

'The 50 Fridays Marriage Challenge' Authors Talk About Maintaining Intimacy In Your Marriage



By Gabriela Robles

Jeff and Lora Helton, authors of the marriage-transformation book *The 50 Fridays Marriage Challenge*, are a husband-and-wife duo who coach, counsel, and consult other married couples. Between them, they have an impressive background: Lora earned

her Masters Degree in Clinical Psychology from Wheaton Graduate School and was in private practice for seven years, while Jeff spent nearly three decades as a pastor, offering spiritual guidance to men and families.

Now, they're offering their expert advice to an even broader audience. In their new book, they encourage their readers to ask themselves one question each week. Their hope is to spark conversation and open up the boundaries in a relationship, allowing spouses to better understand each other and thus increase the intimacy that they share. Here, Lora and Jeff give CupidsPulse.com the inside scoop on their game-changing challenge.

Each chapter in *The 50 Fridays Marriage Challenge* includes a question, a biblical quote, a message and a quote from other literature. Why did you choose this format?

J: The idea for the book developed about five years ago when our oldest son was entering his senior year of high school. I started writing weekly letters to him, and I found myself thinking, "Oh my gosh, does my son know these things before he leaves home?" So I covered everything from how to change a tire to how to cook a steak. As the letters evolved, I began including a quote that gave more substance to what I was saying. Then, since my family is faith-based, I added in a Bible scripture, just something to encourage him. And it was during this process that I thought, "These are some really good benchmarks for Lora and I to write about marriage."

I think to ask a question about marriage is a helpful tool for people. But I thought it'd be better to also reference experts to add some weight to each chapter. So each of our passages or quotes are connected to the question of the day. We want people to have three different types of content: something from us, something from a passage of Scripture, and something from everyone from celebrities to Mother Theresa.

Related Link: [5 Conversations Every Couple Should Have Before Getting Married](#)

Why did you choose a 50-day timeframe? Is that really enough time to improve a relationship?

J: In our introduction, we talk about how we live in a culture that wants a 50-minute fix. Marriages are far more like a crockpot than a microwave. They take time, even in crisis. Our process is two weeks short of being an entire year. Instead of couples thinking, “If things don’t get better in three weeks, I’m out,” we want people to say, “Let’s just slow down and take our time. We didn’t get into this mess overnight, so it’s going to take longer than overnight to get through it.” It gives couples a new way of relating to each other.

Why do you specifically advocate having deep conversations once a week? What if a couple wanted to talk about an important topic every single day?

J: We definitely encourage that. There’s some type-A people who will go through our book in only two months. I don’t think couples can have this type of conversations too often. We are writing to a market where a vast majority of people have no intentional conversations for weeks or months at a time. We’ve asked a group of 600 people if they’ve had this sort of chat with their partner in the past week – and not a single person raised their hand!

It’s so easy to get into the routine of life where you talk about your kids, your family, and your work, but you never really get a chance to ask, “How are we doing? How do we intentionally grow intimacy?” We wanted to develop a tool that would help couples do just that. So if they do it daily, that’s awesome. But our hope is that we just help create a rhythm in their marriage.

It’s no secret that men typically have a harder time sharing their feelings than women. How does *The 50 Fridays Marriage*

Challenge address this issue specifically?

L: We tried to do some questions that weren't really emotion-focused. There are questions about dream vacations or how would you like to spend time together on your next date.

J: There are some questions throughout the book that talk about sharing your heart, and we just hope that, over time, men will start to feel safe enough to talk about their fears and hopes. We also tried to have two- or three-page chapters to help engage men. To really engage men, we wrote something that you can get in and out of quickly with questions that are non-threatening and meant to start a deeper conversation.

Related Link: [Secrets to Staying Married for 50 Years \(Or More\)](#)

And finally, what would you say is your number one tip for maintaining intimacy in a marriage?

L: Communication is the most important thing – you have to be willing to share your expectations and desires. Many times, we try to guess what our partner wants. Instead, just talk about it. Sex is a topic that some couples find hard to discuss with their significant other. Talk about what you want it to be like and how you want it to be a part of your marriage. Movies and television shows make sex seems so easy, but it's not that way, especially when you have a house full of kids. You have to keep the communication line open.

You can purchase your copy of The 50 Fridays Marriage Challenge on Amazon. To learn more about Jeff and Lora Helton, visit their website, <http://50fridays.com/>.

4 Questions to Ask Yourself Before Getting Married



By April Littleton

Getting married is a big step in a couple's relationship. This should be an exciting time for you as long as you're doing it for the right reasons. Are you about to tie the knot with that special someone, but in the back of your mind you're still questioning your motives? Cupid has four questions you should ask yourself before you decide whether or not you're ready to commit:

Why are you getting married?

What's your reason for getting married? Some couples feel pressured to get married because of a family member or friend who is close to tying the knot. You shouldn't feel like you have to rush future plans with your honey just because you see everyone else making the final commitment to their loved ones. You need to get married for the right reasons, so if you're skipping ahead because you see everyone else doing it, then you need to take a step back and be honest about your relationship.

Related: [8 Things Your Wedding Can Do Without](#)

Are you 100 percent sure?

It's normal to have pre-wedding jitters, but once those nerves fade away you should be completely sure your partner is the one you want to spend the rest of your life with. If you're constantly catching yourself doubting your decision to get married, sit down and talk to someone you trust or see a pre-marital counselor. Trust yourself. If the situation just doesn't feel right to you, postpone the wedding until you feel more comfortable.

Do you and your partner have similar life goals?

Think about whether or not you and your significant other want the same things in life. How many kids do you see yourself having with your honey? Will your careers keep you from spending a lot of family time together? Where do you want to live? How financially stable will the two of you be? Your marriage won't succeed if you and your partner don't have similar goals and interests. It might not seem like much now, but once you're around each other on a long-term basis, you'll realize how important it is to be on the same page with each other.

Related: [Premarital Counseling – The Pros and Cons](#)

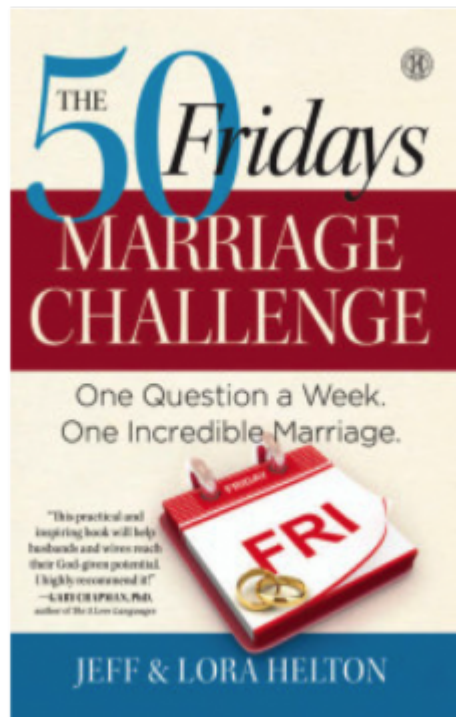
Do you really know the person you're getting married to?

How long have you and your partner been in a relationship with each other? Have you both been completely honest with each other since you've been an item? If you're keeping anything from your significant other and if you've caught him/her in their fair share of lies, think about what that means for your relationship. Do you really know each other? You might want to spend some more time connecting with each other before you make such a huge commitment to each other.

What are some other questions you should ask yourself before getting married? Comment below.

'The Biggest Loser' Winner Ali Vincent Says, "We All Need a Support System"





By Kristin Mattern

The first woman to win *The Biggest Loser* – a show that premieres its fifteenth season next Tuesday, October 8th – Ali Vincent really lives up to her motto of “believe it, be it.” She has moved on from reality television to become a motivational speaker and author of *Believe It, Be It: How Being the Biggest Loser Won Me Back My Life*. Vincent continues to live a rich, full life with her new show *Live Big with Ali Vincent* on the Live Well Network.

