to charity work, impressed many by starting *The Make It Right Foundation* after seeing the damage caused by Hurricane Katrina. The Foundation has built over 50 "green" houses, and has brought more than 200 people back to the Lower Ninth Ward, a devastated neighborhood in New Orleans. More recently, the Jolie-Pitts made headline news when they donated \$500,000 dollars to the Joplin Tornado Relief Services in Missouri. Also newsworthy are the Jolie-Pitts tax returns, which according to Britain's *The Independent*, show that Jolie and Pitt donated almost 5 million dollars to various charities in 2009.

2. Will Smith and Jada Pinkett Smith: Will Smith and Jada Pinkett Smith's charity work has been somewhat of a recent development. Since 2007, the Smiths have made several large donations of over 1 million dollars each, usually to religious causes. In addition to their religious donations, Smith and Pinkett Smith started the New Village Leadership Academy, a private school that offers both a challenging curriculum and generous financial aid to students. Recently, the longtime couple decided to "donate their birthdays" to the *charity Water*, an organization dedicated to providing clean water for developing countries in Africa. Will Smith asked fans to send \$42 to the charity in honor of his 42nd birthday, while Jada Pinkett Smith simply asked for fans to "send what they can."

3. David and Victoria Beckham: U.K power couple David and Victoria Beckham actively participate in humanitarian work.

In late 2009, Victoria visited Clay County, Kentucky, with the charity *Save The Children* in order to learn more about the children in the poverty-stricken area. The former Spice Girl rewarded the children with book bags and advice. Her husband, soccer star David Beckham has been a Goodwill Ambassador since January 2005 and is also a spokesperson for Malaria No More, a New York City-based nonprofit dedicated to treating Malaria in Africa. David is often seen on ESPN and other sports channels in short clips for *MLS WORKS*, the Major League Soccer's charity project. Recently, the couple made news when they donated many of the gifts sent to their newborn daughter, Harper Seven, to charities in Los Angeles.

Is there a celebrity couple you feel belongs on this list? Feel free to leave a comment below, and keep your eyes peeled for more celebrity humanitarian efforts.

An Introduction for a Lifetime: Sarah Jessica Parker and Matthew Broderick





By Bari Lyman, author of *Meet to Marry*

With so many options for meeting a potential partner these days, like dating sites, speed dating or singles events, we often forget that one of the most successful ways to find that special someone can be through an introduction. It's a time-tested and successful model for creating a good match and since the person introducing you is usually a close friend, family member or mentor, they typically have your best interest in mind.

An example of a happy celebrity couple who met via introduction are Sarah Jessica Parker and her husband, Matthew Broderick. The duo have been happily married for 14 years and were originally introduced through her brother.

If you're looking for a way to meet someone special, following are some Meet to Marry, Date To Marry tips I share with singles who want to find "the one." Hopefully this advice will lead you toward a wonderful and inspiring union.

Be marriage ready, make dating a priority and be open to all

possibilities!

Sarah Jessica Parker and Matthew Broderick met when her brother introduced the two during a trip to the movies.

Shortly after their initial meeting, they were inseparable. Because they were both open to the possibility of love, they still have a successful marriage to this day.

Never marry potential.

Broderick told *People* magazine in 1998, "We love each other and let the other person be themselves. We don't try to convince the other to be something they're not." A key element for a successful relationship is to be happy with your partner without trying to change him or her.

When it's right, it will flow.

This celebrity pair was clear about who they were in their relationship and they were both ready to become involved in a serious commitment. Throughout their marriage, Broderick says that the two have never spent more than two weeks apart.

Marriage-ready people understand that a relationship requires maturity, generosity and self-awareness in order to work.

Be clear about your vision, values, and goals when dating for marriage.

While these two celebrities are from different parts of the country (Ohio and New York City), they share the same important underlying vision. They are both half-Jewish, so their backgrounds reflect similar religious values as well. Having a common ground is important for building a family. They also share mutual admiration for each other and find the same characteristics (such as humor) to be important.

If you're looking for your happily ever after, try out the tips above and let us know how they work.

Were you introduced to your partner through a friend or family

member? Share your experiences below.

Check Out Upcoming Hot Fall Movies



With the end of summer comes a new batch of films. Entertainment reporter Sara Edwards tells us her picks to look for at theatres:

9/2: **The Debt**

The espionage thriller boasts a stellar cast. The story centers around retired Mossad secret agents Rachel and Stephan played by Helen Mirren and Tom Wilkenson. They discover they

need to settle unfinished business started 30 years earlier while on a secret mission for Israel. They were sent to track down a Nazi war criminal, using Rachel as “the lure” to draw him into a trap. Jessica Chastain plays the young Mirren who struggles with her duty when romantic feelings surface. The film bounces back and forth between two time periods with John Madden, who directed “Shakespeare in Love”, at the helm, this promises to be a winner.

9/9: Contagion

Another terrific cast is assembled, this time for a thriller about a highly communicable virus that wipes out millions of people worldwide in just weeks. Amidst the international chaos, Matt Damon plays a Midwesterner whose wife, played by Gwyneth Paltrow, is one of the first to get the disease. Kate Winslet is a doctor for the Center for Disease Control and Marion Cotillard plays a World Health Official. Add Jude Law to the mix as a crusading blogger and Steven Soderbergh as director and you have a recipe for a heart pounding journey.

9/16: I Don't Know How She Does It!

Carrie fans will be thrilled that Sarah Jessica-Parker is back on the big screen in the romantic comedy about a working Mom who's high wire act is dangerously starting to come crashing down. The premise isn't original, but it will be fun to watch her navigate that slippery slope that all too many women cope with every day.

9/23: Moneyball

Based on a true story, Brad Pitt plays Oakland A's general manager Billy Beane as he struggles to reinvent his cash poor and undervalued team in the early 2000s. But don't call this just a baseball movie. Life lessons abound as Pitt and Jonah Hill, a clever young A's exec, toss out the rule book and realize that thinking outside the box gives everyone a chance to start again. Word is that Pitt hits this dramedy out of

the park!

9/30: **50/50**

I've loved Joseph Gordon-Levitt ever since he played the sweet and vulnerable guy in 500 Days of Summer. In 50/50 he plays a young man diagnosed with spinal cancer who bonds with his best pal played by Seth Rogen who helps him through the chemo and the tough diagnosis with heart and humor. In real life, Rogen's best friend went through this harrowing scenario and he asked his pal, now in remission, to write the screenplay. Poignant and funny.

10/7: **The Ides of March**

George Clooney stars in this. Need I say more? Ides is a political thriller that takes us inside the intense climate of a presidential campaign. Clooney plays Gov. Mike Morris, an inspiring Democratic candidate, who discovers that his young media strategist has a secret that could destroy his campaign. He's forced to choose between morality and winning. Clooney co-wrote the script. I'd like to see the Sexiest Man Alive run for office one day!

10/7: **Footloose**

Come on! Consider this a guilty pleasure, especially if you grew up with Kevin Bacon's 1985 version. The new "Ren" is played by 27 year old newcomer Kenny Workman of MTV's Dancelife. And former Dancing with the Stars favorite Julianne Hough is the preacher's daughter who loves to shake things up on the dance floor.

10/28: **Like Crazy**

This love story won the Grand Jury Prize at the Sundance film festival this year. It's the tale of a long-distance relationship about college lovers who try to sustain that passion on opposite ends of the world. Felicity Jones and

Anton Yelchin are the appealing couple who are determined to be together despite work, immigration laws, and their own insecurities.

11/04: Tower Heist

The comic dream team of Eddie Murphy and Ben Stiller stars in this caper. A group of employees at a luxury apartment complex decide to steal 20 million from one of the residents, a Bernie Madoff type who lost their pension funds in a Ponzi scheme. Given the recession, this stealing from the rich premise becomes even more satisfying, as well as hilarious.

11/18: The Twilight Saga: Breaking Dawn Part One

We finally see Bella and Edward's long-awaited wedding and passionate honeymoon consummation. And then, a half-vampire baby? That's the big news in the beginning of the end of the insanely popular series. If you have followed it this far, you will see it through until the bitter end.

11/23: The Descendants

George Clooney au deux! It's a busy fall for George on the big screen. I have high hopes for this drama helmed by Sideways director Alexander Payne. Clooney is a Hawaiian land baron whose life is turned upside down after his beloved wife goes into a coma and he learns that she'd been having an affair. A complicated affair of the heart.

