

# Top 10 Ways to Get Invited to the Royal Wedding



 By Tanni Deb

Prince William and Kate Middleton invited an astronomical number of guests to their wedding: 1,900 people! Yet most of us are wondering how we can get invited without having to work the affair itself. Sure – you can watch the fanfare on NBC (at 4 a.m. EST no less!), but it's not the same as getting dressed, attending the event and bumping elbows with A-listers from around the world. If you feel left out and want to see the ceremony in person, here are strategies that worked for some of the hundreds of guests that will be at Westminster Abbey on April 29:

**1. Embarrass yourself in public, Kanye West-style:** West's infamous humiliation of Taylor Swift at 2009's MTV Video Music Awards didn't stop the royals from inviting him. While millions of us watch the wedding overseas, West has the honor of mingling with many notable international figures – and may even get to offend some of them as well.

**2. Open a pub:** Middleton's favorite pub owner, John Haley, is attending the nuptials. If you want an invite, follow suit! Open your own bar close to Buckingham Palace, pray that someone in the royal family is a regular visitor, and hope that you'll score an invite when Prince Harry gets engaged.

**3. Stay close to the family:** If Ellen DeGeneres, the queen of comedy, stayed in touch with her distant relative, she probably would've been dancing down the aisle at Westminster Abbey. Sadly, the 15th cousin of Kate Middleton won't get that opportunity. Check your genealogy – you just might be

royalty.

**4. Become a popular sports player:** Think British football (or as Americans call it, soccer). It's no surprise that David and Victoria Beckham are on the guest list. If you want an invite, start working on your athletic skills now.

**5. Mind your manners:** Simon Cowell, former American Idol host, won't be in attendance. Last month, he told Jay Leno, "I may have said something to the Queen about her hat when I met her..." In that case, you can't *really* blame the royals for not inviting him. It pays to play well with others, Cowell.

**6. Be a nanny:** Rumor has it that former royal nanny, Tiggy Legge-Bourke, will be a guest. While it's too late to take care of these princes, positions are sure to open up once they have kids, so stay on guard.

**7. Don't humiliate your fellow royals:** Prince Andrew, the Duke of York, and his daughters, Princesses Eugenie and Beatrice, received an invitation. However, ex-wife and mother, Sarah Ferguson, was left out. Well, that's embarrassing – and bound to happen when you try to sell access to your ex-husband. Moral of the story: If you ever wish to attend a royal event, never mess with the royal family.

**8. Become a charity volunteer...:** Volunteer at a charity where Prince William is the president; you'll automatically be invited. Who says it doesn't pay to volunteer?

**9. ...or join the military:** In Britain, of course. It was reported that 30 members of the country's Defense Services will see the nuptials in person. Join the forces now; that number might increase when the next ceremony takes place.

**10. Don't run for President of the United States:** If the emperor of Japan, sultan of Brunei, and the kings of Malaysia, Tonga and Thailand are invited to this affair, you'd think the president of a leading first-world country would be as well.


Unfortunately, President Obama didn't make the cut. Why, you ask? Blame it on the expensive costs for security to protect him and the First Lady. Looks like the Prince has also been affected by the recession.

Well, there you have it! If any of these strategies work for you, let us know. However, if you're unsuccessful, the 'Not Flippin' Invited' party at London's Mahiki nightclub would love to have you around. And if that's too far for you, consider throwing your own, "Where's My Royal Wedding Invitation" party.

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## Focus on Friendship for a Peaceful Dating Experience



 By Naini Nakagawa

Spring is in the air, and so is dating! With the fresh spring air comes a new way to approach dating. The goal for this season? Focus on friendships, which may lead to romance later on when you truly know your mate-to-be. Celebrities like Ryan Phillippe could certainly use this wisdom right now.

Phillippe's recent relationship with Amanda Seyfried seems to be on and off, and he was also recently accused of having "innocent sleepovers" with Rihanna. It seems to be a game of celebrity musical chairs in Hollywood these days, filled with all sorts of drama. For the rest of us, who prefer to keep drama-free peaceful relationships, the following tips could go a long way:

**1. Rid your life of toxic people:** Keep those who are

discouraging and who don't support and believe in you on the sidelines. Your energy field can take a turn for the worst with negative influences in your life.

