

'Bachelorette' Stars J.P. Rosenbaum and Ashley Hebert Tie the Knot



By Nic Baird

Season seven *Bachelorette* Ashley Herbert and fiancé J.P. Rosenbaum got hitched Saturday in Pasadena, Calif., according to [People](#). The couple are only the second in the franchise's 24 seasons to tie the knot after the finale. *Bachelor* and *Bachelorette* alumni Ali Fedowsky, Emily Maynard, and Jason and Molly Mesnick were in attendance, and franchise host Chris Harrison officiated the ceremony. "Today is all about our friends and family," Herbert said.

What are some ways to celebrate your love without getting

married?

Cupid's Advice:

It might not be the right time to get married, or maybe you're not that concerned with the institution. Either way, there are many ways you can deepen your love with your partner. Follow your heart, and prioritize your happiness:

1. Moving forward: Both of you should want to see your relationship develop. Finding ways to spend more time together, and bringing your lives closer are benefits you can find without marriage. Make time for your partner and find new ways to enjoy their company.

2. Children: A child is a huge commitment, and shouldn't be considered lightly. Many times a baby can pop into your life unexpectedly. No matter how it happens, a child is a celebration of your love. You might feel pressure to get hitched, but giving a baby the significance it deserves is most important.

3. Special occasions: Spending the holidays with your loved ones shows their importance in your life. Making Valentine's Day and anniversaries special with thoughtful celebrations will reflect the love you share.

How does your partner remind you of their love? Share your experiences below!

Mario Lopez Marries Courtney

Mazza



By Nic Baird

X-Factor and *Extra* host Mario Lopez married actress Courtney Mazza on Saturday, [People](#) reports. The couple exchanged nuptials in an outdoor ceremony in Punta Mita, Mexico. The newlyweds' daughter, Gia, was a flower girl with her three cousins. The ceremony will also feature a wedding cake by *Cake Boss* Buddy Valastro, and a mariachi band. The couple met in 2008 when Lopez starred in *A Chorus Line* on Broadway.

What are some things to consider about the music at your wedding?

Cupid's Advice:

Don't stay up at night making your wedding playlist. This is

usually a task assigned to a trusted music adviser, either a friend or sibling. Here are a few things to keep in mind for your music choices:

1. Venue: The ceremony itself would obviously benefit from live musicians for more powerful instrumentals. There's no point in playing party music at your wedding venues where nobody can dance. Music can always add to the atmosphere, but high tempo pop is much more obnoxious than slow instrumental songs. Manage the volume when music is not important, or instruct musicians accordingly.

2. Dancing: If people are going to be hitting the dance floor, pick exciting music! Luckily there are many classic songs for wedding receptions. Adding a few of these is a good way to break the ice. Don't worry about theme appropriate songs, just as long as it sounds fun. Live bands who know a good collection of tunes are even better, but make sure they have enough good material for your whole event.

3. Know your audience: Weddings can bring many demographics together so make sure the music will appeal to everyone. It's too tempting to pick music with emotional significance to you or specific people in attendance, but don't go overboard. This is your special day, but making diplomatic music choices will keep your guests happy. Letting a friend with reputable music taste to design the line-up is a safe choice.

What types of music do you like at weddings? Share your experiences below!

Advice for Meeting His Parents



By the Editors at JDate.com for GalTime.com

You never get a second chance to make a first impression. That's why making sure you come across as the likable, charming and delightful person you are is so important during an initial meeting, especially when the face-to-face is with the parents of the guy or gal you're dating!

While meeting ma and pa can certainly be intimidating, Rachel Seliger, Community Manager for JDate.com, has five sure-fire tips to guarantee that a meeting with the parental units goes as smoothly as possible. Here's what Rachel told us:

- 1. Give it a Hot Second:** My current boyfriend (who I met on

JDate) introduced me to his parents on the THIRD DATE. He's lucky he's so sweet and that his parents are so great, or it might have been a major red flag! Give your new found love a hot second before you schedule a brunch with mom, dad, grandma or any other member of the family you haven't seen since Independence Day. In fact, you should even go one step further and officially have the "Are we exclusive?" talk before introducing your new partner to any family members.

2. Give Adequate Prep Time: While it's best to wait until you've had "the talk" to meet the parents, you still need to actually tell the person you're dating that you're planning a meet-and-greet. Did I mention that when I met my boyfriend's parents, he didn't tell me where we were going? He said it was a "surprise." That was the understatement of the year! Give your honey time to prepare for the meeting, so they can think about what to say, how to dress and all those important factors.

3. Dress for Success: Luckily I never dress ultra-casual (my go-to "casual" outfit is skinny pants, a silky blouse and statement jewelry), so when I unexpectedly found myself at my boyfriend's parents' house on a Saturday afternoon, I was ready! When dressing for a first date with the parents, you want to dress to fit in, but still show your true personality. Wear something that not only makes you comfortable, but confident as well. The more confident you feel, the less nerve-racking meeting the parents will feel. And it goes without saying that you should NOT wear something that's revealing or suggestive.

4. Come Bearing Gifts: Do not, I repeat, DO NOT show up empty-handed when you meet the parents for the first time. I don't care whether it's a bottle of wine, a bouquet of roses, a small box of chocolates, or even a personalized key-chain (ok, avoid that last one), but you should definitely bring something. Bringing a gift not only shows that you respect your mate's parents and are excited to make this new

connection, but you'll also make your own parents proud (and who isn't constantly striving for that?).

5. Seal the Deal: This last tip is the toughest part. By now, you've discussed the meeting, had time to prep, figured out what you'll wear and bought a small gift as a way to say, "Nice to meet you, I'm really into your son/daughter!" Now it's time to put on your game face.

Show up to the meeting on time, be friendly, listen carefully to what both parents are saying, respond with some kind of engaging story of your own and go with the flow. In other words, just be yourself – but be the best version of yourself! Offer to help clear dishes at the end of dinner and remember to say how much you enjoyed yourself at the end of the night, and you won't have to worry about figuring out how you can get that impossible second chance at making a first impression!

How to Find Love Amidst Holiday Crazyiness





By Courtney Allen & [Jessica DeRubbo](#)

The ever-so jolly holiday season sets the stage for one of the most romantic times of the year. But no worries, single gals and guys! There is more than enough love to go around. Even in the midst of the frantic, last minute gift shopping and preparations for throwing an unforgettable party to kick off the New Year, love is in the air ... and not just for the ones who are taken. The holiday season provides plenty of opportunity to meet a honey just in time to snag a kiss under the mistletoe.

Anything can happen during the holidays, so follow this [relationship advice](#), and keep your eyes and options open for potential love in these places:

1. Christmas party: [Celebrity couples](#) don't have all the fun

around the holidays – you can, too! Holiday parties are an absolute must during the Christmas season. Take complete advantage of the endless party invites this year. Throw on a fancy red dress or suit, and go to a Christmas party or two. Make the extra effort to introduce yourself to the attendees. Sip on eggnog, and embrace the holiday spirit with new friends... and maybe even a future date!

