

How to Avoid Arguing Over Money



By Jennifer Harrington

Unquestionably, two things that can be difficult to navigate in life are relationships and finances. And, if you're involved in a serious romantic relationship, at some point, you are going to tackle the topic of finances and how they will be handled in your joint life with your sweetie. Here are some tips to avoid the conflicts about money that can frequently plague romances:

1. Always communicate.

Clear and timely communication is crucial. Make sure you convey all wealth-related issues and concerns with your

significant other, and have regular, honest talks about your money, expenses, and financial priorities for the short and long-term. Last year, it was revealed that Alicia Keys husband, hip-hop producer Swizz Beatz, owed the government more than \$2.7 million in unpaid taxes. It's likely this financial misstep caused discord in the duo's romance, as it was exposed that the couple had to make several important asset-related decisions in light of the money that was owed to the government.

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2. Make a budget.

Take the time to talk through your cash flow and upcoming expenditures with your partner. While communication is an essential first step of establishing a healthy financial relationship together, it also helps to [create a financial plan by using a monthly budget template](#) and, most importantly, stick to it. That way you are both clear on the plan of how you will handle money as a team, and can hold each other accountable with a budget. Even Will Smith recognizes the importance of budgeting and spending responsibly. The Men in Black superstar, and longtime husband of fellow star Jada Pinkett Smith, once said, ""Too many people spend money they haven't earned, to buy things they don't want, to impress people they don't like."

Related: [Celebrity Couples Who Let Money Ruin Their Relationship](#)

3. Try to see your love's perspective.

Each person has a unique approach to managing money. No doubt, your significant other will do things with his or her money that will anger you. Try to keep your frustration under control and hear your partner out about why they made a particular spending choice. Taking the time to listen and empathize can go a long way in diffusing a fight. Viewing a

situation from your partner's perspective also provides you with a valuable opportunity to see things from their eyes and through the lens of what they value.

When money matters bring strife into your romance, remember this famous Judy Garland quote. *The Wizard of Oz* star was quoted as saying, "I can live without money, but I cannot live without love." Being financially healthy is important, but don't lose sight of the fact that money can't buy (or keep) love.

What are some other ways to avoid arguing over money? Share your thoughts below.

Date Idea: Warm Up With Winter Cocktails





By Deanna Atkins

You and your special someone can enjoy what's left of this chilly winter with warm cocktails that are perfect for this time of year. [Indulging](#) in a hot spiked apple cider or learning how to make a hot toddy will set you up for an intimate night that's different from just cracking open a couple of beers or sipping on a glass of wine.

If it's a night for two, you and your [honey](#) can relax by the fireplace with drinks that will make you feel warm inside – and maybe even a little lovey too. Look up recipes to make so you each can try your best at perfecting your own beverages.

Have a soft spot for hot chocolate? Add tequila or peppermint schnapps to this classic drink – and don't forget the whipped cream. Another twist to attempt is adding KahlÃ to the concoction. If you have a bottle of red wine that has overstayed its welcome in your home, uncork it and add spices, citrus, sugar and brandy to achieve a delicious mulled wine. Light some candles, put on soft music and enjoy tasting each other's signature drinks.

For more [fun](#), host a (warm) cocktail party at your place. Invite close friends over to celebrate winter's end. Have each guest bring over a bottle, a mixer and a garnish, but make sure they know to stay in the theme. Some easy suggestions include eggnog, rum, Tuaca, bourbon, cinnamon sticks, dried cherries, vanilla and miscellaneous spices. Then, taste everyone's homemade cocktail and judge who made the ultimate drink at the end of the night.

This weekend's date idea can also be done at a bar with your friends and a professional mixologist. Be sure to step out of your comfort zone and try something new. Testing out a variety of unique flavors and spoiling your senses with a delicious drink will spice up your night and refuel your [connection](#) with your man.

What is your favorite winter cocktail? Share below.

Celebrity Hair & Makeup Artist Predicts Anne Hathaway Will Steal The Red Carpet at The Oscars





By Whitney Baker and Nicole Cavanagh

Celebrity hair and makeup artist Julia Papworth finds her inspiration just about everywhere: from fashion magazines or local newspapers to sites like Pinterest and Vine, she's always looking for new looks to try. "It's important to find an image you love and then take it and make it your own," she said. By making a few small changes, you can create a unique style that will represent your particular personality and specific style.

Although Papworth focuses on hair and makeup, she often collaborates with stylists to ensure that, together, they're creating "a full package." Fashion and jewelry must align with hair and makeup to invent a character, whether it's for a red carpet, a work meeting or even a first date.

Speaking of red carpets, for the 2013 Academy Awards, Papworth hopes to see a lot of old school Hollywood glamour. To her, there is nothing better than a woman just being pretty. "No gimmicks or crazy blue eye shadow and insane hair. I just love beautiful looks and classy dresses. That's what the Oscars are all about!"

Related Link: [Marc Friedland Explains Why the Winner's Envelope is Now an Iconic Part of the Oscars](#)

Two great examples of this style from the 2012 Oscars are Emma Stone and Penelope Cruz. Stone took a risk by wearing red, a color that redheads often avoid. Her polished updo paired perfectly with the dramatic neck of the Giambattista Valli gown, making for a very sophisticated look on the young starlet. Cruz, on the other hand, opted for a romantic and flowing periwinkle dress by Armani Prive, which was both “stunning and super vintage.”



So who will steal the show this year? Anne Hathaway, according to Papworth. “She has been on point all year long and has been more adventurous with her pixie cut,” the stylist shared. Many women with short hair think they can’t be stylish or feminine, but Hathaway is a prime example of how to do it right. She keeps her look fresh and varied, mainly by “playing with color.” Changing your lip color or even your nail color will give your style a bit more edge when you have a short and simple haircut.

Papworth is also excited to see what Jennifer Lawrence, Quvenzhané Wallis and Jessica Chastain will be wearing. For Lawrence, she hopes to see a pretty, polished updo. As for

Wallis, she always likes to see how the younger stars manage to look beautiful while still being age-appropriate. Chastain should wear a color that complements her luscious red locks, such as emerald green or deep plum.

Related Link: [Get the Latest Fashion Style from 'Hunger Games' Star Jennifer Lawrence](#)

This classic style holds true for men and even couples too. Papworth is a big fan of the clean, classy look that Justin Timberlake has been rocking lately. In terms of couples, "it's nice to have a picture where you look like you go together." You and your man – famous or not – should complement one another and support each other's style. In addition to predicting the looks for this Sunday's big show, Papworth is also a go-to source for everyday style, something that comes in handy if you're getting ready for a first date.

Take a look at her three tips below and keep them in mind as you're primping and hoping to impress that new guy.

1. Be comfortable. "If your uncomfortable in anything you're wearing or how you look, all your going to do is think about that. If you're wearing uncomfortable shoes, you're not going to be able to hear a word your date is saying because you're just going to think about how your toes hurt."

2. Keep it simple. Simplicity is always best when it comes to date. You may be "super wound up and excited and want to make a big splash when meeting someone for the first time, but honestly, people want to see you and hear you and what you have to say." Something simple, classy and chic is the best way to translate your personality to fashion and beauty.

3. Don't experiment. A first date isn't the time to try anything new. You always want to put your best face forward, so stick to something that works rather than something that *might* work. Don't test run a new hair color or makeup product. Of course, experimenting isn't always a bad thing. It's easy

to get stuck in a style rut and do the same thing with your hair and makeup; Papworth has even fallen victim to this mistake.

