

# How to Handle Wedding Season as a Single Gal



By Jennifer Harrington

Summer is the season of many things, including warmer temperatures, weekend getaways, sundresses and weddings. As wedding bells are ringing, it's no secret that the arrival of an invitation in the mail can bring angst to a single lady. No matter how you feel, remember that weddings are a reason for everyone to celebrate, even single folks. Keep these tips in mind in order to navigate and embrace wedding season, even if you're "without guest":

**Related:** [What to Wear to a Summer Wedding](#)

**1. Consider the men you know.**

Once a wedding invitation arrives, take stock of the guys in your life. Do you have a crush or even just a good friend? Ask him to accompany you. Most guys, whether their interest in you is purely platonic or not, are eager to accept a wedding invitation, as it usually means a fun day with a free open bar. Having someone as your arm candy gives you a partner in crime for the wedding. Plus, if you have romantic feelings for your date, no place has more romance in the air than weddings.

## **2. Try to meet new people.**

Even if you don't have a special guy in mind to accompany you, don't forget that weddings are an excellent place to meet someone new. Flying solo gives you the opportunity to mingle, particularly with members of the opposite sex. Some have even said that showing up unattached to the festivities labels you as a "hot commodity." You can be sure that the bachelors in attendance will take note and will flock to make introductions. Embrace their attention, dazzle the gentlemen, and remember: it's not uncommon for people to meet their future spouses at a friend's wedding!

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## **3. Be confident.**

If you're self-assured and confident, you'll be a lot more likely to have a great time. Wear a dress that makes you feel your best (for inspiration check out celebrity-style guest attire), and enter the wedding ceremony with the right attitude. Take the day as an opportunity to have fun and celebrate the bride and groom. Don't forget to test your luck at the bouquet toss!

**How do you handle weddings when you're single? Leave a comment below and tell us.**

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# Date Idea: Explore the Wilderness



By Amanda Martin

Make this weekend all about you and your honey by spending time together in the great outdoors. Take Friday to travel to a romantic location that's off the beaten path – and yes, that may mean no cell phone service, which will really make it all about the two of you. Use the commute as a way to discuss the activities you want to do once you're there, and don't forget to compromise if necessary.

On the night you arrive, set up the tent and use your natural

resources, such as wood and branches, to start a campfire. Cuddle under a blanket while roasting marshmallows and telling spooky stories.

Start the next day with adventure once you've gotten a good night's sleep. Go for an early morning hike, and don't forget to stop and take in the picturesque surroundings while enjoying each other's company.

Spend the rest of the afternoon at the lake. You can do activities that require a couple's effort, like rowing a canoe or pedaling a boat. Another activity you can try your hand at is fishing; if one of you has a catch, make your hubby cook it for dinner. Take the night to reminisce about the good times you had that day.

Be spontaneous on Sunday before it's time to go home. If you wake up and feel like being lazy, lie out and take in the sun. Find out if there are nearby activities like rock climbing or zip lining. Whatever it is you decide to do, be sure it's what the both of you want.

The tranquil, secluded setting you choose will provide the perfect getaway for romance and communication.

How do you get off the grid with your significant other? Let us know in the comments below!

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## **Weddings Show Single Men What They're Missing**



By DeAnna Lorraine

Summer is here, which means wedding season is already well underway. That's good news for those walking down the aisle, but how about for those who are still single? Sure, some might use weddings as a hot singles spot to meet someone new, but others just feel depressed. There's a reason that therapy bills increase every summer. Though major movies like *Wedding Crashers* always cast single women as being desperate and emotionally vulnerable, it seems that men are more and more likely to be bitten by the love bug first at a wedding. In fact, they're also just as likely as women to be emotionally vulnerable. Here are some other things you might not have realized about single guys at weddings:

**Related:** [What to Wear to a Summer Wedding](#)

**1. Men can be vulnerable:** Sure, they pride themselves on



showcasing a tough and “manly” exterior, but men have feelings just like women do. They’re not just at weddings looking for casual relationships; they’re usually feeling just as strongly about commitment as their female friends and relatives.

**2. Men don’t always show their feelings:** Because of the need to appear strong, most men aren’t used to expressing themselves outwardly. Although they might not be using an entire box of Kleenex while at the wedding, their emotions are definitely getting stirred up on the inside, usually just as much if not more than women’s. Because men don’t typically deal with their feelings as thoroughly as women do or analyze them to death with their friends, when they are faced with something like a wedding, they’re often even more stirred up and affected.

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**3. Men are anxious for love:** The popular stereotypes that cast women as the clingy, needy gender and men as the cold and insensitive one just aren’t true any longer. Men are more sensitive and anxious for love than you might think. Weddings actually seem to activate a man’s own version of a “biological clock,” leaving him feeling more eager to find a woman of his own and settle down. Suddenly the bachelor life looks less fun when they see those happy couples walk down the aisle. In the last seven years of coaching singles, I’ve always had about 10% more male clients than female clients. However, that number has been steadily increasing in the last few years. This might be a reflection of this trend: a growing number of men seem to be the ones who are more interested in getting married and settling down.

Are men and women gradually starting to switch roles? It might not be long before women are the ones passing the tissues to men at the weddings, with men going back home updating their Hope chests. Let’s stay tuned and see.

*Nicknamed, "Ms. Hitch," DeAnna Lorraine specializes in helping even the most introverted men and women find the best ways to find confidence to express themselves in order to find love. She has years of experience coaching hundreds of singles of all kinds on how to go from lonely and distressed to total romantic success in a few months. She's seen regularly on television and has appeared on the Rachel Ray Show offering her insights and advice.*

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## **Find Out How Katie Holmes Felt in Her Marriage to Tom Cruise**





Now that Katie Holmes has filed for divorce from Tom Cruise, she is taking matters into her own hands after breaking free from what sources say was a 'Scientology-influenced marriage' to the actor. The *Kennedys* star is now pursuing sole legal custody of their 6-year old daughter, Suri Cruise. An insider tells [UsMagazine.com](http://UsMagazine.com), "This is about protecting her daughter. She wants to be in charge of how Suri is being raised and didn't want her to have an exclusively Scientology education." With that said, the divorce of TomKat is just beginning to unfold.

