

Taking on the Role of Stepmother



By Michele Sfakianos, RN, BSN for [Hope After Divorce](#)

Relationships alone are difficult. When you add his kids, her kids, his ex, her ex, and both sets of in-laws, most people cannot handle the pressure. Stepfamilies require more effort and understanding because more people are involved, and this often includes young ones who didn't ask to be put into the situation to begin with.

Long ago, the term "stepmother" was used to describe the "new" parent who stepped in after the "real" parent's death. Today, the stepmom is less often a substitute than she is an added parent. We all know the story of *Cinderella*. Fortunately,

there was a happy ending, but it did bring to light the “wicked stepmother.” Most everything you read about stepparenting has to do with evil stepmothers, obnoxious children, responsibility with no control, resentful ex-partners, and lack of worth or appreciation.

Related Link: [How to Prevent Yourself from Rushing into a Relationship](#)

Being a parent triggers memories and emotions from one’s own childhood, whether conscious or unconscious. This may or may not bring fear to those thinking about raising another person’s child. Parents may raise children similar to their own upbringing – or the opposite. Parents may strive to give their children an entirely different upbringing.

Being a mom can be one of the most rewarding things we do in our lives. It can also be one of the most difficult undertakings, and parental responsibility is not something we can take lightly. Taking on the role of stepmother can perhaps be the most difficult undertaking of all.

As mothers, we are programmed to love and nurture children. We were raised with the understanding that it is our “job” to take care of them. So we would naturally expect a loving response in return – or should we? When Mother’s Day or your birthday comes around, this opens opportunities for feeling down about being a stepmother. But don’t give in! An attitude will get you nothing but grief. Moping around because no one remembers your birthday is not the answer. You have to tell people, “Hey, my birthday is on Friday, and I want us to go out to dinner together.” Tell your partner birthdays are important to you and strongly suggest your partner talk to the kids about acknowledging it.

Related Link: [How to Date when You’re a Single Parent](#)

Before special events or days that matter to you, take the initiative to:

- 1. Be clear about your plans.** Anticipate problems and discuss them with the children.
- 2. Tell them your expectations.** People are not mind readers. Talk with your partner.
- 3. Do not expect a major deal about Mother's Day.** The kids feel conflicted enough as it is. Acknowledging it is important, but celebrating it may be too painful. Yes, of course, it hurts to be ignored or snubbed. Try to understand the positive intent behind it. It is not meant to hurt you. It is about guilt and loyalty to the other biological parent.

The manner in which you approach the role of mother or stepmother and the attitude you put forth will differ from those around you. You must pay particular attention to your actions so as to not alienate yourself from your partner or the children. Getting into a stepfamily can be rewarding and will make for new adventures. As with every new adventure, hold on tight because there will be bumps along the way, but the ride will be spectacular!

For more information about Hope After Divorce, click [here](#).

Michele Sfakianos, RN, BSN, is a Registered Nurse, Life Skills Expert, Speaker and Award Winning Author. She is the owner of Open Pages Publishing, which includes her series of "The 4-1-1" books on Life Skills, Step Parenting, and Surviving Teenhood. Michele is a contributing expert for HopeAfterDivorce.org, DivorceSupportCenter.com, FamilyShare.com, and CupidsPulse.com.

Q&A: Should I Delete or Unfriend My Exes on Social Networks?



Question from Shelby F.: Whenever a guy and I breakup, I always wonder if I should completely delete him from my life. A part of me thinks it's a good idea because then I won't be tempted to see if he's tagged in any new photos with new girls, but the other part of me doesn't want him to think I'm so bitter or immature that I can't stand him coming up on my newsfeed. What should I do?

Answer from Our Love Experts:

[Suzanne Oshima, Matchmaker](#): When it comes to social media and

an ex, there really isn't a clear-cut answer. It really depends on how the relationship ended and how you feel about him. If the relationship ended amicably and you feel you can still be friends with him, then it's fine to stay connected to him on social media.

However, if the relationship ended on a bad note, then why would you want to torture yourself by seeing him with his new girlfriend? Unfriending him or deleting him really isn't about being bitter or immature; it's more about your well being and moving on with your life. What he thinks about it shouldn't really matter to you, as you are no longer together.

[Paige Wyatt, Reality Star](#): It's totally understandable if you feel the urge to check up on your ex every once in a while, but know that it's not healthy. Keeping an eye on him will never give you the chance to completely get over him and move on, especially if he posts pictures with other girls. Seeing him having fun or with another woman will drive you crazy, even if you tell yourself you're happy for him!

The best thing to do after a break-up is wait until things have settled and neither of you are upset, which might take a few weeks. Then, unfriend him. This way, he won't think it's you taking a stab at him, and he will more likely realize you're just working on getting over him, which is exactly what you're doing!

[Robert Manni, Guy's Guy](#): This is a personal decision that is entirely up to you. A lot depends on the individual circumstances of how things went down with each guy. If you had an amicable split and somehow managed to remain friends with your ex (it *can* be done), then keep your social media lines of communication open. However, if you experienced an uncomfortable break-up that left behind some emotional residue, it might be best to sever your social media ties with him, so you're not reminded of a bad situation.

Notice I have not mentioned or factored in what he thinks. That's because this is *your* decision, and what he thinks about your social media doesn't really matter. And if it does, then maybe you still have feelings for him.

For more information on our three dating and technology gurus, click [here](#).

If you have any questions you would like answered by our experts, please submit them on our [Contact Page](#).

Do you delete or unfriend your exes on social networks? Tell us in the comments below!

Single in Stilettos Show: 5 Ways Women Sabotage Themselves with Men





On this week's [Single in Stiletto](#) show, founder Suzanne Oshima talks to dating expert Robert Manni about five ways that women sabotage themselves with men when it comes to dating. Ladies, the biggest mistakes that you tend to make include: always being “plugged in” and never letting go of your smartphone; not fishing where the fish are; traveling in groups; sticking too closely to your checklist of must-haves in a guy; and breaking up with him too soon. If you want to find true love, stop sabotaging yourself and learn how to avoid these pitfalls!

Related Link: [5 Things Men Wish Women Knew About Them](#)

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Ladies, what's the biggest dating mistake you make? Tell us in the comments below!

