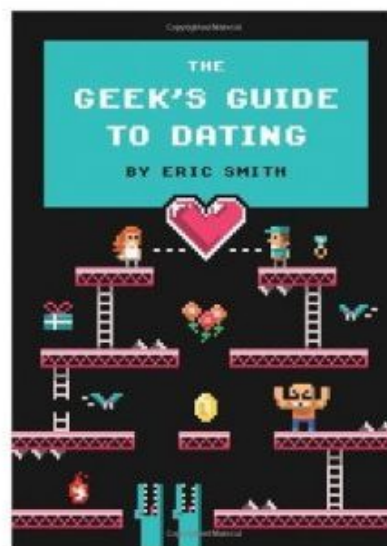


Eric Smith Helps Nerds Sail Through the Waters of Love in 'The Geek's Guide to Dating'



By Kerri Sheehan

In the *Mario 64* video game, the title character wins over Princess Peach's heart by saving her from Bowser, a villainous kidnapper. *Spiderman* characters Peter Parker and Mary Jane Watson fell in love despite Parker's nerdy demeanor and web-slinging abilities. In *Star Wars*, Han Solo wowed Princess Leia by showing her that he was more than just your average galactic player. So how did all of these "nerds" manage to navigate the dating world and find their special someone? Chances are they got their hands on a copy of *The Geek's Guide to Dating* by Eric Smith!

Smith is the cofounder of Geekadelphia, a popular blog covering all-that-is-geek in the City of Brotherly Love. In his newest book, the blogger hopes to help his fellow nerds and give them a step-by-step guide to put their heart on the line and fall in love. Throughout the book, he makes references to *Star Trek*, *Firefly*, *Pokémon*, and many other fandoms. A self-proclaimed geek himself, Smith was able to connect these ideas to the dating world so nerds can really grasp the concepts he discusses. The author also encourages his readers to switch off the “pick-up artist” technique in favor of showing understanding and respect for women. Featuring eight-bit pixel art by Juan Carlos Solon, *The Geek’s Guide to Dating* will make any gamer feel like they’re right at home.

Related Link: [‘Chuck’ Star Vik Sahay Shares Love Lessons from ‘Nerd Herd’ Member Lester Patel](#)

In Chapter One, you outline the different types of geeks and talk about their strengths and weaknesses when it comes to dating. Which kind of geek do you identify with the most? How has this description helped and hindered you in the dating world?

I would probably identify most with the gamer and the book geek. Sometimes, I play a crippling amount of video games, and I’ve been known to take days off of work just to play a new release. My co-workers can tell because I won’t show up on a Wednesday if the video game comes out on a Tuesday. The only reason this hobby has hindered me when it comes to dating is when people aren’t really open to joining in and trying something new like video games. As for the book geek, I spend a lot of time scouring flea markets or used bookstores, trying to get rare titles and exciting finds.

In terms of how these qualities have helped me, I think I have the ability of recall, which is a really nice thing. I love

remembering random dates and unique moments of my fiancé's relationship with me. I still remember what my fiancé wore on our second date when we went to this really small restaurant in Philadelphia – it was a pink dress that she got from this place called Smak Parlor in Old City. And on our first date a year and a half ago, she wore this green eye shadow that I'm never going to forget. It's fun to know little things like that because mentioning those things can really make someone's day.

You refer to readers as Player One and their potential love interests as Player Two. You pointed out that players must look inside of themselves before finding a Player Two. Can you delve deeper into this advice?

We're talking about the whole "Manic Pixie Dream Girl" concept. Many people tend to think that there is someone out there with a quirky, Zooey Deschanel nature who is going to make you a whole person again. It's like her character in *The 500 Days of Summer* when Tom (Joseph Gordon-Levitt) thinks she's going to fix him. I think it's really important to love and take care of yourself because you probably won't be good for someone else otherwise.

What do you say to a girl to change her mind about dating a geek?

There are always new things to learn in life, and you never know what someone will show you. My fiancé was super weirded out by the fact that my OkCupid online dating profile talked about the fact that I have a bunny. His name is Rorschach (after a character on *The Watchmen*), and I laid it all out right there on my profile. She told her friends about it, and they were like, "Really, he has a rabbit? Are you sure you want to meet this guy?" And, happily, she did because we're getting married!

Related Link: [5 Tips for Creating a Perfect Online Dating](#)

Profile

Do you have any advice for gamer guys who are currently attached to a non-gamer girlfriend?

Introduce your significant other to a game that has an interesting storyline. *Bioshock Infinite*, *Vengeance*, and *Assassin's Creed* were great when I was showing my fiancé the video games that I was really into. It got to the point where she wouldn't let me play *Bioshock Infinite* unless she was sitting right there with me, so we spent two days playing together, and it was really romantic. She'll play games, but she really likes to watch the ones that have a riveting and intense plot.

If you're dating someone who does want to play and try them out, then you can pick out games that have two-player opportunities. You don't want to make your significant other watch you slog through a football game when they can't jump in at all. It reminds me of when I was a kid and went over someone's house to play video games; you would really just be watching them because they wouldn't let you play!

Lastly, you give a lot of advice to male geeks looking to get a lady. Do you have any advice for female geeks who want to find love?

It's really a lot of the same stuff that I say to the guys. Share your ideas and pursuits, and don't close someone out because they're not into the same things as you are. Remember that we're long past the days when it was strange for a girl to ask out a guy. Just go for it!

*For more information about Smith, you can check out his web series, [The Geek's Guide to Dating](http://www.quirkbooks.com/post/geeks-guide-dating-webseries-chris-shannon) at www.quirkbooks.com/post/geeks-guide-dating-webseries-chris-shannon or connect with him on Twitter @ericsmithrocks. To purchase *The Geek's Guide to Dating*, visit Amazon.com.*

'The Secret Life of Walter Mitty' Hits Theaters on Christmas Day



By April Littleton

Ben Stiller stars and directs in this film based on James Thurber's short story about a daydreamer who escapes reality by sinking into his world of fantasies that involves romance, action and heroism. Walter decides to stop living in his imaginary world when his job, along with his co-worker's, becomes threatened.

Should you see it:

Ben Stiller fans and Kristen Wiig fans won't have a doubt in their minds about seeing this film. Also, if you have no set plans for the holidays, why not spend the day enjoying a new comedy at your favorite movie theater?

Who to take:

If it's possible, bring the whole family along with you when you're ready to hit up the nearest Cinemark. After all, it is the holidays. You can fly solo if that's what you prefer or if your loved ones are out of town. This film would be good to see with a boyfriend/girlfriend who has a good sense of humor as well.