**What are some ways to get out of a controlling relationship?**

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

Ending a relationship is hard enough, but a controlling relationship proves to be an even bigger challenge. Here are some ways to help you take back control of your life:

**1. Seek professional help:** Searching for words of encouragement is a huge boost when it's time to take action in your relationship. You may find the perspectives of others are wiser than your own.



**2. Make yourself your priority:** Make your relationship about you instead of your significant other. This will encourage you get out of a relationship that is not benefiting you.

**3. Take back your power:** Demand power in the relationship. Your significant other most likely will not allow it, which will help you find an escape.

**How have you gotten out of a controlling relationship? Share your stories with us.**

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# The Smart Gal's Guide to Relationship Bliss



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# Ryan Philippe's Ex Alexis Knapp Hooked Up With Seth MacFarlane





*Project X* star, Alexis Knapp, was secretly hooking up with *Family Guy* and *Ted* creator, Seth MacFarlane while she was pregnant with Ryan Philippe's baby. According to [UsMagazine.com](http://UsMagazine.com), Knapp began seeing MacFarlane after she broke up with Ryan Philippe. When reached for comment, MacFarlane's rep insisted that the two are not dating, but a source says that Knapp really likes MacFarlane and wants the relationship to be official.

**What are some ways to tell it's time to move on after a split?**

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

When a breakup happens, both parties can leave with different feelings about the failed relationship and their ex. Sometimes one partner may want to hash out old feelings while the other just wants to forget their feelings. Don't be the one who can't let go! Here are some ways to tell it's time to move on after a split:

**1. No phone calls:** If your ex no longer calls you to set up a date or texts you to let you know what time he's getting home, then it's time to move on.

**2. They have moved on:** If you see that your ex is already talking to other people or just focusing on themselves without you, then you need to do the same.

**3. Other people acknowledge the break up:** If the people around you no longer refer to you as a couple, then its time to keep it moving.

How do you know when it's time to move on after a split? Share your comments below.

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## Date Idea: Turn up the Heat in the Kitchen



By Amanda Martin

Stay in this weekend and test your skills in the kitchen with your significant other. Prepare the whole meal from scratch and don't forget to set a romantic mood with candles.

Start with something simple for an appetizer. Put together a mixed green salad with fresh vegetables such as grilled eggplant, tomatoes, cucumbers and a balsamic vinaigrette dressing. You'll be eating healthy as a couple, so neither of you will feel too guilty about dessert.

For the main course, make spaghetti with homemade tomato sauce. It's easy enough for beginners and it's the team effort that counts when making the sauce. Be sure that the two of you eat opposite ends of a single strand of spaghetti until meeting in the middle – Lady and the Tramp style.

If you're in the mood for fun romance, individual pizzas are a delicious meal to cook together. Create heart shapes with the dough and make a game out of spinning it in the air like a professional chef. Once the main course is in the oven, start on the sweets. Mix your own cake batter and frosting exactly how you both like it. Use colored icing to write messages to one another on the cupcakes. It can be something important you've been waiting to say, or it can just be a reminder of your love.

Cozy up on the couch with a bottle of wine after dinner. Shut the ringer on your phones and keep the TV turned off. Instead, use this time to really bond.

**What's your favorite meal to cook together? Let us know in the comments below.**

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# Date From Hell: 10 Ways to Get Out of It, Tactfully



By Sarah Ribeiro

Picture this: you're on a date and your potential partner walks in 30 minutes late. Plus, they're a sloppy, sweaty mess. As soon as you sit down, they make sure you're paying for your own meal and begin to check out the server, setting off all the red flags that romance isn't going to blossom. It's enough to make you dread the rest of the night if you haven't already bolted out of the restaurant. However difficult it might seem, there are better ways to handle situations like this. Check out these tips to leave that date from hell—with class:

**1. Try a do-over:** The “date from hell” might not be a bad

person; maybe they're just nervous. Stop them mid-idiot and politely tell them that they're not currently coming across as a potential partner, but you'd like to try again. Set a date for a fresh beginning, and see what happens then.

**2. Ask for the bill:** Getting the check early is a clear sign that your date—and any sign of a relationship—is over. Doing this quickly cuts out any additional awkward time and keeps you from having to say flat-out how miserable you are.

**3. The white lie:** Sometimes it's better to be gentle with your let-down. Tell your date that you have plans you forgot about or that you left something important at home and you have to leave immediately. This prevents you from having to tell them how upset they're making you.

**4. Use your sense of humor:** Bad dates are usually some of the most memorable. You'll definitely be able to look back on your terrible experience and laugh. Stick around and gain some material for funny storytelling with your friends and future significant others.

**5. Be open-minded:** Your date might have underlying issues that are impeding the success of your night. Try to understand why they're acting the way they are, and you'll be able to see them in a better light.

**Related:** [When Dates Go Bad: 5 Ways to Find the Funny in Dating](#)

**6. Ask for a change of scenery:** Maybe part of the problem is that neither of you are comfortable in your location. Hating the loud, crowded bar filled with singles? Switch to a quiet, intimate couple's café—your new environment might bring a new attitude.

**7. Call for back-up:** If you're concerned that a date you've planned is going to get awkward, make arrangements beforehand. Prior to your date, ask a friend to call you halfway through

the night. If things aren't going well, use your acting skills and tell your date there's been an emergency that you have to tend to immediately.

**8. Enjoy yourself:** Try to have a good time outside the date. There's sure to be something you can enjoy, even if it's not the person with you. Appreciate your meal or your surroundings and stay optimistic by entertaining yourself.

**Related:** [Top 10 Sayings That Can Destroy Your Love Life Before It Begins](#)

**9. Take care of yourself:** Of course, if your date is being insulting, aggressive or threatening, you never need an excuse. Get up, leave and don't look back.

**10. Be honest:** Tell him kindly that you're not interested. If they're being such a painful date, chances are they're not interested either. It will save you both the trouble if you take the mature and truthful route.

**What are some ways you've gotten out of a bad date? Tell us your story below.**

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## Three Far Flung Honeymoon Destinations





By Vanessa Roberts

Honeymoon planning might be the least stressful and most fun part of planning your wedding, but there's still a lot to consider. While celebrities such as Carrie Underwood, Molly Sims, Fergie and Tiger Woods choose luxurious locations like Maui, Tahiti, the Bahamas or the open seas aboard a \$57 million yacht, we regular folks don't have to sacrifice our savings to have an unforgettable honeymoon. You just have to know where to go.

