

# Make Your Relationship Count This Year



By Dr. Tranquility – Lydia Belton, PhD, Ct. H.A.

## **how to improve your love life in the new year**

Many couples come to me as part of my Date Therapy for Couples protocol and ask how they can make their relationships healthier. Being each other's strongest support system and not taking each other for granted is key. These underlining core values are the bond that makes it all possible. So whether you've been married for over a decade or you're in a brand new relationship, you can still keep the romance alive. Here are five tips to help make your partnership the best it can be in 2014.

**Related Link:** [Create an Action Plan to Make Every Date Feel Like Valentine's Day](#)

**1. Date night:** Love is easy and exciting in the beginning, but as we settle into real life, there's a noticeable shift. We're not always on our best behavior – which we automatically engage in during the courtship or “honeymoon” phase – but a date night can make a big difference. Keeping your romance fresh and making time for just the two of you is a great way to keep your love strong.

A date night can be as simple as preparing a romantic meal or as complex as planning a weekend getaway at your significant other's favorite bed and breakfast. Those of you staying at home can add a little extra romance with flowers and candles. Dress up and pretend like you're enjoying a fancy night out. Get creative and make this night your own!

**2. Conflict resolution:** All long-term relationships experience ups and downs, and it's important that you address the issues head-on. Find a moment in the nearby future to discuss it so neither one of you let the problem fester and get even worse. Gently, calmly, and thoughtfully share your feelings with your partner. Be sure to avoid using a fussy, loud, or defensive tone; instead, think of your situation as telling a story. Once you have the initial conversation, give yourselves about 15 minutes of alone time to fully digest everything; when you reconvene, I bet you'll work things out without any trouble.

**Related Link:** [3 Ways to Know He's Just That Into You](#)

**3. Trust:** Trusting each other enough to allow your partner the space they need is important. Take Jada Pinkett-Smith and Will Smith, for instance: While they are each other's strongest support system, they trust each other enough to enjoy their space apart as well. This time is key in allowing yourselves the blessing of missing each other. After all, they say that absence makes the heart grow fonder.

Plus, taking care of your own needs outside of your relationship will help you be a better partner. When we are nourishing ourselves, we can better nourish our joined energy, our love.

**4. Real expectations:** As we spend more time together, it's natural to inadvertently take advantage of your partner and vice versa. As I've said before, healthy boundaries are key. Be fair in your expectations of your partner. For those of you who are workaholics, even if you work with your significant other, your work is your work, and your relationship is just that: your relationship. Take time to nurture and enjoy it, and it will thrive.

Think of all of the celebrity couples that have experienced long-term love: Kyra Sedwick and Kevin Bacon, Goldie Hawn and Kurt Russell, and Pauletta and Denzel Washington, to name a few. There are good and bad times in all relationships, but remembering why you love your partner and what first attracted you to them will help you get through the rough patches.

We all grow and change, and we need to allow our relationships do the same. Making new memories to tie into your growth as a couple will keep your love strong.

**Related Link:** [Kyra Sedgwick Opens Up About Love for Husband Kevin Bacon](#)

**5. Gratitude:** Remember that, in this day and age, whether you're married, living together, or only dating, you always have the choice to stay or leave. Take your relationship day-by-day. Visualize where you want to be in five or ten years, and share this exercise with your partner. If you start each morning with gratitude for your partner, a day becomes a decade before you know it. True love is a gift, so be grateful for it!

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# 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](#).*

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## Reducing Dating Anxiety In 5 Ways Or Less





By Dr. Tranquility – Lydia Belton, PhD, Ct. H.A.

Let's face it, dating can be stressful but "participatory anxiety," as we say in the mental health community, is completely normal. What's important is that you deal with this anxiety in a healthy manner. That's why, I've provided some tips below to alleviate dating nerves.

**Step 1:** Focus on all of the things that make you the unique, wonderful person that you are. We are all beautiful in our own way and we should accentuate those features that make us feel good about ourselves. For example, if a favorite outfit or blazer brings out the best in you, then make sure you wear it on your date. Doing so will help ease your nerves and remind you of how attractive and amazing you are. Confidence is always sexy!