Related: [Get Ready to Celebrate the Holidays with 'A Madea Christmas'](#)

How do you build up the courage to ask the person you're interested in on a date?

Cupid's Advice:

Putting yourself out there to another person can be tricky, especially if you're shy or you've experienced a recent heartbreak. Everyone who has experience with the game of love knows that rejection isn't a fun feeling to experience, but sometimes it's worth it. You don't want to be left wondering 'what if', and at least you'll have an idea of where you stand with your crush. Cupid has some tips:

1. Be straightforward: Don't play games with a potential love interest. If you're considering another person on a romantic level, let them know how you feel. Being open and honest is considered a turn-on, so don't be shy and go after what you want.

2. Show you're interested: Your crush won't know that anything is different between the two of you if you don't show or

express your feelings. Make sure you're making clear that you're interested in them. Call them from time to time. Get to know them on a more personal level. Ask them out for coffee or a simple lunch date. You don't have to move too fast, but you do want to make sure the feelings you have for them are reciprocated. Also, keep in mind that you need to move forward with the relationship at a pace comfortable for both you and your potential honey.

Related: [Ben Stiller Says Jennifer Aniston and Justin Theroux Are Happy](#)

3. Be creative: When it comes to date ideas, you want to keep things simple for awhile. That doesn't mean you can't spice things up and come up with something unique. As you start to get to know your boo, incorporate some of the things they like with your dates. If your love interest is really into the outdoors, go on a hike or try out a mountain bike trail. Visit a local museum if he/she enjoys culture and fine arts.

How did you build up the courage to ask the person you're interested in on a date? Share your experience below.

What to Do when He is Still Dating Others





By April Littleton

You're in love, but the person you're dating might not feel the same way. In fact, you just found out he's still fooling around with other women. A situation like this can be tricky to handle – especially if you haven't been seeing your man for that long. How do you get the point across that you want a commitment without scaring him off? When do you decide to walk away from the relationship altogether? Cupid has some advice:

1. Do the same: At this point in time, your partner might not be ready to commit to you. He may be focused on other things such as school, a career, etc. Instead of stressing over him not making you a priority, start getting back out on the dating scene. If he's still seeing other people, you shouldn't put all of your focus and time solely on him when he's obviously not doing the same for you. Keep yourself open to new possibilities and new love interests. You never know, someone who's ready for a serious commitment might be waiting for you just around the corner.

Related: [Dating with an Age Gap](#)

2. Keep busy: Don't sit and wait around for your boyfriend to call or text you. Continue on with your daily routine. Your life shouldn't revolve around another person – especially if that certain individual isn't seeking an exclusive relationship with you. If your man wants you, he should show it and fight for you. When he realizes you're no longer waiting around for him and you're not going to be a second choice, he'll either get his act together or you'll be free to find someone who's worth your time.

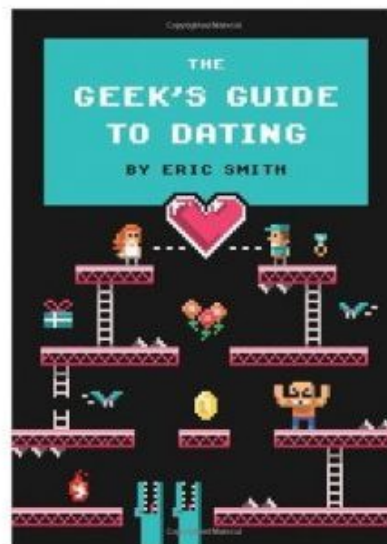
3. Read the signs: A man who wants to be with you will do whatever it takes to do so. Does your guy call and/or text you often when the two of you aren't together? If not, he's probably using that time apart to connect with other people. Have you met his family? Do your loved ones like him? The first step to a serious commitment is the approval of both parties family and friends. You don't want to be with a guy who hasn't introduced you to the important people in his life. If the two of you are constantly doing things by yourself and you haven't met anyone else in his life, he isn't serious about you and you need to rethink the status of the "relationship."

Related: [Ways to Help Single Friends Find a Partner](#)

4. Talk it out: Your significant other may not be aware that an exclusive relationship is what you're after. If the two of you have been an item for awhile and he's still seeing other women on the side, have a talk with him first before you call it quits. Let him know how you're feeling about the situation. Tell him if he wants to continue being with you, he must stop dating around. A serious commitment might not be on his mind right now and if that's the case you need to find a way to move on. Don't keep yourself in a situation you know isn't going to work out in your favor.

What are some other things you can do when your man is still dating others? Comment below.

Single in Stilettos Show: How to Get Into Shape for Dating



On this week's [Single in Stilettos](#) show, lifestyle and wellness coach Tracy Campoli talks to Suzanne Oshima about how to get your body in good shape before looking for love. Campoli reveals: the three body parts you should focus on to ensure that you feel confident when dating; her best tips for losing those last five to ten pounds; how to combat negative self-talk on the morning of a date; and why you shouldn't starve yourself or obsess over every little thing you eat. For more information about Single in Stilettos shows, click [here](#).

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

How do you get into shape before date night? Tell us in the comments below!

Date Idea: Freaky Friday



By Kristin Mattern

Bring on the goose bumps this Friday the Thirteenth by having a superstition-based date with your baby. Take those old wives tales to heart as the two of you skip cracks hand-in-hand so you don't break your mothers' backs. Avoid walking under ladders or breaking mirrors – nobody wants seven years of bad

luck. Take superstitious beliefs to a fun new place with this weekend date idea.

If you've never been superstitious, spend some time with your sweetie and look up some nifty ones from all over the world. There are a lot of bizarre superstitions out there, according to bored.com, like black cats being demons in disguise who create a barrier of evil when walking across your path. Looking at the new moon over your left shoulder (so specific!) or cutting your nails on a Friday are two more examples. While your love and you share some giggles about these negative juju actions, discover some good luck superstitions to perform and ward off the bad luck. Cross your fingers, knock on wood, spill wine while proposing a toast (just make sure you have paper towel on standby) and walk in the rain with your honey to soak up the good vibes.

Take a cue from the movie *Freaky Friday* and celebrate this Friday the Thirteenth by pretending to be one another. Act out actions each other normally does, or imitate catch phrases you both normally use. To really take it to the next level, swap clothes and just have fun! Remember to play nice though – don't harp on your partner's bad habits or annoying behaviors.

Continue this eerie date by watching *Friday the 13th*. Looking for something a little more vintage? Check out the *Twilight Zone* or a Hitchcock flick for some suspense. Your cutie is sure to snuggle close as you curl up together on the couch with some popcorn to finish off this fun Friday the Thirteenth-inspired day!