**2. Consider your spiritual path:** Celebrities like Scarlett Johansson, who received an Ally for Equality Award at the 2011 Human Rights Campaign Los Angeles Dinner and Awards Gala, keep things in perspective by prioritizing things like helping those less fortunate than themselves. Give off positive energy by taking each interaction throughout your day and adding some cheer to it. Smile! It could make a big difference in someone's life. Plus, confidence attracts. It's one step closer to finding your future mate.

**3. Exercise and eat right:** Being healthy will not only make you feel good about yourself, but your healthy glow will attract potential partners. Bring out the Jennifer Aniston inside yourself! Some foods with special vibrations to consider are cherries, which bring joy, and strawberries, which foster dignity. Working out can help to keep you balanced so that you're in the mindset to make the right choices.

**4. Be friends for 8 months before dating:** Meet as many people as possible and keep it friendly, even if the attraction is strong. Longtime Hollywood actress Goldie Hawn had a deep friendship with Kurt Russell before they were romantically involved, and they're still together after 25 years !

**5. What's meant to be will be:** Let the gods get working already. Sometimes the universe needs some time to work its magic, so instead of micromanaging your love life, try to have faith that things will work out the way they're supposed to work out.

**6. Meditate:** Meditation brings on a sense of delicious peace, which no other activity can accomplish. A-list celebrities like Richard Gere, Gwyneth Paltrow and Angelina Jolie are no

strangers to the practice, as they're known to make quiet time for reflection a regular part of their busy schedules.

**7. Be proactive:** After you've taking the time to get to know someone on a spiritual level, it's time to make a move. Plan a date that doesn't involve drinking alcohol, so that your minds are clear and ready to connect.

By utilizing these tips, you can increase your magnetism to such a level that you'll attract someone with the same vibrations as yourself, even if he or she isn't currently anywhere near you. It will lead to a peaceful dating experience that few celebrity couples in Hollywood have thus far achieved.

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## Sean Penn and Scarlett Johansson: Is the Age Difference an Issue?



 By Christie Hartman, PhD

After 14 years of marriage, Sean Penn and Robin Wright divorced in July 2010. Now Penn, who's 50, has been caught canoodling with Scarlett Johansson, 26. Yes, your calculations are correct: Sean Penn is dating a woman who is literally half his age.

Of course, the obvious questions are: Why would Sean Penn go for someone so young? And why would Scarlett Johansson date a man so much older than herself? That's when all the pseudo-scientists come out of the woodwork and start spouting

evolutionary theory – i.e. that older men like young and pretty women because they represent fertility, and that younger women like older, not-necessarily-good-looking men because they have the maturity and means to care for her and her young. While there is some truth to these theories, it's only a small part of what drives dating (and mating) behavior.

More often, such theory is used as an excuse for older men to chase women who are too young for them, and for younger women to seek sugar daddies.

That said, many people assume a May-December romance is somehow typical, and that it's what every man wants. Single women in Penn's age bracket may wonder, "What chance do I have if men my age can get women in their 20s??"

Here's why you shouldn't fret much when you see a relationship like Sean Penn and Scarlett Johansson:

**1. Older men often rebound with younger women.** In fact, dating a much younger woman is an ironclad sign a man is still recovering from a past relationship. He's looking for fun, sex and an ego boost after the difficult time he's been through.

**2. Celebrities are not like regular people.** You will often observe more extreme mating behaviors in celebrities, including multiple marriages, rapid transition from one partner to another, marrying after having dating only a few months and partners with vast age differences. These behaviors are far less common among the rest of us. In fact, only 7.5% of U.S. marriages include a husband who is more than ten years older than his wife.

**3. Most older men admire younger women, rather than prefer them.** A youthful, pretty face is a pleasure to look at, but most men want a partner with whom they connect. That special connection will rarely occur with someone half your age. Likewise, most women prefer men much closer to their own age.

Christie Hartman, PhD is a psychologist, dating expert, and the author of *Dating the Divorced Man and It's Not Him, It's YOU*.

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## David Arquette and Courteney Cox: Did Over-Complaining Kill Their Marriage?



 By Guy Winch, Ph.D., author of *The Squeaky Wheel*

While it's natural to moan and complain to our spouses and expect support and understanding from them, too much complaining can change the very nature of our relationship and damage it beyond repair. When David Arquette and Courteney Cox announced they were splitting up last October, Arquette mentioned that Cox was sick of "mothering" him. For a celebrity couple, the two have been relatively close-lipped about the details of their separation. However, it's fair to assume that if Cox was doing too much mothering, Arquette was doing too much complaining.