There are some honeymoon destinations that are not only insanely beautiful, but that also won't drain your bank account. Of all the places I've traveled, here are my three favorites:

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## **1. Koh Tao, Thailand.**

Koh Tao is a tiny slice of paradise close to the Gulf of Thailand that will steal your heart and let you honeymoon like a star for a fraction of the cost. It has crystal-clear turquoise water and luxurious beaches, making it hands-down the most beautiful island I've ever visited. Plus, the locals are very friendly, and everything is inexpensive. And it's not just the scenery and cheap prices that make this 13-mile island a honeymoon favorite. There are also boat cruises, snorkeling trips, world-renowned scuba diving, zip-lining and mountain hiking. When the day is done, you and your partner can settle down with \$10 luxurious massages, to-die-for dining right on the beach and 2-for-1 happy hour. Now *that's* what I call honeymooning!

## **2. Yangshuo, China.**

Surrounded by hundreds of mountains in central China, Yangshuo is a destination for the adventurous couple who aren't afraid to step outside of their comfort zones. From bustling walkways filled with bargains and delicious dining to bike riding through mountain-lined dirt roads and bamboo rafting down the Li River, this natural wonder will give you a honeymoon you're sure never to forget. Don't let the language barrier deter



you! It's easily overcome by downloading any translation app to your smartphone.

All in all, this little mountain paradise is the perfect place for newlyweds who not only have keen senses of adventure and open minds, but are also looking to kick off their honeymoon with a bang.

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### 3. God's Own Country (New Zealand)

I never understood why New Zealand was referred to as God's Own Country until we stepped off the plane and onto the South Island. To say we were struck speechless is an understatement. The South Island of New Zealand is a spot at the bottom of the world that you have to see to believe.

Just looking at the soaring mountains and glacial lakes is exciting, but there are plenty of things to do in New Zealand as well. Like adventure? You can go bungee jumping, skydiving, surfing, hiking and more. If you prefer to relax, you can take a wine tour, go canoeing, explore the quaint towns or even see the sights from *The Lord of the Rings*. There's no shortage of things to do here, especially if you want to start your married life in a truly thrilling and unforgettable style. How many celebrities can say they did that?

Photos: Courtesy of Vanessa Roberts

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# Julianne Hough Proclaims Love for Ryan Seacrest On Air



Julianne Hough has nothing to hide when it comes to the love she has for her man. The *Rock of Ages* star declared her love for boyfriend Ryan Seacrest on Friday while promoting her new musical movie on his radio show. According to [People](#), 22-year old Hough closed the flirty interview with a simple, “Alright. Love you. Bye” after Seacrest complimented the movie and shared how proud he was of his gorgeous gal. The radio host was later teased by members of his staff for not returning the ‘I love you.’ But between Seacrest’s praise over his girlfriend and Hough’s declaration, love seems to be the least of their worries.

**What are some ways to tell your partner you love them for the first time?**

**Cupid's Advice:**

Telling your significant other you love them for the first time is a huge step in any relationship. Here are some tips to help you communicate your feelings in the best way:

- 1. Go on a special date:** Plan an amazing, romantic date that sets the mood for what you want to say. Show your honey how the night is different from the rest.
- 2. Present a nice gift:** Great gifts can easily serve as an 'I love you.' Imprinting those three magic words on a piece of jewelry can be a unique way to always remember the moment.
- 3. Invite them to meet your family:** Show your sweetie how important they are by allowing them to meet your family. A family dinner is a great step to take right before you say 'I love you.'

**How did you tell your other half you love them for the first time? Share your story with us.**

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## **How To Ease Your Nerves Before a Blind Date**





By Nisha Ramirez

You're sure to have a lot of troubling questions before any first date. What should you wear? What will you say? Will you make a good first impression? However, when you're set up on a date with someone you've never met before, new questions about your mysterious potential partner are added to the mix. What will they look like? What will their personality be like? As a result, blind dates can be both the most exciting and the most nerve-wracking romantic experiences of all. Take a deep breath, count back from ten and read our tips on how to stay calm before a blind date:

**1. Spend the day with friends:** Creating a relaxing and easygoing atmosphere early in the day can set the tone for a relaxing and easygoing date in the evening. Go shopping, see a movie, eat lunch with your friends or just do something you love. A fun-filled day will leave you in a positive mood and give you plenty to talk about on your blind date. Plus, if you wear an outfit that can easily go from day to night, you won't have to rush home and change your outfit 50 times.

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**2. Exercise:** Before you slip on that hot outfit, work out! Exercise releases endorphins that will make you feel happy and confident. You don't have to hit the gym or a high-cardio Zumba class; it's enough to dance to music around your house. If you time your workout well, you'll still have a glow from your improved blood flow when you show up on your date.

**3. Think positive:** When trying to lose weight, experts tell their clients to picture a thinner version of themselves for added confidence and motivation. Why not try this for calming your pre-blind date jitters? Take a warm bath or sit in your living room while meditating on what you hope your date will look like and how the evening will go. By visualizing your evening as pleasant, you'll stay in that positive mindset.

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**4. Be fashionably late:** If you still feel nervous after trying the steps above, arrive at your date a bit late. This way you can scope out the venue and get a chance to see your potential mate before they see you. Just don't stand your date up. If you really have to leave, be sure that you've at least spent some time getting to know them first.

**How do you ease your nerves before a blind date? Share your comments below.**

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**Date Idea: Travel Abroad  
without Leaving the Country**





By Amanda Martin

If you live in the U.S., you and your honey can get a taste of foreign culture without traveling overseas this weekend. Traveling abroad is expensive and impractical for a short trip, but there are many places in the states dedicated to celebrating an array of various cultures.

Take a trip to Frankenmuth, Michigan for the Bavarian Festival, voted one of the top 5 festivals in the area. Running through the summer months, you'll have a blast while immersing yourself in German heritage. Enjoy games and rides with your other half, dance to live Bavarian music, indulge in ethnic food and try ice-cold, imported German beers. The two of you will be getting a taste of Germany without having to spring for a pair of expensive tickets across the Atlantic.