Screwing the Rules Video Dating Tips: Texts That Destroy Your Dating Mojo



By [E!'s Famously Single Dating Coach, Laurel House](#)

Dating Advice from E!'s *Famously Single* Laurel House on Texting

Related Link: [Summer Love...](#)

Texting: It can be flirty, funny, bitchy, or sexy. So what are the basic rules of sending a message to that special guy? In this week's [dating advice](#) video, dating expert and E!'s *Famously Single* dating coach, Laurel House talks about the do's and don'ts of texting while dating. She reveals when photos are appropriate and just how sexy is *too* sexy. "You don't want your texts to be longer than a thumb," she says. "Follow his lead!" Watch the video above to educate yourself on texting etiquette and learn what your texts might *really* be saying.

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What are some of your personal texting rules? Tell us in the comments below!

Single in Stiletto Show: 4 Signs He Might Be a Player





On this week's [Single in Stiletto](#)s show, founder Suzanne Oshima talks to top dating coach Sandra Fidelis about how to know if you're dating a player. Sometimes, you may recognize the red flags but choose to ignore them because you really want things to work out with this guy. Other times, he might totally fool you with his charming ways. If you're unsure, consider these four signs: he never calls and only texts you; he tries to sleep with you too soon; he ignores you for weeks and then suddenly contacts you again; and he makes inappropriate plans, like a vacation to Mexico after only a few dates.

Related Link: [Joe Amoia Discusses Dating Red Flags](#)

No matter what, always follow your intuition. You'll know if it's time to get serious or send him on his way!

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How can you tell if you're dating a player? Tell us in the comments below!

Emma Stone and Andrew Garfield's Body Language: In Love or Stressed Out?



By [Jared Sais](#)

On April 10th, at the World Premiere of *The Amazing Spider-Man 2* in London, Emma Stone and Andrew Garfield's body language didn't exactly scream love – proving that even Hollywood's

cutest couple can feel the strain of a long work day. The two met while filming *The Amazing Spider-Man* in 2010, and since then, they have become one of the most buzzed about celebrity couples. They've been known to gush about each other during interviews, but the lovebirds were strictly business on the red carpet.

Photo 1 (from left to right above): In this photo, Stone and Garfield are facing each other and looking deeply into each other's eyes. Her eyes are shut more tightly, and her dimples are more defined and closer together. These signs indicate that she is feeling playful and carefree as opposed to a forced, red carpet smile. His expression mirrors her affection because it is lighter and more romantic in nature.

Although Stone's eyes and dimples say playful, her and Garfield's upper bodies are telling a different story. Her hand is touching her dress is a self-touch gesture, which is usually used to comfort oneself in high stress situations. This touch can come in the form of simply rubbing or playing with one's own clothing or body parts. In this case, we see the actress use her dress as the non-verbal cue that she's stressed out. This snapshot indicates that, while they may be absolutely in love with each other away from the cameras, at this moment, their affection seems more like a strategically posed photo.

Related Link: [Celebrity Couples: What True Love Looks Like](#)

The final and most useful cue to identifying Stone and Garfield's true emotions is by looking at their feet. Your feet point to the direction you want to go. If you're interested in someone, your feet will be pointed in their direction; if not, then your feet will be pointed away. Stone's feet are pointed straight in front of her, not toward her beau. Similarly, his feet are also pointing away from Stone. But I think this speaks more for the situation than it

does the state of their relationship. Their bodies and faces may be in photo shoot mode, but their feet are ready to get inside, away from the cameras.

Photo 2: Here, their lack of enthusiasm is more evident. Stone is giving a standard glamour photo smirk. Her smile isn't genuine because it's missing ocular muscle movement, also known as crow's feet or smile lines. When people truly smile, their eyes and mouth both move to form a distinct facial expression. Because Stone and Garfield are smiling only with their mouths, this means that they are smiling purely for the cameras.

Stone has her head tilted away from Garfield, which is a bit odd because couples usually tend to gravitate towards one another. If you covered up either Stone or Garfield in the photo, it would seem like they were alone on the red carpet. When a couple is being photographed together, they usually pose as one unit, which isn't what I see here. However, this could be the 30th photo taken of them, and they most likely just want to mix it up when it comes to posing.

Related Link: [Celebrity Couples Who Met on Set](#)

As we saw in photo 1, Stone is still rubbing her dress with her hand, and Garfield continues to have his hand in his pocket. Both gestures indicate that they are trying to bring down their stress levels.

The actor is also holding his girlfriend pretty tightly. Combined with his "bad boy" facial expression, this body language tells me that he is establishing his dominance. Your state of mind can trigger your entire body to follow suit. In this case, he is portraying high confidence and a rebel persona, which is leaking into his body language and how he holds the actress in his arms.

Despite the visible signs of stress, how do I know that Stone and Garfield are still in love? In both photos, we can see

that they're mirroring each other's body language, which is a strong indicator of affection. From their gestures of distressing to the direction of their upper bodies and feet, the similarities in their poses show that these two are like-minded and compatible. Stone-Garfield fans can breathe a sigh of relief!

[Jared Sais](#) is co-author of the website [The Non-Verbal Game](#), where you can find free downloadable content. He is an expert in non-verbal communication, who specializes in body language, micro-expressions and lie deception as they relate to life and love.

Celebrity Couple Predictions: Mariah Carey, Mila Kunis and Lupita Nyong'o





By [Shoshi](#)

For today's column, let's take a look at three celebrity couples that are hot topics of relationship gossip – whether it's because of a whirlwind relationship that's still going strong, a seemingly-perfect twosome that recently announced their engagement and pregnancy, or a possible new coupling:

Mariah Carey and Nick Cannon: Since the day these two got together, they've made headlines. Their quick wedding had people predicting that they'd be divorced within months. Looks like the critics were wrong – at least for now! This quirky couple is celebrating six years of marriage yesterday.

Cannon has been very verbal about their sex life, even to the degree that it can be too much information. Did we really need to know that a lot of nookie is what keeps their relationship alive? Carey is not always thrilled that her hubby shares their marriage with the world. As a matter of fact, it's reported that she told him to stop talking about all of the women he was with before her because she didn't want to hear about it anymore.