When one member of a couple becomes an over-complainer, it creates significant stress on the relationship and the entire household. Unproductive complaining such as venting, whining and moaning, creates an atmosphere of negativity and dissatisfaction that pervades the home. Over-complaining of the unproductive kind can also make it difficult for other members of the household to express their own joy and

happiness.

The problem is that such habits can develop slowly and go unnoticed until the problem is severe. For example, a husband might go through a period of employment instability and feel down about himself and the world. His wife might be supportive at first. She might try to help out by offering regular dollops of sympathy and taking on more responsibilities. However, by doing so she is reinforcing her husband's complaining and enabling him to remain miserable and passive. Over time, the husband in this scenario can become comfortable in the situation and expect his wife to continue "mothering" him.

When left unchallenged, this kind of dynamic can lead to a shift in the very nature of a couple's relationship. Instead of being husband and wife, they now relate to one another in a manner more reminiscent of mother and child or mother and teenager. As a result, their relationship suffers, their marital satisfaction drops and their sex life erodes. Whining is rarely a turn on.

Although it's natural to go through difficult times and expect support from our spouses, couples should never let negative circumstances turn into an enduring reality. If your spouse is over-complaining so much that you begin to think of him or her as a whiner, alert your partner to his or her behavior and how it is affecting you. Ask your mate to learn how to use complaints sparingly and productively—for everyone's sake.

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# Dating Tips for Renee Zellweger and Other Singles Over 40



 By Rosalind Sedacca, CCT

The pain of dating and breaking up isn't just reserved for the young. Singles dating in mid-life and beyond face the same heartbreak, confusion and anxieties as those in their 20's and 30's. These challenges are compounded by the insecurities that frequently come with age, especially for women: Am I still desirable? ... Am I still attractive? ... Will I ever find another partner?

Celebrity couples are no exception. After 24 years of marriage, Tony Danza, age 59, filed for divorce from his 52-year old wife, Tracy Robinson. Jennifer Aniston, who has been in the headlines with several unsuccessful relationships over the past decade, is now telling reporters that she's happily single.

Recently, celebrity couple Renee Zellweger and Bradley Cooper, considered one of Hollywood's top power couples, broke up after dating for two years. When asked during an interview about the nature of their relationship, Cooper mentioned that marriage was not in the picture. Chances are that Zellweger thought she was in a different relationship – one with a more committed and long-term outcome. It appears both partners were not “on the same page.”

This is one of the most common deal-breakers for long-term relationships. Often, couples get together and make assumptions that the other person shares their goals and

intentions. The problem is that they don't discuss these options and spell them out clearly. If you're not on the same page when it comes to monogamy, time spent together, decisions about raising children, as well as other values and cultural beliefs, you set yourself up for disappointment and inevitable conflict.

**Some other success tips for over 40 singles entering a new relationship include:**

**1. Be aware of unresolved baggage:** Emotional scars and wounds from your past can easily sabotage any new relationship. Take the time to identify unresolved feelings of anger, hurt, guilt and disappointment from the past and accept these feelings as lessons learned. It then becomes easier to move on.

**2. Avoid "fairy-tale" thinking:** It's not your partner's job to make you happy. It's your responsibility to love and value yourself when you enter a relationship. Dependency and neediness are not attractive qualities. It is also an illusion to assume any one person can meet all your needs or desires.

**3. Start with friendship first:** This level of comfort translates into a solid foundation for love to blossom and intimacy to develop. Be friends first before you open the door to the physical and emotional closeness that is so essential to a solid partnership.

**4. Be sure your expectations are realistic:** Are your demands about weight, age, height, financial success and other factors limiting your ability to find the right partner? Being flexible, objective and fair prevents us from setting ourselves up for the pain and disappointment of unrealistic expectations.

**5. Communicate effectively by encouraging open, honest dialogue:** In addition to your words, be attuned to your partner's nonverbal cues and body language. Also, be aware of

your own cues that can trigger messages and unconscious signals to your partner.

*Rosalind Sedacca, CCT, is the co-author of the new book, 99 Things Women Wish They Knew Before Dating After 40, 50 & Yes, 60! Visit [www.womendatingafter40.com](http://www.womendatingafter40.com) to receive a complimentary Tip Sheet, along with a Tip of the Week which spans every facet of dating success – from preparing for your first date to determining whether your partner is a “keeper.”*

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## After The Breakup: Should You Stay in Contact With Your Ex?