If you live in San Francisco, take a trip to the Chinatown

area, which is the first of its kind in North America and home to the largest Chinese community outside of Asia. The entrance gate, which is on Grant Street, is the most photographed structure there. Take a few moments to admire the Dragon Gate, as it's called, before entering the area. Then, embark upon an unguided walking tour and get lost in the culture. Explore some of the oldest Buddhist temples and try authentic dim sum. Many other cities, such as New York and Chicago, have Chinatown neighborhoods as well. No matter what state you live in, visiting these cultural destinations will make you feel as though you've traveled half way around the world.

Experiencing life abroad without leaving the states is an inexpensive way to be romantic with your partner. You may have such a positive experience that you'll take your relationship to the next level and start preparing for an extended trip together.

**What do you and your honey do to explore other cultures? Let us know in the comments below.**

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## **Will Smith and Jada Pinkett Smith to Celebrate 15-Year Anniversary**





For Will Smith and his leading lady Jada Pinkett Smith, two kids and well over a decade of marriage are definitely worth celebrating... with a high-five and encouraging words like, "We survived another year, homie! Yeah!" according to Jada Pinkett. Come December, 15 years will have passed since the Hollywood parents exchanged their vows in a secret New Years Eve ceremony in 1997. The *Madagascar 3* star credits much of their long-lasting marriage to being "the best of friends," telling [People](#) at the movie's premiere, "You have to be there for each other. That's how you build great relationships." Despite years of speculation and recent rumors that Mr. and Mrs. Smith are experiencing marital problems, the pair continues to go strong.

**What are some ways to celebrate a milestone wedding anniversary?**

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

Wedding anniversaries mark another unforgettable year spent with the one you love. There is no better way to celebrate your milestone anniversaries than with a meaningful occasion.

Here are some ways to spend your special day:

**1. Renewal of vows:** Vows symbolize the love two people have for each other. Renewing vows will let your sweetie know how much you continue to love, cherish and appreciate their presence in your life.

**2. Huge party:** The best way to celebrate a milestone is to have not only your other half by your side, but family and friends as well. Their love and support for your marriage will make the day that much more special.

**3. Romantic getaway:** Travel time with your love is a great way to create a memory that you will never forget. The privacy and romance will allow you both to truly enjoy one another and explore new adventures together.

**How would you celebrate a milestone wedding anniversary? Share your ideas with us.**

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## **‘The Bachelorette’ Season 8, Episode 5: The Dos and Dont’s For Taking Your Relationship To The Next Level**







By Marni Kinrys, of [WingGirlMethod.com](http://WingGirlMethod.com)

We've made it! We're finally to the halfway point when the superficial, made-for-TV drama must go away and make room for the real connections to bloom on 'The Bachelorette.' Emily Maynard is now in falling-in-love mode, so it's time for the guys to get serious and show her they're ready to fall in love too.

As you know, I work with thousands of men, and one of their biggest challenges is connecting. Connection is something that comes really naturally to women, especially to a woman like Emily. As a single mother, she is even more open to love. But for men, the ability to share themselves with a woman can be a daunting task.

Honestly, I have been surprised this season because most of the contestants have it figured out. But there are still some who struggle with opening up, which may hurt their chances of taking their relationship with Emily to the next level – especially as the number of men gets smaller and smaller every week.



Here is my list of dos and don'ts for taking your relationship to the next level and truly connecting with your partner.

**Do:** Create trust and protection in a relationship. Whether you're a woman or a man, you need to feel safe in a relationship. I love the way that Sean is so willing to share his feelings with Emily. He's expressing his emotions *without* being emotional, a skill that few people are able to pull off. His behavior provides Emily with the security to always know what he is thinking, allowing her to never question their relationship. Safety!

**Related:** [Bachelorette Season 8, Episode 4: Pucker Up! Lessons Learned from Emily Maynard](#)

**Don't:** Never put down, belittle or betray a date, especially in front of others. What the hell was Kalon thinking? For someone who cares so much about what others think, you would think he would be more discrete about his true feelings for Emily. He basically made a mockery of the Bachelorette process, and I couldn't have been happier when Emily told him, in her squeaky, sick voice, to get the f\*&k out. Loved it!

**Do:** Have fun! Being able to laugh at yourself is the ultimate sign that you are open to developing new relationships and nurturing old ones. No one wants to be with Mr. or Mrs. Serious. Being uptight and well-spoken all the time is no fun. For instance, on the group date, Doug, Arie and Travis really stepped up to the plate. They showed Emily that, no matter what crazy situation she threw at them, they could handle it and laugh their way through it.

**Don't:** Sit there and say nothing when someone talks smack about your partner, especially if you have built a strong bond with each other. I am sure that this situation was a tough one for Arie. If he watched previous seasons where contestants would cause a disconnect when they tattled on one another, then it would've been easy to second guess his instinct. But

Emily was starting to see Arie as her protector, and in this instance, he failed her. Hopefully, they can get over that hump and rebuild their strong connection.

**Related:** [The Bachelorette Season 8, Episode 1 Recap: The Dos and Dont's of First Impressions](#)

**Do:** Listen to the Queen of Pop and EXPRESS YOURSELF. When Emily was on her date with Jef, she kept mentioning how hard he was to read – and I wholeheartedly agree, which is why it was so essential for him to put into words what he was feeling and thinking. As much as we like to think we are mind readers, we are not. Expressing yourself is the one sure-fire way to boost a connection and move your relationship to the next level.

**Don't:** Wait for others (in this case, Emily) to come to you. The only way to get what you want is by asking for it. Alejandro got the boot because he didn't ask for what he wanted. He wanted to get to know Emily better, but he never took the initiative to make that happen. In a room full of 25 dudes, you have to step up and be an Alpha male in order to be noticed.

Connection is the toughest part of any relationship. You can't fake it, but you can open yourself up so that it happens more easily. I can't wait to see what happens next week. Be sure to tune in as these men fall harder for Emily and attempt to take their relationship to the next level!

