

# Lessons From Jennifer Garner and Ben Affleck



By Tammy Greene for [Hope After Divorce](#)

There are few other couples that have amassed more attention in 2013 than celebrity power couple Jennifer Garner and Ben Affleck. It has been a memorable year for them with Affleck's huge success and Oscar for his brilliant movie *Argo*. In the coming months, Garner will step back into the spotlight with the film adaptation of the popular book, *Alexander and the Terrible, Horrible, No Good, Very Bad Day*. With their stellar careers, three beautiful children and easy affection with each other, it seems like this Hollywood pair has it all.

But let's not forget the bumpy path these two heavyweights took before they found each other. No one can ignore Affleck's relationship with Jennifer Lopez, a love that the media

referred to as “Bennifer.” The couple called off their engagement after only 18 months of dating. And Garner isn’t without her own, though certainly less notorious, relationship history: She married fellow actor Scott Foley in 2000 and found herself divorced in 2004. Though celebrity couples seem to live a fairytale, these two prove that happily ever after does not come easily.

We often find ourselves looking to celebrities to guide us in our lives – from how to dress, what to eat and where to shop. Similarly, we look to them to guide us in our relationships. Here are three lessons that we can learn from this fan-favorite power couple.

**Related Link:** [Celeb Couples: More Like Us Than We Want to Admit?](#)

### **Keep your personal life personal.**

It is hard to say exactly why, but the media bombed hard on Bennifer. Whether it was because of their rather embarrassing nickname or possibly their highly-criticized movie *Gigli*, this couple could do nothing to escape the jokes or harsh criticisms. What might have topped it all off was the music video that the pair filmed together for Lopez’s song, “Jenny from the Block.” The couple openly displayed their affection for each other in a way that many felt was unnecessary, leaving themselves open to severe criticism by critics and fans alike. It was no surprise, then, that they soon broke up.

There is something to be said for keeping your personal life personal. Publicly displaying arguments or overtly sexual displays of affection leave you open to criticism and opinions from third parties. Thanks to social media, many feel it’s okay to air their dirty and sometimes very inappropriate laundry for the world to see. In truth, nobody really wants to hear all about how angry you are at your husband or know what

your “dirty talk” sounds like. Keep the details of your relationship personal. Being in a relationship is hard enough; there is no need to invite the unnecessary opinions or criticisms of others.

### **Admit that marriage is work and work on it daily.**

Upon winning the Oscar for Best Picture for *Argo*, Ben Affleck gave an acceptance speech that caught people’s attention. He said to his wife, “I want to thank you for working on our marriage for ten Christmases. It’s good. It is work but the best kind of work, and there’s no one I’d rather work with.” The actor was criticized for possibly alluding to the fact that his marriage was in trouble. According to the happily-married duo, though, his speech was totally misunderstood.

Why is it that our society struggles to admit that marriage is work? Anyone in a good and happy marriage knows that daily effort is required for a successful relationship. It seems that people would rather hear that all is rosy and perfect in the land of Hollywood. Affleck should be commended for reminding all of us that what you love is worth the work.

**Related Link:** [What We Can Learn From “the Work” Celeb Couples Do](#)

### **Don’t take things too seriously.**

As a result of the media criticism for his acceptance speech, Affleck found himself having to clarify what he meant and took the opportunity to do so while hosting an episode of *Saturday Night Live*. During his monologue, with the help of his lovely wife, they showed fans that they were still in love and happy and could laugh and joke about the way the acceptance speech was construed.

Being able to laugh in a relationship is a vital part of happiness. It is important not to take things too seriously and to always try to find the humor in situations. There

are endless factors that add stress to a relationship and can work cracks into any strong foundation. Laughter can often be the glue that keeps those cracks from splitting in half. There is something admirable about a couple who doesn't take themselves too seriously.

Garner and Affleck are a power couple who seem to have it all together, but they remind us that the path to a happy ending can often be blocked with bumps and turns. Still, it is undoubtedly a path worth taking.

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**Lea Michele Dedicates Teen Choice Awards Glee Win to Cory Monteith**



By Kerri Sheehan

Gleeks far and wide had to dry their eyes this Sunday night during the Teen Choice Awards. Lea Michele, 26, dedicated the award she won for her portrayal of *Glee*'s Rachel Berry to deceased boyfriend and cast member, Cory Monteith. Her appearance at the awards show is the *Glee* beauty's first since Monteith's July 13<sup>th</sup> death. She made sure to thank fans for their love and support during, "These very difficult past few weeks," reported [People](#).

**What are some ways to honor a deceased partner?**

**Cupid's Advice:**

Finding ways to honor a deceased loved one is an important part of learning to live with their death. Cupid has some ideas on how to do so:

**1. Love what they loved:** Anyone who passes leaves behind a great number of things. Whether they are children, pets,

family, friends or mementos, hold on to those things your partner once treasured. This will help to remind you of them and all the great times you had together.

**2. Remember them:** As time passes, you may wish to forget about your time together completely as you think that will hurt less, however that is not the case. The time you two spent loving and supporting each other can't be replaced and it was special. Choosing to forget it would be a shame.

**3. Accomplish their goals for them:** Go somewhere your loved one always wanted to visit, or take up a hobby that they wish they had time for. This will help you feel more connected to the deceased person and will help you accept their passing.

**Have you ever lost a partner? How did you honor them? Share below.**

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## **Why So Many Women Couldn't Care Less About Getting Married**





By Marcus Osborne

for GalTime.com

I don't know how or why or when it happened, but somewhere along the line I realized that I have an inordinate amount of female friends. It's been a blessing and a curse really. The majority of my closest friends are female. I'm living proof that men and women really can be "just friends."

One of the stellar benefits of having close platonic relationships with women (I'll save the negatives for another column – because believe me, particularly in the dating game, there are many!) is you get some compelling, honest insight on what makes women tick. After all these years, I think I've got a pretty decent understanding of the ladies. I'll never completely figure you all out – I won't even attempt that Herculean task – but I think I know enough to stay out of the doghouse!

Your SMF's receive a fair amount of e-mails. As one of the founders of StraightMaleFriend.com, I thank you. Lord only knows where we'd be without you and your correspondence. From those e-mails and the regular correspondence with you and many of my friends, I've noticed a surprising trend.

## **Women who couldn't care less about getting married. Seriously.**

This is not to infer that the general female populace has suddenly become anti-marriage. Not only do I not harbor that belief, but the preponderance of evidence clearly indicates that matrimony is still the preferred path of life's journey. But what I have seen is an ever-expanding legion of women who are quite content with their lives sans a husband. Women who are cool to the idea or just flat out not interested in being a wife.

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What's really been fascinating is how many of these ladies still aren't comfortable sharing that perspective with other people because of the way the information is/would be perceived. And it really gets touchy when they announce that they're not interested in having kids. Just the other day, I was told, "Marcus, you know how some people's biological clock is ticking? Mine's not broken – it's just not even there."

Now understand, as a guy, this is fairly unbelievable news. What woman doesn't dream about getting married? What woman doesn't have her entire wedding mapped out by the time she sees her first Julia Roberts movie? Are you kidding? Of course you want to get hitched ... you're a woman!

