

Expert Dating Advice: How to Date a Coworker



By Marisa Gooch

Most of us typically view work as a place to acquire skills, earn an income, and build a social circle. But for some, work can also be a place to find their happily ever after.

Take [Gwen Stefani and Blake Shelton](#), for example. They met while judging for [The Voice](#) in 2014. What began as a simple friendship soon sprouted into something more. Now, Stefani and Shelton have been dating for three years and are still going strong.

Dating A Coworker

Dating a coworker isn't only familiar to the celebrity world. According to a survey conducted by [Vault](#), 51 percent of respondents have had an office romance at least once in their careers. Another recent study conducted by [The Knot](#) found that 12 percent of participants met their spouses at work.

For how common it is to date within your work circle, learning how to handle a romantic relationship with a coworker can be difficult, awkward, and stressful. Should you tell the company that you two are dating? How do you address each other at work? What happens if you break up? These questions should be contemplated and answered before you dive into a serious relationship with a fellow employee. To combat the potential awkwardness, here are four guidelines that will help you handle a professional relationship that turns into a personal one.

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1. Check Your Company's Policy

Unless you work in the state of California, it is *legal* for your company to set [fraternization](#) policies, meaning that the company could prohibit employees from participating in romantic or sexual relations with each other. If your company has a strict fraternization policy and it is broken, one or both participants involved could be terminated. Yikes.

Not all companies have strict fraternization policies, though. Some companies have their employees sign a [love contract](#), and other companies don't care if two employees date as long as the work gets done. Before becoming romantically involved with a coworker, check your company's handbook and your employment

contract to confirm that dating within the company is allowed. If you have the green light, it is best to notify your supervisor or boss once your relationship becomes serious so that he or she is aware.

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2. Set Boundaries

Sometimes “all work and no play” is a good thing in terms of how you and your partner interact while in the office. Remember that when you are at work, you are *working*. That means no kissing in the halls, no batting eyelashes at each other, and no overly romantic talk.

[Lynn Taylor](#), author of [Tame Your Terrible Office Tyrant: How to Manage Childish Boss Behavior and Thrive in Your Job](#), says that even though behaving strictly professionally may feel awkward, it is “better to overcompensate than to constantly test the limits of workplace etiquette while hoping for the best.” Maintaining your professionalism will prevent your colleagues from feeling uncomfortable around you and your partner.

Now, I know what you may be thinking: *I can't show ANY form of love or appreciation for my partner in the office?* The answer is you can, but keep it simple and subtle. Going to lunch together or meeting up for breaks is totally fine. Friendly chatting in the coffee room is, too. Discuss with your partner other activities that you both feel uncomfortable participating in while you are at work and stick to your decisions.

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3. Don't Involve the Entire Company

You're dating your coworker, not the company you work for. Keep your relationship private, especially when you have disagreements and fallouts. [Art Markman](#), professor of psychology at the University of Texas, advises this exactly. He says that you should leave any personal quarrel with your significant other out of the workplace.

This means that if you and your partner are fighting, don't tell Sally in the printing room what happened. Likewise, your partner shouldn't tell John two cubicles down about the rude things you said. Sharing the details of your private life with your colleagues can spread rumors and encourage gossiping in the office. You and your partner may forgive and forget, but Sally will see your partner as an awful person, and John will dub you as someone who doesn't have a filter. Even worse, the news could get back to your boss, causing him or her to feel that your relationship is damaging your work ethic. That itself could create a plethora of problems. To keep this from happening, keep your home life at home and your work life at work.

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4. Be Prepared for What Could Come

It is important to be realistic about the future of your relationship. Either it is going to work, or it isn't. If you and your partner decide to get married, will you both stay at your company? If you and your partner break up, how will you interact at work?

Be prepared for both outcomes early on, especially for the outcome that entails tears, heartache, and anger. According to dating expert [Chiara Atik](#), it can be very uncomfortable to work with someone after a breakup. Preparing for the unknown with your partner can help you both have a clear game plan when x, y, or z happens.

If you are making eyes at the girl down the hall or the boy in the mailroom, keep these four guidelines in mind for when that relationship takes off. If you end up belonging to the 12 percent that marries a coworker, all the best to you. If you belong to the majority that knows what it's like when a romantic relationship with a colleague turns sour, don't be afraid to apply these same steps to combat the inevitable awkwardness that may follow.

Expert Relationship Advice: 4 Ways Picking Up a Book Can Improve Your Health





By [Amy Osmond Cook, Ph.D.](#)

[Oprah Winfrey](#) does it. So does [Reese Witherspoon](#), [Bill Gates](#), [Barack Obama](#), and [Emma Watson](#). Not only are they world leaders and superstars, but they are also super readers.

Nearly [25 percent of Americans have not read a book](#) in the last year, and adults over age 50 were more likely than their younger counterparts to let their books collect dust. While you may think you don't have the time to read a good book, you might want make reading a higher priority in your life.

Reading isn't just a fun way to pass the time. It can also improve your health. Read on to learn four ways reading can improve your physical and mental health.

It will help reduce stress

Reading might sound like something you just don't have time for if you live a busy, stressful life. But it could be the key to [helping you relax at the end of a stressful day](#). According to research conducted by the University of Sussex, reading a book is one of the best ways to reduce stress. Their study showed that reading can reduce stress by 68 percent, and it will do the job faster than other tried and true methods like taking a walk or listening to your favorite music. So, pick up a good book and let your stress melt away.

You'll sleep better

Reading can help you [get a better night's sleep](#), if you do it right. A good way to get more sleep is to create a nighttime sleep routine and include relaxing activities in it. Reading has been shown to reduce stress and help you relax, so it is a prime candidate for your bedtime routine. Staring at a screen is counterproductive, however, so stick to a book with real pages, rather than clicking through your favorite book on your phone or tablet.

It may help prevent dementia

Keeping your brain active at every age can [help fight off symptoms of dementia and Alzheimer's](#). Researchers have found that people who challenge their brains when they are young and old have a slower rate of mental decline. Keeping your brain active can help preserve memory and thinking skills into old age. It is beneficial to work your brain from childhood on, but it isn't too late to start a reading hobby if you haven't tried it yet. Studies indicate people can benefit from giving their brain a workout even if they begin later in life.

It can help you feel empathy

If you have a hard time relating to other people, getting hooked on a good book can help you with that. A recent study conducted by [The New School for Social Research](#) showed that people who became deeply involved in a fictional book and its

characters were able to better understand their own feelings and beliefs as well as those of the characters. “If anyone has a desire to help others succeed in a non-threatening manner, this is a must read,” said Rose Rios, director of marketing at [Legend Oaks Healthcare and Rehab of Northwest Houston](#). Reading literary fiction improved the ability to feel empathy for others.

Reading a book can make a difference to your health in ways that might surprise you. So instead of turning on the television at the end of the day, pick up a good book.

For more information about and articles by our relationship expert Dr. Amy Osmond Cook, click [here](#).

Expert Relationship Advice: Spring Cleaning Tips for a Happier Life





By [Amy Osmond Cook, Ph.D.](#)

When the smell of spring is in the air, it can only mean one thing. No, not the spring sale at Neiman Marcus. Instead, for many of us, the end of winter ignites a passion for cleaning. But along with hauling old furniture and clothing to the curb, let's take a look at our emotional well-being and the relationship we have with others.

So, in the spirit of renewal, here are four areas where we can benefit from some mental and emotional spring cleaning. Don't miss the [expert relationship advice](#) below!

Expert Relationship Advice for Spring Cleaning

1. Examine relationships: It's time to address the negative feelings that may be lingering with others. "Releasing your grip on a gripe can free up emotional energy that you can then invest in other, more positive areas of your life," says [Julie Hanks, PhD, LCSW.](#)

This same belief also applies to people who may have a negative influence on your ability to feel good about yourself. “Feel good about who you are, how you have grown, and what you offer in your personal and professional relationships,” says [Jeffrey Bernstein, PhD](#). “If you have trouble remembering your own value, then think about what you would say to a family member or close friend who wanted to return to a toxic relationship.” Bernstein says thinking about how you may value or advise someone else can help you treasure yourself and move on.

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2. Find your passion: There’s doing things you enjoy, and then, there’s doing things about which you are passionate. “I’ve always said that passion is my drug of choice,” says [Steve Sims](#), a professional ultimate experience concierge, founder of Bluefish, and author of *Bluefishing: The Art of Making Things Happen*. “I can get further with passion than I can with any amount of money in the world. Passion is my secret weapon.”

Hey, we all have dreams: We can visualize our dream vacation, career, life experience, celebrity encounter, or life partner. But Sims often encounters clients who are afraid to realize those dreams or passions. “One of my first questions for clients is how far they are willing to go to make this passion – this experience – truly unforgettable.” If you are ready to uncover your passion, three of Sims’ many life lessons are to never underestimate the power of simplicity, to ask yourself why this matters to you, and to realize that nothing is ever going to happen if it benefits only you. “Work for win-win every time,” Sims says.

3. Make physical health a priority: Remember that New Year’s resolution to lose 10 pounds? Fewer than [10 percent](#) of us actually achieved that goal. However, it’s never too late to

adopt healthy lifestyle choices. With the warmer weather and more hours of sunlight, outdoor activities and exercise are easier. And research shows that exercise is not only good for your body but that the brain gets a healthy boost as well. “Exercise is a scientifically proven mood booster, decreasing symptoms of both depression and anxiety,” says a published article from [Walden University](#). “Physical activity kicks up endorphin levels, the body’s famous ‘feel good’ chemical produced by the brain and spinal cord that produces feelings of happiness and euphoria.”

Experts say even moderate weekly exercise can improve depression and anxiety. In some cases, doctors recommended an exercise regimen for these conditions before turning to medication, which is particularly good for older adults who are generally [more susceptible](#) to depression. “Clinical depression is a major concern for those of us working in healthcare since it is so common with older adults,” says [Derek R. Orme](#) of Mission Hills Post Acute Care. “Healthcare providers and loved ones focus on the physical needs of patients, but we also need to make sure their emotional needs are addressed.”

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4. Declutter: Whether it’s clearing out stuff in the closet, garage, or your married and gone son’s bedroom, removing the physical clutter from your surroundings is essential for your mental health. “Clutter can increase stress by distracting us and overwhelming our senses with extraneous stimuli – toppling piles and unsightly messes as well as associated smells and noises,” says [Jonathan Fader, PhD](#).