Freak out this Friday with a superstition-filled date!

Have you and your significant other every gotten a little spooky on a Friday the Thirteenth? Let us know in the comments below!

New Couple? Courteney Cox Takes Snow Patrol's Johnny McDaid to Jennifer Aniston's Party



By April Littleton

According to UsMagazine.com, Courteney Cox was photographed attending Jennifer Aniston's party with a date Sunday, Dec. 8. Snow Patrol rocker and the former *Friends* actress were spotted driving up to the party together. Cox was previously linked to *Cougar Town* costar Brian Van Holt in June.

How do you introduce your new partner to family and friends?

Cupid's Advice:

Introducing your new boyfriend/girlfriend is a big step in your relationship. Having the person you're dating meet all of your loved ones can be stressful and nerve-racking, especially if you don't set up the meeting in the right way. Don't worry, Cupid is here to help:

1. Baby steps: Don't overwhelm your significant other by introducing them to all of your friends and family at one time. Take it slow. Your new honey will already be pretty nervous as it is. Start off by meeting up with one or two of your closest friends for a nice lunch or dinner. If your partner gets along well with them, introduce him/her to a few of your family members.

Related: [New Couple? Ryan Seacrest Steps Out With Shayna Terese Taylor on Vacation](#)

2. Heads up: Before you set up any meetings between your partner and your loved ones, give both parties a heads up first. Make sure your family and friends are aware of your new relationship. Give them a little bit of information about the person you're dating so they'll have some topics to talk about when they do see each other for the first time. Also, keep your partner's feelings in mind. Give them time to adjust to the idea of meeting your family and friends.

Related: [Kendall Jenner Says She and Harry Styles Are 'Cool'](#)

3. Ground rules: Let your significant other what is and isn't acceptable in your family's household. Make sure your friends are aware of how they should act around your boyfriend/girlfriend. You wouldn't want them to offend your new honey in any way – even if what they do or say was meant as a joke.

What are some other ways to introduce your new partner to family and friends? Comment below.

Ways to Help Single Friends Find a Partner



By Leslie Chavez

We all think very highly of our closest girlfriends, so when one of them is single we naturally want to find a partner for them who is just as intelligent, kind, funny, sophisticated and attractive as they are. Although we mean well, sometimes our good-intentions can be misconstrued as offensive and

slightly irksome. As someone who is well acquainted with being set up by happily coupled friends, trust me when I say there are certain ways to go about finding that special mate for your BFF. So before you get all Millionaire Matchmaker Patti Stanger on me, consider these alternative approaches to helping your friends find romance.

Try a new activity together

Sometimes your friends need your help in yanking them out of their comfort zone. Trying new activities or learning a new skill is a great way to meet guys. Ask her what kind of class she's always wanted to take but didn't have the courage to do alone. Maybe a comedy class or surfing lessons, somewhere where there will be plenty of guys around to "help" you and your friend out with that new technique you've been learning. This way the pressure is off and your friend can naturally meet a guy who shares some of the same interests as her, all while having a great time practicing a new hobby with you. If she does find someone she is interested in, suggest that you all go out for drinks after class.

Related: [Dating with an Age Gap](#)

Take control of her online dating profile

If your friend really trusts you and she is comfortable with this, offer to be her online dating advisor. You will be able to give her a different perspective on those online suitors she's been ignoring. Encourage her to be more open to guys she wouldn't normally go for; she might not know what she's been missing. While you're at it, spruce up her profile. Lauren Ware, Match.com's professional online dating profile writer suggests, getting specific, "when you want to use an adjective to describe yourself, think of an anecdote or example that shows how you embody that trait." Grab a bottle of pinot noir and the two of you can turn it into a fun evening of reconnection and reminiscence. Your friend will

have a fresh approach to online dating to boot.

Related: [Celebrities Who Met on Blind Dates](#)

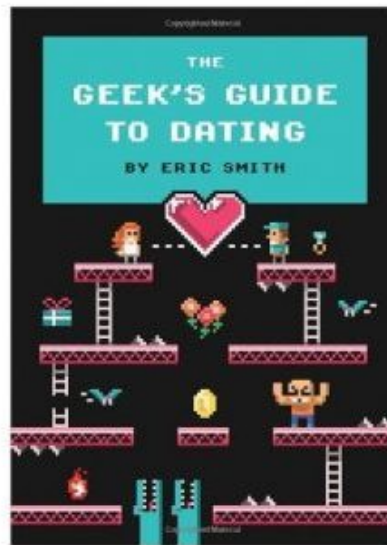
Have a party

Have you had your eye on your athletic co-worker with the curly, brown hair or that blue-eyed barista who greets you every morning, thinking they would be perfect for your friend? Have a party and invite them! This isn't an episode of *The Bachelorette*, so don't start lining up roses for your friend to give away at the end of the night just yet. Take a step back and construct a little plan. You can't just invite cute guys. Invite everyone; friends from work, neighbors and your single friend of course. When the party is in full swing, casually introduce your friend to her potential date(s) and let the chemistry take care of the rest. But remember, try not to put too much pressure on the connection. If there are no sparks, then you have to let it go. Look at it as a reason to have another party.

Have you helped a single friend find a partner before? Share your experience below.

NoGamesLove Video Dating Tips: When and How to End It





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

Getting dumped is never easy, but sometimes, it's even harder when you have to break up with your significant other, when you love someone but know it won't work, or when you have to break your own heart. So how do you make that decision to finally get out of an unhappy relationship and find the love you deserve? In this week's [dating advice](#) video, relationship expert and E!'s *Famously Single* dating coach, Laurel House offers her tips for knowing when and how to end things. One way to know: "You're lonelier with them than when you are alone."

Dating Advice from E!'s *Famously Single* Laurel House on How to Break-Up

Related Link: [Heartbroken? Heal and Move On...Like I Did](#)

If you do everything you can to fix the issues in your

relationship and still don't see a future, it's time to say goodbye. House warns that it will be heart-wrenching – “I've been there,” the dating expert candidly shares – but also assures you that you will find more happiness.

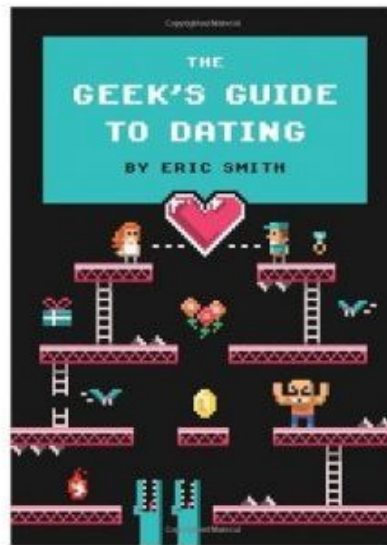
For more information about our dating mentor, click [here](#).