Related Link: [Date Idea: Volunteer Together this Holiday Season](#)

2. Speed dating: Speed dating may be year-round, but the holiday season makes the experience extra special and will bring out twice as many people. Take a chance, and explore a new way of meeting potential love interests. You never know who you might meet as you shuffle from table to table, enjoying the company of other singles. If you're worried about going alone, bring some adventurous friends along for the ride.

3. The mall: There is no place that is packed with tons of people during the holidays quite like the mall. Slow down your hectic Christmas shopping and truly enjoy others around you as they collect items to mark off their own list. Chat with the tall, handsome guy shopping for a Marc Jacobs watch or the sweet brunette bagging your tennis shoes. Love can find you anywhere- even in the mall.

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

4. Singles night: Although you may feel like you're the only one flying solo during the holidays, you're most definitely not. Classy clubs, snazzy lounges, and even church groups often have specific nights dedicated to those who are single and ready to mingle. Grab a few of your girlfriends or best guy friends and have a fun night out with singles just like you.

How do you plan to find love this holiday season? Share your

ideas with us!

Date Idea: Go Shopping Together

Holiday



By Samantha Mucha

This holiday season get your shopping done early. Turn this chore into a date and take your sweetheart with you. Doing this tedious task will be exponentially more romantic if you accomplish it together.

Make a list for both of you and see what you can tackle as a

team. Both of your mothers will love new pajama and slipper sets, and both of your fathers will both enjoy ties, all from the same department store. Map your route before you hit the mall to ensure you have the smoothest shopping experience. Keep the romance strong and keep the arguing to a minimum!

Since this will most likely be a full day event be sure to feed your man so that he doesn't become agitated and ruin the day. Make pit stops at Starbucks and the food court throughout the day. Don't worry about the calories because all of that walking and bag carrying will burn them off.

Try to get as much shopping done as possible. However, don't buy your partner's gift in front of him. Let it be a surprise. The plus side of shopping early together is seeing what catches your beau's eye. Stop by your significant other's favorite store and see what they drool over. At a later date sneak back to the mall and pick it up for them.

Don't let shopping all day become stressful. Take your lover by the hand, take on the mall while emptying your pockets for the sake of romance.

Brad Pitt Confirms Celebrity Wedding with Angelina Jolie Will Happen 'Soon'





By Jennifer Ross

Break out the tuxedos! A celebrity wedding celebration is in order. Engaged to one of Hollywood's most famous stars, [Brad Pitt](#) says his celebrity wedding to [Angelina Jolie](#) is coming soon, as reported in [People](#). At Monday night's premiere of his new film *Killing Them Softly* in New York, Pitt, 48, stated "I am getting more pressure from my kids, and it is something I want to do within their lifetime, but I also feel like the time has come." The famous couple has been together for seven years and celebrated a [celebrity engagement](#) this past spring. Even though Pitt and Jolie, 37, raise their six children together, Pitt still believes the wedding will be significant to their family. "I am surprised how much [marriage] meant to me once you had that."

Like famous couple Pitt and Jolie are sure to do at their celebrity

wedding, what are some ways to involve children in the celebration?

Cupid's Advice:

Regardless of your children's ages, it is never a bad idea to include them in your wedding. A wedding is a ceremony of unity, which definitely includes everyone in your immediate family. To help your wedding be a success, here are three ideas how to include your children:

1. Ring bearer or flower girl: When your children are very young, consider sticking to the traditional roles of ring bearer or flower girl. They'll love these fun roles! Plus, it won't give your little ones too much to handle.

Related Link: [Lena Dunham Puts Off Celebrity Wedding in Support of Marriage Equality](#)

2. Escort: Should the children be teenagers or older, they may want a more significant role in the ceremony. Why not have them escort you down the aisle? By escorting you, they are symbolically giving you and your fiancé their blessing.

Related Link: ['Teen Mom' Star Amber Portwood is Celebrating Celebrity Engagement to Boyfriend Matt Braier](#)

3. Family vows: Including family vows in the wedding ceremony is a great way to publicly solidify the family as a whole. After exchanging marriage vows, you and your partner can each exchange family vows with the children, promising to love and care for them. You can also give the children a ring as a token.

How do you think this famous couple will include their children in their celebrity wedding? Share your thoughts

below!

Why You Shouldn't Buy Her a Ring for the Holidays



By Marina Sbrochi for GalTime.com

Hey, guys: Do you feel pressured by all the engagement ring ads you see on TV, billboards, radio and magazines? If you don't cough up two months' salary are you less than a man? Is someone putting the high pressure on you to get her a ring for the holidays? Are her parents giving you the stink eye every time you come over and don't ask her father for her hand? Is

she dropping hints like, “I really like round diamonds better than emerald cut, you know, in case you were wondering.”

Here are three reasons to skip the little velvet box presentation at Christmas, Hanukkah, at a big family gathering, over hot cocoa, on New Year's, while ice skating or on a carriage ride through the city.

1. Diamonds shouldn't be produced out of pressure

NEVER EVER EVER do anything because you feel pressured to do it! You don't **need** to buy anyone a ring. Are you feeling the pressure because you are inundated with ads telling you that you would be a lesser man if you didn't come through with the latest four stone, fancy cut engagement ring this year? They've got your number my friend. They know your girlfriend is watching. They know she looks at those beautiful rings in the magazines that she ever so “carefully” leaves open on the table.

You only buy someone a ring if they are the love of your life. You only buy them a ring if can't live without them. Then and only then do you put your hard earned cash down for an engagement ring.

I won't even go into the fact that diamonds aren't rare and they are crazy overpriced. That's another story.

2. Holiday engagements are so cliché

A ring for the holidays is so predictable. Be original, dude. If she really is the love of your life, make the engagement a surprise! Don't give it as a holiday gift. Don't be cheap and think, “*Hey, I was going to buy her a ring anyway, might as well make it a gift and I don't have to give her something else.*” Don't be that guy. Step outside the box and put yourself in her shoes. She's seen the ads, she wants something special. Pick some time when she really won't expect it and make it memorable. Remember, it is not to be

combined with another gift or event 00 so her birthday is off limits, too.

3. Timing is everything (and nothing)

Most woman have a magic number in their heads of how long they will wait until the ultimatum pops out. For some it is a year, some three years. I say phooey! Let me explain: I definitely think you need to date someone for at least a year at a minimum before you even think about marriage.

However, there is no magic number to feel like you want to spend the rest of your life with someone. If you aren't feeling it by year two, she probably isn't it for you. Just because you have dated for two years does not mean you have to come up with a ring. This is the completely wrong reason! If she doesn't do it for you – do her a favor and break up with her. No one wants to be a consolation prize.