[Organizing expert Lauren Piro](#) says that when facing a cluttered space, we should ask ourselves tough questions like, “Is this item enhancing my life?” or “Is this something I’ll want my children to see one day?” Sometimes, forcing yourself

to defend owning an item can help gain a realistic perspective on the true value of that item. Keep in mind that you don't have to clear the area to gain inner peace. "Take comfort in knowing that your home and desk do not have to be pristine for optimal living and working," says Fader. "The key is finding what environment is most efficient and productive for you."

Now is the time for some personal spring cleaning. By tending to relationships, our health, passions, and the physical clutter that surrounds us, we are on the road to authentic rejuvenation and renewal.

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Expert Dating Advice: Tips for Romance That's Just Around the Corner When You've Been Around the Block





By [Amy Osmond Cook, Ph.D.](#)

For many of us, a lost opportunity at love or the end of a long-term relationship can sometimes make us feel like a second chance just isn't in the cards. And when Valentine's Day is focused on romantic dinners for two or coupled walks on the beach, it can be a painful reminder of what we lack.

Let's face it. There's no substitute for young love, but that doesn't mean we can't enjoy being loved again later in life, especially for seniors. "Fortunately, in some ways, there has never been a better time for women over 60 to be in the dating world," says [Margaret Manning](#). "The rise of divorce among 'silver splitters' means there are more single older men – and there might be more great guys out there than you might expect at first glance, especially if you give them a chance."

Expert Dating Advice for Older Adults

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A loving and caring companionship is a good thing, but it's also important to recognize that it's different for older adults. If you find yourself ready to take a shot at love again, here are three pieces of [expert dating advice](#) for making this experience feel as good as if it was new.

1. Instead of going for red hot, opt for a slow burn: Daters who are 50 and older tend to be less impulsive. And AARP writer [Ken Solin](#) says that's a good thing: "By now, we've collected enough life experience to know better than to fall for the first person we meet," said Solin. "We understand what works for us and what doesn't." For older adults, the belief that a fulfilling relationship is out there waiting for us still holds true. The difference is that we are willing to wait for the right person to come along.

2. Bring the [Sex-C](#) back: Instead of relying on intercourse to be the foundation for your budding relationship, a growing community is coming forward with conversations about intimacy challenges. [Laura Brashier](#), founder of RomanceOnly.com, helped ignite this conversation when she pioneered a site designed for people whose physical and emotional challenges prevent them from engaging in intercourse. "While these people are unable to have intercourse, they still crave intimacy but are unable to open up about it," says Brashier. "I've discovered that people facing difficulties with sexual intercourse still want to show love and be loved in return."

Sharing intimate moments with someone you love is an essential part of a growing relationship, but for older adults, that doesn't always require intercourse. Instead, a loving couple can explore other ways to share pleasure and develop a personal connection. It can be as simple as spending a whole day together erranding, participating in common interests, sharing meals, and everything in between – and then parting ways at sunset.

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[Your Comfort Zone Is a Good Idea](#)

3. Expect respect: At this stage of life, older adults know what they want and what they deserve in a relationship. Yes, we want romance and attention, but we also need respect. “We all need respect, especially from those who are closest and most intimately connected with us,” says [Peter Gray, PhD](#). “It seems to me that women, even more than men, have suffered when love directed toward them is not accompanied by respect.” It’s helpful to discover common interests, but a caring partner will also respect differing hobbies or career choices. For instance, if your partner cannot understand why you would pursue teaching as a career or insists that you give up bowling league to spend more time at the theater, these may be signs that your new squeeze is a drip. “A lack of respect is unacceptable under any circumstances, but it’s especially intolerable on a first encounter because it’s unlikely to improve with time,” says Solin.

Love certainly has its share of unpredictable twists, but there has never been an easier time to navigate those turns. For instance, with online dating sites catering to older adults and those facing struggles with intimacy, the ability to connect is offering new hope to older adults every day. By using a strategy that includes things like patience, honest communication about intimacy – and, above all, respect – you’re on the right track to finding new love again.

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Dating Advice: The Sex-C Single's Guide to Confidence in Holiday-ting



By [Amy Osmond Cook](#)

Hello, holidays! Aside from the huge boon this season is to retailers, there's no other time of year when online dating sites see their [biggest spikes in activity](#). Romance-seekers start wondering: Who do I bring to my company party? Who should I enroll in my family's festivities? Who's my plus-one to my coupled best friends' snowsport weekend? And who'd be in for the ride if they knew I couldn't have intercourse?

Make no mistake: There are [millions](#) of people who remain silent and grapple with that question, and it's confidence-

shattering enough to cause them to dodge dating altogether. Health problems such as diabetes, heart disease, cancers and related treatments, traumas, congenital abnormalities, and even PTSD can preclude individuals from engaging in sexual intercourse – as would be expected in the course of a romantic relationship.

Dating Advice for the Holidays

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This makes modern-day dating especially tough. There is one online dating site, [RomanceOnly.com](#), that completely eliminates the need to disclose this dilemma. After all, Sex-C (sexually-challenged) men and women are no different from anyone else in their needs for affection, companionship, and attraction-based physical connection. Sex-C individuals are also in the same holiday-ting quandary as the rest of singledom. Rather than sidelining the pursuit of someone special, here is some [dating advice](#) to improve the Sex-C adult's chances of kindling a real connection this season.

Jingle, Jingle: Get Out and Mingle!

A person who sees themselves as different in a shameful way can experience crushed self-confidence, which in turn can cause them to [avoid social interactions](#). But in truth, getting outside of oneself, if even just to [smile at a stranger](#), can really make a difference in restoring self-confidence. Talk to that person in line next to you at the grocery store. Accept invitations to parties – and don't hesitate to go alone! Join a local Meetup group. You'll not only meet fascinating people, but by being open to being out there, you'll increase your chances of meeting someone special.

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“Remember it’s a numbers game,” says Laura Brashier, the visionary behind the world’s premier Sex-C dating website. Any measure that helps you to be open and upfront from the beginning about the awful quandary of “when and how do I share my secret” serves as one less stressor in dating. But it all starts with building confidence, and that starts with meeting people and finding a common interest. Shared commonalities are the cornerstone of any fulfilling relationship. “True pleasure can be found in a variety of social connections and relationships.”

Spread Holiday Cheer: Go Volunteer!

When people desire a deeper and more satisfying relationship, character counts. You’re not defined by your inability to have intercourse! The holidays abound with opportunities to work alongside other volunteers looking to help those in need. It’s another wonderful chance to get out and do something good for others that will make you feel even better about yourself. If the person next to you is attractive or interesting, don’t hold back in asking them out! Start with something simple, like a coffee date – you’ll know in 30 minutes if there’s a connection.

[Date ideas](#) like hiking, dancing, attending concerts, pairing up to take an art or cooking class, spending a couple hours at a museum together, or trying a restaurant that’s new to both people are all ways to gauge common interests. They’re great avenues by which two people can share interesting and meaningful things together, which are building blocks for a solid relationship – friendships and romantic partnerships alike!

“The benefits of such activities extend beyond the immediate pleasure of being together,” says [HealthyWomen.org](#). “The new interests will stimulate your brain and provide numerous new opportunities for conversation.” Finding things in common makes for a nice beginning.

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Naughty or Nice: Sex-C Delights

Once you feel you've found that special someone to take beyond the mistletoe, there are plenty of options for physical delights outside of intercourse. When you think about sexiness, the authentic allure of a desired person goes beyond the temporal desire of sex itself and rests on a physically sensual connection. It's a spark, an undeniable urge to share yourself physically with another. RomanceOnly.com offers [articles](#) that cover alternatives to intercourse that can spice up any couple's physical connection.

According to Michael Castleman, M.A., [great sex without intercourse](#) means experimenting, which can feel strange. But he says, "Novelty is key to sexual zing. Doing things differently stimulates the brain to release dopamine, and dopamine heightens erotic intensity. Once you get on board with sex without intercourse, it's pretty easy. It involves the same leisurely, playful, whole-body touching, caressing, and massage that sex therapists recommend to all lovers."

So for all you Sex-C people, make your holidays merry and bright by putting yourself out there. You have nothing to lose but being alone! Go to some of your local community events, listen to music, and just put yourself out there. Say yes even if you're tired! When you do meet someone, and even if that the person doesn't seem like The One, go and just have fun. Always date safely with exit options. The bottom line is that you deserve the companionship you're after, and you can't find it until you connect with others.

Cheers to 2018!

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Relationship Advice: Is Your Job Killing Your Relationship? How To Choose The Right Company To Work For?



By [Dr. Amy Osmond Cook](#)

When Andy Sachs ([Anne Hathaway](#)) took the job as an assistant for the infamous Miranda Priestly, (Meryl Streep) in the 2006 hit, *The Devil Wears Prada*, viewers knew things would get rough in the workplace. But this movie also illustrates the

impact a stressful work environment has on a relationship. Studies conducted by [relationship experts](#) show that more than half of women are kept awake at night by job-related stress, according to [Metro.co.UK](#). Fortunately, not all bosses have this negative influence on employees, and many leading companies place employee engagement and job satisfaction as top priorities. Here are three things to look for in a company that values your personal life as well as your work life so you can avoid [relationship problems](#).

Relationship advice that will help you balance work and love!

1. Choose a company that values flexibility. In a global economy supported by cloud technology, the parameters for innovative work structures are more flexible than ever. For example, companies like Simplus and Clif Bar offer remote and flexible work schedules for full-time employees. “That’s why nine out of ten employees report plans to grow with their companies for a long time,” says Jennifer Parris from WorkFlexibility.org. “And workers, grateful for the flex, report that the overwhelming majority (95 percent) will do extra if it means getting the job done.”

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2. Choose a company that values culture. Finding a company that values a positive work culture means management respects work boundaries and recognizes the importance of personal time. “We often hire with our work culture in mind,” says Ryan Westwood, CEO of Simplus. “We want our employees to thrive, and we understand that supporting employees’ personal lives is an important of that. We aim for high employee satisfaction, which is one reason we were ranked the #2 top company culture by Entrepreneur Magazine.” Things like yoga classes,

healthy lunches, and generous vacation packages ensure companies retain valued staff, and employees can focus on other things when the workday is over.

