

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



By Marni Battista

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

Perhaps it’s because she has a “broken picker,” or maybe it’s just that she’s 22 years old and has no idea what she really wants. Whatever the case, Swift is repeating the same mistakes in each and every relationship. Her romantic trysts are unable to move past the infant stage. With actors and boy-banders alike (even a Kennedy!), the songstress dives in head-first each time – and comes out like a drowned rat within a few

months.

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

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

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

Deciding after one coffee date that you're madly in love, that you should spend every minute together for the next five days, and that you're in a serious, committed relationship is almost always a recipe for disaster. Be conscious of the pacing of the relationship and strive to really get to know the other person, based not on who you want him/her to be but rather on how he/she shows up consistently over time!

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

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

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

Ignoring the "quiet voice within" is not a smart move. Instead, communicate your concerns while remembering that your perfect match will want to work through speed bumps to come to a real win-win. If it's not something that's appropriate to share with your partner, make sure you have a coach or therapist (not your best friend) who can help guide you in making informed relationship choices.

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

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

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## Celebrity Relationships in Need of a New Year's Resolution





By Courtney Allen

The New Year is here, and even the biggest celebs in Hollywood know what that means: it's time to pull out the glorious pen and paper. There is no better time like the present than to leave the daunting past behind in the tabloids, whether it is love drama with exes, juicy scandals or shocking infidelity. 2012 may have proved to be rocky for these celebrity couples, but the upcoming year just may be looking up if they write their New Year's Resolution list with these things in mind:

**Kristen Stewart and Robert Pattinson:** These two *Twilight* stars had us watching in amazement as their seemingly perfect relationship flourished both on-screen and off. It wasn't until this summer that their 'fairytale' took a turn for the worst. Stewart became the center of a cheating scandal between her married *Snow White and the Huntsman* director Rupert Sanders. Stewart caused jaw drops amongst her *Twilight* fans and co-stars as news of the flaming affair became public. Speculation over whether Stewart and Pattinson would stay together swirled for months. The answer to the question we were all once dying to know? Yes. The couple is together today. But one piece of advice for their partially tainted relationship: keeping Kristen's deceit in the past in order for it to successfully recover in the new year.

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**Rihanna and Chris Brown:** Chris Brown and Rihanna have quite the troubled past. The two world-famous singers started dating back in 2008. Between Rihanna's stunning face and body and Chris Brown's undeniably handsome facial features and lullaby-like voice, they instantly became one of the hottest, power couples in Hollywood. But in February of 2009, tragedy struck for the lovebirds. Brown was arrested for allegedly assaulting the "Disturbia" singer after a pre-Grammy bash. The two obviously went their separate ways as Rihanna filed a restraining order against Brown which was later dropped in 2011. Shortly after, rumors began to fly about the two rekindling their flame with the release of Rihanna's "Birthday Cake Remix" featuring the R&B singer. Looking back, the rumor seemed nothing less than the truth. Brown recently dumped ex-girlfriend Karrueche Tran and now appears to be dating Rihanna based off pictures on her Instagram. Let's just hope these two have a healthier relationship this time around. If they commit to this New Year's Resolution, nothing can stop them.

**Halle Berry and Oliver Martinez:** Halle Berry and fiancé Oliver Martinez seem to be doing just fine besides one small problem: her ex. Model Gabriel Aubry is causing trouble in paradise for the couple. Berry and Aubry are right in the middle of custody battle over their four-year old daughter Nahla after splitting up back in 2010. Things got pretty heated over Thanksgiving when Aubry got into a physical altercation during a custodial hand-off with the bombshell's current boyfriend, French actor Gabriel Martinez. Aubry seems to be creating quite the mess for Berry and her new relationship. The cause of the fight is unknown, but pleasant words are definitely out of the question. Sounds like the three need to somehow find a way to kiss and make up for the New Year and for the future. With Nahla in the picture, Aubry isn't going anywhere.

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**Rupert Sanders and Liberty Ross:** The couple on the other side of Kristen Stewart's cheating scandal has been through trying times since the infidelity went public last summer. Turns out *Snow White and the Huntsman* director Rupert Sanders was not only in a relationship, but was married to English model Liberty Ross. The couple was not seen together for several weeks following the scandal, leaving us to wonder if Sanders' position as director in the *Snow White and the Huntsman* sequel was the only thing he had lost. Luckily for Sanders, Ross seems to be giving him another chance after his slip-up with 22-year old Stewart. Sanders will now be walking on thin ice with his wife as he enters into 2013. All the New Year's resolving between them should come mostly from his end: proving that he can be trusted again; and of course for Liberty, giving him the fair chance.

**What are some of your New Year's Resolutions for your relationship? Share your ideas with us!**

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## **5 Signs He's Not Ready to Commit**





By Susan Trombetti,

Matchmaker and Relationship Expert

It's the New Year and the emails are flying, with women trying to decide if he's a keeper for 2013, or if they should cut their losses and kick him to the curb and start fresh this year. Many single women were hoping and praying for that all important sparkle on their left finger. What to do if you didn't get it? Heaven forbid, should you wait until Valentine's Day. How long to hang on desperately waiting ? I think you know the answer yourself. You don't need to reduce yourself to that point of an awkward conversation and beg, "Will you please finally marry me ALREADY ?" Check out these five signs he isn't ready to commit, which tell you all you need to know about the status of your relationship:

**1. There are long periods of unaccounted for time, physically and emotionally:** If it's been a few days since you've heard from him or spent time with him, then throw up the red flags. In a healthy and committed relationship your man won't go off the radar from you, whether it's not answering calls, not making plans or not spending time together in the bedroom.

**2. He's breaking promises(big or small):** From a call he didn't make to your nephew's soccer game that he missed, any sort of promised action he breaks is a sign he's not as committed as



you thought.

**3. He lives by himself and you can't drop by when you want:** You should be able to stop by his house at random, when he's home. Don't accept excuses.

**Related:** [How to Kick That Bad Relationship to the Curb](#)

**4. He still puts his mom first in every case:** If you're his girlfriend, his mother shouldn't win every argument that you have. You should be the Number 1 woman in his life, not his mother.

**5. His dad is a marriage-a-holic (married more than twice):** If his Dad, or another strong male influence in his life, has been married more than two times, this could affect your chances of getting married. Many times these son's are often hesitant to get married for the first time because

Get your confidence back this year. Don't spend another minute with the wrong guy if he displays any of these behaviors because he isn't ready to commit. Good luck in 2013. The signs are right in front of you. No need to feel so powerless.