Even though there are a lot of questions that surround them, this couple is a good fit. Since they started dating, Carey has calmed down, while Cannon has grown up a bit. They both enjoy adventures, so they always seem to be dressing up in costumes or doing something fun with their twins. On the flip side, the songstress is not fond of the comic's antics, which causes some stress and strain on their marriage. There may come a day when she is totally over his behavior, but it won't happen until their children are older.

Related Link: [Mariah Carey and Nick Cannon: New Parents On Their Anniversary!](#)

Mila Kunis and Ashton Kutcher: This adorable couple originally met while working on *That 70's Show* where their characters, Jackie and Kelso, dated and talked about having a baby. Looks like the show predicted real life since they're engaged with a baby on the way!

All is looking good for the famous pair, and there shouldn't be any roadblocks before their upcoming wedding. The two of them are just enjoying all of the good things in their lives. They're an ideal duo since they have the same values and are both down-to-earth in their approach to life.

I do, however, see a bit of back-and-forth when it comes to their prenuptial agreement. Kutcher's divorce from Demi Moore is still fresh on his mind, so he knows how things can go down if a marriage ends. Other than sorting out these financial details, everything is wonderful. From what I can see in their relationship, their preup will never need to be used.

Related Link: [Mila Kunis and Ashton Kutcher Are Expecting!](#)

Lupita Nyong'o and Jared Leto: Recently named the most beautiful person in the world, it's all good in the lovable actress's world. What exactly is going on in her dating life? She's extremely hot right now, so the men must be lining up to see what she is all about. Nyong'o has been linked to Academy

Award winner Jared Leto and rapper K'naan.

As much as I would love to see Nyong'o with Leto, it's not happening. It's fun to see the actor flirt with Nyong'o, and they would make such a gorgeous couple (can you imagine their kids?), but it looks like the *12 Years a Slave* star spends more quality time with K'naan.

Nyong'o is not thinking about dating around right now. Besides Leto, she gets attention from some of the best looking men in Hollywood. As for those rumors saying that she is going to run off and marry her rapper boyfriend, don't believe them. The spirits say that she'll soon be dating a sexy Hollywood actor who has been smitten with her for a while.

For more information on Shoshi, click [here](#).

Screwing the Rules Video Dating Tips: Find the Love of Your Life





By [E!'s Famously Single Dating Coach, Laurel House](#)

Dating Advice from E!'s *Famously Single* Laurel House on Finding the Love of Your Life

Related Link: [10 Places to Meet Your Soulmate](#)

In this week's [dating advice](#) video, dating expert and E!'s *Famously Single* dating coach, [Laurel House](#) tells you the 8 things to do when looking for love and the 10 best places to go to find that someone special. But first, she encourages you to forget chance. "Put yourself in the right place at the right time if you want to meet Mr. Right." She also shares what you shouldn't do – and it's really quite simple. "Whatever you have been doing! Because clearly it isn't working."

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What are you going to do to meet The One? Share your tips in the comments below.

What You Need to Know Before You Move In Together



By Lori Zaslow and Jennifer Zucher for [Project Soulmate](#)

There are many different factors, both trivial and significant, that you need to decide on as a couple before you move in together. Most importantly, you need to have a solid,

set plan. Questions must be answered prior to moving in together. For example, is this the person you want to marry? If the answer is yes for you, then make sure your partner is on the same page.

Sometimes, people may use moving in together as a sort of cop-out to getting engaged. Living together has all the benefits of marriage *without* the actual commitment in the eyes of the law. Ideally, you should obtain a verbal promise from your partner about if or when the next step towards marriage should occur. However, with that being said, you do not need to put an exact time frame on it because that will add unwanted pressure.

Related Link: [How to Know When It's Time to Get Hitched](#)

First, the two of you need to find a place to live. If possible, it is best to find a new apartment or house together because if you move into a partner's place, it may not ever feel like your home.

Another important aspect to keep in mind is determining what you can't live without. For example, will you be cooking or eating out most of the time? Your answer will determine whether you need a certain grocery store or particular restaurants nearby. Do you need to be close to family or the office? Do you need to use mass transit on daily basis, or are you driving to and from places? Living together, the two of you will be going through enough big changes, so it's best to keep where you live convenient to your already existing lifestyles and routines.

Related Link: [How to Prevent Yourself from Rushing into a Relationship](#)

Little things, like closet and bathroom space, should also be addressed beforehand in order to avoid petty fights and arguments. Plus, you made need to consider whether or not the

space (if you're renting) allows for animals. Some people cannot live without their pet, but perhaps, their partner is allergic to the animal. Any issue, no matter how big or small, that's going to alter your lifestyle in any way after moving in together should be addressed in advance!

For more information about Project Soulmate, click [here](#).

What do you think you should know before you move in together? Tell us in the comments below!

Single in Stiletto Show: What Attracts a Man?



On this week's [Single in Stilettos](#) show, founder Suzanne Oshima talks to dating coach Mr. Locario about what attracts a man. A self-proclaimed serial dater, he started out by helping his friends and family with their love lives – and now, he's here to help you! We all know that every man is attracted to different things, but there are some qualities that catch the attention of all guys. For instance, men like women with positive and pleasant attitudes as well as women who are independent and have their own lives.

Related Link: [What Women Don't Know About Men](#)

Listen up for more great dating tips!

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What do you think is the #1 trait that attracts a guy? Tell us in the comments below!

A Hole in My Heart





By Patricia Bubash for [Hope After Divorce](#)

A June wedding invite came in the mail for my husband and me this week. Ahhh, I think June is still the month for weddings, although I have read that October is quickly matching it for the month chosen by brides.

I met the groom-to-be a couple of years ago at a film festival where the documentary produced by him was being previewed. Dan and the other two creators of the film *Give a Damn* had decided in their mid-twenties to travel to one of the poorest countries in Africa. This film was to bring awareness to the world, to encourage those who saw the film to be proactive, to become involved in whatever manner they chose to be involved.

The three filmmakers would make their way from the Midwest to Europe feeding themselves on only \$1.25 a day for each. When they could, they hitchhiked; flights to Europe and Africa came out of fundraising money. Once there, they shared lodging, food, living arrangements with the poorest of poor, constantly filming, telling a story for the world. I watched in amazement, awe, and great respect what they had documented,

their immersion into extreme poverty.