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3. Choose a company with good benefits. While things like prenatal care or family dental coverage may not matter now, however a solid benefits package will support you when your long-term goals include starting a family, buying a home, or retiring early to kayak around the world. A generous benefits package means a company wants to keep you around for a while and be a part of your personal and professional growth.

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Contrary to what the movies may show, a qualified employee shouldn't have to sacrifice a valued relationship for work demands. Follow this work-related [relationship advice](#), and you're sure to bypass all that unnecessary stress Andy Sachs had to put up with. If you have the skills that an employer values, you can position yourself for positive professional momentum while nurturing cherished relationships at home.

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Relationship Advice: 5 Things To Do Before You Get Petty



By [Dr. Amy Osmond Cook](#)

[Katy Perry](#) has a new look, and her new attitude is the cherry on top. Between her sassy new song dissing Taylor Swift and her poorly reviewed album that just came out, Katy Perry has taken some heat in the past few weeks. Say what you will about Katy Perry, [Taylor Swift](#), and any of the other celebrities caught up in the drama relationship problems, **cough Nicki Minaj cough** but there are a few notes we can take to apply in our lives about being petty. Think about these four key pieces of [relationship advice](#) before you take any rash actions against your significant others, especially when it comes to breakups.

Relationship advice that will help

you be the bigger person.

1. Put your phone away: Your first instinct may be to tweet or text your way through frustration, but this can blow any situation out of proportion. Whether it's your boyfriend or your best friend, putting your problems out on social media in the heat of the moment can lead you to say things you'll regret. Just think of all the celebrity Twitter drama that could have been avoided had these celebs given things some time to blow over. Try to keep things between the people involved until you feel like you have a handle on the situation.

2. Take some time: Similar to the phone tip, take a few hours or days to think about things before making any decisions. You might be contemplating a breakup or deciding on whether it's time to meet the family; give yourself time with your thoughts. "Respect is earned simply by giving it," relationship expert Toni Coleman says, "And, if you are disrespectful, this is what will come back to you." Even if someone betrays your trust or says something rude, taking the time to evaluate the situation will help you decide what the best way to handle it.

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3. Consider their perspective: Have you ever heard the phrase, "Broken hearts break hearts?" Well, sometimes it's true. Maybe your heart was recently broken. Maybe your boyfriend said the wrong thing at the wrong time. Maybe your crush bailed on plans. Emotions are natural, but when thinking about their situation, feelings, and intention, you can gain a little perspective of your own. "When you act without regard to how your behavior will impact your partner and relationship, you are sending a very clear signal that their feelings and needs

are not a priority,” Coleman says. If they need some time to sort through personal hardships or just don’t feel the connection like they once did, hearing them out and giving them the benefit of the doubt can be very healing. However, this isn’t an excuse to justify actions that are disrespectful, manipulative, or unkind.

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4. Talk to a friend: If you’ve taken the time cool off, now might be the perfect time to talk to a friend. He or she can give you a different outlook on the situation, be a safe person to vent to, and help you avoid making any rash decisions. Your friends might know you better than you know yourself, and they can be a source of honesty when you’re looking for advice. Confide in someone you trust. Ask them what they see in the relationship.

5. Change your look: If all else fails and you feel the need for a little control in your life, follow Katy Perry’s lead and freshen up your look. I’m not saying chop all your hair off, but trying a new style out or adding some color to your wardrobe can give you an extra boost of confidence.

Being petty hardly ever pays off. Try these tips to deal with the rough patches in the varied relationships of your life, so you’re more likely to keep your dignity, have fewer regrets, and avoid burning bridges.

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Relationship Advice: Things A Nurse Will Tell You But Your Friends Won't



By [Amy Osmond Cook, Ph.D.](#)

What do actresses Bonnie Hunt, Julie Walters, and recording artists Paul Brandt and Tina Turner have in common? They were all trained as nurses! In honor of the “Year of the Healthy Nurse,” now is a great time to recognize the role nurses play in our lives. The demands placed on nurses every day are huge. Our nurses are committed to providing the best care possible, and they try their hardest to meet that challenge every day. And sometimes that commitment means being brutally honest about a patient’s symptoms or habits. Your friends may not tell you that your moodiness has hung around for weeks, or

your jeans are fitting a bit tight – but a nurse will tell you. In the spirit of good health and valuable [relationship advice](#), here are five things your nurse is willing to discuss that your friends aren't.

Relationship Advice That Come Straight From Nurses

1. Weight gain. Despite your friends insisting they can't see a difference in your waistline, your nurse on the other hand will likely confirm your biggest fears – yep, you have gained weight. If you have been diligent about exercise and diet, your nurse will discuss the possible reasons behind the weight gain. Things to consider may be your medications or your thyroid. A nurse may also discuss your sleep patterns or your ability to cope with stress. Putting a stop to unhealthy weight gain in the early stages will make you feel better sooner. Not to mention, your nurse probably has an arsenal of [fitness secrets](#) that can help you get in shape and ready for the dating scene.

2. Skin symptoms. Your friends may discount your less-than-glowing skin, but a nurse will explore the reasons why your skin is less than luxurious. Who couldn't use helpful [beauty tips](#) from someone who actually studied medicine? “A helpful acronym to remember the specific questions to ask patients when taking a skin history is ‘OLD CARTS,’ which gives a systematic approach to questioning in a skin assessment,” health writer [Julie Van Onselen](#) says. This includes onset, location, duration, character, aggravating factors, relieving factors, timing, and severity.

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3. Mood swings. You may not realize it, but a nurse assesses

mental status during your physical. “The mental status assessment is an essential part of the examination,” experts at the [Nurses Learning Network](#) say. In general terms, mental status could be described as an individual’s state of awareness and responsiveness to the environment. It also includes the more complex areas of a person’s mental functioning, such as intelligence, orientation, thought process and judgment. Your friends may steer clear of the neighborhood grouchy pants, but a nurse will face your behavior head-on to determine the root of your negative feelings and [relationship problems](#).

4. Lack of exercise and poor diet. We may try to lie about our daily habits, but our vitals will always paint another picture. Unlike a friend who may look the other way, a nurse will know the truth about how many times we hit the treadmill versus how many sets of pants are draped over it at the moment. “It is so important for patients to be truthful about their daily habits. When patients try to hide their smoking or drug and alcohol use, for example, it prevents us from providing the best care to fit their needs,” Julie Aiken, CEO of Ameritech College of Healthcare, said. “Another thing patients don’t think about is the importance of mentioning any dietary supplements or over-the-counter medications that they’re taking along with prescribed medications. Doctors need a comprehensive view of a patient’s health history to design the ideal treatment plan.

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5. Address your stress. Stress kills. And as much as you may try to hide it, the effects of prolonged stress can affect your physical well-being. Nurses know a thing or two about controlling stress; it’s a large part of the job. So when the topic of stress comes out in the open, a nurse may prescribe a variety of helpful remedies. Things like taking a walk, reading, soaking in a hot bath, talking with friends, or crocheting, are popular ways for nurses to deal with stress.

Many nurses have also found a healthy connection with yoga, meditation, and other relaxation exercises. “We bring in a massage therapist for staff every few weeks where they can receive a 15-minute neck and upper back massage,” said Julie Aiken, CEO of [Ameritech College of Healthcare](#). She added that faculty and staff could participate in weekly yoga sessions, daily group walks, and both students and staff are encouraged to use essential oils to help with stress relief.

We love our trusted friends, and we count on them to support us when we need it most. But when it comes to our health, and sometimes even relationship advice, the dedication of our nurses is something we can truly count on to keep us healthy every day.

For more information about and articles by our relationship expert Dr. Amy Osmond Cook, click [here](#).

Relationship Advice: 3 Ways Bad Credit Can Ruin Your Love Life





By [Dr. Amy Osmond Cook](#)

Congratulations on your new relationship! It's an exciting time to join two lives together to build a bright future. You brought the pets and furniture while your partner brought along a big screen television—and bad credit history. Is this union doomed from the start? Not always. But the road to repair can be rocky. A bad credit history can be fixed, but it takes time, patience, honesty, and a lot of self-discipline to change the habits that got you in this financial situation in the first place. If you want to avoid [relationship problems](#) and change your spending habits, here are three ways bad credit can impact your love life. With the following [relationship advice](#) and [dating tips](#), you can prevent heart ache and an empty wallet.

Relationship advice that history is wrecking your love life with the following relationship advice.

1. Deception invades your relationship. It's one thing to hide

the department store shopping bags from your loved one or screen calls from creditors, but when your spending habits cause you to lie about how you are handling your financial responsibilities, it's time to make some changes—fast! “The best healthy financial habit you can make is to develop and maintain a good credit history,” Anthony Bell, a financial expert and blogger from rescu.com.au says. “The best way to do this is to spend less than you earn and budget your expenses so that you know what you can afford, what you need to repay, and by when.” It's solid and simple advice.

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2. Bad credit makes it hard to move forward with goals. It's hard to move forward with your goals when you face financial barriers. Think about the natural progression of a relationship; Those plans often include buying a home, a car, or other big-ticket conveniences. But when you bring a bad credit history into the relationship, those goals will either not be possible, or you will face high-interest rates in the purchase. Keep in mind, moving forward with goals isn't impossible, but it will take discipline and determination to achieve them.

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3. Bad credit destroys your self-confidence. Nobody enjoys rejection. Hearing “no” can ruin the mood of the most optimistic of people. Just imagine being denied day after day. In that case, even the most basic consumer decisions become an issue when you are denied a cell phone, a gas card, a new bank account, or even an apartment. Such negativity can take its toll on your self-worth and your relationship. “Partners should treat this as another relationship goal to solve together rather than letting it drive them apart,” Elle Kaplan, [relationship expert](#) and financial advisor says. “Both

partners' debts and credit scores are now tied together for the long run." In other words, this requires a new attitude concerning money.

The good news is that you can repair your poor credit. Start by requesting a credit report, looking for possible errors, learning your credit score, and discussing financial strategies with an expert, such as [Lexington Law](#) or [CreditRepair.com](#). As you move from this moment on—make sure you are moving toward a life of happiness and financial health.