**Related:** [Single Advice: Can You Handle Casual Dating?](#)

**Step 2:** Take the time to get to know your prospective partner by calling him or her up before the date. A pre-date phone conversation can be a laid-back way for you two to chat about

your shared likes, dislikes, hobbies, favorite foods, sports teams and so on. This can be a crucial conversation that sets the foundation for the date itself- especially if you have never met yet. Think of it as a crash course in getting to know each other. You won't have to worry about running out of things to say on your date if you've already established mutual interests and favorite topics of conversation. If you've utilized Date Therapy, your date will be someone who is right for you on all levels, someone with whom you share similar values and beliefs. Established sexual boundaries and similar expectations can (though don't always) determine if your date is a one time thing or the beginning of a new relationship.

**Step 3:** Take time to prep for your date. Make sure that you choose your outfit and get your hair and nails done ahead of time- especially if your date is scheduled right after work. During your pre-date phone call, it's also helpful to decide on the location of your date so that you can prepare to dress appropriately. A pre-planned outfit will alleviate some of your pre-date jitters and ensure that you are confident and comfortable.

**Step 4:** As many of you know, boundaries are a favorite topic of mine because they're so important. Healthy boundaries are a necessary component of a good relationship. You should always be true to yourself and partake in activities that make you feel comfortable. If you find yourself feeling pressured to be someone that you're not, then you need to seriously reevaluate who you're with because something isn't right.

**Step 5:** Have fun! Dating is a process. Not every date will be "the one." Dating is about gaining confidence, meeting new people and enjoying yourself. Lighten up on yourself and others and get out there! Above all else, remember that every date offers us the opportunity to grow in self-confidence and maybe even make a new friend. Friendships can evolve and are often the foundations for strong relationships later on down



the road.

*Developed by Lydia Belton PhD, Ct.H.A., Date Therapy® is an effective protocol that helps people get in touch with their criteria for an ideal mate. DrTranquility's protocols® have been featured most recently on Forbes.com & Yahoo, ABCNEWS.com, ABC's the View, KISS FM, CupidsPulse.com, Metromix for the Chicago Tribune, British Glamour, REDBOOK, Cosmopolitan Magazine & promoted by Match.com.*

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## Dating Advice: How to Approach a Spring Fling



By Dr. Tranquility – Lydia Belton, Ph.D., Ct. H.A.

If you've been reading me for the last year or so, you know that I'm all about boundaries. So when we think about having a spring fling, it's important to first figure out what that means. What's comfortable for you? What exactly are you looking for in a casual relationship? Here are four tips to help you on your journey to love.

**1. Go for it.** Since this relationship is just a fling, keep it light and allow yourself to really enjoy the process. There are no strings attached, and the experience is whatever you make it. Be confident about who you are and what you want in a man (something that Date Therapy can help you accomplish). A spring fling is a fun opportunity to try something new, to veer away from what you usually look for in love. What does your ideal significant other look like? How do you want to spend your time together? Sipping wine at a local restaurant? Or hanging out on the beach? Now is the time to go after your wish list in a partner.

**Related Link:** [3 Ways Date Therapy Can Help You Connect](#)

**2. Be honest.** It's important to be open about what you need from this type of relationship. Ensure that your definition of a spring fling is in sync with your potential partner's vision. If you're expecting a phone call every day, make sure this person will do that for you. Remember that this type of relationship still involves emotional attachment; there's always a chance that you'll get hurt.

So be real with yourself – not judgmental but *real*. This way, you're better able to screen your crush objectively to ensure that he's on the same page. If you have any doubts about the importance of this step, consider Kim Kardashian and Kris Humphries. Sure, their relationship was more than a fling, but these two were definitely not on the same page.

**3. Don't date where you live.** It's much harder to keep things light if you're going to see this person again and again once the relationship ends – and a fling always ends. You want to be able to make a clean getaway when it's over. So consider where your potential partner lives and make your choice wisely.