Related Link: [‘The Biggest Loser’ Host Alison Sweeney Chats About Her New Book, Fitness Routine and Family Life](#)

The idea for the show began with her book. “There’s a line about how it was ironic that I had to lose half of myself and become smaller in order to live big, and we developed the show from there.” On *Live Big*, Vincent helps her guests’ follow in her footsteps. This season is all about adventure, and her mom, Bette-Sue, is along for the ride. “We’re focusing on our

bodies not holding us back as we enjoy adventurous lives.”

The theme of not being limited by one’s body hits home for the celebrity who, before her time on *The Biggest Loser*, was restricted by her own body weight – an impediment she works hard to never be constrained by again. “I felt trapped because I was ashamed and embarrassed of my body, and I collected evidence for why people were judging me or not giving me an opportunity. I realized, though, that I was collecting the wrong evidence. I didn’t have to change who I was; I had to shift the evidence I was collecting and focus on how I could get healthy and believe in myself.” Her own struggles help Vincent to identify with her guests and aid them through the hurdles they encounter.

Setting goals is how Vincent stays motivated, and she encourages others to do the same. Her personal challenge to herself is to choose three physical activities each year and conquer them. This year, she is running *thirteen races*! She recently participated in the Disney Land ‘Dumbo Double Dare,’ running a 10K race one day and a half marathon the next. “I realized I had forgotten to set objectives in my life,” the television host candidly says. “Now, I make goals that I have to train for, so I have a reason to get up and workout in the morning.”

As a motivational speaker, the star advocates that there is no secret to *The Biggest Loser*, but that each person has everything they need to change their lives. “Who you are doesn’t have to change; who you are is great. There are some habits you have created that need to change, so you really just need to look for areas where you can make slight shifts.” She suggests that people start by setting small, achievable goals and then writing down their progress so they can be motivated by their improvement.

As much as Vincent focuses on fitness and nutrition ambitions, she also stresses the importance of strong relationships, both

romantic and otherwise. "We all need a support system," she explains. "I try to help people recognize what they need in their loved ones so that they can reach their dreams and live big."

Related Link: [Five Secrets Truly Happy Couples Know](#)

With this thought in mind, she ensures that communication is a priority in her love life. Of her boyfriend, she explains, "We have to talk about things. We come from different backgrounds and different ways of life, so we're really just trying to support each other and have a healthy, happy, long relationship." A triathlete herself, *The Biggest Loser* contestant seeks a physically fit partner who is conscious about making healthy choices. While she doesn't expect her man to do everything she does, she loves for him to train with her from time to time, whether it be cycling or running. "I mean, it's not the prettiest moment," she laughs, "but it's good to have people you can workout with."

When it comes to date nights, Vincent prefers to go to healthy restaurants or make dinner at home with her beau, though she is up for a good splurge now and then. The key for her is balance: If she has a glass of wine with dinner, it counts as dessert. "I make healthy choices for me, but I don't want to always be tempted. I want to go somewhere and choose what I want to eat because everything is healthy, not because it's the one thing I can eat."

To learn more about Vincent, visit her [alivincent.com](#) or connect with her on Facebook and Twitter @alivincent. Be sure to watch Live Big with Ali Vincent Saturdays at 5:30 ET/PT on the Live Well Network!

Stars Shared Relationship Advice at GBK's Annual Pre-Emmy Celebrity Gift Lounge



By Kerri Sheehan

Celebrities came out this weekend for GBK's Annual Luxury Gift Lounge at the W. Hollywood Hotel in Los Angeles, California. The Gift Lounge honored nominees and presenters of the 2013 Emmy Awards and featured a range of great gifts and brands while also including some worthwhile charities, such as The Creative Coalition, Lambda Legal, GUARDaHEART Foundation, and spcaLA.

GBK teamed up with NEW Tidy Cats® LightWeight 24/7 Performance® to put on the event and raised a whopping \$49,000 for charity. Some of the luxury gifts given away at the Lounge were jewelry from Helzberg Diamonds, flat irons from Barbar Hair Tools, and hair extensions from Pelo Hair, Los Angeles. Many great vacation destinations were also highlighted like The St. Regis Bora Bora Resort, which gifted an all-inclusive resort stay. Guests such as Rumer Willis, Ed O'Neil, Dennis Quaid, Jason Isaacs, and Neil Patrick Harris, this year's Emmy's host, were in attendance.

CupidsPulse.com was there to chat with the stars about dating and relationships—check out the star's advice below!

What is your best tip for maintaining a healthy relationship?



"I don't know. If anyone has the answer, stick it on a postcard and send it to me."
[laughs] – Jason Isaacs, Actor

How do you break the ice on a first date?

"I've been with my wife for 26 years and have never had a date in my life. I wouldn't know what to do."- **Jason Isaacs, Actor**



"Honesty is probably the best thing for any relationship, whether that be a love relationship with kids or marriage. I can't imagine anything without honesty."
— Joe Morton, Actor on *Scandal*



"Oh my gosh! No one would ever use

this, but the first time I met my man, he asked me what I was doing, and I said I was in San Diego for my colonoscopy.

[laughs] I just don't think that would normally work with most people. This was two years ago, and we are still together. Being honest, I guess, is really key. Be true to yourself and be honest." — Mary Murphy, Celebrity Choreographer



"You have to take things very slow and be very respectful. Make sure to be honest

too.”- Chuy Bravo,
Actor/ Comedian

All photos: GBKProductions

Are Penn Badgley and Zoe Kravitz Back Together?



By April Littleton

The romance may still be alive for Penn Badgley and Zoe

Kravitz. The couple, who called it quits this past June, seemed to work things out during a romantic getaway to Rome, Italy Sunday, September 22.

They broke up because of schedules but they had a moment to reconnect and those feelings are still there. We'll see," a source close to the *After Earth* actress told UsMagazine.com.

How do you balance your career with your relationship?

Cupid's Advice:

It can be tough to make a relationship work when both individuals involved have busy careers. How can you maintain a healthy romance while still keeping up with your job? Cupid has a few tips for you:

1. Make time for each other: The only way your relationship will thrive is if you spend time together. It's that simple. Even if that means penciling each other into your schedules, make it a point to do something together. Have dinner with each other. Go see a matinee movie once a week. Do something together that both of you will enjoy doing.

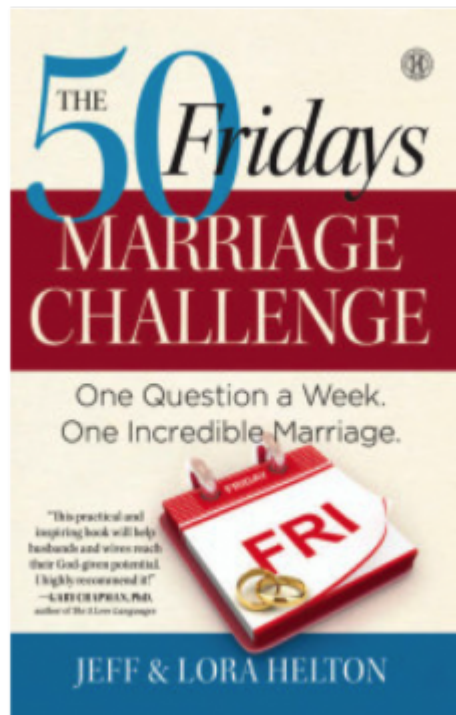
2. Support each other: When your partner comes home from a long day's work, ask them about their day. This may not seem like much, but showing some interest in your significant other's job will work in your favor. If you show you care, they'll be sure to reciprocate those feelings toward your career.

3. Make some rules: Setting up boundaries will make situations a little more easier to handle. If you're living with your honey, set up a chore chart. You take out the trash one week, while your partner handles the dishes. Turn off cellphones after 8:00 p.m. for family time and make sure to have at least one day off together.

How do you balance your career with your love life? Share your

experience below.

Planning the Perfect Proposal



By Rachel Seliger,

JDate Community Manager

Over the past few years, we have seen hundreds of couples share videos of their engagements for the world to see. We laugh, we cry, and we love to share that special moment with the happy couple.

If you are planning the big moment and need a little inspiration, here are my top five suggestions for seamlessly executing your proposal:

1. Get family and friends involved: This is a milestone moment and it's always fun when everyone knows what's about to take place except the one who is about to get proposed to (plus, your guests can help you plan!).