Stepping out of your comfort zone may be challenging, but you have to give yourself some “tough love” and just do it. It’s also helpful to turn to those around you for their opinions. “Confide in your girlfriends. They’ll give you that extra push.” You should chat with your stylist too: he or she can help you find something new that you can recreate at home.

As Papworth says, “It’s about finding that perfect marriage.”

You can catch Papworth’s work on ‘Legit,’ an FX comedy on Thursdays at 10:30 p.m. EST.

QuickieChick’s Video Dating Tips: This Video Could Save Your Relationship





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

Dating Advice from E!'s *Famously Single* Laurel House on Saving Your Relationship

In this week's [dating advice](#) video, relationship expert and E!'s *Famously Single* dating coach, Laurel House read this blog post by Single Dad Laughing, titled "16 Ways I Blew My Marriage," and immediately knew it was worth a video. Thanks to hindsight, we all have lessons learned when we look back on mistakes we've made, especially when it comes to past relationships and broken hearts. Perhaps, the most surprising point made in both the post and the dating expert's video is just how easy it is to stop putting effort into your marriage. Listen up, and we guarantee you'll learn a thing or two that will improve your own love life.

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10 Ways to Make a Good First Impression on Your Mate's Parents



By Nic Baird

What's the worst that can happen when you meet your partner's parents? Projectile vomit over dessert. But, really, what are the chances of that? Obviously be yourself, because anything else is too hard for something so stressful. If it makes it

easier you can be reserved at first, and let your hair down as you size up the situation. Here are the standard rules to follow when meeting the parents for the first time:

1. Presentation: It could be that your partner's family is a commune of hippies and they don't care if you wear a ball gown or a burlap sack, but it's not a good idea to go into your first encounter with this assumption. Dress smart, but don't overdress. It has to show that you put effort into your appearance without any flash or sex appeal. Pretend you're dressing for a job interview at the library.

2. Grace: Most parents want to like you, and will try their best to establish good relations for the sake of their child. In some cases you might be prodded or even goaded. If this happens then the only correct response is to remain untouched. Don't fight back, and keep smiling. You will demonstrate your power by your lack of aggression and offence.

3. Enthusiasm: If it feels like a chore, that's reasonable. If the pressure of the date is pure torture, that's not unreasonable. As soon as you ring the doorbell, your gut might urge you to just hide in the bushes and slink away unseen. Resist. You must be ecstatic to have been granted an audience with these most respected figures. Or at least it should seem that way.

4. Confidence: Parents who smell a reasonable amount of fear on your person will not be upset. This could even delight them as a form of respect, or give you an endearing quality. An attempt at a confident presentation is all they ask. If they want you to try the mechanical bull in the basement and you don't have a heart condition, then there's only one choice.

5. Engage: Ask questions and be part of the conversation. Show an interest in topics they bring up, and try to bring new material to the discussion. Look them in the eye, talk at a reasonable volume, and, once again, smile.

6. Restraint: Especially for the first meeting, show restraint in your affection towards your partner. Groping and French kissing will disgust even the most liberal of parents. There's some leeway once you've established your presence, but the restraint you show in front of them demonstrates the respect they crave, and in most cases, the respect they deserve.

Related: [5 Ways to Reconcile Arguments With In-Laws](#)

7. Foresight: Even if you're uncomfortable looking to the future, this is a favourite topic of parents. What are your dreams and aspirations? What skills are you developing? How will you be a valuable addition to my child's life? You're not going to answer these questions outright, but it will be in the subtext when you describe your plans. Talk about yourself. Don't talk about the apartment you hope to inhabit with their progeny.

8. Maturity: These people are older than you. They should be older than you, but if not this applies regardless. Keep your jokes and comments at a level above theirs. This isn't your grandma, but it's somewhere in between her and the school playground. Be mindful not to go too far.

9. Commitment: While it might seem like a good idea to describe yourself as hopelessly in love with your new soul mate, parents don't respond to this as well as you might think. Nobody is good enough for their child until they prove themselves. If this is your first encounter, you should demonstrate that you're serious about the relationship without planning the wedding day.

10. Etiquette: This is a skill that must be developed. It's more than being polite and thoughtful, though those are the essentials. Things to compliment: the house, the meal, the music, and anything of personal significance. Manners involve clearing the plates without offering, and sitting back down

when they urge you to stop. You're a guest and you have to pay tribute to their hospitality.

What are some other tips for meeting your partner's parents? Share your ideas below.

Date Idea: Get Dorky Together



By Deanna Atkins

Just because Valentine's Day is over doesn't mean that you can't continue the love fest. It's the perfect time to get as dorky as you want with your beau.

Stay in for the night and break out your favorite *Star Wars* movie or a more action-packed selection from *The Bourne Trilogy*. Feeling like a comedy? Get “groovy, baby” with your love, and put on *Austin Powers*. If you’re up for it, you can wear a laugh-out-loud, 70s-themed outfit. Don’t be afraid to act out the characters or scenes you’re watching, even if that means pausing the flick to reenact a light-saber battle or practice your best Dr. Evil voice.

Another way you can get dorky (and impress your man) is by playing a few rounds of video games. Dabble in some Xbox Live so you can each talk to one other through the microphone in your headsets. It will be a fun way to connect, especially if you play Nazi Zombies in *Call of Duty*. Your goal will be to slay the living corpses using shotguns, molten cocktails and machine guns while simultaneously protecting one another. If blood and gore isn’t your style, dig out your retro Nintendo 64 to play some old-school *Mario Kart*. Racing each other head-to-head will be a friendly competition that could continue all night.

You and your honey can also choose to stay in and build a gigantic fort in your living room. If you want to get out of the house for a bit, unleash your inner nerd with a trip to a planetarium. Gaze at the stars as you get lost in the dreamy atmosphere. You can take turns testing each other’s constellation knowledge or just enjoy learning something new together. You could also visit a nearby museum. Whether your guilty pleasure is biology, natural history or modern art, there’s a geeky institution for you!

If you’re feeling creative, set up a scavenger hunt that you know your other half will enjoy. Accompany your partner on the hunt, giving him or her clues along with a handmade treasure map. This activity will give you a ton to bond over.

Showing your sweetheart how much you love him or her is as easy as being yourself. You don’t need to go to a five-star

restaurant to have an amazing time together.

What are some ways to be a dork with your loved one? Share below!

Q&A: How Can We Celebrate Valentine's Day In a Special Way If My Boyfriend and I Are Apart?



Question from Candace M.: My boyfriend and I are both traveling for work on Valentine's Day, but we don't want to

miss out on celebrating the romantic holiday. How can we share our love for each other in a unique and special way even though we're miles apart?

Answer from Our Love Experts:

Tristan Coopersmith, Love Stylist: Valentine's Day is all about expressions of love that go outside of your normal handholding, "love ya's", dinner and a movie, etc. Valentine's Day is about passion! It is about over the top "I love you's!" It is about celebrating your unique love in a memorable way.

So when your love is distanced by miles and maybe even a time zone, your best bet is to use technology to your advantage. Instead of sending a dozen roses, send a dozen love texts. Instead of a reservation-only prix-fixe dinner date, opt for a candlelit Skype dinner for two, complete with an Evite. Instead of a decadent dessert with one spoon, try sending a box of homemade goodies. And as for the naughty lingerie show, you can keep that one.... thank you, FaceTime!