Well, that's simply not the case.

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Apparently there are a lot of women who could give a rat's a\*\* about having a relationship, in general, not to mention marriage in particular. And I find it fascinating, brave and a spectacular display of self-honesty to admit it. As open-minded as we all like to think we are, those women get the collective stink-eye. We're a unique society that way. We promote women's strength and independence, but we're perplexed



when they exercise that independence by NOT wanting to get married, by NOT wanting to have kids, by being ... a real life Samantha Jones if she chooses.

I'd love for you to share your thoughts here ... whether you are or aren't married, how do you feel about it? If you aren't and have no intention or couldn't care less about doing so – why? Furthermore, how do you feel about the women who choose to forgo the institution altogether? Let's hear your thoughts...

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# 'Bachelorette' Desiree Hartsock Says 'Love Can Be Unpredictable'



By April Littleton

Desiree Hartsock took to her blog on [People](#) to thank everyone who watched her journey to find love on the latest season of *The Bachelorette*. " I appreciate the encouraging words from many and the understanding that love can be unpredictable." Ultimately, Hartsock chose Chris over Drew because she felt her relationship with him "didn't move forward" after their date in Antigua.

## **How do you roll with the ups and downs of a relationship?**

### **Cupid's Advice:**

Dealing with the ups and downs of a relationship can be complicated, but love isn't perfect. In order for you and your partner to be happy you must learn how to properly handle any bumps in the roads that you're bound to hit. Cupid has some tips:

**1. Don't ignore the issue:** When you realize that you may have a problem, confront it head on. Some couples choose to neglect the problem, but this will only make matters worse. You may even end up breaking up because of it. Take the time to sort out why the two of you may be having issues. The sooner you talk about what's bothering you, the quicker you can find a way to solve the problem and get back to being the happy couple you once were.

**2. Don't bring up the past:** Once you decide to forgive each other for whatever wrongdoing may have occurred, leave that issue in the past. Constantly bringing up problems that aren't relevant to your relationship anymore is immature. Of course, couples fight, but that doesn't mean you have to bring up conflicts that occurred months ago. Let the past be the past.

**3. Stay positive:** When you and your honey are on the outs, think about all of the positive things the two of you have done together and how much the both of you have overcome. Don't focus on the negative. Rather than obsessing over the

things your partner may do wrong, draw your attention to all of the things he/she does right. Your relationship will be better for it.

How do you roll with the ups and down of your relationship? Comment below.

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## Russell Brand Makes Jokes at Katy Perry's Expense



By Kristyn Schwiep

Russell Brand and ex-wife Katy Perry have been divorced for over a year, but the 38-year-old British comedian is still including Perry, 28, in his stand-up routine. According to [UsMagazine.com](http://UsMagazine.com), Brand made joked about his sex life with Perry during a gig at London's Soho Theatre on Wednesday, July 31.

“When I got divorced, I considered becoming a monk. When you’re a monk, you’re not allowed to have sex with anyone. When you’re married, it’s one person. That’s one more than a monk,” he allegedly joked. “It’s not that different. I’d be having sex thinking, ‘Think of anyone, anyone else.’”

**What are some risks of too much humor in a relationship?**

### **Cupid’s Advice:**

When you decide to add humor into your relationship you should consider the consequences. Using too much humor in a relationship can lead to harsh feelings, confused emotions, and might lead to a break-up.

**1. Confused:** Using humor in a relationship can sometimes ease an uncomfortable situation, but sometimes you might take it too far. Cracking jokes at your partner could leave them seriously confused on how you actually feel about them and your relationship.

**2. Feelings:** Feelings can get hurt when you use too much humor in a relationship. Even if you think you are being funny you need to consider your partners feelings. You partner might not find the humor that you do and you need to consider his/her feelings before making fun of them, even if it is all in good fun.

**3. Break-up:** Using too much humor in a relationship can ultimately lead to a break-up. You partner might not be able to handle all the jokes thrown their way and it might take an emotional toll on them. Constantly using humor in your relationship can lead to frustration, which can ultimately lead to you being alone.

**What are some risk of too much humor in a relationship? Share your thoughts below.**

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# Are Rob Pattinson and Kristen Stewart Getting Back Together?



By Kerri Sheehan

*Twilight* stars Kristen Stewart and Rob Pattinson may not be through after all. In fact, Pattinson was spotted parking outside of his former lover's house Monday, August 5th. According to [UsMagazine.com](http://UsMagazine.com), Pattinson has been having a fling with Riley Keough, Elvis Presley's 24-year-old granddaughter. "She's the first girl he's liked since Kristen," a source dished to the magazine. Although the Robsten have remained friends since their split, it is possible this recent reunion could mean a reconciliation for the two vamps.

## How do you decide whether to get back together with an ex?

### Cupid's Advice:

Every one and their mother knows exes just plain suck. However, sometimes giving an ex a second chance may lead to love and happiness. Cupid has some advice about how to decide whether to get back together with an ex:

**1. Relationship:** Think about your former relationship as a whole. What did you like about it? What didn't you like about it? Giving love another shot after it went wrong the first times means that you're really going to have to analyze what went wrong the first time around. Remember getting back together with an ex should be the exception, not the rule.

**2. Breakup:** Why did you two break up in the first place? If whatever caused your breakup is still an issue then it's unlikely giving the partnership another shot will produce good results.

**3. You:** The most important thing to consider is your own happiness. If this person makes you really truly happy then the answer about whether or not to get back together should be clear as day.

Have you ever gotten back together with an ex? Share below.

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**EXCLUSIVE: Designer Christy Biebrich from 'Brother vs.**

# Brother' Says, "Laughter Is The Secret to a Healthy Everything!"



By Sarah Ribeiro

HGTV's hottest new show *Brother vs. Brother* takes John and Drew Scott, stars of the hit series *Property Brothers*, and pins them against each other in a sibling rivalry of design and ingenuity. Interior designer Christy Biebrich, an organizing specialist, joined Drew's team for the ultimate renovation showdown – a task she was more than ready to face and knew how to overcome. "The biggest challenges were the time constraints," she reveals. "We were doing massive renovations in timeframes as low as 48 hours. There were value-increasing choices that could not be completed simply due to time, so it definitely required strategic thinking." Despite her prowess in design, she was unfortunately sent home on Sunday night's episode.

**Related Link:** [‘Design Star’ Champion Leslie Ezelle Offers Relationship Advice for a Happy Home](#)

As the owner of Christy B. Designs, she has years of experience in interior design, which helped her make quick and efficient decisions on the show. As a self-proclaimed addict to improvement, the skills she offered her team come second nature to her. In fact, the designer has been renovating since she was a child. “From the time I was little, I was always looking around me and visualizing how I would improve spaces – from my room to my treehouse. I even had a renovation laid out in my head for the barn on our family farm!”