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Relationship Advice: Our Connection With Sleep





By [Dr. Amy Osmond Cook](#)

More people do this than you may think. [Taylor Swift](#) does it. [Kendall Jenner](#) does it, too. Some people have caught [Katy Perry](#) and Demi Lovato doing it, and supermodel Heidi Klum credits it as one of her best beauty secrets. What are they doing? They nap. And they make sure to get a good night's sleep. With less than 40 percent of Americans getting a satisfactory amount of sleep each night according to [gallup.com](#), it is evident we have a love/hate relationship with sleep. What happens when we sleep? And why is it so important for our well-being? "While we doze, our brains and bodies aren't slacking off, they're at work, repairing us after the day's battles and refueling us for tomorrow's slog-in more ways than you likely realize," [prevention.com](#) writer Sarah Klein says. The brain and heart are recharging, the liver is detoxifying the day's activities, and skin cells are reproducing and repairing. With the role of sleep being such an important part of our wellness, it's time we build a healthy relationship with sleep. Here are four ways to do it.

Want to feel less tired during the day? Then follow this relationship advice about sleep.

1. Don't ignore sleep. The notion that sleepless people can accumulate a "sleep debt" is true. And the long-term effects of neglecting the need for better sleep can have a negative effect on daytime functions. "The curious thing is that with sleep deprivation, you can only pay off a recent debt," Brandon Peters, M.D. says. "Fortunately, the short-term effects of sleep deprivation are quickly reversed by getting adequate rest." Although the damage from years of not sleeping may be difficult to remedy, we can start improving our sleep habits now with immediate benefits like improved motor skills, better concentration, and decision-making skills.

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2. Pampering is required. The best way to welcome a good night's sleep is to adhere to a routine. Experts from The Mayo Clinic suggest going to bed and waking up at the same time each day. And try adding a soothing ritual like a hot bath, relaxing music, reading a good book, or dimming the lights for quiet meditation. It will help lull you into a deep sleep that will allow you to wake up energized for the next day.

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3. Let the process progress naturally. Although getting seven to nine hours of sleep per night is the popular belief, some of us simply don't need that much sleep. The National Sleep Foundation conducted recent studies that place more emphasis on the way you feel rather than dictating a specific amount of time. "Pay careful attention to your mood, energy, and health

after a poor night's sleep versus a good one," experts at Sleep Foundation say. "Ask yourself, 'How often do I get a good night's sleep?' Like good diet and exercise, sleep is a critical component to overall health." The National Sleep Foundation uses a series of questions to measure adequate sleep. For example, after sleeping seven hours, do you feel productive and happy? Are you overweight? Do you rely on caffeine to get you through the day? And do you feel sleepy while driving? The answers may help you better gauge how many hours your body needs to stay healthy.

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4. Give sleep your full attention. If you want to improve your sleep quickly, put down the electronic devices before you go to bed. "The pervasive glow of electronic devices may be an impediment to a good night's sleep," [Washington Post](#) writer Meeri Kim says. The culprit is the blue light emitted by computer and smartphone screens. The physiology behind it stems from the tiny pineal gland in the brain. It releases melatonin a couple of hours before you are ready for bed. However, the blue light of electronic devices prevents the pineal gland from releasing melatonin, which means you don't feel sleepy. And, morning arrives before you've had a chance to get a good night's sleep.

The health risks from a lack of sleep are enough to keep you awake at night. But by catching up on lost sleep, sticking to a routine, gauging how we feel each morning, and unplugging at night, we are on our way to a healthy lifestyle that can lead you to your future sweetheart. And, that's just dreamy!

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Relationship Advice: When The Person You Love Suffers From An Anxiety Disorder



By Amy Osmond Cook for [Divorce Support Center](#)

This time of year is filled with holiday magic and festive gatherings with friends and family. But for many, the holidays ignite staggering levels of anxiety that paralyzes the sufferer with fear. Celebrities such as Emma Stone, Oprah Winfrey, and Jennifer Lawrence have been candid about their struggles with anxiety disorder while balancing public life. The road hasn't been easy. "The first time I had a panic

attack, I was sitting at my friend's house, I thought the house was burning down," said Stone. "I called my mom, and she brought me home. For the next year, it just would not stop." How can you create a feeling of normalcy with your partner when the circumstances are far from typical? "For the majority of our residents, the holiday season brings family together and cheerful memories of Christmases past. But for some, this time of year brings on higher levels of anxiety and depression," said Mark Hymas, executive director of Copper Ridge Health Care. "We watch for changes in behavior and initiate conversations where we can talk about his or her feelings and find a solution that can best help during this stressful time of year." If anxiety is a large part of your relationship, here are three pieces of [relationship advice](#) to understand when the person you love suffers from an anxiety disorder.

Relationship Advice For Those Who Know Anxiety Sufferers

1. Their anxiety disorder makes them tired. Some people view their role as they are the one worrying about their loved one's anxiety and trying to find solutions while their partner sleeps and doesn't seem to think about it. In reality, nothing could be further from the truth. "I still do get terribly nervous, and that's partly due to the fact I think too much and over-analyze things," said Amanda Seyfried. Anxiety sufferers think about their situation – a lot. "Anxiety is naturally tiring," said Ryan Rivera, relationship expert and founder of CalmClinic.com. "Anxiety can essentially cause both low and high levels of fatigue, and leave you feeling incredibly drained." Rivera added that tiredness is much easier to prevent than it is to stop. "That's why you need to take steps to start controlling your anxiety better," he said. "The less intense your anxiety is, the less tired you should

feel.” This year, limit your attendance to gatherings that are meaningful or more intimate with close friends and family.

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2. They don't like being around their anxiety, either. Like most people, anxiety sufferers don't want to be defined by their anxiety disorder. “If you truly want to be supportive of someone with anxiety, remind them that you appreciate the individual behind the anxiety,” said contributor Jake Mcspirit. “Recognize that they are more than just their anxiety.” Anxiety sufferers understand that their behavior is irrational, and they feel frustrated by seeing their irrational responses. It doesn't help to point them out. “What they need is compassion, understanding, and support,” said Mcspirit. “Very rarely do they need advice on how irrational and pointless is their anxiety.”

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3. Partners can be part of the solution. Most partners are unsure of the best way they can offer support to their loved one. Although living with anxiety disorder can be overwhelming, The Anxiety and Depression Association of America encourages partners of those suffering from anxiety disorder to play an active role in treatment. “In one approach, a mental health professional enlists the partner as a co-therapist,” said the ADAA experts. “With training, the partner can assist the patient with homework assigned by the therapist. This might involve accompanying the patient into anxiety-producing situations and providing encouragement to stay in the situation by using anxiety-reduction techniques.” ADAA recommends setting specific goals that challenge the loved one to progress through different levels then be sure to note the progress.

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If someone you love suffers from anxiety disorder, ensure all is truly calm and bright this time of year by recognizing the physical toll these emotions create for your loved one. Take time to understand the frustration behind their responses, and appreciate your role in the solution. With support and encouragement, your partner will share in your joy during what can be considered one of the most cheerful times of year.

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Dating Advice: 4 Reasons Going Outside Your Comfort Zone Is A Good Idea





By Amy Osmond Cook for [Divorce Support Center](#)

“For great things to happen– get out of your comfort zone,” that is the mantra of famous personalities like Danica Patrick- as she cruises through industry stereotypes to actors like: Charlize Theron and Jared Leto, who made a career out of avant-garde movie roles. Testing the boundaries of convention is the secret sauce for those hungry for change in their lives. But what about breaking out of your comfort zone in relationships? “When it comes to relationships, some feel it is best to date someone who has the same morals, taste, traditions, and beliefs as them,” wrote relationship expert and contributor Elizabeth Aguirre. “But rest assured it is quite okay to step outside of your comfort zone and explore someone from a different background as a potential partner.” If it’s been two weeks since the date with Mr. McDreamboat, and your texts have gone unanswered– again. Here are four reasons why going outside your comfort zone may be just what you need, and some [dating advice](#) to improve your chances in finding “the one.”

Dating Advice That Will Help You Experience Something New

1. You can reevaluate your “type.” Moving beyond your comfort zone draws attention to the type you typically chase. If those pursuits have proven unsuccessful, this is the time to evaluate why your type isn't making you truly happy.

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2. You can learn to take chances on other people. Now, don't be reckless and start pursuing somebody who is clearly a bad influence, but try connecting with someone who breaks the pattern of your dating behavior. If you only date short women, try one that is tall. Have you ever dated a man with facial hair? Perhaps you should date someone with an interesting job or hobby.

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3. You can become more self-aware. Dating outside your comfort zone may want you to change something about yourself or add another quality to your life. “There is something about challenging yourself, and doing something a bit different that gives you confidence, an edge, and a sense of accomplishment that does wonders for your personal growth,” wrote relationship blogger Monique A. Honaman. A self-examination may not result in a lifelong partner, but it will help you discover things about yourself that add zest to your life.

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4. You can uncover hidden strengths or desires. “I never thought I would want a man who—” you can fill in the blank. The point is, dating outside of your comfort zone forces you to use skills or behavior traits that you haven't used before,

including patience. Exploring new social territory means a possible match may be slow to materialize. Unlike your usual connections where the results are quick, venturing into unknown territory takes time to maneuver, but it could be well worth the wait. The good news is, once you find yourself in a happy, healthy relationship, the skills you developed while venturing beyond your comfort zone will stay with you long after you've left the dating scene. "I have seen the difference a good attitude and living a life with purpose can make on an individual's quality of life," said Jim Morrison, executive director of Redmond Care and Rehabilitation Center. "So if there's a secret to living a good life, it's loving the life you have and making the most of it every day."

So get out there and experience a different part of life with someone new. With the dating tips provided, you might just end up loving a person you never thought of giving a chance before!

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Relationship Advice: When Your Partner Sings The Blues, It May Be Something More





By Amy Osmond Cook for [Divorce Support Center](#)

Depression is so much more than sadness. And for those who love someone battling depression, the effects are all encompassing. “It’s like this thing that engulfs you,” said legendary music artist Bruce Springsteen in a celebrity interview with *CBS Morning News*. “I got to where I didn’t want to get out of bed,” he said. Springsteen credits his celebrity relationship with wife Patti Scialfa for giving him the motivation to rise above it. “She’d say, ‘You’re going to be OK. Maybe not today or tomorrow, but it’s going to be all right.’” With the following [relationship advice](#), I’ll provide you with tips on recognizing signs of depression and how to support your partner through this troubling time.