At an age when most young adults are just beginning their careers, these three chose to live in uncomfortable, unpleasant, inconvenient, and even horrific circumstances and conditions. I wanted to hear more of their story, so I arranged to have breakfast with the two who were available. Dan arrived before David, and as we chatted, we discovered that he had attended a school where I had counseled part-time. He told me that he had also attended Rainbows, a divorce group for kids within the school. It was a program that all the counselors in the district utilized.

He went on to share that he was an only child, and in the fifth grade, his parents divorced. Not an unusual story, but what has transformed a first time meeting, a casual relationship, into an ongoing friendship, a wedding invite, is Dan's following words: "I was very close to my mother, and when she divorced my dad, she just left, went away. It left a hole in my heart."

Although Gwyneth Paltrow has been getting a lot of publicity with her "conscious uncoupling" approach to divorcing when children are involved, it does not take away the pain and sadness that kids feel when their parents breakup. They have feelings too, and their feelings are often not considered nor are their voices heard.

Related Link: [The REAL Reason that Gwyneth Paltrow and Chris Martin Split](#)

I have listened to many children's stories, wiped their tears, and reminded them that "things would get better" as they coped with their parents' divorce. Dan's words reached such an emotional cord with me. Before me sat a young man who had been part of an extraordinary project, was way past fifth grade, did not know me, and had shared something so personal.

I felt that I had been gifted with his openness. He went on to

tell me that he had participated in counseling beyond the Rainbows into his adult years. He had found his niche through church and his church friends. They were his support and his family.

Finding a faith, friends, a church family, and a cause had been Dan's personal "hope after divorce." I have always been bothered by adults who express that kids are resilient, that they will be just fine with the divorce, remarriage, or blending families. No matter what age, children are emotionally affected by the end of family composition as they have known it. It shakes their sense of security and stability.

They often fear that one parent will no longer be in their life. They worry that they will have to move, lose their friends, will have to change schools, and like Dan, feel a hole in their heart.

Related Link: [To Move or Not to Move? Why This Decision Is Tough on Kids](#)

I have often reflected back on our conversation, as a counselor and a divorced mother. I wondered if my kids were in conversation with Dan, would they share the same feeling of loss at the time of my divorce from their dad? What I do know is that I am so grateful for my relationship with Dan and for the compliment of an invitation to his wedding. I think Dan is quickly – and effectively – filling the hole in his heart.

The sharing time I had with Dan really did touch my heart so deeply. He is marrying a young woman who has a child – and I think he will be good at filling her little boy's heart.

For more information about Hope After Divorce, click [here](#).



Patricia Bubash received her M.Ed. in Counseling from the University of Missouri, St. Louis. Working with students and families has been her true calling for over thirty years. For more than twenty years she has presented workshops at the community college on a variety of topics relating to parenting issues, self-esteem and issues relative to divorce. Patricia is a Licensed Professional Counselor in the state of Missouri and, a Stephen Minister. She submits a variety of articles related to relationships, marriage and divorce to several internet sites, and, frequently, is interviewed on internet radio stations. Volunteerism, writing and family are most significant in her life. Patricia writes for DivorceSupportCenter.com, HopeAfterDivorce.org, CupidPulse.com, and FamilyShare.com. She can be reached at patriciathecounselor@successfulesecondmarriages.com. Follow Patricia on www.facebook.com/patriciathecounselor.

Screwing the Rules Video Dating Tips: Communicating About Tough Topics





By [E!'s Famously Single Dating Coach, Laurel House](#)

Dating Advice from E!'s *Famously Single* Laurel House on Talking About the Tough Things

Related Link: [Dating Power Tools](#)

In this week's [dating advice](#) video, dating expert and E!'s *Famously Single* dating coach, [Laurel House](#) helps you answer the age-old question: Are you good in bed? If you're not sure, the best thing to do is just ask. The key, though, is removing your ego. "This is not about blowing smoke. You're not fishing for compliments. You're looking for constructive criticism," House shares. "But if you can't handle the truth, don't ask for it."

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Cupid wants to know: How do you approach the tough topics with your partner?

Singles in Stiletto's Show: Are Men Intimidated By Independent Women?



On this week's [Single in Stiletto's](#) show, founder Suzanne Oshima talks to relationship strategist Joe Amoia about

whether or not men are really intimidated by strong and independent women. While that may be the case, there's a chance that you're making the biggest and most common mistakes made by career women, including: acting too self-sufficient, bringing masculine energy on a date with you, lacking vulnerability, and more.

Related Link: [Joe Amoia Reveals Quick Fix Dating Tips that Don't Work](#)

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What's the most common mistake that career women make? Share your thoughts in the comments below!

How to Move On After Heartbreak





By David Wygant

I'm going to share with you some of the best advice that my mother gave me when I was younger. When I was 19 years old, I was dating a girl named Kris. She was the love of my life. Well, the love of my very short life at the time. She was my high school sweetheart, and she literally broke my heart three weeks before the prom.

Thankfully, for me, we got back together that summer, but once again, she broke my heart right before I went to college. I remember spending my freshman year of college listening to "Keep On Loving You" by Reo Speed Wagon and thinking about her. All I thought about was getting back with her. I spent the whole time romanticizing about all that was great between us and ignoring the reasons we broke up in the first place.

Related Link: [Gwyneth Paltrow and Chris Martin Separate](#)

The summer between my freshman and sophomore year, Kris and I got back together again! It was amazing. It was fantastic. We were in love again. I was thinking I would marry her in 8.4

years, when we both got out of school. Then all of a sudden, she broke my heart one more time. I remember sitting there in my room, crying again, and thinking to myself, "How am I going to get her back for the fourth time?"

My mother walked in. Little did I know, my parents were separating and getting a divorce at the same time. She sat down at the edge of my bed, looked at me, and said, "In life, you never know how things are going to work out. Even if you've been with somebody a very long time, it doesn't mean you're going to be with them forever. You're going to meet somebody again one day that loves you more than Kris ever did."

I cried. I went to school, and then after a while, I realized what great advice that was. I was going to meet somebody who loved me more. Isn't that what we want? Don't we all want somebody who loves us as much as we love them? Throughout my life, I've always remembered and embraced my mother's advice. Most importantly, I've always paid attention to it whenever a relationship ended. I was always going to find somebody who loved me more.