Though it is sad that she was ousted on *Brother vs. Brother*, the talented designer now has more time to focus on her personal life. Biebrich is tapping even further into her love for design with her upcoming wedding – and it hasn’t been as easy as one would expect. “People think that, because of my line of work, I would be like a fish in water with wedding planning – not so!” she says with a laugh. “I’ve been happy to have others helping me through this process because it’s very overwhelming. It’s how I imagine people must feel when they come to me with a renovation or redesign project – they’re out of their element, and they need me to walk them through the process, to make it easy, make it fun and make their vision come to life.”

And, of course, the West Hollywood native is implementing her design aesthetic into her big day. “I love Art Deco, and we have several subtle hints to that style in our décor,” says Biebrich. “Our centerpieces are very sculptural and architectural, and I like that they feel more like modern art than a bouquet of flowers. My wedding dress and my bridesmaids’ dresses are very simple, elegant and contemporary. There’s not a lot of frills, and I like it that way.”

Most importantly, Biebrich’s fiancé has been helping her



throughout the planning process. She even admits that he has the stronger opinions and vision on the ceremony – a real role reversal. Then again, they’ve always had an interesting relationship. “We met on Match.com, but it wasn’t your typical online dating story,” she shares. “I wrote him a critique of his profile because I thought he had the worst headline I had ever seen. Remarkably, his ego was not bruised, and he didn’t care what I wrote. He thought I was cute and asked me out! He caught me off guard; I said yes; and we started seeing each other.”

Biebrich credits her fiancé’s dependability, kindness and good heart for their successful relationship. “We get along so well because we are very silly,” she says. “Laughter is the secret to a healthy everything! Neither of us take ourselves very seriously, so there’s no butting heads or arguing. And the biggest thing is that we don’t bring our work problems home with us or take our frustrations out on each other. We remain grateful, appreciative and respectful of each other and try not to take each other for granted.”

**Related Link:** [Do-It-Yourself Date Night Advice from HGTV Host Monica Pedersen](#)

Once the wedding is over, the designer will face yet another challenge: moving in with her new husband. She believes that all couples should take each others’ design styles into account once they share a home. “I’d be completely unrealistic if I thought that I wouldn’t have to consider my fiancé’s likes and dislikes when it comes to design in our home. I like to think of it as an opportunity to expose myself to style possibilities I might not have considered before, and to become more well-rounded. Luckily, he’s already said he will defer to me when it comes to our house, but of course, I will want to know his input because I love him!”

*For more information on Biebrich check out her website, [www.christyb.com/](http://www.christyb.com/).*

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# 'The Bridesmaid's Manual': A Guide to Wedding Planning And Friendship



By Sarah Ribeiro

Sarah Stein and Lucy Talbot are seasoned bridesmaids, so they know a thing or two about surviving your friend's big day. Now, they're trying to help all women overcome the biggest test of friendship a girl can face: being a bridesmaid. *The Bridesmaid's Manual: Make It To and Through The Wedding with Your Sanity (and Friendship) Intact* covers everything from dress shopping and planning the bachelorette party to bridesmaid etiquette and time (and budget) management. But,

most importantly, the book focuses on the best part about being a bridesmaid: the relationships you create (or strengthen) while helping your friend with her special day. We spoke to co-author Sarah Stein about her inspiration for the book and her experience being a bridesmaid.

### **First, we'd love to know about your inspiration for the book!**

Lucy and I used to live together, and during that time, we were both bridesmaids plenty of times. One night, I came home from an awful experience, just feeling soured and complaining. I was having a problem with the last of the bridesmaid duties and thought, "Why isn't there a book for bridesmaids?" We did a ton of research on it, and there was absolutely nothing out there. That inspired us to write our first book, *The Bridesmaid's Guerilla Handbook*. The old book is dated now, so we needed a book for the new generation. Weddings have changed, and the expectations for bridesmaids have changed; the Internet has a lot to do with that.

**Related Link:** [Girls: Would You Pass The Bride-To-Be Test?](#)

### **What is the toughest thing to manage as a bridesmaid? And what's the best part?**

The toughest thing is, without question, the different personalities of the wedding party. You are all so vested in this one event, and you're trying hard to not step on people's toes.

The best part is being able to see your friend, sister, cousin, someone who is so dear to you, travel through this process from singlehood to marriage. It really can stir you to your core; it's a beautiful thing to be a part of if it all goes well.

### **What has been your favorite experience? Your worst one?**

There have been so many good moments and so many bad moments.

My best friend from college took me dress shopping with her – it's not something that bridesmaids always get to do, but getting to help pick out my best friend's wedding dress was my favorite. It was such an intimate, beautiful and fun experience. I know there are shows like *Say Yes to the Dress* that make it look like hell, but it's really not like that.

My worst experience was the one that convinced me to write this book. A "friend" from college asked me to be in her wedding. Months went by, and I didn't even know if I was still in the wedding party anymore. As the wedding approached, I heard from other people that she'd picked out the dresses. She just dropped me from the party without saying anything! I e-mailed her and asked if I needed a dress, and she replied, "I didn't think you wanted to be a part of my wedding."

### **What are some ways to help the bride and fellow bridesmaids during the wedding-planning process?**

First, know that all creative decisions go to the maid of honor and the bride. It's really important for people to understand that there's a hierarchy. Everyone has an idea of what they want, but it's not their day. It's the bride's day. Problems occur when very strong-willed members of the family or party decide that their idea is the one that will happen.

Second, be verbal about being able to help. Check-in with members of the party and ask what you can do. Being proactive is infinitely more helpful than waiting to be asked to do something.

**Related Link:** [Add a Little "Luck O the Irish" to Your Wedding Day](#)

### **What are some clear-cut ways for bridesmaids and brides alike to set boundaries with one another so they don't drive each other crazy?**

There are some brides who actually do wedding contracts to set

clear expectations. I think it's insane. That is one way for a bride to lay out expectations, but the only agreement that leads to success is one to be open with each other. If there's a problem, you should agree to listen to each other. If there's dissent in the bridal party, you need to work it out. The one thing that festers is when people harbor anger. That's when problems happen. You have to be willing to say what's on your mind; just be sure to do so in a way that isn't going to impose your point of view on the bride or hurt anyone's feelings.

**You talk a lot about the strain planning a wedding can have on a friendship. How can you avoid this stress affecting relationships in your life?**

You have to agree not to talk about the wedding. Come home and say to yourself, "I'm not going to think about it tonight." You have the right to take a moment to check in with yourself and unplug from all the wedding stuff. Do things that are not wedding-related, that are purely you. If you don't, all that stress can build up and lead to a tremendous amount of resentment. You're a bridesmaid! You're not an indentured servant.

The Bridesmaid's Manual *can be found on Amazon*. You can also find Sarah and Lucy's first bridesmaid guide, The Bridesmaid's Guerilla Handbook, *on Amazon*.

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## **The New 'Bachelor' Is Juan Pablo Galavis!**



By Kerri Sheehan

With the wrap up of the most recent season of [The Bachelorette](#), ABC has announced its newest star in search of a relationship and love: Juan Pablo Galavis! You may recognize Galavis as one of Desiree Hartsock's suitors on *The Bachelorette* season 9. The 32-year-old single dad and former Venezuelan soccer player is hoping to find the perfect person for him and his daughter. According to [People.com](#), this reality TV star and new *Bachelor* said he is looking for "a mom for [my daughter] Camila and someone I can spend many years [with] together."

