

When Friends Have Babies and You Have Your Career



Statistics show that many people are getting married later in life, and many are questioning whether they want to get married at all.

If you're a twenty or thirty-something who has put your climb up the corporate ladder (in Louboutin heels, of course) or achieving your personal dreams, ahead of the traditional 3-step plan—get married, get pregnant, and live happily ever after (or get divorced), you will see married couples with kids or newlyweds with babies on the way, everywhere you look.

And, if you're anything like me—an unmarried thirty-something who loves her career, lives with her boyfriend, and whose biological clock only ticks to adopt a dog right now, then you

understand the questions it raises when surrounded by those who have made starting and raising a family their business of choice.

I've worked through this biological paradox and have helped hundreds of my clients do the same. Here are my top four suggestions:

Embrace Your Freedom

After every first, second, or third birthday party for our friends' children, my boyfriend and I do something spontaneous to remind ourselves how great it is that it's just the two of us—for now. Enjoy every moment of your life. There's no need to rush. Plan a safari to Africa, go back to school to get a degree, write a book, buy an expensive and impractical handbag, and live on your own. Get excited about your life, and live with no regrets! Too many new mothers say, "I wish I would have done that before I was married and pregnant."

Get Healthy

No matter how feminine we are on the outside, we all have masculine energy. Masculine energy is the force behind our goal-setting process, the direction we take in life, and the one-track thought process that gets us to where we want to go.

Many women have a challenging time getting pregnant because they do nothing to nurture their feminine energy after they start dating. The more you can create a space in your life for your feminine side to shine through, the more you will attract men who could be the father of your children. This energy can also make it easier for you to conceive. Begin preparing your body for pregnancy or start building the 5-star accommodations your unborn child will be living in. Cleansing your body can take months. Become more self-aware and learn as much about yourself as possible.

Prepare with Positivity

A positive response can make all the difference. If you feel fine with your decision to wait to get married and have kids, then this will translate in your face, voice and expression.

But, just because YOU are happy with your choice, you will still be asked why you are waiting to start a family. For me, it comes up in every conversation with the grandparents, the parents, the parents' friends, and now even our friends.

People can't help themselves—so I chose to forgive them!

It's better to answer their questions with a positive response and with a commitment to your decision.

Women's Wisdom

I love the fact that my friends all have had kids before me.

I respect them as women and as mothers. I feel so confident knowing that I can reach out to them when it's my turn. The lesson here is to learn from your friends' experiences. Try on their choices and see what works for you and what doesn't.

Their experience can be your greatest teacher.

Remember, you can have everything you want: the accomplished professional life and the fulfilling personal life. Consider how you would be able to enjoy both if they didn't happen at the same time. Try these suggestions and let me know how they work for you.

Stephanie Florman is a Relationship Coach and Advice Expert for Master Matchmakers, the company behind VH1's Tough Love Series. Stephanie is most passionate about teaching people how to have a healthy and happy relationship with themselves because she knows it is the starting point for developing a meaningful and rewarding relationship with another. Visit her online at www.StephanieFlorman.com or at www.mastermatchmakers.com.

Even Jesse James Deserves a Second Chance



Right now, it seems the internet is a buzz with the news of Jesse James and Kat Von D's engagement. I was fairly surprised at the intense debate their announcement fueled, but then I got to thinking about second chances and leaving the past in the past. We all know what transpired between Jesse James and Sandra Bullock. America's sweetheart was left betrayed and left to adopt a son alone, so who wouldn't be on her side? Now there's Jesse, the resident bad boy now starting a new life with Kat Von D, who is about as opposite from a Sandra Bullock type as you can get. Same story, different couple.

The thing is, nobody really knows what goes on in a

relationship, but the two people who are in it. Jesse James and Sandra Bullock are no more, but does that mean that Jesse doesn't deserve happiness with someone else? I'm not saying Jesse and Kat will last forever, but who can you really say that about, as nothing in life is guaranteed, anyway?

People can change, although to what extent, nobody knows. People also do really terrible things in relationships and hearts get broken ... but life goes on and hearts continue to beat. I don't believe someone should be punished for the rest of their life after one mistake. It's so easy for us to write someone off as a horrible person; in fact, it's too easy. It's more difficult to give someone the chance to redeem him or herself, and second chances can be so worth it.

Should Kat be aware of what she's getting into? Heck yes! I am not suggesting one should disregard the past actions of another. I'm fairly certain there are tons of people just waiting to tell her, "I told you so!" But if it feels right in her heart, then really, who are we to judge?

Speaking of judgment, what do you guys think of this announcement? Comment below.

And The 2011 Oscar Nominees Are...





By Krissy Dolor

With today's crack-of-dawn announcement of the 83rd Academy Awards nominees, the Oscar race has officially begun! This year's big contender is *The King's Speech*, leading the pack with 12 nominations. *True Grit* comes in second, with 10. *Black Swan*, *The Social Network*, *The Fighter* and *Inception* all received multiple Oscar nods as well, and like last year, there are 10 nominees for Best Picture. But all I can think about are the celebrity couples that will dazzle us in their designer gowns and dapper suits.

While we have to wait until **Sunday, Feb. 27** for the big day, here are the five celebrity couples that should strut their stuff on the red carpet:

1. Natalie Portman and her soon-to-be-hubby, Benjamin Millepied: He was the choreographer of *Black Swan* and they shocked the world last month with their engagement and baby news! Need I say more?

2. Leonardo DiCaprio and Bar Refaeli: While Leo has been

spotted with the likes of Blake Lively, there hasn't been any mention of a breakup between him and his longtime supermodel girlfriend. Also, the actor is famous for staying away from red carpet events like the Oscars, so it would be nice to see him there – with anyone – at his side!

3. Justin Timberlake and Jessica Biel/Olivia Munn: Rumors from as recently as this month are flying that the actor/singer is still texting Munn, telling her that his relationship with Biel, his girlfriend of four years, “is basically over.” Will he – and a new woman – show up next month to support David Fincher and Aaron Sorkin's nominations for *The Social Network*?

4. Sandra Bullock and Ryan Reynolds: Despite Bullock's denial of any relationship with close friend and former castmate Reynolds, it's hard not to secretly wish for the two of them to date, regardless of his recent split from actress Scarlett Johansson. But if Jesse James can find love with Kat Von D, Bullock should get out there and snag a new romance for herself, too! Or at the very least, some really hot eye candy.

5. Tom Hanks and wife Rita Wilson: Hanks' second wife is the constant pillar of support that the actor and voice of *Toy Story 3*'s Woody has chosen to lean on for the past 20 years. Check out this picture of them at the 1989 Academy Awards. Why stop now?