That being said, if she is the love of your life and it's going on five years and she wants to get married but you aren't feeling the ring, you need to ask yourself why. Do you *not* want to be married? That's cool, if she's cool with it. But if she isn't, and you still feel she is the one, there are definitely bigger issues at hand. Seek some professional help to sort it out.

I'm not against engagement or marriage or this whole ring thing. I am against doing it for the wrong reasons. If you feel forced or pressured, you may end up with divorce papers and that ring will be at the pawn shop. Do both of yourselves a favor and propose **ONLY** if she is the love of your life!

Did you get engaged at the holidays? Would you advise it to someone else? Share your comments below.

5 Reasons Why Men Are Attracted to Celeb Bad Girls



By Joshua Pompey

There is just something about a bad girl that men can't seem to resist. We know they are bad for us, but that sure doesn't stop us from feeling the way that we do, especially when it comes to the celebs who we crush on. Look no further than the overwhelming attention paid to stars like Megan Fox, [Angelina Jolie](#), and Lindsay Lohan during the heights of their popularity. Don't forget: It wasn't that long ago when Jolie's [celebrity news](#) was focused on her carrying a vile of blood around her tattoo-laced body and lip locking with her brother on national television!

Why Celeb Bad Girls

Take a trip a little further down memory lane, and you may recall a time when bad girl [Britney Spears](#) dressed up as a schoolgirl and crushed the competition (like good girls Mandy Moore and Jessica Simpson). When it comes down to it, the allure of a bad girl makes a lot of sense. Here are a few reasons why men can't resist these types of women:

Related Link: [What Attracts Us to Bad Boys?](#)

1. The promise of sexuality: When men see a bad girl, the look and the attitude conjures images of a woman who is free with her sexuality. Women such as Fox ooze sexuality, making us believe that a night with her will be different from any experiences we've ever had. This is enough to make any man weak at the knees when contemplating the sexual revolution that could enter his life.

2. The excitement a bad girl brings to the table: Life can be boring sometimes. Many of us fall into the same day-to-day routines, week after week, month after month. But not with a bad girl. With a bad girl like celeb Lohan, we know we will be in for one heck of a ride, full of exotic trips, random adventures, and potential trouble. This trouble may not be good for relationships and love, but it sure is exciting.

3. The promise of a chase: Men will always want what they can't have. When men chase after bad girls, they know they may be setting themselves up for mistreatment, frustration, and neglect, but the allure of that chase is enough to outweigh the negatives. Deep down, we all want to be the ones to conquer the Jennifer Lopez's of the world and get them to settle down.

Related Link: [3 Reasons Nice Guys Shouldn't Finish Last](#)

4. The look: Pull up pictures of some of the most notorious

bad girl, and you will find one common thread: All of them look and dress incredibly sexy. Men are extremely visual creatures. We become excited by the over-sexualized visuals a bad girl presents. When choosing between the pretty girl in the turtleneck and the bad girl who shows off what she has, our primal sides want the bad girl that stimulates us visually.

5. The attitude: The way a female carries herself can work wonders for her appeal. An average looking woman can become extremely attractive by walking, talking, and acting as if she has it going on. Bad girls such as Jolie give off a vibe of living in their own world, and everyone else is just in their orbit. This attitude of complete confidence can be liberating to men who feel constrained by society. There is something very sexy about a woman that marches to the beat of her own drum.

Joshua Pompey is an online dating expert and author of The REAL Online Game series. For plenty of free advice, visit <http://getrealdates.com>.

Does it Matter How Old You Are When Your Parents Divorce?





By Jane Greer, PhD for GalTime.com

jessica simpson's parents file for divorce

Tina and Joe Simpson, parents to pop stars Jessica and Ashlee, have filed for divorce after 34 years of marriage, citing “discord or conflict of personalities.” There have been rumors that Joe had an affair with a young man, though the couple denied any third-party complications, saying it was an amicable split.

Whatever the reason, whenever there are children involved – even grown children – it is hard not to wonder how the kids are taking it. Jessica Simpson has said she is [sad](#), but remains focused on the priorities of her own life – raising her new baby Maxwell and managing her post-partum weight loss. Ashlee has not yet spoken publicly about her parents’ split.

We all can appreciate the enormity of divorce, and the toll it takes on everyone involved, especially the children. With that in mind, it is easy to understand why sometimes parents who are unhappy make it a priority to stay together while the

children are young, raising them as a unit until they reach adulthood, before they make the move to break up. The idea, or hope, is that if they wait until their children have their own lives with their own careers and families, then maybe the divorce won't have such a big impact. Maybe it will be just a small blip on their radar screens.

WHAT TO EXPECT AS AN ADULT WHEN YOUR PARENTS DIVORCE

While it might be true that, as an older person, you are better equipped to deal with that sort of emotional trauma. It also may be true that you are not dependent on your parents in the same way a young child is. However, it doesn't minimize the fact that the family you have always known, the image of which you carried around with you your whole life, no longer exists.

Whatever age you might be when a divorce occurs, it is likely that you will have a strong reaction to it. After all, it is the demise of the family you knew as a child from which you drew much of your emotional security. At the very least, you can expect it to be jarring. You may go through a potpourri of feelings, beginning with a sense of abandonment because the parents you've counted on are no longer there for you as a team. You may also feel rejected, taking their decision personally, and wonder if your mother and father don't love you enough to stay together. You might even feel betrayed, and want to blame either one or both of them. Ironically, if your parents had an extremely contentious or stormy marriage, you might even find yourself feeling relieved that they are getting divorced, and then guilty for feeling that way.

HOW TO COPE

Make room for the idea that your parents' divorce – no matter how old you are – can have a big impact on you. Increasing your self-awareness can help you cope so you can handle the negative feelings and keep them from spilling over into your

own relationships.

Be patient with yourself and your parents, recognizing that it is their marriage and, no matter how close you might be, it is impossible to fully comprehend what goes on between two people unless you are one of them. Remember that your parents don't have a problem with you or with the family as a whole, but some unresolvable problem with each other. With that in mind, you will hopefully be able to side step the blame, and avoid being forced to take sides or being pulled into their battle.

Finally, determine the sort of relationship you want to maintain with each of your parents separate from the anger and animosity that is going on between them.

It is still so early for Jessica and Ashlee to process their feelings about their parents' divorce. But hopefully, they will be able to move forward without losing too much, and be able to hold onto what is important to them. And if your parents are separated, divorcing or apart, here's hoping you have the support to move on, too.