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

How did you know when it was time to end a bad relationship? Share your story in the comments below.

Dr. Barton Goldsmith Discusses How To Become 'The Happy Couple'





By Priyanka Singh

When it comes to being happy in a relationship, Dr. Barton Goldsmith, a multi-award winning psychotherapist, believes that little things can go a long way. In his new book *The Happy Couple: How to Make Happiness a Habit One Little Loving Thing at a Time*, he discusses how couples can transform their bad habits into good ones, just by doing simple tasks such as talking for 20 minutes a day and asking clarifying questions to resolve conflicts. It all boils down to communication. We recently chatted with the author about how to strengthen and rebuild a relationship from the ground up. Here's what he had to say:

How do bad habits start in relationships?

It starts by people being complacent and not really talking about things that are bothering them. Bad habits develop over a period of time, and if someone doesn't say something that makes you aware of it so you can change it, the bad habits continue. They happen within every relationship. You get used to your partner doing something nice for you, like bringing

you a cup of coffee in the morning, and then you forget to thank them for it – that's a bad habit!

Related Link: [Use Your Five Senses For a More Fulfilled Love Life](#)

Do couples take each other for granted after a period of time?

That's something that does happen for many couples and also something that you want to prevent. No one wants to feel that way. You need to be reminded by your partner that you want to be in this relationship every day. That comes from the little things: the hellos, the goodbyes, the kisses, the hugs. All of that's going to make a difference.

What if your partner struggles with communication? How do you get them to open up to you?

I think the thing that I would say to my partner is, "Look, I've read that communication is the most important thing in the relationship, and if we don't get it together, we're going to be in trouble down the road." In the end, communication is all that you have, so I would approach it very seriously and say that we need to work on our communication. We can either do that on our own or with books; we can go to therapy or watch self-help videos on YouTube. There's a lot of things we can do, but we have to start communicating! We can set up our own time to talk about our days – maybe 30 minutes after dinner or even during dinner. Then, you create communication as a habit.

Many women say they have a hard time getting their guys to open up. Why's that?

It's a learned thing. A lot of guys wouldn't know how to respond. Emotional communication is something that takes time to develop. By opening up to her man, a woman is setting the example.

There's a very simple exercise in the book to teach your partner how to communicate. You ask them a question; they ask you a question; you ask them a question – and you do that for a half an hour. Ask questions like: What's your favorite movie? What's your favorite color? Tell me about the nicest thing your mother ever did for you. If you're not a communicator, it takes a little practice to get there. The first chapter of the book is on communication, so I would say read the chapter together and do the exercise as a couple.

Also in that chapter, it talks about learning how to ask clarifying questions. That's a very important part of communication, especially for guys, because when a woman presents a problem, the guy goes right to solving it. What the guy needs to do is ask clarifying questions to learn more about the problem before he dives right in. A lot of times, a woman doesn't even want the man's solution; she just wants to talk about what's going on. Guys have to learn how to listen.

Related Link: [Five Ways To Get His Undivided Attention](#)

Let's say you have a hard time coming up with creative and fun things to do for and with your partner. What are some go-to suggestions?

If you just put a smile on your face, in the beginning, that's going to make a big difference, and that's a very simple thing. You need to change negative thoughts to positive ones. Take a walk; read a light book; write down your feelings; play with the dog; play with each other; give each other a massage; do something outside of the house, in the house, with the house! Do things that add to your environment. Do things that are light and easy that are going to make what surrounds you better.

One of the things I tell couples that get into a negative feedback loop is to be nice. Remember what it was like when you were dating, when he would pull out the chair and open

doors for you. Go back to that, and do those nice things for each other again. That creates a lot of positivity in a relationship.

Sum up your best relationship advice in one sentence.

Keep it simple: Love each other every day, and don't be afraid of saying "I'm sorry."

To purchase The Happy Couple, check out Amazon or your local bookstore.

Single in Stilettos Show: How to Flirt with a Man





Are you wondering how to flirt with your cute co-worker at your company's holiday party? If so, look no further than this week's [Single in Stilettos](#) show! Suzanne Oshima talks with Patty Contenta, sensuality expert and founder of Sensuality Secrets. Learn how to attract a man through natural confidence with these great flirting tips.

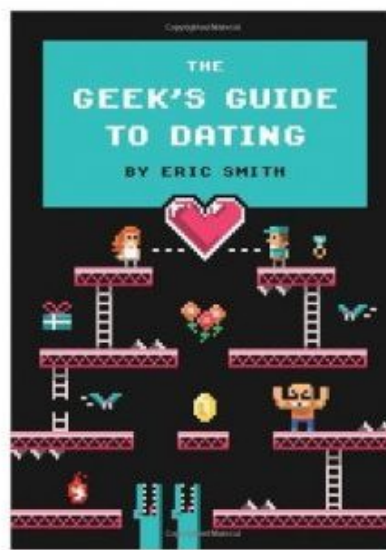
For more information about Single in Stilettos shows, click [here](#).

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

What is your go-to flirting move? Tell us in the comments below!

How to Listen to Your Heart

and Take Back Control of Your Love Life



By [Marni Battista](#)

It may sound cheesy, but listening to your heart is essential when navigating the path to a happy ending. And as important as this may be, doing so can be especially difficult with input from loved ones clouding your true feelings. Be it a long-term boyfriend, a new prospect, or a re-ignited flame, here is a simple, step-by-step guide to drown out other's opinions on your love life and follow your intuition.

Related Link: [‘Tough Love: Co-Ed’ Star Kyle Keller Says, “Listen to Your Heart”](#)

1. Take Time to Think: Before you completely shut out your

loved ones, make sure you take some time alone to sort through your thoughts on your current romantic situation. And I mean *alone* time; even just talking it through one-on-one with a trusted friend can invite a trickle of unsolicited advice that leads to confusion and self-doubt. Sometimes, quieting your surroundings, making a cup of tea, and cracking open your journal are all you need to allow the truth to softly float to the surface. Whether your “thing” is to go for a run in nature, collect your thoughts in a long, hot bath, or write until your hand hurts, the truth *will* bubble up when you take time to listen carefully.

2. Trust Your Gut: Once you’ve had time to develop a solid stance, you’ve likely also developed a nagging voice in the back of your head that’s constantly urging you toward a particular decision. If you’ve made your list of pros and cons about staying with a long-time boyfriend and you know deep down the right move is to end it, let that nagging voice drown out that of your mother trying to convince you he will provide you the stability you need. Choices like these are not always so cut and dry, but the more time you allow yourself to process the relationship, the more strongly your gut will lead you in the right direction.