Happy Valentine's Day, lovers!

[Suzanne Oshima, Matchmaker](#): Trust me, with this unique idea, your boyfriend will have the best Valentine's Day ever! Starting two days before Valentine's Day, surprise him with a few teaser messages. Send him steamy text messages and take photos of you in sexy lingerie, giving him subtle hints about what you have in store for him on Valentine's Day.

Then, on the big day...

His first gift: Surprise him and have the hotel staff deliver him breakfast in bed with all his favorite foods.

His second gift: Send him some more sexy photos and messages in the morning and afternoon.

His third gift: This gift must be sent to the hotel in

advance, just make sure they don't deliver it to him until that night. Give him a super sexy video of you, your hottest panties sprayed with your favorite perfume and a few aphrodisiac foods (like almonds, bananas and chocolate).

After he opens his third gift, end the night with a live Skype session with you.

Your boyfriend will be so excited to see you when you're both home again...so be sure to answer the door in a racy outfit. Your man will think you're the hottest woman ever!

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

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

How have you celebrated a holiday when you and your loved one are apart? Tell us in the comments below!

Why Being Too Picky is Ruining Your Relationship





By Whitney Baker

When it comes to finding the love of your life, it's important to know what you want. Even so, having a checklist that you refuse to deviate from means you could miss out on meeting Mr. Right. And if you're already in a relationship, you may be looking past the good stuff about your man because you're too hung up on the not-so-right things that you wish you could change. Below are a few reasons why being too picky is ruining your relationship. Pay attention and think about what you need to do before you sabotage your chance for love.

1. Demanding too much of your loved ones may drive them away. Smothering your sweetheart may lead to feelings of resentment and irritation, while constantly talking down to your cute coworker may make him see you as a nuisance instead of a potential partner. Whether you're developing a new friendship or trying to improve your romantic relationship, be understanding and open about other people's differences. See their unique personalities as a positive thing and help to foster their individuality.

Related Link: [Love Lessons from Holiday Movies](#)

2. Nagging can be as harmful to your relationship as infidelity. If your significant other isn't living up to your idea of an ideal mate, you may be tempted to ask him to make some changes. If he resists, this cycle could turn into nagging, the interaction in which one person makes a request over and over again, while the other person continually ignores it. According to an article in 'The Wall Street Journal,' every couple will face this issue at some point – and depending on how they deal with it, this form of toxic communication can be the end of a partnership.

3. Pointless arguments mean you spend a lot of wasted time being unhappy. By constantly wanting something different, something more, from your sweetheart, you're bound to cause a lot of unnecessary disagreements. One fight leads to another fight, and before you know it, you forgot why you were arguing in the first place. Rather than constantly quarreling, look past your pickiness and remember why he makes you laugh or how he surprised you on your birthday last year. If you can't think of anything good about your partner, you may be fussing over silly things to cover up a deeper issue.

4. You miss out on the great aspects of your relationship – or a great person who could be your perfect match. When you're too picky about the way your man folds his clothes or how your girlfriend chews her food, your mind becomes too crowded with negative thoughts to appreciate the happiness that your partner brings you. When it comes to meeting someone new, you should be open-minded towards everyone. Who knows, you may even find the person of your dreams in the most unexpected place! And even if the fling is short-lived, you can use the experience to improve your next relationship.

How has being too picky affected your relationships? Share your answers in the comments below.

The Pros and Cons of a Long Engagement



By Marni Battista

The latest news in Hollywood is Britney Spears and Jason Trawick's somewhat long-anticipated breakup. The couple met when Trawick was Brit-Brit's talent agent, and he gradually transitioned to her beau post-Keven Federline divorce. The two had been engaged for just over a year, and we presume one of their resolutions must have been to start off 2013 single.

They parted amicably, according to their reps, but could the lengthy engagement have caused the split? Or did it just make

it clearer that they should call off the whole thing?

If you've already been divorced and are engaged to be married a second time – like Spears was – it's a good idea to discuss if you're setting a wedding date immediately or planning to take it slow.

Related Link: [Dating After Divorce: Lessons We Can Learn from Taylor Swift, Queen of Heartbreak](#)

A year-long engagement in the '50s and '60s would have seemed endless to a blushing future bride, but these days it seems to be more common. In fact, modern couples are holding their "I do's" for two, three, even five years before actually tying the knot. There are plenty of reasons: costs of a wedding, the pressure of daily life (it's hard to schedule a manicure, let alone pick a wedding date) and commitment anxiety. While it makes sense for some couples that are on a second or third marriage, is it really better to wait it out?

PRO: You get ample time to figure out if you're truly a match.

Although the core idea of being engaged is that you've both already decided you want to be together long-term, having a lengthy engagement can help ensure you're making the right choice. In Spears's case, it seems that this is exactly what happened: they weren't a great match.

When you're in a healthy, serious relationship, you're openly communicating about your values and goals...and by the time you get to an engagement, you hopefully have decided you're a good fit in multiple ways.

However, time will certainly tell. Being committed to each other on a higher level than being boyfriend and girlfriend should bring more conversations and actions that will help prove to you whether or not you're on the right path. Ideally, you'll be sure that you're both on the same page, and you'll be able to make the right decision *before* getting married.

In addition, a lengthy engagement can ensure that children from previous marriages have time to adjust to a new person in the parent role, which can ultimately create a better transition from mom's boyfriend to stepdad.

CON: Lack of marriage can indicate to the other person a lack of commitment.

Related Link: [5 Signs He's Not Ready to Commit](#)

A lengthy engagement can certainly be interpreted by one person that the other person isn't fully invested in the relationship. If you choose to have a long engagement period, make sure you're clear as to why you're choosing to wait and that the items on the "when this happens, we'll be ready" list are specific and measurable. Communicate consistently regarding how those benchmarks are going to be hit and be open to shifting them if the results take longer than anticipated.

When you're fighting with your fiancé, you can simply decide to leave...whereas when you're in a marriage, people seem more likely to want to work out the issues to save their relationship. Additionally, there is data that supports the fact that modern society may be growing indifferent about the institution of marriage. It's an important issue to discuss with your fiancé. Together, you should decide a realistic time period for your engagement; being open about it will help give clarity to your individual feelings and can also bring you closer.

There are both pros and cons to a lengthy engagement; you will just have to decide for yourself what time frame is best for you.

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.

Get Dating Advice From Classic Literature With the Help of 'Much Ado About Loving'



By Michelle Danzig

What does your love life have in common with the love lives of the characters in classic, century-old literary novels? Some of you may be thinking back to your high school and college reading lists when you dreaded those 500-plus page novels

assigned to you by an outdated teacher or professor. There couldn't possibly be any similarities between you and those fictional characters, right? Two book lovers and advice columnists challenge that notion. In their new collaborative book, *Much Ado About Loving: What Our Favorite Novels Can Teach You About Date Expectations, Not So-Great Gatsbys, and Love in the Time of Internet Personals*, authors Jack Murnighan and Maura Kelly address today's relationship issues, apply them to the plots and character traits of classic novels and suggest ways that their readers can learn from these stories. In an exclusive interview with CupidsPulse.com, Murnighan and Kelly discuss what sparked the idea for the book, what you can learn from these novels and what they personally discovered while writing.