10 Reasons Women Stay in Bad Relationships





By Jennifer Harrington

Everyone knows the oldies song that proclaims “breaking up is hard to do”, but do you ever wonder why some women stay in bad relationships, rather than breaking up and starting over? Look no further than Hollywood to identify some of the most common reasons women don’t kiss Mr. Wrong goodbye:

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

1. She fears being single. *Esquire* Magazine’s 2011 Sexiest Woman Alive, Rihanna, has publicly admitted she hates the single life and it’s “overrated”. She’s made it no secret that she’s looking for that special guy to share her life with. While Rihanna may claim she is not enjoying her time unattached, after her disastrous relationship with Chris Brown, it seems she is taking some time out of the dating game to have fun and heal.

2. She doesn’t want to face the stigma of divorce. After being married for two decades, there’s no question that Robyn Gibson knew about some of the problems her husband, Mel Gibson, was

facing. Mel has notably dealt with alcohol abuse, an arrest for driving under the influence, and publicized racist remarks. Despite all of these warning signs, Robyn stood by her man until 2006 when they filed for divorce. Knowing what Mel put her through, one can only wonder if she stayed with him so long because for the sake of their seven children and their strong Catholic faith, which discourages divorce.

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

3. She wants children. Jennifer Aniston and Justin Theroux recently announced their engagement, which means everybody will be watching for Jennifer's baby bump in the coming months. A victim of constant pregnancy speculation over the past several years, Jennifer has shared that in regards to having a baby, "I still kind of go with, if it happens, it happens. I'm calm and peaceful with whatever the plan is. It's not something where I'm going, 'I gotta have a kid!'" Given she's 43, time will tell if Jennifer is tying the knot with Justin for true love or for babies.

4. She doesn't want to hurt her partner. Vanessa Paradis and Johnny Depp, while never married, enjoyed a long romantic relationship and became raised two children together. The couple has gone their separate ways. Vanessa still speaks glowingly of her former partner and it's apparent the love between these two was real, but given Johnny has been living for the bachelor for some time now, it's likely there was something very off-track in this relationship. Ultimately, Vanessa has decided that "Love is the strongest and most fragile thing we have in life. Nothing is ever for sure, but when something in love doesn't work from the beginning, it's never going to work. Don't push it."

5. She doesn't want to hurt her children. Several years ago, everybody watched as the relationship between Kate and Jon Gosselin crumbled. Any viewer of the hit television show Jon and Kate Plus Eight could tell trouble had been brewing

between these two for some time. No doubt that raising eight small children is difficult, but between Kate's belittling of Jon and Jon's playboy ways, divorce was inevitable. Kate has acknowledged her biggest fear about the divorce was being a single parent and hurting her children.

6. She thinks things will get better. Kourtney Kardashian's relationship with longtime boyfriend Scott Disick has been marked by Scott's excessive drinking and partying, and the couple's hesitancy to marry. In fact, in 2011, Kourtney shared with People magazine that she thinks Scott is "the one", but she is not "100 percent" yet. Scott has sought professional help for his alcohol abuse issues, and recently the couple welcomed their second child, daughter Penelope Scotland. It seems that Kourtney is hoping that Scott's wild days are behind him!

7. She thinks she won't find anybody better. It's hard to imagine what attracted Angelina Jolie to Billy Bob Thornton, but during the course of their three-year marriage, indulged frequently in public displays of affection, and even wore vials of each other's blood as necklaces. They ultimately split because they had different ideas of how they wanted to live; Angelina is a well-known globetrotter and Billy Bob is a homebody. When they split, they had just adopted son Maddox from Cambodia. Assuming the role of a single parent must have been scary for Angelina, but just one year later, Angelina met Brad Pitt met Brad Pitt, and the rest is history!

8. She labels herself as part of the problem. The late Whitney Houston and ex-husband Bobby Brown dealt with alcohol and drug abuse in the media spotlight. Many people blamed Bobby for introducing Whitney to drugs, but in an interview with ABC News, Bobby said "I wasn't the one who got Whitney on drugs". The 15-year marriage was violent at times, and Whitney shared with Oprah Winfrey in 2009 that, "He was my drug. I didn't do anything without him. I wasn't getting high by myself. It was me and him together, and we were partners, and that's what my

high was—him. He and I being together, and whatever we did, we did it together. No matter what, we did it together.” It’s hard to imagine that Whitney didn’t blame herself for some of the problems in her marriage.

9. She doesn’t have the frame of reference to understand healthy relationships. Britney Spears became a major international pop star when she was just a teenager. It’s no surprise that her twenties were marked by increasingly erratic behavior and two short-lived marriages. However, Britney has spent the past several years living a much more low-key lifestyle, focusing on her duties as a mother to her two small sons. She’s also enjoyed a long courtship with now-fiance, Jason Trawick. It seems the past decade has taught Britney a lot about life and love!

10. She feels pressure to make it work. It seems the relationship between Kim Kardashian and Kanye West is on the fast-track. Kim is only 31, but she has two failed marriages behind her (as well as many ex-boyfriends). Kim’s 2011 marriage to Kris Humphries was widely criticized when she announced plans to divorce just 72 days after the lavish wedding ceremony. Many declared the nuptials were just a publicity stunt. If the romance between Kim and Kanye continues, Kim will likely feel pressured to make a real commitment this time around (it helps that Kim and Kanye were friends before dating!).

What other celebrities can you think of that have stayed in bad relationships for too long? Share your comments below.

Date Idea: Rent a Cabin for the Weekend



By Samantha Mucha

Take advantage of the weekend and escape the chaos of holiday shopping by renting a nice, quiet, cozy, cabin in the middle of the woods. There's nothing more romantic than cozying up with your sweetheart as you sit alone by the fire in the wilderness?

Put the city noise and stress of the up-coming holidays behind you and escape. A cabin gives you the chance to live simply for a weekend and who better to enjoy the relaxation with than your lover.

If you do your research, you may be able to find a good deal.

Remember more than just retail stores go on sale during the holidays. Better yet, ask your friends for advice and see if they know anyone who has a cabin that they won't be using for the weekend.

If it's too costly for this time of year, invite another couple to join in the festivities for an added dose of fun.

Although it may not be as romantic as you originally planned it's often more entertaining to share the experience with close friends, especially when you are alone in the woods with nobody else around. It will also help cut down on costs.

If you're with another couple, you can play games together or have a spooky story night by the fire while you're roasting marshmallows. Go back to simpler times and play cards, and do other things you did as a child, this will allow your significant other to reminisce about the childhood that they may not have been around to share with you.

Have fun doing next to nothing and be sure to keep your mind away from the stress of going back home. Enjoy the company of your partner and the silence of the woods.

Have you ever rented a cabin or went camping? What did you think about the experience?

Three Steps to Stress-Free Holiday Dating





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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

ShrinkWrap: Has Your Relationship Hit a Speed Bump?





By Jane Greer, Ph.D. for GalTime

catching the clues that something is off

Not all roads to romance offer a clear ride. Sometimes the signs are harder to read than others. As Emily Maynard, this season's Bachelorette, handed out roses, the message was pretty clear: stay or go. But short of gathering for the ABC show's famous rose ceremony, is it possible to miss the message? Might an important lane shift have taken place that you somehow didn't notice? And what can you do to protect yourself against the turbulence of an unexpectedly bumpy ride?