Related: [Creating a Celebrity-Style Wedding](#)

2. Research rings: By now you should have some idea of your significant other's style – for example, traditional or contemporary? Or, perhaps an heirloom would be a home run? The ring tells a lot about the recipient, so if you are struggling, pay close attention to how your future fiancée dresses, accessorizes and decorates and if all else fails, call the best friend.

3. Capture it on film: Hire someone or get a friend you trust to video the proposal. Most likely you and your partner (similar to the wedding) won't remember all the amazing details and what was said, so it makes sense to capture the happiness you felt when you both said yes to this new chapter.

4. Don't be a copy-cat: Yes, there are a lot of good proposal examples out there, but do something unique and authentic to you as a couple. If you hate musicals, then don't incorporate a flash mob!

Related: [Weddings Show Single Men What They're Missing](#)

5. Keep calm and marry on: If your significant other senses you are acting strange, they will either catch-on or think you are breaking-up with them. Neither is a good start to the perfect day, so have fun and be yourself—it's why they fell in love with you in the first place.

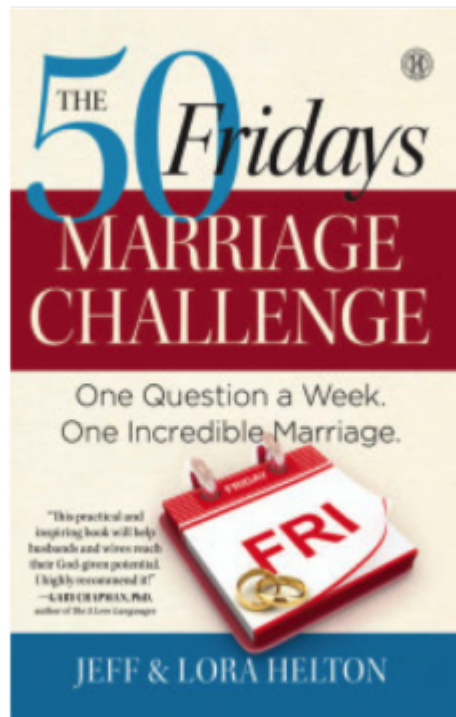
JDate, the leading online Jewish singles community, is calling

all couples who met on JDate to submit a video of their proposal for the chance to be crowned JDate's Next Top Proposal. If you are a JDate Success Story and have a video of your engagement or are willing to reenact it, head over to JDate's Facebook page and enter your video.

Rachel Seliger is a dating guru and Community Manager of JDate.com, the premier online community for Jewish singles. She's here to break down the rules of dating, share first date tips and offer words of encouragement when dating gets tough, visit her Tumblr page for more insightful advice.

Celebrities Donated Their Best Relationship Tips at Star-Studded "Legends Beyond" Charity Gala





On Thursday, September 19, 2013, the First Annual “Legends Beyond” Gala gathered some of the biggest celebrity names in Beverly Hills, California, to help benefit the Michael J. Fox Foundation for Parkinson’s Research. The disease affects over 1.5 million people with the United States, so all donations from the charity directly went to fund research with the foundation. This elite vintage glamour-themed evening consisted of live performances, silent auctions, and of course, a fantastic array of stars to join in on the excitement. CupidsPulse.com was there for the fun too!

Denise Richards and Charlie Sheen were the hosts of this red carpet event that honored musicians, like Maurice White, who was part of the multi Grammy-winning group, Earth, Wind & Fire, and Grammy-winning artist Howard McCrary, as well as other stars that advocate for Parkinson’s awareness.

We asked some famous stars that attended the event for their best relationship advice – check out their responses below!

What is the relationship motto you live by?

“Stay honest with each other. Honesty is the most important thing.” – **Bobby Brown, Singer/Songwriter**



“Stay with a very loyal guy!” – Tara Reid, Actress



“A relationship is not a relationship without communication. Also, the person

that you're dating
needs to be your
best friend." –
Taylor Bright,
Singer/Actress



"My boyfriend is
doing *Dancing With
The Stars* in
Australia right
now, so I would
say communication!
Always get that
'good night' call
because it makes
everything so much
better.
Communication is
the best thing,
and if it's not
there, just dump
the guy." [laughs]
– Rachel Sterling,
Actress

For all the single people out there, what's your best piece of dating advice?

"Oh gosh! My best piece of dating advice is a saying that I

live by: 'Never treat anyone like a priority if that person treats you like an option.' That goes for all things; it goes for dating, it goes for friends, it goes for your job...it goes for everything. If you are giving more consistently than what you're getting, you're putting your energy in the wrong place. It's tried and true, and sometimes, you want to fight it, but don't." – **Rachel Sterling, Actress**



"Honesty and communication are always the best...and jewels!"
[laughs] – Vivica Fox, Actress

You're such a busy lady! How do you balance everything?

"Oh my gosh! I am just so blessed that I have a wonderful team of people working with me, from my assistant to my manager. It's so important to have good people around you keeping things focused. It's also good to have an attitude of gratitude, more than anything else. I am very, very blessed!"

– **Vivica Fox, Actress**

All photos: Izumi Hasegawa / PR Photos

Top 5 Don'ts We've Seen From Miley Cyrus That Should Never Enter the Dating World



By Laura Bensen

After the performance at the VMA's and her newest music video, it is safe to say that Miley Cyrus is on everyone's minds whether we like it or not. She has taken the media by storm and consequently our consciousness but don't fret. This is not a complete lost cause. There are lessons to be learned

from this. So here are five don'ts that should never enter the dating world as seen by Miley Cyrus:

1. At the VMA's we saw Miley twerking on Robin Thicke. This is wrong for so many reasons. Don't twerk on a married man. With a child. On TV. When you have a boyfriend. Or in general. Just don't twerk. While Thicke might be in trouble with the Mrs. (I know I would be mad!), we do know that Miley certainly is with her on again off again fiancé Liam Hemsworth. So the lesson here? Don't get up on another man when you have one of your own.

Related: [5 Lessons to Learn from Celebrity Divorce](#)

2. Don't orally pleasure garden tools, construction tools or foam fingers. She just needs to stop putting things in her mouth or she's going to get sick. Also, while some people might think it's sexy to put objects in their mouths, a guy might find this as an indicator for the Herp.

3. In her new song Wrecking Ball, she cries, gets naked, and rides a dirty wrecking ball to show how 'emotionally exposed' she is. Don't cry and don't get naked to show you have emotions. Please do not ride a wrecking ball, clean or dirty. It will not lead anywhere good. While there is nothing wrong with crying-everyone cries sometimes- it's not good for a relationship to do it too early on. It can scare off potential prospects very easily. Getting naked too early on will lead you down a very short road where respect is scarce.

4. While this one is a bit of a throwback, we can see signs of Miley's retaliation, joining the slew of ex Disney actresses (Britney, Christina, Hilary and Lindsey. Sweet Jesus, Lindsey was the worst) against modesty back in 2010 with her video Can't Be Tamed. First of all, channeling your inner Britney past Baby One More Time is never good. Men might not want a meek girl but they probably don't want a trashy, weird and violent bird either. There is a pretty wide median to walk and

Miley vaulted right over it. So it's okay to be a fiery female, remember your checks and balances.

Related: [Is Being Center Stage Ruining Your Relationship?](#)

5. Please keep your tongue rolled up and in your mouth. Ladies use it for speaking. Not for obscene gestures. As my mama would say "you keep making that face it's going to get stuck that way".

So on the whole, while we all want attention and a partner to love us and to love back, please remember to love and respect yourself.

Laura Bensen is a freelance writer for Magazines.com from Tacoma, Washington. She enjoys gorging herself on celebrity gossip and chocolate.

How to Support a Partner Whose Ex Passed Away





By April Littleton

Dating someone who has lost a significant other can prove to be challenging. It'll be hard for them to let someone else into their heart after such a tragedy, but if you're willing to be patient and show them there's love after loss, the relationship you might be able to build will prove to be worth it. Cupid has some advice:

1. Be understanding: During the grieving period, don't take anything your significant other may say or do personally. It's natural for him/her to reminisce about his/her late partner. Be patient with your honey and give them the space they need.