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**Father Knows Best: 5**

# Relationship Rules Dad Taught Us



By Ché Blackwood

Fathers have the ability to influence all aspects of their daughters' lives, including areas most wouldn't even imagine. According to numerous psychological studies, a father's temperament, sense of humor and even facial features are stored in his daughter's memory bank, becoming favorable traits in her search for a partner. While some of this happens automatically, most dads aren't exactly passive when it comes to doling out their wisdom, *especially* when it comes to dating. In honor of Father's Day, we've compiled the five best pieces of relationship advice ever given by dear ol' Dad:

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**1. Teach them how to treat you:** Every woman remembers the night she brought home her first boyfriend, and how terrified she was when Dad brought him into the next room for “a talk.” Sure, it mortified us then, but Dad was ensuring our dates knew his standards up front and that we were to be treated accordingly...or else. When you're on your own, it's still important to set ground rules at the beginning of every relationship. Being confident enough to strike out behavior you wouldn't normally accept without fear of scaring your new beau away is the key to creating the type of relationship you ultimately want.

**2. Love isn't a guessing game:** Dad was there on prom night, shocked by how beautiful we looked in our poufy pastel dresses. He was there at graduation with flowers and a look of pride on his face. And when we couldn't stop crying over our first breakup, Dad came armed with a box of tissues and an arsenal of hugs. We never had to wonder if he loved us or if he was interested in our lives because his behavior showed it. In the dating scene, you also shouldn't have to wonder whether your partner cares about you. Even if they're usually busy, it shouldn't be a stretch to expect our honey to accompany us to dinner parties or pencil in mid-afternoon phone calls just to say “hello.”

**3. Learn to spot red flags:** Whether forbidding us from hanging around with a bad crowd or scowling at our leather-clad boyfriends, Dad seemed to judge people based on his own invisible list of “Disqualifying Characteristics.” It frustrated us when we were 16, but his dedication to our well-being mattered. As an adult, be sure to make your own list of “Disqualifying Characteristics.” If you can't stand someone who drinks too often, has a short temper or simply refuses to clean up after dinner, it's important to keep a mental record of things that bother you. The more red flags your beau

exhibits, the less likely he's Mr. Right.

**Related:** [Best Celebrity Moms \(Who Also Make Great Wives\)](#)

**4. Make him come to the door:** One quick way to make Dad angry was for a young suitor to come to the house and honk the horn rather than come to the front door. If Dad got his way, your date was probably sitting in that driveway for a very long time. Dad was right: it's not old fashioned to want to be treated like a lady. If your potential sweetheart thinks it's okay to honk the horn on your first date, how is he going to treat you six months later? Dad never forgot that the little things make for a special relationship, and neither should you.

**5. A good father is priceless:** The greatest lesson Dad taught was the importance of fathers in children's lives. Whether he was at every recital or didn't make it to a single one, Dad's presence (or lack thereof) left a lasting impression. His choices, behavior and actions had major effects that still influence you today. There are few things as important as a Dad's relationship with his children, so keep that in mind when you're looking for a long term partner. If you wouldn't want your beau's behavior being repeated by your potential kids, maybe you need to rethink your status.

**What did you learn from Dad? Tell us below.**

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## **Date Idea: Dare to Romance**







By Amanda Martin

Let go of your inhibitions this weekend and do something daring with your other half. Why not face your fears together? Experiencing a riveting, heart-thumping activity with your partner is a perfect way to bond, especially when you're holding onto each other for dear life.

For truly brave couples, get off the ground and go sky diving. Many companies will videotape the whole experience, and although it's an added fee, it's worth the memory. While the actual jump may seem like too short of a date, you'll be taking your romance to new altitudes.

If jumping out of a plane at 13,000 feet in the air, plummeting to the ground at Mach speeds isn't for you, try something closer to the ground. Indoor rock climbing is a fun, gutsy activity that requires a couples effort. For anyone who's new to the sport, most venues that provide rock climbing offer lessons for beginners. When you're ready to climb up the wall, have your partner remain on the ground and hold your rope. This will be the ultimate trust building

experience since they're responsible to catch you if you fall.

Whatever it is that you choose to do, get out of your comfort zone and be there for each other in the process.

What's your idea of an adventurous weekend activity for two? Let us know in the comments below.

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## Five Top Tips On How To Find "The One"



By Chris Owen

If you're single, bored and playing the field, there's never

been a better time to get the job done and find a new person to date. Though most relationships start in the workplace, you can still find love anywhere if you're willing to work at it. By acting the part and grabbing fate by the throat, you can easily find "the one" and be happy in love. Here are some simple tips to help bring you closer to the object of your affection:

**Related Link:** [Nine Unexpected Places to Find Love](#)

**1. Be caring.** Even if you're a mean or moody person, you still have a heart, so show it and get involved! Find out how you can run, walk, swim or cycle for charity. As soon as you're passing around that sponsorship form and subtly letting colleagues know you've turned over a new charitable leaf, you can guarantee that you'll be raising both dollars and pulse rates.

**2. Be nice.** Don't just care about causes, care about the people around you as well! Even little things like opening doors, giving compliments and being nice are all great ways to get yourself noticed by members of the opposite sex. Fill your day with smiles, laughs and cheery greetings and you're sure to be well-liked. If you adopt a pleasant attitude towards everyone, the object of your desire is sure to notice you sooner or later.

**3. Be there.** If your intended "catch" always takes the same bus, always brings lunch to the park or they're hitting a particular bar at five o'clock every Friday, then learn that pattern and make sure you're there, too. Of course, I'm not advocating stalking, but if you just so happen to be in the park, on the bus or down at the bar once a week, then there's no harm in that. If you slightly adjust your own schedule, you won't even have to acknowledge them. Just be there, and after a while, they'll speak to you and romance can blossom.

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

**4. Be interesting.** How hard is it to read a great novel and leave it casually on the corner of your desk or go to the theater and drop it into a conversation within earshot of your “partner-in-waiting?” Learn a language, play the guitar or go on vacation to an exotic country. If you make what you want to do seem interesting, you’ll be noticed for sure.

**5. Be exciting.** If you’re the kind of person who enjoys warm baths, NPR and an early night, then good for you. There’s a lot to be said for the comforts of home, and I hope you’ll be very happy with your partner Tim the cat. However, for all of you who are still looking for someone who’s slightly less feline, you need to actually get out there and make it happen. Being perceived as exciting doesn’t mean you have to ride a Harley Davidson or go on adventure holidays every other weekend. Stay out late every so often, watch a few live rock bands, do the odd bungee jump or get yourself pierced or tattooed. Even small things like these can make you seem like a great person to date. Plus, the more out of your comfort zone you step, the more likely you are to book some safari holidays down the road.