Take Lucy, for example. She was dating a guy named Adam with the usual excitement and reservation that comes at the start of any promising possibility. But Adam took off, gaining speed faster than she expected: telling her how much he liked her, wanting her to meet his friends, and calling and texting all the time. Since she liked him, too, she joined in and went along for the ride. Before she knew it, though, she was ahead of him, and he had slowed down, suddenly saying he couldn't keep up with her expectations. Because he continued to stay

connected, she didn't realize what that might mean. So she kept going at the same momentum. And then she didn't hear from him. That was two weeks ago.

She was angry, and didn't understand what had happened. How can you make sure you don't get ahead of the relationship, particularly if one person is coming on strong? Before you let yourself go full-steam ahead, you might want to build in a few speed bumps for yourself. There are some people who jump into a relationship fast, and then want out fast, and you want to protect yourself from getting too attached if there is the chance that person could burn out.

You can do that by being aware of when and how much of your feelings you share. If they say they like you, you can reciprocate with an, "I like you too, let's see where this goes." If they want you to meet their friends, suggest you get to know each other a little better first. Build a foundation under the two of you before getting carried away.

When Adam told Lucy he couldn't keep up with her, it was the equivalent of the Bachelorette's not offering a rose. It just took her a little while to realize it, and by then she was halfway down the highway and looking forward to the road trip. Once you're there, it's harder to come back.

Date Idea: Go Black Friday Shopping





By Samantha Mucha

If you go out for this crazy, corporate holiday, then why not do it with your lover? This experience can be very frustrating when done alone, so why not take your favorite person along and make it a more enjoyable experience? Your partner could be the perfect addition and it will certainly be an interesting way to measure the strength of your relationship.

Black Friday begins a lot earlier than it ever used to in the past with merchants beginning on midnight or earlier on Thanksgiving eve. So, after your Thanksgiving dinner stay up and watch movies until it's time to go, and then hit the stores. End the early morning hours with breakfast and a nap.

Shopping with your partner allows you to test your relationship to see how well you two work as a team under the pressure of all the great deals. As well as, see how well you know each other. Find out if your partner cracks under sleep deprivation or if he knows your family well enough to help you select the perfect gifts for them.

To add more pressure to Black Friday, make a competition with your beau. Whoever completes the most shopping and gets the best deals for their purchases wins! The loser has to make breakfast, or doesn't get to nap until after they give the winner a foot massage.

Be sure to map out your route, and scan online to find the best deals before heading out at the crack of dawn. A smart game plan will give you an edge over your sweetheart (and everyone else standing in line to buy that new flat screen television for \$99.99) and of course it will make the whole experience run a lot smoother.

How do you spend Black Friday? Let us know below.

Q&A: Where Does Social Media Draw the Line on PDA?





Question from Sarah J.: *I've been really annoyed by the amount of relationship pictures showing up on my News Feed – all I see are photos of couples kissing or cuddling! Where does social media draw the line on public displays of affection (PDA)? How much relationship sharing is too much?*

Answers from Our Love Experts:

Tristan Coopersmith, Love Stylist: Social media is a weird space. It's a space that encourages us to be friends with strangers, over-share personal details and solicit opinions and validation from random people... all things we clearly know *not* to do in real life. Social media is desperate for those unspoken rules of "too much information" that the real world instinctively knows. So how much skin, how much gush, how much intimate sharing is too much?

Well, in my opinion, although showing your affection for your loved one is sweet, and friends and family do enjoy seeing how blissful you are, quantity and quality should be considered. When it comes to quantity, one post a day **maximum** should do it. Your friends and family have other stuff they are

interested in beyond the inside jokes between you and your sweetheart. When it comes to quality, follow the rule that, if there is a slight chance your viewers would tell you to “get a virtual room,” your online PDA is too much. This means no tongue kissing, no cleavage, etc. If not for the sanity of your followers and their over-cluttered feeds than for the sake of your relationship’s pure need to have private boundaries, remember that less is more!

Suzanne Oshima, Matchmaker: You will always come across couples on social media who share way too much information about their relationship because they want the world to know about their happiness together and love for each other. But the good news is that you don’t have to see it if you don’t want to. With social media, you can always hide their news feeds or unfriend/unfollow the couples who annoy you.

Now, while that will solve your problem, I think the more important question here is: why does it really bother *you* so much? Is it because you’re jealous you’re not in a relationship too? If that’s the case, then I wouldn’t focus so much on the couples sharing annoying photos. I highly suggest you start working on getting out there and meeting the right person for you. Then, you can become a couple on social media who *doesn’t* share too much information.

Paige Wyatt, Reality Star: When it comes to PDA, there is a very thin line between cute and sweet and just plain nauseating. The quick smooch or cuddling pictures are pretty tolerable when they’re only posted every now and then, but I think the constant full-on make-out photos are where I draw the line. Some people don’t know social media etiquette, and that’s when they tend to post the uncomfortable status updates and pictures. One thing to consider: think about exactly who is looking at what your posting – like your boss, teacher or even mother dearest.

For more information on our three relationship gurus,

click [here](#).

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

How do you feel about PDA on social media sites? Tell us below!

Justin Timberlake and Jessica Biel Lend a Hand Post-Hurricane Sandy



By Nic Baird

Singer Justin Timberlake and actress Jessica Biel spent Saturday helping the victims of Hurricane Sandy in Queens, New York, [People](#) reported. After recently returning from their honeymoon, the newlyweds spent hours handing out relief backpacks and blankets. The neighborhood, Far Rockaway, was heavily damaged by flood water and local residents were grateful for the group's help as some still wait for heat and electricity.

What are some ways to give back as a couple after a natural disaster?

Cupid's Advice:

A natural disaster is a cause everyone can get behind. People like you have lost their homes, security, and other essentials in the wake of Hurricane Sandy. If this was you and your partner, you'd welcome any help in your time of need! Show the humanity of your relationship by lending your hands:

1. Understand the crisis: What happened? Figure out the effects of this disaster, and who's been affected. Learn the stories of the ground zero victims. Find out how it happened, and what emergency services are doing. Pay attention to the actions of politicians and where their priorities are in this national dilemma. Most importantly ask yourself, what do people need?

2. Relate to the victims: These are people like you. Nobody brought a natural disaster upon themselves, except maybe the citizens of Sodom and Gomorrah. Try to understand how you would feel if your life was stripped away. As a couple, remember your pity isn't worth anything to the victims, only your help. Approach the situation as your duty, not your charity.