*Susan Trombetti is an expert matchmaker and member of the Professional Matchmakers Association. She has helped many discerning singles discover long-term relationships and partnerships that are both rewarding and fulfilling through her business, Exclusive Matchmaking. She was also recently featured in a Cosmopolitan Article, about the 5 Text Messages Not to Answer.*

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# Ring In The New Year With A New Relationship



By Jennifer Ross

The New Year is always that time to let go of the old and stagnate parts of your life to make room for the new and exciting ones. With all the spine-tingling sensations coming your way, now is a good time for you to start a new relationship. This does not mean that you dump your current relationship to find a new one. Rather, view this as making a new start with your current partner. To create a memorable 2013, filled with an invigorating romance to last well beyond the year, here are five steps to lead you to a “new” relationship:

**1. Your mindset:** The number one step to starting a new relationship with your current love is to mentally vow to have a new relationship with your current love. Sound too simple? It actually is that easy. You don't need to know all the

answers on January 1. Instead know this. Your relationship is on a new journey, with you and your partner as co-pilots. Once your new relationship takes off, there is no going back! Feel yourselves veering off course? That doesn't matter; just nudge your relationship slowly back on track. And remember, as long as you and your mate are still heading towards the direction of love, you are always making progress to your final destination.

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**2. A new language:** With a new relationship comes new vocabulary or rather a new way to speak to each other. Think of this as your relationship's very own language of love, fluently spoken by only you and your partner. Instead of saying "I" or "you," use the word "we." Instead of saying "problem," use the word "challenge." Instead of saying "but," use the word "and." Instead of saying "can't," use the word "can." Finally, instead of saying "why," use the word "how." An example of the old language is, "You have a problem but I can't fix it. Why can't you fix it?" Your new language is, "We have a challenge and we can fix it. How can we fix it?" The difference is to focus on a solution and not the problem. With a little practice, it will come natural.

**3. Remember what year it is:** If you are holding on to issues from 2012, it is time to let go. That doesn't necessarily mean you act as if the issues never happened. Can anyone do that? Instead, have those conversations with your partner, talking about how each of you feel. The best way is to listen to your mate without interrupting. Don't keep a tally, while he/she is speaking, of what you think he/she has done wrong. Honestly try to understand only from their perspective before reacting. Remember, you love each other. No one is deliberately hurting the other. Often the case is, both of you are reacting to preconceptions of intentional pain.

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**4. Be Open:** In the late 1800's, inventor Thomas Edison, and his team, experimented with thousands of different filaments in order to get the right material to make a long-lasting light bulb. What does this have to do with your relationship? Throughout 2013, you and your partner will also experiment with thousands of different ways to make a long-lasting relationship. Just like Edison, be open to other interpretations or ideas. More importantly, ask for help or advice when needed. Edison didn't succeed alone and neither will you.

**5. Control only what you can:** Realize that just like last year, there will be situations to create setbacks in 2013, times where you will feel personally hurt or your relationship threatened. That doesn't have to halt all progress. Make the decision to continue forward. Just because someone or something has attempted to hurt you does not mean you are required to react negatively. You cannot control what happens but you can control how you react. Once you master this, you will see that the negative issue is only 10% of the situation and how you react is 90%.

**How do you plan to re-new your relationship in 2013? Share your ideas with us below.**

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## **Tips for Making a Long Distance Relationship Work**





By TJ Barea

Long distance relationships can be successful. Just because there is distance between you physically does not mean the relationship should suffer. There are a number of things you can do to help bridge the gap from your heart to your partner's:

## **Skype**

Skype is cam-based chat software that can be downloaded. Skype is better than messaging, texting or online chatting. It has a real-time cam that enables the participants of the chat to not only exchange messages, but see each other as if they were face-to-face. Skype can help bridge the gap by enable partners to see each other and talk at the same time. It can be the next best thing to meeting in person.

**Related:** [How Can Social Media Help My Long Distance Relationship?](#)

## **Texts**

Texts are a quick little message that can be sent all hours of the day. The nice thing about texting is if the other person is tied up, they do not have to answer it, like a phone call or Skype call that has to be answered right then. The

downsides to texting are it can take a while for the other person to respond if they are busy and the fact that you can't always read emotions in texts.

## **Phone Calls**

A simple phone call can brighten anyone's day. Thanks to cell phones a call can be placed and received anywhere. When you're having a rough day, or just want to share a moment with your partner, a phone call is the perfect way to connect the gap caused by the miles apart. With a phone call, you will not get the misunderstandings and lack of emotions that texts can have. The sound of your partner's voice on the line is sure to bring a smile to your day.

**Related:** [4 Ways to Make Your Long Distance Relationship Work](#)

## **Letters**

As old fashioned as it may seem with today's technology, letters are a great way to communicate and keep a long distance relation healthy. Remember back to when you were a kid, running to the mailbox just to see if you had mail. Even though we are all grown up, doesn't mean we don't still like receiving letters. In addition to the excitement of finding a letter in the mail, there is a certain freedom that comes from writing. Some people are able to communicate better once they can think about what they want to say and have a chance to put it on paper. Face-to-face or voice-to-voice calls can prove to be limiting for fear of rejection. Writing a letter gives you a chance to say your heart's deepest thoughts and wishes without rejection as it is being written.

## **Deliveries**

Much like the excitement of getting a letter, your partner will enjoy receiving deliveries. The deliveries can be anything from a gift, care package, chocolates or flowers. Some places will even deliver special dinners, too. A



delivery, especially surprise ones, is a great way of saying you were thinking of your partner.

### **Alternating Trips**

Make plans to see each other. Since travel can be expensive, try suggesting alternating who travels each time. One month or every few months you travel and the next time, your partner can travel. Depending on distance, you can set up the timeframe and frequency of the trips. You could even meet in the middle someplace romantic to split the cost of traveling.

Long distance relationships can work. They just take a little bit of work to ensure communication lines stay open. Also, your partner needs to know you were thinking of them, since you do not see each other daily.

*This article was composed by TJ Barea for the team at badoo.*

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





**Question from Ashley**

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

**Answer from Our Love Experts:**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

**Tell us: How have you made a long-distance relationship work?**

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# The Art of Making Up



by Straight Male

Friend Marcus Osborne for GalTime.com

As a man I can personally attest to men's particular brand of cluelessness. The countless missed signals contributing to ineffectual attempts at communication by the Adam gender has caused many Eve's heads to explode. Sure, a gargantuan chunk of couples' misunderstandings could be avoided with ease if women would...oh, I dunno...maybe be more direct. Instead of expecting guys to "just know", perhaps being a teensy-weensy more literal would be helpful.

Every man would agree with me.

See, guys will happily admit that they do not understand women. Conversely, women tend to believe that they've got men all figured out. Which leads to...*wait for it*...more arguments! Disagreements are bound to occur. If you and your partner don't have the occasional flare up, one of you is being lied

to. But that's another argument for another day. I'm more concerned with what occurs *after* the fighting is over.