Related Link: [Should You Listen When Your Parents Advise You to Break Up?](#)

3. Be Open: Keep in mind as you dissect your thoughts that even the most unsolicited or inaccurate advice about your personal life from loved ones stems from the best of intentions. Remember that your parents, girlfriends, and siblings are giving advice based on *their* experiences, not yours. While they just want the best for you and to see you with someone who makes you happy, find a sensitive way to explain to them that, though you appreciate their concern, you have a handle on how you feel and what to do. Thank them for their support and remind them that you will certainly come to them for advice when you truly need it. Not only will this

open communication show your appreciation for those you care about, but it will hopefully quiet some of those real-life opposing opinions as well!

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

Exclusive Interview: ‘Food Network’ Host Claire Robinson Says, “Food Is the Key to Passion”





Interview by Priyanka Singh.

Chef Claire Robinson is perhaps best known for her Food Network show *5 Ingredient Fix*. But does she use only five ingredients when cooking at home? “I’m all about few ingredient cooking, which really focuses on the quality of the ingredient and the balance within each recipe,” the reality TV host explains in our [exclusive celebrity interview](#). “I’m looking for power-packed punches of flavor!”

Related Link: [‘The Chew’ Host Carla Hall Talks Winter Dinner Date Ideas](#)

Reality TV Chef Claire Robinson Shares Recipe

Plus, she reveals how the Flavor Forecast by McCormick helps her overcome “writer’s block” when she’s developing new recipes. Celebrating the Chilies Obsession of 2014, she teaches us how to make the Three-Chile Mole Fondue. She also encourages viewers to introduce fun and exciting recipes to their partners – and she’s got just the way to do it. “Try

some of these new flavors!”

And, of course, we had to ask if food is truly the key to a man’s heart: “Food is the key to memories; food is the key to passion,” she candidly shares in our exclusive celebrity interview. “It’s the one language we all speak.”

For more information on McCormick’s Flavor Forecast, visit <http://www.mccormick.com/Flavor-Forecast>.

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

New Couple? Ryan Seacrest Steps Out With Shayna Terese Taylor on Vacation





By Brittany Stubbs

Ryan Seacrest has some new arm candy! The *American Idol* host was seen on vacation in Uruguay with the beautiful blonde, Shayna Terese Taylor, both a model and personal trainer. UsMagazine.com confirms the two were spotted on Sunday, Nov. 24 smiling and laughing while having lunch at La Huella restaurant. The couple then proceeded to step into the sunshine and head to the beach.

What are some ways to announce your new relationship to family and friends?

Cupid's Advice:

As easy as it is these days to put yourself "in a relationship" on Facebook and upload some pictures of your significant other, there are more personal ways to introduce and officially announce your new romance to your loved ones:

1. Dinner and drinks: Why not get your family and friends together for dinner to meet your significant other? This way you not only have the opportunity to officially announce

you're dating, but you also give everyone an opportunity to get to know him or her. They'll share in the joy of your new relationship just as much as you have.

Related: [Julianna Hough Relaxes in Miami One Month After Split From Ryan Seacrest](#)

2. Bring your partner along: If the thought of having a dinner in which your partner and new relationship are the main subjects makes you uncomfortable, consider a more low key way to include and introduce them to your circle. Bringing them along to a friend's house party, a family birthday, or as your plus-one to a wedding, are opportunities you can casually announce your relationship.

Related: [Julianne Hough and Ryan Seacrest Spend Weekend in Los Cabos](#)

3. Send an email: Not everyone has the luxury of living close to all their family and friends, but it's important to still keep them updated on your life. Sending them a nice email updating them on what you have going on, including the news of your new relationship, will make your loved ones feel more in the loop despite the distance that separates you. You might even consider including a picture of you and your partner and a little synopsis of how the two of you met.

How have you announced a new relationship to your family and friends? Share your experiences below.

Dating with an Age Gap



By April Littleton

Many people find themselves attracted to others who are older and/or younger than them. Dating someone who isn't the exact same age as you isn't uncommon. In fact, it's almost rare to find a couple who don't have an age gap between them. This doesn't mean that dating someone who's a different age doesn't have its challenges. Sure, you'll have plenty in common with your new boo, but you might also have quite a few differences. Cupid has some advice:

1. Be sure: Whether you're dating someone older or younger than you, you need to be 100 percent sure that you want to be with that person. Why are you dating this specific individual? Do you see it going anywhere? Will the age difference ultimately affect your relationship? If there's a huge difference in age, the two of you as a couple might not see eye-to-eye. One of you might be ready to settle down, while

the other is still wanting to play the field a little. Just be sure the person you're devoting your time to is worth the hassle.

Related: [What to Do When Politics Interfere with Your Relationship](#)

2. Find common ground: If you're going to try to make the relationship last, you and your partner need to communicate early on what your goals and interests are. Find some hobbies you and your honey can enjoy together. Discuss whether or not you're looking for something more long-term, or if you're just taking it day-by-day. Make sure you really dig deep into each other's lives. Watch your significant other's favorite movie, eat the food he/she enjoys, etc. You might come to find that you have a lot more in common with your love than you think.

Related: [5 Tips to Dating Someone with a Potty Mouth](#)

3. Don't make it a big deal: Many of your friends and family members might do a double take when you tell them how old your partner is, but the trick is to act like it's no big deal. Don't act any differently around your honey than you would anyone else. If he/she is younger than you, don't try to act as if you know all of the new slang words people tend to use. If he/she is older, don't pretend to be anymore mature than you are. The two of you are together for a reason. He/she obviously likes you for who you are. Be yourself around your significant other and everyone else will follow suit – regardless of how young or old they are.

Have you ever dated with an age gap? Share your experience below.

Single in Stiletto Show: Dating Red Flags



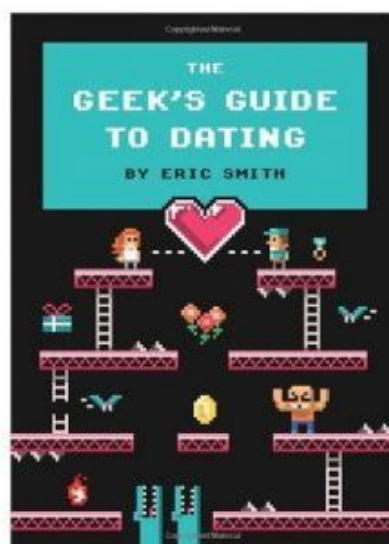
This week, [Single in Stiletto](#) founder Suzanne Oshima talks with relationship strategist Joe Amoia about dating red flags. They address the following questions: Why are you missing the red flags in the first place? What are your essential needs from a man? What if he isn't giving you what you need? What kind of men should you avoid? What's a tell-tale sign you need to get out of a relationship? Listen up if you're trying to figure out if the man in your life is worth your time!

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

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

What dating red flags have you missed in the past? Tell us in the comments below!

NoGamesLove Video Dating Tips: 10 Places to Meet Your Soul Mate by New Year's Eve



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

Dating Advice from E!'s *Famously Single* Laurel House on Where to Meet Your Soul Mate

Are you hoping to find a guy before New Year's Eve rolls around? If so, you're in luck! With a little strategic dating, it *is* possible to meet your soul mate – or even just Mr. Right Now – before the clock strikes midnight and a new year begins. First, you must do something different. “You want to expose yourself to new people and set-up an opportunity for chemistry,” says Laurel House, dating expert and E!'s *Famously Single* dating coach in this week's [dating advice](#) video. “You do that by going places you normally would *never* go.”

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

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

What are you going to do to meet a man by NYE? Share your tips in the comments below.

Lady Gaga Says Boyfriend Taylor Kinney Is a Weirdo Like Her





By April Littleton

According to UsMagazine.com, Lady Gaga is finally spilling the beans about her boyfriend, Taylor Kinney. During an interview on *The Ellen DeGeneres Show*, the *Applause* singer revealed that her and her beau have similar personalities. "He is extremely strange, actually, and we complement each other's weirdness," Gaga said to DeGeneres. The episode is set to aired Monday, Nov. 25.

What are some important things to have in common with your partner?

Cupid's Advice:

Everyone's heard the saying 'opposites attract,' but it doesn't hurt to have a thing or two in common with the person you love – especially if you plan on spending a lifetime together. Cupid is here to help:

1. Long-term goals: You may not know how you want your life to be like in the next few years, but you should at least have an idea. Do you want kids? A house of your own? Do you plan on

moving for the sake of a new job? All of these things are important to discuss with your significant other because what they want in the future might not be what you're hoping for. When it comes to your relationship, the two of you should be in sync with each other and know what the other is looking for in the long run.

Related: [Lady Gaga Confesses Her Soccer Mom Dreams to Oprah](#)

2. Similar interests: If you and your honey don't have at least a few common hobbies, there won't be much for you to talk about or agree on when it comes to dates. If your boyfriend/girlfriend is a movie junkie, rent a few of their favorite movies and spend the night cuddling on the couch. If you prefer to do something that gets your adrenaline pumping, maybe you and your partner can try water skiing or hiking – just make sure it's something both you and your loved one can enjoy together.

Related: [Lady Gaga and Taylor Kinney Split](#)

3. The feelings you have for each other: You shouldn't be in a relationship with someone if they don't share the same feelings as you. If you're not sure how your partner feels, ask them. If it's obvious that they don't feel the way that you do, then you need to take a step back before you end up getting hurt.

What are some other things you should have in common with your partner? Comment below.

Dating with Dogs: When Your Pet Is a Deal Breaker



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

For my first expert post, I want to consider a common question: What do you do if your pet is a deal breaker? Let's say you have a two-year-old puppy, and you meet the person of your dreams – and they aren't a dog person. Do you choose your dog, or do you pursue a relationship with your soul mate? Big dilemma!

Related Link: [Must Love Dogs: More Singles Getting Pets](#)

Being a dog owner has changed for the current generation. Keeping your dog outside and tied up to a tree is no longer an option. Now, our dogs sleep next to us in our bed, and some of

us spoil them so rotten that they even have their own pillow and blanket. For many pet owners, having a dog can be similar to having a child: You drop them off at daycare; you bathe them regularly; and you take them to the vet for regular checkups.

Trading your puppy love for a new relationship will certainly be difficult, and it's an issue that you need to clearly communicate to your partner. They need to understand how important your pet is to you and that giving your dog up is not a decision that you take lightly. If you truly want a future together, you *both* must be willing to compromise.

This question affects everyone differently. Luckily, my wife is a huge dog lover, and we'll always have multiple dogs in our household. Our two Boston Terriers have been a huge part of our lives for the eight years we've been together, and we couldn't imagine not having them.

Related Link: [Amanda Seyfried and Justin Long Bond Over Her Dog](#)

This month, I caught up with Jayde Nicole, former Playmate of the Year and star of *The Hills* and *Holly's World*, to ask her some questions about dating with dogs:

Q: You meet someone who says "I'm not a dog person" or "I don't like dogs." Is it over right there?

A: Yes, definitely!

Q: Do you ever feel jealous of your significant other when they're more into their dog than you? Or is it attractive?

A: Never happened to me before!

Q: Let's say your dog eats your partner's new wallet. What do you do?

A: My dogs would never do anything like that – they're very

well-behaved.

Q: How do you handle it if your dog doesn't like your new significant other?

A: Most of my dogs hate everyone at first, but they always warm up to people eventually, so I would just give it some time.

Q: You meet someone that insists that his or her dog sleeps in the bed with you. Is that the end of the relationship?

A: All four of my dogs sleep in my bed with me no matter who else is there!

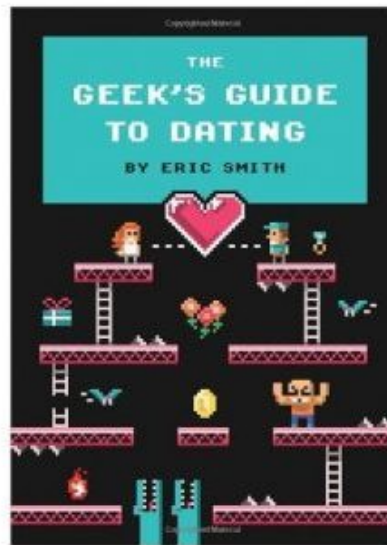
Q: And lastly, Your significant other says hi to the dog before they say hi to you after a long day of work. Do you see it as sweet or just plain rude?

A: Pretty standard – my dogs are so darn cute!

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

Britney Spears' Ex Jason Trawick is Dating 'Hunger Games' Star





By Brittany Stubbs

Britney Spears' former agent and fiancé Jason Trawick, has moved on to actress Leven Rambin. Sources exclusively confirm to UsMagazine.com that Trawick and the *Hunger Games* actress are "hooking up and dating." After Trawick ended his two year engagement with Spears in January 2013, the pop star moved on shortly after with David Lucado and has been with him ever since.

How do you know when you're ready to move on after a break up?

Cupid's Advice:

Break ups can be difficult and healing takes time (and sometimes a tub of cookie dough). It's important to allow yourself an adjustment period to recover before jumping back out there:

1. You're emotionally stable: Break ups are often roller coasters when it comes to your emotions. One moment you're balling your eyes out in the bathtub, the next you're enraged and cutting up every photo you have of the two of you. When

you've finally gotten to a point where you feel secure someone could mention his name or you could even run into him in public and not be tempted to have a dramatic meltdown in anyway, you've come a long way.

Related: [Britney Spears and Jason Trawick Call Off Their Engagement](#)

2. You no longer talk about them: It's normal for everyone to get in the habit of constantly mentioning their ex, whether you're going on rants about how poorly they treated you or just finding little opportunities to bring up their name. This usually means they're still on your mind and you're still pretty attached. But if you get to a point where you can pass by their work or hear their favorite song and not feel the need to bring it up to your friend, you've gotten over him.

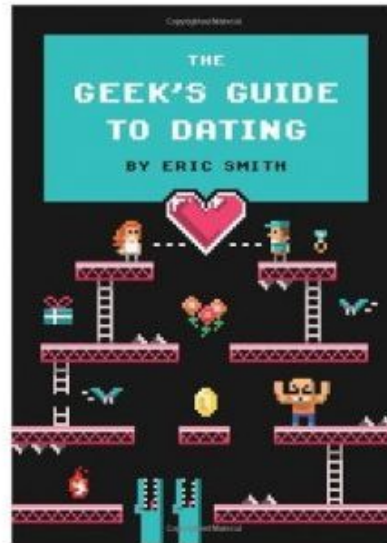
Related: [Britney Spears and Jason Trawick Reveal How Their Romance Began](#)

3. You're done cyberstalking him: We've all been guilty of it before – constantly refreshing his Facebook page, seeing if he's Tweeted lately, etc. But if you find yourself getting online and no longer have the urge to check if he's been tagged in any recent photos with someone new, it's a good sign you're ready to move on.

How have you determined you're ready to move on from someone? Share your experiences below.

5 Tips for Enjoying the

Holiday Season



By Dr. Tranquility – [Lydia Belton](#), PhD, Ct. H.A.

As someone who's dating and marriage history would make the United Nations proud, I am all too aware that the holidays can add additional stressors to one's search for love. You have to consider the integration of cultural differences as well as contrasting religious belief systems and traditions. After all, Christmas, Chanukah (Hanukkah), Kwanzaa, and many more important days overlap. It's no surprise, then, that "the most wonderful time" is a great opportunity to create new memories and do some good for others. Whether you're single, dating, or happily married, here are some basic tips for a happy holiday season:

Related Link: [10 Holiday Gift Ideas for That Special Someone](#)

1. Don't sweat the small stuff: This time of year means that your friends and family (in-laws included) often want to visit. If you're single, it's a great time to travel and enjoy new cultural experiences. Or perhaps you want stay home and host your own celebration instead. No matter how you decide to spend the holidays, remember that we always stress less when we enjoy each other's company.

2. Get ready for family time: As noted above, the holidays mean traveling for many people (celebrities included – Jessica Simpson and Eric Johnson will be splitting their time between Dallas and Boston this year), which allows for extra bonding time. Know that there will most likely be holiday traffic, so don't forget to load up your computer or tablet with your favorite books, games, and movies. Family gatherings are also a great time to learn more about your partner. Relatives won't shy away from telling stories about your significant other's childhood, even those that they would prefer be forgotten. Utilize your finely-honed listening skills and fall even more love with your beau.

3. Enjoy the ride: Do your holiday shopping together and take in the holiday decorations of your city. For a more charitable approach, volunteer at a local soup kitchen and drop-off toys for patients in a pediatric ward. Giving back always feels good, and what you receive in return just might surprise you.

4. Take advantage of being single: Now is the opportunity to *enjoy* being single! You can experience the usual party circuit or step out of your comfort zone and volunteer at a homeless shelter; either way, you'll have the chance to bond with old friends and meet new people. Plus, the start of another year is a great time to meet someone special, so keep an open mind and an open heart.

Related Link: [Three Tips to Stress-Free Holiday Dating](#)

5. Give thanks: As the year draws to a close, take a moment to

appreciate your life and prepare for a wonderful year ahead. Have fun with your loved ones, old and new. Set your desires and intentions for the next twelve months, and visualize what you want. When we least worry about things, they tend to fall into place.

Follow these tips, and you are on your way to a stress-free holiday. Happy holidays to all of you from Dr. Tranquility!

For more information about Dr. Tranquility, click [here](#).

Taylor Swift Says, “I Only Write Songs About Crazy, Emotional Love”





By April Littleton

According to [People](#), When it comes to her songwriting inspirations, Taylor Swift has let plenty of ex-boyfriends off the hook. “I only write songs about crazy love,” Swift told *New York Magazine*. “If I go on two dates with a guy and we don’t click, I’m not writing a song about that. It didn’t matter in the emotional grand scheme of things.” Exes of Swift, 23, include Jake Gyllenhaal, Harry Styles and John Mayer.

What are some ways to use music to cope with a broken heart?

Cupid’s Advice:

Dealing with a broken heart can feel unbearable at times – especially if you weren’t the one who wanted the relationship to end. Every individual handles a breakup in their own way, but music seems to be a common form of self-therapy. Cupid has some tips:

1. Get creative: If you’re musically inclined, think about writing your own song or creating your own depending on what

instrument you play. You can make your own heartbreak song or try something a little more positive – think Destiny's Child's *Survivor*.

Related: [Taylor Swift Disses Harry Styles at VMA Awards](#)

2. Listen to your favorites: For some unknown reason, music tends to make the heart happy and can make almost any individual who isn't feeling their best see the bright side of things. While you're taking a long, random drive, listen to some of your favorite songs. By the time you put your car in park, you should be feeling a little better about your breakup.

3. Make a game out of it: Play only one song per day that represents the mood you're in. As the days progress, you should be in better spirits and the songs you choose should be a little more upbeat and inspiring. Don't let yourself stay in a rut. You can get through this. Let the music be your outlet.