3. Be proactive: After you've spent time to understand this sudden calamity, move your sympathies out of that well-

informed head. Bring your feelings of altruism to the broken streets and wounded families. Talk to those in charge of relief efforts and tell them how the disaster makes you feel, and how you want to pitch in. Discuss with your partner which organization is a right fit for you. You can find a list of many of the groups helping with Hurricane Sandy at www.treehugger.com.

How have you and your partner reacted to Hurricane Sandy or other natural disasters? Share your experiences below!

Jennie Garth and Peter Facinelli Reunite for Daughter's Soccer Game





By Nic Baird

Despite announcing their split in March, actress Jennie Garth and actor Peter Facinelli came together Saturday to support their daughter at a soccer game, [People](#) reports. After 11 years of marriage, they could still cheer together for their 6-year-old daughter Fiona. The former couple were joined by their other daughters, Luca, 15, and Lola, 9. Both have said the other is a great parent. “Co-parenting takes two great parents to put their differences aside and focus on the children,” Facinelli, the former *Twilight* star, said last month.

How do you remain civil post-divorce for the sake of your children?

Cupid’s Advice:

“Monkey see, monkey do” is the ancient mantra for child rearing. If you want to protect your children from painful endings to their relationships, it’s crucial you put your best foot forward. Here are some tips:

1. Never show children aggression towards your ex: Regardless of how badly your partner messed up, there's no reason your children should be further victims of the situation. Never show hostility or bitterness towards their other parent. If they have two parents at each others' throats, then what was the point of the divorce? You're setting them up to think that this broken family is the model for their future.

2. Maintain parenting partnership: Your kids will understand that family is forever, and parents have to prioritize their children, only if you keep a united front with your ex. This means that you discuss parenting issues together, and always bring back the same ruling to your child. If there are different rules home to home, favouritism and confusion will plague your family. It's important your kids have both parents active in their life. Don't try and push your ex away from their children.

3. Discuss emotional subjects in private: Emotions are irrational, and your feelings can spill out within earshot of your offspring if you're not careful. Make sure you avoid topics that can trigger confrontation when your children are around. Maybe these subjects do warrant discussion with your ex, but make sure you know the right time and place. Turning up the radio is not a solution.

How have you accommodated your children in your divorce? Share your experiences below!

4 Ways to Exit a Relationship

Gracefully



By Dating Diva, Jennifer Oikle, Ph.D., for GalTime.com

how to break up with your head held high

You know it's time to move on from your current relationship, but every time you think of it, you cringe.

You hate to be the bearer of heartache, so you've been putting it off. But now things are getting worse: he knows something's up, the irritations are piling up, or the energy is draining you.

Bottom line? You've got to woman up and get the job done so you can both move on with your lives.

But not just any break up will do. *How you call it quits is*

important. It can either be so ugly that it makes it hard to move on or, if done elegantly, it can be a useful springboard to your next relationship. Thankfully, there are some savvy exit strategies which will ensure that both you and your new ex are able to transition as smoothly as possible from one romance to the next.

EXIT STEP 1: CHANGE YOUR VIEWPOINT

As long as you think about breaking up as breaking his heart, it's hard to take the plunge. But the truth is, if you aren't the right match, then splitting now is the biggest gift you could possibly give him *and* yourself. Because then you'll both be free to pursue the right relationship that can last. So take a moment to adopt a new mindset and go into the next steps knowing you are giving him the most precious gift possible: his freedom to be loved.

EXIT STEP 2: GIVE A HEADS-UP

Nothing, and I do mean nothing, is worse than being blindsided by a breakup. When it seems like a breakup comes out of the blue, it's truly traumatic. People hate to feel out of control, like something is being done *to* them, rather than participating in a decision. So never let The Conversation be the first time you've talked about going your separate ways. When things start to get hairy, be sure you bring it up clearly, and attempt to problem solve. Then, if the problems aren't resolving, it won't be a surprise to anyone, and emotional preparations will have paved the way to separate.

EXIT STEP 3: HAVE THE CONVERSATION, GRATITUDE-STYLE

These days, it's so easy for people to wuss out and break-up the weenie way: via email, text, or voice message. You don't want to be that person. Value yourself and your new ex enough to end it, face to face. But not with just any sad or angry conversation, you want to part ways with graceful gratitude. So prepare ahead of time by thinking of the things you

appreciated about your partner, the lessons you learned, and the gifts you offered to each other. Then at a good time, sit down and be super clear about your decision to move on. Provide whatever level of detail your partner needs to understand the why's. But do so in a gentle, kind way by sharing all of the things you are also thankful for during your time together. Invite your partner to share in a similar way, despite the pain or discomfort of the circumstance.

EXIT STEP 4: MAKE A CLEAN BREAK

Break ups have a way of being messy, on again-off again affairs, which only end up causing more pain. So once you've celebrated your relationship for what was good, and shared the reasons you no longer can be together, it's time to agree to a No-Contact Period. In the weeks immediately following a break up, it's really hard to move on if you keep touching base via email, text, or phone. It's like pulling the scab off your wounds- they take longer to heal than if you just leave it alone. By agreeing to not connect with each other for a period of time, say 2 weeks to 2 months, you give each other the space to grieve, begin emotional separation, and let go to stand on your own two feet again. Be sure you agree on a time frame you can each live with, and if you both wish to remain friends, you can reconnect after that time.

After your parting, give yourself time to heal and move on before dating again and you should be ready to start from a fresh, clean, positive place!

What's the BEST break-up you've ever had? Comment below.

Date Idea: Document The Romance With A Flash



By Steven Zangrillo

Even for the strictest of mathematical minds, creating art is one of the most rewarding experiences. Making photo memories with your soul mate distinguishes you as a couple and supplies physical proof that you are meant to be together.

Pick a location for the shots, be it the nearest park, museum or beach. If there's a place of value to the both of you – the place where you met, a place you love to visit together – head there first. Start snapping away pictures, capturing images and new memories one click at a time.

There are many easy-to-use photo-editing programs available

online. You can download them through the Mac App Store, Amazon, or purchase them at your local Software store. Once you load you upload your photos, you and your partner can hang out and edit them together. There is even new social media, like Instagram and Hipstamatic, that let's you edit straight from your phone or tablet. You'll be learning a new skill as a couple. Learning together is an incredibly important component to growing closer with your mate.

So, start snapping away. Let your creative minds take care of the rest.

What has been the most unique and creative photo capturing location for you and your honey? Let us know below.