12/16: The Iron Lady

Meryl Streep who has recently brought us the likes of Julia Child and Vogue's dragon lady Anna Wintour to the big screen, this time morphs into former Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher during her peak of power in the 1980s. The film is about her extraordinary political career, along with the love she sacrificed on the way. Hey, Meryl reading the phone book would be interesting.

12/21: The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo

I loved the Swedish film based on Stieg Larsson's best seller, but I'm ready for the American version now. I just can't get enough of his trouble heroine Lisbeth Salander who is now played by Rooney Mara. Daniel Craig takes on the role of the Swedish journalist Mikael Blomkist. As a fan of the book I'm looking forward to this, but the pressure is on for director David Fincher to come through!

12/23: We Bought a Zoo

Matt Damon plays Benjamin Mee, a real-life London newspaper columnist who moved his family to a decrepit rural zoo, and after the death of his wife from cancer, worked to reopen it. As the animals prosper, he finds his own healing gifts. This feel good tearjerker is perfect for the holidays.

12/28: War Horse

Steven Spielberg is back at the helm with a World War I story about a British farm boy who nurtures a pet horse until his father sells the horse to the British Army. He enlists as well and hopes one day to be reunited with his equine pal Joey. Bring hankies to this one too.

12/18: Carnage

Based on the hilarious and searing Broadway production God of Carnage, the top notch cast of Kate Winslet, John C. Reilly, and Oscar winners Christoph Waltz and Jodie Foster star in this film adaptation. Two couples meet to discuss the fight between their two sons. A civil discussion descends into an all out brawl between the parents that will have you laughing out loud. I just hope the movie is as good as the play!

10 Restaurant Ideas to Help Your Relationship Grow Stronger



By Molly Borter

You've heard it before: "The way to a man's heart is through his stomach." While men all over the world "eat up" this saying, what they forget is that food is a major way into a woman's heart, too. More to the point, couples who share a mutual love of food form stronger bonds with each other.

Statistics show that 75% of Americans eat out at least once a week, so why not spend that meal with your special someone?

Here's a list of restaurant genres that should be on every couple's food forecast:

1. The Quiet Café

They say that breakfast is the most important meal of the day, so why not find a café that both of you love that's calm and cozy. It will make waking up every Saturday morning even better, and there's nothing more comforting than a place that knows exactly how you like your eggs and coffee, without even asking. The best cafés are less crowded and more secluded, so find a low-key spot that not a lot of people know about. For extra intimacy points, opt for al fresco seating!

2. The Favorite Pizza Joint

On nights when neither of you really want to cook, pizza makes a great fail-safe plan. Better yet, pizza can be taken to go, when a Friday night spent cuddling in front of the DVR is in order, or eaten right at the "joint" itself, when a laidback, Italian atmosphere is just what you need to relax and wind down. Having a favorite pizza joint to turn to, where you can enjoy some quality, casual conversation, is the perfect pair pleaser.. Bon appétit!

3. The Swanky Bar

Every once in a while, a couple needs an excuse to dress up and enjoy a few cocktails and hors d'oeuvres over sultry music and hushed voices. A swanky bar makes it easy for you and your significant other to spend a sophisticated evening together – sipping, snacking, and schmoozing. On evenings like these, let loose and explore the city together, because you never know where it might lead you.

4. The Neighborhood Park

It's not technically a restaurant, but a park can be the best place to snuggle up together on a blanket and enjoy a homemade meal, especially if there's live music playing nearby. Whether it's hummus and pita chips or a new dinner recipe,

grab a picnic basket, throw a bottle of wine into your cooler, and have yourself an instant (and affordable) meal full of deep conversations and quality time stargazing.

5. The Local Brewery

What guy doesn't love beer tasting with his babe? Local micro-breweries are popping up left and right these days, and they're the latest choice for a fun date night. Not only will the beer be a hit with your man, but with menus that feature all the American classics, like juicy burgers, hearty sandwiches, and baskets of fries, these bustling establishments score points on all levels. Go spend a rowdy evening together and enjoy one of the newest dining phenomenons around.

6. The Ice Cream Shop

Not just for after dinner anymore, spending a random afternoon at an ice cream parlor, with one hand clutching a giant waffle cone, and the other hand intertwined with your significant others, can be a playful way to eat together. Spontaneous moments like these can spark childhood nostalgia and help you connect to the memories you're creating at the moment.

7. The Go-To Ethnic Food

Some like it hot. Others like it with chopsticks. Decide on your go-to ethnic food, whether it's Mexican or Thai, and make an attempt to visit every restaurant in town specializing in your favorites. For example, become sushi experts together by sampling different types of rolls at each place. You'll not only love trying dishes together you previously might not have eaten alone, but you'll be able to recommend your top picks to other couples as well.

8. The Quirky Diner

Most towns have an old diner that everyone loves because of

the endless menu, eccentric wait staff, and a hodge-podge of tacky décor. Diners have a little bit of this and that, from chicken to pancakes, and usually serve a majority of their items all day long—which is perfect for when you two get the craving for breakfast at dinner time. Channel your old-fashioned side as a couple.

9. The Trendy, Upscale Restaurant

An upscale, modern restaurant is ideal for the times when you want to create perfect evenings together under dim lighting and listening to soft background music. And with fresh, innovative food, whether it is a premiere seafood restaurant or the latest steakhouse, you both will enjoy the chance to bond on a whole new, elegant level. Special restaurants make you feel special together.

10. The Classic

This is probably the easiest to choice on the list, because you've already been there. Perhaps it's the place you went on your first date, the place you got engaged, or the place you find yourselves going to over and over again. It's the restaurant where you relive special memories, and it never fails to keep the spark alive.

As you start to find your favorites spots to frequent from the list above, your choices will shape and shift to include the atmospheres and menus you both love. Soon, you'll find that each restaurant becomes a classic, where you can sit and talk for hours, sharing hilarious and meaningful conversations and creating memories together that earn the coveted title, "Your Place."

Molly Borter is a writer from Fishers, IN, who specializes in women's sunglasses. She loves trying new restaurants with her chef boyfriend, keeping up with the latest celebrity gossip and fashions, like the must-have sunglasses for fall, and giving helpful relationship advice to her girlfriends.

Should a Woman Propose to a Man?



By McLean Robbins, GalTime.com

A woman dreams of the day when that special someone sinks to one knee, looks them lovingly in the eyes and utters those four magical words, "Will you marry me?"

But in today's glass-ceiling breaking, two-income household holding, Mr. Moms-are-totally-cool day and age, is this notion a bit antiquated? Has the women's liberation movement come so far that we can now propose our own version of happily ever after?

Our initial reaction after being presented with this topic was a resounding “heck no,” but naturally, more exploration was necessary. So we queried leading relationship experts, lawyers, dating coaches and wedding professionals to get their opinions.

We’ll warn you – there’s no concrete answer, but our industry experts did come up with some valuable arguments for and against the issue.

Traditionalists Say “No Way”

Tasha, a love coach who appeared on VH1’s *Secrets of Aspen*, says that when a woman proposes to a man, she castrates him. “When you take the proposal away [from the man], you cut off their ability to make you [the woman] the happiest you could be.”

“If you’re putting the best product you have out there, you will capture your rational mate [without proposing] rather than drag him [to the altar],” says Constance Dunn, M.A. etiquette specialist and author of *Practical Glamour*. “And this is coming from a card-carrying feminist!”

“It’s all about perceived mate value,” she says. “Sure, you might be able to drag some dude to the altar, but he’s always going to wonder if he could have done better.” “If something is readily available, it isn’t as valued ... look at the success of the Birkin bag wait list.”

Letting a man take charge isn’t about letting go of your own self or conceding that he has more power in the relationship, says Tasha. It’s about allowing the person you love to make a grand gesture.

“There’s something important about that ritual of a man making that commitment to a woman,” Dunn says. But, she admits, women have the ultimate power – saying yes or no.

Dunn agrees that as society continues to evolve, the idea of women proposing may become both psychologically and socially more acceptable. “But it’s only been a few decades ... we aren’t there yet.”

Moderates Say “You’re Doing It Every Day”

Laurie Puhn, lawyer, couples mediator and author of the national bestseller *Fight Less, Love More: Five Minute Conversations to Change Your Relationship Without Blowing Up or Giving In* says that women “propose” to men every day – they just don’t call it that. “It’s called an ultimatum.”

“The reality is that women initiate probably over fifty percent of the ‘are we in this for the long haul’ conversations,” says Puhn. This gives the man the information he needs to know that when he asks you to marry him, he’s assured you’ll say yes.