 By Natalie from Baggage Reclaim

One of the trickiest aspects of modern dating and relationships is the etiquette minefield that is keeping in touch with your ex.

There are two important things to consider:

**Are you over them?:** Have you worked through the loss of the relationship, grieved your feelings good, bad, and indifferent, accepted that it's over and reached a point of not being emotionally invested?

**What is your *purpose* for staying in contact?:** If it's friendship pure and simple, working together or sharing kids necessitates contact, these reasons are understandable. Anything else is a hidden agenda.

Unless you were 'over' him by the time you broke up, you need space before contact.

Many people believe that the mark of a good person is one that can remain friends with an ex...even one that didn't treat them well in the relationship. As a result, often the 'dumper' pushes for contact because gaining agreement makes them feel less guilty. The 'dumpee' might push for contact so that they can be validated and try to potentially 'win' their partner back.

Those who break up pretty amicably and understand and accept why the relationship ended are often OK with letting a friendship evolve naturally. Those who want to ease their conscience or keep a foothold in case they change their mind or who are seeking validation and don't want to let go will not have the patience for space. They're afraid of their partner moving on without them.

If your motives are not purely friendship or for professional/civil reasons, evaluate what you're doing because your agenda will create expectations that your ex cannot or shouldn't meet. You're likely to seek emotional and affectionate displays that are not appropriate for a friendship, and you may inadvertently try to control their agenda so that you don't have to let go. If you're keeping in contact in case you change your mind, you could be wreaking havoc in their lives. If you still look for things such as sex and attention from them, you are using them.

Remember if you have any other agenda beyond being friends or professional/civil, it means you're not their friend so you shouldn't be keeping in touch.

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# Can She Ever Forget Her First Love?



 By Chandler Jones

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

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

I've talked with various women about the subject, all of them married to men who are not their first loves. To my surprise, they all essentially told me the same thing. They said that the first love is mostly passion and the second love is much deeper.

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

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

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

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

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


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

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## **Celebrity Couples Who Have**

# Stayed Together



 By Erin O’Riordan

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

Check out what works for these four celebrity pairs:

**Beyonce and Jay-Z:** They are one of the world’s great couples. Jay-Z has an undeniable charm, a laugh to die for and a fantastic smile. The key to their happiness may lie in their equal success – both reportedly make around \$80 million yearly. Celebrity couples have survived even without equal success, though, so what works for Jay-Z and Beyonce might be their commitment privacy. The couple is notoriously private about their relationship, keeping the magic between them and not opening up their bedroom to the world.

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

**Jada Pinkett Smith and Will Smith:** He’s the only actor ever to have scored eight consecutive films that grossed over \$100 million domestically. Okay, so Will Smith is the biggest movie star ever. Jada’s also had some megahits, notably the Matrix series, and she’s taken turns as a writer and director. Still,

Jada insists she would let her career go before allowing it to interfere with her relationship with Will. Maybe that's why they've been together since 1997. Of course, it doesn't hurt that this super-cute couple only seems to get better looking with age.

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

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

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## Marriage Is a Loaded Word



 By Kenneth Weene, PhD.

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

Before you get the wrong idea, I loved her, I was committed to



her. In my head we were going to grow old together. My concern was the word – marriage.

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

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

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

"What happened?" they ask me, their new marriage counselor.

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

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

And then there's the expectation that marriage is forever.

Forever is such a long time! (My approach was to consider it a three-year contract with option to renew.) That expectation leads to one of the easiest mistakes to make, which is

investing in one member of the couple. Don't put your spouse through school. There, I've said it. That's a prescription for the spouse's mid-life crisis. Marriage is too fraught with obligation as it is. Don't add more.

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

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

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## **Finding Love After a Breakup: Should You Jump In?**



 By Kelly Seal

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

strength and move on to a happier, healthier relationship in the future.

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

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

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

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

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

**Get to know yourself again:** Sometimes, we feel so lost after a break-up we don't even know who we are without our exes. If you feel adrift, try doing something new, whether it's going

to a new restaurant or paragliding on a Saturday afternoon. Trying new things lifts our spirits and puts us back in touch with the part of ourselves that is willing to take risks and grow.