**The new star of *The Bachelor* has some Venezuelan roots that make most girls swoon. What are some things to consider when you're**

# dating someone from a different culture?

## Cupid's Advice:

Meeting people from other cultures can be shocking, but can you imagine dating someone with a different background? Cupid has some dating advice about what to consider when you're falling for someone from a different culture:

**1. Embrace your differences:** You were likely raised differently, so don't be too shocked when the two of you do things a bit differently. Don't pressure your partner into doing things your way, as that may feel unnatural to them.

**Related Link:** ['The Bachelorette' Star Desiree Hartsock Says Confidence is Key to Finding Mr. Right](#)

**2. Learn something new:** Learning about another culture can be quite exciting, so soak up every moment of it! Don't stress too much about your differences, as the two of you can find common ground if you work together.

**Related Link:** ['Bachelorette' Andi Dorfman's Promo Poster Mocks Juan Pablo](#)

**3. Take up cooking:** Cooking is a great way to dive into your significant other's culture! Just make sure to run the ingredients by each other. For instance, snails and frog legs are a delicacy in France, but here in the States, they're considered adventurous meals.

**Have you ever dated someone from a different culture? Share below!**

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# 'Bachelorette' Desiree Hartsock Chooses Chris Siegfried



By Kerri Sheehan

This season's *Bachelorette* was not exactly a cookie cutter love story. Desiree Hartsock was blindsided when her frontrunner, Brooks Forester, decided to bow out of the competition leaving her with the last two contestants, Drew Kenney and Chris Siegfried. Rather than abandon her search for love, Hartsock decided to give each of the remaining bachelors a rose and a chance at her love. In the end, Chris Siegfried won her heart and had her feeling, "Like the luckiest girl alive," according to [People](#).



## **What are some ways to choose between two potential partners?**

### **Cupid's Advice:**

Not everybody's love story is straight out of a Nicholas Sparks novel. Sometimes you may be forced to choose between two love interests and the decision will be one of the hardest of your life. Cupid has some advice about how to deal:

**1. Ask what you want out of life:** Take time to really think about what you find most important and consider which partner can help you attain that. Most of the times you'll want to achieve these things yourself. If that's the case then consider who is most likely to give you an emotional boost when you're feeling down.

**2. Long-term happiness:** In the end you have to put your long-term happiness above all else. Think of whom you can see yourself growing old with and stick with them. You live your life for you, not for anyone else.

**3. Think of what draws you to each partner:** The human mind can do this really neat thing where it builds people up on its own accord. This means that part of the guy you're falling for can be partially in your head. Think about each guy separately and what you love about them. This should include the good, the bad, the ugly, and the pretty.

**How would you choose between two potential partners? Share below.**

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# Reap the Benefits of Cutting Costs on Your Big Day



By Rev. Randy

Williams

For many couples, planning a wedding can be financially exhausting. If not planned carefully enough, the most important day of your life can leave a hole in your pocket shortly after you tie the knot. Although every woman yearns for a dream wedding, they also want a dream house, dream car and a family to go along with it. With the average wedding costing over \$20,000 nowadays, many newly engaged couples are becoming wiser and planning their weddings on a budget. If you and your significant other find yourself walking a financial tightrope just to get married, then you might want to consider setting a strict budget for a wedding ceremony that is more easily affordable.

Regardless of the size or planning, every wedding can cost a substantial amount of money. You are going to have to pay for a venue, food, marriage licenses and invitations. One way to begin planning for an affordable wedding is to cut down on costs and avoid unnecessary expenses. Below is a list of ways you can cut down on some of your wedding costs:

**Rent your tuxedo and wedding dress:** There is no sense in paying a small fortune on something that you and your partner will only be wearing once. There are many places where you can rent classy tuxedos and beautiful bridal gowns.

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

**Get creative and make your own invitations, decorations and centerpieces:** By taking a trip to the local arts and crafts stores, you can save money on pricey invitations and buy materials to make your own.

**Look for family and friends that can donate their talents:** If you have a family member or friend that's a photographer, DJ or pastor, ask if they can provide a discount or possibly lend their services for the occasion.

**Utilize the same venue:** For most couples, renting two separate venues for the wedding ceremony and reception can be costly. Consider reserving one location and using the same furniture and decorations for both events to save some bucks.

Eliminating wedding costs and setting a budget will save you money for things that come after the wedding is over. The money saved on a wedding and the accompanying reception can be used for a down payment on a house, your honeymoon or to pay off debt from credit card balances and school loans.

**Related:** [Four Dates and a Wedding](#)

By cutting down unnecessary expenses and planning a wedding on

a budget, you can enjoy the biggest day of your life without worrying too much about the financial woes that follow.

*Rev. Randy Williams is licensed, ordained, and is an active local pastor in Cave Creek, AZ. He has a Bible college degree and a seminary degree. He has been a minister since 1986. He has experience working with brides and officiating hundreds of wedding ceremonies since 1988.*

*His approach and style to weddings and marriage preparation is casual and relaxed. He is very committed to preparing the couple for a life-long marriage, not just the perfect wedding day. For more information, visit Rev. Randy Williams official website: <http://phoenixweddingpastors.com>*

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## **8 Things Your Wedding Can Do Without**





By Kendal Perez for

GalTime.com

According to a survey conducted by The Knot, couples spent an average of \$28,427 on their wedding and related events last year. It's no surprise that weddings are big business, and yet it's tough to imagine dropping 300 Benjamins on a single-day event.

There are lots of ways to trim wedding expenses, especially with the number of DIY crafts available to eager brides on Pinterest. However, there are some things your wedding can do without entirely that add up to big savings. Read on for eight such recommendations.

### **1. Summer setting**

The cost of a wedding is not only impacted by the season, but also by the time and day of the week. For example, a Saturday afternoon wedding in July will cost you more than a Sunday-morning ceremony in March. The impact of timing on the overall cost of your wedding cannot be overstated, so check [Turbotax.com](http://Turbotax.com) has a handy infographic for insight into the best budget-friendly times to get married.

**Related:** [Love Advice: 3 Signs He's the Right Guy to Be Your](#)

## [Valentine](#)

### **2. Enormous guest list**

The best way to save money on your nuptials is to keep the guest list small. The number of people you invite impacts every cost associated with your event, from location to invitations to menu. The smaller the wedding, the more intimate the event. Plus, it means fewer headaches all around for those involved in planning the big day.

### **3. Save-the-Dates**

I'm not sure when we decided one wedding invitation wasn't enough, but this trend is the bane of budgets the world over. While invitations aren't the costliest part of a wedding, they're the most redundant and unnecessary. If key people can't make it unless they pencil you in a year in advance, pick up the phone or send them an email. Everyone else considers two-months sufficient notice.