Of course, Puhn cautions, conversations of that nature should not be brought up lightly. But if you’re nearing or over 30 and have been seriously dating for six months or more ... it’s natural and fine for a woman to want to bring up the topic.

A huge number of changes in relationships, for good and for bad, come about as a result of women initiating, poking, prodding, and setting time frames, she says. The issue isn’t necessarily what one says, but how they phrase it. Relationship discussions of any nature won’t be successful if phrased as “you’d better do it,” she says. Women who feel the need to issue proposals – of the mini or major variety – need to know before speaking what they are and aren’t comfortable with ... and how to walk away if they don’t get the answer they need.

“You’re never too young to value your time.” If you want to make sure you’re giving yourself ample opportunity to meet Mr. Right before you have to meet Mr. Right, that’s the outlook to have, says Puhn.

While this type of proposal isn't "fun or exciting," it's the reality of many relationships today.

And, if a woman wants to get down on one knee and ultimately do the proposing, Puhn is fine with that – so long as she has the confidence and guts to "make that the story [you tell your grand kids]."

But will it ever become commonplace? No. "When we get to the male birth control pill, you can talk to me about a woman proposing."

Progressives Say "Go For It ... Selectively"

In the Old World where civility is king, the man should always make the moves," says Paul A. Falzone, CEO of eLove, a dating and matchmaking service with a three-decade history. "But now we're in 2011 and the world has evolved quite a bit. If a guy can take a woman's assertiveness, God bless her; let her run."

Of course, he says, this type of forward thinking need require a certain type of man. If your sweetheart is a traditionalist, a subtler hint might be the better route. But, as Falzone cautions, "at the stage in the game where you're getting down and proposing, choice shouldn't really be in the game. You should have it pretty nailed down by then."

In other words, are you damn sure he'll say yes? For some women, it's about taking life into their own hands and being the master of their own destiny. "You're the most important person in your life and you've got to look at yourself and think, what's best for me?"

If the answer is marriage and your relationship and timing are right, a proposal might be the way to go.

If you're determined to do the asking, make sure you're planning a proposal the man would enjoy, says Sandra Aaron, owner of Mindless Sophistication Events in Toronto, Canada.

“This isn’t the moment for a female’s fantasy proposal. This is the moment to make him feel appreciated.”

Sometimes, Falzone says, men need a god kick in the pants. Just remember, he cautions, that one should make sure they’re doing it for the right reasons – that they’re truly ready to get married.

What about you? Would you propose to your sweetheart, and under what circumstances?

Swag or Peacocking? Rappers Use Big Bling to Show Off Clout





By Steven Zangrillo

As August winds down and we start to tuck away our beach bodies, once again the focus returns to Fall fashions and lifestyles for 2011. It's interesting to see how the dating world is affected by our turbulent economy. Since we now need to tighten the strap, we also need to re-evaluate the way we spend money on that special someone – you know the drill... flowers, drinks, dinner, a new outfit. That new outfit, in particular, can really bust the bank and cause a headache or two. However, if you reside in the “young and wealthy rapper” demographic, chances are that you can still use that chunk of bling to woo the lady of your dreams.

It's difficult for most of us to work up the cash to don a \$3000-\$8000 chain and pendant. Rappers of the right means, however, have the ability to display their fiscal clout. Financial stability displayed through ostentatious mediums is a tried and true recipe for romantic success (although it may not always attract the right partner). Psychologists call this bold style of dress for the purpose of attracting a romantic partner “peacocking”, but if you ask a rap artist... they'll

flash a gold and diamond encrusted smile at you and utter one word.

“Swag.”

According to Andrew Streyer, Director of Evaluations at **Pawngo.com** – the new online pawnshop by the founders of **Groupon** at **Lightbank** – you might be surprised at the cost for some of these pieces.

Below are three signature styles, the MCs who popularized them, and the estimated worth of each piece:

Rapper: Nelly

Bling in Question: Silver (iced) nameplate and St. Louis Rams Chain

Estimated Appraisal: \$6000+ each

The “Grillz” hitmaker and St. Louis native is known for showing his NFL team pride in concerts via his signature 18-inch pendant, which he couples daily with an 18-inch nameplate pendant. Further showing his taste in high-end luxury, Nelly said in a 2000 interview, “Where I’m from, this Rolex could take care of the whole block for a year. It’s crazy like that, but this is something you work for.” Also, just to clarify, Nelly’s aforementioned hit song about grills wasn’t expressing the love of a fine hibachi. Which brings us to...

Rapper: Kanye West

Bling in Question: Permanent Gold and Diamond Stud Grills

Estimated Appraisal: \$5000+ not including dental work

Artist. Producer. Songwriter. *Metalmouth?* In 2010, Kanye West followed in the steps of friend Lil Wayne by having custom-made permanent grills, or molds, imprinted on the bottom row of his teeth. Kanye premiered them on *The Ellen Show*,

insisting that the diamonds were real and not cubic zirconia, as rumored. While it's unclear whether this gold is the "40 Carats" dropped in his Lil Wayne collaboration, gold is nevertheless one of the safest precious metals to have in one's mouth, as it's relatively non-toxic and rustproof. Who knew?

Rapper: Lil Jon

Bling in Question: Various handmade studded glass and Metal Pimp Cups

Estimated Appraisal: \$1000-\$2000

Lil Jon often calls upon Chicago artisan Debbie "The Glass Lady" Harrison to create lavish signature glass-blown and 24 Karat gold chalices exceeding the thousand-dollar price range. He made no exception for his second annual Crunk Cup Ball in Las Vegas in 2008. The Atlanta rapper and *Celebrity Apprentice* contestant premiered a custom gift from Debbie that was molded from metal and sported Debbie's encrusted name, with imprinted crystals on the handle and a studded crown on top. Of course, all of the cups are fully drinkable and non-toxic. For protection, Lil Jon uses a custom padded carrying case to tote each of his goblets when traveling.

About Pawngo:

Pawngo is the first full-service online pawn shop in the US and allows individuals immediate access to the cash they need for life's countless unexpected moments without leaving the comfort of their homes. As evidence of the market for this unique lending model, the company to-date has funded over \$2 million in 46 states. Pawngo is venture-backed by Daylight Partners, Access Venture Partners and Lightbank, the \$100 million fund started by the founders of Groupon

Celebrity Couples We Can't Wait to See at MTV's VMAs



By Tanni Deb

From Britney Spears to Nicki Minaj, this year's MTV Video Music Award (VMA) nominees are teeming with A-list music stars. The three top contenders include Katy Perry, with nine nods (the most of any performer this year), and Adele and Kanye West, both with seven nominations each. While it will be exciting to see which stars take home a trophy for their designated categories, we're also eager to see which of our favorite celebrity couples will attend. Although we won't know for sure who will show up to the VMAs until Sunday, Aug.

28, here are five celebrity couples we hope make an appearance:

1. Beyoncé Knowles and Jay-Z: Listed as the “most powerful couple” for *TIME* magazine’s “100 Most Influential People” in 2006, the duo dated for six years before secretly getting married in 2008. *OK Magazine* reported that “the couple is very supportive of one another – making sure to attend performances and appearances together.” That means we can definitely count on them to arrive together, since Beyoncé is up for a nomination, right?

2. Britney Spears and Jason Trawick: Although these two love birds have made many public appearances together, the first time they stepped out as a couple was at the St. Bernard Project Event in May, 2011. Spears’ relationship with Trawick seems to be getting serious, but now the question is whether he’ll attend the VMAs to support his pop singer lady, or not?

3. Katy Perry and Russell Brand: In May, 2011, comedian Russell Brand visited Japan to see his wife perform, but unfortunately, he was deported due to criminal incidences that happened more than a decade ago. Distraught with the news, the *Firework* singer tweeted, “So...my husband just got deported from Japan. I am so sad.” Don’t worry, Katy. Since the VMAs take place in L.A. this year, your hubby should have no problem attending. After all, how could he miss the opportunity when you have the most nominations?

4. Selena Gomez and Justin Bieber: The teen heartthrob and the *Wizards of Waverly Place* beauty were set up on a date by her mother and his management team at the end of last year. In an interview with *Seventeen* magazine, the 18-year-old Disney star admitted that she is head over heels for Bieber, and the pair were even seen exchanging ‘I Love You’s’ while shopping in New York City last month. This year, they attended many award shows together, including the Oscars, the ESPY Awards show,

and the Billboard Music Awards. Let's just hope they won't miss out on this one.