Relationship Advice On Coping With Depression

The World Health Organization reported that 350 million people worldwide suffer from depression. It’s the leading cause of disability. To better identify depression, a standardized

method was devised by relationship expert ,Dr. Carey Gross, and used by psychiatry residents at Massachusetts General Hospital. "These eight neurovegetative symptoms of depression can be easily remembered with the mnemonic SIGECAPS," wrote Daniel J. Carlat, M.D for the American Academy of Family Physicians.

If you see these signs emerging in your loved one, he or she may be suffering from more than the blues; it could be a sign of depression. Learn to spot the difference with the following relationship advice.

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Sleep Changes: Should your loved one's sleep patterns increase during the day, or if he or she stays up most of the night, this may be an indicator that your loved one is suffering from depression.

Interest: A loss of interest in the hobbies and activities your partner once enjoyed may mean there's an emotional struggle emerging. This isn't about changing interests. Instead, your loved one won't be interested in doing anything at all.

Guilt: This behavior has more to do with feelings of worthlessness, particularly in older couples, where a depressed loved one devalues themselves. "We believe social and emotional health play an important role in maintaining overall physical health," said Shiloh Sorensen, activity director at Parke View Rehabilitation and Care Center. "Positive and supportive social interaction and relationships are important factors in a person's well-being. It's a need people never outgrow."

Energy: A lack of energy coupled with a declining interest in activities is a sign for concern. It could be a matter that your loved one wants to get involved but doesn't have the

energy or feels too fatigued to do anything.

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Cognition/Concentration: Life is loaded with its share of distractions, but if your loved one, who once carried a razor sharp focus when performing tasks, now struggles with concentrating on those things, it's time to talk about it.

Appetite: While an increase in appetite does occur, it's a rapid decline in weight and an interest in eating that indicates possible depression.

Psychomotor: If your man becomes easily agitated, or your girl lacks energy or interest in things she once enjoyed, it's time to talk about how they are feeling.

Suicide: Many people suffering from depression will share signs of their despair. This preoccupation with death compels them to give away valued possessions or talk about life without them around, among other things. If your loved one seems to have given up on the value of life, seek professional help immediately.

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Remember, your loved one didn't request for depression to be a part of your relationship. But, this unwelcome visitor can be controlled with treatment accompanied by the love and support of a committed partner. By seeing the signs and recognizing the onset of depression, you and your partner can change your tune from singing the blues to enjoying an old-fashioned love song.

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Relationship Advice: 6 Ways to Keep Work & Life Demands in Balance



By Amy Osmond Cook for [Divorce Support Center](#)

How does she do it? You know who I mean. She's the one who makes achievement look easy—and her hair looks great in the process. As women, our relationship with the demands of work and home have been a historically tenuous balance. More often than not, we lose sight of our anticipated goals for the day and end up whipped by daily demands. But it doesn't have to be this way, and we are surrounded by influential women who

demonstrate that strength every day. While their personal strategies may differ, the most common game plans for keeping our work and home life in balance include the following six pieces of [relationship advice](#).

Relationship Advice That Will Help You Balance Your Work & Home Life

1. Be the boss of your time. For women whose schedules are often dictated by the needs of others, maintaining control over time is a constant challenge. But it's necessary. Set boundaries establishing clear work and personal times, then enforce it with colleagues and family. Unless it's an emergency, family must recognize that your attention must be focused on work. The same is true with demands from work. In her book, *Year of Yes*, Shonda Rhimes admitted she now signs off her emails with this signature: "Please note: I will not engage in work emails after 7 pm or on weekends. If I am your boss, may I suggest: Put down the phone." If you don't stay firm on setting clear boundaries, your ability to stay productive in both areas will be compromised.

2. Set priorities. "It's the person with the passion who get it done," said writer, director, and producer Autumn McAlpin. Her award-winning film, *Waffle Street*, is based on the true rags to riches tale that follows the life of a financier who loses his job on Wall Street but finds redemption and true friendship as a waiter in a 24-hour diner. Her success as a writer relies on disciplined organization and project management. "And, a lot of phone calls," McAlpin added. Life will deliver a hearty portion of distractions. Enforcing balance between work and personal demands by setting firm priorities will help you stay focused on your goals. "To this day, I keep a schedule that is almost minute by minute; Grabbing a power nap to facilitate recovery instead of wasting an hour online," said Olympic gymnast legend Shannon Miller.

“Focus on those things that bring you further to your goal each and every day. Every moment counts.”

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3. Focus and avoid multi-tasking. Business philosopher Dr. Stephen R. Covey once said, “The main thing is to keep the main thing the main thing.” As tempting as it is to celebrate the art of multitasking, in truth, we are robbing ourselves of achieving excellence in both arenas. Health contributor and relationship expert Amanda MacMillan wrote, “Research shows that it’s not nearly as efficient as we like to believe, and can even be harmful to our health.”

4. Recruit help. “If there’s one thing I’ve learned over my career as an entrepreneur, it’s good things are rarely accomplished alone,” wrote *CorpNet.com* CEO Nellie Akalp. “Success often hinges on getting the right advice or support from the right people.” This could mean finding help with household chores or childcare. Or, it could mean emulating an admired mentor. Shonda Rhimes is candid about her dependence on Jenny McCarthy, her family’s nanny. “I am proud to say that I do not do this alone,” Rhimes wrote. Having someone to help you with your duties at home will curb resentment and any potential relationship problems.

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5. Don’t forget to play. Having something to look forward to that doesn’t include the demands of work or home keeps you motivated to stay on track. “With vacation days left at the end of last year, the principals of my firm encouraged me to take time off between Christmas and New Year’s; time they took off as well,” wrote Kristine Scotto, director of Strategic Planning. “And when we all arrived back at the start of the year, everyone was fresh, and the vibe of the team was more

energetic than I've seen in months." Take a break from the work and home routine. Buy tickets to a concert for date night, spend Saturday morning walking on the beach, visit a temporary exhibit at the museum. Make plans at the beginning of the week, then stick to them.

6. Schedule time for exercise. A healthy diet and regular diet is essential for energy. "Even when we're busy, we make time for the crucial things in life. We eat. We go to the bathroom. We sleep. And yet one of our most crucial needs – exercise – is often the first thing to go when our calendars fill up," wrote Forbes contributor Deborah Jian Lee. Despite her busy schedule, supermodel Cindy Crawford makes fitness a priority every day. "If you stick with it, even if it's just a small amount, it becomes part of your life," she said. Crawford incorporates dance and Pilates into her daily schedule, and she has been known to jump on the trampoline with her kids as a way to get in some exercise.

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Life doesn't guarantee it won't throw interruptions in your path. But by establishing a routine that includes the relationship advice we've provided you: setting boundaries and priorities, focusing on each task, recruiting help, and scheduling time for play and exercise, can offset the imbalance in your work and life schedules and make room for the unexpected joys in your life- both of them.

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Relationship Advice: How to manage your business when you're sleeping with the CFO?



By Amy Osmond Cook for [Divorce Support Center](#)

When viewers tune into HGTV's *Fixer Uppers* each week, many wonder how TV hosts and real-life [celebrity couple](#) Chip and Joana Gaines manage to balance their personal life and professional careers. When considering the challenges of running a business, you want to surround yourself with people who share your vision and provide a comforting degree of trust. Many entrepreneurs turn to their spouse. Though the number has likely increased, in 2007, the U.S. Census Bureau's Survey of Business Owners reported there were 1.4 million firms "jointly owned and equally operated by a husband and

wife.” And while the organizational chart for your business venture may appear standard, the fact that a member of the executive board has seen you naked presents a unique set of challenges and rewards. How can husbands and wives go into business together and still like each other? It’s something that my husband, Jeff, and I are managing carefully. Here are four pieces of [relationship advice](#) that have worked for us.

Relationship Advice On Handling Business With Your Significant Other

1. Recognize the difference between business and personal mode. Once you acknowledge that a business is going to dominate the majority of your time, your business will settle into a pattern. Thus, the number one dating tip relationship experts offer is to establish boundaries that honor both a business and personal arena. “Running a business is difficult and stressful enough. Add marriage to it? That’s quite the challenge,” wrote contributor H. Lerner. “When a couple knows how to turn off the business switch and enjoy their personal lives, they are one step ahead of the game.” Once those two worlds emerge, it’s up to you and your partner to respect them. My husband and I might be in a heated discussion about something I bought that I didn’t run through the “finance department”—then our favorite show comes on, and we move into “married” mode. As difficult as it is, you have to make the mental switch.

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2. Acknowledge that business and personal conversations are going to spill into each other. Things happen. The office manager runs off to Vegas to be an Elvis impersonator, or your

teenager returns from soccer camp with a tattoo of Messi on his calf. You're going to have to discuss it ... urgently. "Trying to separate work and family when your work is your family is pretty much impossible," wrote contributor Valentina Zarya. She referred to Julia Hartz, CEO of the ticketing site Eventbrite. As a co-founder with her husband Kevin, she admitted she doesn't even try to separate the two worlds. "We focus on Eventbrite and our family. That's how we spend our time, full stop. The nature of business today is that the lines of 'work' and 'life' are a little more blurred." Zarya added that when you include kids in the mix, things get even more complicated. Admittedly, Jeff and I aren't very good at this. We can't always compartmentalize the daily events of our personal or professional lives. But when one of us needs some time and attention on a personal level, we are pretty good about communicating it to each other. And we can also make it work for us. "Ok, let's discuss business for five minutes so we can expense this dinner," is commonly heard at our house.

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3. Share the housework... or hire it out. Regardless of whether you're running a business together, it's likely that both husband and wife work. Somebody has to mind the store at home, but nobody wants to do it— and for good reason. Work schedules have never been more stressful, and the distinction between public and private life is blurred with the additional flexibility that many businesses offer. If you're just too busy to do the dishes, it might be time to hire some help. I knew it was time when I came home from work to a dirty house and started blaming Jeff for it— when he had been working all day. While hiring help was expensive, it was cheaper than hiring relationship experts for marriage therapy, and was worth every penny.