**Related Link:** [10 Steps to a Remarkable Relationship](#)

**4. Clear your mind.** As I mentioned in the introduction, you must be specific and sure about what you want. Think about what a spring fling can give you – beyond a casual relationship. You may meet someone who encourages you to try new things, someone who takes you out of your shell, someone who changes you for the better. A spring fling can be good for the mind, body and spirit, so take advantage of this well-rounded opportunity.

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**Create an Action Plan to Make  
Every Date Feel Like  
Valentine's Day**



By Dr. Tranquility – Lydia Belton, PhD, Ct. H.A.

The feelings and emotions we experience during the Valentine's Day season can be enjoyed any time of the year. In order to begin, it starts with yourself. When we love ourselves, we resonate a vibration of love, and as it goes out, it comes back to us. So if you've had a breakup recently, let go and let love in – not for your ex, but for you! Our boundaries tend to be in a healthy place when we achieve this goal, giving way to much happier and healthier relationships.

**Related Link:** [How to Keep the Spark in Your Relationship After Valentine's Day](#)

What if you're single? A great way to make the feelings of Valentine's Day last if you're not partnered up is to surround yourself with friends. Take them by the hand and do something that will bring love to others. A great example is

volunteering. Help an elderly neighbor, head to a local soup kitchen or join the Red Cross. Getting out of your own head and helping others, brings loving resonance. Take a page from Prince William: when he was single, he followed his mother's example and gave back to those less fortunate.

If you're single but dating, drop the dinner and drinks. Hint at ideas that are fun and non-traditional. For example, horseback riding, hiking in the park, or planning a picnic can take your relationship outside the comfort zone and build a stronger connection. These suggestions give you a chance to really get to know each other and to be able to *hear* what the other person is saying. This step follows the initial phone call we chatted about last year in "Four Steps For Stress Free Dating," so quite of a bit of the "getting to know you" stage is already out of the way. After a few dates, you could also try cooking together and watching a movie at home.

**Related Link:** [10 Steps to a Remarkable Relationship](#)

If you're attached, keep the love going: flowers, romantic games and bubble baths aren't just for Valentine's Day! Instead, pick one fun and sexy activity to enjoy for the night. Take five minutes where you are solely focused on each other; don't say a word and just relax into each other. This behavior gets the PEA going (brain chemistry of attraction). Give it a shot – you can thank me later!

What if you're married and perhaps have a family? Keeping things interesting can be a challenge, so in addition to the exercise in the paragraph above, I have some special tips. According to Redbook, the First Lady has said her 17-year-marriage to Barack Obama is "not perfect." Still, even in the midst of the crisis in the Gulf of Mexico, the two had date nights. And the President has been known to bring home flowers for his wife.

Another celebrity couple that's still going strong is Patrick

Dempsey and Jillian Fink, who have been married for 11 years. Fink says, “You have to make time to spend together and to work through your issues.”

Kevin Bacon and Kyra Sedgwick have been together for 22 years – a century by Hollywood standards. Here’s Bacon’s advice: “I think you’ve got to keep the fights clean and the sex dirty!”

Consider these examples and remember that is possible to keep the love alive. You must make your relationship a priority. Wherever you find yourself on this list, relax, have fun and enjoy each other’s company. A few minutes a day goes a very long way!

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## 4 Tips To Reduce New Year’s Eve Dating Anxiety





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

We have all experienced an [New Year's Eve](#) that we look back on with regrets. This is largely due to the fact that we invest too much into trying to make this one day the most perfect of the year – when in truth, it's really no different than the other 364 days. Here are some tips to help you have an anxiety-free New Year's Eve this year.

**1. Plan Ahead.** Lots of restaurants, clubs and various event venues book up early, so make certain that you make reservations or purchase tickets ahead of time. You can always bring a friend with you, which is a great idea and certainly guarantees a much better evening than a forced [date](#). Regardless of whom you decide to celebrate with, have a discussion about what you both would enjoy doing and make a plan.