5. Lady Gaga and Luc Carl: The mother monster credits her boyfriend for helping her become "successful" in the music industry. Last year, she told *Rolling Stone*, "I've really never loved anyone like I loved him. Or like I love him." Despite break-up rumors, hopefully her supportive boyfriend will be by her side to cheer her on at the VMAs.

Who did we forget? Anyone you'd like to see? Let us know in a comment below. Don't forget to tune into **MTV on Sunday, Aug. 28 at 9 p.m. ET**. For a complete list of nominations, visit [MTV](#).

10 Tips for Dating Your Friend's Sister





Submitted By Donna Cullen

It's not uncommon for guys to become attracted to sisters of their friends. When the attraction is mutual and a dating relationship develops, there are some guidelines that should be followed in order to keep the original friendship intact. Here are ten tips to avoid issues when you're dating your friend's sister:

1. Don't take sides: If there's a disagreement between your friend and his sister, do not take sides. Insist on remaining neutral and not being brought into the middle of the argument. It is a no-win situation for you, should you voice any opinion at all.

2. Don't share stories: This works both ways. Don't share stories about his sister with him, and don't share stories about things your friend has done with his sister. Keep your lips sealed tight.

3. Don't double date: There may be some brothers and sisters who would be comfortable on a double date, but most would not be. You don't want your friend watching your every move with

his sister, and she probably doesn't either.

4. Stay on good terms: This would not be a good time to get your friend upset with you. He has the ear of your girl, and he could do irreparable harm to your relationship with her, if he was inclined to do so.

5. Gain inside knowledge: Use your relationship with your friend to gather some insight into what his sister likes and doesn't like. You have access to a great resource, if he's willing to assist.

6. Treat her well: If he hears news from her, or anyone else, that you have been anything, but a knight in shining armor, you could lose a friend and gain an enemy, very quickly. Be on your best behavior with this lady.

7. Watch what you say: This can be applied in several ways. Anything you say about your friend, may be carried back to him via his sister. Anything you say about her, could be carried back to her through her brother. Do not discuss your relationship with one, with the other.

8. Remember the relationship: This fits along with the previous tip. Be careful about what you say about the sibling in front of your friend or your girl. Always remember that, in their eyes, you're talking about their brother/sister, not 'your friend' or 'your girl'.

9. Don't break her heart: This is one of the biggest dangers that you risk in dating the sister of one of your friends. What will happen when you break up? If she feels wounded or betrayed, her tears are not likely to go over to well with her brother. Ending your relationship with her could potentially end your relationship with your friend.

Don't neglect him: Be careful not to give the impression that you're no longer interested in your friend, or don't have time for him, once you start dating his sister. See #4 for one good

reason; the other is that you don't want to give the impression that you were using his friendship to get connected to his sister.

Weigh out the complications before deciding to enter into one of these sibling relationships. They can get a bit sticky at times, depending on the maturity of those involved.

Is He Husband Material?



By Kelly Rouba, GalTime.com

The other day, my friend was distraught over how his wife has been treating him lately. The two had begun the process of getting divorced when she suddenly had a change in attitude

and promised she would change. Sadly, that promise lasted only a couple of weeks.

After we discussed the situation, we began exploring what he should expect from his partner and it led me to think about what characteristics I should be looking for in a man so that I don't end up in a similar situation someday. For those single ladies, like myself, who are hoping to get married one day, allow me to share some expert advice on what you should be looking for in a partner:

“What makes a man husband material are emotional characteristics, including stability, reliability and honesty. These are the hallmarks of what makes a man a good long-term partner,” says Dr. Seth Meyers, a licensed psychologist, relationship expert, and author of *Dr. Seth's Love Prescription*.

In addition, and perhaps “the most surprising factor that is important is empathy, or the ability to be sensitive and understand how the other person feels,” Meyers adds. “When problems develop, as they inevitably will, having a man in your life who listens and cares about your feelings is one factor that helps to solidify mutual respect and intimacy.”

Stacie Ikka, founder of Sitting In A Tree, a consulting service that was created in response to the dating community's need for customized and innovative approaches to help facilitate sustainable relationships, offers the following tips:

1. You feel as good about him when you're not with him as you do when you are with him.
2. He's never made you cry and you're confident he never will. (There's a saying that goes something like this: No boy/man is worth crying over and the one who is will never make you.)
3. He shows a genuine interest in the things that are

important to you.

4. He fights fair.

5. He holds your hair back if/when you're sick.

6. If your child were to come out EXACTLY like him, you'd be thrilled.

As for my own advice, which I shared with my friend, you need to learn to love yourself first. Learning to love yourself and finding self-fulfillment while single is crucial because you cannot expect a mate to fill those voids for you. Depending on a partner to meet those needs will never work and you'll remain emotionally needy, not to mention more likely to put up with bad behavior just to be with someone.

Personally, I also promised my parents I'd never bring someone into the family who didn't fit in with them or get along with them because they mean too much to me. Plus, I want to be with a man who respects me, values me and treats me well because I will do the same in return.

Maybe this piece of advice seems obvious, but Robert Epstein, Ph.D., who is a distinguished research psychologist and former editor-in-chief of *Psychology Today* magazine, reminds us that the man needs to be "available (meaning not married or in a serious relationship), and he needs to be ready for a long-term commitment." Emotional availability (don't want someone who's pining for his ex) is also key.

Beyond that, women also need to watch out for deal breakers, meaning threats to having a future together, Epstein says. "When there is a deal breaker, that means that extremely important relationship needs – either your's or his – are not met by the other person. You want kids, for example, and he hates them. Forget about it!"

If you feel an issue is at-hand that could be a deal breaker, it's best to address it right away. "When there are deal breakers, you need to put them on the table and talk about

them. If you try to hide them, they'll turn up anyway, eventually, and probably destroy your relationship – or at least make you miserable. Get them out in the open and see if you can work something out! Hey, maybe he can handle having just one kid! You never know until you talk.”

Here's to happily ever after!

What Your Favorite Summer Song Says About Your Relationship Style



By Melissa Tierney and Molly Jacob

Almost everyone has a song that reminds them of summer. Whether it's a tune you jam to in the car, or a melody repeating on your iPod, summer anthems represent a piece of who you are and how you think, particularly when it comes to love. That's why we've taken a look at this summer's hottest hits and analyzed what we think they mean about your relationship style.

Check out what we've come up with below:

1. 'Sugar' by Maroon 5: If you crank up the volume when this song starts playing, then you're probably in a passionate and dependent relationship. You crave your significant other like sugar, and you just "need a little sweetness" in your life. You may be in desperate need of attention from your partner; when all else goes wrong in your life, you just need "one little taste" of their love.

2. 'I Can't Feel My Face' by The Weeknd: If you're into this summer hit, you're a tragic lover. You love being in a whirlwind romance and think that "misery is necessary when we're deep in love." Your significant other is more than just your baby, they're the "death" of you. Dating advice: don't take dating so seriously; it can be fun, too!

Related: [Love Advice: What Your Sleeping Position with Your Partner Says About You](#)

3. 'Cheerleader' by OMI: This fun song has been playing over the radios nonstop this summer and if you find yourself grooving along, you're in a great relationship. You've found someone who is there to support you and to give you "love and affection"! Dating advice: keep your "cheerleader" close to you well past the end of the summer.

4. Shut Up and Dance With Me' by Walk The Moon: Obsessed with this song? If so, you've probably been dancin' the summer away! This upbeat song is all about letting go of your troubles and hesitations, and enjoying the moment. Perhaps you're hitting the town in your "backless dress and some beat up sneakers" or you're just grooving with your baby, but no matter what, you're just enjoying summer as it comes. Love advice: keep enjoying yourself, but know when to settle down and get serious with someone!

Related: [Love Advice: 5 Signs You're in a Lukewarm Relationship](#)

5. 'Honey I'm Good' by Andy Grammer: This song is all about someone enjoying their night out on the town and avoiding the temptation of "those long, long legs." But if you're into this song, you're all about being faithful in relationships and love. You're all about being devoted to the person you have waiting for you back at home!

What do you think your favorite summer song says about your relationship style? Share your thoughts below!

Top 5 Ways to Get Him to Propose By Labor Day





There may only be three weeks until Labor Day, but that's still plenty of time to encourage your beau to pop the question by the end of the summer ... or at least get him in the right mindset to do so. **Dana B. Myers**, sexy lifestyle expert and author of *The Official Booty Parlor Mojo Makeover*, has a unique take on how to do just that. Here are her top five tips:

1. Work It Out: Boost your confidence by adding some extra gym or spa time to your routine this summer. Taking this time to yourself will give you a new self-assured attitude that your man will find to be oh-so-sexy.