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4. Master the bedroom. When it seems as if the major parts of your day are regimented into “to-do” lists and schedules, there is one area where time and titles shouldn’t matter. Your bedroom is a refuge from reality, so use it – a lot. “Appreciate your unique relationship,” wrote David and Carrie McKeegan, writers and co-founders of Greenback Expat Tax Services. “The entrepreneurial lifestyle can be intense and having someone to share it with help make it more manageable but also rewarding – sharing your passion for the business with the one you love can be powerful.”

Running a business with your trusted partner can be an exciting and rewarding experience—or, not. By establishing clear boundaries, relying on loving trust while treating this endeavor as a serious business, and sharing duties while being generous with private time, you can design an exciting future in entrepreneurship without scrapping a promising future with your spouse.

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Relationship Advice: True Love or Rebound?





By Amy Osmond Cook for [Divorce Support Center](#)

It's a familiar scene; we watch a friend wallow in a doomed relationship for a while only to hear him or her declare their true love was found in a brand new relationship. For example, as fans watched multi-platinum recording artist Taylor Swift switch from her [celebrity relationship](#) with Calvin Harris to cozying on the beach with new squeeze Tom Hiddleston, it makes one wonder if this truly was perfect timing for a new love to grow, or simply a rebound relationship? Sometimes it's hard to know for sure. But if your new relationship feels a little too good to be true, here are some dating tips and [relationship advice](#) to determine if you could be somebody's rebound.

Relationship Advice On Rebounding

1. Your partner just got out of a long-term relationship. Following a failed relationship, it's always wise to take some time alone to realign one's goals and evaluate lessons learned from that experience. This time is valuable to ensure you don't make the same mistakes in future relationships. But if you are involved with someone who

has recently left a long-term relationship, you need to determine if your new partner was ready to move on, or are you simply filling in as the emotional gap? “If you’ve met someone you like that recently got out of a relationship, take it slowly,” advised relationship expert and blogger Alina. “Even if he or she says they are completely over their ex and have moved on, it is in your best interest to take your time getting to know this person a little more before giving yourself the green light to emotionally dive in.”

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2. The relationship is moving at a fast pace. You may have dated for a short time, but the relationship has already escalated to a highly physical and committed relationship. While you are spending every moment together and talking about your future, consider how well you know this person. If this relationship is moving at rocket speed despite the fact you know very little about your partner, you may be the rebound for your partner’s crushed heart. “I think I married for the wrong reasons. Instead of following my heart and doing something that made me really happy, I just did it for the idea of everything,” said [Britney Spears](#) of her failed marriage to Kevin Federline. She talked about her decision to wed in a 2008 *For the Record* documentary.

Related Link: [Five Ways To Cope With A Relationship Breakdown Just Like The Celebs](#)

3. The former flame is the third member of your relationship. It’s common for people to share stories of old relationships. But if a past love is a common component to your romantic dinners, this could be a sign that he or she hasn’t moved on from that former relationship. It’s likely you are a vehicle in helping your partner get back with the person they truly want to be with. The staff at *eHarmony.com* offered relationship advice with the following scenario as a

warning: “He talks about his ex all the time. He mentions that you look like her, or that your mannerisms or interests remind him of her. He takes you places he once took his ex – and tells you so. If he’s still preoccupied with someone else, he’s not ready to fully move on.”

Related Link: [Expert Dating Advice: How to Rebound from a Solo Holiday Season](#)

4. Friends are surprised your partner is dating again. You and your partner’s friends are helpful in determining if the person you’re sharing your time with is worthy of that commitment. If you see outsiders shaking their heads at the relationship, it may be a warning sign. The staff at *eHarmony* warn that the new relationship “may be poorly timed and concur that sometimes it’s wise to trust the red flags coming from others.” Finding someone to share your life with is a gift. But if the foundation for that new relationship is sitting on shaky ground, it is destined to fall.

By being aware of your new love’s past, keeping control of the pace, ensuring former partners are out of the picture, and measuring the reactions of others who care about you and your partner, you are lined up to score big on the relationship front rather than being sidelined as a rebound.

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Relationship Advice: 3 Ways

To Scratch The Seven-Year Itch



By Amy Osmond Cook for [Divorce Support Center](#)

If you listen to the relationship experts, the seven-year itch can just as easily be called the three-year itch, four-year itch, or the twelve-year itch. “There’s no consensus among experts as to why the seven-year itch may occur,” explained relationship expert Jennifer Nagy. Experts identify irritating contributors like hasty marriage proposals (Pamela Anderson or Khloe Kardashian), declining interest in his or her’s partner, and growing family responsibilities. But with married couples facing a 50-50 chance at success, it makes one wonder how to extend the rather short shelf life of a marriage, despite the growing needs of maintaining a life together.

Fortunately, society is filled with [celebrity couples](#) who have defied the odds. Will and Jada Pinkett Smith will celebrate twenty years together next year, Bill and Melinda Gates have been married over twenty years, and Billy Crystal and his wife, Janice, have been together forty-six years. If you and your partner are truly committed to making a marriage work, here is my [relationship advice](#) where I provide three ways to scratch that seven-year itch. Follow these dating tips to increase the longevity of your marriage.

Relationship Advice On How To Have A Lasting Marriage

1. Search for the things you first loved about each other. “I just love him more and more,” said Reese Witherspoon about her five-year marriage to Jim Toth. “I want so much for him to be happy, and he wants me to be happy.” Life is filled with distractions that make it difficult for those once-endearing traits to present themselves. Between family, changing interests, and work, we have many things demanding a portion of our time. Remember: You committed to share your life, dreams, and your whole self with this person. Don’t take that promise lightly, and don’t search for perfection—you won’t find it. Instead, uncover the things about your partner that make you feel secure, more focused, and better able to grow and expand your evolving interests as a couple.

Related Link: [Dating Advice: How To Go From Single To Married](#)

2. Make the private moments meaningful. “For us,” explained Chrissy Teigen about her marriage to John Legend, “it’s exciting to have time away and then be together and make up for that lost time.” As a mature relationship grows, the opportunities to share alone time are few and far between, but the need to find that time becomes so important. “When the sexual intimacy in the marriage can be nurtured and given the

time to grow, then the marriage will be successful,” wrote Dawn Michael. “The problem, of course, is that many couples lose the closeness that brought them together in the first place.”

Related Link: [Relationship Advice: Keeping The Fireworks In Your Relationship](#)

3. Leaving is not an option. “At our facility, it is not uncommon to see a loving spouse sit with his or her aging partner while illness, dementia, or frailty robs them of meaningful twilight years together,” said Scott Hanson, executive director of Lake Ridge Senior Living. “Even though the loved one may no longer recognize him, the thought of leaving or loving her any less is simply not an option.” That kind of commitment through good times and bad is what strengthens the bond Gisele Bündchen shares with her husband Tom Brady. “My father always said, the quality of your life depends on the quality of your relationships, and I think, no matter how challenging it was, we’ve always been supportive of one another. I think that’s the most important thing you can have in life.” With the array of circumstances that continually take shots at a relationship, it’s hard to know whether or not a marriage will be strained at any specific time. According to Nagy, “The studies do seem to agree that couples need to put in the extra effort every day in order to sustain happy marriages. If a couple doesn’t prioritize their relationship, their marriage will fall by the wayside – no matter how long they’ve been together.”

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Relationship Advice: Keeping The Fireworks In Your Relationship



By Amy Osmond Cook for [Divorce Support Center](#)

“I wanna know what love is. I want you to show me.” The rock band Foreigner made that desperate request thirty-two years ago, and we are still wondering about the answer today. With summer romance in full swing, many are looking for [relationship advice](#) on how they can keep the fireworks flying in a relationship that is worth protecting. A common truth behind some of today’s most enduring relationships is that it takes work to keep that spark alive, and these four dating tips will help ensure your love is a total blast.

Relationship Advice On How To Keep The Spark Alive

1. Keep dating. Typically, a secure, committed relationship means we don't have to pay close attention to it, right? Wrong! Relationship experts stress that just the opposite is true. Marriage counselor Michele Weiner-Davis says that many times her clients can't recall the last time they spent any time alone together. "They are just not recognizing that romantic time with one another is what a relationship should be about—it should not just be the icing on the cake," she says.

Related Link: [Have a Front Row Date Night to the Fireworks on a Circle-Line Cruise](#)

2. Stay connected. A healthy relationship needs to be nurtured. That means your significant other needs to be reminded regularly that you are his or her number one fan. By using today's technology, you can drop a message to your main squeeze in any form. Be careful who is on the receiving end, however. [UsMagazine.com](#) reported on Kelly Ripa's experience sending a photo of her toned behind to her husband, Mark Consuelos. Unfortunately, the photo made its way to her in-laws' iPad instead. "My mother and father-in-law respond from their email and they're like, 'Dear Kelly, we are so proud of all your hard work,' she said. 'Your exercise classes are really paying off.'"

Related Link: [Balance Work and Love Like a Celebrity Couple](#)

3. Stay interested. When the relationship began, we wanted to know everything about our new love interest. As your relationship continues to progress and evolve, staying curious about what makes your partner tick keeps you both engaged in the relationship. "Romantic profundity embodies frequent acute occurrences of intense love over long periods of time, along

with romantic experiences that meaningfully resonate in all dimensions, helping the individuals flourish and thrive in all dimensions of love,” wrote relationship expert Aaron Ben-Zeev, Ph.D. In other words, the best relationship advice to follow is recognizing and celebrating the new, positive discoveries with your partner which will keep things hot in the relationship.

Related Link: [Famous Couple Robert Pattinson and FKA Twigs Exchange Promise Rings](#)

4. Do whatever it takes. When you have made up your mind that you are committed to this relationship, you will find the little things that often chip away at a marriage won't be a factor in yours. For example, actor Hugh Jackman and his wife, Deborra-Lee Furness, have made a promise to each other not to be apart for more than two weeks at a time. They have been together since 1996. The decision to stay committed early on will be the foundation when difficult times challenge the relationship. Since actor Dax Shepard opened up publicly about his personal struggles with addiction as a result of childhood abuse, his wife, Kristen Bell, has remained supportive of her husband and offers public support to others who live with mental illness and addiction. “Seeing the world through his eyes has really opened mine to knowing that it is a disease, and nobody is choosing to drink more than others. They are doing it because of a variety of reasons, and they deserve the attention of a mental health professional, and not the county jail or however else we're choosing to pretend we're fixing the problem,” says Bell.