Remember, if you’re hoping to date someone, the only one who can get you there is you! Keeping simple ideas like these in mind can turn you from single to taken before you know it.

*Chris is happily married after meeting his wife in the middle of the jungle while undertaking his adventure holidays in deepest darkest Asia.*

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## **Sofia Vergara and Ex-Beau**

# Nick Loeb Meet for Hot Chocolate



*Modern Family* star, Sofia Vergara, was spotted having hot chocolate with her ex, Nick Loeb, in New York City this week. In May, Vergara went to the Met Gala solo and sources confirmed that the pair had called it quits. Could the two just be friends? According to [People](#), a source said, “They were not romantic at all.”

**What are some ways to remain amicable with an ex?**

## **Cupid's Advice:**

Breaking up is hard to do, and staying friends after the break-up can sometimes feel impossible. However, you can keep a meaningful friendship intact when the romantic connection is



gone. Here are some ways to remain amicable with an ex:

**1. Let go of grudges:** If you want to get past the reason your relationship didn't work out, forget about the past and focus on your future as friends or just being civil with one another.

**2. Take baby steps:** Do not go from a huge break-up to a dinner and movie date with your ex. When the time is right, go out for coffee or a quick chat in the park.

**3. Group meetings:** To make things even more relaxed and friendly, meet with your ex in a group of each other's friends or family.

**How do you remain amicable with an ex? Share your comments below.**

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## Making the Most Out of Your Long Distance Relationship





By Grace Pamer

For some people, a long distance relationship can seem like a tremendous hurdle to overcome, and many couples who are apart frequently see these relationships as positive instead of negative. Celebrities are no exception.

One celebrity couple that speaks openly about the benefits of long distance partnerships is Victoria and David Beckham. Their busy careers frequently keep them apart, forcing them to have separate homes oceans apart. However, they feel the distance doesn't take from their love. Instead, they think that the extra space enhances it.

The key to understanding how to make the most out of your long distance relationship is to change your way of thinking. A long distance relationship can improve your life! Take a look at some of the many benefits:

**Related:** [Jesse James and Kat Von D Split Due to Distance](#)

### **1. It Can Lead to a Happier You.**

Having a lot of time to yourself, as long as you use it to

your advantage, can lead to a healthier mind, body and spirit. You'll have more time to follow your own dreams. You can work on your career or further your education, so that when the time comes for you and your partner to settle down, you'll be in a better place in your life. You can take time to care for your body by getting fit or relaxing in a hot bath, which will enhance your self-esteem and overall well-being.

## **2. You Get to Have it "All."**

Many singles yearn for companionship and love, while many people who are in relationships yearn for the freedom they had when single. In a long distance relationship, you have both a loving, supportive partner and time to yourself. It's the perfect combination of some of the best elements of single life and dating.

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

## **3. No One Will Resent the Relationship.**

If you talk to many unhappy couples, you will hear stories like, "I was going to get my Master's degree, but I met my love and settled down." In the passion of love, it is easy to put aside dreams because it feels as if nothing else matters. But years later, that can impact a relationship negatively. There is plenty of time for you to pursue becoming your own person when your partner is far away.

## **4. It Can Make the Relationship Stronger and Healthier.**

When two people in love are also fulfilling their own hopes and dreams, that positive energy will spill over into their relationship. A couple is only as strong as the two individuals who form it. If either partner feels they have no free time, missed out on their dreams or lack fulfillment, the relationship is bound to suffer.

## **5. You Can Still Keep the Romance Alive.**

Being apart doesn't mean that you'll be treating each other like strangers. You can find ways to connect every day, and

even tell your lover goodnight each night. With modern advancements like Skype, you can even see each other's faces and talk about your day while eating dinner at the table. Don't think of these types of relationships as dispassionate and lonely! Absence can make the heart grow fonder. You'll be even more passionate and romantic if you find unique ways to stay bonded though physically separated.

For reasons like these, long distance relationships can definitely be very healthy. Being able to be the best "you" while having a deep, loving commitment to one another can truly be the best of both worlds.

*Grace Pamer is the author of [www.RomanceNeverDies.com](http://www.RomanceNeverDies.com), one woman's on going quest to get the world reacquainted with the art of writing love letters.*

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## Why You Don't Need the Perfect Body





By Lisa Moore

Many women obsess about having the ideal body, model looks and flawless hair. In fact, one survey suggests that 66 percent of women are so unhappy with their bodies that, despite the recent recession, they would spend money to achieve a perfect look. 90% of the 3,000 women questioned said their bodies depressed them, and 75% of women think about their shape and size every day. Gill Todd, a clinical nurse specialist at Bethlem Royal Hospital in South London, says that women are getting the message that they need to be thin in order to be happy and successful, especially in the romance area. It seems like women hate their bodies.

The question is, why should they? Why do women want these “perfect” bodies? Here are some misconceptions that put unneeded stresses on a female’s relationships and keep her from loving who she is:

**Related:** [Kasey Kahl Says He’d Love Vienna With Any Size Nose](#)

**1. There is only one acceptable body type.**



One beauty website invited shoppers to select their favorite famous body parts, and then combined the results to create the ultimate celebrity. This pseudo-celebrity ended up as a combination of Kate Middleton's hair, Cheryl Cole's eyes, Keira Knightley's cheekbones and Gwyneth Paltrow's chin. Her eyebrows were shaped like Megan Fox's, she had Kate Beckinsale's nose, Angelina Jolie's lips and the chest of Kelly Brook.

The fact is, there isn't a single body type that is perfectly appealing. Think about it: The fact that two opposite procedures, breast augmentation and breast reduction, are just as popular is concerning, as it supports the idea that it's impossible to have universally "acceptable" breasts. So, why try?

## **2. Thinner is always better.**

Though society often seems to think that being incredibly skinny is the perfect choice, an Australian study revealed that a man's ideal female shape was represented by those of average women, not by supermodels. One woman explained that men can't help loving women who have curves. They're genetically drawn to rounded women, because curves signal a woman who will successfully conceive, carry and then nurture a man's offspring. It's a sign of fertility.

And, she adds, who can blame guys for loving curves? They're more comfortable than being poked by sharp elbows and holding a set of ribs.