### **4. Custom invitations**

With save-the-dates off of your list, you can invest lots of money in the invitations, right? Wrong. Gold-flecked cardstock and lace-trimmed envelopes will be lining wastebaskets within moments of receipt, or at the very most a few days post-ceremony. Thankfully, you can find customizable wedding packages online for a fraction of the cost. For the truly frugal, free wedding printables abound, and you can buy cheap printer ink using Inkjet Willy to cut the cost of at-home printing.

### **5. Wedding favors**

Wedding favors look charming in style shoots, but are ultimately a waste of money. Leave them out and I guarantee guests won't gripe about the lack of personalized M&M packets or monogrammed matchstick books. In fact, they may thank you –

it's one less tchotchke to feel badly about tossing in the trash.

## **6. Full bar**

A cash bar is a surefire way to save money and annoy your guests at the same time. Meet your guests halfway with complimentary beer, wine and a signature cocktail. You'll have fun creating your very own wedding drink, and you'll save on the cost of offering every spirit and mixer known to man. For signature cocktail inspiration, peruse [this gallery](#) of tasty offerings.

**Related:** [How to Balance a New Relationship and Love with a Booming Career](#)

## **7. Multi-course meal**

The most expensive element of my wedding was the food. Despite guests' declarations that it was the best wedding spread EVER, I lament the cost. Before you deliberate over the chicken or the salmon, consider a more condensed eating experience to save money. Early-evening weddings can get away with cocktail hour accompanied by appetizers or small plates. Mid-morning ceremonies can have fun with brunch fare for much less than typical dinner spreads.

## **8. Location, location, location**

Believe it or not, destination weddings can actually cost less than traditional ceremonies. The cost of travel and accommodations can be a deterrent for most guests, making your overall price tag potentially less. It all depends on the location, of course, but ultimately it's a good option to consider if you've always wanted to get married on a beach.

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# Lindsay Lohan Shows a Different Side in 'The Canyons'



By April Littleton

Directed by Paul Schrader, *The Canyons* is a story about a young couple trying to work through a past infidelity. Christian (played by James Deen) is a movie producer who works to maintain his trust fund by creating films. When he becomes aware that his actress girlfriend, Tara (played by Lindsay Lohan) is hiding an affair with another actor from him, his life takes a violent turn, filled with twists and unexpected misfortunes.

**Should you see it:**

Lindsay Lohan has been out of the game for awhile. Fans of



hers will more than likely rush to local theaters to see this film. *The Canyons* falls under the mystery and suspense category, so if you like to be kept guessing until the very end of a movie, this would be the one for you.

### **Who to take:**

Unfortunately, this movie is unrated, but rumors have been swirling around about sexually explicit scenes and plenty of nude flashes from *The Parent Trap* actress herself. So, naturally, it's not recommended to take young children to this movie. Would a movie about infidelity make a good date movie? Probably not. If you're still heartbroken over a breakup yourself, take a few of your close friends to see this movie. The destructive love story portrayed in the film might make you feel better about your own situation.

**Related:** [When Can You Trust Him?](#)

## **What do you do when your partner has cheated on you?**

### **Cupid's Advice:**

Knowing that you've been cheated on is probably one of the worst feelings in the world. You end up blaming yourself for your partner's actions and for everything that went wrong in the relationship. You're not sure if you want to forgive your significant other for his/her infidelities, or move on with your life and find someone who would treat you with the upmost respect. Cupid has some advice:

- 1. Confront them:** In order for you to make a clear decision about your relationship, you need to confront your partner about their wrongdoings. If you have solid proof, show them. Ask them why they did what they did. Be prepared for whatever answers they may give you. Your love may lie to you or he/she may admit to having cheated on you in the past. In any case, make sure you are mentally ready for the discussion before you go through with it.

**2. Think about it:** It's easy to cause on a scene the instant you find out your boo is cheating. Before you make any mistakes you'll regret, think about what you've just found out. Take a couple of days to let the information sink in before you bring it up. You might even want to share the bad news with some close friends you trust. They might have been through a similar situation and will have plenty of advice for you.

**Related:** [Your Partner Has Cheated. Should You Reconcile?](#)

**3. Let go:** Do you think your relationship is worth saving? Can you see yourself mending a relationship with someone who has cheated? You need to decide if you're willing to forgive or if you want to move on. Trust will always be an issue once infidelity becomes a problem in a relationship. If you can't trust who you love, what kind of future will you have with them?

**Have you had a loved one cheat on you? How did you deal with it? Share your experience below.**

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**Amber Heard Talks Johnny Depp: 'Not Part of My Professional Life'**





By April Littleton

Amber Heard has finally opened up about her relationship with Johnny Depp. The 27-year-old actress told [Flare](#) magazine that she wanted to keep her love life private and out of the spotlight. In 2012, a source told [UsMagazine.com](#) that the pair are “100 percent dating” and that Depp “treats her very well.” The couple were recently spotted holding hands while walking the red carpet together at Depp’s latest film *The Lone Ranger* in June.

**When is the right time to go public with a new relationship?**

### **Cupid’s Advice:**

Dating someone new is fun and exciting, especially when there’s no one around to tell you how you should act in your relationship. It’s OK to keep your love life private, but there will come a time when you need to fill in a few key people in your life. Cupid has some tips:

**1. It’s getting serious:** If you’re just casual dating, there’s no need to inform your friends and family, especially if you’re seeing more than one person. Your loved ones should only get involved when the situation starts to get serious. It takes more than a few dates to know if who you’re seeing is

someone you want in your life long-term. Take your time and continue to have fun getting to know each other before you tell the whole world about a flame that may fizzle out in a few days.

**2. You've defined the relationship:** A lot of the time, people don't like to talk about their relationship because they don't even know if they're actually in one. Get ready to have "the talk" if your partner is playing hot and cold with you. You need to know where you stand as a couple, if you even are a couple. If you both agree that you want to try something more exclusive, then it's OK to share the good news with a few close friends.

**3. The L-word:** You definitely need to go public if you're in love! There's nothing stopping you from going public with your significant other if the two of you are in a committed, loving relationship. That doesn't mean you have to tell everyone you know via Facebook or Twitter, but it would be nice to be able to share some details about who said the L word first with your best friend or your mom.

**When did you know it was the right time to go public with your relationship? Comment below.**

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## Top 3 Questions about Open Relationships





By Natalie Vartanian

The way I see it is there are so many models for being in a relationship. Some people are naturally monogamous. Some people are not. Some people need variety. Some don't.

Instead of assuming a closed relationship is for you, or an open relationship is for you, really ask yourself the questions and be honest about your feelings. To help with that, here are the top three questions asked about open relationships:

### **1. How do you classify a relationship as Open?**

Open simply means you are choosing to open up the physical part of the relationship. If you want to flirt, kiss, go on a date or have sex with someone besides your primary partner, that is totally fine. With your partner or alone. You may even choose to have multiple partners (relationships) that are equally weighted in commitment and energy/connection.

What people love about open relationships is the freedom to talk to other people. Pursue them romantically if they want. It is a belief in the idea that you can love more than one person and have an intimate relationship with more than one person. Without feeling bad or wrong about it.