See, what we do when we're breaking up with somebody, is we romanticize about the good times. We ignore all the lessons that were there. Let me tell you something: If a relationship doesn't work out between two people once, the chances are it will never work out. There are tons of reasons why, and most the time, you'll never get to the bottom of it.

I'm sure that, if you're going through a breakup now, you're wondering, "What if I did this differently? What if she hadn't done that?" You could spend years talking and thinking things through, and you'll find a few reasons things haven't worked out. What you have to remember is the person you're romanticizing about in your head isn't going to change. You're remembering the good and blocking out all the negative reasons you guys can't be together. That's the key.

Related Link: [How to Get Over the Relationship Blues](#)

Maybe you're hung up on your ex because you don't like the idea of being single. If that's the case, I'm going to end this post with some of the best advice I've ever *given* people about relationships. Being single gives you the opportunity to meet someone you've never met before and the chance to use the lessons you learned from past relationships to avoid making the same mistakes again.

So stop romanticizing about the ex and start remembering the reasons you're not together anymore. Learn the lessons and move on. Being single gives you the chance to create magic. Don't run away from it. Embrace it!

For more information on David Wygant, check him out on our [Experts Page](#).

Top 3 Mistakes Women Make in Relationships





By [Marni Battista](#)

As much as we'd like to think of ourselves as relationship experts and place all the blame for failed attempts at love on pure male stupidity, women may unknowingly make crucial slip-ups that land them back in the singles pool time and time again. If you find yourself chronically heartbroken, it's time to take an objective look at your past relationships and 'fess up if you've been guilty of making some of these common missteps. To help you do so, here are the top three mistakes women make in relationships and how to avoid them.

Related Link: [Cupid's Weekly Round-Up: Fixing Your Relationship](#)

1. Trying to Change Him: We've all heard the age old saying that loving someone makes you want to be a better version of yourself, which is often misinterpreted and manifests itself as the number one mistake women make in relationships. We have a tricky habit of seeing men for the way they could be and not the way they are...and then we give ourselves the mission of being the one who helps them bridge that gap.

If you find yourself inclined to guide your man down a path you've envisioned for him, pause to analyze what small stuff you can let go or gently encourage. Ultimately, if you're wanting to drastically change someone, this isn't a good relationship for you in the long run anyway.

2. Acting Passive-Aggressive: Conflict is bound to arise in even the happiest of relationships, and unfortunately, some of it could leave you feeling upset or put out by your significant other's words or actions. Many of us are guilty of employing the old standby silent treatment or just responding with curt answers, all the while assuming he knows exactly why you're angry and impatiently waiting for a heartfelt apology.

While it can be comforting to a bruised ego to let him sweat it out, squirm, and press for what's bothering you, passive-aggressive behavior will ultimately lead to a loss of respect or a fight without the issue really getting resolved. If you're hurt or have a problem that needs discussing, be straightforward and address it head on.

3. Not Giving Him Space: In a relationship where you're feeling either particularly lovey dovey, you can easily slip into the habit of insisting on spending all your time with your man. In the case where you simply cannot get enough of him, remember that you'll appreciate the time spent together so much more if you maintain an active social calendar outside of your relationship. Furthermore, having your own activities and hobbies that you participate in independent of him will make you that much more appealing.

If you're feeling especially drawn to him because he's been withdrawing from you, it could be that he's needing to sort through an internal issue unrelated to the relationship. Men are wired differently and prefer to deal with tough issues on their own rather than reach out to others for help. If his seclusion is isolated to within your relationship, it's time to open the lines of communication and air out whatever it is

that isn't working. Smothering him without addressing the heart of the matter will only drive him further away.

Related Link: [How to Listen to Your Heart and Take Back Control of Your Love Life](#)

If you have a tendency to make any or all of these three mistakes, it's time to take a dating break and look at what fears or insecurities are behind your behaviors. Often, trying *not* to make these mistakes can feel akin to a Monday morning diet promise: easily made but rarely implemented once we get triggered. Forgive yourself for the errors you've made and give yourself an opportunity to change-up your dating game. The result will be worth it, of that we are sure!

[Marni Battista](#), founder of Dating with Dignity, is an expert dating and life coach with a 10-step system to manifesting love for your self and others. You can contact Marni at marni@datingwithdignity.com.

To Move or Not to Move? Why This Decision Is Tough on Kids





By Michele Sfakianos, RN, BSN for [Hope After Divorce](#)

Divorce is one of those life events that forces huge changes in your life, whether you like it or not. During a divorce, a decision will need to be made on living arrangements. Let the court decide who needs to move out and what will happen with the home. Sometimes, one spouse will offer to move out but wants their part of the equity in the house. The partner who stays put may have to put it up for sale in order to pay the other partner unless they can refinance, thus adding the amount of equity onto the mortgage.

Definitely get some legal advice before you make your choice. Leaving the home before the court date might have a detrimental effect on the outcome. Couples will want to communicate in a responsible manner to find a way to share the residence. If there's too much disagreement, then another solution may be necessary...but you still need a professional opinion before packing up those boxes.

Since they have just announced their desire to divorce, Gwyneth Paltrow and Chris Martin are one such couple

who will be considering the effect moving will have on their two young children. Hopefully, through their “consciously uncoupling,” the transition will be as smooth as possible for their kids – as well as themselves.

Related Link: [Gwyneth Paltrow and Chris Martin Separate](#)

There are times in each child’s life when a change like moving to a new school, city, or state can be devastating. A young kid depends on the security of their home and school, while a teenager may simply want to finish high school with their friends. You need to take these situations into account when making your plans. The parent who has the children a majority of the time should do their best to stay put.

With divorce, the furnishings are often divided, which may leave the family home empty. Since it is your kids’ house too, you should try to include them in the decorating decisions. This approach helps them to feel valued. Listen to the child’s needs and tastes. It also provides opportunities for two important activities:

1. Education: You may know that it’s an antique chair, but for your children, it’s an old ugly chair until you teach them about the distinguishing signs and history.

2. Shopping: Head to local flea markets, auctions, or estate sales for old furniture. Refinish or repaint the old dresser. Your kids will feel like a part of the process and enjoy using the item they helped refinish.