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

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## The Law of Attraction Between Celebrity Couples



By Yolanda Shoshana, Luscious Lifestyle Diva

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

Simply speaking, the law of attraction is when "like" attracts "like." Take a look at Jesse James and Sandra Bullock's

different places in life. Clearly, they had perspectives and ideals that simply didn't match, whereas James and Von D are on the same page.

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

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

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



 By Emily Macintosh of My Life On Match

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

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

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

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

Sexting can be fun and may spice up a relationship when it

gets bland, but remember, technology is our “big brother.” In one click (fwd, RT, send), your sexts could be in the wrong hands.

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## Dating a Playmate



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

Originally published on [Appitalism.com](http://Appitalism.com)

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

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

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

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

**Seduction Discussion** (\$0.99 for Android) – A mobile discussion


app for discussing all things related to the art of seduction. Discuss meeting girls, picking up women, closing the deal, advanced PUA techniques, love and relationships and more!

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

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## ‘How About’ Giving Online Dating One Last Try?



 By Jenna Barbieri

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

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



people out and going on the dates you really want to go on.”

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

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


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

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

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



 By Aarón Sánchez, celebrity chef and TV personality

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



**The Nose Knows**

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

### **Team Chef**

It's like that old saying goes: those who sauté together, stay together. Collaborate on a menu and invite your guest(s) to help you bring the menu to life. Start the party early and enjoy cocktails as you cook; I like to keep it simple with a glass of Kahlua on the rocks with a splash of ginger ale. Cooking your creations together as you enjoy cocktails will allow for plenty of lean-in moments over the stove top, and eating those creations will be the reward for your labors over delicious conversation.

### **Pairing is Caring**

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

### **Forget the Utensils**


Feeding someone can be a loving, playful proposition (especially sans fork). In Mexico, we love to entertain with botanas – small bites – that incorporate foods indigenous to

the region like seafood and black beans. Reconnect with your partner over a selection of botanas like plantains, garnachas (a small fried masa topped with pork or chicken), mushrooms, or fresh cut fruit. Watch those teeth.

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## Three Valentine's Resolutions That Last!



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

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

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

**We will teach ourselves to argue.** Significant marital research suggests that couples who argue using the right words, who are conscious of how to start and end a conversation, and who avoid accusatory or critical rhetoric in the middle can use disagreement to strengthen their marriage, rather than weaken it. So forget about what you are fighting about and focus instead about how you disagree. Healthy conflict puts you on a path to resolve your differences. Unproductive conflict, or avoiding conflict all together, means that your problems don't

get solved, only aggravated.

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

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

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

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## Must-Dos for a Memorable Valentine's Day



 By Babe Scott, author of *Delicious Dating*

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

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

### **Dress to Impress**

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

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

### **Give Him a Gift**

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

### **Create Some Ambiance**

Chances are, you'll be at your place later, so make sure you have all the ingredients to whip up his favorite cocktail and

snacks. Remember to tidy up, and set the stage with dim lighting and soft pillows. Have candles and mood music at the ready, put some flowers in a vase, and get your best and softest clean sheets on the bed. It's the little details that count. Maybe have some strawberries and sparkling wine, if not Champagne, in the fridge for the morning.

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

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

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

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## 4 Great Valentine's Day Gift Ideas for Her



 By Gunter Jameson

Men, for 364 days of the year, get to do things like fix cars, hook up electronics, and be a general handyman for the women in our lives. One day a year, we are asked to do something else to show our love – something a little more romantic. On

[Valentine's Day](#), it's our job to shave off our manly exterior and be the cute and cuddly teddy bears that our women want us to be. The time has come once again to buy gifts for our wives or girlfriends that tell them how much we love and appreciate them. This is not a time for utilitarian gifts, like a mixer or a car stereo, so if you're stumped as to what you should buy for your special someone, here are a few ideas that should point you in the right direction:

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

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

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

**4. A weekend away:** Clearly, if you have the money, a weekend away is one of the best gifts you can give to your special



lady this Valentine's Day. All she wants to do is feel special by spending time with you without distractions, and doing things you both enjoy. Stay at a cozy bed and breakfast or at an upscale hotel. Get couples massages or spa treatments. As long as the two of you are together and relaxing, she'll love it.