If you need some ideas, search online for New Year's Eve activities for adults and children in your town. If you like to travel, take a cue from the stars: Brad Pitt & Angelina Jolie will be traveling with the kids, while [J. Lo](#), Casper Smart & the twins will be in Melbourne, Australia. Or you

could plan a [party](#) of your own. If finances are tight, make it a BYOB and/or a potluck get-together.

**Related Link:** [Three Steps to Stress Free Holiday Dating](#)

**2. Why Accept A Date Simply For The Sake Of Having One?** This is a common mistake made on both this holiday and Valentine's Day. If you have no [significant other](#) in your life, it's a great time to simply hang out with friends. We often feel that we have to have a great date, but usually, this just creates a lot of pressure that leads to us choosing the wrong partner.

Another mistake that can often be made is going back to an [old lover](#). Set healthy boundaries. If this person was physically, mentally abusive or even inconsiderate, DO NOT ever give them a chance again. It can be easy to think that it will be different this time, but 99 percent of the time, it won't be. Remember: this is a holiday to move forward, and if the wrong lover is clogging your path, there isn't room for the new one to come along.

**3. Go Forward, Not Backward.** Rather than spend the [holidays](#) with a negative and abusive partner, who I allowed into my life longer than I should have because he was tied into my companies, I checked my boundaries to make sure they were set correctly. I discovered that I was tolerating too much, so I reset them. As I have said before, you must let go of what doesn't work so that the right people can come into your life. In a couple of days, I had a new backer with massive funding for the New Year. He became a friend and a life [partner](#), and I have never been happier. Give this story some thought before backtracking again!

**Related Link:** [Get Back In the Dating Game This New Year](#)

**4. Be Proactive!** Don't wait for the phone to ring. Instead, get out there and set your action plan. I recommend a plan A & plan B; then, determine how much time you will allow for plan A to kick in before you move to plan B. You should make your



plans at least two weeks before New Year's Eve. If someone doesn't want to make plans in advance, he or she is "shelving" you, and we all deserve better than [mistreatment](#).

Allowing yourself to have fun with friends can be a much better launch to your new year than forcing that [dream date](#) to occur. No matter what you do on New Year's Eve, take a moment during this time to visualize your goals and hopes for the next year. See yourself living the life you want!

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## Three Steps to Stress-Free Holiday Dating





By Dr. Tranquility – Lydia Belton, PhD, Ct. H.A.

November is a great time to nail down all of your holiday plans, especially if you're in a newer relationship, like Eva Mendes and Ryan Gosling. Will you spend these special days together? If so, where? If you have been together for a while, like Evan Rachel Wood and Jamie Bell, will you be with family? If so, which one and on which holiday? These seem like very simple decisions, but they can make for some serious arguments if not addressed and handled properly. Before you get overwhelmed with too many questions, here are three easy ways to keep your [relationship](#) stress-free during the holidays:

**Related Link:** [Three's a Crowd: Four Perfect Couples Holidays](#)

**Step 1: Meeting the family.** Family can be stressful under the best of circumstances for all of us, especially during the holidays. One key to your relationship surviving is being respectful and supportive of each other while spending time with each other's family. Remember, you are potentially starting a life together. Thus, these people may remain in

your life for quite a long time. The good news is that holidays are technically only three days out of the year; so it's time to buck up, babes, and have fun!

**Step 2: Healthy Boundaries.** The holidays are a time to be social and celebrate, especially when it comes to New Year's Eve. Before entering this time together, it is a good idea to set up behavioral boundaries and be clear about what exactly that means. This time of year, more than any other, is when "champagne" tends to flow, making it easier for tempers to flare. Therefore, strong healthy boundaries and an open dialogue are vital for tranquility.

**Related Link:** [Date Idea: Document The Romance With A Flash](#)

**Step 3: Bonding While Giving.** The holidays are meant to be a time for meaningful bonding. Yet for some, they can also be a lonely and difficult time. A wonderful way to create unity is by volunteering your time as a couple. While you may not be like Lady Gaga, who generously donated a million dollars, or Rihanna, who kindly donated 1000 sleeping bags, but your time is equally as important and needed. With all of the recent disasters caused by Hurricane Sandy, volunteering together at food banks, senior citizen centers, homeless charities or at one of the many disaster locations allows you the opportunity to accomplish two things at once; 1) it is a way for you to connect to your community, and 2) strengthen your relationship. This Thanksgiving, why not truly stand in gratitude? In the end, you and your partner will feel better about doing so and have heartfelt memories to share in the future.