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

## **2. What about fear of getting emotionally attached to someone or jealousy?**

That may very likely happen: the attachment, care and love you feel when you are intimate with multiple people. Doesn't mean you won't encounter confusion or doubting your feelings for your primary partner (or any of your partners).

Being unemotional and detached is not the point. The point is enjoying the freedom, ability to love without definition and being open to the range of emotions. It is all part of the journey and self-exploration.

An open relationship requires a lot of communication and honesty, and self analysis. Jealousy is a natural part of open relationships. Identify the jealousy and deal with it appropriately.

Ignoring jealousy will inevitably lead to resentment and eventually heartache. There is a great article on jealousy as part of the list of resources included at the end of this post.

## **3. Any tips or lessons learned for someone contemplating an open relationship?**

There are so many pieces to a relationships besides physical, such as emotional, mental, spiritual, etc. So while the physical part of your relationship is important, it is not the end all be all either.

You have got to be clear about your level of desire and comfort up front and throughout the relationship. Open relationships are fluid. Once decided/agreed upon, it does not set it in stone. They can open, close, shift, expand, etc depending on where each other partners are in their level of comfort.

**Related:** [Return to the Dating World](#)

Remember to continually keep the lines of communication open and that will alleviate unnecessary stress on the relationship and allow it to be a thoroughly enriching experience.

*Natalie Vartanian, CPCC, ACC, is a certified life coach, talented writer, speaker, workshop facilitator and an expert when it comes to sex and relationships. She knows it's possible to have amazing love in an unconventional way. She works with individuals and couples to build better relationships and help them amplify the communication and intimacy, which always results in better sex. She has also worked in organizations such as Google to develop personal development curriculum and present around the importance of designing relationships in the classroom to educators, as well as personal leadership for education outreach professionals. Her work has been featured in Forbes.com, Good Men Project, Your Life Your Way and CTI's Transforum Blog. You can find her at <http://nataliethecoach.com>.*

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## Mastering the Art of the 'Plus One'





By Sarah Gooding for

GalTime.com

The summer is upon us, and it has brought a new love interest with it! Your mind is drifting off to clear skies, beaches and breezy summer dates – we know. However, if you're in your late 20s or early 30s, you may have found the summer months becoming suspiciously less and less about lazing in the sun and spending endless afternoons on your favorite patio. Your coveted weekends out of the office are becoming increasingly filled with wedding showers, bachelorettes and of course, the big day itself. Luckily your invite to the next wedding includes a Plus One, but there are also some major unknowns that come along with the first wedding you and your new guy attend together. Will he have fun? Will you have to babysit him the whole night? Will your friends and family like him? What if you're the Plus One? Will he be attentive? Will his friends and family be inclusive? Will he feel he needs to be by your side all night?

As the Dating Coach for PlentyOfFish, I receive many letters from our female users asking for dating advice; particularly when a relationship is first taking off. In light of wedding season, here are some tips that will ensure your first wedding together won't be your last:



## If he's the Plus One:

**Introduce him to your friends before the wedding.** A wedding shouldn't be the first time your new beau is meeting all of your friends and family members. The focus of the day will be on the bride and groom, not getting to know new people. Plan a casual get-together before the big day and use it as an opportunity for your friends to get to know your new guy and vice versa. If a wedding is not the first introduction, it's still a nice gesture to host a dinner party for all your friends and their significant others who will also be attending the wedding. This is simply another opportunity for your date to get acquainted with your friends and feel like he's part of your close-knit group.

**Related:** [Dating Advice: Are You Dating a 'Mad Man'?](#)

**Ask your best friend's boyfriend or husband for help.** The last thing you want to do is look after your date all night. He likely won't be a fan of this either. An easy way to ensure you're not babysitting your date but also not leaving him alone for too long is to enlist the help of one of your guy friends, preferably the significant other of one of your close friends. They'll likely be spending time together in the future (if things work out) so they'll have an incentive to get to know each other, too. While you're enjoying yourself on the dance floor with all your best girlfriends, your date can engage in some needed guy talk while bonding over drinks with a cool, new dude.

**Don't force your date to dance (or do anything for that matter).** If your date doesn't suggest a dance, don't force it. You want him to feel comfortable and he may not be the time to show his moves until at least a few months in. Aside from dancing, be careful not to force anything on your date at a wedding. Try to avoid asking 10 different people to take your picture or suggesting he try to catch the garter if you can sense he isn't into it. You don't want him feeling pressured

to be the perfect Plus One or that you are much more serious about the relationship than he is.

**Related:** [Relationship Advice: Making Marriage Work Like Beyonce](#)

## If you're the Plus One:

**Offer to contribute to the gift.** According to etiquette, unless your name is on the invite, you don't technically need to contribute to the gift. That said, it's a nice touch to at least offer. You are getting a nice dinner and a beautiful night out of the deal. If he declines, offer to pick out a nice card instead.

**Mingle.** The last thing you want is for your date to feel that he needs to stay by your side all night. This is likely an exciting night for your date and a chance for him to catch up with all of his close friends. Don't sulk in the corner or attach yourself to his hip. Show him you're outgoing, independent and can make friends with anyone. All it takes is a 'Hello, I'm \_\_\_\_\_. How do you know the groom?' A little liquid courage also doesn't hurt.

**Blend in with the crowd.** You want to be on your best behavior at wedding, particularly when you don't know the bride and groom very well. For one night only, do your best not to stick out from the crowd or embarrass your date. When it comes to attire, stay away from pants and anything white. Also, while drinking is usually part of most weddings, be careful not to drink too much. You wouldn't want to have to cut your night short.

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# DJ Khaled Says He Was 'Serious' in Video Proposal to Nicki Minaj



By Kerri Sheehan

It seems the love bug has bitten DJ Khaled. The 37-year-old recorded a special video message for Nicki Minaj while he was at MTV News this past week. [UsMagazine.com](http://UsMagazine.com) reported that in the video he confessed his crush on the singer and former American Idol judge saying, "Nicki Minaj, I'm at MTV, I'm going to be honest with you; I love you. I like you, I want you, I want you to be mine." He ended the video with a marriage proposal that he claims was 100 percent legitimate. That is some high profile proposal.

**What are three creative ways to propose?**

**Cupid's Advice:**

From a young age women dream of how their significant other will propose to them. Cupid has some advice about how to get creative with your proposal so you won't disappoint your bride-to-be:

**1. Treasure hunt:** Let your loved one revisit the relationship with a scavenger hunt leading through all of the favorite places and moments you shared during your union. Each location should have a clue to solve that will lead her to the next destination. Some places to include are the location of your first date, first kiss, and your favorite night together.

**2. Personalize it:** Every woman and relationship is different so every proposal should be different as well. Pop the proposal in the middle of you two doing one of her hobbies or maybe give the proposal a theme of her favorite book or television show.

**3. Flash mob:** This proposal is definitely not for everyone, but if your girl likes to be the center of attention then it may be the perfect option for you. Set up a flash mob and pop the question amongst the commotion.