2. Take Charge: Plan a date night that is all about him. Incorporate some of his favorite date night activities and make a reservation at his favorite restaurant. Then, prep your bikini area because if everything goes well, your night will just be getting started when you return home. Dana suggests the painless at home hair removal device, no! no! Hair. And another tip: share your little secret at the beginning of the night so that the anticipation to see what you've done will make the date even better.

3. Heat Things Up: The best way to a man's heart is through his stomach, so make him an old-fashioned, home-cooked meal, like roasted chicken or lasagna. The traditional meal will remind your man of family and starting his own. And, if you're in with his mom, ask if you can borrow one of her recipes.

4. Get Hands-on: Let your man know you're there for him after a long, stressful day of work by setting up some special pampering time just for him. This can be as simple as giving him shoulder, neck and/or foot rub. For a full body treatment try the Don't Stop Massage Candle. The candle provides a seductive glow, and when you're ready to start the massage simply blow out the flame and drizzle the warm oil onto bare skin for a uniquely intimate, exciting massage experience.

5. Change Locations: Plan a romantic summer getaway together. The vacation could present the perfect opportunity for him to pop the question, or inspire him to plan a special event on his own.

Have some ideas on how to get your man to pop the question? Share your thoughts below.

Top Summer Hotspots If You're a Celebrity Couple





By Diamon Hall

Hard work and dedication. Cameras constantly flashing. People relentlessly gossiping. Not to mention, lack of free time and sleep. We must admit, celebrities have very hectic schedules, ones that the typical person probably couldn't handle. Therefore, not only do they desire long and relaxing vacations, but they also deserve them.

Take a look at the top five hot spots that a lot of celeb couples swarm to when it's time for recess:

1. Los Cabos, Mexico: Better known as Cabo, Los Cabos, Mexico is one of the most popular spots for A-listers from Tinseltown to vacation. Offering beachfront villas, indoor and outdoor suites, top-of-the-line restaurants and high-quality spas, this is the perfect place for celebrity couples to be. And to prove it, Gwyneth Paltrow and musician Chris Martin honeymooned in one of the beachfront villas. Other celebrity couples that have visited include Will Smith and wife, Jada Pinkett-Smith and Michael Douglas and wife, Catherine Zeta-Jones.

2. Cannes, France: This popular vacation spot, located on the French Riviera, hosts the annual Cannes Film Festival, which is a pretty big deal to most celebs. This is one of the many places where celebrity couples get to show off their new trends, and add to their collections by shopping at some of the city's luxurious shops. What sizzling celeb couple wouldn't want to be in the midst of all the glitz and glam in Cannes?

3. Vail, Colorado: When celebrity couples are looking to cool off, they hit the slopes in Vail. As if skiing isn't enough fun in itself, the Red Lion in Vail Village lays live music nightly and has therefore earned its reputation as the spot to be after skiing. When it's time to wind down, The Tap Room is the place that all the hot commodities scatter to for martinis. Celebrity couples don't want to miss being cool at these famous ski ruins.

4. Saint Barthelemy: This hot, beautiful vacation spot, more commonly known as St. Bart's, is located in the Caribbean. This island collects so many celebs each year that it has gained the nickname "Hollywood South" by some writers. As if the fact that this romantic island was discovered by Columbus isn't enough reason to visit, celebrity couples can get very intimate at St. Bart's.

5. Aspen, Colorado: Another popular ski resort for the stars is this place. Some even have second homes in Aspen, while others simply vacation there for the holidays. Either way, Aspen has all the celebrity couples attracted to wearing fur coats and cuddling with each other after long ski cycles. The uniquely-named ski trails such as "Buttermilk Mountain" have all the celeb buzz.

Want to vacation like the A-listers? These five hotspots are only a sample of some of the fun and relaxing vacations that they routinely enjoy. Be on the lookout for more of your favorite celebrity couples and their exclusive vacation

spots. You'll be surprised!

Do's and Don'ts of Flirtexting and Sexting



By Olivia Baniuszewicz and Debra Goldstein

We were eating dinner the other night with our best guy friend, and the topic turned to sexting. Not too soon after, he handed us his cell phone to show us close to a hundred naked photos of different girls. Can you believe he actually created a folder on his phone to archive them because there were so many? Sigh. Anyways, all of these girls sent

him photos for one reason and one reason alone ...because he asked. He didn't think twice about showing them to us nor is he shy about sharing them with his boys.

Ladies, we don't particularly want to see your privates on our friend's phone, in the news (yes, you Andrew Weiner, Blake Lively, Vanessa Hudgens...) or anywhere else for that matter. We thought a nice refresher on some do's and don'ts of sexting may be just what we all need to keep our privates, well, private.

What is Flirtexting?

Flirtexting is what you do in the beginning stages of a relationship to build a connection.

What is Sexting?

Sexting is sending suggestive flirtexts that are bold and blunt and used to spice up an existing relationship.

Do's:

- Sexts should be used by mature adults in a committed relationship to avoid risky backlash
- Stay classy by sending simple sexts telling him what you want to do when you see him later, or what you plan on wearing
- Use the casual and safe environment of text to forgo shyness by sexting to reveal your fantasies
- Spark fire in a long distance relationship with an exciting bedtime sext
- Send a flirtext to spice up an existing relationship during work
- Less is more, send sexy photos of new lingerie or a picture of your legs to get him aroused

Don'ts:

- Never include your face in a naked photo text.
- Avoid your kids seeing these photos by deleting them immediately from your phone after sending them.

- Don't reveal everything in a text message exchange, leave him wanting more.
- Stay away from racy photos unless you're in a serious relationship to avoid unwanted leaks and criticism.

You Should Know:

- Guys have said that they will often test girls by sending them a sext to see how they will respond.
- Nothing is going to happen if you refuse to take it all off for a sext, except for maybe gaining more respect from the person asking you for it.
- Unlike phone sex, you don't need to be anywhere private to send a sexy text.

Flirtexting: How to Text Your Way into his Heart *is a dating guide that spells out the rules, the guidelines and the do's and don'ts of the dating phenomenon of flirting over text message. "We date, therefore we text," was Debra Goldstein and Olivia Baniuszewicz's motto and inspiration for writing Flirtexting. Once guys stopped calling and started courting them over text, they decided to equip themselves, their friends, and the greater cell carrying public, with the tools to cleverly respond to get what they want. www.flirtexting.com*

He Said/She Said: Decoding the Text Message





By Analorena Zeledon, GalTime.com

I don't think anyone really thought about how complicated text messaging would turn out to be when it was first invented, not to mention how talented we'd have to become with our thumbs. Seriously. If you think emails can be misinterpreted easily, think about those short, abbreviated messages specifically designed to say a lot in as little space as possible. They are minefields when it comes to romance.

Even the most simple messages can be over analyzed. Ever received a text with a "ha ha" and a period after it? How do you interpret that? First of all, why is the "ha ha" separated? Was the person showing sarcasm, did his I-Phone auto-correct it or did he genuinely find it funny? And if he found it comical, then why did he end it with a period? Periods are meant for formal sentences in emails, letters, papers, books, etc. But NOT in text messages! Especially after a vague "ha ha." So at this point, you are psychoanalyzing his attitude. "Is he mad at me? Did I do something wrong? He never uses periods. So I definitely messed up. Oh no, is he going to dump me???" See the

problem? OK, maybe that is a little extreme and you're not quite that insecure, but tell me you haven't had moments of doubt after sending and receiving a text where you've stared at the message and re-read it a million times.

How about when you impulsively reach out to the cute guy from the gym and text, "Why don't we go out for drinks?" And he responds with "Sure." What does that mean, SURE? Now, take a step back. What if he wrote you that same message but added the word "sometime." Then what then? When is "sometime?" Is that in a day, a week, a month, a year??!

Men say that they are simple and straightforward. They mean exactly what they say. But do they? Read the following text messages and think about them (really think). What do YOU think they mean? Then we'll give it to you straight. We've polled some of the best love & relationship experts in America to clarify these vague texts. Giving us the male perspective is **Thomas Edwards Jr.** known as **the Professional Wingman**; he has been featured on *Maxim* and *E!* Online. From the female perspective, we have funny but no-bull, **Ensley Gilchrist**, the proud author of a humor and dating blog, **Haughty By Nature** and **Laurie Davis**, the founder of **eFlirt Expert**.

"I wish you were here"

GIRL INTERPRETATION: "He really likes me! Awww and he misses me!! So cute!"