No matter what you and your mate decide for this holiday season, remember what is most important: your love for each other. Keeping this as the top priority will ensure that your relationship will survive well past the New Year. From my heart to yours, have a great Thanksgiving and a wonderful holiday season!

The holidays are a wonderful time of year. *Developed by Lydia Belton PhD, Ct.H.A. of DrTranquility.com, Date Therapy® is an effective protocol that helps people get in touch with their criteria for an ideal mate. DrTranquility's protocols® have been featured most recently on Forbes.com & Yahoo, ABCNEWS.com, ABC's the View, KISS FM, CupidsPulse.com, Metromix for the Chicago Tribune, British Glamour, REDBOOK, Cosmopolitan Magazine & promoted by Match.com.*

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## Breaking Up Without Breaking Down



By Dr. Tranquility – Lydia Belton, PhD, Ct. H.A.

While breaking up is a part of dating, going back to a single life can be scary. It's time to stop worrying about lost love and start taking care of yourself. By enjoying life and staying positive, you'll climb out of this rut in no time. As Russell Brand told host Liz Hayes. "Sometimes it goes well, sometimes it don't. But if you sort of sense there's an incompatibility, then in any relationship, regardless of the status of the individual, it kind of is best to go separate ways."

Here are four tips to help you get back on the horse and have fun while doing it. Let's start with our post breakup tips.

**Related Link:** [Letting Go of Past Loves](#)

### **1. Don't call them under any circumstances**

Once more, don't call them under any circumstances. If you're a woman – and you know who you are – just say no. We have a need to communicate our feelings. It is our way of processing. This is not as true for men. Write a simple e-mail, which states your feelings factually without gushing. Keep it as short as possible. Using bullet points can be helpful to keep you on point. If it truly has been a loving relationship they will eventually call you, if only to say hello and wrap up any loose ends. At this point, you may be concerned it will be too late. You will be looking ahead to a new relationship. It may very well be too late. That is their problem, they blew it. This is why you don't sit around pining!

**Related Link:** [6 Things Women Should Never Do In A Divorce](#)

### **2. Occupy your darn time**

Book yourself up continuously. Now is a great time to hang with friends, go to dinner, go to the movies, stay home and watch your favorite show with the girls and, even better, popcorn. Try wine tastings, spas and gallery events. You name

it! It's also good to hang out with your male friends. Get some of that testosterone energy to keep you strong and reduce the sobbing. You will be less tempted to call him as well.

### **3. Date like crazy**

Dating like crazy accomplishes two goals. One, it keeps you busy. Two, it releases PEA and endorphins. This works particularly well for women. You'll feel more secure, sexy and desirable. This shifts your attention off of him and back to you where it belongs. You will do far less pouting, and because your self esteem is stronger, you will get over your old flame far more quickly. So log into a dating site, go see a matchmaker, write a personal advert and let all your girlfriends know you are single so they can fix you up. Now, you may not be that attracted to some of these guys. Some you may not like that much, and a couple not at all. The point of this exercise is to get you out and about again. One thing I can promise is if you sit at home pining the only men you are going to meet are doing pizza and Chinese delivery. Even if your former romance is gorgeous, he's probably not the one for you.

### **4. Take advantage of quiet time**

Know there will be some quiet times. When you find yourself with peaceful moments, try meditation on for size. Do this whenever possible and visualize positive thoughts: times and relationships that are supportive and loving. This past one wasn't, or you would still be together. Having more time with your thoughts isn't bad!

Remember, you deserve to have someone in your life who is caring, honest and faithful to the terms of your relationship. Take solace in the fact you're free from guy problems for awhile. You are now set to find the right person and have a good time finding him.