Check back next month as we recap the top celebrity couples of the 2011 Oscars, which will be hosted by James Franco and Anne Hathaway and will air on ABC! And in case you missed this morning's live stream, here are the nominations:

Leading Actor

- * Javier Bardem, *Biutiful*
- * Jeff Bridges, *True Grit*
- * Jesse Eisenberg, *The Social Network*
- * Colin Firth, *The King's Speech*

* James Franco, *127 Hours*

Leading Actress

* Annette Bening, *The Kids Are All Right*

* Nicole Kidman, *Rabbit Hole*

* Jennifer Lawrence, *Winter's Bone*

* Natalie Portman, *Black Swan*

* Michelle Williams, *Blue Valentine*

Supporting Actor

* Christian Bale, *The Fighter*

* John Hawkes, *Winter's Bone*

* Jeremy Renner, *The Town*

* Mark Ruffalo, *The Kids Are All Right*

* Geoffrey Rush, *The King's Speech*

Supporting Actress

* Amy Adams, *The Fighter*

* Helena Bonham Carter, *The King's Speech*

* Melissa Leo, *The Fighter*

* Hailee Steinfeld, *True Grit*

* Jacki Weaver, *Animal Kingdom*

Animated Feature Film

* *How to Train Your Dragon*

* *The Illusionist*

* *Toy Story 3*

Directing

* Darren Aronofsky, *Black Swan*

* David O. Russell, *The Fighter*

* Tom Hooper, *The King's Speech*

* David Fincher, *The Social Network*

* Joel Coen and Ethan Coen, *True Grit*

Foreign Language Film

* *Biutiful* (Mexico)

* *Dogtooth* (Greece)

* *In a Better World* (Denmark)

- * *Incendies* (Canada)
- * *Outside the Law* (Hors-la-loi, Algeria)

Adapted Screenplay

- * *127 Hours*, Screenplay by Danny Boyle & Simon Beaufoy
- * *The Social Network*, Screenplay by Aaron Sorkin
- * *Toy Story 3*, Screenplay by Michael Arndt. Story by John Lasseter, Andrew Stanton and Lee Unkrich
- * *True Grit*, Written for the screen by Joel Coen and Ethan Coen
- * *Winter's Bone*, Adapted for the screen by Debra Granik and Anne Rosellini

Original Screenplay

- * *Another Year*, Written by Mike Leigh
- * *The Fighter*, Screenplay by Scott Silver, Paul Tamasy and Eric Johnson. Story by Keith Dorrington, Paul Tamasy and Eric Johnson
- * *Inception*, Written by Christopher Nolan
- * *The Kids Are All Right*, Written by Lisa Cholodenko and Stuart Blumberg
- * *The King's Speech*, Screenplay by David Seidler

Best Picture

- * *Black Swan*
- * *The Fighter*
- * *Inception*
- * *The Kids Are All Right*
- * *The King's Speech*
- * *127 Hours*
- * *The Social Network*
- * *Toy Story 3*
- * *True Grit*
- * *Winter's Bone*

For the complete list of nominations, visit [E! Online](#).

Is Sandra Bullock Heading for Heartache Again?



By Dawn Maslar, author of *From Heartbreak to Heart's Desire: Developing a Healthy GPS (Guy Picking System)*

Just about everyone loves America's sweetheart Sandra Bullock.

She showed such grace and charm winning the Golden Globe Award just months after filing for divorce following the devastating cheating scandal with ex-hubby Jesse James. Bullock maintained her dignity while her husband's tawdry affairs were displayed on just about every magazine cover.

Most of us couldn't image the pain she was going through.

Now the grocery store checkout lane is displaying Sandra Bullock and Ryan Reynolds in a rebound romance. Bullock divorced Jesse James in June 2010, while Reynolds' marriage with Scarlett Johansson just ended a few weeks ago.

Besides the fact that rebound relationships usually lead to heartbreak, neither of the stars have very good partner picking skills. Bullock's past attraction to a bad boy biker (who just announced his impending fourth marriage to Kat Von D) shows an attraction to men with questionable loyalty. And Reynolds' past relationship choices aren't much better. His marriage to Johansson only lasted two years, which is actually record breaking for the young actress, since her previous relationships usually lasted less than a year.

If we take a look at who Johansson dated prior to Reynolds, we see many red flags. She dated Justin Timberlake, who has a string of affairs with women who are attracted to the wrong men, including Britney Spears and Cameron Diaz. Diaz's is currently dating Alex Rodriguez, whose dating history is one of a classic player (and I'm not talking about baseball).

Diaz also dated Chris Angel, and the relationship seemed to evaporate into thin air. The point is, by looking through this cycle of relationships, it's easy to see why both Bullock and Reynolds should probably keep their distance ... at least for now.

Spokespeople for both of the actors claim the pair are just friends, and we hope they keep it that way. Their relationship histories and current rebound states indicate that a potential relationship could end in heartbreak.

How to Have a Relationship with Yourself



Maybe you've never been to rehab and maybe you've never been accused of assault while in aforementioned rehab, but you must know what it's like to be in over your head. You know what it's like to nearly have a panic attack when things are going wrong. We've all made mistakes, and we've all grimaced at the fact that life is not turning out the way we wanted. Once you reach that point of regret and self-awareness, you'll hopefully come to one solid conclusion: before you can move on to your next relationship, you must work on yourself.

But how do you do it? There's no internal switch that makes you focus on personal development. You have to find the motivation within yourself! Perhaps your inspiration comes from the desire to be with someone special, but many of us

aren't in the right place to meet that person, yet. If you don't have your most basic issues analyzed and set on the road to recovery, then how do you expect any relationship (romantic, friendly, or familial) to work out? Self-improvement—a relationship with yourself—must come before all others.

Since leaving rehab, 24-year-old actress, Lindsay Lohan, has been busy. In fact, she can teach us a few lessons. Several sources for celebrity news refer to her as “newly sober.”

1: Once personal development begins, you get a clean slate: In this context, every day can be the first day of your journey to self-improvement. The best part about unlimited fresh starts is that you have numerous chances to succeed.

2: You need an overarching goal: Figure out what you're working towards, and never forget it. In Lohan's case, staying sober might be her main objective along with sub-goals, possibly including a shoe line or a successful movie in the future. Maybe she's even keeping her eye out for a new and healthy relationship.

The paparazzi have been keeping a close eye on Lohan. Their pictures allow us and the rest of the world to speculate about whether she's on the right path.

3: Only value the advice of people who truly know and care for you: Those who don't have your best interest at heart should be ignored. Lindsay Lohan should stay focused on herself and those close to her.

You might have minor issues to work on, or you may need to completely restructure your life. That said, you no longer have to worry about your answer to the question, “Are you seeing anyone?” Now, you can hold your head up high and say, “No. I'm just working on a relationship with myself.”

Miss America 2011: Harvard Graduate and Miss Massachusetts Loren Galler-Rabinowitz is Much More than Just a Pretty Face



By [Lori Bizzoco](#)

The women of ABC's *The Bachelor* may be competing for a man's heart, but the only thing Loren Galler-Rabinowitz wants to win is this year's Miss America crown! But don't think that the

Miss Massachusetts contestant is just another pretty face. The 2010 graduate from Harvard University has a degree in English and just finished a 10-year figure skating career as a U.S. Champion ice dancer. In addition to her dreams of becoming a published poet, the Brookline, Mass. native received an \$8,000 scholarship from the Miss America Organization as Miss Massachusetts, which she will put towards pursuing a medical degree. If all this wasn't enough, the 24-year-old won an additional \$250 for winning the talent portion of the competition (nope, not for ice dancing – she's a classically-trained pianist). And this Saturday on ABC, Galler-Rabinowitz will show the country just why she deserves to win not only the Miss America title, but the \$50,000 academic scholarship that goes along with it.