Actual Meaning:

THOMAS: "I want something and only you can give it to me." It could mean he actually misses you, the way you kiss his lips or the way you make his favorite Italian sandwich. Whatever the case is, he misses you and you are appreciated. But beware, too early in the game and he might be a High-level Clinger.

LAURIE: If you've been on more than 3 dates, this is

absolutely adorable and he's a keeper! But, if you only grabbed drinks once, this reeks of desperation. He's basically admitting that he's sitting around his lonely apartment-for-one clinging to the memory of how the light hit your hair in the bar din.

“Are you going out tonight/ What are you doing later?”

GIRL INTERPRETATION: “He wants to hang out with me! He can't stop thinking about me!”

Actual Meaning:

ENSLEY: “Maybe I can get this one in the bag before I have to buy her too many drinks.”

THOMAS: “Can we have sex?” Not much science to this one.

LAURIE: If it's after 8PM, this is definitely a booty call. If sent earlier in the day it could be genuine, but beware, you've got a last minute planner on your hands! Same day scheduling too early in the courtship process means you might be a fill-in for a cancelled date.

“Can we reschedule for another night? I am not feeling well.”

GIRL INTERPRETATION: “Poor little boo boo! He needs me to bring him chicken soup and some lotion-infused Kleenex!”

Actual Meaning:

THOMAS: “Whatever responsibility I had, I'm bailing” or “I want you to take care of me.”

It could be a cheap bail out of something he doesn't want to do. Or he's not feeling his best and may want to be alone. Pay attention to the context in which he says this one.

ENSLEY: "That hot girl from the bar Saturday night just told me she was free."

LAURIE: This level of sharing is actually a good thing. A statement like this is one way of showing vulnerability and you can expect more to come from your relationship. But if you have plans, watch out! Your date is about to get cancelled.

"I'll text you later."

GIRL INTERPRETATION: "He must be really busy right now. He has such a stressful job! Why can't his boss give him a break?!"

Actual Meaning:

THOMAS: "I'm bored and I'm going to do something else." OR "I want to call you later but I'm too scared to do it." If you get that message mid-conversation, it probably means he's losing interest and wants to get back to playing video games. Texting is also an easy way out and it takes the pain away from actually talking on the phone so he may be avoiding that. This also can apply to anyone that will text, "I'll call you later," and ends up texting you.

LAURIE: Generally, this means, "I'm still too lame to pick up the phone and call you."

Now, if he just mentioned he was about to run into a meeting or have dinner with friends, this is acceptable. But, if you're in the middle of a conversation, it is NOT. He might as well be saying he's bored and/or has better things to do.

Were you surprised? Or are you a text-messaging fiend who can read men's minds with as much ease as adding 1 +1? If you're the latter, well then my hat's off to you! If you are however, more like me, then I guess we still have some work to do (but don't worry, I am sure you have all the other bases covered

*wink).

Experts Corner

Thomas Edwards Jr.: Founder of **The Professional Wingman** (www.theprofessionalwingman.com), he has been featured in *Maxim*, as well as *E! Online*, *CNN*, *MSN*, the *Wall Street Journal* and *Blast Magazine*.

Ensley Gilchrist: Author of humor and dating blog, **Haughty By Nature** (www.haughtybynature.com).

Laurie Davis: Founder of **eFlirt Expert** (www.eflirtexpert.com). *eFlirt Expert* markets your “single-dom.” Helping singles establish the ultimate virtual first impression and transition their digital selves to meaningful, in-person dating experiences.

Five Dates That Will Brutally Backfire





By Sam Greenspan

There's a fine line between thinking of innovative ideas for dates and ending up with disastrous thoughts for dates. About five years ago, I happened to see that a circus from Mexico was here in Los Angeles. I had a first date that night and took the girl to that circus, even though neither of us spoke Spanish. I thought it was brilliant and would help us bond. She got an "emergency call" from her "grandma" who had suddenly come down with "dying" and left after 45 minutes. That's a date backfire on a grandiose scale.

In my semi-bestselling book *11 Points Guide to Hooking Up*, I have a list of 11 Dates That Will Brutally Backfire. Because I blew through 25 percent of my allotted words for this guest post with that circus anecdote, I will only be able to relay abbreviated snippets of five of them:

1. Comedy club: Because somehow, every comedian on the planet has a built-in radar for a nervous couple on a first date. It must be a side effect of cheap beer and mild depression. Anyway, he'll joke you guys right into never seeing each other again.

2. Massages: The problem is, a good masseuse takes you to a place in a different realm than sex. Afterward, you and your date won't want to be physical with each other – it'll just ruin how good your neck and shoulders feel.

3. Your friend's party: You know everyone there. Your date doesn't. It'll be hard to get to know each other while you talk to your friends and he or she just kinda awkwardly hangs at your side like you're Tom Hanks and he or she is Rita Wilson.

4. Errands: Twice in my life (with about 10 years' separation in between), a girl ran errands while we were ostensibly on a date. And all I could think of both times was, "You think our date's going so poorly that *errands* are going to liven it up?" Especially the time the girl diverted us to a post office so she could mail her taxes. In January. She wasn't in that much of a rush.

5. An overnight trip: Save the overnight trips for when you actually know each other. There's nothing worse than realizing 20 minutes into a two-day trip that you really don't like each other. (Other than realizing it 20 minutes into a two-year relationship, like Ben Affleck and Jennifer Lopez.)

Sam Greenspan is the founder of the website 11Points.com (because top 10 lists are for cowards). His first book, the 11 Points Guide to Hooking Up, just came out in June.

5 Steamy Summer Celebrity

Couples



By Tanni Deb

Summer's arrival not only brings in warm weather, but also creates new relationships. New romance sparks – such as Hollywood's hot couple, Justin Bieber and Selena Gomez, while other couples' love for each other continues to grow. Since many relationships are emerging, here's a list of this summer's top five steamy celebrity couples who are hot as well as committed:

1. David Beckham and Victoria Beckham: The famous soccer player and his wife have been noted as the Brangelina of UK. They have four children and have been married for 12 years. Although there were rumors of David having an affair during their relationship, the Posh Spice said the news strengthened their marriage.

2. Will Smith and Jada Pinkett Smith: Married for 14 years, everyone's favorite Hollywood couple made *YourTango's* Top Ten Longest Hollywood Marriages list. What's their secret to a successful marriage? The couple agreed that "divorce just can't be an option."

3. Mark Consuelos and Kelly Ripa: The duo first met on the sets of *All My Children* and married in 1996. Ripa, the hilarious co-host of *Live with Regis and Kelly*, and her husband were noted as one of Hollywood's Hottest Married Couples by *US Magazine*.

4. Orlando Bloom and Miranda Kerr: Who could forget about the Victoria Secret model and her husband who stole our hearts away in *Pirates of the Caribbean*? Married in 2010, the couple had their first child in January. The two are always making time for each other despite their busy schedules.

5. Brad Pitt and Angelina Jolie: Of course this list wouldn't be complete without Brangelina. Known best for their huge family – three biological and three adopted children – and their humanitarian efforts, they are referred to as Hollywood's power couple.

Want to see one of your favorite celebrity couples on this list? Let us know who in a comment below. In the meantime, lookout for new celebrity relationships this summer.

8 Alternative Wedding Trends for 2011



By Cara Davis

Today's brides and grooms aren't settling for what has always been done. They're infusing creativity, personality, cultural trends and most of all, they're having fun. They're creating memorable experiences not just for themselves, but for friends and family who contribute to their big days.

Author and marketing guru Seth Godin recently spoke at a Chick-fil-A Leadercast about how the new normal is not normal at all. People are questioning why we do things the way we do, thereby turning tradition on its head. It's affecting all industries, including the wedding industry.

Here's a look at eight alternative wedding trends that are popping up in 2011:

1. Mini Wedding Dresses: Whether it's glammed up, vintage or breezy casual, knee-length wedding dresses are more practical

and personalized for today's bride. As more stores roll out wedding boutiques like J.Crew and White House Black Market, brides can pick up a wedding dress from their favorite retail store. And let's not forget that for some, that's Etsy, where they can pick up a custom hand-made gown for as little as \$40.

2. Fun with Color: From black accents to bold color blocks, color is king this year and it's not limited to the bride!

Non-matching bridesmaids are coordinating in patterns or complementary color combinations like this crafty DIY wedding of mega-blogger Elsie Larson. In addition to bold color palettes, shades of gray and stripes continue to be the big color trend for the year.