Once you’re finished decorating, throw a party and show off the new look of your place. By celebrating, you are showing the children that you love and respect their help and that everyone can enjoy the newly decorated home.

Related Link: [What Now? Transitioning From Married to Single](#)

If you must move, understand that a new place will not fix

everything. Moving is traumatic and expensive, and when everyone has to move, someone will be upset. Yes, the new house may have clean paint and a fresh look, but those moving into it are still the same people. After the movers are gone, you may find yourselves standing around and looking at each other thinking, "What now?" Post-Move Syndrome Letdown (PMSL) is common.

Hang in there and try to enjoy setting up your new home. Make sure to include everyone. If you see your children having difficulty adjusting to a different home or community, address it immediately. Find someone for them to talk to. Be supportive and encouraging and let your children know that you'll be with them every step of the way.

For more information about Hope After Divorce, click [here](#).

Michele Sfakianos, RN, BSN, is a Registered Nurse, Life Skills Expert, Speaker and Award Winning Author. She is the owner of Open Pages Publishing, which includes her series of "The 4-1-1" books on Life Skills, Step Parenting, and Surviving Teenhood. Michele is a contributing expert for HopeAfterDivorce.org, DivorceSupportCenter.com, FamilyShare.com, and CupidsPulse.com.

5 Ways to Have a Stress-Free First Date





By Melanie Mar

Butterflies in your stomach, questions running through your mind, and nervous energy are all natural reactions before heading out on any first date. The first date is an icebreaker, not a marriage interview, so sit back and enjoy! The beauty of a first date is that, if it goes poorly, you will most likely get over it quickly. Remind yourself that your best self is relaxed and confident. Follow the tips below to reduce your first date anxiety and set yourself up for fun.

1. Keep it short and sweet: The focus of your first meet-up is getting a feel for the other person, so stick with the basics. A first date is like an appetizer, not a main course. Don't go into every detail of your past relationships, be too flirty, or reveal too much about yourself.

A good rule of thumb is to keep your date to a maximum of two hours; a lot can be covered in this short amount of time. An hour at the local coffee shop with a short walk afterwards, a shared dessert at a fun new spot, or an early dinner are all simple ways to keep things light. Always leave the other

person wanting to know more about you!

Related Link: [Five Tips for Falling in Love in 2014](#)

2. Have fun: Lighthearted conversation is key. Just enjoy the time as you would with a new friend. You certainly don't need a super extravagant or creative plan for your first meeting. Try to look at the person across from you from a place of playfulness. Laughter is very attractive! This is a new, exciting stage in your life, so focus your intentions on having fun.

3. Just breathe: Your mind is naturally going to be overactive with pre-date jitters. Listen to some upbeat music, go shopping, or even exercise beforehand. This activity will help get rid of all your restless energy. Getting your body and mind centered is a big part of feeling mentally prepared for your date. Plus, people are their most authentic selves when they're relaxed. Go with the flow, breathe, and take it slow. By learning to have a nice, stress-free time, you will allow the true you to come out naturally, making you even more beautiful and attractive.

4. Be the natural you: When you're concerned with finding the right partner or overly-focused on making a good first impression, you often end up being awkward. Trying too hard results in a false sense of self. When you feel comfortable with yourself, others will feel at ease with you too.

One of the biggest reasons people are anxious preparing for first dates is because they are overly concerned about how they will be perceived. You think, "Will this person think I'm funny or attractive enough?" Remind yourself that the someone who is meant to be with you long-term will like you even if you show up a little nervous!

Related Link: [Why Looking for Love Is Like a Job Search](#)

5. Be realistic: It's easy to get carried away by a fantasy

you have created in your head. Thinking of this new person as a potential fiancé or even marriage material can set you up for a total letdown. A date that has had too much pre-conceived thought or imagination added to it is almost certain to disappoint you. We're all human and far less than perfect, so try to keep an open mind and heart.

It can be easy to waste time worrying about going out on a first date, whether it's with someone you've met online, have been talking to over the phone, or have even already met in person. Try practicing some or all of these tips the next time you prepare for a first date, and you'll feel more confident and relaxed as a result!

[Melanie Mar](#) is a celebrity relationship specialist, matchmaker and life coach.

Screwing the Rules Video Dating Tips: #1 Sexiest Trait that Attracts Any Guy





By [E!'s Famously Single Dating Coach, Laurel House](#)

In this week's [dating advice](#) video, relationship expert and E!'s *Famously Single* dating coach, [Laurel House](#) shares her thoughts on the sexiest trait that attracts any guy. "Did you know many of my clients who are seemingly the total package can't get a guy to ask them on a fourth – or sometimes even a second – date? Do you know why?" the dating expert asks. "It's actually the most important thing when it comes to attracting a guy." It's not about looks or even being the total package; it's a trait that's available to average or even below-average women.

Dating Advice from E!'s *Famously Single* Laurel House on Sexy Traits

Related Link: [First Date Conversations That Will Get You a Second Date](#)

So what is the sexiest trait that attracts any man? Being alluring. Listen up for advice on how to channel this power and get the guy you want!

For more information about our dating mentor, click [here](#).

For more videos from CupidsPulse.com, check out our [YouTube channel](#).

What do you think is the #1 sexiest trait to attract a guy? Tell us in the comments below!

Single in Stilettos Show: Quick Fix Dating Tips Don't Work!





On this week's [Single in Stiletto's](#) show, founder Suzanne Oshima talks with relationship strategist Joe Amoia about why quick fix dating tips don't work. He believes that the reason they don't work is because they're just that – a quick fix! They won't give you the long-term results that you want when it comes to your love life. Instead, you need to explore the true cause of your dating problems. Look inward and try to identify repeating patterns or issues that always come up.

Related Link: [Stop Wasting Time Dating the Wrong Men](#)

Watch the video above for more great dating advice that will transform your love life from the inside out!

For more information about Single in Stiletto's shows, click [here](#).

For more videos from CupidsPulse.com, check out our [YouTube channel](#).

Why do you think quick fix dating tips don't work? Tell us in the comments below!