Once you stop throwing the verbal grenades, how do you get back on track? The art of making up is truly an art and like anything else, it requires commitment and work to achieve maximum efficacy. Unfortunately, getting into the fight is easier than making up. So here are a few things to consider next time you've exhausted yourself in conflict with your guy.

**Resolution** – It's cliché, but sometimes you accept that the other person IS another person – and you simply agree to disagree. I mean, the greatest thing in the world is the moment where the two of you get it figured out. When the light bulb comes on and you both actually *hear* what message you're each attempting to send to the other. It's vital to do this – *when it can be done*. But sometimes people simply have divergent perspectives on a particular issue, even *after* they've heard one another. But recognize that a *disagreement* with you is not generally a *judgment* of you or an indictment of your relationship. You're simply different. And that's okay.

**Let It Be Over** – Nothing is worse than feeling like your conflict has reached its zenith, only to have it re-ignited by a careless comment or an insensitive assertion. Don't keep trying to "win" because ultimately no one will. By accepting that the disagreement is not a competition, but a desire to be heard, understood, and respected you will ensure that the door to reconciliation is wide open.

**Reconnect** – It's vital to reconnect, I believe, as soon as possible. Some people need "space" after conflict; some need immediate, overt acknowledgement that the fighting is over. That could be in the form of an apology, a hug, or both. But something that clearly says, "I'm done arguing – and I love you." There are those who can simply separate from the heated disagreement and proceed on with ease. Then there are those

who need a deeply intimate experience (make up sex) to feel that reconnection. Whatever method works best for you and your partner, figure it out and act on it as soon as appropriate because the more time that passes between the end of the fight, the more difficult this part of making up will be.

How about you? What tips can you share that have made making up easier in your life?

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## Dr. Brandy Engler Says, “‘The Men on My Couch’ Taught Me That Love Is Hard and Complicated”



By Whitney Baker



When Dr. Brandy Engler opened her sex therapy practice for women in New York City, she was shocked that it was mostly men reaching out for her help. As she began working through their heartache, she discovered that she had her own issues to face as well. In *The Men on My Couch: True Stories of Sex, Love and Psychotherapy*, Dr. Engler, along with David Rensin, weave together her personal story and her patients' journeys, sharing the lessons both learned and taught throughout her first year as a psychologist. We chatted with the first-time author about her new book and what she has coming up next.

**Why were you surprised that more men than women came to you after you opened your practice?**

Traditionally, men tend to seek psychotherapy less than women for issues like depression or anxiety. Similarly, I hadn't seen any statistics that showed that men were more interested than women in sex therapy.

**What question about love and relationships do you find your clients asking most often?**

The question that they tend to come to therapy with is: Should I break up with my significant other? They feel confused about a decision, which drives them to therapy. The second thing that most often brings people to me is feeling broken-hearted and wanting to know how to stop hurting.

Once in a while, couples that are about to get married or are newly married come in as well. They want to know how to communicate or understand each other better. They're usually in pretty healthy relationships but are just looking for guidance.

**What motivated you to write a book about your experiences during that first year?**

Because of my time spent with these men, I gained a lot of new

insights that really excited me. The more I sat with them and explored their true motivations for being there, I felt like I was uncovering answers that went far beyond the simple and conventional conclusions that we draw about men – things like men just want to have sex, men want sex more than women or men are less emotional about sex. The more I listened to them, the more I saw how vulnerable they were.

The first chapter of *The Men on My Couch* talks about a guy named David, who was a relatively happy guy. He recognized that he was cheating a lot, which led him to the question, “Am I even capable of love?” I thought that was such an interesting question. It ended up becoming a theme in the book, which is why I put it in chapter one.

**Can you tell our readers a bit of your personal story, as discussed in *The Men on My Couch*?**

Originally, I wasn’t going to include my personal story; I just wanted to focus on what was happening during my sessions with the men. But I realized that I was learning a great deal, which I thought would be important, particularly for female readers.

Initially, I felt taken aback by some of the men’s behavior. Like the guys who were total womanizers. They made me nervous, and I started to become super jealous and unsure of myself. I had to start working through my own anxiety. I started looking at my relationship and asking myself, “Is this really love?” I had to assess my own notions about love.

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**What lessons learned during your therapy sessions most impacted your own life?**

Psychologists are necessarily trained on “what is love” – that’s more of a social or philosophical question than it is psychological. So I had to really examine that idea, and

throughout the book, that's really what I'm learning. I learned that love is much more of a skill and that it's actually kind of hard and complicated.

I had to learn to be patient and understanding with each of my male clients even when it was hard for me. It felt amazing when I was actually able to be very loving towards my clients. My ability to do so became very healing for them; instead of me just reaching them in a cognitive way, I was now fully present and invested in helping them.

**If you had one piece of advice to share with our readers, what would it be?**

This is another theme of the book: to truly understand your own motivation. You need to become more conscious about the way that you love. Instead of really loving each other, a lot of people bring fear and deficit to a relationship. They're trying to get a need met instead of bringing fullness to the relationship. People don't realize that though; they feel some sort of want, and they go after gratifying it, so they're basically using the other person. When people become more aware of what's driving them, they become very full and happy and satisfied in their relationships.

**We understand that ABC recently optioned your book for a TV series – anything else you can share with us about this deal?**

Yes! We have an amazing writer – she worked on 'Will and Grace' and 'Ugly Betty' – who wrote the pilot. In January, the networks will decide what shows to pick up, and ABC is interested this year. It was a contender this past January as well, and it made it to the final round.

**And finally, you're already working on another book called *Libido*. We'd love to know more about this project!**

*Libido* will be all about women and how they get in touch with their desire, which was the original focus of my work. It'll

be conversational in tone (as was *The Men on My Couch*) and include some history as well. In the past, women were viewed as very sexual – even more sexual than men. So this narrative that we have that men are more sexual than women is only a couple of hundred years old. It's a totally manufactured story that a lot of people buy into, but it's not true.

*To purchase 'The Men on My Couch,' click here. You can also learn more about the book by visiting her site or following her Twitter.*

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## Singles and Couples: 5 Ways to Celebrate the New Year



By Sarah Ribeiro

We all have our idea of the perfect New Year's Eve: spending the night with your loved ones, dancing the night away and

counting down to midnight where you can pop champagne and share a kiss with your sweetheart. While tradition may be romantic to you, sometimes breaking that tradition can give you a unique, memorable experience that can make this the best New Year ever. Cupid spoke to some experts to find ways to celebrate the holiday and resolutions to keep through the year for both couples and singles:

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

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

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

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

also will save couples a decent amount of money on a fun New Year's getaway, which is always nice right after gift-giving season."