Related: [How to Deal with Your Partner's Professional Failure](#)

2. Time: Consider how long it's been since your honey's ex passed away. If it's a fairly recent death, expect more hardships and hurdles to overcome in your relationship versus being with someone who's had time to accept the situation and

move on from it.

3. Don't be something you're not: The last thing your significant other needs is someone trying to be exactly like their former lover. Your partner fell in love with you, not a copy of what he/she lost. You need to stay guarded if you notice him/her intentionally looking for similarities between you and their ex. Let him/her know that you're not a replacement and you can't make up for the person they lost. This might be a sign that he/she isn't ready for anything serious yet.

4. Don't bring up the past: Don't bring it upon yourself to talk about your partner's deceased ex. It's not your place to discuss such a sensitive topic unless your honey wants to talk about it. In that case, let him/her start the conversation and listen to what they have to say. Put yourself in their shoes. How would you feel if the person you were currently dating kept bringing up a subject you'd like to move on from? Think about what you're going to say before you say it.

5. Be honest: You need to be upfront and honest about your feelings. If you don't feel like the relationship is progressing in the way it should be, let your partner know. Yes, you want to be there for them, but your needs and desires are important too. It takes time to get over a death of a loved one, so your significant other may not be emotionally ready for someone new in his or her life. You can give it as much time as you'd like to see if things improve, if not, stop the relationship before you end up getting hurt too.

Related: [Absence Shouldn't Make the Heart Grow Fonder](#)

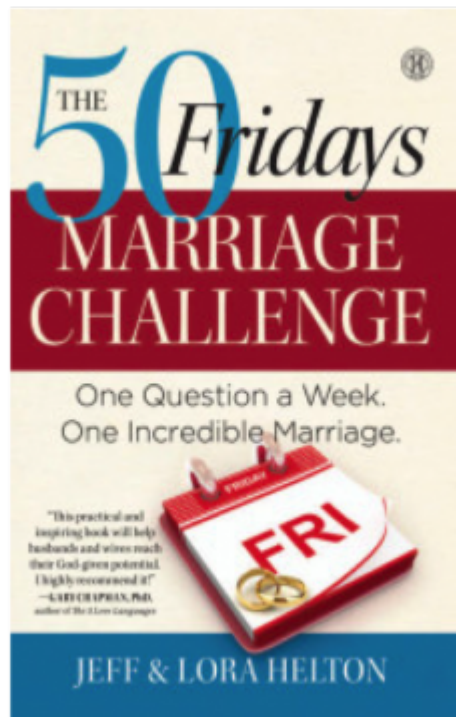
6. See a counselor: Dating someone whose ex has recently died will be tough and you won't be able to solve all of the complications on your own. When the relationship starts to get serious, talk with your partner about seeing a professional therapist. Your significant other might find it easier to open

up to a third party about their unresolved feelings.

How did you support a partner whose ex passed away? Share your experience below.

Relationship Author Kailen Rosenberg Gives Dating Advice for Finding ‘Real Love, Right Now’





By Gabriela Robles

[Kailen Rosenberg](#), Oprah's "Love Ambassador" and co-host of the revolutionary television show *Lovetown USA*, knows what it takes to find a lasting relationship and love. The relationship author has a method that inspires people to put aside their bad habits and find their true self – and she has proof that the dating advice works in many happy famous couples that she's helped. Her new book, *Real Love, Right Now*, is a set of guidelines that focus on discovering what really matters in a romantic relationship. The dating expert touches upon physical, mental and emotional self-appraisal before explaining her 30-day plan to help singles succeed in their search for The One. *Real Love, Right Now* even comes with its own set of fun "homework" assignments to deepen its impact.

Dating Expert Opens Up About New Book About Love

What inspired you to write this book about love and share your advice for finding your soul mate?

This was something that I've wanted to do for many, many years. Whether I was doing something on television or doing something with my clients, I continued to hear, "Oh my goodness, when are you going to put this down in writing? When are you going to get a book out so I can take what I'm learning and follow it in my path everyday?" And I was just so grateful that what I was doing was touching people and helping them move and shift their love lives in a positive way. It was definitely time, and I was really blessed with the opportunity with Howard Books to put this book together. I'm just hoping and praying that it really helps my readers.

Related Link: [Oprah's "Ambassador of Love" Kailen Rosenberg Tell Us How to Experience the Love We Deserve](#)

You start by discussing the importance of physical, mental, and emotional self-appraisal. Why do you feel that it's important to consider these three aspects of yourself before beginning to look for love?

I think so many people believe that, because they're single, they're ready for love. Most people actually aren't, which is why we end up hitting a lot of walls and get stuck in marriages that end in divorce. It's really crucial for us to ask ourselves why we want love in our lives. If we believe that we know what we want from someone else, then we must know what we have to offer to a relationship for it to be happy, sexy, and amazing. All of those things that we want from someone are things that the other person deserves as well. Many times we don't think about that, and it comes off as very one-sided. We need to really be in the best place that

we can be in terms of our physical, emotional and spiritual states. Otherwise, roadblocks happen, and we unknowingly sabotage our relationship.

You have “homework” assignments at the end of each chapter. How important is that work to your method?

Those assignments are really important because they get people in touch with themselves. They realize that maybe they were connected to the wrong truth, that maybe there's a different self that they were meant to be. It's one thing to just sit and read a book and kind of take it in. But if you take that time to do the homework and dive into who you were in the past, who you are today and who you want to be in the future, you start to become your own true friend in a way unlike ever before. You honor yourself, and those lessons learned really stick with you. I'm hearing from readers that, after they finish the homework, set the book down and enter the real world, something will remind them of the work they just did and the chapter they just read. It'll make them realize, “Oh wow, I'm already moving and growing.”

Related Link: [Is He In It for the Long Haul?](#)

Relationship Author Gives Readers Her Best Dating Advice

So what's the trick? What are people who have found love using your method doing differently from people who aren't?

They are learning, for the first time in their lives, how to stop ignoring their inner voice, how to stop ignoring red flags and how to truly understand what they want. That's one of the greatest ways that we can really love ourselves and honor our true value. We often end up abandoning ourselves more than we realize, and when we do, we end up with the wrong partner and in the wrong relationship. We need to really,

really pay attention to that inner voice, that wisdom that's there to guide us. It's not there to hurt us, and it's not there to steer us wrong. I'm not kidding you – if everyone could learn to listen to it and to trust it, we would all be in such an amazing place.

And finally, as a relationship author and dating expert, what is your number one tip for people trying to make themselves ready for love?

You need to sit down and have a reality check with yourself. Who were you in past relationships? Who have you been? Are you proud of your behavior? Do you think you've been honest with yourself and those you've attracted? My number one tip is just to get raw and real with yourself and discover who you are and what you want. You have to be in that place where you're listening to your inner voice and where you know you will never settle due to desperation or fear. That's never a reason to stay in a bad relationship or start a new one.

You can purchase a copy of Real Love, Right Now on Amazon. To learn more about Kailen, you can view her biography on The Love Architects or check her out on www.facebook.com/kailenrosenberglovearchitect/ and Twitter @kailenrosenberg.

Lance Bass is Engaged to Michael Turchin





By April Littleton

A source confirmed to [People](#) that Lance Bass is engaged to artist Michael Turchin. A week after his reunion with the other 'NSYNC bandmates for the VMAs, Bass revealed that he popped the question to his longtime boyfriend. "He said YES!! Love this man," Bass wrote on Instagram Sunday with a photo of the couple showing off the engagement ring.

How do you know when you're ready to get married?

Cupid's Advice:

You know you're in love, but you're not sure if you're ready to make such a huge commitment to your partner. Marriage is a big step and it's not something that should be taken lightly. If you're certain that your honey is the one you can't imagine spending your life without, Cupid has some tips:

1. Think about what's important: Before you start planning your dream wedding, it's crucial to know if you and your

significant other will match well in the long run. What are his/her long-term goals? How will the two of you solve any future issues? Does your sweetie want kids? It's not a good idea to enter a marriage without knowing the answers to these questions. Some of the feedback you get from your partner may change with time, but for now, you'll need a general idea of how compatible the two of you will be once you've tied the knot.