**What's your dream proposal? Share below.**

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## Handling the "Kids" Question On a Date





By Sheila Blagg for

GalTime.com

The kids-or-no-kids debate is an issue for many couples. But, bring a child into a new dating relationship and the issue becomes even more complex. As people move from one relationship into the dating realm, they often wonder, “Does he want kids?,” “Will she still want to date me?”

When both parties are on the same page in regard to the kids question (either in favor of kids or not), the new relationship experiences fewer bumps. But if one wants kids and the other doesn't, the debate may result in a huge rift that not many couples survive.

## **When to talk about kids**

It is my opinion that the do-you-want-(more)-children question should be tackled within the first couple of dates. Why continue to date someone who doesn't have the same goals and desires as you do? Sure, there are some cases where, along the way, someone changes his or her mind, and everyone lives happily ever after, but there are more cases that end in heartbreak and anger.

**Related:** [Relationship Advice: Can You Have a Friendly Meeting with Your Ex?](#)

Are you willing to take that chance? Does it make sense to invest so much time in a relationship that may never work?

Most people know whether or not they want children by the time they reach adulthood. Personally, I have five children, and three of them already know that they definitely want to have kids of their own. One of my kids is a no go, and one is still on the fence (which is fine since he's only 14!). My point is that, even though my kids are still relatively young, they already have a picture of what they want their family lives to look like.

## **I can change his/her mind**

I've heard so many stories of heartbreak resulting from one person trying to change a potential partner's mind about having or not having children. The bottom line is, if someone you're dating does not want children (and vice versa), don't try to talk him/her into it. It's important to respect the vision of what that individual has in mind for his/her future.

Stop trying to change the other person and accept that you may need to change how you deal with the situation.

When I began dating after my divorce, I decided that I wanted to date only men who wanted children. I felt that the desire for kids was one common ground on which we could relate to one another.

But, one of my very best friends approached the kid debate in a completely different way. She decided that she had no interest in dating a man with kids. She didn't feel that she was cut out to manage someone else's kids and the ex-wife that would inevitably come as part of the package.

**Related:** [Relationship Advice: Why We Are Insecure About](#)

## [Relationships](#)

### **Know what you want**

What it boils down to is that you must first decide what your goals are for the future. Do you want (more) kids? Do you want to date someone who already has kids? Know your limits, set boundaries and stick to them. It has been my experience – and the research will back me up – that it's never a good idea to try to “change his/her mind” on something as important as having a family.

Although there are always exceptions to every rule, dating someone who is like-minded – especially when it comes to children – makes for a less complicated relationship.

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**‘Bachelorette’ Desiree  
Hartsock Speaks Out at ‘Men  
Tell All’**





By April Littleton

The bridal stylist blogged on [People](#) about the ups and downs she went through while getting the chance to see all of the men she dated on *The Bachelorette* again. She talked about her unresolved feelings for some of the contestants and how it felt to see some of the men who manipulated her. “It was exciting and fun to to see everyone at *Men Tell All* and to hear what they had to say after watching the episodes,” Hartsock said.

**What are some ways to tell your partner something difficult?**

### **Cupid’s Advice:**

Sometimes it’s hard to tell your loved one something important depending on how they usually react to surprising news. The more difficult the situation is, the harder your partner may take it. Unresolved issues can escalate into a fight, so whatever the problem is, don’t keep quiet. Cupid is here to help:

**1. Practice:** Before you bring the issue up with your partner, it’s best to prepare what you want to say first. If you’re nervous or unsure of how to bring the subject up, this tactic might help you. Practice in front of the mirror or ask one of



your friends to sit in as your love.

**2. Don't get defensive:** When you do tell your significant other the bad news, try not to place any blame where it doesn't belong. It may be hard for you to do so, but consider your partner's feelings in the situation. Be kind while still remaining honest. Both of you need to be responsible for whatever is going on in the relationship. One of you shouldn't feel worse than the other.

**3. Write it down:** Sometimes the best way to say something is by not saying anything at all. If you don't have the heart to tell your loved one bad news vocally, try writing it down instead. Write down all of your feelings in a letter and give it to your partner when you feel ready.

**How do you tell your partner something difficult? Comment below.**

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## **Solo Parenting: Reconsidering Your Ex**





By Cynthia MacGregor

for [Hope After Divorce](#)

You've been divorced a while—maybe six months, maybe more than two years—and nobody better has shown up to tempt you. What's more, parenting as a solo act has proven to be a heavy burden. And on top of that, the kids haven't given up pestering you about getting their dad to move “back home.” You'd think by now they'd be used to the new order of things, but no, they're relentless about wanting Daddy to return. And you're tired of hearing them “singing the same old song.”

The last time he came to pick them up, you looked him over and started remembering all of his good points—and forgetting all of the bad ones. You remembered how funny he could be, how good he was with the kids, how kind he was to your mother... and you saw how happy the kids were to see him.

**Related Link:** [The EX Word](#)

You remembered the night before, when you'd gotten home from work exhausted and still had to make dinner, supervise homework, get on the kids' cases about room-cleaning, nag Jeffrey about walking the dog and Jennifer about changing the cat's litter box. You had to hassle them about bedtime, and

once they were finally tucked in, you had to wash up the dinner dishes and start the first of two loads of laundry. By the time you fell into bed, you were too exhausted to fall asleep and had done *nothing* for pleasure or relaxation all evening.

Oh, how different it would be, you think, if you had a spouse, a partner, a man in your life to help shoulder the burden. (And what a heavy burden it seems at the moment to be.) What about your ex? He had his faults, but he was a good father. There's no taking that away from him, whatever else there is to say...

Stop right there! "Whatever else there is to say?" What else *is* there to say? Plenty, I'll bet, if you think back and give the marriage an honest appraisal! Why did you call it quits in the first place? Not on a whim, I'm sure. You had your reasons, and they were most likely valid ones. Remember?

Now, fast-forward in your mind. Imagine you've gotten back together with the man. Imagine how overjoyed the kids are. Imagine how relieved you are—at first—to have help with the kids and in general. Then remember all his faults or flaws, all the reasons you gave up on the marriage in the first place. What has changed? Probably nothing. Now picture yourself asking him to leave—again. Finally, picture the kids' reaction when Daddy leaves for the *second* time. Not a happy picture, is it?

**Related Link:** [Must We Remain Friends With Our Ex-Husband?](#)

So, is remarrying your ex the answer to your problems? In all probability, no. Is remarrying your ex going to make your kids happy? In the short term, sure, but in the long term, when he leaves again, definitely not! And thinking that "this time, things will be different" is almost certainly a fantasy.

Reconsidering your ex? Better think twice—not just for your own sake but for the kids' sake too.