3. Alternative Gift Registries: Many couples are registering for gifts that will help them in a practical way. Travel agencies are starting to offer honeymoon gift certificates and some auto dealers are offering gift certificates toward the purchase of a new vehicle. CardAvenue.com allows couples to create a gift card registry for national retailers. Couples can get as creative as they want; they can request gift cards to home improvement stores to offset costs of home renovation or register for local restaurants so they can continue dating as newlyweds on a budget.

4. Punchy Personalization: While the structure of the wedding remains the same, (you've got a bride and groom, an officiant, a group of family and friends, a ceremony and reception) the look is anything but. The time may be different (think brunch), the seating may be smarter (seated at tables & staying put for reception), the furniture may be funky (varying size and shape or non-traditional choices) and forget the wedding favors – today's couples are giving personalized takeaways, like souvenir photo booth picture strips.

5. Eco-friendly Finds: Outdoor spaces, reclaimed furniture, flea market finds and even wooden rings are helping eco-conscious brides and grooms celebrate in a big way without the

environmental impact. Green weddings can feature locally grown food and seed-lined wedding invitations that can be planted.

CarbonFund and Terrapass offer wedding carbon footprint calculators, where air travel is most likely to be the big offender. Couples can purchase carbon offsets to lessen the impact, or request contributions as gifts.

6. The Rustic South: There's been a rise in rustic weddings in the past several years and it mirrors a growing hunger in popular culture for all things Southern (think The Civil Wars, J.Crew fashion, artisan jeans and home-brewed beer). Today's vintage and rustic weddings are all about embracing simplicity and infusing new life into old things. From location (barns or old warehouses) to furniture & decor (antiques and flea market favorites) to apparel (vintage clothes and even brooch bouquets), many couples are going for the nostalgic feel of the old South.

7. Cultural Cues: Couples who are looking to add levity to their big day are incorporating pop culture trends. Food cart fare is showing up in pre-wedding cocktail hour and the after-party. Culturally significant themes like retro Asian flavors and ethnic icons like sushi, ninjas, geisha girls and Chinese lanterns are being used in inventive ways. Vintage board games are showing up as Monopoly pieces in bouquets and Scrabble letter tiles as signs for the buffet.

8. Death of the Wedding Cake: The exorbitant cost of traditional tiered wedding cakes has given way to nontraditional desserts like square mini-cakes and cupcake tiers. Furthermore, dessert buffets may feature pies, macaroons, Whoopie Pies, cake pops, color-coordinated candy and even ice cream sundae stations or cookies and milk bars.

Weddings expert Cara Davis is the author of Cheap Ways to Tie the Knot. She also blogs from her home in Orlando, FL about

cheap ways to spend and save at CheapWaysTo.com.

New Dating Apps to Manage Your Love Life



By Rebecca VanderMeulen, GalTime.com

Is your smartphone the first thing to greet you in the morning and the last thing you see at night?

“If you’re a power user of your smartphone, you should definitely use it in your dating life,” says Laurie Davis, founder of online dating consultant eFlirt Expert. Given how indispensable mobile apps are these days, it’s no surprise

that there are tons of applications to help you find a dating partner and plan a rendezvous. Pretty much every dating site has its own mobile app, Davis says. Besides that, you can download apps designed just to manage your dating life. “More people are spending time on their smartphones,” author and online dating expert Julie Spira tells us. “Mobile dating apps make it more convenient to meet someone while you’re on the go and are rapidly growing in popularity.”

Our experts say there are so many to choose from, but here are some of the newest choices:

HowAboutWe

Instead of scrolling through ubiquitous profiles of singles who like baseball and long walks on the beach, why not vet them based on what they suggest doing for fun? Spira says this app does just that. Here’s how it works: Post “How about we ...” and use your imagination to complete the sentence. Recent examples include, “How about we sit on a park bench and make up conversations for the people we see?” and, “How about we go see a band that neither of us has heard of?” Someone nearby post something that sounds fun? Send a message. That’s it! HowAboutWe’s iPhone app, launched in June, integrates with Foursquare – useful if you’re looking for a happy hour nearby.

Bizzy

Looking for a new place to take that guy you met online? Davis advises checking out Bizzy, a new app (in Beta) available for Android and Apple devices. Like Foursquare, you check into that new coffee shop down the street and rate it. But Bizzy takes things one step further by asking you for your favorite places – like your thoughts on the best food truck, best live music and best salon. The app recommends places you might like based on your answers to these questions, ratings of places you’ve checked out before and preferences of people

who share your taste.

PinPointsX

Spira says this is the app for when you're looking for a hookup. It shows you other members who live nearby, displaying information like their names, ages, height and weight. Of course you can also make a profile complete with a photo and brief, tantalizing bio. Find someone who looks like fun and you can send a message or give him a call. PinPointsX lets you search for men, women and couples. Plus, the app helps you find bars and hotels once you figure out who you want to meet. PinPointsX is available for Apple devices and in the Android Market.

DatingCRM

Ever meet John during happy hour at that funky dive bar, only to confuse him with Jake from the hot club you checked out last weekend? Then you may want to check out DatingCRM, an app that keeps notes on all the potential dates you meet. While a new guy thinks you're texting, store tidbits about where you met, his favorite beer and what he does for a living. "It's like a digital black book," Davis says. Right now DatingCRM is only available in its private beta version since the developers are still working on the details. But this means you have a chance to give them feedback.

Got any others we should know about? Let us know your tip on managing your love life ... we want to hear from you!

5 Celebrity Couples That Are

Playing It Safe In The Sun



By Melissa Tierney

Whether it's running through Central Park or hitting the beach, celebrities everywhere are embracing the summertime and loving their naturally sun-kissed or porcelain skin. But despite the fact that it's now August the cast of *Jersey Shore* is getting their "GTL" on, these five celebrity couples are determined to love the skin they are in without fake and baking at a tanning salon. If you think you're pale and were considering getting a faux glow, think again! Take a look at these five celebrity couples, because they're sure to make you feel comfortable and confident in the skin you're in!

1. Kristen Stewart and Robert Pattinson: Having pale skin isn't just perfectly acceptable in Stephanie Meyer's *Twilight* world, but in Hollywood as well. Stars like these vamped up

hotties are embracing the sun, but in a healthy way. While traveling the world to promote their upcoming movie, *Breaking Dawn Part I*, Stewart and Pattinson have kept to their procelin roots even though the bronze trend is becoming a huge sensation.

2. Natalie Portman and Benjamin Millepied: This adorable couple has that new parents glow after welcoming their baby boy into the world this month. Portman, who is known for her light skin, looks ravishing everywhere she goes without having that orange tint that so many celebrities are after this season. Maybe it's time for us to take a tip from Portman and realize a natural glow is much better than a fake one. Fiance and baby daddy, Benjamin Millepied, seems to agree, as he's adored Portman ever since they met on the set of their film, *Black Swan*.

3. Nicole Kidman and Keith Urban: It looks like this couple knows just how to play it safe in the sun! The two Aussie's are no strangers to the sun, but when they hit the clear waters and beaches of Sydney, like they did for their 2006 wedding ceremony in North Sydney, they are careful to put on some SPF and cute shades. What better way can these two love birds embrace their culture, than in a conscious and healthy way?

4. Dita Von Teese and Louis-Marie de Castelbajac: The sexy pin up girl and French aristocrat have caused quite a stir since they started dating in 2010, but one thing these two don't have to worry about is damage from the sun's harmful rays. Being the ex of vampire-esque Marilyn Manson may have rubbed off on Von Teese, and she'd rather be fair-skinned than brown, which we love. Who knows – maybe this is the season to give pale skin a shot.

5. Cate Blanchett and Andrew Upton: The Hollywood starlet is certainly gorgeous and breathtaking, and one of her claims to

fame is her porcelain-like complexion. While having healthy skin is most certainly in, knowing how to carry it makes all the difference. Blanchett's clear complexion makes her stand out on the red carpet, and husband Andrew Upton definitely seems to approve.

What celebrity couples do you think practice safe skin? Share your thoughts below!

Why Kourtney Kardashian and Scott Disick Don't Need to Get Married





By Brea Gunn

Okay, okay...I'll admit it. I'm a reality TV junkie. I LOVE watching the train wrecks, drama, and outright ridiculousness that has become entertainment. Sometimes, though, a show truly hits a chord. I was watching Keeping Up With the Kardashians and stumbled upon the episode where Kris is pushing Kourtney and Scott to get married ... But they don't want to tie the knot.

This may seem strange to you, but it really irked me that their mom, Kris, was pushing the issue. Now, I'm all about weddings. It's what I love to write about, talk about and blog about, but sometimes weddings are not the best thing. Take Kourtney and Scott, for example. If her mom wants a commitment, why not have a commitment ceremony instead of a wedding? You can still have the dress, the big bash and the DJ without ending up with a legally binding piece of paper.