Celebrity Couple Predictions: Mary-Kate Olsen, Eva Mendes and Amal Alamuddin



By [Shoshi](#)

For today's column, let's take a look at three celebrity couples that are on top of the media's radar— whether it's because of an odd pairing, an on-and-off-again relationship, or a surprising new coupling:

Mary-Kate Olsen and Olivier Sarkozy: The former child star turned fashion designer is rumored to be engaged to the

banker, although she has yet to officially confirm the news. When this engagement was first announced, there was a collective “ew” heard around the world.

Olsen is 27 years old, while Sarkozy is 44 years old – but one can say that Olsen has experienced a lot in her 27 years. Therefore, their 17-year age difference shouldn't be a major factor in this relationship. It's the visual of seeing them together that makes people stop and ponder a bit. She's a petite youthful-looking pixie, while he's over a foot taller than her and looks every bit of his four decades. In other words, he looks more like her daddy than her fiancé. Seeing the two of them with his teenage daughter definitely makes you do a double take!

Since Sarkozy and Olsen have been together, she seems to be completely drama-free. The two already live together in a six-million-dollar home in New York City, and the fashion designer has shown how she will be as a stepmom to Sarkozy's two children. So the next step appears to be marriage. I can see them getting married secretly and having a baby together before the relationship hits a major bump.

Related Link: [Mary-Kate Olsen Is Engaged to Olivier Sarkozy](#)

Eva Mendes and Ryan Gosling: Are they together or not? That's the question. The two of them haven't been photographed together for over three months. In the midst of the break-up rumors, she has been seen walking his dog, while he has been seen driving her car and peeking over her fence. One report even had the actor rekindling his relationships with his *The Notebook* co-star Rachel McAdams, who he admitted was his first love.

Maybe the twosome are just having fun and like to keep us all guessing. It could also be a way to get people interested in Gosling's directorial debut *How to Catch A Monster*, which Mendes stars in.

In looking at their relationship energy, I feel like these two can't figure out what they're doing. Either they commit to each other 100 percent and get married or buy a house together, or they split and move on. Part of why they're staying together is their comfort level.

Also, might I add that it looks like things in the bedroom are quite fabulous. Let's keep it real: Good loving will make anyone stay around a little bit longer!

Related Link: [George Clooney Vacations With Rumored New Girlfriend Amal Alamuddin](#)

George Clooney and Amal Alamuddin: It has finally happened: Clooney is dating a woman who has beauty *and* brains. This isn't to throw any shade at the lovely ladies he has dated in the past, but his new girlfriend has some major girl geek credentials. Alamuddin's resume includes a career in international law, fluency in French and Arabic, and a degree from Oxford. Plus, she's an author.

Some say that she's way out of Clooney's league. While the actor is no Oxford grad, he is deeper than some of his former dating choices. Let's not forget that he normally makes his intellectual statements in the movies that he produces and directs.

There is speculation that he staged the recent photos of the couple in New York because he's upset that his ex Stacy Keibler got married and is expecting a baby less than a year after their break-up. I won't go so far as to say that Clooney cried over Keibler's big news, but it bruised his ego a bit. He's used to his exes looking a little pitiful in the press when he drops them, whereas the beautiful blonde rebounded with a win.

His relationship with Alamuddin will have a typical Clooney run. She will accompany him to events, vacations, and other high-profile outings. However, she will bore of him versus him

getting bored with her. She's a woman of many layers; Clooney picked a lady who will give him a run for his money.

For more information on Shoshi, click [here](#).

Hang Tough – You'll Get Through It



By Janeen Diamond for Hope After Divorce

“When depression sets in, bring on the sugar! Right?”

I don't know about you, but for me, the winter months are often the hardest to get through. Sometimes, it feels like all

I can do is grit my teeth and survive! The snow falls, which is great the first several times, but then it starts to get annoying. The sun rarely shines because of the inversion, and, no matter what I do, I'm freezing all the time.

Such is life. So many of the experiences we encounter remind me of the cold weather. And sometimes, we just have to hang in there and keep the faith that there's something better waiting for us when it's all said and done.

Related Link: [Cupid's Weekly Round-Up: Fixing Your Relationship](#)

Maybe you're going through a divorce. Maybe you have financial pressures that are holding you back. Maybe your kids are giving you grief. But no matter what, just remember: This too shall pass. Here are a few ideas for hanging tough and coming out the other side in one piece:

Keep yourself healthy and hydrated. When depression sets in, bring on the sugar! Right? Well, try to practice moderation with the chocolate and eat more vegetables instead. You'll feel a whole lot better and may even beat the blues. I notice that, when I don't drink enough water, I start to feel run down and tired. Staying hydrated is an easy fix that we sometimes don't even think about.

Slow down a bit. Sleep a little more, and work a little less. We sometimes put a lot of pressure on ourselves to take care of things that really aren't all that important in the grand scheme of things. If you feel you need a nap, take one. If you want a day of doing nothing, do it.

Related Link: [How to Get Over the Relationship Blues](#)

Look for the positive. Winter may be rough, but the freshly fallen snow is beautiful. You may be in the throws of divorce, but soon, you'll be able to begin a new life. You may be feeling financial pressure, but you're always free to look for

a new opportunity to help you rise above it. Your kids may be causing trouble, but it's all part of discovering who they are – and one day, they will make you proud.

One thing is certain. Winter will end, and spring will begin. And there is definitely nothing more beautiful than watching the grass become green and the flowers start to blossom. I've come to realize if the grass were always green and the flowers were always in bloom, we wouldn't be nearly as grateful as we are when we can watch the transition happen right before our eyes. So hang in there. Things are about to change!

For more information about Hope After Divorce, click [here](#).



Janeen Diamond was a newscaster for KUTV News until 2001. Since then, she has been actively producing commercials and special programming through her company, "Your TVSpot." She has hosted several television and internet productions and has been a spokesperson for many products and companies. She authored her first book, "Save Your Marriage in 30," hoping to help families have greater success and live happier lives. She is co-creator of "Teen Impact TV," a website for high school students to give them a creative and emotional outlet. Janeen is a contributing expert for HopeAfterDivorce.org, FamilyShare.com and LAFamily.com. Follow her blog, <http://saveyourmarriagein30.blogspot.com/>.