**4. Stay in with your sweetheart:** While it may be tradition to ring in the year with your friends – or out with strangers – try having an intimate night with your love. "Instead of hitting the party scene," Washington says, "think about renting a private bungalow in the mountains or a sleepy town nearby to say hello to 2013 in a private, intimate setting. Run a hot bath, add the bubbles, pop the champagne, and soak the night away in each others' arms."

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

Couples can start the year off by making a short-term, broader goal that's easier to keep. "Instead of promising to have date night at least once a week, try agreeing that each partner will plan the date of their choice once a month," advises Washington. "This type of resolution has more room to breathe, and each partner can appreciate that the other is doing something for them on a regular basis."

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

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



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# Holiday Break-Ups Are Awesome!



By Dudeologist Marcus

s Osborne for GalTime.com

Okay, so maybe that headline is hyperbolic. Unless you're one of those sickos who gets off on hurting people, no one is really thrilled about those soul crushing break ups. You know the kind where you feel the nausea gauge rising the moment one of you begins a statement with, "So I think you and I should..."

Yeah, you know.

And that's just the beginning, right? Your family and friends, whether they're being supportive or just nosy, all want the scoop. Scoop you're not entirely certain you're ready to

share. And what's worse, social media has become the Paul Revere of the twenty-first century. The second you change that status update to "single", Facebook jumps on its little horse and starts riding across the internet screaming, "Marcus is single! Marcus is single! Marcus is single!" to your two thousand Facebook friends....fifteen of which I actually *know*.

Not at all awkward.

Whether you were the instigator of the break up or not, someone was mature enough to take a broad look at that situation and realized that it wasn't optimal for either of you.

By euthanizing that relationship you've not only saved yourself from potential long-term emotional disaster, you've created an opportunity for yourself. This is a fresh start. As awful as it is to look into that mirror at the puffy remnants of an hour of crying, there's a dark cloud that's been lifted. Because let's face it, you knew things weren't right before that break up didn't you? Well guess what? Problem solved!

Now you've got the chance to turn your attention to family and friends. Here's your opportunity to inhale life from a whole new perspective. From that of the single, happy, independent, grounded woman. And THAT women, to us guys, is ridiculously hot.

Crazy hot.

So when you show up at parties and events you own that room. You own the all the potential in that room. Because whether it's a new job, new place to live, or a brand new love interest, the fact that you've only got to answer to yourself in each new situation makes those choices completely your own. How sweet is that? And from a completely hedonistic point of view, if you're so inclined, you're free to indulge your inner *Samantha Jones*. Don't lie....you've thought about it.

I won't pretend like each break up is like winning the lottery, just merely pointing out that especially during the holiday season, millions of people are going through or are contemplating whether now is the right time to end their current relationship. Just do it. As a guy I'd rather just have the band aid ripped off...particularly before I buy you gifts.

Just sayin'.

There's no "right" time to do it. So you may as well get it over with. And as adults, we've all been through this. It's not easy, but you know you always bounce back. So let's get this thing over with so you can really enjoy this break up and embrace it like the awesome thing it'll turn out to be!

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## 5 Resolutions That Can Help You Find "The One"





By Ashley DelBello

The year is coming to a close and you still haven't found that special someone. So if you're truly ready for love, why not make it your 2013 resolution? While love does seem to happen when you're not exactly looking for it, there are things that you can do to work toward that goal. Cupid spoke to a few relationship experts and came up with five resolutions to help you get closer to finding "The One." Keep reading to find out what they are:

**1. Show yourself some love.** "Start dating yourself and do for yourself what you want someone to do with you – stop waiting around and treat yourself well. Once you get an appetite for that, not only will you be better able to find someone because your best self will be out there, you also won't stick around for what doesn't feel right," said clinical psychologist Ramani Durvasula, M.D.

It might sound cliché, but it wouldn't be said if it wasn't true – you need to love yourself before you can have a healthy relationship with someone else. So go ahead, take yourself on a trip to somewhere you've always wanted to go or simply order in dinner and have a glass of wine or two. As long as it's all about you.

**2. Get out of your comfort zone.** “Commit to putting yourself out there at every opportunity. It doesn’t matter where you go or what you do, as long as you can meet other people there. Even going to a movie with a friend can lead to something more – you can start a conversation with a cute guy in line. You simply never know,” advised author and marriage/family therapist, Jane Greer, Ph.D.

Go even further and make a resolution to do one thing a day outside of your comfort level – a concept that is explained in Durvasula’s “You Are WHY You Eat,” a book on making better choices in health, love and life. “Go out for coffee alone, join that online site, tell your friends that you are ready to meet people – one thing a day. Then once a week, do something unique – visit the planetarium, take a cooking class or join the yoga class in the park. Try and make it something where there will be other people. I acknowledge that it can be the loneliest in a crowd, but they are not going to come to your front door,” added Durvasula.

**3. Resolve to be in the best shape of your life – this doesn’t just mean your physical health.** “It means that if there is an area of your life that is not working, then you need to make a resolution to restore balance in that area. If you have been ignoring health issues, then you should make a resolution to go to the doctor. If your finances are a mess, then you should make a resolution to get help from an accountant,” said life coach and dating expert, Jason Weberman of North Star Coaching.

Whatever it is (and it may be more than one thing – that’s OK!), figure it out and focus on improving that area of your life so there won’t be any obstacles in your way of finding “The One” – and more importantly, having a long and healthy relationship with that person.

**4. Break unsexy habits.** “This should be the year that you vow not to think negative thoughts every time you step out of the

shower. Set the expectation to have at least one positive thought about your body when you look in the mirror," says founder of Pure Romance and relationship expert Patty Brisben. "As the year progresses, keep adding positive self-talk until you are completely in love with the person staring back at you."

It's true – confidence is hot and attracts others to you. So stop talking about how gross you feel or how you wish you were better at your job and do something about it. And then believe it.

**5. Have fun.** Love happens when you least expect it so don't put too much pressure on yourself to find that special someone...and don't forget to enjoy the journey as well! Overall, it's about knowing (and loving) yourself and then putting yourself out there so you can find someone that is not only worthy of you, but someone who is right for you and who you can have a great life with.

**Tell us: What will your New Year's resolution be?**

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## **Date Idea: Christmas Movie Marathon**







By Samantha Mucha

Getting cozy with your mate by the fire while watching ABC Family's '25 Days of Christmas' should be number one on your to-do date list this holiday season. Leave the freezing winter weather outside and kick back for an indoor weekend with your sweetheart.

Watching Christmas movies will not only put you and your lover in the holiday spirit, but the price is right – free. Throughout the month of December, there are a variety of holiday themed broadcasts on all of the national networks. The choice is yours, really. Of course, if you're lucky enough to own a DVR, you won't have to choose. You can load up "Miracle on 34th Street," "8 Crazy Nights," and "A Christmas Story" and watch them whenever you please.