2. Your loved ones approve: You can't get married to someone your family and friends don't love just as much as you do. Well, you could, but don't count on a big turnout at your wedding. Choosing someone to spend the rest of your life with is a big deal and your loved ones should be included on your journey to find someone special. After all, your family knows you better than you know yourself. If they don't dig your partner, there might be a reason why.

3. You make each other better: You and your honey are two peas in a pod and it shows whenever you're out in public together. Does your partner give you that little extra incentive to be better as a person? Are you nicer to others? Has your patience rubbed off on your boo? Marriage might be in your near future if the two of you bring out the best in each other.

How did you know when you were ready to get married? Share your experience below.

How to Deal with Your Partner's Professional

Failure



By Courtney Allen

It is said that “a woman’s loyalty is tested when her man has nothing, and a man’s loyalty is tested when he has everything.” And let’s face it; every guy and gal is bound to face these crucial tests in their relationship.

That is because in this complicated and unpredictable life, failure and success go hand in hand; whether it is at your first D1 college soccer game after your coach unexpectedly declares you goalie or your first, real job out of college as a local reporter at your hometown television station. But it’s not failure that defines you; it’s how you recover from the seemingly life-ending experience that determines just how

bright your future will be. Believe it or not, your partner can make all the difference in getting you back on the path to success. For better, but in this case, for worse, every great partner will do these exact things to get the one they love through the hardest of times:

1. Express empathy: When your partner's world is crashing down around them, all they want to know is that you understand. Everyone has been in the professional "hot" seat and it is important to remind your honey that it is a typical experience. Take powerful stories of basketball god, Michael Jordan, Apple mastermind, Steve Jobs, and talk show host turned Forbes Most Powerful Woman in the World, Oprah Winfrey, who experienced some of the biggest failures before reaching their ultimate success. Even though failure is common, be sure to make your love feel special by showing that their particular situation is especially important to you. Be extremely attentive and respond to their feelings with sensitivity, taking into account the type of person they are.

Related: [How to Master Being in a Relationship](#)

2. Be a source of encouragement and support: Bouncing back after a failure is the toughest part of the experience. Constantly reassure your partner of their full potential. Failure creates a world full of doubts that can often be very hard to go up against. Help build up the confidence of the one you love after it has been stripped away by vocalizing their strengths and engaging in activities that they feel confident in. Express your 100 percent commitment to their happiness and let your honey know you are in it together.

Related: [5 Ways Your Relationship Can Overcome his Loss of Ambition](#)

3. Help look toward the future: Moving forward is essential after a failure and can determine what comes next. Create a positive atmosphere for your partner so that they can leave

the negativity in the past. It is impossible to visualize a better future if the past is clouding your vision. Lend a hand in the tiresome search for a new job or the discovery of methods of improvement. Help come up with an ambitious plan that includes dreams, goals and means of reaching them. Your love's future is in their hands. Be a continuous reminder of this, as it will lead their life in the exact direction they want it to go.

What are some ways you've helped out your partner after a failure? Share your ideas with us!

Michael Douglas and Catherine Zeta-Jones Separate





By Kristyn Schwiep

Catherine Zeta-Jones and Michael Douglas are taking a break. According to [People](#), the celebrity couple hasn't been photographed together since April 22 and they have been vacationing separately with their kids. The couple has not filed for divorce and they hope they can work out their differences. "They want the best for their kids no matter what happens," said a source.

What are three reasons to take a break from your relationship?

Cupid's Advice:

Deciding whether or not you need to take a break from your relationship can be difficult. So when should you take a break? Cupid has some advice for you:

1. Different goals: Being in a relationship with different goals can be tiring. Even though at one point you might have had the same goals, people change their direction. If your

goals are different and it doesn't seem like you guys can agree on the same path its probably time to take a break and think about what you two really want for the future.

2. Fighting: Fighting all the time with your partner is unhealthy and tiring. Fighting every now and then is common in a relationship, but if it the only communication that you two have anymore it is time to re-asses the relationship and take time apart.

3. You're not happy: The relationship that you are in should always make you happy. Happiness means a lot and you and your partners happiness should be important. If one of you are not happy it is time to go your separate ways for a little and see if you can find happiness elsewhere.

What are some reasons you have taken a break from your relationship? Share your stories below.

Five Secrets Truly Happy Couples Know





By Lesli Doares

Reality shows focus on hooking up, finding a spouse and the wedding. Movies and books end at the beginning of a couples' life together or as the relationship is ending in divorce.

There is very little focus on the time married. Ben Affleck got in trouble at the Oscars when he publicly thanked his wife, Jennifer Garner, and the work their marriage has been for the last ten years. Wow, who wants to sign up for that? So, how does any couple keep their marriage healthy and happy over the years?

Five simple rules to keep you in love through the years:

1. Give at least one genuine compliment each day to your partner about something that matters to them. It will make them feel noticed, appreciated and loved. Having it be important to them really lets them know you are paying attention.

Related: [Top 3 Things a Couple Can Do to Combat the Top Risk Factors and Save a Marriage](#)

2. Spend at least 30 minutes of quality, one on one, time together each day. This allows you to get past the relationship killing exchange of information and tune in to what is happening in each other's lives at a more intimate level.

3. Continue to date. The two of you fell in love by spending time together and having fun. Once the routine of day-to-day life with work, kids and chores goes on for a few years, it's easy to lose track of that. Having regular dates, where the purpose is to have fun and reconnect, not analyze the relationship or discuss issues, keeps the spark alive.

4. Go to bed at the same time. Shut down the technology, turn off the television, forget about the never finished housework and spend some quiet time together. Keeping different schedules makes connecting physically much more difficult and that is not good for long term happiness.

5. Change up your sex life. Get out of the "it's Tuesday, you know what that means" routine. Spice things up by trying different times, places and activities. Have fun figuring out how to outsmart the kids in finding private time. Don't make it so hard that you just give up.

Related: [The New Dating Game](#)

Each of these rules builds from the one above and each one deals with an aspect of intimacy. Truly successful couples follow them diligently and that's how they stay out of the headlines.

Lesli Doares is a marriage consultant/coach and the author of "Blueprint for a Lasting Marriage: How to Create Your Happily Ever After with More Intention, Less Work". Find her real and practical relationship advice at www.afearlessmarriage.com.

She tweets @LesliDoares.

Sources Say Khloe Kardashian Has Been in Touch with Troubled Lamar Odom



By April Littleton

[People](#) confirms that Khloe Kardashian has been in touch with husband Lamar Odom since his alleged disappearance. Amid all

of the drug reports, rumors of infidelity are also swirling around the couple. The duo hasn't been photographed together since June 2.

What are some ways to help your partner through an addiction?

Cupid's Advice:

If you have a partner who's struggling to overcome an addiction, you may feel overwhelmed. Going through a situation like this is tough and frustrating. You're not sure what to do or how to help, but for better or for worse, you've made a commitment to your significant other and you plan on keeping it. You just need a little help. Cupid has your back:

1. Don't enable them: Your partner's addiction is not your fault. Yes, you want to take care of your honey and protect them while they're going through such a tough time, but that doesn't mean you should cater to their every needs and desires. Stop them from harming themselves any further. It doesn't matter how upset or angry they get. Eventually, they will understand that you're trying to do what's best for them. Gain control of the situation until they are able to see how destructive their own behavior is to themselves.

2. Get involved: Believe it or not, you are the most important person in the process of their recovery. Your partner will need you now more than ever. Show that you care and you're willing to be there for them every step of the way. Get involved with their support groups, show up at his/her meetings and participate in all of the counseling sessions your honey may need to go to.

3. Talk to someone: While you're busy taking care of your significant other, you might not realize that you have no one to take care of you. Your partner's addiction will affect your life too. Find someone you trust to talk to about what's going on, or talk to a therapist. You'll need to be able to deal

with the situation in a healthy manner and you won't be able to do it alone.