Predict the Future of Your Relationship And Love with Celebrity Astrology





By Teresa Lopez

There are two things that every girl loves: horoscopes and checking out [celebrity couples](#). We've put the two together, as we are going to be looking at some of the hottest Hollywood couples and what their star signs have to say about their relationship and love. From polar opposites to people born on the same day, we've got it all! So, here's a taste of celebrity astrology that may help you predict the future of your relationships:

Related Link: [Top 5 Celebrity Couple Predictions](#)

What The Stars Say About Relationships And Love

Kristen Stewart and Robert Pattinson: Although they've experienced a few rough patches in the past, this famous couple has amazing compatibility when it comes to their charts. Both have an ascendant sign that is almost close to identical. Although this is questionable because of how

uncommon it is, if it *is* the case, it means that this couple will have very similar world views. Not only are their ascending signs in conjunction, but they also have conjunct Mercuries, which means that they think alike as well! Similarly there are positive signs of strong sexual attraction and romance: Stewart's Uranus is conjunct to his seventh house, which means that they are both very romantic and inclined to please. Although they may have been rocky before, these two have all of the makings for a long lasting relationship and love.

Catherine Zeta Jones and Michael Douglas: Because these two share the same birthday, their charts are almost identical. The only differing aspects are caused by location and time of birth. Almost everything is compatible here, except for Zeta Jones's Mars being conjunct to Douglas's moon. This can be extremely stressful on a relationship, despite the fun energy that it can provide for a short period of time. Because of this, we believe that this relationship may last for several years but will subsequently end in a celebrity break-up due to stress and potential hardship.

Related Link: [Five Reasons Why Opposites Attract](#)

[Brad Pitt](#) and [Angelina Jolie](#): Oh, Brad and Angie! So many of us were curious how they were going to work out when their celebrity relationship first started – they seemed so opposite! Turns out that it's not just their personalities that are juxtaposed but also their horoscopes. Many of Pitt's planets fall into Jolie's sixth house, the one that indicates work relationships and services, such as charity. Obviously, this speaks worlds to Pitt's commitment to adoption and community service that coincided perfectly with the beginning of this relationship. Although it can be difficult to say what drives the very private pair, this Hollywood couple's major aspects are usually opposite each other: They have sun opposite sun, and Venus and sun opposite ascendants. Many of these opposite aspects can cause stress and negativity in a

relationship, although keeping things fresh and unique. It is important that as much excitement as they may find that they realize that they need to be cautious around such harsh juxtaposing aspects. We may see, in the future, this fiery relationship and love fizzle out and die.

This post was written on behalf of Hollywood Psychics. If you want to learn if you and your partner are as compatible as Kristen Stewart and Robert Pattinson, start a live psychic chat today!

Secrets to Staying Married for 50 Years (Or More)





By GalTime Lead Ambassador Jenny Tieg for GalTime.com

Danny DeVito and Rhea Perlman have separated after 30 years of marriage. Why does it feel so sad? Maybe because, in a reality-TV world, we are so used to seeing relationships go the way of Kim Kardashian. Here's how to put aside the sad news of spotlighted break-ups and focus on staying with your own leading man for 50 years (or more).

1. Stay Alive: This may sound like a smart-aleck answer, but it is true. Take a good look at yourself and realize that you're not that strapping 20-something anymore and you have to take care of your health in order to make it to 50 years of marriage. Joe Hewitt, a retired pastor, mediator and married man of 50 years was blunt when asked how to make it to celebrate that many wedding anniversaries.

"To make it to the 50th wedding anniversary, first of all, the couple has to stay alive." Make the choice and decision to be healthy for you, your partner and your family.

2. Take Time to Talk: Life is busy for everyone at every stage

of life, but it is vital to your marriage to take a time out each day and reconnect with your spouse. Christina Steinorth is a licensed psychotherapist and author in Santa Barbara, California and believes 30 minutes is all it takes to stay connected.

“With all the interruptions couples have between jobs, kids and smart phones, it’s very easy to lose touch with each other over the years, only to find out five or ten years down the line that you have very little in common anymore.”

If you can’t find a solid half-hour, Steinorth suggests breaking into 15-minute sessions. In-depth talks that will involve some Kleenex aren’t necessary – just some simple conversation. “Talk about your day, make plans for the weekend or even talk about current events,” she advises – all to build and maintain a strong bond.

3. Check-Ups: Everything we own needs maintenance: our cars, our teeth, even our technology need to be charged and updated. So why wouldn’t we do the same for a marriage? Dr. Carletta Perry, a psychology professor, therapist and relationship and life coach, tells couples not to be afraid of attending counseling, a workshop or a fun couples retreat.

“Check ups can provide you with a third-party perspective on issues you ‘talk’ about well into the wee hours of the morning,” she says. These exercises will help you learn what’s normal for relationships, teach you new things about how to be a stronger couple or just learn how to have more fun together. Most of all, participating in a check-up can also reassure you that you’re not alone, Dr. Perry says. “Everyone has problems...even that perfect couple you compare yourself to.”

4. Know When to Speak and Know When to be Silent: Certified dating and relationship coach Yvonne Chase says the key to her parents’ marriage was being adept at responding with words and

with silence. Chase's mother told her, "You don't have to respond to everything you see in your marriage. Stop picking the little things. So what if he didn't cover the toothpaste? It's not worth it. Know when to speak and when to be silent."

Chase also provides a bit of self-reflection with a hint of Gandhi: Be the change we wish to see.

"Change *you*. Don't waste your time trying to change your spouse. It's an exercise in futility. Work on the person in the mirror and that will bring the changes you want to see in your marriage."

5. Fight! We've heard it before, so why hasn't it stuck yet? Happy couples need air – and resolve – their grievances.

"Couples who don't fight at all are actually more likely to divorce than couples who do fight, but do it productively," Jennifer Soos, a marriage and family therapist in San Antonio, Texas points out.

Happy couples have figured out how to hash out their problems in a manner that is respectful and gets problems solved. To do this, you need to know the "rules of fight club." They include starting conversations with a soft-start-don't go into a discussion with swords already drawn. It's also wise to know when to take a break if you get emotionally overloaded. A half-hour can make a huge difference when things get heated, so step away and return when you've taken a breath. And lastly, don't be too extreme on either end when an argument starts. Soos warns that couples enter gridlock when one or both people either refuse to talk or want to fight about everything at that moment.

Finally, one of the best pieces of advice came from Jack Quinn, married 52 years, who simply says, "Don't sweat the small stuff and don't do anything that you would be ashamed to tell your children or your wife."

Celebrities Come Together at NBC Universal Benefit to Help Hurricane Sandy Victims



By Nic Baird

Hurricane Sandy's destruction of homes and power grids along the East Coast has prompted NBCUniversal to schedule a one-hour telethon special presented live from NBC's 30 Rock studios in New York on Friday at 8 p.m., according to [Hollywood Reporter](#). The emotional response includes musical performers Bruce Springsteen, Christina Aguilera, Billy Joel, Sting, and Jon Bon Jovi. They will take the stage

with actors and media personalities like Brian Williams, Jimmy Fallon, Kevin Bacon, Tiny Fey, and John Stewart to promote hope for the victims. Many networks like HBO, NBCU, SyFy, Style, and others will feature the special to raise donations for The American Red Cross' Sandy relief.

How do you bond as a couple while giving back at the same time?