Related: [Richard Gere and Carey Lowell Call it Quits](#)

Single in Stilettos Show: Why Self-Confidence is So Important in Dating





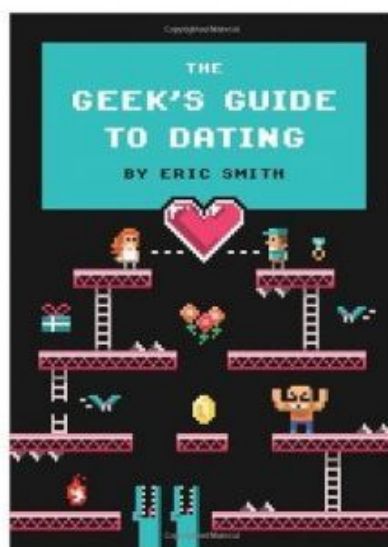
On this week's [Single in Stiletto](#)s show, Jennifer Daure, transformational coach at Timeless Living, talks about the importance of self-confidence when dating. She reveals why self-assurance is so important when you're looking for love and what men really think about a woman with confidence. Plus, she shares her top three tips for ensuring that you possess poise before your next night out.

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

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

How do you build up self-confidence in moments of doubt? Tell us in the comments below!

How to Help Your Partner Through A Crisis



By [Melanie Mar](#)

During any long-term relationship, it's inevitable that you will eventually experience some form of crisis together. Whether it's a loss of a job leading to financial difficulties, the passing of a loved one causing immense sadness, or some form of addiction that is creating friction, life is challenging, and the stresses that occur can certainly take a toll. During these times, the only choice you have is to pull together or fall apart. So how can you ensure that, while enduring a conflict, your partnership remains resilient and you strengthen your love as a couple? Below are my top recommendations for supporting your partner through a crisis:

1. Communicate. Communicate. Communicate: I cannot stress enough how important it is to communicate. The art of verbally expressing one's thoughts and feelings is becoming less frequent as texting and emailing is becoming rampant – to the point of compulsion. This way of relating is not an adequate way of articulating your needs and wants, so keep your “conversations” via typing to an absolute minimum when handling important matters within your relationship.

Related Link: [How to Communicate to Get What You Need](#)

2. Pay Attention to Body Language: With 85 percent of communication being non-verbal, it's important to be aware of your facial expressions, posturing, and gesturing when expressing yourself in conflict. Understanding how the brain works with verbal communication will help you stay focused on the issues you're trying to resolve. Always talk to your partner from your left lobe, which is used for thinking, acting, and doing. Recognize that your right lobe is responsible for being sensitive and emotional, and know that feelings are non-negotiable and will not assist you in solving your issues in a logical manner.

3. Make Your Commitment Clear: It's easy to love someone when everything is easy; the true test of strength in your relationship is when times are tough. It's paramount to let your partner know that you will not abandon them during these rough patches. Understanding your significant other's needs is crucial when being supportive. When in a crisis, ask them specifically, “What can I do to help us do better?” and determine if there are solutions within your capabilities or if you need to accompany them to see a specialist.

Related Link: [Melanie Mar Offer Tips for Today's Relationships](#)

4. Give Each Other Space: In your efforts to assist your loved one, there may be a period when things become too overwhelming, and both parties agree to take a little time out

for the greater good of the relationship. While you're giving each other space, it's very important to keep all points of contact open and available. Often times, after having a little solitude, each person can replenish their body and mind to a healthier place and resume communication with a positive attitude.

When a crisis strikes, there is little ability to predict the outcome or prevent the emotional chaos that may ensue. While it's easier to walk away, ultimately, it's better to face the problem as a team. Arising from the current conflict provides you with a new sense of love and support that will fortify your relationship, give you a positive outlook, and show you that you can conquer any future issues.

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

10 Blind Date Etiquette Rules





By [Whitney Johnson](#)

As tricky as it is to navigate the dating world, a new type of pressure is added to the meet-up when it's a blind date. It may be the first step to finding lasting love, or it may be the worst date of your life. Even so, everyone should experience a blind date at least once. You're sure to learn something about yourself and what you want in a mate. Read on for 10 blind date etiquette rules to keep in mind before getting together with your mystery man:

1. Don't drag your feet. Rather than postponing the date or holding off on meeting for a few weeks, schedule a get-together as close to the initial fix-up as possible. "The longer you have to exchange digital communication, the longer you'll have to create a fantasy that this date will be the perfect mate," says author and relationship expert Dr. Wendy Walsh.

2. Keep your expectations in check. It's natural to have some hopes or doubts about the date, but keep an open mind. Even if you have an instant connection, there's bound to be an awkward

moment or two. Dr. Walsh adds, "Creating a build-up, site unseen, can set you up for a big crash."

Related Link: [How to Ease Your Nerves Before a Blind Date](#)

3. Ask your matchmaker for details. Don't hesitate to ask the friend who set you up for intel about your date. If you're lucky, you can get an idea of what type of guy he is and what type of girls he's dated in the past. Plus, you can identify a few common interests to keep in mind when conversation grows quiet.

4. Dress like a lady. Since a blind date eliminates the usual pre-dating process, it's particularly imperative that you make a great first impression. When he first lays eyes on you, he won't be seeing your charming personality or quick wit. He'll only be noticing what you're wearing, so keep it classy. Save your distress (but very trendy) jean jacket or fanciful headband for next time.

5. Come prepared. As Dr. Walsh explains, "In these days of gender equality, it's perfectly acceptable to bring your own car and your own money to a blind date." It's also the best way to keep yourself safe, as you want to have an easy exit strategy in case you feel threatened or in danger.

6. Be your best self. "You could be auditioning for the most important role of your life: being the companion to an incredible person," reminds online dating expert Julie Spira. If you're the right match for your date, you won't need to lie about who you are or even try to impress him. He'll like you for you.

7. Don't expect immediate chemistry. "It takes time to get to know someone, and relationships need to go through all seasons before you sign up for the long-term," says Spira. Also remember that your date may be nervous, so "if you aren't feeling it right away, give him a second chance."

Related Link: [Why a Blind Date Might Be Good for You](#)

8. Keep the conversation light. “Just because you know someone in common doesn’t mean you need to kiss-and-tell or spend the entire date talking about your past history,” cautions Spira. “Ration your information flow.” Sticking to surface-level topics will also keep him wanting more – you can tackle the heavier stuff on a fourth or fifth date.

9. Never walk away. No matter how poorly the date is going, it’s never an excuse to be rude. Even if you see no future with this man, you can survive a few hours of harmless chit-chat. Plus, as Spira points out, “Even if there’s no chemistry, your date might have a friend to introduce you to, know of a business opportunity for you, or just be a great guy to have in your life.”

10. Be honest. At the end of the date, tell the truth when it comes to your feelings. There’s no reason to string someone along if you have no interest in seeing him again. If you’d love to get together again, don’t be shy! No matter what, be gracious as you say goodbye and know that there’s someone out there for you, even if this guy’s not The One.

For more information on Dr. Wendy Walsh and Julie Spira, please visit DatingAdvice.com.

Tell us: What’s your number one rule for a blind date?