**Related:** [How to Keep Weight Gain from Ruining Your Love Life](#)

## **3. Cosmetic surgery will please your partner.**

Almost two-thirds of women believe that their love lives would be better if they had better looking body parts. Similarly, many women believe that cosmetic surgery will make their partners happy. A 42-year-old book-keeper stated that she

probably would not have had a breast enhancement if it hadn't been for her man. She said that he wasn't as much in love with her as she was with him. Surgery might help, she thought. Did it, though? What do men really like?

The truth is, guys find a too-perfect look boring. A gap-toothed smile like Georgia May Jagger's, or Alexa Chung's style of messy hair can actually serve to keep up your man's interest level. Many women also overlook the fact that men appreciate beauty in their hair, eyes, skin, neck curves and even belly buttons. Chances are that your man already loves how you look. You should, too.

So relax, ladies, and realize that the natural you is more enchanting to your man than a frazzled you that's stressed over your parts. Love who you are, and your man will too.

*Lisa Moore, senior editor of Interactive Service Group, has written several articles focusing on women, body image and parenting issues. Her articles have appeared on number of sites including HerExtra.com, ProfessorsHouse.com, and Eurweb.com.*

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## 5 Ways Facebook Can Help Mark Zuckerberg Keep His Marriage Strong





By Amy Osmond Cook

On May 19, Mark Zuckerberg married longtime girlfriend, Priscilla Chan, in a private ceremony the day after Facebook went public. She wore a traditional white wedding gown, and he even put on a suit for the occasion. As the [Washington Post](#) reported, fewer than 100 guests were in attendance, and they all arrived thinking they were celebrating Chan's graduation from medical school.

Mark and Priscilla are famously low-key and grounded. For the past nine years, their relationship has grown right along with Facebook. In fact, Mark and Priscilla can use principles learned from Facebook to strengthen their personal relationships. Below are five Facebook-inspired ways that the couple can keep their marriage strong:

**Related:** [7 Ways to Flirt in a Web 2.0 World](#)

### **1. Keep your relationship status public:**

No one wants to be left wondering what about his or her relationship status. Experts agree that communicating your

feelings is a vital component of a good relationship. Nothing is worse than coming home to a spouse who is angry but won't tell you why. A person who withholds his feelings to manipulate a partner is similarly despicable. So whenever possible, Mark and Priscilla need to check in with each other and keep their feelings out in the open.

## **2. Don't invite strangers into your inner circle:**

When you're married, you have to be each other's biggest fan and keep any naysayers at arms' length. Mark does this well. He recently gave ABC News a glowing report about how hard Priscilla worked to make sure her pediatric patients were well cared for: "She'll see them getting sicker and then all of a sudden an organ becomes available and she comes home and her face is all lit up because someone's life is going to be better because of this." Clearly, Mark is proud of his wife, and the feeling is mutual. No matter who you are, there are always going to be haters who criticize your spouse or your relationship. You just have to have enough sense not to "friend" them.

## **3. Don't waste your time looking at other people's profiles:**

There is no such thing as a perfect relationship. Most people don't like to air their issues out in the open, and serious problems can exist underneath the gloss of a perfectly touched-up family portrait. A friend of mine had long-term problems in her marriage. When it finally ended in divorce, people were stunned. "I had no idea there was a problem," friends said repeatedly. This couple kept their problems private, but they were still there eating away at the relationship. So the next time your frenemy posts an Instagram photo of herself and her movie star husband vacationing in Italy, remember that appearances can be deceiving.

## **4. Block the games:**

There are endless ways to waste your time on Facebook.

Messages, comments, causes, alerts, Farmville—so many ways to become distracted. My personal nemesis is Words with Friends. The same holds true in a relationship. Whether it's working long hours or going out excessively with the girls, anything that distracts a couple from their relationship is a threat. Priscilla knows this. *The Daily Beast* reports that she is mitigating the workaholic tendencies of her husband by laying down some ground rules for the relationship: 100 minutes of alone time and one date per week.

**Related:** [Don't Just Drop Hints When You Want Commitment](#)

## **5. "Like" everything:**

It's easy to get bogged down in what is wrong with a relationship instead of what is right. When your three-year-old clogs the toilet with a Barbie and the boss is making extreme demands at work, it's hard to look at your partner with the same starry-eyed perspective as you did when you were dating. But keeping a positive attitude is one of the best things you can do for a relationship. As Norman Vincent Peale outlines in his famous book, *The Power of Positive Thinking*, the key to becoming a positive, happy person is to be aware of your thinking patterns and replace negative thinking with positive thinking. For example, instead of saying, "My husband is so messy," look at the flip side: "I'm so glad my husband doesn't bark at me about every little household chore." Whenever possible, give your relationship a big thumbs-up.

Mark and Priscilla are off to a good start. The Facebook founder is famously low-key (still donning his hoodie from college), and his new wife is focused on humanitarian causes. As Priscilla's former science teacher said to the *Daily Mail*, they want to change the world together and are blessed to have the resources to do it. With a few Facebook-inspired relationship reminders, this royal couple of the tech world can beat the odds and establish a secure foundation for a happy, healthy marriage.



*Amy Osmond Cook, Ph.D. is a faculty associate at Arizona State University, where she teaches Communication and English classes. She is the publisher of Sourced Media Books and co-author of Hope After Divorce and Full Bloom: Cultivating Success. Amy and her husband, Jeff, have five children and look forward to welcoming baby #6 in April 2012. For more information about Amy, please visit [amyosmondcook.com](http://amyosmondcook.com).*

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## **Kim Kardashian Gives Love Advice as Guest Star on 'Drop Dead Diva'**



The beautiful Kim Kardashian did the honors of being a guest star for the June 3rd season premiere of Lifetime's hit TV show, *Drop Dead Diva*. The reality television veteran, who divorced Kris Humphries late last year and is now dating Kanye West, portrays a juice bar worker who is rumored to be a relationship guru. In the premiere preview, Kardashian's character offers love advice to a struggling model played by April Blowby, who still has feelings for her ex. *Drop Dead Diva* creator Josh Berman praises the 31-year-old for her acting skills, telling [UsMagazine.com](http://UsMagazine.com), "I'm blown away by her smarts, sense of humor, and passion." After Kardashian's appearances in the show's season premiere, in addition to two other episodes, the reality television star is sure to be a pro.