One reason is her devotion to her philanthropic cause, fighting childhood hunger. In fact, Galler-Rabinowitz, who spent a lot of her childhood in Barbados where her mother runs the center for malnourished children, was awarded the Harvard's English department's Le Baron Briggs Traveling Prize for her humanitarian work. Her goal is to work in the area of pediatrics.

How does this non-stop woman find time to accomplish all this – and manage a happy and healthy relationship with her boyfriend of three years? Cupid was lucky enough to speak with her and find out:

After all that you have accomplished, what encouraged you to participate in the Miss America Competition now?

I knew that I wanted to take a year off between undergrad and medical school and I wanted to use that time to give a year of service. I figured that this was the last opportunity in my life where I don't have financial obligations to anyone other than myself. I wanted to do something that would encourage people to help others and Miss America gives me the platform

to do that.

In what ways has your title of Miss Massachusetts already started to impact people?

One advantage of being Miss Massachusetts is that I get to go to schools and give talks. Sometimes people think kids don't listen, but they do. I've received hundreds of email responses. Whether it's someone saying, "Because of you I started a UNICEF chapter at my school," or, "This weekend I am going to be nicer to my little sister."

Miss America is a beauty contest, no doubt about that. There is an aesthetic element to it, but it's not girl who is the most beautiful girl on the outside who wins – it's the one who is most beautiful on the inside. As Miss Massachusetts, I've put in up to something like 70 hours a week of public service. I'm not paid to do this. Being Miss America is even more intensive, but I think that I have the heart to do this job.

What do you say to inspire people?

I usually talk to people about what's *not* on my resume. I worked for 10 years to make an Olympic team, and unfortunately, it didn't turn out the way that I wanted it to and I was really disappointed. I started to volunteer in a hospital as a way to observe how *other* people were dealing with loss, and see if I could learn how to get through a tough time in my life. Also, my grandmother, who I was very close to, passed away around that same time. So I dedicated time each week to caring for others and it was so unbelievably rewarding. Now, I get to talk about the fact that you can take a bad situation and make the best of it by helping others who may be in an even worse situation. Doing the littlest things for someone can brighten their day.

How important do you think beauty is in a relationship?

I think that I would use the word “attraction” rather than “beauty,” because everyone finds something different to be beautiful. In my own life, I have always looked for someone who has the same passion for giving back and doing good. Ultimately, we all end up with wrinkles and gray hair, and saggy in places that we wish we weren’t. But at the end of the day, you want to make sure that you are actually in love with the person – and not what they look like.

How did you and your boyfriend meet and what keeps you together?

We met at school and we’ve been dating for three years. He has a similar commitment to being in public service and that’s the thing that we have really bonded over. It’s that feeling that your life just isn’t complete unless you are doing something good for someone else every single day.

How do you make time for a relationship when you’re so busy? And what can you say to others in the same situation?

I think that’s the challenge in today’s world. As women, for the first time in history, we are as busy, if not busier, than our spouses, husbands, or boyfriends. How do you make a relationship function with two working people? I am in awe of my parents and feel lucky that I grew up in a household where my parents were both incredibly busy, but were able to build this incredibly strong bond and love for one another. Even with three children, they still managed to find the time to communicate. They were engaged after only 24 hours and they just celebrated their 40th anniversary.

I think for anyone to feel fulfilled, you want to have a personal life, too. Work is wonderful, but there’s nothing like having time for relationships and family. You have to schedule time, even if it’s 10 minutes, just to make sure that you’re in sync and on the same page.

You are celebrating a birthday only a few days after the

competition. Would winning the crown be the best birthday present ever?

Yes (laughing). I can't really think of anything better – except for maybe a cheesecake and a fork!

Cupid thanks Ms. Massachusetts for her time! And remember to watch her this Saturday, Jan. 15 at 9 p.m. EST on ABC at the 2011 Miss America Pageant – you can even vote for her to be a finalist! Text MAMA (which stands of Massachusetts for Miss America) to 24470. Voting ends at 11:59 p.m. PST tonight, Jan. 13. And for more on the Miss Massachusetts contestant, you can follow her on Twitter: @missmass2010.

Good luck!

Prince William at War with the Queen Over Wedding Plans





By Vicky Sullivan of aspiringsocialitenyc.com

According to E! Online, the War of the Roses has once again taken to the British Isles. After details of the much-anticipated royal wedding between Prince William and the lovely Kate Middleton were announced, Queen Elizabeth II was less than enthused. In fact, she was livid. Apparently, her royal highness learned of her grandson's wedding plans just as the rest of us did, by watching the news. The traditional matriarch steeped in the tradition of the British crown was enraged at the couple's plans for Middleton to arrive at Westminster Abbey in a car rather than the traditional horse drawn carriage. According to witnesses of her breakdown, the Queen made it very clear that buffets have no place at Buckingham Palace. Though the royal wedding craze rightfully glamorizes Prince William and Middleton as the world's most fascinating couple, this family feud makes the impending royal wedding almost familiar. As the bride and groom stress over the guest list, an overbearing grandmother has already pulled the plug on their breakfast buffet and dance party. Royalty or not, weddings can be a royal pain. Perhaps, the couple should do away with their trendy plans or it's off with their

heads. Plus, the Tower of London isn't much of a honeymoon suite!

How do you keep your family from messing with your wedding plans?

Cupid's Advice:

Anyone who has been involved in planning a wedding knows how difficult it is to please everyone involved. People tend to forget that weddings are really about the couple getting married and less about the flower arrangements and catering plans. Cupid has some advice on how to handle the situation diplomatically:

- 1. Explain your reasoning:** Your close family and friends may lay off for a bit if you explain why the details of your wedding are important to you. Perhaps you're trying to save money or are honoring family traditions.
- 2. Remind them that it's your wedding:** Sometimes critics just need a reality check. Once you remind them that this is a celebration of you and the person you love, they should back off.
- 3. Meet in the middle:** It may be necessary to compromise with family members, especially if they are contributing the festivities financially.

Forbes: What Do Powerful

Celebrity Women Really Want From a Relationship?



By Krissy Dolor

Forbes may be a money magazine, but that doesn't mean that they don't love celebrities, too! Last week, the magazine reported on a recent study conducted by the University of Abertay Dundee in Scotland, which found that as women earn money and financial independence, their attraction to good-looking, older men increases. In addition, these women hold a man's looks to a higher standard. The university has dubbed this "The George Clooney effect."

Previous studies have found that women care more about whether or not a man can provide for them, while men were more attracted to lookers. This new study showed that when a

woman's income increases, her taste in men change.

"We'd assumed that as women earn more, their partner preferences would actually become more like those of men, with a tendency towards preferring younger, more attractive partners rather than those who can provide and care for children," said lead researcher Dr. Fhionna Moore, a psychology lecturer at the University of Abertay Dundee. "However, the preferred age difference did not change as we'd expected – more financially independent women actually preferred even older men. We think this suggests greater financial independence gives women more confidence in partner choices, and attracts them to powerful, attractive older men."

Forbes analyzed 12 celebrity couples, posing this question: What is each woman in the celebrity couple attracted to? They say that Angelina Jolie, as one of the highest-earning women in Hollywood (\$20 million), wants a hot, older man. Hubby Brad Pitt is 12 years older than the starlet. Think Demi Moore's marriage to Ashton Kutcher is part of the cougar effect? Think again. She told *Harper's Bazaar* she does not like the term – and Kutcher's Twitter presence seems to garner enough fame on its own. We can even look at Ellen DeGeneres, who earned \$55 million last year, and is married to Portia De Rossi – a woman 15 years her junior.

In addition to the UK study, lead researcher at dating site [eHarmony](#), Gian Gonzaga, said in the *Forbes* article that high-earning women are attracted to successful men who have established careers – and typically, these men are older. "In the data I've seen, women always want higher earning men," said Gonzaga. He also said, "the Cougar thing is likely a myth."

Well, there you have it: money only begets more money. If only there were a slew of George Clooney and Brad Pitt look-alikes up for grabs...

Kevin Spacey Doesn't Need an American Beauty



By Jenna Barbieri

This weekend at The Times Center in Manhattan, famous legends of film, theater, music and dance will join together to express their shared love for the arts at the 10th Anniversary of Arts & Leisure Weekend. Kicking off the spectacular event tonight will be none other than two-time Academy Award-winning actor-director-producer, Kevin Spacey.

Though currently starring as disgraced former lobbyist Jack Abramoff in *Casino Jack*, Spacey has a much bigger

responsibility serving as creative director of The Old Vic theater in London for the last seven years. So what makes it so easy for Spacey to drop what he's doing and hop an eight-hour flight to New York? Perhaps it's because he has no "ball and chain" to hold him back.

That's right, the 51-year-old film legend's ring finger bares no band. In fact, it never has! Yet Spacey continues to squeeze out every ounce of creative energy he has in him year after year. Which begs me to question, can being married to the arts act as a healthy alternative to being married to a significant other?

Spacey has never been known to go out of his way to get serious with another person, but he moved to another country to take the job at the Old Vic theater. When first questioned about his feeling on the big commitment Kevin would say, "I'm living my dream." Not being married gives him the opportunity to give full attention and devotion to his number one love – the arts. In a way, the theater plays the role (pun intended) as his wife: a wife whom he is completely passionate, happy and more than content with.

And Kevin Spacey isn't alone in this category! Among other passionate art lovers who have never walked down the aisle are Diane Keaton, Oprah Winfrey, Al Pacino, Sheryl Crow, Bill Maher and the legendary Coco Chanel. These stars are living proof that something that while some people get married when they're in love to have someone who will be there to hang out, listen to music and laugh with them for the rest of their lives, others can depend on their stage, their guitar, or their audience to fulfill the same feeling.

Want to read more about Kevin Spacey's hosting gig? Follow Cupid to The Times Center's 10th Anniversary of Arts & Leisure Weekend event page.

Most Romantic Movies of 2010



By Erika Mionis

2010 has been a big year for movies. Sequels like *Iron Man 2* and *Toy Story 3* have ruled at the box office, while animated films like *Despicable Me* and *How to Train Your Dragon* have made their marks as well. Those aside, the year was also particularly crammed with many a chick flick. From romantic comedies (*When in Rome*, *Knight and Day*) to romantic dramas (*Dear John*, *Remember Me*), nearly all of the movies have had easily identifiable themes and laughs that we learned from and enjoyed. Out of all the great romantic movies we have seen this year, the following have had lessons that effortlessly apply in the real world:

Easy A: This romantic comedy had us rolling in the aisles. Emma Stone masterfully portrays Olive Penderghast, the teenage protagonist whose sarcasm is as razor-sharp as it is endearing. After pretending to lose her virginity to help out a friend, Olive's reputation begins a downward spiral as nasty rumors circulate around her school. Eventually, her childhood crush helps her regain her reputation and her happiness. Though based in high school, the film manages to support an overarching theme; the idea that those who really care about you will stick by you, no matter what.

Blue Valentine: This drama will have you on the edge of your seat. While the basic romance in this film is not immediately detectable, this tale of two troubled lovers is one of the most heart-wrenching films we've seen in a while. The film follows the now-broken couple of Dean (Ryan Gosling) and Cindy (Michelle Williams) over different points in their relationship. MTV's NextMovie.com calls the film, "A meditation on the nature of romantic relationships that's undeniably depressing yet incredibly insightful." It's safe to say that the flick is not a cheerful one, but it does present a viable warning. Be cautious when entering a relationship. Don't progress too quickly, and thoroughly examine your values before making a serious commitment.

Eclipse: The third installment in the *Twilight Saga* was also the most successful, both with critics and at the box office. Bella Swan (Kristen Stewart) is forced to choose between her steadfast vampire boyfriend, Edward Cullen (Robert Pattinson), and her best friend-turned-new flame Jacob Black (Taylor Lautner). The film gave us an important lesson about the dangers of jealousy (especially if you're caught in a tumultuous love triangle between a shirtless werewolf and a sparkling vampire). The movie is undeniably entertaining, and the sheer gorgeousness of the cast left us reeling.

Is Your Dating Profile A Movie Trailer or a Cereal Box?



I've read a metric bazillion dating profiles in my time as an online dating coach and about 90% are yawn-worthy. Do you think you're part of the other 10%? Think again.

Most people write a dating profile that reads a bit like a cereal box. Have you seen the following claims on a dating profile (maybe yours)?

The Cereal Box Dating Profile

Healthy: “I like to take care of my body and you should, too.”

Balanced: “I love to get dressed for a night out or wear PJs for a movie at home.”

Wholesome: “Family is really important to me. I don’t know what I’d do without the support and love of my parents and siblings.”

Mom-approved: “Best of all, your parents will love me.”

Sure, these are all things that you might value in a date, but we eat cereal every day. It’s not exciting. It’s not unique. It’s not interesting. It’s just... okay. Pair a cereal box profile with photos of a regular Joe (or Jane), and what do you get? Not a whole lot of emails from potential dates, that’s what!

Learn A Lesson From The Movies

The film industry knows what they’re doing. How many times have you seen a trailer and been totally psyched to see the movie? It has your favorite actor, it’s based on your favorite novel or it has lots of explosions. You know in a minute or three whether or not it’s a movie you’d be interested in seeing.

Previews work by showing you snippets of the best parts of the movie. You meet the protagonist, and you get a preview of their story. If it’s going to be a funny movie, there are some quick quips. If it’s going to be a summer blockbuster, there are cars exploding and people leaping away just in the nick of time.

What’s Your Trailer?

Your life may not seem as exciting as a summer blockbuster (and I certainly hope there are fewer explosions!), but it’s interesting and unique. Think about the little things that make you who you are, and write those into your dating profile.

Even little things give a glimpse of your character. When I was dating, my profile described me riding my shopping cart across the parking lot at Publix supermarket (you're never too old!). Many of the emails I got from men referenced that part of my profile as a reason why they emailed me.

Take your Cereal Box Claims and beef them up with specifics:

Old: "I like to take care of my body and you should, too."

New: "I'm not sure what I like most about my morning run – the heart-pumping exercise or the heart-stoppingly beautiful sunrises."

Old: "I love to get dressed for a night out or wear PJs for a movie at home."

New: "My best friend knows me better than anyone else. For my birthday last month, she got me tickets to the opera and a new pair of fuzzy bunny slippers."

Old: "Family is really important to me. I don't know what I'd do without the support and love of my parents and siblings."

New: "Now that we're adults, my sister and I are best friends. It might also help that our closets are 300 miles apart – she always stole my favorite clothes!"

A Movie Trailer Profile Always Does Its Job

Not every movie trailer is going to thrill you and make you mark opening day on your calendar. If you re-write your dating profile ([or have my staff do it for you](#)), it's not going to magically attract every single on your dating site.

And it shouldn't.

If your dating profile is written like a good trailer, it will intrigue the kind of person who will find you interesting, attractive, and worth getting to know better.

Steps for Success

1. Read your current dating profile and mark the boring cereal box phrases. Make notes on how you can beef them up by being more specific.

2. Find little snippets of your life that show off your character. Write about those.

3. Don't be afraid to show yourself off. Self-confidence is sexy and will draw in exactly the kind of people that are good matches for you.

Need help? Check out the [Geek's Guide to Online Dating Success](#) on my site for more tips & tricks or [hire us](#) to write or re-write your dating profile.

Why I'm Rooting For Jennifer Aniston in 2011





By The Single Filez

2010 is drawing to a close, and the new year will soon be upon us. While this is usually exciting for me, I must admit that I'm not looking forward to watching the clock strike midnight this year. Let me explain. I turn 35 next year. If I'm being honest, I'm scared shitless. Luckily, I still feel and (thanks to great genes), look 25. But no matter how young I look, the fact remains the same: next year I will be 35 and still single. I'll be single with not even a whiff of any potentials and without ever having experienced a long term relationship. The older I get, the more worried I feel about my singledom.

Just like Jennifer Aniston (and many other single women out there), I'm notoriously unlucky in love. Although Jen has the distinct advantage of having been married to Brad Pitt, whereas I have the advantage of still being in my mid-30's (Aniston is in her 40's). Either way, I'm rooting for Jen because I'm sick and tired of the reaction in the media to her lack-of-a-man situation. Everything they say about Aniston are the same things my friends, family and co-workers say

about me: “but, she’s gorgeous,” “but she’s successful” and “why on earth can’t she keep a man?.” It’s frustrating, it’s tiring and it’s just not fair.

At first, I was going to write about why Jennifer Aniston and Halle Berry (another successful hottie who seems to be a serial douche bag dater) scare the hell out of me. I was going to say how nervous I am about still being single when I’m 40, but then I thought, “NO.” Actually, what I want to do is root for Jennifer Aniston in 2011. I want to do for her what I want my folks to do for me. Despite my bad luck with men, I feel confident that I will find the right man eventually. So, HAPPY NEW YEAR Jen! I hope you find a good love in 2011. Enough of the ‘Mr Right Nows,’ like John Mayer, Bradley Cooper, Vince Vaughn and Gerard Butler. Give us singletons the opportunity to look at you and say, “Hey, there’s hope after all. It is possible to find true love after a long bout of bad luck.” But most importantly, do it for yourself. Wouldn’t it be nice to stick your middle finger up and prove to the world that you’re gorgeous, successful and can keep a man?

Go Jen!

Why Should Women Buy Their Own Diamonds?





Everyone knows that diamonds are a girl's best friend. So why should men have all the fun in picking them out?

The answer is that they shouldn't! Who better to pick out your next piece of jewelry than, well, you? No woman should ever depend on a guy to buy her some bling. Don't just sit there and wait for Prince Charming to spoil you – spoil yourself! You know you want to.

And what better way to give yourself a little love than by visiting Diamond.com for beautiful earrings, necklaces, rings and more – whatever your heart desires! From exquisite black diamond jewelry to extra special pieces in The Vault, you're sure to find something that's perfect for you. Can't decide? Diamond.com allows you to design your own special pieces. Make your friends jealous and show off something that showcases your unique personality. And when someone asks who bought those pretty bracelets for you, have no shame in telling them you bought it yourself. After all, you have great taste!

Cupid knows you're still out there snagging those last-minute holiday gifts. Do yourself a favor and buy something shiny and new that's just for you. After all, 2010 has been a long year,

and 2011 will be more of the same – reward yourself for all your hard work. You deserve it!

Is Brad Pitt Ruining Your Love Life?



We know how effective media is in shaping our perspective and even our values, including our self-image. We know that being bombarded with images of beautiful men and women molds our vision of attractiveness. As we mature, we know it's fantasy, and that even Hollywood beauties don't look that stunning without professional hair, make-up, wardrobe and lighting.

By now, you've probably seen the Dove video called "Evolution." It shows how an attractive woman morphs into a fabulous knockout through professional hair, make-up, lighting, and yes, even Photoshop.

How do these unrealistic images affect your dating life?

1. They can influence your expectation of a man's looks. Very few men, especially middle-aged men, look anything close to George Clooney, Brad Pitt, Johnny Depp, Colin Firth or Pearce Bronson. While we realize these men personify an unattainable ideal, some small part of many women want – and perhaps expect – their guys to look as yummy.

2. The Photoshopped images of pencil-thin people on magazine covers and in movies exacerbates women's feelings of inadequacy. Actresses like Cher, Teri Hatcher, Vanessa Williams, Julia Roberts, Helen Mirren, Glenn Close and Ellen Barkin are sparkling in their perfection – with personal trainers, private chefs, and perhaps a bit of nip-tuck. How many real-life middle-aged women do you see looking like that? Just as women have unrealistic expectations of a man's looks, so, too, men have an idealized expectation that women should look like these air-brushed fantasy females.

So it seems like a lose-lose for both genders.

We think (hope?) that as one matures, people realize that these movie star looks are really just fantasy. But unfortunately, I've found both men and women hold themselves and their potential dates to standards that nearly no one meets in real life.

So what can you do?

1. Play up your own physical attributes: Got beautiful eyes? Don't hide them behind glasses. Get a makeover if you haven't had one in years, or make an appointment with a free

personal shopper at a department store to help you dress to look your best.

2. Realize that there are many good people underneath a few bags, sags and extra pounds: While we know that goodness has nothing to do with outer appearances, we sometimes get caught up or put off by what we see. I've gone out with many wonderful men who aren't gorgeous. The thing is, they got more attractive as I got to know their kind hearts, senses of humor and caring natures.

Dating Goddess is the author of the 13-book Adventures in Delicious Dating After 40 series. For information on her books and her blog, go to <http://www.DatingGoddess.com>.

Prince William and Kate Middleton Set Good Relationship Examples





By Roy Sheppard

Here in the UK, we are being drenched with Prince William and Kate Middleton stories in the media. They are *everywhere!*

Unlike the loved-up celebrities who can't wait to show off the latest in a long line of soul mates, what's different about Prince William and Middleton is their quiet togetherness.

They already exude a sense of being an 'us,' rather than part of a 'me + me' relationship. Their focus is on each other, and they're not trying to convince their friends or the world that they're together. They just are.

The royal couple each have what I describe in my book, *How to Be The One* – a well-developed Emotional Core, the emotional equivalent of a strong physical core stability known to anyone who has ever practiced Yoga or Pilates. The emotional 'muscles' they have developed in life include: a healthy self-esteem, an appealing attitude to life, a deep sense of inner happiness and kindness towards others.

Faced by the world's media at a press conference announcing

their engagement, did you notice how William so gently reassured and supported his bride-to-be, knowing how nervous she must have been? That's classy. But you don't have to be royalty to be considerate. So, for the next month, commit yourself to the following:

1. Instead of focusing on what you want from a date, put some effort into being that sort of person for them. Adopt or develop those same qualities you value so much in others. You want someone loving, trustworthy, reliable and considerate? Well, how would you score on those same qualities?

2. William and Kate are best friends. Decide to be nice to everyone you meet and everyone you date. Just be friendly with *no* agenda. And forget the so-called 'dating rules.' Let's face it, they mostly encourage you to treat people like you dislike them!

3. Those who have exhausted "just having fun" are looking for someone special with whom to share their lives. There are men and women out there who create idealized fantasy figures in their heads, and no one can live up to them. My fear is that millions of people will keep looking, but will fail to realize that their wish list may be completely unrealistic. Happy, long-lasting relationships are based on trust, love and commitment; but there seems to be a lot of confusion about the definitions of those qualities. In my book, I talk about how commitment has been diluted into "Commitment Light," a diet cola version of the quality.

Invest time developing your emotional core. You'll pass more 'auditions,' which will open up options. Plus, you'll be able to share the limelight with an A-list partner in a Blockbuster relationship, rather than a low-budget soap opera!

Hunting for Love Later in Life



By KB in NYC

We all know that dating is a minefield, right? But here's the thing; getting older doesn't help. A lot of 40-year-old men only want to date 25-year-olds. And here's why: a woman in her 30's or 40's knows what she wants. She's been around the block a few times, and she's less willing to compromise. She's less easily impressed and she is, in a word, more discerning.

Now that's not necessarily a bad thing, but it does make dating harder. Also, when man hunting at an older age, you tend to want different things. At 24, a cocktail and a great make out session will suffice; at 40, not so much.

Hollywood is filled with fabulous women, all of whom have achieved enormous success and are finding themselves single in their mid-30's and 40's – think Jennifer Aniston, Charlize Theron, Sandra Bullock and Sheryl Crow.

The thing is, these celebrities are pretty much set: they have millions of dollars in the bank, they look fantastic and if motherhood tickles their fancy, there's always adoption. And yet, they can't get the man thing right. Famous or not, who doesn't want to get the man thing right?

Whether you're single by choice or on a serious manhunt, the parameters are kind of the same. Be honest with yourself and the men you're dating about what you want. If it's marriage and kids, then own that.

You may not be in your 20's anymore, but that's no reason to act desperate. Like Jen taking back John Mayer after he had publicly humiliated her? That had a whiff of desperation to it. Know what you have to offer, and never accept anything less than you deserve, no matter how desperate you may be to "put a ring on it."

Take a page out of Jen, Cheryl or Sandra's books and surround yourself with great people. Friends make the world go 'round, and being happily single is about having your emotional needs met.

It's such a cliché, but oh-so true: be comfortable in your skin, even if it requires Artefill to keep it looking as good as it once did.

We are a society obsessed with aging, and yet many celebrities are just getting better the older they get. From Halle Berry to Kate Winslet, Jenny McCarthy and Susan Sarandon, age certainly hasn't gotten in the way of dating fabulous men. Which leads one to contend that if age is just a number, attitude must be everything.

PR maven KB is a self-proclaimed 'lover, dater, blogger, believer.' She is the author of KB IN NYC, a no-holds barred account of her dating hits and misses, and her search for love in New York. With a penchant for red nails, five star hotels and a sultry wit to match, she explores what it means to be in your woman perfect early-thirties navigating this brave new world that we find ourselves in.

A New Hollywood Trend: Dating with Kids



By Kelly Seal

Considering dating someone with kids?

Celebrities without children are daring to date single parents these days, at least according to the tabloids. Rocker Matt Bellamy recently started dating single mom Kate Hudson. Brad Pitt became an adoptive father to Angelina Jolie's oldest son shortly after their relationship took off. And let's not forget Jake Gyllenhaal's romance with Reese Witherspoon, single mother of two.

I have to admit, I never thought I'd be dating a man with children, let alone marry him. I don't have any myself, and had never dated any single dads previously. It's one thing to figure out the twists and turns of being in a relationship, and quite another when you add children to the mix. And yet I decided to pursue this path, not only because I fell in love with my husband, but because I saw him as a compassionate, caring, and loving father with his kids.

Whether this is a new trend in Hollywood or not, dating a single mom or dad comes with its own unique challenges. If you find yourself in this situation and are looking to navigate your way through, here are some considerations that may help guide you in the right direction.

1. Are you looking for a long-term relationship? Perhaps you've fallen for a single mom or dad, but you aren't really sure if it's just a fling or something more substantial. Until you decide that you are in it for the long-term, don't meet the children. They do not need more instability added to their lives, and it's more confusing when girlfriends or boyfriends come and go. Take your time so you really know what you want.

2. Be flexible. Single parents are going it alone, so remember if a child gets sick or has a change in schedule, the parent has to take care of things. If you planned a nice evening out or a trip with your beloved and it gets canceled due to

the kids, recognize that sometimes you have to go with the flow.

3. Do you want to form a relationship with the kids, too? When you date someone with kids, you're also entering a relationship with his/her children. If you are uncomfortable with the idea of taking the kids places or getting to know them, you may want to reconsider.

Kelly is a writer and former speed dating host. She writes regularly for Womens Online Magazine, Examiner.com, and DatingSitesReviews.com, and blogs about dating and relationships at www.kellyseal.com.

Gwyneth Paltrow Slams Celebrity Couples Who Teach Important Relationship Lessons





By [Jessica DeRubbo](#)

Recent *Glee* guest Gwyneth Paltrow is making headlines lately. Even though she's part of a high-profile celebrity relationship herself, she is speaking out against "unnecessary" celebrity couples. In fact, she went so far as to tell CNN, "It's just unnecessary to be a public couple, and to have your couple-dom or whatever be its own entity. It doesn't make sense to have that in the public world."

Alright, Gwyneth, I see your point. There are definitely famous couples who live for the spotlight, which is pathetic. One obvious example is former *Hills* stars Heidi Montag and Spencer Pratt.

I don't know about you, but I'm under the impression that their every move is to garnish media coverage. And then there's LeAnn Rimes and Eddie Cibrian. Has anyone else noticed their everyday presence in tabloids lately? They cheated on their respective spouses with each other and then they spend months defending their indiscretion to the media. Is that necessary?

Even Taylor Swift is becoming a constant presence in the celebrity relationship world. While she doesn't currently have an 'other-half,' I'd be shocked to see someone who *doesn't* know that Taylor Swift is single and loving it. I've read at least three interviews in the last month where she refers to her singleness. Okay, we get it already!

Yes, I see Gwyneth Paltrow's point. She even refers to her own relationship, saying, "When I see high-profile relationships now, I think, 'Oh my God' even though I'm technically in one. But we sort of don't do anything public, we try to keep it behind the scenes as possible (sic).

Because it just generates more interest...it just undermines the quality of your life." That being said, there's certainly a lot to learn from those high-profile pairs that Gwyneth Paltrow speaks about. Celebrity couples can teach us about our own personal relationships. Consider the following:

1. Heidi Montag and Spencer Pratt: You may roll your eyes at their publicity stunts, but through that negativity you realize that you want to avoid being like them in your own life. They convince you that it's probably best not to discuss every detail of your relationship to anyone who will listen.

2. LeAnn Rimes and Eddie Cibrian: This singer and actor duo made the mistake of cheating on their significant others and then defended their decision to do so, even though many would agree that infidelity is morally wrong. LeAnn Rimes and Eddie Cibrian help you realize that if you find yourself falling in love with someone who isn't your current partner, you should call it quits and come clean about any wrong doings.

Apologize and move on. And whatever you do, don't rehash the past in public!

3. Taylor Swift: She's not only been linked to John Mayer, Taylor Lautner, Joe Jonas and Jake Gyllenhaal, but she's turned around and written songs about it. And right now,

Taylor Swift is embracing the single life, calling it “wonderful.” What have we learned from her? Being single is okay! Dating is okay! Instead of sulking in a dark corner and lamenting your current solo status, enjoy the experience while it lasts. If Taylor Swift can do it, so can you.

Gwyneth Paltrow may make a valid point in her rant on high-profile celebrity couples, but I highly doubt those who crave the limelight will leave the tabloids anytime soon. As long as they exist, we can use these stories to gain insight into the multifaceted world of dating and relationships.

Dating: First Impressions – Part II





By Alex V. of The Urban Dater

Reality. If reality was an actual person, I'd probably punch it in the neck. Why? Sometimes, or most times (depending on how much baby Jesus thinks I suck) reality really is a jerk. Only sometimes, though.

I'm a dork, I gigantic geek bag! It's true. No, really, it is! I was a nerd before it was cool, dammit! However, there's just no helping a person's uninformed perception aka ignorance. You see, being a dork and an odd ball, dating women was often lost on me. No women wanted to date a geek like me, I thought.

You never heard about Dustin Diamond dating a hot girl, now did you? If you did, surely you chuckled at such a ridiculous rumor. However, the coolness of nerds and geeks has sky rocketed over the years, with shows like *Beauty and the Geek* and the rise to stardom of actors, like my hero, Seth Rogen.

Seeing that, the king of chubs and geeks, Seth Rogen was dating super-hottie Lauren Miller, for, at the time, four

years, gave me hope that a geek like me could find a hottie of my own as well; and found one I did! The nerd wins!

My girlfriend, I tell my friends, is a lot prettier than a dork like me deserves. I'm sure Seth Rogen felt the same way, too! Once we get passed the looks and the superficial associations and self-stylings, we're all looking for love, ultimately. It's not just about looks, after all. Right?

There was something about this person that made me fall for her, many somethings, if you will.

– The person has got to make you laugh. No question about it. The women I've loved were the ones that made me laugh. No doubt about it.

– Are they open minded? Is your would-be partner in crime willing to pony up when you want to go on an adventure?

– Will they help you clean your place after a raging party at 3am? Just having the support is important.

– Do your friends like your significant other? This, by far, has been the biggest difference for me. Most of the women I've dated, my friends didn't get along with. With my girlfriend, now, all my friends simply adore her. They would probably dump me, if I dump my girlfriend!

– Do they make you believe you can do anything? My girl does. She's my biggest fan; my biggest cheerleader. The girl supports all of things I'm working on... That's huge. Seth Rogen? You better believe he needs a cheerleader after a box office bomb... I'm just sayin'.

It's pretty amazing what becomes clear once we set perceptions about beauty and status aside. No?

Dating: First Impressions – Part I



By Taylor Cast of The Urban Dater

First impressions are incredibly important, and even more so when it comes to dating. People make a snap decision when they meet someone if that person is going to be a friend or potential date. Instant decisions are an innate process in us, and most of the time we don't change our mind. I have met men who in theory are exactly what I want, but they failed to impress, and I lost the urge to pursue dating them. Or men who in their dating profiles are good looking, they have great "stats," and then they misspell something. For example, the last guy to message me said in his profile that he is "very intelligant." Afraid not pal.

When we first meet a person we size them up, make judgments and decide if this person is going to get us naked. My roommate will not date a man who shows up with dirty shoes. So if his white sneakers have the slightest tinge of dirt on them, she is done with him. I eliminate men based on their literary knowledge. It may be silly, but we all do it. A guy friend of mine wouldn't even entertain the idea of dating a brunette, because blondes were his "thing." We decide that a person isn't for us based on that first minute or so.

Now pretend you're a famous celebrity: a star whom the world knows. Every detail of your life is published for the masses to consume. Oh, and you're single. No, thank you. I can't imagine what it is like to date as a celebrity, where most of the public thinks they "know" you. To have all of those preconceived notions out there about you and then to meet someone and show them who you really are. How difficult must it be to be Jennifer Aniston? Most of the public pities her for the end of her marriage and inability to find a partner. Can you imagine what it's like for her to meet someone and go on a first date?

Dating is difficult enough, but to have the obstacle of being incredibly famous must at times feel like an incredible burden. I'm sure Jennifer Aniston has her own ideas of what she wants in a man, and first impressions must count ten fold to her than any of the rest of us. That man has to follow in the steps of Brad Pitt. BRAD PITT. I don't know if there could be bigger shoes to fill.

For the second part to this series, visit us on Thursday for The Urban Dater's male perspective from Alex V.

My Love Relationship with Celebrities and Fame



By Royal Young of *Interview Magazine*

Charlie Sheen's recent escort escapades are good for a raunchy laugh, but they are part of a trend in bad celebrity behavior that has poisoned my own ideas about passion. I have always chased fame – which never seemed to match up with love – despite the fact that my devoted parents have been together for almost 30 years. While I'm sure there are plenty of Hollywood homebodies with happy marriages, we are constantly bombarded with the burning Bentley car wreck of celebrity relationships.

Growing up as a reserved Jewish boy already predisposed to

solitude who would only come alive when performing, I decided I would never need to use my heart. Spotlights were flirtatious, and applause was better than the attention I couldn't get from pretty girls my own age. I turned into a hungry ghost, too self-obsessed to want anything but vague, vacuous fame – at any cost.

I was raised on the Lower East Side in the '90s (before its multi-million dollar reincarnation) and went to LaGuardia "Fame" High School. I chased gaudy glamour after graduation and skipped college for empty extra roles in music videos, sleazy modeling gigs, sex exchanged for money and promises of lines in movies that were never made – all which led to failed, fledgling relationships. I wore outlandish, revealing outfits for attention, and was thrilled when shutterbugs snapped my portrait for a street style section picked up by Gawker, where, to my glee, I received so much hate mail. Yet without any long-term girlfriend – since I pushed away every person who tried to get close to me – I felt empty.

At 24, I realized I hadn't been in a normal relationship for ten years. Sure, I've hooked up with models and had two seconds of screen time in some indie movies, Boy George once winked at me and I've partied with Yoko Ono, but I suddenly craved the comfort of a real lover. For the first time in my life, I wanted the stability and support my parents seemed to have, working through their issues as a loving team. But I had no idea where to start. I no longer wanted to be a fame shark, get featured on Perez Hilton, or go dancing with the stars. I knew none of that would make me feel like I had a home or a heart, or allow me to be satisfied with who I was: a shy loner who longed to fit in with a loud, lascivious crowd. When it came to love, I realized there were no rules except for letting go; I just wish there were some tabloids that could teach me how.

Royal Young just completed his debut memoir *Fame Shark*. He works with *Interview Magazine* (www.interviewmagazine.com) and

you can follow him at [Twitter.com/RoyalYoung](https://twitter.com/RoyalYoung).

Thoughts from a Single 30-Year-Old



By Jessica Downey of Chicago Now's All the Single Ladies
Christina Aguilera recently divorced Jordan Bratman, and she is about to turn 30 in December. I am at the opposite end of things – I just turned 30, and I have never been married (read that as I am totally and completely single).

When I was 20, I thought that I would be married or at least in a really serious relationship by the age of 30. And it's not that I think 30 is old by any means or that I had some

sort of timeline but at that time, 30 just seemed so far away.

I mean, 10 years is a pretty long time; plenty of time to meet a guy, fall in love and get married.

Obviously as I went into this year, I figured out that marriage probably wasn't going to happen. Technically, it didn't take me that long to figure it out, but I mean, you really never know what can happen. But as my birthday got closer and closer, I kind of liked the idea of having a boyfriend or at least a date by my side on that day.

When the day actually came, I honestly have to say that I wasn't all that sad that I didn't have a man by my side.

Actually, I wasn't sad at all. I looked around me and saw all of the amazing friends and family that went out of their way to make the day special for me. I also realized that I have accomplished a lot in life since I was 20.

Now that I am actually 30, I can honestly say that not having a significant other really doesn't feel any different than when I was 20. I mean, things around me have changed. I now live in a completely different place. Certain characteristics about me have also grown and changed, but honestly being single doesn't feel any different for me.

I am not trying to take anything away from the whole concept of finding someone that you truly love. But I do believe that there are many other things in life that you can also be happy about. Things that are important as well. And while the once 20-year-old girl thought she would be married by this time, the 30-year-old woman knows that she just hasn't met the right guy yet.

Jessica Downey is a freelance writer who writes about dating and single life in Chicago. All of her ramblings can be found on her blog on ChicagoNow.com. She also writes for badonlinedates.com and has written for examiner.com.

Celebrity Trademarks Offer Dating Advice for Singles



By Laurie Davis, Founder of eFlirt Expert and eFlirt Expert VIP

We've all heard the line "If you've got it, flaunt it." Now, some of the biggest celebrities in the business are proving that your best physical assets mean *everything*. To many of them, that's several million. Hollywood's finest are getting their vital parts insured – the physical attributes that give them star power – and it shouldn't come as a surprise that these body parts are often the things that we're most attracted to in the opposite sex. Whether on the silver

screen or at the local watering hole, your trademark asset sets you apart for all of the other singles out there. Simply showing off your physical assets can help you snag that cutie sans cheesy pick-up lines. Celebrities have proved that our flirting assets can literally be one in a million. So, just how much are we talking?

Jennifer Lopez insured her booty for \$27M. Heidi Klum's legs are worth \$2.2M. Tom Jones' chest hair is insured for a cool \$7M. Frankie J, the British male stripper, insured his ... well, you know ... for \$1.6M. Troy Polamalu of the Pittsburgh Steelers had his hair insured for \$1M by Head & Shoulders. Dolly Parton's chest is worth \$300,000 per breast. And, Aquafresh White Strips insured America Ferrera's teeth for \$10M.

Some of these celebrities have literally made entire careers by paying attention to their strengths and flaunting it, so the bottom line is: you need to know what physically sets you apart when a match meets you! Which of your attributes do *you* enjoy the most? Playing up your trademark while you're flirting, whether it's shaking your derriere on the dance floor or flashing your pearly whites from across the room, will help get your crush's attention. If you're having trouble identifying that stand-out trait, ask your friends for some insight. Also, small enhancements can go a long way, too. If your eyes are your trademark, work on getting that perfect, natural makeup look that makes your lashes longer and eyes bigger.

But, now that our lives have gone digital and so much technology is involved in our day-to-day, you have digital flirting assets as well. Some singles spend all day on Facebook and others are addicted to announcing their every move on Foursquare. While celebrities aren't insuring their thumbs yet, they are certainly following suit. Ashton Kutcher is a Twitter-aholic. Steve Jobs is the king of apps. And

everyone has a digital trademark, just like they have a physical one. Knowing what you got and how to flaunt it online will up your eFlirting game instantly. By determining where you enjoy your time online, you can structure your digital life to put yourself in the right virtual opportunity to meet matches.

The key is to make your online life work *for* you, not against you. For example, if you know that you are better with real-time flirting than you are over email banter, try to catch your crush on instant messenger whether you're communicating on Facebook or Match.com. iPhone addicts who are always out and about might have a blast meeting matches via location-based dating apps like Meet Moi or Skout. If your best digital assets are photos, flaunt them in front of your matches on DailyBooth or Zoosk.

Using the right platform is half the battle and the other half is using the right language that allows your personality to jump off the virtual page. You want to sound like you would in person, but enhanced for the online black and white text. Exclamation points help send energy through the computer screen, terms of endearment used at the perfect moment can make things more personal and emoticons can show excitement. So whether you're injecting a darlin' into conversation or ending a sentence with a wink, know what will speak to your personality while resonating digitally with your potential dates.

Remember, your best assets are all right there in front of you, whether it's in the mirror or the computer screen. So if you got it, flaunt it!

Celebrity Couples Make a Blessing Out of Interfaith Relationships



By Erika Hymowitz Vujnovich

Chelsea Clinton/Marc Mezvinsky, Naomi Watts/Liev Schreiber, Tom Cruise/Katie Holmes and even Brad Pitt/Angelina Jolie are among the numerous celebrity couples attempting to make an interfaith relationship work. While it's nice to believe the old saying "love conquers all," there are often many challenges an interfaith couple faces. Speaking from experience, I entered into an interfaith marriage five years ago. It has taken a tremendous amount of respect and understanding between me and my husband to make our relationship work and to be able to provide a stable

foundation for our children.

[ABC News](#) says that one in three U.S. couples is in a religiously mixed marriage. However, back in June, the [Chicago Family Law Blog](#) highlighted the issue and cited data taken from a 2001 American Religious Identification Survey, which show couples in mixed-religion families were *three times* more likely to be divorced than those who were of the same faith. The [New York Times](#) also wrote on the issue this past summer, following the high-profile marriage of Chelsea Clinton and Marc Mezvinsky. Clinton, a Methodist and Mezvinsky, who is Jewish, pushed the issue of mixed marriage into the spotlight again.

Whether mixed-religion marriages are becoming the new norm or not, if you are in such a relationship and are questioning whether or not it can work, here are a few things to consider:

1. Don't ignore the differences: Religion often contributes to who we are. As such, it's crucial not to disregard religious beliefs. One of the top mistakes that couples make is that they believe their love for one another will conquer all interfaith marital problems. This is not always true. Take the time to discuss your beliefs. You may find that your partner feels the same way, or you may realize you come from completely different backgrounds.

2. Look for clergy counseling: If you're looking for that mixed marriage blessing, you'll want to consider speaking with clergy from your place of worship. When my husband and I first considered getting married, we immediately went to meet with my Rabbi. He was very open to the idea of us getting married, with the understanding that we will raise our children in the Jewish faith. A member of the clergy will help outline the challenges you may face as a couple as well as give advice on how to best approach your respective families, who may not be as accepting.

3. Think of the children: The last thing you'll want to do is make a child decide which religion they want to follow. Before you even have children, you and your spouse should decide how you want to raise them. Lay the foundation from the beginning, and be honest with each other about your wishes. You don't want to confuse your child, but rather give them a solid sense of faith and culture. There is nothing wrong with celebrating all holidays, but make sure that as your children get older, they have a belief system.