How did you help your partner through an addiction? Comment below.

Rumor: Is Lamar Odom's Drug Abuse Causing Marital Problems?





By April Littleton

Rumors are swirling around about Lamar Odom's alleged drug use. A source close to both Odom and Khloe Kardashian told [People](#) that the *Keeping up with the Kardashians* star has been struggling to help her husband. "It's a really hard time for Khloe. She's kept this secret for almost two years trying to save Lamar and their marriage," the source said.

What are some ways to support your partner through substance abuse?

Cupid's Advice:

1. Talk about it: When your significant other is ready to talk about their problem, listen to them wholeheartedly without any judgements. You may notice that your honey has an issue with drugs and/or alcohol, but they might not be ready to admit it to themselves yet. Wait it out for a little while until your partner is comfortable enough to confront the problem head on.

2. Find other support: When your love is ready to get help, look for support meetings or groups around your local area to attend together. Going with your partner will show that you love and care for them no matter what and they won't feel like they have to deal with the situation on their own.

3. Be patient: A substance abuse problem will not go away overnight. Just like anything else in life, healing takes time. You need to think about if you're willing to stick it out with your significant other. Talking to a loved one or a professional counselor might help you sort through your feelings of guilt or resentment and can help you figure out if your commitment is strong enough to get past something like this.

What are some other ways to support your partner through substance abuse? Comment below.

Should You Listen When Your Parents Advise You to Break Up?





By Jennifer

Harrington

As if relationships aren't challenging enough, many people face an additional obstacle when they discover that their parents do not support the romance and advocate a breakup. While it's always important to be true to yourself, love can sometimes be blind and sometimes outside opinions can be helpful in evaluating your relationship. After all, your parents have known you the longest and only have your best intentions at heart. So, how do you know when you should listen when your parents advise you to break up? Here are some of Cupid's tips:

Take their counsel to heart

When your parents voice their concerns about your romance, it is only natural that your first instinct will be to fight back and reject their opinions. Once you've had a chance to cool down, take some time to objectively assess what was said about

your relationship and partner. Evaluate if their concerns are problems that can be addressed. If the situation can be addressed, do everything in your power to show your parents that you heard their feedback and that you're taking steps to make things better. It's more likely that your parents may be concerned about something that can't easily be changed. Regardless, it is essential that you try to understand why your parents are counseling you to break-up.

Related: [Cameron Diaz Discusses Her Break-up Style: Break Up and Move On](#)

Solicit feedback from other loved ones

It's important to also talk with other family and friends to see if they agree with your parents' advice to end your romance. Seek out opportunities to honestly and openly speak with other loved ones about your relationship, and figure out if others agree with what your parents are saying. Your parents are people entitled to their opinions (which may or may not be valid), but if others echo their remarks, it's time to take notice that your relationship may be more flawed than you realized.

Assess the situation

Ultimately, you have the right to choose who you want to date – and you may fundamentally disagree with the opinions others have about your love life. However, when the people closest to you don't like the person you love, it can make your life very complicated and potentially unpleasant – and you have to decide if you are ready for those possibilities and if your partner is worth it. Ask yourself if your love is strong enough to survive such adversity. Everybody has different relationships with their families; you know your family dynamics and yourself well enough to figure out if you can imagine a happy future without your parents blessing your relationship.

Related: [5 Celebrity Exes Who Became Famous After the Break-Up](#)

Love is a powerful influence and motivator in life – but this applies to love you experience with your family and friends, not just who you date or eventually marry. While love can be complicated, it should always bring positivity and well-being to your life. Be mindful of your parents counsel and don't be afraid to take some time away from your romance if it helps you figure out what you need and what will make you the happiest long-term.

What are some other way to deal with your parents' relationship advice? Share below.

Do the Chicken Dance: Tips for Surviving Wedding Season Single





By Rachel Seliger,

JDate Community Manager

The summer months are known for a few things: warm nights, pool parties, BBQs and of course, weddings. For singles, wedding season is exciting, but it can be overwhelming when you feel like you are always the bridesmaid and never the bride.

JDate, the leading online Jewish singles community, recently surveyed members and discovered that 31 percent of singles daydream about their future wedding before they are engaged. Daydreaming is harmless, but in the meantime, with wedding season in full swing, you might have to put those dreams on hold and support a few others.

To help arm the single wedding goer this season, I've compiled a list of tips that will guarantee you have an amazing time and celebrate the new couple in style.

Related: [Reap the Benefits of Cutting Costs on Your Big Day](#)

Define +1: If your invitation includes a +1, it doesn't necessarily mean your guest has to be a romantic partner. Of course check with the bride and groom first, but it might be a good idea to bring a close friend or family member as your partner in crime.

Reserve your seat: If you are flying solo, don't be afraid to make sure the bride or groom knows you want to sit with the other singles! Not only is it a great way to make friends you won't be sweating through the whole ceremony about sitting with a group of couples who might ask the infamous question, "when are you getting married?"

Reconnect with old friends: However you are related to the bride or groom, there are probably other guests that you know at the wedding. Maybe it's old friends from your childhood who you lost touch with or a relative of the bride and groom. Don't be afraid to say hi and spark a conversation. Everyone loves to reminisce!

Related: [5 Conversations Every Couple Should Have Before Getting Married](#)

Do the chicken dance: You are never too old to flap your wings! Popular wedding dances like the chicken dance are perfect for singles because they don't require a partner and are an opportunity to find your next dance partner. Now get out there and shake your feathers.

Rachel Seliger is a dating guru and Community Manager of JDate.com, the premier online community for Jewish singles. When she's not shopping for her next pair of great heels, she is busy blogging on JDate's exclusive tumblr blog tumblr.jdating.tumblr.com/ featuring great first date outfit ideas, tips to make your JDate profile shine and more.

10 Relationship Behaviors You Think Are Odd... That Are Totally Normal!



By Laura Seldon

for GalTime.com

What's "normal" and what's not when it comes to dating, love and relationships? Think you and your partner align with the average couple? Or are your relationship behaviors totally out there? We've asked several therapists, marriage counselors and

relationship experts from around the country to shed some light on relationship behaviors that seem odd at first, but are actually quite normal. Take a seat and see how you and your mate compare!

1. Changing feelings

Once upon a time you loved rocking the highest of high heels. These days, however, you're much more apt to throw on a pair of flats. It may sound simple, but your ever-evolving feelings on shoes can help to serve as a reminder that feelings come and go – and that's OK.

“Love is a living entity,” explains Karen Sherman, Ph.D. “And just like people have good days and bad – so will there be periods where the lovin' feelings just won't be there. Hang in, focus on the positive and the feelings will come back.”

2. Going through “adjustment periods”

“If you decide to marry, even if you've lived together, the first year is likely to be bumpy,” warns Sherman. “You are now in a legally committed relationship, the dynamics change and there is a period of adjustment. Having lived together doesn't prevent this adjustment period.”

So, if you and your better half are not in a state of bliss at every moment, it doesn't mean your relationship is doomed – it just means you're normal.

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

3. Enjoying different hobbies

He's into fantasy football and you're into shopping? Better yet, you're into fantasy football and he's into shopping? Either way, it's totally normal for you and your main squeeze to have different interests.

“You don’t have to like all the same things to have a healthy relationship,” notes Sherman. “What matters is having the same values.” So go ahead and enjoy your fantasy football draft, and then swoon over the new shoes your man just bought online. You both deserve to enjoy your hobbies without feeling guilty.

4. Needing alone time

Are you the kind of person who would take yourself out for a date night for one? If so, you are not alone.

“Washing a car, walking a dog or exercising alone are signs of a healthy relationship with a secure attachment,” says Lanada Williams, a licensed counselor in Washington DC and Maryland. “Remind yourself, the individual you met still needs time to breathe and thrive.”

5. Being slow to compliment

When is the last time you told your partner how hot they looked? We’re all guilty of holding back compliments, and, according to Licensed Marriage and Family Therapist Holly Cox, it may even be something you’re doing on purpose!