Jack, Maura's introduction states that you instantly recommended *War and Peace* to help her with her dating troubles. Where did you come up with the idea to learn about relationships from fictional characters in classic literature?

JACK: If you spend a lot of time reading great books, you can't help but learn, feel and grow right alongside the characters; that's much of the joy (and point) of turning those pages. What really separates great literature from merely good is how much it can teach and inspire you. Alain de Botton wrote that Proust can change your life, but that's true of most great writers – and that's why we wrote this book.

In the book, you compare modern-day problems to the plots and characters of fictional literary novels. Which modern-day problem was the hardest one to match?

MAURA: Well, we didn't really say, "Okay, let's take some modern-day problems and look for their analogs in classic novels." We did it the other way around – a more natural approach. As we read novels, we thought, "Hmm! There's a lot in here that sounds familiar. There's a lot here that we can apply to our own dating lives." And then, when I was talking

to a friend about how Jack and I were looking for romantic wisdom in novels, she said, “Pass some of that insight over to me!” That’s when I began to think that we should write a book.

JACK: I take it as an open dare to find a current life situation that I can’t find some analogous set-up in great literature. Even some theoretically contemporary-only situations, like online dating, can be illuminated by quality literature, as in Maura’s chapter about *Love in the Time of Cholera*.

Related Link: [Five Steps to Turn a Date into a Relationship](#)

Do you feel that today’s generation is facing the same scenarios in love (with the exception of new technology) as what we read in classic novels?

MAURA: Absolutely. One of my favorite proofs that we moderns, living in the age of the iPhone, are facing the same kinds of romantic conundrums that people faced in the time of hunting and gathering – or, at least, in the time of stagecoaches and petticoats – comes from Jane Austen. In *Sense and Sensibility*, there’s a great little set piece during which Marianne Dashwood, one of the main characters, sends a note to her crush, Willoughby, through a footman, and then begins waiting, immediately, for his letter back. She waits and waits and waits – and checks at the window and looks at the door and listens for the sounds of a horse’s hooves and makes herself sick wondering when she will receive the response she wants. The same kind of thing happens all the time today, even if what we’re doing is staring at our computer screens and endlessly refreshing our inboxes.

In your opinion, what are the modern-day catalysts that cause relationships to fail?

JACK: Assuming that you have real chemistry together, in some ways, I think it’s all about timing: both parties have to want the relationship to work, and that requires a good time sync.

Each party also has to be mature enough to have a sense of what they need and be able to communicate that (and the disappointment of not getting it). That's a fair amount of personal development. I fear most of us, most of the time, brush things under the rug, and eventually, that deteriorates everything.

If you could each chose one fictional character in the novels you studied and give them jobs as relationship experts, who would you pick and why?

MAURA: I don't know if there's a character I would pick. We like characters and relate to them, in large part because they *don't* know everything about relationships and love – and we often read novels to see what they learn about romance. I'll point to Austen again because she's an author so many people know and love. Her characters learn, for instance, that the charming guy whom you just feel so connected to and so passionate about isn't always a good bet for the long haul; sometimes the less dashing – and more cantankerous or even less sexy – guy is the one who's going to make you feel adored and respected.

But if I had to pick an author to be a relationship expert, I'd vote for Tolstoy. That guy really seems to know the human heart inside and out. A "Dear Leo" syndicated advice column? Awesome. Of course, we'd need to do as we say and not as we do – Tolstoy's wife was deeply miserable in their marriage, and I'm sure any of us would've been too. It sounds like Tolstoy was cruel and emotionally abusive.

JACK: Yes, sadly, the wisdom of his books wasn't exactly put into play in his personal life. Not that either Maura or I have that problem...

Related Link: [7 Ways to Build a Love That Lasts](#)

What are some of the biggest lessons that you learned from studying these novels? How do you apply them to your own love

lives?

JACK: My favorite lesson comes from Charles Dickens' *Bleak House*, where there's an old married couple, the Bagnets, that provide excellent examples of how to keep love alive. Mr. Bagnet is utterly full of appreciation for his wife, and the palpable love he feels for her, the pains he takes to try to show it and the degree to which he trusts and leans on her all add up to a portrait of an incredible husband. (And all of this occurs in only a few short scenes!) I'd like to marry a woman whom I love as much as he loved Mrs. Bagnet, and then I'd try to be an equally good partner to her.

You can purchase a copy of 'Much Ado About Loving: What Our Favorite Novels Can Teach You About Date Expectations, Not So-Great Gatsbys, and Love in the Time of Internet Personals' in bookstores and online from Amazon. For more information about Maura Kelly, visit MauraKellyWriter.com. For more information about Jack Murnighan, check out his biography [here](#). You can also follow both authors on Twitter: [@jackmurnighan](#) and [@Maura_Kelly](#).

5 Celebrities Who Don't Know How to Date





By Courtney Allen

Some of the hottest celebrities in today's world find their soul mates on the Hollywood forefront. Couples from the likes of Brad Pitt and Angelina Jolie and Justin Bieber and Selena Gomez are deemed "the lucky ones" in just a handful of celebs who have hit the jackpot on love. But for others, dating is nothing more than a love taboo. After endless relationships, dates, splits, and shots at love, these five just can't seem to settle down with the right one:

1. Taylor Swift: If there's one thing Taylor Swift is known for, it's her willingness to share her heart-wrenching and disastrous relationships with the entire world. This seems to be one of the many reasons why this flawless Cinderella can't find a Prince Charming to last forever. Swift has dated a series of celebrities ranging from John Mayer to Jake Gyllenhaal and she has the songs to prove it. The musical genius even confessed her dating troubles, telling *British Cosmopolitan*, "I don't know how to make relationships last." Swift may not be able to make them last just yet, but practice makes perfect. The gorgeous musician recently split from One

Direction's Harry Styles.

Related: [Celebrities With Too Much PDA](#)

2. John Mayer: Heartthrob John Mayer has a way with musical lyrics, but certainly not with the ladies. The smooth singer and his unfavorable habits were exposed with release of Taylor Swift's "Dear John," in which she calls Mr. Mayer out for a number of wrong-doings during their rocky relationship. The song called fans to speculate the 35-year old brown-eyed boy's past relationships, which includes celebs like Jennifer Anniston, to see if he was a repeat offender of breaking hearts. It's clear Mayer was nothing less than a heartbreaker for Swift. Let's just hope Mayer takes better care of alleged new girlfriend, Katy Perry.

3. Emily Maynard: Both *The Bachelorette's* and *The Bachelor's* Emily Maynard has been in the center of love's battlefield for the past two years. This sweetheart momma has been engaged twice since both shows have ended and still remains single. Her relationship status leaves us wondering exactly how this tan, blonde bombshell's fairy-tale like relationships take a turn for the worst so quickly. Not only are her engagements called off, but they end rather messy with ex-fiancée Brad Womack's insults and Jef Holms' digs on Twitter. Seems like the last thing Miss Maynard needs is for her next few dating experiences to be televised for millions to see.

Related: [Celebrities Who Are Better Off Alone](#)

4. Joe Jonas: One-third of the Jonas' Brothers, Joe Jonas, has had his fair share of dating experiences amongst some of the youngest and hottest Hollywood starlets. His flings include powerhouse singer and actress Demi Lovato, *Twilight* star Ashley Greene, and even girl next door, Taylor Swift. It is said that Miss Swift's "Forever and Always" is all about the boy band's lead singer, but Swift wasn't as forward in revealing who ripped her heart to shreds in this tune. Not

much is said about the musician when it comes to dating, but it seems like he has some trouble keeping a girl around for good.