*Cynthia MacGregor is a multi-published author. She has over 100 books to her credit. They include "After Your Divorce," "Divorce Helpbook for Kids," "Divorce Helpbook for Teens," "Solo Parenting," "'Step' This Way," and others. Forthcoming books include "The One-Parent Family," "Why Are Mommy and Daddy Getting Divorced," and "Daddy Doesn't Live Here Anymore." She hosted and produced the TV show "Solo Parenting," which was broadcast in South Florida over WHDT. Cynthia writes for [HopeAfterDivorce.org](http://HopeAfterDivorce.org), [FamilyShare.com](http://FamilyShare.com) and [LAFamily.com](http://LAFamily.com). Contact Cynthia at [Cynthia@cynthiamacgregor.com](mailto:Cynthia@cynthiamacgregor.com), and visit her website.*

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## **Summer-Themed Ideas For Your Partner's Birthday**





By [Whitney Johnson](#)

The eternal sunshine, lazy days and carefree attitudes make summertime the ideal season for celebrating. If your beau is lucky enough to have a July or August birthday, be a great partner and throw him a party he'll never forget. Before you pick a theme, consider your man's hobbies and passions. Once you've settled on an idea, go all out: make sure the food, drinks, decorations and even the guests' outfits align with the bash. Below, we've developed a list of five fun party themes – ideas that can be further flushed out on Pinterest. Happy planning!

**1. Country-themed party:** It's the season of outdoor concerts, and if your man grew up listening to Hank Williams and Willie Nelson, this party will be just what he had in mind. Stick with southern comfort food for the menu: macaroni and cheese, fried chicken and biscuits with homemade lemonade. And, of course, build a playlist with your beau's favorite country tunes, including old-time favorites as well as some current hits. As for attire, ask your guests to wear their broken-in boots and favorite cowboy hat.

**Related Link:** [Date Idea: Listen to the Music](#)

**2. Red, white and blue bash:** With holidays like Memorial Day and Fourth of July coming up, summer is the perfect time of year to honor America and show your patriotic pride. For appetizers, consider snacks like red peppers and hummus or mini-sandwiches with turkey and Swiss cheese. Summer fruits like strawberries and blueberries are great to use in festive cocktails or delicious desserts. Be sure to decorate with little American flags and red and white flowers. Also, be sure to ask attendees to stick with the color theme when they get dressed.

**3. Comic book celebration:** Did your sweetheart love comic books as a little boy? With blockbuster hits like “Iron Man 3” and “Man of Steel” already released in theaters, it’s the perfect time for your man to relive his childhood days and be his favorite comic book character for a day. Plan your menu around the colors in your guy’s hero’s suit (black and yellow for Batman, green for The Hulk and so on). Transport your guests to a different world with futuristic décor and movie soundtracks. Guests can wear simple T-shirts with their character of choice or go all out and don a full costume.

**4. Mexican fiesta:** There’s nothing like sipping on a refreshing margarita (non-alcoholic or not) with your love on a sweltering day. To fill your guests’ appetites, stock up on chips, salsa and guacamole. For the main course, plan a do-it-yourself taco bar: purchase soft tortillas and hard shells along with fresh vegetables, cooked shrimp, spicy chicken and more. And for dessert, break out the blindfolds and piñatas! Set the mood with bright-colored decorations and Mexican music.

**Related Link:** [Date Idea: Celebrate Cinco de Mayo with Your Mate](#)

**5. Baseball bash:** Sure, you may have been to your fair share of ball games this summer, but we have a feeling that your significant other will never tire of the sport. For food and

drinks, serve typical game snacks: peanuts, nachos, hot dogs and pizza along with beer and soda. As for dessert, soft-serve ice cream is the perfect way to top off the fun. Decorate using the colors of your hometown team as well as a few foam fingers, baseballs and wooden bats. For attire, your friends can wear a jersey from their favorite team. Let the rivalries begin!

**What is your favorite summer-themed party idea? Tell us in the comments below.**

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## Lea Michele Is Grieving With Cory Monteith's Family



By April Littleton

According to [People](#), the *Glee* star is spending her time

grieving with Cory Monteith's family. Monteith's body was found in a Vancouver hotel room over the weekend. The coronor announced he died of a mixture of heroin and alcohol.

**What are some ways to help your partner grieve?**

### **Cupid's Advice:**

Your partner just went through a tragic loss and you've been doing all you can to try to console them. Sometimes, it's hard to know what your loved one would appreciate and what would set them off once again, especially if you're not going through grieving yourself. Cupid has some tips:

**1. Listen:** If you're afraid of saying the wrong things to your partner, just listen to them vent. Some people only want to be heard when they're going through a rough time. The best thing you can do for your significant other is just to be there and lend a ear if and when they need it.

**2. Be supportive:** Your partner will expect you to be the strong one while they are dealing with a loss. While you may not know how to handle everything, you'll need to give it your best shot and provide a sense of stability. You'll need to show your love all of the positive, while they can't help but to focus on the negative. Your partner will be counting on you to be there, don't let them down.

**3. Don't judge:** The worst thing you can do right now is judge the decisions and actions your significant other may make. Naturally, some of the things they do might not be wise, but they're not thinking clearly. Let them grieve how they want and for as long as they need. Don't get impatient. When they do finally bounce back, they'll appreciate everything you did and your relationship will be stronger than ever.

**How did you help your partner grieve? Comment below.**



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# QuickieChick's Video Dating Tips: Ways to Know If He's Ready for Marriage



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

## Dating Advice from E!'s *Famously Single* Laurel House on Marriage

How do you know if your guy is ready to take the next step in your relationship and get married? In this week's [dating advice](#) video, relationship expert and E!'s *Famously Single* dating coach, Laurel House shares the questions you should consider in order to figure out if you're the one he

wants for the rest of his life. And, of course, you have to first decide if you're ready to spend forever with him. Plus, the dating expert tells you how to ensure that you're not coming across as too needy and how to deal with your man if he's acting desperate.

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

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

**How did you know when your partner was ready for marriage? Share your thoughts in the comments below!**

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## **What is Blake Shelton and Miranda Lambert's Idea of a Great Date?**





By Kerri Sheehan

Country crooners Blake Shelton and Miranda Lambert may spend a lot of time in L.A., but they're not about to buy a house in the Golden State just yet. [People](#) reported that Shelton spends the time he's not filming in Oklahoma. He said, "As soon as we're done on Wednesdays, my a--is on the plane." The 37-year-old judge on the *Voice* claims that he and Lambert prefer their dates to be low key. The two enjoy, "Throwing a cooler in the back of the pickup and driving around the property clearing brush and singing to the radio," said Shelton.

**What are some ways to incorporate common interests in dates?**

### **Cupid's Advice:**

Dates are an important activity in any relationship. Cupid has some advice for keeping your dates unique:

**1. Keep it simple:** Sometimes a super chill date is just what the relationship needs. This is especially important for high profile couples like Shelton and Lambert. Keeping it simple allows the couple to strengthen their bond as a couple.

**2. Incorporate a hobby:** Often in a couple at least one half has a hobby that he or she likes to keep up with. Whether it's

surfing, crafting, biking, or baking centering a date on a hobby is a great idea to try out.

**3. Try something new:** If you've been dating your partner for a while then you've probably had a million and one different dates. Make an effort to try something completely new that's totally out of both of your comfort zones. You don't have to go as extreme as skydiving or bungee jumping though! Trying out a new restaurant can be an adventure as well.

**What was your favorite date? Share below.**