Cupid's Advice:

It's hard to balance your goals of contributing to the greater good, and growing stronger as a couple. But it's very easy to manage if you take some cautious steps to make sure your joint venture into charity doesn't end in a worse disaster than the one you're fundraising.

1. Discuss your purpose: Before rolling up your sleeves, discuss with your partner the reasons this contribution is important to you. Listen to your significant other's opinion and ideals regarding future charitable work. If you find a common purpose to share with your partner, then you've just hit two birds with one stone.

2. Work together: While dividing up the tasks is an effective way of completing work that is important to both of you, you won't get the same bonding effect as you will together. Laboring for your cause as a unit, and sacrificing together affirms you're both on the same team.

3. Review your achievements: After the work is done, it's time to debrief. You want to make sure you're both comfortable with the extent of your toils, and the good you've accomplished. Discuss the effects your contribution made, the challenges you faced, and ideas for future contributions as a couple.

What are some ways you've contributed to causes with your partner? Share your experiences below!

Dr. Greg Smalley Reveals How to Fight Your Way to a Better Marriage



By Jennifer Ross

Dr. Greg Smalley was fortunate to be raised in a loving family who believed in the sanctity of marriage. From a very young age, he attended marriage conferences held by his father, Dr. Gary Smalley. This foundation ultimately led to his own passion and to the marriage counselor and author that he is today. In his latest book *Fight Your Way to a Better Marriage:*

How Conflict Can Take You to Deeper Levels of Intimacy, Dr. Smalley explains what it means for a relationship to benefit from the opportunities that fighting presents and how a marriage can succeed because of disagreement. We had the chance to interview Dr. Smalley and hear what he had to say about his upbringing and how it influenced his life.

When watching your father's conferences, what principles did he speak about that really struck a chord with you?

I think one thing that stuck with me was my father's passion for doing something that made a difference. And I never forgot that. Something else that I saw from my dad is that he was the same person at home as he was up on stage. He worked to implement the things that he was teaching.

He also taught us the concept of honor, the importance of viewing your wife, your kids, your loved ones, as priceless treasures. I want my heart in my marriage. I want my heart with my kids.

Let's talk about that concept of honor. Do you think that's the main principle that most adults are misunderstanding or misinterpreting in their marriages?

When we become comfortable with someone, it's easy to lose sight of honor. When we lose sight of someone's value, we are likely to treat them in hurtful ways. If I don't value myself, then it's pretty hard to value other people as well. If we just did those two things every day – cherish our loved ones and value them – then we would also be nourishing them. If that's all we did, can you imagine how strong our marriages would be in this country? But again, it's hard to do that because we've got all this other stuff going on.

Can you briefly explain how fighting can improve a marriage? It sounds so counterintuitive.

The problem is that, culturally, we tend to perpetuate that myth that conflict is a bad thing. We see fighting as a sign that your marriage isn't that strong. There's amazing benefits if we are willing to walk through the doorway of conflict. Some of the greatest things that I've learned about my wife have happened on the other side of conflict.

I hate the words "conflict resolution," and I never use that term. Sometimes it's not about an issue to resolve. It's about how to manage the situation when we bump into a difference. Every relationship will have conflict. It's a normal part of life. So really, my book focuses on how to find success in these times of arguments.

Related Link: [Elisha Cuthbert Proves Patience Can Pay Off](#)

You state that fights are really about fear and not about money, kids, etc. If that's the case, then why do we focus so much of our energy on fighting about money or kids?

I think that's what we are taught to do. We see it on TV and in movies. Conflict is driven by something deeper than the surface level issue. I call it an emotional button. It's like an iceberg. The topic is what we see, so we spend all our time worrying about that. But man, there's a lot going on down deep, and that's the stuff that we have to learn how to handle. I need to learn what my buttons are because ultimately to break out of conflict, I've got to learn to deal with me first.

You talk about the unproductive fights between you and your wife. Considering the amount of experience you have with understanding marriages, how did you find yourself falling into this common trap?

I have my bad days, and I'm no different than anybody else. I may know more things, but I'm still gonna get my buttons pushed. There's only two types of reactions: when we fight or when we flight. What this does is create a reactive cycle. My

button gets pushed, and I react. The way I react pushes my wife's button, and she reacts, and we just keep spinning around. It's what we all do.

And finally, what is the one thing that you want readers to take away from your book?

What I like is the sequence for breaking this cycle; I show a very simple way to figure out how to solve things as a team. We're usually taught that we need to talk through our arguments – and that's really the worst advice you can give someone. It really does need to go in order. I gotta deal with me first, get my heart open, and then I can go after my spouse and care for her heart. Together, we can solve whatever needs to be solved.

You can purchase a copy of 'Fight Your Way to a Better Marriage' in bookstores and online nationwide beginning November 6, 2012. For more information about Dr. Smalley, you can visit his website at smallemarriage.com.

Alicia Keys and Swizz Beatz React to Hurricane Sandy by Reaching Out





By Nic Baird

Hurricane Sandy, a storm that shut down the New York Stock Exchange for the first time since 1888 and killed over 40 of the city's inhabitants alone, has left New York resident and singer Alicia Keys and her husband Swizz Beats without power or running water, reports [Essence](#). The couple and their two year old son, Egypt, were forced to evacuate their \$17-million Manhattan penthouse on Monday and take shelter at Keys' mother's apartment, which fortunately did have power. "God forbid there's anything else coming – but if it did, I want to be more prepared about how to handle it and be able to ride it out," Keys said. "My heart really goes out to all the people out there going through crazy circumstances." The singer added, "I really feel for people and am reaching out in any way I can."

What are some ways to participate in charitable causes as a couple?

Cupid's Advice:

Charitable causes can be a great way to work with your partner towards meaningful goals. If sudden disaster hits – like a Hurricane for example – share your altruistic passion with your significant other. Try these ways you can participate in charitable causes with your partner:

1. Grassroots kindness: You don't have to formalize your good deeds by scheduling them. Open your heart and your home to those in need. The most meaningful impact you can hope for is to change someone's life for the better. Having your partner to brainstorm with you on the best ways to lend your neighbor a hand will make things easier. Be ready for opportunities, your relationship can handle the spontaneity!

2. Local fundraising: You may not know how to build homes, or repair power lines, but you and your partner can think up tons of ways to raise money with friends. Bake sales, car washes, book/garage sales, casino nights, the list goes on. As a couple, showing your compassion together allows you to clarify your relationship's identity. The Red Cross is currently accepting donations for the Hurricane Sandy relief fund!

3. Volunteering with an organization: There are many great systems in place to accommodate volunteers in a range of charities for a range of positions. Don't expect any reward besides self satisfaction. Check the internet for groups that are active near you, or ask around at local churches and community centers. Having your partner volunteer with you will make the time pass painlessly.

What are some ways you've contributed to causes with your partner? Share your experiences below!