5. Flavor Flav: It's hard to forget Flavor Flav as he was once the face of VHL for his popular reality television show *Flavor of Love*. The ex-rapper searched for three long seasons for a woman to call his own, with at least twenty five girls to hand-pick for himself, and still ended up with nothing. Flavor Flav did eventually find what he was looking for, but none of the girls from his show proved worthy. Even so, we can't help but think the long chain-wearing goofball has trouble dating after several failed opportunities placed directly in front of him.

Which celebrities do you think have the most trouble dating? Share your thoughts with us!

How to Make Your Lady Feel Special This Valentine's Day





By John Powers

There is a very serious holiday fast-approaching, and you need to be prepared. This holiday does not require you to fast, dress in green or be good all year. It's Valentine's Day, the one day each year designed to help people celebrate love. Even those of us who say we are not celebrating secretly want to be kissed and spoiled. Here are a few ways to make you lady feel special this year:

1. Ditch the Ordinary

Try something other than chocolate and flowers. Think of something your sweetie really likes and surprise her. Get that rare collectible figurine she pointed out a few months ago. Leave it on her dresser. Give her a silver necklace. Put it in an empty chocolate box and wait for her to open it. The look on her face will be priceless.

Related Link: [Guys Edition: How to Behave Like a Gentleman](#)

2. Get Romantic

Plan a special date that doesn't focus on going out to the bar. This is Valentine's Day, not Santa Con. You can still partake in intoxicating refreshments, but make reservations at a classy restaurant. Make your partner feel like she's the only girl in the world. Nothing says love better than a candlelit dinner and some sweet somethings.

3. Look the Part

Dress up for this special day. Take off the Pearl Jam T-shirt and put on a sweater vest. Your lady will appreciate the effort and feel proud to be out with you. The worst thing you could do is show your significant other a half-hearted Valentine's Day. Keep in mind she's going to tell her friends and family all about it. Give her something to brag about and take plenty of pictures.

4. Make Every Day V-Day

This magical holiday comes once a year, but it's important to make your woman feel special every day you spend together. My girlfriend likes hand sanitizer but using it leaves her hands dry and chapped. I decided to grab her some scented sanitizing lotions. The thoughtfulness of my random act of consideration made her exclaim, "You make every day feel like Valentine's Day!"

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

It may not mean a lot to us men. Everyone likes chocolate, but we don't much care for flowers. Think of what it means to your lady. It should feel good to make her feel special. Trust me that you will be handsomely rewarded. Go the extra mile this year and make it one she'll remember for years to come.

John Powers is a dating and relationship adviser who performs standup comedy and writes the male perspective for Beauty and the Beast, a weekly comedic dating and relationships advice blog. He recently released a music video for his latest single

– a parody of Hey There Delilah.

Date Idea: Dress Up



By [Sarah Ribeiro](#)

Tired of being cooped up all winter? Refresh everything you learned in college acting class by pretending to be someone you're not. Dress up with your [honey](#) and have the time of your life revitalizing your imagination.

Search for nightclubs having costume parties and spend the night dancing in your babe's arms dressed as the king and queen of the ball. Many city nightclubs have themed nights, such as sci-fi, masquerade, 80's attire, 'Alice in Wonderland'

or even 'Twilight.' Club Oberon in Boston has a weekly "Donkey Show": while their dance party rages on, a subtle re-enactment of Shakespeare's classic [romantic](#) comedy 'A Midsummer Night's Dream' is performed around the club. Additionally, Marquee in Manhattan throws a European party every Friday, celebrating the party cultures of different European nations.

Go to a cosplaying (costume playing) convention and tap into your inner nerd, dressing as your favorite comic book character and reaping the benefits of watching early film footage and trailers. Ohayohcon and Setsucon are two huge conventions that are traditionally held the last weekend in January in Columbus, Ohio, and at Penn State College respectively. Be sure to stick around once the convention ends: the after parties are usually at local nightclubs where you can party all night with your [sweetheart](#).

If you enjoy more ancient stories, visit a renaissance fair or even try out LARPing (live action role playing). You and your honey can dress as medieval royalty and play pretend in another century. Live out a fairy tale adventure together as your knight in shining armor saves you, a damsel in distress, from the hands of an evil dragon. You can act as your favorite 'Lord of the Rings' character or get into a more recent groove and dress up as someone from HBO's 'Game of Thrones.'

If you don't have the money to be hitting up the city (or don't live near one), stay in for the night. During the day, head to your closest Goodwill store and get 20 dollars worth of old, strange clothing and accessories. Once you get back home, come up with the most ridiculous outfits that you and your [partner](#) can create. If you want, you can even put outfits together for each other. Make up scorecards and judge each other on creativity and hilarity.

At the end of the [date](#), the two of you can take a photo in your get-ups and frame it as a memento of the silly and imaginative time you had together.

What are your favorite dress up dates? Tell us below.

Guys Edition: How To Behave Like A Gentleman



By David Wygant

What qualities does a woman desire most in a man? Confidence? Humor? Good looks? No, what a woman wants from the man she is dating is for him to behave like a gentleman.

Men, here is what a woman wants:

She wants you to open the car door when you pick her up. She wants you to pull out her chair when you're having dinner. At the end of a date, she wants you to walk her to the door and give her a sweet kiss. She wants you to compliment her, but not go over the top like you've never complimented a woman before. When she sleeps at your house for the very, very first time, she wants a new toothbrush along with clean sheets and towels.

Related Link: [QuickieChick's Video Dating Tips: How to Get a First Impression Rose](#)

Women want good old-fashioned romance. That's why they want you to *call* them instead of *text* them. They like you to reconfirm a date instead of just showing up. And one of the most important things is...**don't ever ask them what they want to do**. Instead, just take them somewhere; plan a date, figure out who they are and what they're all about, and then take them on a journey.

If a woman says no to you when you're pursuing a physical relationship with her, respect her and say, "Hey, I understand. We don't know each other well enough yet, and that's cool. I'll take things at your pace."

It's about being a gentleman, and a lot of men just don't understand that. When you behave like a gentleman, you'll actually get a lot more out of a relationship than you ever imagined.

But instead, most men behave like Captain Cavemen. They don't plan; they don't let her walk through a door first; and they battle their way through a restaurant, competing for the same spot at the table. Most men have no clue how to lead. They just act like aggressive buffoons.

Related Link: [No More Excuses: 10 Ways to Ditch Bad Dating Habits](#)

Don't be that guy.

The next time that you're out with a woman, when you're sitting across from her at dinner, look at her, and make sure that she's happy and content. More importantly, make sure you're acting like a gentleman and you're allowing her to actually get to know you.

Remember that when you act like a gentleman, you actually get the girl and everything else that you want.

Selena Gomez Opens Up on Life After Justin Bieber Split



By [Nic Baird](#)

Selena Gomez made several references to [moving on](#) from a [breakup](#) during a private UNICEF benefit concert on Jan. 19, according to a [People](#) source who attended the event. Gomez performed an acoustic cover of Justin Timberlake's "Cry Me a River," which recent [ex](#) Justin Bieber had done in concert a few months before. She "seemed so angry" during the song, the source reports. Gomez told the crowd that she'd "been through a lot the past few months. It's been weird and sad and cool."

How do you move on from a bad breakup?

Cupid's Advice:

Even if you're still balling from a fresh [breakup](#), have hope! Your feelings will settle and things will get better. Life's not over and there's many more worthwhile connections to make. First of all though, you have to move on! Here's how:

1. Understand your feelings: The [end of a relationship](#) can hit hard or fast. And you feel it for sure, but you don't always know exactly what you're feeling. Obviously talking about with friends and family helps you sort things out. Listen to some music and use it as a catalyst for your thoughts. Make sure to move towards closure, but don't shy away from your emotions.

2. Find perspective: Not to undermine how difficult this is for you, but you're not alone. Ever since we evolved from the alpha male system and his harem of child-bearers, people have been getting [dumped](#). Ask Taylor Swift, she'll tell you! No doubt the effect of a personal tragedy like a significant breakup can't be belittled, but, really, these things happen. Will you persevere despite this undeserved hit?

3. Live life: Go out and enjoy life as a single person. It can be a fantastic experience. You can be whoever you want and act with spontaneity Put more into your life, and you'll get more

out of it. Sports, exercise, art, music, new skills, new projects, new friends, old friends, and anything else that raises your interest. Spend your time wisely, even if you suddenly have much more on your hands.

How have you moved on from a broken heart? Share your experiences below!

Date Idea: Get Off the Grid



By Sarah Ribeiro

Stay away from a boring date night this weekend and go on a spontaneous road trip with your partner by hopping in the car and driving with no plans in place.

Start off in your town, exploring neighborhoods you've never seen and finding restaurants, cafes or other niche spots for future dates together. Then, take it one step further: skip the highway and take a back road to somewhere random on the map, maybe a nearby town or a tourist attraction that you've been meaning to see. Don't forget to bring a camera so the two of you will always remember the places that you visited.

For added adventure, go out of the state. Take the highway as far as you dare and stop at the cutest bed and breakfast that fits within your budget. Find a famous landmark in a neighboring state or follow the signs to the most intriguing spot advertised on the highway. Some great – and somewhat strange – tourist spots include Ruby Falls in Tennessee, the Oz Museum in Kansas, Lizzie Borden's Bed and Breakfast in Massachusetts or the Mob Museum in Las Vegas. Look for more unique tourist attractions at Roadside America and pick out your favorites.

Cash in on your significant other's interests and find somewhere that fits with his hobbies. Is he a gamer? Look for a retro arcade in a small town. Is he a wine or beer connoisseur? Visit a vineyard or brewery for some local flavor and be sure to take home some free samples.

You can check things off your bucket list during the trip too. Drive down to your local airfield and take your journey on a thrill-seeking twist by going skydiving or taking flying lessons. Enjoy a hot-air balloon ride or even get completely off the grid by going off-roading.

In the car, do your best to keep your man entertained. Play some old-fashioned car games, like Twenty Questions – a great way to get to know your sweetheart better – or the traditional License Plate Game, where you compete against each other to find license plates from each state (bonus points for international plates). Be sure to bring some healthy snacks

with you too, like granola, trail mix or fresh fruit.

The most important thing to remember on this date is to not to plan a thing. Let the road carry you and your partner to a memorable weekend.

What are some of your best off-the-grid locations? Share them in the comments below.

Can You Be Friends With an Ex?



By Melanie Mar

Lovers cannot be friends until both parties have a new lover. Many factors come into play with regards as to whether you can remain friends with a former loved one.

Did the relationship end on good or bad terms? If the two of you merely grew apart and perhaps the physical intimacy died in the relationship, then you may have already started developing a friendship within the relationship. It is far easier to continue an already-established friendship post-breakup. However, if one of the parties did something immoral or unethical and hurt the other one deeply, the chances are certainly much slimmer.

Does one of you not have the ability to remain friends mentally or emotionally? One's life experiences and role models (i.e. if you are a product of divorced parents, did they maintain a friendship post-breakup?) will dictate one's emotional ability and openness to establishing a future friendship.

Is it in your nature to remain friendly after an intimate relationship? I have clients who literally go into relationships telling their partner that, if this doesn't work out, there will not be a friendship afterward, which makes your desire to maintain a friendship impossible, however disheartening this truth may be to you. I have other clients who are friends with most everyone they have dated and would feel sad at the thought of losing that person from their lives.

If you're currently in a relationship that you know has a limited shelf-life, but you desire to eventually have some form of friendship post-breakup, here are some things to consider:

Related Link: [How to Break Up Without Breaking Down](#)

1. Why is the relationship breaking down, and is it mutual? A lot of relationships fade to grey.

2. Were you friends before you became lovers, and had you put in the foundations of friendship before you became intimate?
3. What will this person positively bring to you and your life as a friend, and vice versa?

After asking yourself these questions and writing down the answers, you'll have a clearer vision of whether or not a friendship is something viable. Here are a few more points to remember:

1. If you want to end this relationship, and your partner is unprepared, unaware, or wanting to continue the relationship, it is unrealistic to think he or she would want a friendship with you.
2. If you had a secured friendship prior to becoming intimate, the chances of you establishing a friendship are higher. If you became intimate sooner rather than later, having not gotten to know the other person as an individual, and your connection was short-term and sexually driven, then it could be less likely.
3. Are your lives better by having each other in it? Can you rely on this person? If you're in need in any way, is this person going to be there for you? If the answer is yes, that is a true friend. Nobody needs another type of friend, so make sure the ones you choose to have in your life are worthy.

Related Link: [Falling Out of Love and Back into Life](#)

Now, if your relationship has already expired and you hope for a friendship with an ex, the only thing that you can do is lay yourself bare. Put yourself out there and ask your ex if enough time has passed for feelings to heal and if he or she is willing and wanting to be your friend. There are many famous faces that have achieved a post-split friendship; examples include Demi Moore and Bruce Willis, Reese Witherspoon and Ryan Phillippe, and, most recently, Courteney

Cox and David Arquette. And some relationships actually work better as friends. Engaging in a friendship with someone who knows the most intimate parts of your life and accepts you despite them means that the friendship will be stronger and much more successful than any romantic relationship could have been for the two of you.

Ultimately, there are no hard and fast rules on whether or not you can be friends with your ex. Each split is the same as each relationship: completely different. The most important thing to consider is...do you both really want it?

Prince Harry Is Named 'Most Eligible Bachelor in the World'





By Meghan Fitzgerald

The charming young and single royal, Prince Harry, was declared the number one most eligible bachelor by *Town and Country*. Although this hot headed lad has had his dilemmas with scandalous and risque behavior, *Town and Country* says, "He's the wild-card royal, the naughty one, the one who goes out with rah women, hangs out with a fast crowd, downs too many drinks, and goes home at the wrong moment. That's why we all like him best." His outlandish behavior has scored him the throne of the most eligible behavior. According to [People](#), Harry surpassed 39 other men, including George Clooney and Connor Kennedy.

How do you determine if someone is out of your league?

Cupid's Advice:

Determining if another person is out of your league can be a very challenging aspect of life. Most of the ladies out there have heard about the rule, or the exception. They attempt to scrutinize the guy they may or may not have a crush on and

figure out what the deal is. Is he into me? Is he too cool for me? Am I his type? Here are some ways to help decide:

1. You're constantly chasing him: To every women, there will be that one guy that you crave, the one guy where you want to talk to every single day. The problem which ensues where the guy does not feel the same way, they express their feelings slyly, they rarely return phone calls, they don't seem interested whatsoever. Unfortunately, for some odd reason women tend to want a guy more if they don't want them. I can abide by this preposterous rule, it gives the guy you're chasing a mystery about him. Where does he go? What does he do? Why can't I have him? The best thing here, is to saddle down, get off your horse, and start looking for a different man who wants to be with you.

2. Expectations: Women tend to give men higher expectations, or give themselves higher or lower expectations. Simply, expectations tie in to numerous problems pertaining to "leagues." These expectations given to men can make you think that he is entirely out of your league. This also works in reverse, where you give yourself lower expectations and think you're not good enough for the other person. To entirely decide whether this person is our of your league, you need to throw expectations out of the window and go with your gut.

3. Confidence: Confidence ladies and gentlemen needs to be prominent. In the beginning, of course looming into this confident all-knowing being is more than difficult. However, after practice and assistance, your confidence will come naturally. Confidence is key when determining if someone is out of your league. If you want to go up to someone at a bar, do it. It is as simple as that. You need to saddle up, unholster your confidence and get your flirt on. You could be missing out on the love of your life by degrading yourself or thinking you are better than someone else.

Did you ever go for someone "out of your league?" Share your

experience below.

QuickieChick's Video Dating Tips: How to Get a First Impression Rose



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

If you're anything like the staff here at CupidsPulse.com, then you're wildly addicted to *The Bachelor*, anxiously awaiting the Rose Ceremony that will conclude your Monday evening. Dallas native Sean Lowe has already captured the

hearts of the viewers, and now, he's hoping to find love on the eighteenth season of the popular show. Watching the drama unfold in last week's season premiere, we couldn't help but wonder: How does Sean choose what girls to send home after only one evening of interaction? And more importantly, how did he hand out that first impression rose after only a few minutes?

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

In this week's [dating advice](#) video, relationship expert and E!'s *Famously Single* dating coach, Laurel House tells us just what it takes to make a lasting first impression – both on *The Bachelor* and in real life. After all, we're all hoping to be our best selves on every great first date. The dating expert shares her tips to help ensure that you get that first impression rose when starting a new relationship.

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

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

How do you make a memorable impression on a first date? Tell us in the comments below!

Date Idea: Bring the Beach to

You



By Sarah Ribeiro

Escape the cold winter months and bring the beach to you. Have your own island getaway by planning a romantic and private stay-cation.

The first step for this amazing date weekend is to crank up the heat in your house. Forget about how chilly it is outside by keeping your thermostat set to summer temperatures. You and your sweetheart can pretend you're on the beach while lounging around in each other's arms, blasting Bob Marley and dreaming of the sunshine. To really relax, dim the lights and lead each other in a soothing yoga and meditation session.

For dinner, enjoy grilled pork and pineapple kebabs and picture yourself in paradise. To really set the mood, keep a

beach-themed film on in the background; 'Forgetting Sarah Marshall' is a great romantic comedy set in Hawaii. After you're finished eating, head back to the kitchen and have a friendly dessert-making competition with your partner: prepare the the most tropical dessert you can think of, like key lime pie, fried ice cream or chocolate-dipped coconut macaroons. For something a bit easier, keep a bowl of fruit handy and feed each other. Passion fruit is tropical and in season in January, and it tastes great cubed and frozen.

For some added fun, turn your bathtub into a Jacuzzi. You and your honey can soak in the tub, drinking pina coladas and margaritas. Perhaps you'll even be inspired to plan a real vacation together. Grab some travel brochures or pull up a travel website, pick out your favorite tropical locations and consider what activities you can do there: horseback riding in Hawaii, nightclubbing in Ibiza, hang gliding in Brazil. Figure out ways that you and your sweetheart can start saving up for your romantic getaway.

After a nice long soak, break out the coconut oil and give your love a tropical spa treatment: spread some beach towels on the bed and take turns giving each other massages. Find your favorite massage bar at lushusa.com – their Heavenilli bar is made specifically for the bedroom. If you want a challenge, create your own home spa treatments, like a simple seaweed wrap, or try a home-made facial with fresh fruit, olive oil or yogurt. No matter what, keep each other pampered in true vacation style.

Have any ideas for a faux beach getaway? Let us know in the comments.

Dating after Divorce: Lessons We Can Learn from Taylor Swift, Queen of Heartbreak



By Marni Battista

Taylor Swift has been splashed across almost every magazine in the past few weeks, telling story after story about yet another failed relationship and her tendency to get over someone by getting “under” someone new. The twenty-something country crooner is beautiful and successful, but it seems she can’t break the three-month relationship cycle.

Perhaps it’s because she has a “broken picker,” or maybe it’s just that she’s 22 years old and has no idea what she really wants. Whatever the case, Swift is repeating the same mistakes

in each and every relationship. Her romantic trysts are unable to move past the infant stage. With actors and boy-banders alike (even a Kennedy!), the songstress dives in head-first each time – and comes out like a drowned rat within a few months.

When you begin dating after divorce, you're actually in a similar position to Swift. You might not know what you want; you might be jumping in too fast; or you might believe that someone new can take away the heartache of a failed relationship. And, unlike Swift, you are most certainly very out of practice. So what lessons might we be able to learn from the Queen of Heartbreak herself?

Related Link: [How to Find Love Amidst Holiday Crazyness](#)

1. Don't jump into a relationship too quickly. After a relationship's gone wrong, take time to assess what you learned and how it can inform future choices. We call this the "Dating Fast" at Dating with Dignity because a "cleanse" from a relationship can help you reconnect to who you are outside of that relationship, help you refine your relationship goals, and aid you in making adjustments to your "picker."

Once you're in a space where you want a partner rather than need or crave companionship, you're most likely ready to return to the dating pool. When you're dating, take time to get to know someone fairly well before either of you decides you want to take it to the next level. This phase of "data dating" (collecting data about him/her while simultaneously having fun and creating new shared experiences) can last somewhere between one and three months, which is generally a good time frame for figuring out if this new person meets your needs.

Deciding after one coffee date that you're madly in love, that you should spend every minute together for the next five days, and that you're in a serious, committed relationship is almost

always a recipe for disaster. Be conscious of the pacing of the relationship and strive to really get to know the other person, based not on who you want him/her to be but rather on how he/she shows up consistently over time!

2. Have clarity about what you want. If you find yourself confused about what you really want to create in your next relationship after a recent divorce or breakup, take comfort in the knowledge you're not alone. A great idea is to take an hour or two and create a list of what it is you're looking for based on what you were *not* getting from your marriage or last relationship. Also include a list of your values and the traits you admire in other relationships. Combine the lists and choose five characteristics to be your ultimate non-negotiables. By choosing just five, you can ensure you're selective but not too picky.

Check in with yourself periodically and confirm that what you were looking for two weeks ago is the same thing you're looking for today. If you're not looking to get into a serious relationship right at the moment, date casually to your heart's content and practice the art of setting boundaries, flirting, courting, and having fun. If a long-term relationship is your end goal, then date with that intention. Just be sure you know what you truly want.

Related Link: [5 Bachelor and Bachelorette Couples We Can Learn From](#)

3. Give relationships time to evolve. When you get comfortable in a relationship too soon, you often find out things about your partner that you didn't know before you started seriously dating. What happens, then, is that you begin to ignore or rationalize the importance of these possible red flags.