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## **Five Ways To Make Sure Your Summer Romance Falls Into Autumn**



By Dr. Tranquility – Lydia Belton, PhD, Ct. H.A.

The fun and flirtiness of summer makes this season notorious for lust and love. Whether you're still testing the waters like Kim Kardashian and her new beau Kanye West, or you have found long-lasting love like Jennifer Anniston and Justin Theroux, here are some tips to make your summer romance endless.

**Related Link:** [10 Ways to Get Into a Summer Romance](#)

**1. Plan your fall activities now:** With Labor Day right around the corner, you and your special someone will have no problem finding something to do as long as the long weekend is filled with activities. Consider the Hudson Valley Fall Festivals or visit Cape Cod in Boston to check out Martha's Vineyard for festivals and fairs going on all weekend. On the West Coast, travel to San Francisco (the weather is better in the fall than in the summer) or Laguna Beach. Wherever you decide to go or not, the point is that planning together strengthens the commitment in your relationship while giving both of you something in which to look forward.

**2. Get into a routine:** Things tend to get a little "real" when September rolls around and you realize that you have to get back into your work or school routine. Now is the time to ease into those very important chats about where your relationship fits among all of the other chaos. Fall also brings along family and holiday gatherings. Get a feel for each other's traditions and core values. Holidays tend to bring tension and anxiety to a new relationship, so reduce the stress with lots of communication, and be prepared for the family reunions and gift giving to come.

**3. Get excited for football season:** What is more fun than tailgating for a big game with all of your friends? Get all of the food and beverages together, and make an awesome day trip out of it. If either of you have a college homecoming



game on the horizon or a professional football game you're dying to attend, go together for an unforgettable experience.

**4. Fall means fall clothes:** Shopping is my all-time favorite sport. Plan to go on a spree like a Kardashian, but do it together. Hit one of those great outlet malls to make your shopping outing even more enjoyable. Helping one other select clothes you both like is an intimate activity – you'll both be stimulated by the experience, so make sure to have a great night planned as well.

**5. Stay in touch while at work:** If you are both career people, the end of summer means an accelerated work schedule. Don't let work have all of your attention. Call or text your honey to simply ask how his or her day is going. Try to keep it short to respect each other's schedules, but do it at least once each day. It shows that you are in each other's thoughts and that you care, which is essential to budding your relationship. When you get together after a long day, give each other a detailed breakdown to show your partner that they're a part of your life even when you're not together.

**Related Link:** [5 Reasons to Play Hooky From Work With Your Honey](#)

There are a couple weeks still left of summer, so keep up the romance by completing everything you have left to do on your checklist. Go kayaking, continue to dine outdoors and have another beach day before it's back to business in the fall. All of the time you spend together now will help you develop and maintain the feelings that will keep your relationship thriving throughout the fall.

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# Four Steps for Stress Free Dating



By Dr. Tranquility – Lydia Belton, PhD, Ct. H.A.

Everybody experiences some anxiety in dating, whether it's simple butterflies or anticipatory anxiety. Even a super stars like Russell Brand believe that we can find our soulmate and learn to relax through meditation. Meditation and relaxation

exercises, major areas of my practice, all help to reduce anxiety. But for most of us, all we need is to follow a few simple steps to have a stress-free experience:

**Related:** [Reduce Stress and Maximize Romance](#)

**Step 1: Prepare.** If this is going to be your first date, take time for a “get to know you” phone call before you set out. Find out what hobbies your date enjoys, whether or not their primary focus is work, and explore common interests. Bring up current events and ask for their opinion. This will stimulate conversation on the date and allow you to get to know one another better.

**Step 2: Plan Your Outfit.** Ladies, you will feel much better if you are not hiking in stilettos. Guys, wouldn't it be great to know that you are going to need a tie and coat before you get there? We all like a surprise, but let's get real. Jennifer Lopez always knows where she is going and how to dress appropriately. You will both have a much better time with each other if you're comfortable.