Take a look at some other celebs that have kids and aren't married ... Johnny Depp (together with his partner for more than 10 years, he has 2 kids) and Brad Pitt and Angelina Jolie

(together for more than 5 years and they have six (right?) kids) ... And both couples are very comfortable in their relationships.

And then there are the celebrities that have gotten married after they have kids, like Ashlee Simpson and Pete Wentz, and Britney Spears and Kevin Federline. Now, they're separated or divorced.

So where's the middle ground? And more importantly, what does any of this have to do with us 'normal' people? I think that weddings are fantastic, and I love every single one of them, but they're truly not for everyone, as I think the Kardashians (among others) have shown us. So when do you know it's right?

If you can't imagine the rest of your life without your love's best and WORST features, then (more than likely) you're probably on the right track with the wedding plans. But if you're happy being your semi-single self, consider a commitment ceremony or party to celebrate a milestone year in your relationship instead.

Sure, Mom may be upset (even famous moms want to plan their daughter's weddings), but I think that if you sit down with her (do not take a page from Kourtney on this one) and calmly explain your choice, then chances are she'll be on board ... especially if you let her plan a party.

Brea Gunn is a monthly contributor for Cupid's Pulse and writes for a Hudson Valley weddings site for real weddings, reviews and inspiration from local wedding business resources.

10 Signs You're Ready For a Relationship



By Marianne Beach, GalTime.com

I'm admittedly a recovered relationship addict. I went from relationship to relationship with little or no break in between. Luckily, I was finally able to break that cycle and stay single for two years – before finally meeting my dream guy (and now husband).

But staying single for a serial monogamist is often easier said than done. After all, you're used to having a second opinion, someone to take to dinner parties and curl up with in bed. An empty house can be frightening for someone addicted to love.

But Jennifer Oikle, Ph.D., relationship psychologist, dating coach and founder of **MySoulmateSolution.com**, insists that though it's difficult, it's also ultimately rewarding and will prepare you for the relationship of your dreams.

So how do you start? First, she says, forget being committed to a relationship and start becoming committed to yourself instead. "Become delighted by the idea of discovering who you are, without having to please someone else."

In fact, she suggests not dating at all for a certain amount of time, so you don't fall into old habits. "Avoid all of the typical ways you usually behave to find a new beau (going to bars, trolling the Internet, etc)," she says. "Ask a friend to be your sponsor and help you stay single."

During that dating fast, start living for yourself. "Become involved in new hobbies, activities and same-sex friendships to help you discover who you are, what you love, what you don't love," Dr. Jenn says. "Allow yourself to discover new strengths, become aware of patterns which no longer serve you and begin trying out new behaviors so that you become a strong, confident, self-sufficient person, before you head back onto the dating field."

When you are feeling more secure with yourself – and you don't need a relationship to survive – start with casual dating first, rather than jumping in with both feet.

"By casually dating, often more than one person at a time, you can slow yourself down, by spreading your attention over more than one person – keeping you from getting over – invested in any one person too quickly," Dr. Jenn explains. "You want to keep dating until it's comfortable – until you aren't running into a relationship to get away from the insecurities of dating."

How do you know when you are finally ready to enter a real relationship? Dr. Jenn suggests you look for the following

signs:

1. You've been on your own for at least 3-6 months and you no longer feel like you NEED a relationship just to survive.
2. You feel like you are good on your own.
3. You feel confident.
4. Your mood is stable – you don't let the little ups and downs of life throw you overboard.
5. You can hear other people's opinions and criticism and not take it personally.
6. Your worth isn't directly related to what other people think (as long as it is, you are too vulnerable to date).
7. You aren't preoccupied with your ex and your emotions are no longer raw.
8. You can think of the past and just feel mostly gratitude for what you learned AND you can explain what you learned, how you contributed to the cycle and how you will proceed differently. If you can't name those things, you aren't ready to date because you'll just make the same mistakes.
9. You now have interests, hobbies and friendships that you are passionate about and invested in and you are serious about not dropping them for ANY man!
10. Ask your friends – they will know! ☐

10 Ways To Be A Beach Bum With Your Beau





By **Vicky Sullivan** of **Aspiring Socialite**

During the hot months, the beach is the perfect place to go, either as a couple or while on a group date with mutual friends. Regardless of whether you're in a relationship or not, this location is the perfect place to enjoy a romance in the summertime – no wonder so many people choose to have beach weddings or visit exotic beach-side resorts on their honeymoon! If you're itching to head to the sandy shores, here's a countdown of the top 10 ways to be a beach bum with your beau this season:

10. Sex on the beach: It's not just a drink. But, make sure you don't get caught.

9. Take a stroll: A long walk on the sand or the boardwalk is an ideal way to bond with your partner in the summer sun.

8. Have a picnic: Eating on the beach together is a sweet way to share a meal, whether it's during the day or under the stars. Bring a large blanket to sit on and watch out for those seagulls. They may be hungry too.

7. Ride horses: Many beach resorts offer seaside horseback riding, which is both a romantic and unique experience to share as a couple.

6. Steal a kiss: The beach is as good a place as any to grab a smooch from your beau. Plus, it creates an excellent backdrop for a passion-filled day.

5. Apply sunscreen: Helping your partner apply sunscreen is amorous in two ways. Not only are you watching out for your partner's well-being, but you're also giving them a sensuous rub down – and no one can criticize you for getting touchy-feely in the name of good health.

4. Relax in the breeze: Try visiting the shore during a slightly windy day. The breeze and soothing sound of the waves are bound to cool you off.

3. Create a photo shoot: In the dead of winter, you'll want to remember the fun times you spent frolicking in the sun. Take a moment to snap some cute shots of you and your partner, beaming and tan on a sunny day. Grab some shells to glue to a frame and voila – instant home décor.

2. Take a scenic boat ride: Sail out into the ocean for a peaceful and relaxing ride. Or, if you want to pick up the pace, rent jet skis instead. Or, rent just one jet ski and share the ride together. Just remember to play nice and take turns letting your partner drive.

1. Watch the sunset: Stay until the early evening to enjoy one of nature's most beautiful gifts. A sunset over the ocean is a view you won't soon forget, and it's a picture perfect way to end a day you spent bumming around with the one you love.

What's the most romantic thing you've done with your partner at the beach? Let us know below!

Five Tips to Help Your Partner Feel Comfortable Around Your Friends



By Ashyia Hill

You've managed to make a romantic spark turn into a comfortable relationship, and now you want to bring your new partner around to meet your friends. Meeting your closest friends and family could be a make-or-break moment—especially if he doesn't connect with them or even like them for that matter. Thankfully, there are steps you can take to help make your lover feel more relaxed about the meet and greet. In

fact, many of these tactics are ones that we see celebrities using in their relationships. So, let's take a cue from a few famous couples with the following five steps:

1. Don't force your friends on your partner

Some independence in a relationship is healthy. AskMen.com put together a profile of Tom Brady and Gisele Bündchen's relationship that shows how the celebrity power couple has maintained independent careers that take them all over the world, while still cultivating a sizzling relationship. This independence can also be applied to your friendships. One way to do that is by scheduling time to meet up with your friends separately. That way, when it's time to plan a get-together, you can focus on helping your partner feel at ease instead of trying to catch up on your friends' lives.

2. Give them talking points

Just as celebrities prepare for their TV and magazine interviews, you can help your sweetie feel a little more prepared around your pals with a little prep time. Give them some background on the people they'll meet and match up any commonalities they may have with your friends. Another idea is to provide them with some fun factoids that will help get the conversations rolling and break the ice.

3. Plan a double date

Arrange a double date with another couple you know. This way, your honey can socialize one-on-one and get to know your friends better. Of course, you'll want to steer clear of double dates with friends whose partners you don't care for or you think your significant other won't get along with!

4. Take a trip together

You see celebs doing this all the time. Of course, you don't

need to fly off on a private jet to a world-class resort to get the same effect but a weekend away can bond people immediately. If you're tight on budget, keep it close to home.

5. Steer clear of friendly exes

Tabloids often publish pictures of celebrities remaining friendly with their exes. But getting your current flame together with a fizzled out one isn't the best idea. Instead, focus on life-long friends who have always been and will forever remain platonic.

How do you make your partner feel comfortable around your friends? Leave a comment with your perspective.

Ashyia Hill is a social media advocate at the cash back credit card website, CreditDonkey.