Ignoring the "quiet voice within" is not a smart move. Instead, communicate your concerns while remembering that your perfect match will want to work through speed bumps to

come to a real win-win. If it's not something that's appropriate to share with your partner, make sure you have a coach or therapist (not your best friend) who can help guide you in making informed relationship choices.

When you don't let relationships progress at an organic, natural speed, you may skip over important characteristics of your guy, or he may miss something important about you that's a deal breaker. So be yourself and let the getting-to-know-you part last, and then make that decision for a full commitment in a conscious way. Choosing someone just because he/she chose you is a Mr. Right Now move rather than a move toward finding Mr. Right.

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.

Jennie Garth Says Looks Aren't Important to Her Anymore With Dating





By Nic Baird

Actress Jennie Garth is back in the dating game and says “looks aren’t important,” [People](#) reports. The 90210 alumna split from husband Peter Facinelli in March. “When I’m in excruciating pain, like with what I’ve been through with my breakup and that grief and loss that’s just immobilizing, it helps to remember that it only lasts for 13 to 15 minutes, max,” she told *Health* in its January issue. What is Garth looking for now? “I like positive energy.”

How do you know when you’re being too picky about looks in the dating world?

Cupid’s Advice:

There are a lot of fish in the sea. Some of them are weird, some of them are smelly, and some will explode from the pressure if they ever surface. If you get a bit, don’t let unreasonable standards jeopardize a quality catch. These are signs you might be being too picky in the dating world:

1. You overlook qualities: If you find other people

appreciating qualities about your partner you hadn't noticed, maybe you're not looking at them hard enough. Be sure you don't take any part of them for granted. Part of being happy in relationships is knowing when you have a good thing.

2. You focus on a few faults: If you're having second thoughts, make sure to ask yourself if a reasonable person would look at your date the same way. You could be nitpicking on a few detractors that you won't even notice after becoming more comfortable with this person.

3. You expect acceptance: If you're simultaneously hung up on trivial aspects of your partner and unable to appreciate their appeal, maybe they're not the right one for you. However, it could be you hold yourself to a lower standard. Especially if you're going to be shallow, there's a limit to just how shallow you can afford to be.

Have you ever been too picky when dating? Share your experiences below!

Q&A: Is It Okay If My Boyfriend and I Text Each Other to Stay in Touch?





Question from Ashley G.: *My boyfriend and I live about 100 miles apart. We're both really busy people, so most days, the most we talk is just a text saying "Hi, I love you and hope you had a good day." My roommate thinks this is ridiculous and says we're not in a real relationship. Is it okay if my boyfriend and I only text each other instead of calling?*

Answer from Our Love Experts:

Tristan Coopersmith, Love Stylist: First off, only YOU can determine if your relationship is a real relationship. What works for you may or may not be the same thing as what works for your roommate.

Secondly, no matter who you are, there are TWO questions that you can ask to measure your relationship potential by: 1) Are you getting your needs met? Is the texting satisfying enough to you or do you crave more?, and 2) Is your relationship on a growth path? Is the way that you two connect moving your relationship forward, or is it just hanging out collecting dust? If you answer "YES" to both of these questions, your relationship is working for you, making it oh so very real.

But if you answered “NO” to one or both questions, it may be time to re-examine the value of this relationship. Good luck!

Suzanne Oshima, Matchmaker: A long-distance relationship actually takes a lot more work and effort than a relationship where you both live in the same city. Because you can’t see your boyfriend in person, your only option to connect with him is through virtual forms of communication.

Texting is great for a quick flirt or to let him know you’re thinking of him during your busy workday. However, texting should never be the full premise of a long-distance relationship. To keep your love going, phone calls and Skype are much better for connecting on a more intimate level.

And the truth of the matter is...when it comes to a relationship, no matter how “busy” you both are, you will make time for those things that are important to you.

Paige Wyatt, Reality Star: The relationship between you and your boyfriend is whatever you want it to be. If just texting occasionally makes you both happy, then what’s wrong with that? Being busy makes it really hard to keep a relationship strong, especially a long-distance one since it requires a lot more time on your phone or computer. Your relationship seems low-maintenance and easy to be in with a busy schedule. If this type of relationship is working for you, then don’t change a thing.

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

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

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Singles and Couples: 5 Ways to Celebrate the New Year



By Sarah Ribeiro

We all have our idea of the perfect New Year's Eve: spending the night with your loved ones, dancing the night away and counting down to midnight where you can pop champagne and share a kiss with your sweetheart. While tradition may be romantic to you, sometimes breaking that tradition can give you a unique, memorable experience that can make this the best New Year ever. Cupid spoke to some experts to find ways to celebrate the holiday and resolutions to keep through the year for both couples and singles:

1. Save your money: One of the most fun-wrecking part of the New Year holiday is having to work around your budget. Andrew Schrage, co-owner of Money Crashers Personal Finance, says your best bet this holiday is to find free entertainment options in your community on New Year's Eve, or go out early and skip late-night cover charges. "Set a budget for yourself for the evening and stick to it," Schrage advises, "and if you're going out with your partner, look for budget packages that include the price of a meal, parking, and a hotel room so you won't be tempted to drink and drive."

Related Link: [Celebrate Being Single This Year](#)

2. Don't just go out – Go abroad: What better way to start the year off than spending the holiday in a different country with all of your friends? Marina Sbrochi, author of Stop Looking For a Husband: Find the Love of Your Life says, "A destination location is a great way for a group of singles to ring in a New Year – pick somewhere fun and do it up. Who knows? You just might meet someone great on New Years Eve."

3. Meet new friends: Zuhairah Scott Washington, the creator of Kahnoodle, a mobile app for busy couples, says couples can have their romantic New Year's Eve in the company of new friends: "Keep an eye on daily-deal sites like Groupon and Living Social for holiday specials on group activities like overnight ski trips, cruises, and parties. These are great for active couples who want to spend quality time together while meeting other like-minded people. These deals also will save couples a decent amount of money on a fun New Year's getaway, which is always nice right after gift-giving season."

4. Stay in with your sweetheart: While it may be tradition to ring in the year with your friends – or out with strangers – try having an intimate night with your love. "Instead of hitting the party scene," Washington says, "think about renting a private bungalow in the mountains or a sleepy town

nearby to say hello to 2013 in a private, intimate setting. Run a hot bath, add the bubbles, pop the champagne, and soak the night away in each others' arms."

Related Link: [Important Decisions to Make As a Couple](#)

5. Make reasonable resolutions: Of course, it can't be a New Year without a resolution. Both couples and singles alike can make **realistic** resolutions that they know they can keep.

Couples can start the year off by making a short-term, broader goal that's easier to keep. "Instead of promising to have date night at least once a week, try agreeing that each partner will plan the date of

their choice once a month," advises Washington. "This type of resolution has more room to breathe, and each partner can appreciate that the other is doing something for them on a regular basis."

For singles, Shrage says, "It is important to set specific goals. It's real simple to say, "I'm going to save more money this year," but it's those who put together specific strategies who have the most success. If you're looking for love, a great New Year's resolution is to improve your overall health as that will not only make you seem more "eligible" in the eyes of bachelorettes, but will also allow you to focus on finding love rather than worrying about your health."

What are some ways to celebrate the New Year? Share with us in the comments below.