**How do you decide who to ask for relationship advice?**

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

Obtaining relationship advice is important for any individual who is looking to make sense of what is going on in their love life. Here are some ways to help you choose the right experts:

**1. The mediator:** A mediator thinks logically, distinguishing between what is right and wrong or irrational and rational, rather than picking a single person's side.

**2. The one in an ideal relationship:** Great relationships usually have amazing individuals who maintain them. They are likely to have the knowledge it takes to make good decisions that strengthen a relationship.

**3. The one you trust:** A trustworthy friend has your best interests at heart. They'll give you the best advice that they can.

**How do you choose who to seek relationship advice from? Share your stories with us.**

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# The Single Love-Guru: Author Devan Sipher Discusses Relationships and 'The Wedding Beat'



By Joseph Weissgold

Dating and searching for “the one” is an imperfect art. Gavin Green, the protagonist from Devan Sipher’s debut novel *The Wedding Beat* (New American Library), knows this better than anyone. As a sentimental, neurotic, middle-aged, Jewish man,

he tries to use his profession as a wedding columnist to find a strategy to fix his own miserable love life.

The author, Devan Sipher, is also a single, Jewish wedding-columnist at the *New York Times*. But thanks to his years of romantic journalism, this book can be read as a dating guide for sensitive men as well as for its witty prose and fast-paced story.

We had a chance to speak with Sipher, and he revealed some of the conclusions he's drawn about love, relationships and marriage based on the many interviews he's done with happy couples on their road to tying the knot.

### **Why are some singles so anxious to get married?**

I could say it's cheaper to be married, but that's not a very romantic response. Really, most people crave love. As a journalist who focuses on weddings, I learned how true that is for both sexes. On the other hand, people also aspire to show that their relationship is real, and somehow, marriage, that ceremony, the license, the certificate, it's proof that it's not illusory. It's not easy to be in a relationship, but making the vow in front of a community means there are people supporting you and ultimately supporting your relationship.

### **Have you ever been hired to cover a wedding where people ended up asking you advice?**

Yes, people ask me, but I try not to give it. I would never give someone advice in terms of whether they should or should not get married. Usually, that's just jitters, and I have to reassure them that it isn't unusual to get scared. I let people talk, and I listen to what they have to say. By asking questions about their relationship, I get what I need for the story, but it also gives them what they need. When they focus on the relationship rather than the big wedding or even the marriage, everything becomes a little less frightening.

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

**In *The Wedding Beat*, your protagonist Gavin struggles with a lot of advice that he receives. Is the problem the formulaic advice or just the way Gavin applies it?**

Gavin's biggest issue is that he has problems making choices, which I may or may not have in common with him. My favorite line of my book is, "Everything in life is a choice, and I'm choosing to be happy." The dating-guru in the book tells Gavin to "be the bee," referring to the idea that a woman is a flower and a man is a bee. The bee goes to the flower; the flower doesn't go to the bee. It sounds cliché and somewhat ridiculous, and yet, there's a certain logic there. And actually, there are women I've talked to who agree. You can analyze entire relationships with that one sentence. Things become cliché for a reason.

**Having heard so many successful love stories, are there any common themes that you've come to recognize?**

Yes. Love is not something that hits you over the head with a choir singing in the background. What you get is a spark, and then it's up to you to decide what to do with that. That spark can happen at any time. I've done stories of people who met just passing each other on the street. I've done stories where they met when they were six years old. I did a story about a woman, who was an MIT professor; she fell in love for the first time when she was like sixty years old. It really is different times for different people. Another true saying is love is blind. People often describe their [partner](#) as very good looking or incredibly funny; sometimes they're right, and sometimes they're wrong, but it's beautiful because in each other's eyes, they really are that way.

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

**Are there any red flags, that you've seen, that can determine if a marriage is doomed before it even begins?**



Putting people on a pedestal is the biggest danger. If they can't say anything specific about what they like about the person or they just say that they like the way they are treated, well, that doesn't seem like enough to sustain itself for a long-term relationship. A lot of times, it has to do with falling in love with the *idea* of the person instead of who they really are.

**What's the final verdict: love comes when you give 110 percent or love comes when you stop trying?**

The spark comes when you're open to the experience. It can be a focused openness, but more often than not, the challenge is to not become obsessed. Instead, choose to relax, and just let things happen. On the other hand, when it does happen, it does take effort. So to say, "I'm just going to count on fate to make it happen" – I don't think that works either. Like in my book, Gavin meets Melinda, but then she gets away. The trick is to not let that person slip away. In short, relationships require effort, but feelings should not.

*Visit Amazon to pick up your copy of Devan Sipher's new novel The Wedding Beat. You can also meet Devan at the Writing About Love & Passion Panel on June 20th from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. EST at the NYU Bookstore. To keep up with him, follow him on Twitter or Facebook.*

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## **What to Wear to a Summer Wedding**



By Sarah Thaman

Spring has arrived, and along with it comes prime wedding Season! If you have a relative or friend getting married this summer (and you didn't get called to bridesmaid duty), you may be wondering what appropriate attire might be. How can you dress to impress while still embracing the summer style? While the rules vary, here are some great ideas for three common types of weddings: Formal, Semi-Formal, and Casual/Beach.

**Formal:** Formal, or black-tie, affairs typically call for full-length dresses. Channel your inner goddess with a color block maxi paired with a headband and silver bangles. Mint green is a hot trend, and pairing this hue with an emerald jewel tone make it ideal for day or night. Wear your hair down, or stun with a low, loose bun. A small black clutch is a perfect complement, holding all of your night's necessities.

**Related Link:** [What to Wear on a First Date](#)

**Semi-Formal:** Semi-formal weddings are often harder to decipher. It's always better to be more dressed up than underdressed, so opt for a flirty cocktail dress. A chiffon dress with bright-colored accessories will always hit the mark. Nails are another great accessory – and they often go overlooked. Choose a pair of neutral peep toe heels and perfectly pedicured toes for an added pop of color.

**Casual/Beach:** If the event calls for casual attire, such as a beach wedding, choose a feminine sundress. This is a perfect opportunity to sport a trendy print such as florals. Dress it up with a pair of adorable wedges, or dress it down with a pair of flat sandals. A peachy cheek and a cute, pastel bag complete the look.

**Related Link:** [What to Wear to Meet His Family](#)

When choosing a color of dress, consider when the wedding will take place. If the event is during the day, opt for lighter colors. