

# Relationship Advice: How Important Are Similarities For A Happy Marriage?



By [Dr. Jane Greer](#)

There is no question that people believe having things in common can lead to a strong marriage. But what if those shared interests fade for one or both partners, or you don't really like that many of the same things in the first place? Can you still build a strong foundation and share a lasting relationship?

According to actor Bill Pullman, the secret to a happy marriage is "putting our hands in the dirt; it's a parallel play of digging and planting." In other words, he and his wife

can do their own activity while being together. "It's helped to keep in tune with each other," he said.

## **Relationship Advice: For Bill Pullman and his wife, a successful marriage seems to be about embracing common ground. The question is, if you don't have that, how can you maintain a supportive connection?**

Clearly it can be easier if you agree on movie genres, favorite cuisines, types of books, travel destinations, and even how often you are intimate with each other. All of that allows you to smoothly spend quality time together. But what happens if suddenly your husband doesn't like to ski anymore but you still do? Or your wife has developed an aversion to Thai food which is always your go-to Friday night dinner out and you still love it? Or what if you have always had sex twice a week, which worked well for you both, and suddenly your husband wants to only do it twice a month? What if none of this was the case, to begin with, and you were swept away by intense chemistry but once the dust settled you realized you didn't like doing that much together? Can you still make your marriage work? Cupid has some [relationship advice](#) on how to maintain a happy and healthy connection with your spouse.

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There is no question that discord in any of these areas, especially if things change over time, can create problems. For example, being affectionate or not can eventually take a toll if one person is feeling deprived of it. Appearance is

another place where people can get caught in the downward spiral. Very often couples get so comfortable with each other that they no longer feel they have to dress to impress and scale down to their basic look. If suddenly you are no longer dressing up and going out, or your partner stays stuck in the same shirt day in and day out or stops shaving, it can make you angry enough as well as turn you off to the point where you might even want to avoid intimacy with them. All of this, as well as the usual wear and tear of everyday life and its responsibilities, can contribute to feeling disappointed and resentful to the degree where it can feel intolerable. So, what can you do to generate harmony and happiness rather than discontent?

The first and most important thing is to keep your desire to please your partner on a full flame. It is not unusual to realize that when you met your partner all you wanted to do was please them, which might have led to your not realizing or even withholding some of how you really felt about certain things. Now that you are married, though, you can be honest, which means you are no longer concealing who you really are. When that happens, it can eclipse your desire to please your partner because you are now focusing on yourself. Hopefully, you are being authentic, but still balancing that with your intent to satisfy them and meet their needs. This can get challenging because if one person asks the other to change their shirt, instead of hearing it as a request that brings them joy, it can sound like a demand that you are telling them what to do. As a result, it can make them feel controlled, which then turns into a power struggle with one person saying *if you loved me you would* and the other person saying *don't tell me what to do*

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The second important step is to learn to include your partner in the decisions you make before you settle on them. Very

often people assume that because they want to see their family, their spouse will be just fine with that. Or since they are social and want to hang out with their friends every weekend, their partner will be on board. The truth is, when you go ahead and make choices based on what you want to do without getting your partner's input, they can't help but feel unimportant and not cared about. By learning to come to joint decisions and discussing your needs as well as theirs before organizing a plan, even though you may not always agree, at least you let your partner know that they are important to you and you value them and want them to feel loved. Finding some middle ground and learning to compromise is what can facilitate your making choices that leave room for both of your pleasures and preferences.

Finally, if you are coming from a place of few shared interests, it is never too late to be open to participating in your partner's hobby or activity. While you might not always enjoy it yourself, you can derive pleasure from seeing how much they enjoy it. It is a way to extend yourself and show your love, as well as enjoy watching them have fun with what they are doing. Also, use it as an opportunity to grow together and see if you can discover activities you both might like. Think about learning to play cards or dancing or cooking together, whatever it is, consider changing lanes and trying something new.

Learning to tolerate the differences and make room for them can help you stay connected, rather than allowing them to divide you. It seems Bill and Tamara have celebrated their similarities which, according to Bill, has been a recipe for a happy marriage for them. However, if that's not the case for you, try to view the things you don't agree on in a positive light that can lead you both to happiness.

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## Relationship Advice: Keep Your Pregnancy Under Wraps Like Cameron Diaz



By [Dr. Jane Greer](#)

There are many different stages of pregnancy that people go through, from deciding when to have a baby to beginning to try to conceive to either becoming pregnant or not and, in that case, having to consider other options such as fertility treatments, surrogacy, and adoption. One big question that is often not addressed until it begins to happen is: *when do you bring other people into the equation?* Do you share what's going on right from the beginning of the journey with family and friends, or do you wait until the baby is well on his or her way? Or, like Cameron Diaz and Benji Madden did recently, do you keep the entire pregnancy under wraps until the baby is born?

The [celebrity couple](#), who began dating in May 2014, has always kept the details about their relationship quiet. Even so, it was a surprise when the two recently announced the birth of their daughter, adding the caveat that they will not be releasing any photos or additional details because they want to protect the baby's privacy. In order to keep such a big secret, Cameron and Benji must have agreed to it together.

**How can you decide when the time is right to tell other people about your pregnancy, making sure the information isn't leaked before you're ready? Check out this relationship advice.**

People tend to be curious and inquisitive about when others plan to start a family, but that can sometimes feel intrusive. Your mother in law, for example, might be eager to become a grandmother. So, she might ask when you are going to give her a grandchild. Or, your sister has three kids and can't wait

until they have cousins to play with, so she might be pushing you along. It can start to sound and feel like pressure. If you tell people you plan to try, then you might imagine it is all they think about when they see you, wondering how it's going. If it doesn't happen quickly, you might start to feel a sense of public accountability. If it takes a long time, you might even feel like you are failing and disappointing the people you have told. With all this in mind, Cupid has some [relationship advice](#) on when to tell others about your pregnancy before you are faced with it.

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Talk to your partner early to decide where you each stand on the topic, and determine together when you will share the news with family, friends, and in the case of Cameron and Benji, the public. Try to do this at each stage of the process. This way both of you can always be on the same page. If one of you goes ahead and spills the beans before the other is ready, that can cause tension. Say, for example, you can't wait to tell people and share the excitement as soon as you see the positive test, but your husband is superstitious and asks you not to tell anyone until you are beginning your second trimester. It will be pretty awkward when your best friend blindsides him with a big congratulations. Along the same lines, if you tell some people and not others, the ones who are out of the loop might feel slighted if they hear the news second hand or find out later that others knew before them. It can be tricky.

It is easy to avoid all of this by having a well-thought-out and agreed-upon plan as you move forward, one that takes each of your needs and wishes into account. Consider who you want to tell, when you want to tell them, and how much information you will share. Not only will doing this allow you to support and respect each other, but it will also give you the chance to maintain control of your own space and insulate your

privacy as you see fit while avoiding fallout and resentment from the people around you.

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It used to seem like all babies were fair game- from the moment that baby bump began to show itself and strangers didn't think twice about patting your tummy, to every one cooing at a baby in a stroller. That has changed, and people are being more thoughtful and protective regarding how information about their pregnancy is handled. Pregnancy invites in the world, but it is up to you if you want to let the world in or not. Just as Cameron and Benji did, you can keep it private for as long as you like.

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## Relationship Advice: An Unconventional Marriage







By [Dr. Jane Greer](#)

Once upon a time, there was a very clear, natural progression of how a couple moved from one phase of their relationship to another: they dated, became engaged, got married, and, finally, moved in together. Any other choice, years ago, would have been frowned upon and maybe even whispered about. Of course, that has all changed and now we see and generally accept any choice people make, in the order in which they make it, and the way in which they commit to each other – as long as both members of the couple are on board.

## **Relationship Expert Advice: Have a Relationship Your Way**

Whether they want to live together first, have a family first, or, possibly even, commit their lives to each other and never share a home, it is all happening out there. For example, actress [Kaley Cuoco](#) and her husband Karl Cook choose to be in a committed, monogamous relationship but also choose to [live apart](#). They tied the knot over a year ago but still maintain

separate residences. Rather than worry about what family, friends, fans, and tabloids think of their arrangement, the busy pair say they value their independence, relish the time they spend together, and don't worry about what other people might be thinking. In other words, it works for them. There are pros and cons to every choice a couple makes as they build their life together and it is a matter of knowing what suits the individual people the best. So, how do you know if this possibility might be right for you? Will a situation like this enhance or hurt your relationship?

One question to ask yourself is how much do you need your privacy? Can you tolerate the company of another person without your own time over a 24-hour day? Consider also the accountability that can come with sharing a home with your partner, because sometimes even if you get up to simply go to the bathroom or kitchen your, partner might be curious about your whereabouts and ask you where you are going.

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In addition, the practicality and logistics of your lives might make it difficult to uproot yourselves, especially if you live in different places. Deciding to have a long-distance marriage can give you the opportunity to share a life while maintaining priorities of work, family, and friends. This can be especially true if you find each other a little later in life. In that case, you may have fully established an autonomous lifestyle, which includes routines and habits that are hard to break, and in some ways might not be suitable for sharing a home with another person.

That can be the case even if you live just a few blocks away from each other. If you both find yourselves sharing these concerns – and you each already love the home you created and don't want to give it up – this might be a way to have it all. Similarly, if you each keep early, late, or unusual hours at

work, and coming home could be disruptive to your partner, maybe even totally conflicting with their routine, or if you travel a lot anyway and, with that in mind, it doesn't make sense to combine households, this might be something to consider. Finally, if you have a beloved pet and your spouse is allergic, it could be a way to avoid a deal breaker and still make it all work.

Ultimately, there can be many upsides to this, even beyond holding on to your daily life as you know it. There is less of a chance to get on each other's nerves, since you always have a place to go to get away and you won't be forced to be together if you don't want to be. It can keep your love fresh and more romantic because you can exercise more control over your appearance and how you present yourself to your partner. And if you have different methods of keeping house, one of you is messy and the other a neat freak, this will allow you to just be yourselves in your own homes without bugging the other person.

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On the other hand, living apart can have a real downside. You are more likely to miss out on little moments – inside jokes and shared bedtime and morning rituals – and you're putting off the inevitable step of showing each other your authentic selves while you navigate the tricky waters of splitting up household responsibilities and chores. Because of this there, may be much less chance to learn to cooperate and work together as a team, which allows you to develop an up-and-running sense of partnership. You might not be there when you need each other, if one of you doesn't feel well, or if you want a spontaneous snuggle. It is also possible that you will feel judged by family or friends, and even strangers, for doing something that might be construed as different.

This is not a dish for everyone, but it might be for those

with a particular taste. It offers the opportunity to marry the person you love despite obstacles you might not be willing to change, which would otherwise make getting married impossible for one or both of you. Being married but living apart might be an option to give life to your commitment instead of making it untenable. For now, Kaley and Karl are taking advantage of the upsides of living apart. They are building a life together and don't seem to be concerned that their relationship has been labeled "unconventional." Whatever decision you make for your relationship, know it is right for you, and try to tune out the noise, focus on each other, and continue planning for your future.

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## **Relationship Advice: What We Can Learn From The Trials And**

# Triumphs Of Celebrity Relationships



By Dr. Jane Greer

Coming out of a toxic relationship can be difficult in and of itself, and often requires an emotional detox. Even though the relationship is clearly over, you may find that you still have issues to work through. You might be experiencing not only the sadness and loss, but also pain and anxiety. If you got to this point after a tremendous betrayal or a chronic problem the magnitude of which you were not able to surmount, you probably have many questions and concerns about how you got into that situation in the first place, and how someone you loved could treat you so poorly. Sandra Bullock had a public breakup with her ex-husband Jesse James who [admittedly](#) cheated

on her multiple times. Despite that, Sandra has finally [found love again](#) with a person whom she calls “the one,” Bryan Randall, and the couple reportedly couldn’t be happier. How, then, when you finally do find yourself on the other side and are ready to think about dating again, can you trust another person as well as your own judgement as you, like Sandra, move past the bad and attempt to find the good? How can you make sure you don’t allow yourself to fall into a toxic relationship again?

## **Dr. Greer’s Relationship Advice Teaches Us How to Date Again After a Toxic Relationship**

One thing to keep in mind is that it is natural to be more guarded and question everything when you begin something new after what you have been through. And that is a good thing. Take your time as you get to know someone who has caught your eye. Even if the connection feels comfortable right away, and you experience the temptation to slip into an immediate closeness of constant texting, talking, and even spending the night together, try to resist that at first. Remain your “me” for as long as you can before you jump into being a “we,” so you don’t shoot past any warning signals. Take inventory: do they call when they say they will? Do they keep the plans you have made? Do they generally seem to be telling you the truth about things, or have you caught them in any lies? Do they have friends, or do they appear to have many past relationships – friendly and romantic – that have ended with all ties cut? Take the time you need to read all the road signs, so to speak, and to stop at all the caution lights so you can get a sense of what’s coming down the road. Give yourself a chance to learn who this person really is, instead of making excuses when necessary and allowing them to form in your mind as who you hope they will be. Along these lines, be

more selective about who you might let in, let them show you they are worthy of your love. Sit back a little, possibly more than you usually have, and instead of being an open book and freely sharing your past and your hopes for the future, let them take the lead and reveal those things first. That way, you will have a better sense of what you are getting into before you open yourself up to them.

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By doing this and taking any red flags that might come up seriously, you can work to head off future betrayals and strengthen your own self-confidence as you evaluate your new potential love interest and decide how much you want to share with them. It will also give you more control. The goal here is to find someone who you can believe in, who has your best interest in mind, and who, ultimately, will not stamp on your heart. Proceed with this expectation, that this is what you deserve and what you will get, and this will help give you more clarity and insight as you begin to date. If you feel secure in yourself, you are much more likely to find someone who will support you rather than undermine you.

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Moving on after a toxic relationship isn't easy, but it is possible, as we saw with Sandra and Bryan. The experience, however terrible it might have been, can be a lesson for you to learn from. Once you can stop thinking of it as a recovery process, and more of a moving beyond process, taking with you all that you now know, you can be stronger and better placed to have a healthier relationship than ever before.

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## Relationship Advice: How to Deal With Estranged Family Members







By Dr. Jane Greer

When we think of family, we often have an image of togetherness, but for almost one-fifth of the population that is not the case. Studies have shown that family estrangement affects up to nineteen percent of people. And while it may be fairly common, it is often painful and can interfere with everyday happiness. That can be the case whether it is a child who no longer talks to a parent, a sister who no longer talks to a brother, an aunt who no longer talks to a nephew or any other variation. It can become even more relevant and harder to ignore when a family event takes place such as a big holiday, a wedding, or the birth of a baby because there is the natural desire to share those things with someone who, at least at one time, played a prominent role in your life. This may be what Meghan Markle and Prince Harry are experiencing since they welcomed their first child. She has been publicly estranged from her father, and the arrival of her son might raise questions and emotions about that situation, especially since her father told *The Sun* that he worries he will never meet his new grandson.

# In this relationship advice, learn how to approach estrangement from your family members.

There are so many twists and turns that can lead people to a place where there is no contact at all. Once that is established, it is often difficult to undo it. Perhaps a long past grievance led you to this place, but it has since been forgotten about or doesn't seem at all as important as it once did. So how do you know if it is the right move for you to use this life event, whatever it might be, as a catalyst to reconnect with family members you are no longer in touch with? And when, on the other hand, should you accept that no matter how much you wish you could reconnect that it is essential to your own health and wellbeing to recognize their limitations and continue to protect yourself emotionally by leaving things as is and not trying to bridge that distance between you? In other words, when is it okay to reach out, and when is it time to let go?

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If, in fact, there was a misunderstanding, or a family member cut you off with no real explanation and it is a complete mystery to you, these big life events can be a chance to try to clear the air. You can simply say that you know you have not communicated in a long time, but you would like to take this opportunity to attempt to reconcile any disagreements between you. At that point, you can ask if there was something you did to anger the other person, and possibly even move past it. Another scenario in which you might be able to find a meeting place is if you have had repeated grievances – about anything from politics to personal choices to a value clash – and you have not been able to find a middle ground. Might now be a time you can agree to disagree? Is the introduction of a

new family member – either through a birth or a wedding – or the celebration of a holiday enough to make you both realize whatever it is you are fighting about isn't so important that you can't put it to the side, respectfully acknowledge each other's differences, and go forward? In those situations, seriously consider if you have more to gain by being able to do this than you would lose by insisting on being right or refusing to acknowledge that your relative might have their own preference or opinion. You might even be able to learn how to co-exist as a family in spite of your opposing convictions.

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The times when you really have to ask if it is healthy and a good idea to try to reconnect with an estranged family member are when there has been a clear betrayal. In my book *How Could You Do This To Me? Learning To Trust After Betrayal* I talk about the different types of betrayals. One type is the unaware betrayal in which the person who does it is completely unaware they are doing it. Another type that I call the deliberate betrayal is much more complicated to get beyond. In this case, the person knew they were doing something that could hurt you, but they did it anyway. When this occurs, it is much harder to trust them again. How do you know they won't continue to behave that way and violate your trust another time? If you aren't sure, sometimes the only thing to do is to keep your distance so that despite whatever good news you might have to share, you aren't at risk of opening yourself up and being vulnerable to getting hurt and disappointed again.

Most people don't get to the point of estrangement without serious consideration. In all likelihood, there has probably been more than one issue in the relationship, and you have likely given your relative many opportunities to do better. Even so, it is common to have that continued desire to find your way back to them. Who knows what Meghan will decide to do in the future in terms of involving her father in baby Archie's life. If the reports are correct, he violated her

trust more than once, and it might be hard to bridge that gap since that can corrupt the whole foundation of a relationship. Hopefully one way or another she, and you, will be able to find peace and know when it is more important to take care of yourself than to look for a reunion.

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## **Relationship Advice: How to Approach Social Media Post-Breakup**





By Dr. Jane Greer

It is nearly impossible to do anything privately these days because almost everything is caught on camera and then shared on social media. With that in mind, breaking up and moving on can carry an even heavier and more transparent burden since most steps are documented on Instagram, Facebook, Twitter, or another social media site. For example, John Cena was spotted holding hands with a mystery woman only days after his ex, Nikki Bella, confirmed she's in a relationship with Artem Chigvintsev. All of this played out on the internet. Sometimes the one left behind doesn't feel ready to move on, but when they see their ex out there with a new love they might feel motivated to either try to put themselves out there too or, at the very least, look like they are. This raises the question, is using social media a good choice when trying to get over an old flame?

**In this relationship advice, we**

# explore how to approach social media after a break-up.

Seeing your former lover's posts with a new partner often stings, and might push you to actively seek social interaction with other people in an effort to offset the rejection and loneliness you are feeling, or to spark jealousy. Either way, it can be tempting to document your journey and share it for everyone to see, especially your ex. Whatever picture you present will offer a silent confirmation to him or her about how you are doing after the break. For those who are still mourning the loss of a relationship, putting a happy face out there on Instagram and Facebook can be a way to aspire to feel better than you do, a way to paint a picture in which you appear to be over it, no longer sad, and looking ahead to your future beyond your connection to your ex. Whether you are at a rooftop cocktail party, on an actual date, or lounging by a pool, the message you are sending is that you are carrying on and your life is moving along fine without the other person. The truth, though, might be that you would rather be home in your pajamas or are still pining for your lost love. If that is the case these photos can be a way of faking it until you make it. In the same way you might try to put a smile on your face even if you don't feel like it, there is the hope that doing this can help pull you out of your rut and get you back on a better road since it is forcing you to leave the house and be around other people.

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Additionally, some may truly be over the breakup, having survived the tornado of it, and are in fact happy now, meeting and dating new individuals. As a result, they may be eager to show off that they are happy and doing all right. But is it okay to present your life publicly in order to let your ex

know he or she is in the past and you are now living in your present? Will this be a positive move for you? To what extent do you want to use social media? For some, it can certainly be helpful, but can it also be hurtful?

There are a number of factors to consider when you determine if using social media at this point is the right choice for you. If you have always had a strong online presence, you might not want that to change just because you are suffering through a heartbreak. After all, you have lost a partner, but you don't have to lose your usual connection to the world and feel you have been flung off the map entirely, too. In that case, keeping up with all of that might seem very natural and even help keep some normalcy in your life while you heal. But what if you feel pressure from having to "put on a happy face" and maintain your accounts, and that adds to your feeling more overwhelmed? In that instance, it might not be good for you right now. Along the same lines, putting a fictional story out there of what can look like a fairy tale life might also make achieving it feel even more elusive, and therefore might have the opposite effect of what you are hoping to accomplish, sending you further into despair rather than pulling you out of it.

Keep in mind, also, that when you post publicly you become exposed and open yourself up to all sorts of judgments and comments – anything from someone suggesting you are moving on too soon to making a statement about the way you look. Consider if you will be able to handle this, or if you are already so sensitive and vulnerable that you are at risk of feeling even more bruised by their criticisms and opinions, many of which may be sparked by envy on the part of your followers. It's possible then that opening that door will make you feel worse rather than better. Also, try to determine why you are choosing to put yourself out there in this way, and understanding that might help you decide if you want to follow through with it. Are you doing it to get back at someone who

wronged you? Are you hoping to one day reconcile with your ex, and this is a means of showing him or her that you are valuable and strong, and not pathetic without them? Or are you truly recovered and happy to be back out in the world?

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Finally, as you move through the murky journey of getting back on your feet, remember that in the same way, your own posts might make you and your life appear better than you may feel or that it actually seems to you, the same could be true for your ex. Much of what you see in their online photos may simply be their own social media front. Keeping this in mind can help offset feeling upset that they seem so happy without you.

The bottom line is that there is no correct answer, it is a matter of what is going to be right for you. Posting may be one of the ways to highlight that you are managing rather than sulking and feeling wounded. Furthermore, if you are no longer in personal contact, social media might be the only way to get the message out there. Ultimately, if it helps you feel better about yourself, gives you true support instead of demeaning statements, and the desire to get good photos mobilizes you off the couch and back out into the world, then this choice might serve you well.

Even if John had no intention of spreading any news, it is sometimes hard to keep it quiet. It seems like he is traveling down a new path without Nikki, whether we hear about it on social media or not.

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relationships, intimacy, family, and friendships to Dr. Greer at [askdrjane@drjanegreer.com](mailto:askdrjane@drjanegreer.com). Connect with Dr. Jane Greer on Facebook, at [www.facebook.com/DrJaneGreer](http://www.facebook.com/DrJaneGreer), and be sure to follow [@DrJaneGreer](https://twitter.com/DrJaneGreer) on Twitter for her latest insights on love, relationships, sex, and intimacy. For more on Dr. Greer, visit <http://www.drjanegreer.com>.

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## Relationship Advice: Talking Through the Tough Times



By Dr. Jane Greer

Sustaining a marriage or an ongoing relationship can be hard,

and everybody hits different rough patches along the way where they think they made a mistake choosing their partner and they can't see a lasting future together. Even in what seems like a great connection, there are times when people think they want out. Fortunately, in most cases, they don't act on these heat-of-the-minute thoughts, but rather look to find ways to move past them. Neil Patrick Harris and his husband David Burtka recently talked about how they keep their 15-year relationship happy and healthy. The couple, who share 8-year-old twins and got married in September 2014, said that for them it is all about communication. They said they try not to let emotions and disappointments get bottled up, but instead talk through the issues before they become too big to overcome. That's a good strategy for everyone.

**How can you navigate the potholes you hit in your relationship and get out of them so you don't get stuck, and can instead continue to go the distance and stay on track? Check out this relationship advice from Dr. Jane Greer.**

Often, in the surge of anger, one person may tell the other that it's over and they want out. While they might mean it when they say it, they don't actually intend to follow through and leave or make the other person leave. I call this the Deal Breaker Card, and it gets played when somebody has reached their last nerve and feels a sense of hopelessness that their relationship is ever going to change and get better. While it offers a sense of relief as well as control so they don't feel trapped, and sometimes is meant to intimidate their partner into shaping up and let them know they aren't kidding about

how upset they are, it does in fact work against you. In order to get through the tough times, you need to feel like you are a team and have a we're in this together bond. Once you play the Deal Breaker Card, it is going to shake the foundation of your union and create anxiety and insecurity for your significant other. Your partner is now going to focus on – wow, we can be broken – which can deplete the trust you share and might make your partner no longer feel safe with you, which can get in the way of being able to focus on the issues to make the changes necessary to improving the relationship. It takes away from the sense of being a team, the idea that you can get through anything. Instead of strengthening your sense of resilience, it divides you and can make it harder to get through the conflict. So while you may feel like telling your partner that's it, I'm out, we're through, avoid playing the Deal Breaker Card. Think it, but don't say it. What you might say is that sometimes you feel hopeless about your relationship going forward and you wish it can get better, which makes room for your partner to feel encouraged and work with you to make that happen. Take Neil and David's lead and acknowledge that you are at a fragile place and talk about how you will be able to get beyond it and endure over time. Discuss what you are facing, knowing that the problems in front of you are real and in order to stay together you should try to do your best to talk through them. Instead of playing the Deal Breaker Card, use that anger to consider seeking the help of a counselor, or make a clear effort to work harder to listen to each other. See it as a chance to pay more attention to your mutual needs so whatever argument you are having doesn't bring you to the end of the road.

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Another thing to be aware of is what I call Love You, Mean It, Hate You, Mean It moments. I talk about these in my book *What About Me? Stop Selfishness From Ruining Your Relationship*, and

most couples deal with these at one time or another. No matter how much you love your partner, at some point he or she is going to do something that angers, frustrates, or disappoints you and, when that happens, you might feel like you actually hate them. This is totally normal, it's the natural ambivalence that is a part of every relationship. It often surprises people because when they fall in love they typically imagine that is how they will always feel for each other and they can't imagine ever having feelings of hate for the other person. However, as I explain in my book, most loving feelings in an adult relationship are conditional and subject to how you treat each other. Loving gestures beget loving feelings, and the same goes for negative behavior. With that in mind, accept it and use it as a tool to acknowledge your anger and disappointment. You might even consider developing a shorthand in which you say, Hate You, Mean It, just to let each other know when one of you has done something upsetting. Neil and David joked about using tasers to get through to each other, which is a variation on this theme. Keep in mind that you always want to balance out the Hate You, Mean It moments with the Love You, Mean It moments so you can focus on the positive.

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There is no question that maintaining a solid relationship is challenging and requires prioritizing each other along with truly listening and sharing your time and attention. This is what Neil and David say has gotten them through and continues to keep them on solid ground. That, and a little humor such as their kidding about the tasers always helps. Hopefully, if you find yourself wanting to play the Deal Breaker Card or being flooded in a Hate You, Mean It moment you will be able to take a step back and remember why you fell in love with this person in the first place, so that you can sprinkle some Love You, Mean It moments and therefore make it worth the trouble to try to find your way to those feelings again.

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## Relationship Advice: Can You Handle Sex Without Love?





By Dr. Jane Greer

As women strive for equality, they are exercising their freedom of sexual expression more and more, which for many might mean a choice to have casual sex. However, with that freedom and choice comes great responsibility, and the important task of taking care of your emotional self and well-being. That is possible only once you know what you want and can tolerate, and, when it comes right down to it, if you can handle sex without love. Diane Von Furstenberg spoke about her fling with Richard Gere, saying it was just a “f\*\*k,” which is how she wanted it to be. While it is more common for men to have sex and keep it just about the physical connection, with few or no feelings of intimacy involved, women regularly struggle with separating the two. Often emotions come into play despite their best intentions, since so often women feel most vulnerable when they are in intimate situations and often literally are and symbolically feel naked. So how can you know if you can handle a fling with no strings attached?

# With this relationship advice, learn if you can handle a fling without love.

By challenging the stereotypes that have confined and limited women for so long, you can consider your sexual identity and what it means to you in terms of your happiness and your sexual esteem, and what might give you the most pleasure and fulfillment. Sometimes that might mean indulging in a purely physical romp with someone. That can happen if, for example, you want to sleep with someone you just met, because you are on vacation and want a brief romantic escapade, or you are at a wedding and want a one night stand. Furthermore, you may have just gotten out of a long relationship and aren't ready to jump back in to a serious commitment, so casual sex might seem appealing. If you find yourself facing any of these scenarios, ask yourself if you will be okay if you never hear from this person again. Or if you begin to feel connected but they aren't interested in anything more than the sex, will you be able to disengage without experiencing a great loss? The most important thing to consider is how you will feel when it's over. The key is to be able to enjoy the experience, and have it enhance your self-esteem.

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Sometimes the only way to know if it is going to work for you is to take a chance, jump in and see where you land. You know best what your Achilles' heel might be, and if there is a chance you could come out of it with a big emotional ouch because you may find it hard to let go, this might not be the right move for you. With that in mind, if you are in the driver's seat you can give yourself the permission to say yes to your desires and feel empowered by them when it comes to

your sex life decisions. The essential thing to be aware of is that whatever your action may be you are doing it by choice, one that you are making for yourself with full awareness of the consequences, and thereby can feel confident about. In this way, you will be a woman who takes charge, is in control, knows what you want as well as what you don't want, and will be better able to build your inner security which will reflect in your general wellbeing.

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For Diane, it was simply about getting physical. It requires clarity, like she had, to know from the start that you'll be fine if nothing more develops from your sexual encounter. If you are able to take an inventory and determine where your tender spots are, thereby avoiding heartbreak, hopefully you will be able to keep it light and fun. In the end, knowing what you can handle is the best indication of whether or not a sexual rendezvous without a commitment will be a positive or negative in your life. If you tend to get attached quickly and are very sensitive to rejection, just sex might not be for you. You want to be your best protector. When it comes to casually getting between the sheets and thinking about how you'll feel after, trust your gut.

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# Relationship Advice: Should You Elope?



By Dr. Jane Greer

Planning a wedding can be exciting, but it can also be an enormous undertaking once you become immersed in all the details. From choosing a maid of honor and whatever number of bridesmaids you have agreed upon (and trying not to offend anyone with your choices), to the flowers and the cake, not to mention the seating arrangements, it can be a lot to deal with. That's why, in the midst of it all, people often begin to wonder if they should elope. For some, it is just a joke, something to say when all they really want to do is get a

break from thinking about the dress and the photographer and where Aunt Fran is going to sit. For others it can be the right choice. Actress Gina Rodriguez said she almost married her fiance Joe LoCicero after this year's Golden Globes, gushing about getting caught up in the excitement and the beauty of the dress she had on, and saying it could have happened that night if she hadn't had to work the next day.

## **In this relationship advice, find out if eloping is the right choice for you.**

Of course, that is a perfect example of how eloping can happen if you get swept away by a moment of love and romance. To those who just met or consider getting married after a drunken night in Las Vegas, caught up in the passion and spontaneity, waiting a bit to get to know each other may be a better idea. But many people who are deep into a relationship and are sure they want to spend the rest of their lives together also consider eloping for a variety of reasons. There is a certain practicality to avoiding a big wedding, especially if people don't have the money to spend on a lavish reception. Or, they might not want to burden their family with a huge bill. Along the same lines, a couple might decide they would rather spend the money on something else, such as a honeymoon or to use as the down payment for a house. Finally, since so much family history and baggage can come along with the elements of a big wedding, the future bride and groom may simply want to avoid possible criticism, judgement, or blame for the particular choices they might make, and thereby not have to feel guilty because of the disapproval. While the two options have their merits and cons, it's important that both partners are on the same page about when and how to tie the knot. So how can you know if eloping is the right choice for you?

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The most important question to ask yourself as you make this decision is will you or your partner be disappointed in any way if you forgo the traditional route? Some people fantasize about a big white wedding for their entire lives – a time when they might feel like a princess or a prince – and imagine having pictures documenting it to look at for decades to come. Others have been leafing through bridal magazines for years and have already chosen the style of dress they want to wear down the aisle. And still others may have imagined it as a time to gather all their fraternity brothers for a reunion. If this is the case for either one of you, eloping might not be the best choice. Talk about it and try to make sure there won't be one single regret looming out there, but only happiness for what lies ahead.

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The bride and groom are not the only ones who have emotions wrapped up in the monumental event. With that in mind, consider also if there are family members who might be let down if you decide to have a small, private ceremony at City Hall. Did your mother always dream of this moment? Did your uncle for whom you are named always imagine what he would say during the speech he hoped to give one day? Think about what is most important to you as far as keeping the peace or having your life start together on your own terms, and how much you are willing to deal with to achieve that. If you do choose to elope, keep those family members in mind and see what you can do to appease them and make them understand that for you this is a gain and not a loss of any kind. Even if you elope and choose to make the ceremony your own, you can still throw a celebratory party and invite everyone at any time.

If in the end it feels like there would be no regrets, nothing that you imagine you might wish you had done down the road, and you are eager to begin your life together and not spend a

lot of time or money getting to that point, then eloping might be the perfect choice for you. Who knows how Gina and Joe will end up tying the knot in the end, but they certainly aren't alone if at times they think they could just elope.

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## **Relationship Advice: The Afterlife Connection**





By Dr. Jane Greer

There is nothing more shattering than dealing with the death of a loved one. It turns you inside out, and it can feel like you might never recover. The magnitude of the loss can be overwhelming. However, one of the most inexplicable, profound, and powerful avenues for not just coping with the death itself, but also moving forward with your life is experiencing signs from your loved one that they are still with you and sending you love. I call these signs transcommunication. Television personality and entrepreneur Bethenny Frankel had an experience with this when she accidentally texted her late boyfriend Dennis Shields, and at another point received a text that nobody claimed to write. She acknowledged after that she thought it was, "weird."

I talk about this exact situation in my book *The Afterlife Connection: A Therapist Reveals How to Communicate with Departed Loved Ones*. I actually wrote the book because of my own experiences after I lost my mother. She gave me, and continues to give me twenty years later, such clear signs that she is still with me that I felt compelled to learn more and

explore what was happening.

**Opening myself up to the possibility of transcommunication transformed my life, and continues to today. It can do the same for you once you begin to know what to look for.**

Many people have a hard time understanding or accepting this possibility, or might even be frightened by it. But numerous scientists are now devoted to research and a better understanding of this phenomenon, including the work being done at The Afterlife Research and Education Institute. The big question is, how can you bring this to a personal level? To begin with, in the same way Bethenny said her experiences were “weird,” one indication that you are receiving a sign is that you say, “I know this sounds crazy but,” when you talk about it. That’s because you know something important happened, but you don’t have the means to explain it rationally. Another clue is when you get goosebumps or chills. How, then, can you begin to learn to read the signs that are sent your way? In my book I refer to another book written by Louis E. LaGrand, Ph.D. called After Death Communication. In his preface, he describes the various ways people might become aware of communications from deceased loved ones.

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ADCs (after-death communications) include sensing the presence of the deceased, feeling a touch, smelling a fragrance, hearing the voice or seeing the deceased, and meeting the loved one in a vision or dream. Messages are also received in

symbolic ways, such as finding an object associated with the deceased, unusual appearances or behavior of birds and animals, or other unexplainable happenings which occur at or shortly after the moment of death. Several combinations of the above phenomena may occur within weeks of death or over a period of years.

Along the same lines, Bill and Judy Guggenheim, in their seminal book *Hello from Heaven*, have categorized and provided anecdotal evidence for the innumerable methods – from visual to olfactory to auditory to symbolic – those in spirit have used to communicate with the living. Those they categorize as symbolic include the appearance of birds, butterflies, rainbows, animals of all kinds and a variety of inanimate objects such as seashells, coins, and pictures.

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When coincidence comes calling, consider instead that you are really dealing with a message of love from the other side. Here are three important things to keep in mind as you search for your own answers. The first is, be open to its occurring. If you accept it can happen to you, it will. The second is to debunk the notion that something huge has to happen, which is not the case. The signs can be subtle and small. They do not have to be big, sweeping gestures. For example, you might think about your mother and her favorite song comes on the radio, or you think about your father and a picture falls over. And the third is to be aware that some of the signs might come through energetically and might affect your computer, your car, your television, or any other machine or device by interfering with their function and disrupting what you are doing. Instead of being annoyed when these things break or malfunction, shift your way of thinking to see it as a sign and embrace that.

In my book I also talk about dream visits, in which the

deceased is present in your dreams but not dead. The feeling is so powerful that I call these dreams, “the your still alive, you’re not dead dreams.” There might be a particular interactive quality to the dream – different from others – where you feel you are right there with the person. It is defined by an intense reality that other dreams don’t possess, and after you experience one you wake up with a profound sense of well-being.

The most important takeaway here with all of this is that seeing is believing. It seems Bethenny had this experience, and if you, too, are able to open your heart and mind to this, you make room for your loved one to stay connected with you in a way that is remarkable.

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## **Relationship Advice: Will Your Perfect Partner Vision**



# Become Reality?



By Dr. Jane Greer

Some people refer to it as the Soulmate List, others as the Love List. Whatever you call it, there is a popular trend being used by many hopeful romantics in which people write down the traits they hope to find in a mate – anything from handsome to well-read to empathetic – with the belief that putting it out there will allow the universe, or whatever entity might grant true love, to conjure it up. In fact, Tiffany Haddish dished about her “dream guy” having everything from cooking skills to excellent credit to beautiful hands. While it’s nice to fantasize about the ideal companion, the reality is we all have flaws and imperfections. And the later in life you meet, the more likely each person has baggage from former relationships and life experiences, which can sometimes

include previous marriages or even children.

## **So, the question becomes, is the practice of creating a perfect partner on paper leading you closer to or further from your goal?**

Can this idea of putting a vision out there make it become a reality and energetically bring him or her into your life? Or does creating a dream person end up actually stifling your dreams because there can't possibly be anyone out there who fits every aspect of what you are looking for?

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We all know there is no perfect person, and waiting for one will mean you might continue to be alone until you feel ready to compromise. If you keep searching for your dream person, you might be dreaming for a long time while remaining single. It's important to leave room for the reality of who a person is, since nobody can live up to a fantasy. If you are not willing to consider someone beyond your list – for example, you want your future partner to be six feet tall and you rule out anyone who isn't – then you are limiting yourself in your search for love. How, then, can you have a dream list that can work for you and not against you? First of all, it is important to have a sense of what you are looking for in a partner so you can place a premium on and appreciate what you like – creativity, hardworking, smart – whatever it might be. But so often someone simply looks to what the other person brings to the equation, are they tall? Beautiful? Wealthy? Do they have an exciting job? Do they have a great social life? And while these details can certainly enhance your life and your relationship, there is something else even more important

to consider. That is – how they make you feel when you are with them. Do they make you believe you are special? Can you be real, be yourself, and not worry that you are being constantly judged? Do you laugh a lot when you are together? Do they have a sense of humor, and do they understand and appreciate yours? Are they interested in meeting your family? Do they take care of you when you are sick? These are the details that trump someone's height, or someone's job title, or how much someone's annual salary is.

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It is so easy to get hung up on the external details, but very often it is these other ingredients, the personal ones, that can be on the back burner and eventually lead to a high flame if you are open to it, as was the case in the movie *When Harry Met Sally*. If you can keep your eyes and heart open, and not rule someone out because they don't match one of the items on your dream list, you are more likely to find love. Those items – such as being a good cook in Tiffany's case – should be considered to be the bonus prizes, the perks, but not the essentials. So when you sit down to write that dream list of yours, include yourself, what you hope your partner will be able to give to you emotionally, and what they might bring out in you. After all, the search for true love is a journey for two.

Hopefully Tiffany will find everything she thinks she wants in her dream guy, and so much more.

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# Parenting Advice: How to Manage Being a Working Parent



By Dr. Jane Greer

The push and pull between holding down a job and taking care of a home is an ongoing struggle. It can be hard to balance taking care of the kids, pursuing a career, and getting all of the daily housework and chores done. If a mom is going back to

work after taking time off to start a family, it can be even harder to transition into the workforce again. Eva Mendes has opened up about her struggles as a working mother of two. She talked about how difficult some of the simple things can become when you are juggling so much, even just getting dressed.

## **So what, if anything, is the answer to managing the tug of war and the potential chaos that comes with working and being a parent?**

There are two things going on when a mom decides to go back to work after spending time at home with children. The first is something Eva touched on, getting the logistics into place. The second, and this one can often be even more difficult to deal with, is the guilt and longing that can go along with the decision to return to a job, and the transition of actually doing it. Not only might you want to be with your kids, but you also might feel you are not doing the right thing by leaving them with a nanny or at daycare. The hope is that you will be able to find a middle ground so you are not consumed by these feelings, and you are able to enjoy your work and be present there.

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There is no one answer for all women, each one has to find her own way and her own balance. Here are a few things to keep in mind, though, as you navigate your way. The first is that while you may not be able to spend all day with your child anymore the way you are used to doing, know that research has shown that what is most important is the quality of the time you spend together, not the quantity. In other words, it is better to have one or two meaningful hours together a day,

which you may be able to find before or after work, when you are completely focused on what your child needs, than it is to have all day every day when you are frazzled, possibly unfulfilled, and not paying full attention to your son or daughter. People often falsely equate the idea that being the “good enough mother “ means being with your child all the time. However, the term, used by Winnicott and other developmental theorists, in fact means setting aside your needs in order to be available and responsive to those of your kids, and in this way you are completely attuned to them, which ensures promoting their emotional well-being. This can be achieved in many different ways, and, in reality, it is how you spend the time you do have together, no matter how much it is in a given day, that really counts. With this knowledge, you may be able to set a few realistic goals which will help ease the transition back to work. For example, you might be able to carve out a chunk of time in the day or night when you can really tune in to your child, whether it be reading together, singing, or even having fun choosing an outfit for the next day.

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Some women, though, become so consumed with being a stay-at-home mom that it can really color the enjoyment of the job. Of course, sometimes there is a hard and fast financial element to deciding to go back, and if that is the case know you are doing exactly what your family needs, and keep in mind that the research is on your side. If you are more flexible, though, and it won't interfere with your sense of self, see if you can delay the return to work so you can continue to be physically and emotionally present for your children for a while longer. Some people choose to never go back to work. Making that choice really comes down to determining how crucial the work is to your well-being. If you know you will regret it and resent not being at work more, explore the

possibility of finding a compromise, and try to come up with a plan where you are not away from home all day, maybe you can work part time or a few days a week.

It sounds like Eva is finding her way with that and doing what every mom has to do – confronting that fork in the road and looking at what will be the most meaningful and viable way to move forward for her and her children. Ultimately, that is all you can ask of yourself.

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## **Relationship Advice: Get the Birthday Gift Right**





By Dr. Jane Greer

Birthdays are generally synonymous with hopes, cakes, and, of course, presents, but they can also be tinged with disappointment since there are so many expectations wrapped into this one special day, and emotions can run high. Sometimes the gift is perfect. For example, Priyanka Chopra and Nick Jonas celebrated his 26th birthday together this past week at a baseball game which, according to social media, seemed to be exactly what he wanted. A misstep with the all-important gift, however, can sometimes be the very thing that sinks the ship, and can not only ruin the day, but can also breed resentment for a long time afterward.

**Whether you're dating someone, or you've been married for years, getting the birthday present right can be a challenge. Your partner**



**has wishes you may not be aware of, and you might not be sure what to get. How can you live up to meeting their desires, and where do you start?**

There are a few things that can lead you down the wrong path while you are contemplating that purchase. To begin with, if you have not paid attention to what they have appeared to be interested in over the past few weeks or months, like the scarf she stopped to look at in the store window, or if you have missed their hints, like the massage he always says he would like to get, then you may have no idea where to begin. If that's the case, when they tear away the tissue paper, hoping to find something specific looking back at them but find something out of left field, your gift might be met with disappointment. Along the same lines, it is never a great idea to simply buy what you like or want with no consideration to whether or not your partner might feel the same way. Just because it is your taste does not mean it is theirs. If they say they want a sweater, before choosing the one you would buy for yourself, instead think about their preferences and previous choices. Similarly, you might see this as a good time to get something practical, why not? You really need that better coffee maker or expensive knife. Here is another way you can go awry, though, since your partner might not appreciate that, and may be hoping for something more personal and indulgent. Finally, while some do like a joint activity to be the gift, as was the case with Nick Jonas, not everyone falls into that camp. Make sure that is okay before you take the plunge, since some might see it as encroaching on their birthday, which they don't want to share, since they want it to be only about them.

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For any and all of these reasons, browsing online or in a store can feel like a minefield that could blow up in your face at any moment. So, what can you do to avoid that? Begin by asking what they want in advance, even going as far as requesting that they make up a birthday list. Think about suggesting that the list have three or four items that fall into different price ranges. That way you can have options, and you will know that whatever you choose will be well received. Another possibility might be to take them to a favorite store and have them try on a few things. You can go back later and choose one or more of those items, and it will still be a surprise, but you know it is something they will enjoy. Finally, you can simply get a gift card to a store or spa you know they like so they can select what they want, going back at a later date either by themselves or together to make an outing out of it.

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Sometimes people are reluctant to make a present list because they think it spoils the surprise of the gift, which can be nice but not necessary. They also may think they are making it too easy for their partner by telling them what they want. But the truth is it is more about the pleasure and the good feelings a great gift will generate over time. By helping your partner out so they know precisely how to please you, you guarantee a happy outcome, which is what matters most. The goal is to get what you want, it isn't a contest to see if your partner can figure it out.

It is likely that the way you give gifts comes from the way the family you grew up with gave gifts – in other words, that is what you know, and naturally you continue that pattern. The trick is to be open and aware of your partner's ways and

preferences, so you can develop your own gift-giving protocol together. It sounds like Priyanka and Nick have been able to do just that.

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## **Relationship Advice: How to Cope with a Loved One Who Is an Addict**





By Dr. Jane Greer

When someone you once loved dies, it can be devastating, even if you haven't been in a relationship with them for a long time. If that person had problems, such as a drug or alcohol addiction, learning about their death can also be confusing and can conjure up all sorts of feelings including guilt. Ariana Grande is heartbroken over her ex Mac Miller's death, according to an inside source. The rapper was found dead last week after what is thought to be an overdose. Some people have lashed out at her, saying she should have done more for him. Others have strongly supported her, saying she did everything she could.

**Either way, it is a hard place to be and it raises the question, when someone is in a difficult relationship with an addict, how**

**much is too much, and when is getting out the right thing to do, even if that person might be in danger? Here is some relationship advice.**

It is never easy to end any relationship with someone you love, and if they are struggling with personal demons it can be even harder. Anyone who has ever been involved with someone who is alcohol or drug dependent knows how hard it is to separate even if it has reached a point in which staying seems just as impossible, and sometimes even harmful to your own well-being. There is a natural amount of guilt that goes along with any breakup, but when there are these added complications the guilt can be overwhelming. When a tragedy occurs after you are no longer together and there is a death or overdose, those feelings can take over, leading you to wonder if you “abandoned” them and could have or should have done more.

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The most important place to begin to reconcile these feelings is to recognize that you did everything you could possibly do when you were in the relationship to help them, and if you had remained it would have been to your own detriment. Acknowledge that leaving it was not easy for you. If you were able to remain friends, there might have been the opportunity to further illuminate that in order to have a better understanding of what happened. So in that case, it might be clearer to you that there was nothing more you could have done, and that you simply couldn't continue to handle the struggle. If you didn't remain friends or stay in touch and an overdose or death comes as a complete surprise, remind

yourself that you chose to end the relationship because it took a heavy toll on you, and recognize that you had no choice in the face of their continuing destructive behavior. Understand that there are limits to what you were able to do to help the other person. Ultimately each person is responsible for him or herself. Accept and respect that you made the decision out of necessity to invest in your own safety and happiness, that it was either sink or swim for you. Being able to see and do that is vital to your healthy self-esteem.

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Keep in mind that what you want to do is remember who the person was to you, what they meant and what you shared together. Ariana paid tribute to her relationship with Mac by posting a picture of her memory of him. Hopefully she has been able to find peace.

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# Relationship Advice: Is It Too Soon to Get Engaged?



By Dr. Jane Greer

When is it too soon to get engaged? There are so many considerations that go into making this decision, from practical issues such as having enough money to finishing a degree to living in the same place, to more philosophical ones like is there a proper timeline for true love? Sometimes people have to first deal with other commitments and responsibilities before taking the plunge. But what if you meet someone and know instantly that person is your soulmate, do you still have to wait? Some think the answer to that is no. Nick Jonas and Priyanka Chopra announced their engagement after dating for only two months.

**Quick engagements can be a sign that one or both parties are ready to settle down and feel the security and stability that comes with marriage. However, there are a number of pieces of [relationship advice](#) to consider before taking this next all-important step.**

One of the biggest questions that comes up is, does it make sense to wait even if all the pieces are in place so that you can have more time to bring each other into the other's respective world? In other words, does having the inside track on your partner's life before you're all in add to the success of a marriage? Some might worry that the intensity of the high one feels when they first fall in love won't last, and therefore won't be enough to sustain you through life's ups and downs. If you do feel, however, it is enough to get you through, and you are seriously considering a quick engagement, it can be helpful to ask yourself why. Is it because you simply want to get married and crave the security that comes with that? Or were you disappointed by a previous relationship and now eager to move forward with someone who's ready to truly commit and get married? Or is it all about the person, that you have fallen so hard for one another, that you have become a part of each other's lives so completely, and there is enough compatibility, that you feel you want to and will be able to continue to make things work between you?

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Whatever the case, most people do find that the all-consuming, instant attraction eventually, and really inevitably, wanes.



That's why a certain amount of time and effort is generally important to allow the relationship to solidify so you have the chance to really learn how to work things out together, and to see how each of you reacts to different situations. With time, you'll move from that googly-eyed stage where your partner can do no wrong, to eventually "sobering up," so to speak, and deal with life – sickness, cars that don't work, endless bills, having to work late – as opposed to the euphoria you might be feeling when you first come together. In fact, the "honeymoon phase" can often last longer than most people think, in some cases even up to a year, but by the time you move away from that and into everyday reality where you need to be able to work together as a couple to deal with the nuts and bolts of each day, it takes more than rose-colored glasses to navigate the raging rapids. If you don't manage to build that strong foundation, it will only be a matter of time before your individual needs, as well as all the daily hits of living that create friction and tension, tear you apart.

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If you are in love, and if marriage is on the table, here are a few things you can ask yourself to determine if you are ready. First, do you think you are able to deal with your differences and compromise around them so you end up at a joint decision that feels good for both of you? Are you able to communicate and listen to each other, and ultimately relate to each other's feelings, so that you both feel understood? Can you problem solve, as well as work through and clear up your anger and disappointment so those feelings don't linger and cause trouble between you? Do you have empathy for each other? If you have these skills in place, then you are starting your life together with a full toolbox of important skills.

Nick and Priyanka seem to have found in each other what they are looking for, and have faith that they can continue to keep

love alive. If you, too, have that trust in your partner then perhaps a short engagement can work for you as well.

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## Relationship Advice: Tales of the Other Woman





By Dr. Jane Greer

Everyone feels they were scourged in the aftermath of betrayal, and in an effort to work through that and regain their equilibrium they like to talk about what happened, often to anyone who will listen. Sometimes, though, while that can make someone feel better in the moment, it can cause greater trouble down the line and further delay the journey back to personal peace and happiness. Whether you are in the public eye or not, speaking out about the person who hurt you can be tempting. For example, Evan Felker's ex-wife Staci Nelson reacted recently to claims that he cheated on her with country superstar Miranda Lambert. Doing this can feel like your chance to set the record straight by telling your side of the story, and it can feel like a way to fight back. You've been wronged, so this is your way to make it right.

**Sometimes speaking out about the one who wronged you can be helpful,**

**while other times it can cause more negativity. So how can you balance it? This relationship advice comes down to what you say, and whom you say it to.**

The obvious place to go to vent your anger and frustration is to friends and family, since they are the people who know you and support you. They may encourage you by asking you to tell them what happened, or they may be more provoking by launching a missile and speaking badly about your ex-partner, thus throwing logs on the already flaming fire. Try to be careful, however, about what you share with them for a few reasons. While the initial reaction is to look to end the connection, sometimes cheating can actually help people reevaluate and overhaul their relationship to make it stronger and more resilient than it was before. There are enough times that people get back together. If in fact you and your ex do reconcile one day you don't want your friends and family members to have turned so completely against him or her and become so alienated that it makes it difficult for you to reconnect. Also, there is always the matter of the people you shared while you were together. What if, during your relationship, your cousin became good friends with your ex-husband, or your college best friend's wife is now best friends with your ex-wife? These are hard connections to break, and it helps to be aware of the tricky position that putting down your ex, who may still be an important factor in their lives, can put the people you love in. While oftentimes there is a strong pull to rally as many people as possible to your camp, drawing these lines can sometimes be very divisive and you risk creating more losses for you with your existing relationships if people feel they have to choose a side.

**Related Link:** [Celebrity News: Miranda Lambert Throws Shade at Celebrity Ex Blake Shelton With Key Lyric Change](#)

Being able to vent and say bad things about your ex can be an important initial step, but you want to continue to take subsequent steps and have that not be where you remain. Instead of only demeaning them and looking to do a character assassination, start to shift what you are expressing to focus on the impact their betrayal had on you and how you are dealing with it. To begin the real healing, it is important to be in touch with all of your feelings, not just your anger. This way it can eventually become less about stirring the brew of your rage and more about developing your self-awareness. In my book *How Could You Do This to Me?: Learning to Trust After Betrayal*, I speak about blind trust. Was this going on for you? Were you too trusting, did you see signs and ignore them, or did you miss them completely? It is this reflection and understanding that will enable you to learn how to trust your own judgement so that you feel better equipped to protect yourself in the future and keep this from happening again. By doing this it helps you to stop perpetuating the negative by keeping yourself in the role of victim, and instead shift to moving forward and away from your ex and the fallout of the betrayal.

**Related Link:** [Celebrity Break-Ups: Evan & Staci Felker Were Trying to Have a Baby Before He Met Miranda Lambert](#)

Being deceived is devastating at best, at worst, if not dealt with, it delivers a blow that can keep you feeling low for a long time and can derail you from living your best life. For that reason, doing all this is your emotional health insurance as you go forward. Hopefully, Staci will be able to get back on track and become stronger as she carries on.

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## Relationship Advice: The Pitfalls of Dating While Divorcing





By Dr. Jane Greer

Dating someone new is exciting but often challenging, and adding the complications of a divorce that's not officially finalized yet, as well as kids from the fractured marriage, into the mix can create a whirlwind of possible pitfalls and new challenges. Waiting for a divorce to become official, though, can take some time, and it is often difficult to put the entire future of one's love life on hold until it is all said and done. Actor [Brad Pitt](#), for example, has been seeing MIT professor Neri Oxman in the midst of ending his marriage to [Angelina Jolie](#). Dating while being separated from your ex-spouse can often feel like a no man's land of uncharted territory with no clear rules. There may be concerns about how quickly to move things along, or a newfound fear of commitment because the most recent union failed.

**While you may be eager to move forward and find new love, it can**

**feel like a slippery slope where you can get in too deep quickly, sometimes without even meaning to. With that in mind, there are certain pieces of relationship advice to consider as you navigate this sometimes lawless territory.**

The first obvious question is how soon is too soon? It is a very personal journey in terms of how each person manages the sadness of saying good-bye to someone they loved and shared a life with. Some people have no immediate desire to meet someone new, and instead withdraw and go into emotional hibernation, unwilling to put themselves out there for a while and risk being hurt again or diving into another unsuccessful relationship. Others take the opposite approach and seek out a new romance because that is what they believe they need to survive the turmoil they are facing. Taking your personal inventory of what works for you, figuring out your own rhythm of moving faster or slower, can be helpful in gauging the best way for you to proceed. If you do decide to jump back in to the pond of love, try to consider what didn't work in your marriage and attempt to avoid those behaviors in this new partnership.

**Related Link:** [Celebrity News: Brad Pitt is Casually Dating as He Adjusts to Single Life as a Dad](#)

Along those same lines, how do you balance the responsibilities and devotion you have to your children, as well as all the things that go along with taking apart your old life, with this new person? Consider how much energy you realistically have to give to your new identity as a single



person and to your new relationship. If you have met someone you really like and want to get involved, that is fine, but keep your kids in mind and pace yourself with how you introduce them, possibly saying your new love interest is simply a friend at first so as not to confuse them. On the flip side, you might find you are not ready to invest a lot of time into a new romance. He or she might want to jump right in, planning dates and weekend brunches, but you are juggling time with your kids and don't want to miss a soccer game or a dance performance which often conflicts with the proposed plans. Think about and prioritize what is most important to you, and be completely honest about what you are willing and able to put into this new situation. Be clear about your time and what you need to keep it balanced. It can be helpful to convey this upfront so that they can keep their expectations of you realistic and not bombard you with demands for getting together. By doing this it will help make the new relationship stay light and be a relief for you, instead of becoming another emotional burden and a new source of guilt.

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Finally, is it okay to talk about your ex and the details of your divorce with your new dates? There is no question that you have gone through a difficult time as you and your ex-spouse untangle the life you shared together. It has probably been the focal point of everything for you, all that you can think about. It is natural, then, that it is what you are used to talking about, and very likely what you want to talk about. That is understandable, but when it comes to the people you are just meeting and getting to know, the less you say about the nitty-gritty of your ex and your divorce, the better. Try to keep the conversation focused on fun topics such as activities you enjoy doing as well as those you would like to pursue in the future. Instead of making this new person your support system while you go through the divorce, allow your connection to be about what is ahead of you and think about it

as an opportunity to explore who you are now and who you are becoming.

While it is a lot to contend with, it appears Brad is handling these possible roadblocks and choices with aplomb. Neri seems to be taking everything in stride, and perhaps she and Brad can continue on this path to happiness together.

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## Relationship Advice: Working Through Your Heartbreak





By Dr. Jane Greer

Getting over a heartbreak is never easy, and there is no simple answer to how to recover from it. What does it mean when relationships don't work out? Is it you choosing a bad partner, or is it something out of your control? Dealing with the loss of love is often a challenge. Some people throw themselves back into the mix immediately, jumping in to a new relationship, while others take themselves out of the dating game for a while. The question is, how do you hold on to hope, and is there a way to try to ensure success on take two so that you don't continue to repeat the same wrong moves in the love game? It's rumored that The Weeknd's new EP is about his exes [Selena Gomez](#) and Bella Hadid. Perhaps his approach to dealing with his breakups is through his music.

**Here is some expert [relationship advice](#) on navigating heartbreak**

## post break-up and when entering a new, rushed relationship:

Many who dive right back into the fire may find that their new love connection isn't going as well as they had hoped and wonder why. There are several reasons this can occur, and it is helpful to understand them. For some, the pain of the split is too immense to handle because of how personally rejected they feel. As a result, their self-esteem may take a big hit, and they may go along in a relationship that they know isn't a good fit simply because having a new person in their life helps buffer the intense pain they are feeling. In that case, their thought might be that at least somebody wants to be with them. Another reason is that sometimes the loss of a significant other in their life and everything that goes along with that – doing things together, planning for two, looking toward the future, and having some security as to how they spend their weekends and evenings – is so hard to take that being with anyone might seem better than being alone. Therefore, they will quickly seek out a new partner regardless of how bad a fit that person might be. When that happens, simply having that person in their life trumps how compatible they are. If either of these reasons are in play, it can be the equivalent of taking an aspirin for a headache. It is a quick antidote to buffer the pain, but it may not deal with the contributing issues that brought about the heartbreak in the first place. Consequently, if you are looking to “lose” yourself in a new relationship, be it a rebound or an escape from the past, while it might ease the heartache in the moment it can sometimes lead to more loss in the future.

**Related Link:** [Relationship Advice: Say 'Yes' to Terms of Endearment](#)

In this whole mix one of the questions is, have you gotten over your ex at all? If not, you might find yourself comparing

your new person to your old significant other, and if you are still in love with the former, your current companion may pale in comparison. While the relationship itself might make you feel better about yourself temporarily, your new partner may not ever replace your old one. In addition, there may be unresolved problems still lingering from your old relationship that you now find squarely present in your new romance. You may even realize, surprisingly, that you have taken on the role of your old partner with your new one, and are now doing what your ex did to you, anything from calling too often to acting jealous. If you find this happening it can be a red flag that all is not well.

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If you have gone through a heartbreak and are looking to start a new relationship that is successful, it is important to take an honest look at what didn't work in your romantic past. Shine a light on what went wrong. Were you unhappy or did you do something to make your partner unhappy? Were they turned off by some of your behaviors and quirks, or you by theirs? Was it you or them who was not willing to step up to the plate in terms of making necessary compromises? This will help you develop self-awareness and give you some understanding of what might be at play with your new partner. This will also enable you to view the past as a stepping stone to the future, not wasted or lost time, but important information that you can learn from and take with you. It can also give you more realistic expectations going into the next relationship so you can hopefully make a better choice that will lead to a more positive connection. Along the same lines, if you find yourself going from one relationship to the next so you are not alone, but you keep choosing people who are not right for you or you lose interest in them quickly, then now is a good time to learn how to be on your own so you can develop inner security and grow stronger before doing a cannon ball back in

to that pool of love. Once you have given yourself a chance to do that, you might be better able to choose a new partner based not only on how they make you feel about yourself, but also on how you feel about them and what you are able to share together.

**Related Link:** [Relationship Advice: Don't Let Distance & Lifestyle End Your Relationship](#)

It seems that The Weeknd is working through his heartache with music. [Taylor Swift](#) has been known to do the same. You don't have to write music to be able to do this. Instead, write a letter of the things you wish to say or wish you said, that you don't have to send. You can also listen to sad songs, but remember to balance that with a few love songs so that you are able to have faith that there will be a new beginning around the corner for you.

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**Relationship Advice: Say**

# 'Yes' to Terms of Endearment



By Dr. Jane Greer

So much goes into making a relationship work, and the secret ingredients that lead to success certainly vary from couple to couple. With that in mind, there are certain gestures many have in common that help them accent and cement their romance, and sharing pet or special names as well as baby talk are often among them. In fact, Kelly Ripa and Mark Consuelos recently revealed they share some naughty pet names for each other.

**By choosing a nickname you use only**

**for each other, it can allow you to express the unique affection you share. It can give you the confidence that you are truly seen and known by your partner, and it can make you feel special. Check out more relationship advice around terms of endearment:**

Seductive names like this can add a lot of excitement and enhance intimacy as well as rev up your sex life. In some cases, hearing the special name can take you right back to those amorous sessions and make you feel sexy and desirable. In other words, the word itself can cause a reflex that gets your sexual energy going. Some take it a step beyond and give nicknames to their genitalia, which allows them to playfully refer to one another. There are many different types of names that can have a positive effect, and they don't have to be risqué, but can also be simple and innocent. These, too, can be emotional glue that help to keep you together, and that can also add to a shared moment of love. All of this is great, and can bring you closer to your partner, but sometimes there can be too much of a good thing. Can it ever become a problem?

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The resounding answer is yes, it can. There are those occasions when something that starts as a cute and adoring act can begin to feel like a criticism, especially if the name of choice is rooted in a trait or behavior that may potentially annoy your partner. On occasion a name is picked for that very reason, to mitigate personality quirks that can get on each other's nerves. For example, if your partner chose to call you



Slowpoke because you are always on the other side of late, or you call him Bull because he is always rushed and breaks a lot of things, these can eventually come to highlight the less lovable sides of each of you. At first they might seem charming, but over time they can take on the negative twist of reality and you may feel like you are being scolded. Also, they can become overused and grating, and can become a source of tension. The same can happen with baby talk. You might like it, and it can serve to enhance the camaraderie you share while letting your inner child out, but it can become too much and seep into too many different places in your life. If this happens it can have the opposite of the desired result and instead of turning you on it can turn you off. So what do you do when the terms of endearment become terms of negativity?

**Related Link:** [Relationship Advice: The Baby Predicament](#)

The best thing to do is to have a direct conversation with your partner about it. Explain what you are feeling, and suggest either coming up with another pet name or taking a break from it altogether and simply calling you by your real name. If you go the route of searching for a new nickname, you might even recommend that you hunt for one together. When it comes to baby talk, it is important to express your wishes there, too. Sometimes putting boundaries in place can help – for example, maybe you want to keep it out of the bedroom, or maybe the bedroom is the only place it works for you. Perhaps you are comfortable when you are the only ones present, but once you leave the house and are in the company of others, you might want to suggest turning it off and saving it for later. With that, too, if you want to stop it completely then ask to take a break. By doing this and being honest with each other, you are keeping your verbal interaction fresh and true, and continuing the spoken intimacy you share.

It seems that Kelly and Mark are able to enjoy and balance their naughty names, and hopefully so can you whatever your pet names and baby talk might be.

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## Relationship Advice: Don't Let Distance & Lifestyle End Your Relationship





By Dr. Jane Greer

People in distance relationships, whether by choice or necessity, are able to have success with a great deal of effort and flexibility. In order to make the relationship work, there must be a strong desire to be together, and a willingness between both partners to make room for each other's respective needs. However, love does not conquer all, regardless if you are a celebrity or not.

**Is it possible to find a resolution? Read on for more [relationship advice](#):**

Recently, [celebrity couple Jennifer Aniston](#) and Justin Theroux announced their [celebrity divorce](#) after two years of marriage, stating it was a mutual decision to part ways. While Aniston and Theroux love and respect each other, they said they simply couldn't agree on a lifestyle that worked for each other. This is a common issue couples may face: you can love

someone, and still desire to live differently than them, or even desire to live in an entirely different place than them.

Splits like the one between Aniston and Theroux are often caused by the inability to find the middle ground when trying to successfully make a home in the same place. Compromise is hard enough for two people who live under the same roof, but when partners are separated by differing work schedules or physical office placement, compromise can be extremely challenging. The key to keeping the peace is to commit to a place together, making sure that both partners are happy and do not feel as though they have sacrificed their happiness and well-being.

**Related Link:** [Relationship Advice: What If Your Family Doesn't Approve Of Your Partner?](#)

So, if you're in a long distance relationship right now, what should you consider before packing up your life and moving to a new place with your significant other, to best guarantee a successful outcome? How can you be sure you or your partner are sacrificing enough, without negatively impacting your relationship?

Above all, you and your partner must be in love. This is the most important box to check, as it gives each of you the ability to be open to change because you'll be with your loved one. While this is a starting point, it might not be enough, as we saw with Jennifer and Justin. When deciding to take the plunge, be sure to ask yourself: do you actually like the place you're moving to? Will it take away your happiness?

**Related Link:** [Relationship Advice: Is a Bad Boy Good for You?](#)

Here's some food for thought. If one of you lives in a sunny place, but the other one simply hates the sun, or if one of you lives in a rural community and the other thrives on city life, where to move might not be an easy choice to make. If all your friends live in your current town, would you resent

moving away from them to be with your love? Think about how all of this might affect your day-to-day life, mood, and eventually, your relationship. If, on the other hand, your partner lives in New York City, a place you've always wanted live, great! Leaving your loved ones behind won't matter as much. Talk to your partner and hash out the details. A temporary move might not be a deal breaker. A permanent one may be, though.

It is most important to think about your relationship, what it means to you, and where you can find happiness and friends in your new home. Is this decision mutual? Do each of you want it as much as the other? Does moving mean you're ready to take the next step towards engagement?

**Related Link:** [Relationship Advice: When Is the Old New Again?](#)

It is also important to consider the strength of your connection, especially during the triumphs and tribulations. Up until now, most of the time you've spent together was special and seemingly perfect. (It's called the honeymoon phase for a reason!) You have probably tried to be on your best behavior at all times to maintain the picturesque image. Once you move, it will be more difficult to keep up the guise.

Ultimately, if you are moving for the right reasons; for love and for openness to adventure, it is less likely that you will feel as though you have lost yourself. What really helps is when you are connected with a partner who has similar aspirations, wants, likes, and needs. In the end it, it should not feel like either of you are sacrificing your "me" to be a "we." This wasn't possible for Jennifer and Justin, but hopefully they can both move forward and find happiness apart.

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## Relationship Advice: What If Your Family Doesn't Approve Of Your Partner?



By Dr. Jane Greer

Choosing a partner for life is a big deal under any circumstances. There's enough pressure on yourself to ensure that you're making the right decision and meeting all your needs. So what happens when you come up against a thumbs down from a parent, sibling, or friend who has been weighing in on your choices all your life? Why is it that the people you love take a contrary position and see your partner completely unsuitable for you? Why can't they just welcome the people your care about with open arms? If this sounds like a familiar situation, you are not alone. This is a very common experience for many people, and it happens for a lot of reasons. It speaks to declaring your independence, freedom of choice, autonomy, and, most importantly, trusting your own judgement to know what is best for you, rather than what others think is best.

**Here are some key pieces of [relationship advice](#) as you work to stay true to yourself and your commitment, without allowing conflict to tear apart your family:**

It has been reported that [Selena Gomez](#)'s mother is not happy about her rekindled [celebrity relationship](#) with pop star [Justin Bieber](#). Considering how distraught Selena was in the aftermath of their much-publicized breakup, it makes sense that her loved ones would worry about her this time around. Whatever the reasons may be, Selena's mom has assured the public that she just wants her daughter to be safe, healthy, and happy. While the approval of your parents is always a plus in any relationship, is it crucial to the success of your union? What can you do, then, if you find yourself in a

similar situation?

It is important to begin with an open conversation with the person criticizing your partner. Ask them to spell out their concerns and explain why they feel the person is not right for you. This isn't always easy to do. You might start from a defensive position, (especially if this is a continuous pattern) but it is worth hearing what's on their mind because their thinking is valid and you might be missing something. Keep an open mind while you are talking and consider what they have to say. If, for example, your romantic partner exhibited bad behavior in the past and your parents call that out, think about what has changed and what is different now. You have likely allowed yourself to fully trust that person and move forward with them. Explain the changes and describe why the previous behaviors are no longer something to worry about.

**Related Link:** [Relationship Advice: Is a Bad Boy Good for You?](#)

If, on the other hand, your family members or friends raise issues about a difference in race or religion, this may be a fork in the road where you choose to go your own way. It becomes a step toward independence, and a move away from the ideals of the family you grew up in. It is a time when you can take responsibility and voice your own values, even though they may differ from your parents, siblings, or friends. It can serve as an emotional emancipation and where you start to embrace what is important to you. When this happens, you acknowledge that they have criticisms, while asserting that they are not your personal beliefs.

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Whatever the case, if you continue to meet disapproval tell your loved ones that you would like them to "agree to disagree" and accept that you have clear differences of opinion in order to stay together as a family. This is also a time to put boundaries in place. Note that you are aware they



don't like your choice, but you do not want to hear anything more from them unless you specifically ask for an opinion. You can even warn that if they broach the subject, you will simply end the conversation. This will help you keep some control and prevent being blindsided.

The ultimate goal is to avoid getting into a power struggle that could make you feel controlled and judged by a parent or other loved one. It'll also avoid lots of arguments, too! Try not to become defensive or feel you have to justify your choice. The only thing that matters is that you are happy, excited, and comfortable as you move forward with your partner with your eyes on the future. Hopefully Selena and Justin will be able to do this and find peace even with the family discord. And, in time, Selena's mother will also come around and embrace her daughter's rekindled romance.

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## **Relationship Advice: Is a Bad**

# Boy Good for You?



By Dr. Jane Greer

Carmen Electra has revealed her ideal man is a “bad boy with a good heart.” She describes this man as someone who has been through a lot in life, and has had to work on himself. He is a spiritual person with a strong self-awareness, someone who has “worked all the steps” and is ready to settle down after experiencing all of the craziness of life. This is a common desire for women – wanting a man who is thought to be “bad.”

**This conundrum of falling for the rebel, the tough guy, and then**

dealing with the consequences that brings, has been around since people have been looking for love. What is it about that “type” that attracts so many? Check out the following [relationship advice](#).

It could be the image, or the idea that someone like that might be sexier than someone else, or it might be the thrill of being with a man who often decides not to follow the rules. Whatever the case, it can often lead you down a path of darkness. Very often the outcome is that the “bad boy” makes you feel bad. You see him as having been through a lot, maybe even having suffered, and you might want to try to make things better for him, but it comes with a price. Someone who breaks the rules might do so in your relationship, too, by lying, cheating, and even possibly insulting you. To an outsider, it might look like simply asking for trouble. Why, then, would someone knowingly put themselves through that?

**Related Link:** [Celebrity News: Carmen Electra Sets Record Straight on Her Relationship with Ex-Husband Dave Navarro](#)

In my book *How Could You Do This To Me? Learning to Trust After Betrayal*, I talk about the trust sand traps that keep you mired in a relationship like this. The first is, you want to give him the benefit of the doubt. In other words, you want to believe what he says and take it at face value, whether it is that he is sorry, or he didn't mean it, or he didn't realize what he did would hurt you. It is a way to make yourself feel virtuous since you are being understanding and patient, and you keep giving him another chance. You can say to yourself, look what I'm willing to put up with. Another trust sand trap you can get stuck in is the idea that he loves

you so much he will change his bad behavior for you. This concept allows you to stay in it and tolerate whatever he does while holding onto the hope that over time he will come to treat you the way you want. You are going to be the one who is more special than all of the other women, and be able to bring out the good in him. And finally, there is the idea that we are meant to accept the good with the bad. He wants you to feel sorry for him for how hard he's had it, and all the pain he has been through. This can work on your guilt. So by staying with him, it gives you a feeling of being in control since you are choosing to put up with it, which can help to alleviate your feeling guilty about not being accepting enough.

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If any one of these three trust sand traps are at play with you, surprisingly the relationship might be a way of going about trying to make yourself feel good. You raise your self-esteem by making you feel you are a strong, tolerant, and forgiving person in contrast to his being so bad. If you find yourself here, you may want to explore other ways to boost yourself up. Try to begin to trust your own truth by admitting that his lies and the other troubling things he does are not okay, and probably won't change. Protect yourself by putting limits in place and refusing to go along with the bad behavior so you don't have to continue to be mistreated.

Hopefully Carmen's "bad boy" has gotten all that negativity out of his system and is ready now for a smooth, good ride with her by his side.

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## Relationship Advice: When Is the Old New Again?



By Dr. Jane Greer

Jelena is back! [Justin Bieber](#) and [Selena Gomez](#) are officially back together. This is an instance when what was once old and

finished can become new again. Rekindling a relationship in this way can sometimes mean a couple was never really over the feelings they shared for each other the first time around, or that with the passage of time they are simply ready to give it another try. Sometimes extenuating circumstances such as illness can play a role and help them realize what is truly important. With this in mind, an end is not always really an end, and you might have an opportunity one day to reconnect with an old love if they're single, too. If that happens, it may give you both a chance to deal with unfinished business, and to move forward the way you may have always hoped you would.

## **How, then, can you get from Point A – a breakup – to Point B – a revived romance?**

So many things can bring a relationship to a grinding halt despite the fact that two people still feel love for each other. Career opportunities that force people to live in different places, or one of you wanting one thing – such as marriage or a family – when the other isn't quite ready. Negative parental pressure can also tear two people apart even if they don't really want to say goodbye. In these cases it isn't the feelings people have for each other that threaten the relationship, it is the life/work balance and other outside forces. This can become especially hard to cope with if one or the other jumps into a new relationship quickly to get over the hurt and disappointment of the loss. Even considering that, there still might be feelings of hope that someday they will find their way back to each other and their connection will resume.

**Related Link:** [Relationship Advice: Does Being Wronged Give You The Right To Fight?](#)

Sometimes this can occur with simple good luck – two people find themselves living in the same city again. It can also happen more dramatically, such as when someone becomes ill, as Selena has been with lupus which required a kidney transplant earlier this year. That sort of event can change your perspective and make you question your priorities, turning the small issues that once seemed so important in the past into meaningless details in the present. It may make you more willing to compromise over differences that previously you might have stood your ground on. It might also make you realize that you don't want to waste any more time hoping and waiting, and one or the other might reach out. When one does that, if the other person is receptive and welcomes the contact, it can leave room to pick up where you left off, rebuild, or even lay down new tracks.

**Related Link:** [Relationship Advice: Can You Cheat Jealousy?](#)

If you have been in a relationship that ended, and find yourself suddenly single and thinking about a former love, if they are also single, it might be a chance to call or write to them. If that person is sick, you can reach out in the name of friendship and offer caring support in those hard times. By doing so you open the door which might lead to something bountiful for both of you, and give new life to the connection you once shared and cherished.

Whatever happens going forward, it seems clear that Selena and Justin indeed have a bond together that has endured.

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# Relationship Advice: How to Handle Engagement Envy



By Dr. Jane Greer

Fashion model Gigi Hadid really wants her boyfriend, Zayn Malik, to propose after she found out her ex, Joe Jonas, just got engaged. This is a common response of feeling envious when your ex has moved on from being with you and gets engaged to someone else. It's difficult to feel like you are a step



behind when you see a former partner move forward with increased commitment, planning a future life together with someone else. This can be even more challenging if you are either at a standstill in your current relationship or worse if you're not in one at all. Engagement envy can strike and push you ahead when in fact you might not be ready to get engaged, as well as lead to pressure that can create conflict.

**How, then, can you handle envy and see the potential good you have right now instead of focusing on what could have been or forcing what isn't meant to be yet? Here's some relationship advice.**

Even though a relationship is over, there can be that urge to look back and wonder what you could have done differently. There might be a lot of bad that led you to the breakup, but somehow people tend to remember that pot of good that brought and kept you together, no matter how small it might be. With that in mind, it is hard not to wonder what you might have been able to do to work things out with your ex. Should you have tried harder, or given the love you once shared a second chance? These feelings can really come to the forefront when your ex becomes engaged to another person. You might even think that could have been, maybe should have been, you.

**Related Link:** [Celebrity Couple News: Gigi Hadid's Family Calls Zayn Malik a 'Great Guy' and Says 'She's Happy'](#)

Those negative feelings swirl around the sense that you've been cheated. You were the one who put up with so much negativity and worked at getting your partner to change for the better, and now someone else is going to reap the

benefits. Or you might feel it's not fair that your ex so easily found another partner while you might still be looking for Mr. or Mrs. Right. Or, as in Gigi's case, you might actually be part of a new couple, but seeing your ex get engaged to someone else stirs up your own desire to do the same. This could be stemming from not wanting to see your former lover be more successful than you, resulting in your forcing your new partner to take the next step before either of you are ready.

**Related Link:** [Celebrity Wedding: Joe Jonas & Sophie Turner Are Engaged](#)

All of these scenarios have the undercurrent of envy, which is never a pleasant place to be. So what can you do? First and foremost, remember what was different about the relationship you used to have and why you chose to end it in the first place. Trust your gut that you were taking care of yourself, and the breakup was in your best interest. If your ex was the one to call things off it might help to realize that the expectations he or she had for you were probably unrealistic, and take comfort in the fact that you are now free from that conflict and disappointment.

If you are currently not involved with somebody, it is really important to keep in mind that the connection you had with your ex served a purpose in helping you grow and discover what you are looking for in someone and what you're not. Even though they are now involved with someone else, try to keep that separate from your life and instead let it shed a light on what you want in your next relationship. Rather than getting caught up in feeling left behind or abandoned, or a failure that you and your ex couldn't make it work, focus on what you took out of it to better judge and choose your next partner.

Finally, if you are in a relationship as Gigi is, and your ex is already engaged to someone else, consider that this new

situation for your ex may perhaps be a rebound romance. They might be in a hurry to have a commitment, and it still might be just as fraught with the complex issues you had together. Just because he or she is choosing to get married now does not mean it will necessarily be smooth sailing ahead. If you can, sit back and maybe find some relief in the fact that it is not you on the road to marriage with someone you already know brings discontent and hard times to the table.

Hopefully Gigi and Zayn will get engaged when the time is right for them, not her ex.

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