Dating with Dogs: Pet Responsibilities



By Eric Bittman, CEO/President of [Warren London](#)

To say that getting a dog is a huge responsibility is an understatement. From feeding, walking, and picking up after your furry friend to making sure he's up-to-date on his vaccines and well groomed (with Warren London products, I hope!), he demands *a lot* of attention. Before rushing into picking out a pet, there are a lot of things to think about and to discuss as a family.

Related Link: [What to Discuss Before Getting a Pet Together](#)

Talking about how you plan to divide up responsibilities is extremely important in advance of getting a pup. You and your family members might have busy work and school schedules. Who will watch the dog? How many hours each day will he be alone?

One possibility to discuss is dropping the dog off at a doggy daycare center. Once you've decided on daycare, you should consider the expense and discuss who will drop off and pick up your pooch.

Planning a walking and feeding schedule is also extremely important. If you want to bring a young puppy home, the first six to ten months can be very intense – accidents on your antique rug or brand new bed and chewing on the legs of your coffee table or favorite pair of shoes are common. The only way your dog will learn is to be constantly reminded and walked or let outside whenever needed. To make it easier, involve all of your family members and decide who will do each job.

It's no secret that kids love dogs and often beg their parents for a new puppy. The fun ends once everyone realizes how much work it is! Make sure your children understand the process of housebreaking, grooming, and cleaning up after a dog before bringing a new family member home.

Once the work level is understood, raising a pet will be a rewarding experience and will teach your children responsibility – after all, it's up to you and your family to keep your new pal both healthy and happy! Having a dog is not all fun and games, but as long as your family understands the work it entails, great memories will be made.

Related Link: [Picking Out a Pet](#)

For this month's celebrity Q&A, I spoke with Steve Cuccio, who appeared on *Charles in Charge*, became good friends with Scott Baio, and later appeared on the VH1 show *Scott Baio is 45 and Single*. Known as The Cooch, he was usually the voice of reason

for Scott and his friends as they tried to figure out why he couldn't settle down and get married.



Q: What kind of dog do you have now?

A: A King Charles Spaniel.

Q: Did you grow up with dogs? If so, what kind?

A: I grew up with a beagle-cocker mix named Penny.

Q: How did you and your wife decide the rules on training your dog? Did you have different views, or was this a non-issue?

A: We sent our King Charles Spaniel to puppy school at about four months old. It helped her learn simple commands and introduced her to other dog's butts. We never feed her table food; she is actually on a strict diet from a bout with pancreatitis. She gets fresh Bison meat from Whole Foods, while I eat a microwaved dinner!

Q: Do you feel that your dog has a positive effect on your relationship with your wife and kids?

A: She is very loving and has had a positive effect on my family.

Q: You got your dog when your daughters were around their

middle school years. Did your family set up job responsibilities for your kids prior to getting a dog?

A: The kids said they would walk her and feed her, but in reality, they just play with her and enjoy her.

Q: Does your family use Warren London's easy to use at home dog spa products to pamper your pup? Is this a fun bonding time for your family?

A: We use Warren London products, and she loves them, especially her nail polish.

For more information about Eric Bittman, click [here](#). Stay tuned for next month's Dating with Dogs column!

NoGamesLove Video Dating Tips: Get Over Your Ex





By [E!'s Famously Single Dating Coach, Laurel House](#)

Dating Advice from E!'s *Famously Single* Laurel House on Getting Over Your Ex

In this week's [dating advice](#) video, relationship expert and E!'s *Famously Single* dating coach, Laurel House knows firsthand just how difficult it can be to get over a lingering ex-boyfriend. "Are you having a hard time getting over your ex?" the dating expert asks. "You are obsessing over him; you feel addicted to him – even though you know how unhealthy and toxic that relationship was, you still crave it." In today's video, she shares what she learned from her own experiences to help you move on.

For more information about our dating mentor, click [here](#).

For more videos from [CupidsPulse.com](#), check out our [YouTube](#)

[channel](#).

Have you ever gotten over a toxic ex? Tell us your story in the comments below.

Q&A: Is It Bad to Double-Text a Guy?



Question from Kelsi W.: I've been texting back and forth with a guy I recently met. We'll be having a good conversation, but occasionally, he won't respond to something I say. Is it bad to text him again later on about something else, or should I always wait until he texts me back?

Answer from Our Love Experts:

[Suzanne Oshima, Matchmaker](#): In the early stages of dating, it's a push/pull dynamic, so if you keep trying to pull him towards you, he might start to push you away. If you have a great conversation and he doesn't respond to something you say, then just leave it be. If you text him again, it may come across as a little desperate, and his response might be to ignore you even further.

Trust me, if a guy likes you and is interested in dating you, he will pursue you and text you. But if you're doing all the pursuing...then how can you ever really be sure that he's interested in you?

Robert Manni, Guy's Guy: Not knowing the context of your texts or how many you're sending each day, I sense a bit of insecurity here. Unfortunately, texting has replaced real conversation and meaningful dialogue between two potential partners. I'd give the guy a pass if he doesn't respond to each and every one. He may read them and mentally acknowledge your message before returning to whatever he's doing. If you feel a need to close the loop on each text, I suggest picking up the phone or meeting him in person.

Don't take it personally if you find out that not every guy has the time or the desire to text back and forth until closing each thread. That said, you deserve his respect and shouldn't allow him to blow you off if that's what he's doing. But keep in mind that texting is only one part of getting to know someone. A phone call or a glass of wine are great ways to better connect. And wouldn't you prefer to hear your partner's voice and see his smiling face rather than read his text message?

Paige Wyatt, Reality Star: When it comes to texting, people are often hard to read, especially someone you've just met. Try to get a sense of how he feels about you from the texts

you do receive. Does he seem enthusiastic and interested in you? Or is it more of a bland, boring conversation?

If he seems really into you, then he's probably just busy and might to be able to respond. If that's the case, you should shoot him a sweet and simple text just to say you were thinking of him and ask him to text you when he can. If he isn't very into the conversation or seems distant, you may want to wait until he texts you again.

Remember that every guy is different when it comes to texting. Some love to talk all day, while others hate it. It's all a matter of getting to know him and his style of communication.

For more information on our three dating and technology gurus, click [here](#).

If you have any questions you would like answered by our experts, please submit them on our [Contact Page](#).

Cupid wants to know: Do you think it's okay to double-text your crush?