To make this into a romantic evening, pour some wine or brew up some hot cocoa. You can even go above and beyond by renting your man's favorite childhood Christmas films. If you are in the mood to get nostalgic, ask your partner's parents to share old home movies of your boyfriend on Christmas Eve or Christmas Day. Watching videos of him as a child can help spark good feelings and could be a Christmas tradition that you decide to continue in your relationship.

It's only getting colder. So, get the popcorn popping and throw on your best flannel pajamas. Cozy up with your holiday honey for the most relaxing moments you'll have for the entire holiday season.

**What's your favorite Christmas movie? Share your top pick with our readers by commenting below.**

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## **A Present is Worth a Thousand Words: What a Gift Says About Your Relationship**



By Rachel Seliger

The holiday season has finally arrived, and with it comes festive parties (hello, candy cane cocktails!), delicious fare (potato latkes, anyone?) and glee-filled gift-giving (who

doesn't love a white elephant party?). Yet, while giving gifts can fill your heart with warmth and joy as you watch your loved ones tear open those carefully-wrapped presents, it can also bring anxiety as you try to decipher what to give everyone on your list. And it only gets harder when it comes to giving a gift to a new love interest!

Rachel Seliger, Community Manager for JDate.com, the leading online community for Jewish singles, is here to help with advice on what gifts *really* mean when they're coming from a significant other. Check out the gifting-pedia below for definitions of what certain gift choices may say about your relationship:

**Related Link:** [What Gifts Say About Your Relationship](#)

**A Jacket = "You'd look much better in this cut."** While giving clothing is fun, it may come off as though you're saying, "You'd look much better in this cut/color." If you don't give your new mate clothing that matches their personal style, you're saying you want to see them in something different, which may signal that you're trying to change them. Whether there's any truth to it or not, it's best to stick to nondescript accessories when giving gifts. Perhaps something like...

**Mittens = "You warm my heart."** Mittens are a sweet and thoughtful way to say, "I like you... a lot!" Unlike jackets, sweaters or boots, mittens typically come in just a few styles (meaning you can't screw up and get your hipster boyfriend a pair that looks like it belongs on an investment banker). And if you are lucky enough to receive a pair, it means the object of your affection wants to warm your fingers like you've warmed their heart.

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

**Candles = "I know nothing about you."** I once got a wrought

iron candle holder from my college boyfriend. I opened it and wondered "What about me screams candles?" Unless you're some kind of candle-maven, this gift basically screams unoriginal and may mean you don't know each other well enough to pick out something more personal.

**Concert Tickets = "You make my heart sing."** If your mate surprises you with a pair of concert tickets for a big show they knew you would love, you've found a keeper! Not only did they think about what you would actually like, but they're also making fun plans with you in the future, so you can be sure they're in this for the long-term)!

**Gift Cards = "I didn't care enough to actually go out and buy you a present."** The gift card is the relationship kiss-off. Giving this gift basically says you are either lazy or just didn't care enough to put any thought into your present. Do not give this gift! You can do better.

**A Box of Chocolates = "You're the sweetest thing I've ever laid eyes on."** Giving sweets to your sweet signals your relationship is so yummy that your mate's love is about to give you a sugar rush! If your partner is associating you with the deliciousness that can only be found in a box of chocolates, then you have certainly found a satisfying relationship. But just as eating the entire box of candies in one weekend will make you crash, moving too fast in your relationship may leave you with a similar result!

**Basketball Season Tickets = "I'll pretend to like anything you like."** As a huge University of Kansas basketball fan, I would personally love it if someone bought me season tickets. However, if the person you're dating suddenly becomes obsessed with your hobbies, going as far as to buy you tickets to a sporting event they previously didn't even know existed, then you may be dating a people-pleaser with no hobbies of their own. Take it as a compliment, but suggest your partner join a book club, karate class or writing program to get a handle on

who they really are!

**A Homemade Gift Certificate = “I’m broke, but you mean the world to me.”** Let’s be real, homemade gifts have become a lot more popular since the recession hit. Drafting a “Free Home-cooked Meal” certificate is a sweet and inexpensive way to show you care. If you’re going to give this gift, make sure you follow through with your promise or your partner may think you are unreliable.

**Expensive Jewelry = “I want to impress you.”** Ah, every girl’s dream! While we usually love anything that sparkles, this gift can also say, “I want to impress you,” or worse, “I messed up – please forgive me!” Give this gift with caution – once you’ve given something expensive, you can’t go back! After receiving a Tiffany’s bracelet, no one wants to follow up with an 80s-throwback snap bracelet.

**An Engagement Ring = “I’m madly in love with you.”** So you wake up on a magnificent Saturday morning to find Mr. Right has made you breakfast in bed, and at the bottom of your mimosa is the most brilliant diamond ring you’ve ever seen! If you’re madly in love and have been waiting for this moment, then a mazel tov is in order! Congratulations – you’ve just discovered the gift of true love.

*Rachel is JDate’s Community Manager. She’s here to break down the rules of dating, share first date tips and offer words of encouragement when dating gets tough. Hit up her Tumblr page at [www.Jdating.tumblr.com](http://www.Jdating.tumblr.com) for more insightful advice. Or, learn what makes Rachel tick by visiting her JDate profile!*

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



By Dr. Tranquility –

[Lydia Belton](#), PhD, Ct. H.A.

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

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



If you need some ideas, search online for New Year's Eve activities for adults and children in your town. If you like to travel, take a cue from the stars: Brad Pitt & Angelina Jolie will be traveling with the kids, while [J. Lo](#), Casper Smart & the twins will be in Melbourne, Australia. Or you could plan a [party](#) of your own. If finances are tight, make it a BYOB and/or a potluck get-together.

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

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

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

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

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

**4. Be Proactive!** Don't wait for the phone to ring. Instead, get out there and set your action plan. I recommend a plan A & plan B; then, determine how much time you will allow for plan A to kick in before you move to plan B. You should make your plans at least two weeks before New Year's Eve. If someone doesn't want to make plans in advance, he or she is "shelving" you, and we all deserve better than [mistreatment](#).

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

*Enjoy some holiday freebies from your [Drtranquility.com](#) goodie bag and schedule your free session by simply mentioning this post. Developed by Lydia Belton PhD, Ct.H.A., [Date Therapy®](#) is an effective protocol that helps people get in touch with their criteria for an ideal mate. DrTranquility's protocols® have been featured most recently on Forbes.com & Yahoo, ABCNEWS.com, ABC's the View, KISS FM, CupidsPulse.com, Metromix for the Chicago Tribune, British Glamour, REDBOOK, Cosmopolitan Magazine & promoted by Match.com.*

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## 10 Rules for Couples Gifts





By Johanna

Lyman for GalTime.com

Do you love the season but not the shopping?