The secret dating advice behind a healthy relationship is that there is no secret. But it does require an understanding of what you want in a loving partner and an awareness of what you are willing to share. Then, by investing time in keeping private time a priority, being generous with loving gestures, staying curious about your partner, and being fully committed to the success of the relationship, you are destined for a

lasting love that lights up the room.

For more information about and articles by our Hope After Divorce relationship experts, click [here](#).

Relationship Advice: The Power of Touch



By Amy Osmond Cook for [Divorce Support Center](#)

A dim room, calming oils, quiet music, two masseuses, you, your significant other, and a few hours away from the world: A couples massage sounds hard to beat. While couples massages are known for being a relaxing and romantic date idea, have you ever considered the real health advantages of

them? It turns out the power of touch plays a very important role in massage therapy and health. Follow my [relationship advice](#) and learn how a couples massage can provide you and your love with real health benefits that can ultimately strengthen your relationship.

Relationship Advice: Strengthen Your Relationship Through A Couple's Massage

1. Physical touch. Physical touch is a vital part of any relationship. "Touch is important for sustaining a healthy relationship, but it's also necessary for our feelings of connection, safety and overall well-being," says Dr. Justin R. Garcia, Associate Director for Research and Education at The Kinsey Institute. Receiving a couples massage with your partner will not only satisfy a need for physical touch but also remind you both of the need for physical touch in your relationship. As a relationship expert, I always hear about couples who have been together for a long time, perhaps growing out of the stage of passionate love to companion love who tend to touch less. A couples massage presents an opportunity for you both to feel a renewed sense of satisfaction and peace. You can pick up on a few massage techniques to use on each other at home. Relationship advice: Take time to make touch a priority so you can become closer as a couple and give you both a greater sense of love and security.

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2. An anxiety reliever. Every relationship goes through tough times, whether caused by a difficult life event or lack of communication. A couples massage can help alleviate some of

this stress and anxiety. Regular massages can decrease cortisol while increasing frontal delta brainwaves, causing you to feel more relaxed. After a couples massage, you and your partner will not only feel less stressed but will also handle challenges better. Releasing anxious feelings together can bring you closer and set the tone for a better week.

Related Link: [Weekend Date Idea: Spa Day at Home](#)

3. Improved overall health. A healthy couple is a happy couple. Massage provides a variety of overall physical health benefits, including heart health. “Studies show massage therapy can immediately lower blood pressure, decrease heart disease risk, and improve circulation,” said Dr. Candice Hall, D.C., an expert in Functional Medicine with Next Advanced Medicine. “We often use massage therapy to help our patients control anxiety and common digestive disorders.” If you and your partner are looking for ways to become healthier together, this is the perfect solution. Another added health benefit of a couples massage is how well it accompanies chiropractic care. Whether you or your partner have chronic back pain or are just in need of some TLC, massages can be a great way to get the most out of your chiropractic appointments. While a chiropractor can adjust your joints, massage therapy can help relieve stiffness and discomfort. If your loved one is suffering from back or joint pain, offering a couples massage is a great way to show you care. When you both feel good, you’re less likely to be irritable and more able to enjoy spending time together.

A dating tip for this weekend? Surprise your significant other with a couples massage and you’ll not only enjoy spending quality time together but could leave feeling healthier and more relaxed than ever.

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Relationship Advice: Managing Your Adult Child's Return To The Nest



By Toni Coleman, LCSW, CMC for [Divorce Support Center](#)

It's that time of the year when young adults are graduating from college, returning home for the summer break, or have decided they want to step back from their lives and return to their parent's home to rethink their options and future direction. During their absence parents often have a nice rhythm going and fear their life and relationship may be upended and they will end up back in parenting mode now that

their adult kids will be under their roof again. If you are facing this challenge right now, the following [relationship advice](#) and parenting advice could help you transition to this new adult-to-adult relationship and avoid falling back into old ruts, conflicts, or dysfunctional dynamics.

Relationship Advice On Managing Your Child's Return Home

1. Start with an open and frank discussion. As the custody battle between [Madonna and ex-husband Guy Ritchie](#) concerning their teenaged son, Rocco, rages on, their circumstance illustrates this relationship advice that you need to be upfront that this is your house, and you will have the final say on what is acceptable and appropriate. Your child is being given permission to live with you, and they will need to adapt to your way of doing things and not the other way around. This does not necessarily mean they will have no input or say or that there will be no room for negotiation around differences. It just means that after talking everything through together, and hearing them out—you will make the final determination on any issue in dispute. In order to avoid relationship problems, you need to be clear that their acceptance of this is a contingency of their living with you.

Related Link: [Relationship Advice: Telltale Signs Your Relationship Is One of Convenience](#)

2. List your expectations upfront. This is how we handle relationships with peers, isn't it? Therefore, when you speak directly and candidly with your adult child, you are saying that you see them as a peer now and will treat him with the same expectations as you would any other adult. Expectations regarding the handling of household chores, finances, shopping, cooking, and the usage of common space should be aired with the goal of reaching a firm agreement on each.

Anything that is shared by or impacts all members of the household would apply here.

3. Discuss boundaries and any rules you want in place. As a relationship expert, I know that boundaries are necessary and important to healthy relationships. Within all households, there are subset relationships—such as parents, children, children and significant others, and any extended family that may be members of the household. Each subset needs to have a boundary around it that distinguishes it from the others. When your young adult comes home, they will need to respect your couple time and privacy, and you will need to acknowledge and respect theirs. If they have a significant other who visits, establishing rules for where and when they will interact in your home will be important to your privacy and theirs, and if not addressed, disharmony and resentment can flourish. If you are concerned about late night noise and arrivals home, it may be necessary to establish a curfew if these disruptions can't be handled in another way.

Related Link: [Dating Advice: Gifts For the Heart](#)

4. Don't forget they are adults and need to be treated as such. Don't treat your young adult like you would a minor child or younger teenager. This includes how you speak to them, avoiding attempts to control or dictate their behavior, or making threats about what you will do if they don't comply with your expectations/rules. Instead, present your expectations and any rules in a direct and non-confronting manner. Remind them that it is their choice to live under your roof and that your expectations are a part of that decision and that they are free to change their mind at any time.

Remember that the adjustment to returning home will be as much of a challenge for your adult child as it is for you. Therefore, it is important to remain focused on their feelings and needs along with your own. After all, you put a lot of effort and care into raising them and want them to be well-

adjusted and competent adults, right? Helping them to handle this important step towards adulthood may be the last hurdle and one that if handled successfully could pay great dividends for all of you down the road.

[Toni Coleman](#), LCSW, CMC is an internationally known psychotherapist, relationship coach, and founder of consummate relationship coaching. As a recognized expert, Ms. Coleman is the featured relationship coach in The Business and Practice of Coaching, (Norton, September 2005.) In addition, she authored the forward for Winning Points with the Woman in your Life, One Touchdown at a Time, (Simon and Schuster, November 2005.) among many other achievements.

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Dating Advice: Gifts For the Heart





By Amy Osmond Cook for [Divorce Support Center](#)

Most would agree that Seattle Seahawks Quarterback Russell Wilson is the picture of good health. When paired up with his beautiful fiancée, Ciara, they are the image of a healthy celebrity couple. Finding the perfect gift to celebrate your loved one, however, never gets any easier, even for famous couples. Do you go with chocolates or flowers? How about a fancy dinner? When you do find the perfect token of love, it will most likely cost you a pretty penny to celebrate your beautiful mate. With summer love heating up, my [dating advice](#) is to make your heart the focus of your enduring love. Here are five ideas that stem from the heart – for the heart.

Dating Advice: Making Your Heart The Focus of Your Relationship

1. Adopt a heart healthy diet as a couple. By incorporating fresh fruit and vegetables, lean proteins, whole grains, and limiting your fat intake, you are taking healthy steps toward a loving and lasting relationship. According to the Mayo

Clinic, "Limiting how much saturated and trans fats you eat is an important step to reduce your blood cholesterol and lower your risk of coronary artery disease." My dating advice is to put your heart where your mouth is and make healthy food choices that will create long-term benefits for you and your loved one.

Related Link: [Dating Advice: Spring Cleaning For The Soul](#)

2. Exercise for Deux. "If you don't make time for walking together, you'll never work it into your busy days," warned relationship expert Sheri Stritof. We all can benefit from daily exercise. A great way to stay motivated to exercise daily is to share your exercise routine with your sweetheart. Creating a daily walking ritual with your loved one is a great exercise for your heart, and the emotional connection that can come from daily conversations is good for the soul.

3. Learn CPR. According to the American Heart Association, sudden cardiac arrest is the leading cause of death in adults. When an individual is able to start CPR, the survival rate increases to over 40 percent. By contrast, each minute that treatment is delayed, the chance of your loved one surviving reduces by 10 percent. For information on CPR training, you can contact your local branch of the American Red Cross, or you can contact city hall for information on community courses. By learning CPR, you just may give the best gift of all to those you love—the gift of life.

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4. Follow up on physical exams. Both males and females are encouraged to undergo physical exams every year. Experts agree a key to overall good health is prevention. One way to prevent disease is to build a comprehensive medical history. Early detection of common diseases is a strong defense should disease occur. According to Health Contributor Treacy Colbert,

we should have cholesterol checked every five years, blood pressure checked every two years, and mammograms and cancer screenings every year. While you are focusing on your internal health, don't forget your cover. Colbert reported that the rates of melanoma continued to climb in the United States despite increased awareness of the dangers of skin cancer. "Check your skin every month for moles that have changed or look abnormal," wrote Colbert. "You should also look out for sores that won't heal. Have your doctor check your skin thoroughly as part of your physical— melanoma is highly curable when diagnosed early."

5. Share expressions of gratitude. For the United Health Group, good health is more than just measuring pressures or pounds: "It means taking an integrated approach to well-being that includes not only our physical health but our emotional health, our sense of purpose, our connections to our community and our overall quality of life." Experts say when you vocalize positive phrases and express appreciation to your loved one, it has a positive impact on your health as well as the mental well-being of your loved one. You will always avoid a few relationship problems. So share your feelings about your sweetheart. Tell him how much he means to you.

When you find someone you want to spend the rest of your life with, why not share gifts that are meant to last as long as your love for that person endures? With gifts such as a better diet, exercise, learning CPR, physical exams and phrases of gratitude, your gifts from the heart can be good for your heart. I "heart" that idea.

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Relationship Advice: 8 Creative Ways That Older Couples Can Keep the Romance Alive



By Amy Osmond Cook for [Divorce Support Center](#)

Despite what the tabloids may say, not all celebrity relationships go down in flames. Joanne Woodward and Paul Newman were happily married for 50 years; Michael J. Fox and Tracy Pollan found lasting love; and Tom Hanks and Rita Wilson are still going strong. It may take a little extra effort to keep the love alive through the years, especially if you and your significant other have forgotten how to connect or are stuck in the same routine. But with some [relationship](#)

[advice](#), the passion is sure to ignite again!

Consider the relationship advice below to add a little spice to your love life:

1. Get back to the basics: As an experienced couple, you know what makes your love tick. It could be surprise kisses, breakfast in bed, watching the sunset together, or enjoying old movies. The relationship advice that I encourage you to consider is to think back to the little things that made your partnership exciting over the years. Even holding hands or taking the time to express specific things you love about one another can make a big difference.

Leslie Stubenvoll, director of social services at [Palm Terrace Healthcare and Rehab](#) in Laguna Woods, CA, said, “The couples that shine the brightest are the ones that make the effort to hold hands, be extra nurturing, and pay attention to the other’s needs.” Sometimes, the most romantic thing you can do is give simple reminders and signals that they’re on your mind.

2. Go on a walk together: Quality time is a must when it comes to romance. Walking is the perfect way to spend quality time, share meaningful conversation, and even do some of that hand-holding! You’ll have the opportunity to reconnect, get some exercise and fresh air, and take a break from your usual routine.

Related Link: [Enjoy a Secret Sunset on Your Next Date Night](#)

3. Plan a photoshoot: Over the years, you’ve probably taken many family photos with kids, grandkids, and a wide range of color-coordinated outfits. Try doing a photo shoot of just the two of you. Dress up in your favorite clothes, drive to your

favorite spot around town or in nature, and have your photos professionally taken. Not only will this be a fun way to spend time together, but it'll also give you romantic photographs to hang up around your home. Not to mention, during the photo shoot, you'll be reminded of how her eyes sparkle or how his smile makes your heart skip a beat!

4. Take a road trip: Your favorite tunes, good food, new sights, and the endless road add up to one great date idea. A road trip could be just the trick you need to rekindle your romance. Try adding a little excitement by making the destination unknown or researching a bed and breakfast where you two can spend the night.

5. Go on a scavenger hunt: This romantic idea is a fun twist on a road trip. Map out all the places that are significant to your relationship, including favorite restaurants, places you love to walk, or locations of good memories. You can design it as a scavenger hunt with the final location being somewhere new to both of you. By the end of the day, you'll both be reminded of the history that's made your relationship strong.

6. Focus on intimacy: Some couples struggle with intimacy as they grow older. A [healthier](#) sex life between you and your partner could be the key to your romance struggles. If your relationship is lacking in this department, trade in a date night for a weekend getaway. For an even simpler idea, light some candles to set the mood. Intimacy is essential to connecting as a couple and can often be a romantic experience for both parties.

Related Link: [Date Idea: Enroll in a New Class](#)

7. Explore new hobbies: Learning something new is a great way to bond and make exciting memories with your loved one. Take up golfing or attend an art class. The two of you will have something new to share while spending meaningful time with each other. This kind of experience can help shake up the

routine and reignite the romance.

8. Learn about your love language: Sometimes, the best way to increase romance is to learn how you and your partner want to be loved. One of my favorite books is [The 5 Love Languages](#). The book outlines the five possible ways most people want to receive and give love. Understanding how your partner wants to be loved, whether it's through acts of service or words of affirmation, will help you connect and feel the love on a deeper level.

It's never too late to turn up the heat in your love life. Try out some of these tips, and the flame of your romance will be reignited!

For more information about and articles by our Hope After Divorce relationship experts, click [here](#).

How do you and your sweetheart keep the romance alive? Comment below!

Relationship Advice: How to Make This Valentine's Day Special for Your Loved One





By Amy Osmond Cook for [Divorce Support Center](#)

In 1653, a Mughal emperor shared with the world a token of his tragic yet enduring love for his favorite wife Muntaz Mahal, who died during childbirth. Today, the emperor and his wife have all but blended into the annals of ancient history, but the symbol of his love remains as the gleaming white marble 42-acre structure known as the [Taj Mahal](#). While most public expressions of affection don't end up being a timeless wonder, many of today's celebrities make their mark in different and extravagant ways. As a relationship expert, I wanted to give you some unique ideas to celebrate Valentine's Day. Here's some [relationship advice](#) on how to say "I love you" to the special person in your life, like these celebrity couples.

Relationship Advice: Making Valentine's Day Special Like The Hollywood Stars

1. Share a little bit of nature. I'm not talking about cut flowers or baskets of posies. With a little bit of creativity,

you can find a bit of nature that symbolizes the unique relationship and love you share. For example, [Angelina Jolie](#) purchased an olive tree to give to her husband, Brad Pitt. Angie may have spent \$18,500 on this olive tree, but you can find something just as special but much more affordable. Aloe Vera plants, palms, fruit trees, and flowering plants are excellent alternatives to cut flowers. Also, some companies manufacture innovative bouquets made out of alternative materials that last forever and offer unique scents. [Ecoflower.com](#) designs arrangements using environmentally friendly and recycled materials like wood, paper, recycled jewelry among other things, and they will provide any scent you like such as raspberry, musk or lemon.

Related Link: [Celebrity Couples and Their Most Extravagant Valentine's Day Gifts](#)

2. Share a wardrobe indulgence. For [Jessica Simpson](#), that meant getting a \$15,000 Birkin bag from her husband, Eric Johnson. For the rest of us, receiving a smart jacket, a silk scarf, a sparkling bracelet, or snazzy boots can generate the same feeling of confidence at one-third of the price. I recall a young newlywed presented his wife with a necklace made of aquamarine. It wasn't the most valuable of gems, but the color reminded him of his wife's eyes.

Related Link: [Valentine's Day Special: How To Have An Irresistible Online Dating Profile for Valentine's Day](#)

3. Share an experience. Angelina Jolie bought Brad Pitt flying lessons. Of course, she threw in the helicopter for good measure. [Beyonce](#) found a million-dollar token to share with husband, Jay-Z, when she presented him with a Grand Sport, reportedly one of the top performing and most expensive cars on the market. For you, a shared experience may be a hike to a cherished location, or a picnic in a secluded spot. Most people will tell you the things are nice, but sometimes it's the thought behind the gift that counts the most. A friend who

lived by an Olympic training site bought her husband a ride on the bobsled track used in the 2002 Winter Olympics. It was an experience he will never forget.

Related Link: [Celebrity News: Check Out Rebel Wilson's Video Valentine's Day Message to Justin Bieber](#)

With Valentine's Day approaching, it seems the extravagant gifts is what makes the news. The relationship advice to remember is that Valentine's Day doesn't have an audience nor does it need a giant price tag. It's an opportunity for you to share a moment, a knowing exchange, a personal connection that is meaningful for the two people that matter the most—you and your loved one.

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What has been your most meaningful Valentine's Day experience? Comment below!

Relationship Advice: 5 Questions To Ask Yourself Before Saying "I Do"





By Amy Osmond Cook for [Divorce Support Center](#)

In light of John Legend and Chrissy Teigen's exciting pregnancy announcement, I couldn't help but take a look at when John knew he was ready to propose. In an interview with Oprah, the gushing celebrity couple gave the inside scoop on their relationship and love and John recounted exactly how he knew it was the right time to propose. Check out the [relationship advice](#) below for what questions you should ask yourself to see if you're ready for your man to put a ring on it and start a life of bliss together.

Related Link: [Celebrity Pregnancy: John Legend Says He's Always Been Attracted to Pregnant Women](#)

Dating Expert Shares Relationship Advice On What To Ask Yourself Before Saying "I Do"

1. Do you love him? First and foremost, it's important to be honest with yourself and your significant other about your

feelings in the relationship. Remember that being in love doesn't mean you think he is perfect or you never fight. It does mean you're able to talk openly with him, care about his dreams and ambitions in addition to your own, and feel a deep connection with him emotionally, mentally, physically, and intellectually.

Related Link: [Relationship Advice On Finding True Love](#)

2. Do you see yourself living with him? After the big 'I do' comes getting a new roommate! Do you know if you're compatible with your man's living habits? While a dirty sock on the floor is nothing to freak out about, it's important to notice how he treats his space. It's best to know this *before* you move in together so you can talk about living preferences and make any necessary compromises. Also remember that moving in together means you'll be seeing a lot more of each other. Are you ready to see each other everyday when you wake up and every night when you go to sleep, or does it feel too early in the relationship to take that step?

3. Do you want to spend forever with him? He may feel like the love of your life right now, but do you see him in the picture years down the road? As a dating expert, I know that growth and change are inevitable aspects of life. If you see yourself growing and changing with him, then you're headed in the right direction! It's important to talk about where you see yourselves in the future and make sure you want the same things.

Related Link: [Expert Love Advice: How To Tackle That Nagging Seven-Year Itch](#)

4. Do you want to have kids with him? Asking this question is a great way to decide whether or not you have a future together. Do you want this man to raise your sons and daughters? If you envision him by your side as you play with and teach your children, then you've got a good thing going.

5. Does it feel like the right time or do you feel pressured? In the interview with Oprah, John Legend said, “She didn’t pressure me, she didn’t say, you know, it’s time to put a ring on it...I felt like ‘it’s time for us to put a ring on it.’” It’s important that the two of you are thinking about marriage because you both *want* to get married. If one of you feels unhealthy pressure, whether it’s from you, him, or your parents, then you need to think long and hard about whether it’s something you really want.

Related Link: [Relationship Advice: How Do You Know When Prince Charming Is Actually Prince Alarming?](#)

Choosing whom you marry is a big decision. It’s important to feel confident about your choice before you say yes. My relationship advice is to ask yourself these questions inspired by John Legend will help you decide whether to say yes to the love of your life or wait until you’re more sure of your feelings.

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