**Step 3: Be Confident in You.** People who are confident and comfortable in themselves are attractive, because they are at ease – not stressed! So, take the time to be comfortable and confident; give yourself time for hair, make-up and nails. Pick out what you are going to wear in advance, and make your favorite outfit suitable for where you are going. The same thing goes for the guys, as both of you should amaze each other. Have fun channeling your inner Brad Pitt or Angelina Jolie. It's better for both of you when you feel as good as you look! Here is a little secret: have some strawberries and a bit of chocolate before you go, because they kick up the positive-relationship-brain chemistry, and your date will notice it in your eyes.

**Related:** [Relax With a Spa Day at Home](#)

**Step 4: Just Breathe.** Dating with tranquility means dating without stress. This really comes down to a little pre-planning, a bit of self-confidence and investing some time. Is your date the person you've been searching for, or maybe the person with whom you'll spend the rest of your life? It's too early to tell, so relax and have a good time. As they say, there are plenty of fish in the sea, so allow yourself to live in the moment and remember – *you are wonderful.*

*Developed by Lydia Belton PhD, Ct.H.A. of DrTranquility.com, Date Therapy® is an effective protocol that helps people get in touch with their criteria for an ideal mate. DrTranquility's protocols® have been featured most recently on Forbes.com & Yahoo, ABCNEWS.com, ABC's the View, KISS FM, CupidsPulse.com, Metromix for the Chicago Tribune, British Glamour, REDBOOK, Cosmopolitan Magazine & promoted by Match.com.*

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## **Five Steps To Turn a Date Into a Relationship**





By Dr. Tranquility – Lydia Belton, PhD, Ct.H.A.

For many people who seek lasting relationships, the first date isn't the big issue. In truth, the actual challenge is to use that first date as a litmus test for whether to move forward or not. You can't hope to follow in the footsteps of Kyra Sedgwick and Kevin Bacon or Sarah Jessica Parker and Mathew Broderick directly after the first cocktail. However, as these celebrities would surely tell you, a lengthy partnership is rooted in loyalty and consistency. Once you get past that initial encounter, you may be ready to take steps towards a lasting and meaningful relationship. Here's how to go about it, step by step:

### **Step One: Focus on the Attraction and Ignore the Distractions**

Many, if not most, first dates are over drinks or a meal with plenty of potential distractions swirling around the room – televised sports, side table conversations, interesting people, etc. You were attracted to your date for some reason or you would not be there in the first place. So keep your attention where it needs to be – your date is the Attraction.

Continuous eye contact is the key, as it will also work to keep your date's attention focused on you. Eye contact also will help with active listening and make the conversation flow easily.

**Related:** [5 Conversations to Avoid on the First Date](#)

### **Step Two: Listen Actively and Be Engaged in the Conversation**

Eye contact should foster concentration on your date and what your date has to say about values, beliefs, understandings and even issues. If you let your mind drift to the pressures of work, finances, where you need to be next week, you will end up excusing yourself for not paying attention – the last thing that a date leading to a relationship wants to be told. You risk losing the areas where you connect, and the important elements of the foundation for forming the relationship. Worst case – you will convey to your date the impression that you do not care to move past the dating stage. So, concentrate and stay engaged!

**Related:** [4 Steps to a Stronger Long Term Relationship](#)

### **Step Three: Flirting and Body Language**

Understanding your limits, particularly if consuming alcohol, will enable you maintain all the positive elements of your body language and appropriate level of flirting. Smile and laugh. Make your gestures inviting – keep your palms up. You want to be open and inviting, conveying an open mind and interest in exploring something new. Reach across the table and touch your date's hand (the eye contact and active listening will lead to this), and before you know it, you will be holding hands and gazing into each other's eyes. You too can flirt like Pamela Anderson and Katy Perry.

### **Step Four: Time is Important and Valuable**

Aside from simple good manners, being on time and respecting

the time of your date is important. Be punctual and respect the time parameters of your date.

### **Step Five: Agree on the Next Step**

If this is going to be a relationship, before you part ways, talk about what, when and where for the next date. If you have followed the first four steps, setting the next date will come naturally.

With these several steps in mind, it should be a little easier for you to gauge whether or not you're ready for a long term situation with your new fling.

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