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

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



 From *SELF* Magazine

### ***Love being single because...***

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

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

**2. You snooze more soundly.** Sleeping solo has its perks: Two thirds of people who share a bed say their partner snores, costing some of them an average of 49 minutes of sleep per night, a National Sleep Foundation survey shows. "The noise created by snoring can be as loud as a kitchen blender," says Carol Ash, D.O., a sleep specialist in Jamesburg, New Jersey.

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

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

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

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

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

## ***Love being coupled because...***

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

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

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

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

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

**Advice for all from SELF:** Visit [HealthCare.gov](http://HealthCare.gov) to search for the most affordable plans in your state and to find out how reform will improve your access.

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

strengthen the connection between brain cells and prevent cognitive decline.


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

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

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## This Is That Love



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

As a singer-songwriter, I can be guided by my muse at anytime of the day or night. Several years ago, it whispered into my ear while I was on my way to join my friends for services at their church. It was a two-hour drive on a brilliant, sunny Sunday morning in northwest Ohio. Passing the cornfields, farms and grazing horses, I was simply enjoying the beauty of the day. I thought of how sweet it was that my friends had invited me to share that wonderful summer day, and began to think about their amazing love story. Suddenly, it hit me. They had won the lottery in love and happiness. Before I reached my destination, I had written the lyrics to the chorus and finished the song after returning home.

Tammy and Scott have that love that we all dream of or read

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

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

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

"This Is That Love"

I could think of many reasons  
Why this is sweet and oh, so pleasin', this love  
And every time I look into your eyes  
It seems I've been there countless times  
And each time feels like new

Chorus:

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

I could count on every star in the sky  
Make a wish and it's sure to fly, this love

And whenever hard times come along  
Love makes a right out of every wrong  
You reach out and touch my hand

Repeat Chorus

Bridge:

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

Repeat Chorus


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

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

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# 10 Tips To Keeping Your Valentine



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

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

*has some tips on how to do just that, which she's garnished from her own experience and research:*

**1. Avoid negative thought patterns:** Allowing yourself to mentally or verbally tear down your significant other is like gnawing at the bond that holds you together.

**2. Remember that this person means more to you than anyone else:** This includes your parents and your kids. People who live their entire lives for their children are often disappointed to find that they have no relationship left once the kids head out on their own.

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

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

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

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

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

loving because of the example you've set.

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

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

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

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

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# Happy Valentine's Day from Cupid's Pulse!



Happy Valentine's Day



To all of our visitors!

Visit us hourly for everything you need to make your  
[Valentine's Day](#) fabulous!

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# Valentine's Day Special: Find Your Five-Star Celebrity Relationship



Wouldn't you like somebody to love? It seems most of Hollywood thinks they do. So many celebrities jump in and out of relationships that we need a scorecard to keep track. Just when we they've got it right, Cupid's pulse hits a flat line.

If celebrities can't keep their relationships together, we wonder: can we? Take beloved Sandra Bullock, left standing at the altar of her professional accomplishments, Oscar in hand, gushingly thanking her beloved Jesse James – only to find he has been screwing around behind her back. Naturally, she instantly dumps him. We also keep hoping that Jennifer Aniston will find her special love. Her ex, Brad Pitt, appears to have a great thing going with Angelina Jolie – at least for now. Then, there's David Arquette, who was dumped by Courteney Cox. One celebrity couple who appears to have it all is Sarah and Matthew Broderick (if we disregard the pre-marital tabloid fodder). And at least we've got Jeff Bridges, Helen Mirren, Meryl Streep, Kyra Sedgwick and Kevin Bacon as beacons of hope.

**How do we avoid the heartbreak of loss and pain to go after long-term love?**

First, you need to learn to follow your own Cupid's pulse. Here are 10 tips to your own five-star celebrity relationship this [Valentine's Day](#):

**1. There are plenty of fish in the sea:** Stop depending on celebrities to teach you how to have a successful love life, and start swimming in your own pond. Sitting home expecting prince or princess charming to magically appear at your door means living in fantasy land.

**2. Get out there:** Dating takes courage, research, smart thinking, a cautiously open heart and the willingness to learn more about yourself en route to your future. Like Nike says, "Just do it."

**3. Be pragmatic:** Dating is like job hunting. You might get lucky the first time, or you may have to invest some significant time and effort into sorting through the possibilities.

**4. Think of dating as an education:** Learn, go after what you want, and don't settle. Just because someone wants you, doesn't mean you need to want them back. Take charge of your own life.