I love the holidays, but I'm not a fan of buying gifts. I'm one of those rare women who don't like to shop. I agonize over buying the perfect gift, but I'm not great with paying attention to details, so I never know what the perfect gift might be. This year, I decided to think outside the gift-giving box and come up with my best tips for making it all easier.

**1. Be blunt when you talk to your Santa.** If there's something special you want from your man, ask for it directly. I know, I know, it's uncomfortable to ask for what you want. But don't you think you deserve it? Your man is not a mind reader, even if he loves you beyond all reason. He won't think you're being pushy if you give him a few ideas, in fact he'll love you for it. Trust me on this one.

**2. Splurge on yourself.** Give yourself the gift of a makeover or splurge on an outfit that makes you feel like a million bucks. The holidays can be a difficult time for people with self-esteem issues (in other words, most of us). One way to keep from getting the holiday blues is to do something that

tell you "I'm worth it." Because it's true: you are worth it.

**3. Your time and talents and donations count as gifts.** Another great way to get happy during the holidays is to give the gift of your time, talents and treasures to those in need. Donate toys to the Marines, pick a couple of tags off a Christmas tree at the bank and buy the requested item for a needy child, and/or volunteer with your sweetie at the local soup kitchen. Maybe Christmas, as the Grinch discovered, isn't about "things, after all." Short on time? Make a donation to the local food bank so families in need can have a happy holiday meal.

**4. Give him something he loves even if you don't love it.** Now onto some actual gift ideas. If your man is into video games, go to a gaming store and ask the sales associate what the most popular new games are then buy one of those for him. I know you probably hate his Xbox, but that's not the point. The gift is for him, not you. He'll love you even more for getting him a game when he knows you're not a fan of gaming.

**5. Help him cheer on his team.** If he's into watching professional sports, get him tickets to the next home game. If those are too pricey, opt for an officially sanctioned jersey. The non-sanctioned jerseys and t-shirts are usually pretty cheesy and he'll love you for knowing the difference, especially if you don't care about his team.

**6. Turn TV into a great gift.** Does he have a favorite television series, or is he a history buff? There are plenty of boxed DVD sets that make great gifts. The History of World War II in an 8-DVD set will keep him entertained for hours. The side benefit of this gift is that while he's watching the DVDs, you can have a guilt-free girls' night out.

**7. Spice it up with a gift you'll both enjoy.** If you want to get him something you'll both enjoy, opt for a weekend getaway. Inside the gift box, include some lingerie for

yourself, with details of the trip folded on top. Remember, this is a gift for him. If you're going to enjoy it as well, it's nice to make it special for him.

**8. Turn up the volume.** For music lovers, there are plenty of options. Satellite radio for his car, a boxed CD/DVD set of his favorite band complete with never before seen live concert footage, or even an iTunes gift card. Concert tickets are a great idea too; get him two and tell him to take his buddy. Then you can have another guilt-free girls' night out.

**9. Skip the chore-related gifts.** Whatever you do, do not buy him something that you want. Also, do not buy him a tool that he needs to complete a project you want him to work on. That's selfish and transparent; it's like him buying you a vacuum cleaner.

**10. Stay focused on the two of you.** You may have noticed that only one of my gift suggestions was something that you would enjoy together. There are two reasons for that. First of all, gifts are supposed to be for the receiver, not the giver. Second, as important as it is to spend quality time together, it's equally important to spend time apart. That's why getting him a gift that gives you time to yourself or time with your girlfriends is a double win. Healthy relationships develop between healthy individuals, and knowing how to spend time alone is one way to cultivate being a healthy individual.

**Happy shopping!**

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## **Is Being Center Stage Ruining**

# Your Relationship?



By Michelle Rebecca

When you and your partner have a fight, do you blog, Tweet, change your status on Facebook and call all of your friends to let them know about it? If so, you might be endangering your relationship by sharing too much information with others.

As many celebrities (e.g., Kim Kardashian, Tom Cruise, Madonna) have discovered, it's hard to nurture the tender bud of a healthy romance in the harsh glare of the public eye.

**Related Link:** [Kim Kardashian 'Doesn't Want Battle' with Kris Humphries](#)

## The Anatomy of a Fight

All couples argue, and everyone who has ever been in a relationship would probably admit to saying or doing something he or she later regretted. Normally, couples work through these less than ideal moments. Only the two of them, give or



take a couple of very close friends, ever know that the unpleasantness took place at all.

Contrast that with the experience of an A-List celebrity who gets into it with her partner and exchanges some angry words with him in public. Those words won't be forgotten as tempers cool. Instead, they will be repeated on every entertainment show and analyzed between the covers of every magazine.

If the fight was shocking enough, marriage counselors may even come out of the woodwork to speculate on the future of the relationship.

**Related Link:** [Sherry Amatenstein Dishes on 'The Complete Counselor'](#)

Long after the celebrity herself has made up with her partner and is ready to move on, her fans will still be talking about those few ill-advised words hurled in what should have been a private moment.

### **Limiting Public Access**

Whether you're a movie star or a contractor estimating software sales agent, there's a lot to be said for keeping your personal relationships...well, personal.

Take a moment to think about celebrity couples who have flung open the doors on their private lives. How many of them are still together?

Now, think about celebrities who have consistently declined to turn their personal lives into public fodder. I'm thinking of names like Rowan Atkinson (married since 1990), Julia Roberts, who learned the hard way about the cost of conducting relationships under media scrutiny (now happily married since 2002), and Meryl Streep (married since 1978).

Are you beginning to see a trend?

## How Does All This Apply to Me?

Okay, so maybe you're not a celebrity, but you can still make choices about whether you invite others to take an intimate look at your relationship. You can decide whether to make your latest dust-up with your partner the most talked about event of the week among your social circle or whether to resolve matters quietly between the two of you.

Most people find that the rift between you and your loved one heals far more quickly when your spat stays private.

Maybe the next time somebody says, "Talk to me, girlfriend," your response should be, "No, thanks!"

*Michelle is an aspiring writer and blogger with a passion for the Internet, specifically social media and blogging. She loves how social media connects people across the globe, and appreciates that blogging gives her the opportunity to voice her thoughts and share advice with an unlimited audience.*

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## 5 Ways that You and Your Honey Can Give Back During the Holiday





By Courtney Allen

'Tis the season to be jolly, especially with the one you love. Take advantage of this year's exciting end with your significant other by spreading holiday cheer the best way possible: by giving back. Show thanks for everything in your life, including your sweetie, by bringing fortune into the lives of others. Here are five great ways for you and your honey to wrap up the year right:

**1. Organize dinner at a soup kitchen:** Go above and beyond this year by offering to plan, prepare and serve dinner to the less fortunate at your local soup kitchen. Get creative with your love as you plan a delicious three-course meal and put together a spirit-filled set-up.