“When you give a compliment to anyone, but particularly someone you like a whole lot, you’re putting yourself on the line,” explains Cox. “Clients tell me they are often afraid their partners will reject the compliment – or worse, say something along the lines of, ‘Wow, you’re finally noticing everything I do around here. Uh-huh. What do you want?’”

Although this may be normal behavior, that doesn’t mean it’s OK. Remember to compliment your partner and accept the praise they give you!

6. Having trouble getting in the mood

Every married couple has experienced one of those nights (or mornings) where one member of the duo is ready for a racy

romp, but the other is ready for a mellow nap!

“Virtually all couples have sexual desire problems sooner or later,” says Licensed Psychologist Dr. Kate Roberts. “Couples often go long periods of time without having sex and then once they start up again, their sex life continues on its own.”

Related: [Dating Advice: 10 Great Date Ideas Under \\$50](#)

7. Withholding information

Sure you told your partner about that expensive purse you just bought – you just chose not to reveal how much you dropped on it!

“Couples often have different priorities for discretionary income and it’s not uncommon for them to keep their secret stashes of clothes, toys, candy or other discretionary items,” says Dr. Roberts.

Just remember it’s never healthy to lie about how much you spend. If your partner asks how much you blew on that new pair of Jimmy Choos, keep it real. Lying to your partner – especially about money – is never going to lead you anywhere good.

8. Sparring, bickering & fighting

As two different people with two different philosophies on life, you’re bound to disagree at one point or another.

“Fighting is normal,” explains Therapist Dana Ward. “While some couples may think fighting is the sign of a bad relationship, it actually is very important. The key is fighting with a purpose.”

So, whether you are fighting about something as trivial as how to fold socks, or as significant as a job transition, make sure to fight the topic – not each other.

9. Finding other people attractive

You may be utterly in love with your partner, but that doesn't mean you can't admire a hottie with a great set of legs.

"You can and should appreciate all the beauty and dashing good looks all around you," shares Ward. However, she notes, "Attractive and attraction is different. Find other people attractive, but stop short of allowing yourself to be attracted to them."

10. Getting scared and pulling away

Pulling away, taking a time out, going on a break – we're all human, and being vulnerable with someone else can at times be scary enough to make you run for the hills!

"Sometimes when things are getting very serious men, in particular, may pull away while they decided to move forward," explains Relationship Coach Stef Safran.

However, just because one person in the relationship needs a breather, it doesn't mean your relationship is in desperate need of an SOS. It just means you're human!

Now that you've read through these 10 strange relationship behaviors that aren't actually weird at all, hopefully you feel a little better about your own relationship. If you still think you're odd, though, then embrace the quirks that make your relationship special and take a line from Holly Golightly in *Breakfast at Tiffany's* – "It may be normal, darling; but I'd rather be natural."

Why You Should Hold 'Marriage Meetings'



By Matty Staudt

for GalTime.com

I have been with my wife for over 10 years. We have an amazing relationship that is full of love and understanding. We rarely argue, never fight and are genuinely each other's best friends. The one thing that we have recently realized though, is that we don't really communicate everything that is on our mind or bothering us about the other person. We are so busy keeping each other happy that we don't make time to talk about the little bothers that can build up.

Most couples come to this point after awhile together and instead of making the time to talk, they let the little things sit and don't address them, when they probably should. The problem with this is, similar to a pressure cooker, people end up storing too much little stuff and eventually it turns into a big thing that explodes. Exploding is never good and instead of issues being resolved, they become a giant whirlwind of accusations.

So we have started doing something new that I think has made a great relationship even better. Once a week we have a "Marriage Meeting." This is a time that we set aside once a week to talk about things that might be bothering us, or to just tell the other something that we appreciate about them. There are some rules that sound easy, but can be a little more challenging than you would think.

1. The meeting should be held at the same day and time every week. No skipping! Because if you skip one, the next thing you know you're skipping two...then three.... And so on.

2. Each partner has one turn to state something that is on their mind or bothering them.

RELATED: [Absence Shouldn't Make the Heart Grow Fonder](#)

3. One partner talks, the other listens. This is not a discussion. Anything said is to be listened to only.... No responding. This gives each person time to think about what the other has said and then work on a solution.

4. If there is nothing bothering one partner, then they should use the meeting as a time to tell the other something that they appreciate about them or mention something they liked about them during the past week.

5. Again... NO RESPONDING. This can be somewhat difficult, because the initial, knee-jerk reaction is to defend oneself. But this is a meeting not an attack and anything said should

be given time to resonate.

RELATED: [Does It Matter If You Have A Lot In Common?](#)

6. Each partner should take what was said and try to work on it the following week. At the next meeting you can discuss what you did about the issue or how you tried to resolve it – IF in fact there was an issue to be resolved.

These meetings have been great for us. They have allowed us the opportunity to A) discuss issues that we would normally suppress and B) voice our appreciation for things that might otherwise go unrecognized.

I believe these are fantastic tools for any relationship at any stage. Give it a try and let us know how it works for you. You can email me at matty@straightmalefriend.com

3 Things a Couple Can Do to Combat the Top Risk Factors and Save a Marriage





By Mark Baer

Marriage is a wonderful institution that affords couples significant psychological, emotional and financial benefits, in addition to being a commitment of their love to each other. Almost certainly, nobody enters into a marriage, expecting that it will end in divorce. However, over the years, certain risk factors that contribute to the likelihood of divorce have become increasingly clear. The following is a list of 5 of the top risk factors for divorce:

Quality of interaction

Researchers have been able to predict with 90 percent accuracy whether or not a couple will divorce within 5 years, based upon the quality of their interaction. Negative interaction is highly predictive of marital distress.

Related: [5 Ways to Stop Sabotaging Your Relationships](#)

Having divorced parents

Children of divorce have a higher rate of divorce, particularly when their parents' divorce was a complete surprise to them. Such surprises cause children to lose trust in their relationships.

Marrying at a very young age

Marrying before age of 26 increases the likelihood of divorce, particularly earlier on in the marriage. As might be expected, this has to do with maturity. In fact, our brains do not reach full maturity until around age 25. Is it realistic that a lifetime commitment entered into before reaching maturity will last a lifetime?

Lack of a college education

There happens to be a correlation between income and education level. Since poverty causes a tremendous strain on marital relationships, the lack of a college education is a top risk factor.

Manner in which a person reacts to problems and disappointments

People who have strong or defensive reactions to problems and disappointments have a higher risk of divorce than those whose reactions are more reasonable and who have learned the art of non-defensive communication.

As with most things in life, some things are easier to address than others. The following is a list of the top 3 things couples can do to combat those risk factors:

Marital education programs

Studies published in the Journal of Family Psychology and in other highly respected organizations indicate that participation in marital education programs leads to more satisfying marriages and more than doubles the likelihood that couples will stay together. Those programs teach couples

communication and problem solving skills, and how to maintain and intensify fun, affection and sexuality. Please note that “counseling” and “marital education programs” are not one and the same.

Therapy

If one or both spouses suffer from trust issues with regard to relationships or have a personality tendency to have strong or defensive reactions to problems and disappointment, it might behoove them to seek therapy in an effort to resolve those issues.

Related: [Five Celebrity Divorces We Really Weren't Expecting](#)

Return to school

It's never too late to return to school and complete high school or its equivalent and enroll in college. This may require making certain sacrifices, especially when people are already experiencing financial difficulties. However, if income and level of education are related and you don't obtain additional education, how do you otherwise address the strain that poverty takes on a marriage?

Mark earned his B.A. in Economics-Business from UCLA. From there, he went on to earn his law degree from Loyola Law School. He also completed extended studies in International and Comparative Law at Cambridge University in England. Mark is a public speaker and regular contributor and legal expert to a number of outlets including: The Los Angeles Times, Forbes, The Wall Street Journal, REUTERS, TIME Magazine, The Pasadena Star News, KTLA Morning News as well as numerous ABC, CBS, NBC, CW, and FOX affiliates around the country.

'Devious Maids' Star Alex Fernandez Says, "Life Isn't All About Work"



By Petra Halbur

Chances are, you're familiar with Alex Fernandez's work. After years of playing small roles on television shows like *Heroes*, *Prison Break* and *Army Wives* and lending his voice to video games like *Call of Duty: Black Ops* and *Socom 4: US Navy Seals*, the actor is now enjoying more prominent parts on Lifetime's hit summer series *Devious Maids* as well as *Killer Women* and *The Bridge*.

Related Link: [Jacqueline MacInnes Wood, Star of Lifetime's 'Her Husband's Betrayal,' Says, "Don't Look for Mr. Right"](#)

Additionally, Fernandez recently completed his run as Roy Vickers on the revamped classic *Dallas*. He says it was “pretty amazing” to work on a show with such a legacy. “The original *Dallas* is a show that I grew up watching,” he adds. “It was on for so many years in the 70s and 80s, and everybody of my age remembers it. When it came back on and I got cast in a role that was going to be there for the entire season, it was very exciting.”

He was also touched by the respect shown to actor Larry Hagman, who played the iconic oil baron J.R. – respect that continued even after his passing last November. On the daily call sheet, which lists all the actors in order of their prominence on the show, Fernandez notes that “Larry was always listed as number one, and I thought that was a really nice testament for those of us who frequently work as televisions actors. I found it to be a really touching tribute.”

Hagman isn't the only co-star who stands out in Fernandez's memory. The Miami, Florida-born performer recalls appearing on an episode of *Robbery Homicide Division* back in 2002 and being struck by the warmth and professionalism of the show's lead actor, Tom Sizemore. “That was the first time in my whole career where the star of the show treated me like a scene partner, treated me like a fellow actor. He's had a lot of personal problems over the years that have been in the media, but he'll always have a really warm place in my heart for the way he acted towards me.”

The actor has also found an amazing co-star in Judy Reyes, who appears as his wife on *Devious Maids*. He plays Pablo Diaz, the husband of Reyes's character Zoila Diaz, who is an ambitious maid working for a rich family in Beverly Hills. Fernandez describes Reyes as the sort of actress that doesn't make work feel like work and says that she “knows her stuff” yet is very

relaxed on set.

There was one scene, in particular, that he was excited to film with her: At the end of one episode, they shared “a really sweet kiss.” By his own admission, he hasn’t had many romantic scenes in his career since he usually plays “cops and criminals.” “I told my Twitter followers to tune into *Devious Maids* because, for the first time in my television career, they were going to let me kiss a girl on camera!” Unfortunately, he was disappointed when a producer later informed him that the scene had been cut.

Though his many projects keep him on the move, Fernandez doesn’t seem fazed by his busy work schedule. Quite the contrary, he enjoys it. “I really love to work. I love to travel between sets. In the case of *The Bridge*, *Dallas*, *Killer Women*, and *Devious Maids*, they’re all shot in different cities,” he reveals. “You would think that I’d be exhausted or annoyed, but I’m just exhilarated. Honestly, I can’t think of a single time that I felt stressed out.”

However, he does admit that spending so much time away from loved ones is “not exactly fun.” He and his girlfriend live in Los Angeles, and it takes some extra work to keep their relationship strong. “When your job requires that you travel as much as mine does, you have to make a little more effort to make sure that you’re not letting too much time pass between seeing each other.”

Related Link: [Absence Shouldn’t Make The Heart Grow Fonder](#)

Fernandez says that his idea of a great date is a day spent at the movies followed by some coffee and conversation at a cafe. For his last birthday, the couple went to their favorite Chinese restaurant to work on a play that he is directing and she is producing. “We sat at the table and spread out all the papers that we needed. We ate and worked and talked, and to me, that was a fantastic date,” he says with a laugh.

He adds, "For anybody who's working a lot, especially if they enjoy what they do, they have to remember that life isn't all about work."

Be sure to catch Fernandez on the season finale of Devious Maids, airing this Sunday, August 25th at 10/9c!

Alex Pettyfer and Riley Keough Are Back Together Again





By April Littleton

Riley Keough was seen with her ex-fiance, *Magic Mike* actor Alex Pettyfer, at the L.A. premiere screening of Lee Daniels' *The Butler*. "There was definitely warmth between Riley and Alex. They were laughing together and smiling at each other," an onlooker told UsMagazine.com. Another eyewitness reported seeing the duo "holding hands" in the VIP area. The couple first appeared together in October 2011. Six months later, Keough stepped out with an engagement ring, but before the year was up, the lovebirds called off the wedding.

How do you know when it's time to give your ex a second chance?

Cupid's Advice:

Lately, you've been hanging out around town with a certain ex of yours. You can't quite figure out what it is about this person, but you find yourself reconsidering the possibility of

you two being an item again. Would getting back together be a mistake or a decision you'll never regret? Cupid can help:

1. Acceptance: If you've already accepted what happened between the two of you in the past, you might be ready to start fresh. You can't reminisce over the old times. You have to acknowledge what went wrong in your relationship and have the ability to move on from it. If you're thinking about becoming a couple again, there's no need to hold on to any anger or guilt. You want to start things off positive. Don't pick up the relationship where it left off. The two of you won't last if you continue to make the same mistakes.

2. Forgiveness: Accepting the situation that happened between you and your ex won't happen if you don't forgive each other first. Giving each other a second chance won't work out if the two of you are still blaming each other for whatever went wrong. Instead, work toward holding yourself accountable for what happened and try to let go of all bad feelings.

3. Communicate: You need to be able to express how you're feeling to your old flame. You're thinking about getting back together? Make sure they're aware of that. Your ex might have unresolved feelings toward you as well and may be afraid to speak up first. Communication is key in a good relationship. Start things off right by having a genuine conversation.

How did you know it was time to give love a second chance? Share your experience below.

Dating Deal Breakers



By [David Wygant](#)

It happens all the time. Things are going really well in your relationship, and then all of a sudden – BOOM, like a guillotine coming down on someone's head – something goes wrong. But this time, the guillotine is coming down on your head, and you're facing another heartbreak.

You thought you knew exactly what he wanted; you read all the books and watched all the dating programs; and you did everything you could to make sure you were the perfect girlfriend. You even spoke for hours on end with the girls about what men *really* want and how to play the relationship game properly. Trouble is, it seems you still don't know what men DON'T want in a relationship.

Related Link: [5 Ways to Stop Sabotaging Your Relationships](#)

Here are my top three dating deal breakers:

Don't Play Games

If you play games with a guy, he's not going to want to be with you – it's as simple as that. If we call you and you don't pick up, call us back the second you get a chance. Returning our call a few days later doesn't turn us on; in fact, it turns us off.

Many men barely have the confidence to even make that phone call in the first place. They spend a lot of time thinking of what they should say, what type of voicemail they should leave, and how they can make you laugh. Sure enough, you hesitate; you wait and don't call him back. You want him to think you're cool and too busy to talk to him.

Well, guess what? Those kind of games are a deal breaker. He wants a girlfriend who's going to be responsive to his texts and phone calls. No guy wants someone who plays *too* hard to get.

Let's Get Physical

You tell him you want to wait, so he waits. Then, when you start having sex with him, you ration it. You start thinking if you give him too much, too quickly, he's going to leave. In reality, as long as you're dealing with a man and not a man-boy, once you start having sex, continue doing it. Don't cut him off. If he's showing he's committed to you, why would you stop it?

If you kill the sex, you kill the relationship.

Related Link: [4 Ways to Know You're Dating a 'Man-Boy,' Not a Man](#)

The Chronic Texter

Don't be the woman who's texting him non-stop. He's out with his friends, and you don't trust him. So of course, instead of telling him to have a great time, you text him all night long.

He doesn't want to be monitored, and he doesn't want to be constantly checking in with you. He wants somebody who will actually allow him to go out with his friends and enjoy himself. Trust him, wish him a fun night, and then let him be.

These are just a few dating deal breakers. The bottom line is, if you've got a good man, stop overthinking everything and learn to go with the flow.

David Wygant is a dating coach and author of Naked and Always Talk to Strangers. For more relationship advice, you can follow him on Twitter @Davidwygant and facebook.com/therealdavidwygant