**5. Move on from the past:** Whatever your dating history, be it a long-term relationship that ended or a series of short-lived affairs that didn't last, every dater remembers enough prior heartbreaks to make a grown elephant cry. So what? You never know what's around the corner. Surprises come wrapped in the most unexpected packages.

**6. Don't ever utter the words "I'm too busy to date":** No one is too busy to date! Making time for yourself and your future sweetheart is important. Start looking for ways to free up some time so you can get out there and find the love of your life.

**7. Images are illusions:** If you feel insecure about something, odds are that the other person does as well. In fact, most people you date are far more worried about how they look to you than how you look to them. Remember, most glamour photos are airbrushed.

**8. Remember that you are a catch:** Focus on your positive qualities. Shifting your attention to your best features, both physical and otherwise, will make you more confident and attractive. Sure, you may have some low self-esteem issues. So does everyone else.

**9. Keep a wish list:** Jot down general values you want in a mate. What are your deal breakers? Is smoking unacceptable? Is religion an issue? Knowing where you draw the line can save you tons of time and heartache later.

**10. Keep a dating journal:** It will help you learn about your likes and dislikes, as well as your own patterns.

Celebrities are just like you. Follow these tips and you just might be able to teach *them* a thing or two. Dating can lead to your own-five star romance ... and a love that lasts!

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# Valentine's Day Special: Speed Shrinking for Love Event



 By Lavanya Sunkara

The best way to attain what you seek is to make the effort and

take that first step. At last night's Speed Shrinking for Love party at Housing Works Bookstore Cafe, organized by bestselling author and journalism professor Susan Shapiro, New Yorkers of all ages and walks of life flocked to find what they were in search of, whether it was love, a book deal, or psychoanalysis.

Enthusiastic participants lined up for their speed meeting – think speed dating, but with literary agents and relationship experts. The jam packed space buzzed with curious newcomers, mingling friends, therapists doling out advice three minutes at a time, and literary gurus advising writers on pitches. Free wine and [Valentine's Day](#) chocolate cupcakes were plentiful.

But Speed Shrinking isn't just a witty name for a networking event. It is also the title of Shapiro's debut novel about a self-help author who sees eight therapists in eight days to deal with her cupcake addiction after her best friend, as well as her shrink, suddenly move away. What started out as a one-time party idea to promote her book, Speed Shrinking has become a social phenomenon, entertaining a series of television appearances and parties on both coasts. Last night's event was Shapiro's 10th party, and she said a producer is interested in turning it into a reality show.

When asked how therapy changed her life, Shapiro said, "It's my secret weapon. I have everything I want in life because of it – a husband I've been happily married to for 15 years and two careers I love. Therapy really pays for itself. I tripled my income, thanks to my last shrink." The participating psychoanalysts agreed, and said they want to expose people to therapy and show that it is indeed a smart life choice.



Susan Shapiro (center) with psychiatrist Sheri Spirt and Jungian astrologist Bob Cook. Photo courtesy of Susan Shapiro.

Among the participants are devoted Shapiro-ites – students, literati friends and work contacts. Kiri Blakeley, author of *Can't Think Straight: A Memoir of Mixed-Up Love*, said it was her first time at a Speed Shrinking event. "I'm thrilled people recognize me from my online interviews," said Blakeley, who added that she came to spend time with friends and talk to editors about possible projects. Her experience is the norm for a Shapiro networking event. Everyone is connected to one another, either through an acquaintance, an agent, or Facebook. But the mutual link between all is Shapiro.

One participant, Daniel Berman said, "Shapiro is like a full-time operator – always available and willing to connect you to an editor, agent or romantic match. She is very supportive and I got published because of her."

Former student Alyssa Pinsker shared her thoughts. "Like most of New York, I consider Sue Shapiro my mentor. I believe in her message and good karma. What better way to spend Valentine's Day than to help others and find help?" Like many others, Pinsker wooed the editors to whom she pitched her ideas. "I always find what I need here."

Shapiro's next book, this time in collaboration with her former addiction therapist Frederick Woolverton, is titled *Unhooked* and is about how to get off addictions. For upcoming free events, please visit [www.susanshapiro.net](http://www.susanshapiro.net).

*Lavanya Sunkara is a freelance writer whose work has appeared in Time Out, NY Resident and online magazines. For more information, visit [www.lavanyasunkara.com](http://www.lavanyasunkara.com).*