**2. Deliver Christmas presents:** Join a church or work group to deliver Christmas presents to deserving families who cannot afford to buy gifts. Surprise them at their door with lots of love and holiday wishes. Let the spirit of giving fill up your heart with your sweetie by your side.

**Related Link:** [How to Ring in the New Year like a Celeb](#)

**3. Help build a house:** Pull out the nails and the hammers and go to work with Habitat for Humanity to build a new home for a family in your community. Provide a family the best Christmas

gift you could ever give. Create a fulfilling experience with your darling that you will never forget.

**4. Adopt a family:** Commit to providing an unfortunate family with necessities, cooked meals and unconditional love for an entire weekend. Get to know the family by visiting with your man. Make the holidays worth more than any gift you could receive by bringing joy into someone else's life.

**Related Link:** [Create a New Years Resolution with your Partner](#)

**5. Spend time at a nursing home:** Spend a day visiting the elderly at a nursing home in your city. Help put a smile on the some of the sweetest faces in the world. Sing Christmas duets with your favorite guy as the residents enjoy your prepared egg nog and gingerbread cookies to bring just enough holiday cheer to their day.

**How will you and your man give back during the holiday season? Share your stories with us.**

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**Date      Idea:      Wrap      Gifts  
Together**





By Samantha Mucha

The holiday season can be a stressful time with your partner, even though it should be full of joy and holiday cheer. To lessen your to-do list this December, and still have time for a date night, try something different with your sweetheart. Break out the wrapping paper, ribbons, and tape. It's time to channel your inner Christmas Elf.

There's no doubt that wrapping gifts is a difficult task. It's an endeavor that should be left for the most skilled and nimble-fingered family members. Yet, nothing says "I support you, babe!" quite like helping out. Have your lover join you.

It may sound like you are just recruiting your man to do your chores while you sit back and relax, but that is not the case at all. It becomes less a of a task and more of a constructive activity when you two do it together. Have your significant other bring over their unwrapped gifts (but not yours, you don't want to ruin a good surprise) and the two of you can work together.

To make your Friday night even more entertaining turn gift-wrapping into a game. Maybe your relationship could use a little competitive edge. Try timing yourselves to see who can make the best looking package in the quickest amount of time.

The winner has to bake cookies for the not-so-perfect wrapper.

Putting on some holiday music while sitting by a warm fire is a romantic conclusion to this date. After your gifts are piled neatly under the tree, sit back and relax with your beau. As the night of gift-wrapping fun comes to a close, catch a Christmas movie on TV and drift off to sleep cuddled up in each others arms.

**What unique date ideas do you have during the holidays? Share your ideas below.**

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# 12/12/12 is the Last Consecutive Number Sequence Date to Marry This Century



By Jennifer Ross



Seeing triple? 12/12/12 is quickly approaching. This is the last of the popular consecutive date sequences, like 10/10/10 and 11/11/11, to come around for the next 1,000 years – our lifetime! Many people consider it lucky to be alive during these years, and even more people consider it lucky to fall in [love](#) and get married on one of these iconic dates.

**Related Link:** [Create a Celebrity-Style Wedding](#)

According to the sixth annual survey from David's Bridal, "What's on Brides' Minds," an estimated 43% of brides have considered planning their wedding on an iconic date such as this one. Earlier this year, on 10/11/12, thousands of couples were married. David's Bridal estimates that more than 7,500 brides will marry on 12/12/12 – compared to only 485 who married on this day last year. That's a 1446% increase over the prior year!

The people at David's Bridal spoke to a lot of amazing brides getting married on 12/12/12 who have great stories. Here are five of the most popular reasons to choose this date:

1. Couples got engaged on 11/11/11 or 10/10/10.
2. The triple number sequence is good luck to people interested in numerology.
3. Because the date is iconic – the last consecutive number sequence of the century.
4. It is easy to remember; husbands will have no excuse if they forget their anniversary.
5. In the Chinese culture, even numbers are lucky.

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

Another reason couples chose this date is so that they can save a little money by getting married in the middle of the

week since 12/12/12 lands on a Wednesday. Talk about being resourceful!

If you are unable to plan your wedding in time for this iconic date and are upset about missing the last consecutive number sequence of our lifetime, don't fret. Next year, there will be an order sequence date: 11/12/13. However, you might want to start planning soon; this number is officially the last sequence number for the century.

*For more information, click check out the blog at [www.Blogs.DavidsBridal.com](http://www.Blogs.DavidsBridal.com).*

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## Kyra Sedgwick Opens Up About Why She Loves Husband Kevin Bacon





By Nic Baird

*The Closer*'s Kyra Sedgwick has a lot of praise for her husband, actor Kevin Bacon, *People* reports. "He is so honorable. He is so ethically true. He has high moral standards, and he doesn't lie and he doesn't cheat," she said in the January issue of [Good Housekeeping](#). "I find that sexy!" The couple married in 1988, and Sedgwick said he still makes her feel like the most beautiful woman in the room. The two are also parents to Travis, 23, and Sosie, 20, who have now left the nest. "There's a lot more walking around the house naked," Sedgwick said.

**What are some ways to keep the spark alive in your marriage?**

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

As your love matures, the comfort of your marriage can push out some of the past passion. Don't let this make you too anxious. Instead, encourage your significant other towards these strategies for keeping the spark alive. Most of all, be excited at having found love in your life. Cupid has some advice:

**1. Spontaneity:** Be ready to suggest ideas to your partner, and be open to their suggestions. Keeping things lively means leading a full life with your partner. If one of you has an

idea for an activity, pursue it. It will either be a learning experience you can talk about or a rewarding moment of fun.

**2. Dates:** It is easy to be lazy, and stop courting your spouse. You two could probably find a lot of enjoyment in each others' company at home, but creating new experiences will keep the marriage fresh. Plan romantic evenings and go out and do something active with your partner. Spending a night away somewhere is a great idea, because it lets you change the scenery and focus on your significant other.

**3. Desire:** It's important both to let your partner know you find them attractive, and to be attractive for your partner. This means more than expected levels of hygiene and personal grooming, but also each of you should at least pretend to be naively unaware of your natural appeal. Dress up for dates, and show effort in your appearance.

**What are some strategies you've found to keep the passion? Share your experiences below!**

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**Date Idea: Ice Sculpting Festival**





By Samantha Mucha

Do you and your sweetheart enjoy looking at art, or even making your own pieces? If so, take date night to the next level this winter by visiting an ice sculpting festival.

These events typically happen near ski resorts or state parks. Look online to find out if there is one near you. If you and your significant other want to travel and have the budget, make a weekend out of it. It's a breathtaking experience that you will want to see at least once in your lifetime.

The art of ice sculpting is incredible; talented artists are able to turn a block of ice into castles and mystical creatures of every sort, as well as hundreds of other one-of-a-kind designs. Talk about a romantic winter wonderland. Spending the day walking around one of these festivals can be exciting as a couple. Get up close and check out the intricate details of the masterpieces. Make sure to take your video camera to capture the day for folks back home.

When you're done being in awe of the fantastic artwork, find a cozy spot for dinner. Since you will most likely be traveling, try a local restaurant in the area. On your drive home share your favorite pieces with your mate and compare your thoughts. If you and your beau plan to tie the knot one

day, maybe you will stumble upon a design that can be incorporated into your own wedding theme.

Have you ever been to an ice sculpting festival? Tell us where it was and what you thought by commenting below.

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## Get Back In the Dating Game This New Year



By Shelly Blagg

Now that it's almost a New Year, it's time for the new you to jump back into the dating pool! We all know dating can be exciting and nerve racking at the same time, made much worse by over thinking things. However, if you know you're ready to date, the best advice I can give is, JUMP IN! To ease into dating, go out with a group of people or another couple until you find your "dating feet". This can help with the pressure



of those first date jitters. I can say I've gone out on many dates with best friends as the "buffer" and all proved to be successful. If you're with your best friends, you'll always have a great time, whether or not you find yourself being attracted to your date.

Most people getting back into the dating pool also have the problem of over sharing, which tends to do more harm than good. Here are some quick tips:

**Related Link:** [Is Divorce the Best Option?](#)

### **Keep the conversation light.**

You're not making a lifelong commitment. Leaving things to the imagination is healthy, can be exciting, and keeps the other person interested to learn more about you.

### **Be yourself.**

Make sure to be yourself because chances are, if they don't like you now, they're a waste of your time. Figure out what you want because if you sacrifice who are you right away, you're only cheating yourself.

**Related Link:** [Dating After Divorce: How Soon Is Too Soon?](#)

### **Make the best of it.**

Lastly, remember, this is your time and it's up to you to make the best of it. There are going to be bad dates, but you will have some amazing ones as well. Each one is a new experience, that at some point, will catapult you into a lifelong relationship, or a shipwreck story to tell your friends. Either way, it's your ride so take it and go off into the dating world when you're ready.

*Divorce2Dating is a networking tool to assist recently separated or divorced individuals find new*

*relationships. Sheila Blagg and her team at Divorce2Dating.com are committed to providing support for those in interested in counseling, legal services, and guidance for rebuilding their future. The goal at Divorce2Dating.com is to offer assistance, whether needed for saving a marriage or supporting an individual through their divorce, bringing to light the emotions involved in every aspect of divorce.*

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# The Best Holiday Gift for Your Man



By David Wygant

So let's say that you're having a very passionate holiday romance. What do you do about Christmas, Hanukah, Kwanzaa, Festivus, etc.? Well, whatever holiday you're celebrating, I'm a firm believer of wishing everybody a merry Christmas. To me,

Christmas is *just* a time of year. That's all it is. It doesn't matter what religion you are—everybody loves Christmas. Who can forget “Santa Claus is Coming to Town”? Who can forget “Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer” and “Herbie the Dentist”?

Anyway, let's get back on topic.

What do you do if you're dating somebody new during the holidays? What do you do?

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

Buying gifts for somebody else is always hard, because you have that “*Oh no!*” moment when they're opening them.

I know that every time a new significant other bought me a gift for Christmas, as I'm opening it, all I'm thinking is, “*Oh no, I hope it's not a shirt that I'll have to wear.*”

Or, “*Wow, I really hope that it's not something I hate and she thinks it looks great.*”

Or, “*God forbid, it's one of those horrific Christmas sweaters, and I'm going to have to wear it to some family get-together she's going to invite me to when I accept the gift.*”

**Related Link:** [QuickieChick's Video Dating Tips: Meeting Your Partner's Family Over the Holidays](#)

Here's the deal: If you just started a new relationship, forget about the gift. I've got a much better idea: gift-wrap yourself. That's right. You dress up as a little elf or Mrs. Claus.

Get some killer red lingerie. Get a Santa's cap. Put some stockings on your feet. Tell him you've got a present for him and that he needs to be at your house at 8 p.m. so he can unwrap it.

Then, you go prep the home. Get some holiday candles – maybe

cinnamon or pine tree – and make your place smell like Christmas.

When he knocks on the door, open it wearing your festive outfit and with mistletoe in your head. Then you smile and say, “Care to unwrap the gift that I got you?”

*That* is the ultimate Christmas gift that you can give *any* man in the entire world. We don’t want to unwrap a bad shirt that’s not going to fit. We don’t want tickets to a concert. We just want *you* in a holiday outfit.

Best. Christmas. Ever.

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## Find Out What Khloe Kardashian Won’t Be Getting Lamar Odom for Christmas





By Nic Baird

As the holiday season approaches, The Kardashians are still searching for Lamar Odom's gift, [People](#) reports. The Clippers' Forward and Khloé Kardashian's husband can't figure out electronics, according to his wife. "Kourtney asked, 'Would Lamar like an iPad mini for Christmas?' I said, 'Absolutely not!' He would have no idea what to do with [it]," Khloé Kardashian said. Odom has managed to figure out Skype video calling so he can stay connected with his wife. "I have to walk him through it on the phone and it takes forever."

**How do you come up with romantic ideas for holiday gifts?**

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

As the season approaches, those with a significant other are no doubt fretting over gift ideas. There is an obvious expectation of thoughtfulness, no matter how serious you are as a couple. This doesn't mean you're obligated to stress! Just take a breath, use a moment to brainstorm, look over these tips, and you'll have your holiday shopping list in no time:

**1. Date or vacation gifts:** One thing you should be able to count on is that your significant other enjoys your company. A great gift you can give your partner is organizing a romantic

date for the occasion. The holidays are more a time to spend with loved ones rather than touring malls. Think about the classic options, like sleigh rides, fireplaces, and hot chocolate.

**2. Make something yourself:** Knitting a scarf, writing a song, painting their room, or building a table show sincere effort and romance from the time it took you. Draw from your interests or talents, but don't be afraid to try something new. The internet is full of guides and tutorials for learning unique gift creation skills.

**3. Revisit relationship memories:** Sometimes you can get by purely on the thoughtfulness of the gift itself. This means that it has to have a strong connection to things you've learned about your partner. If they like making soup, buy them a pot. As long as the gift conveys that you've listened to their interests and you recognize their needs. Another way to go is by choosing a gift that reminds you of a significant moment in your relationship that you shared.

**What romantic holiday gifts have you given or received? Share your experiences below!**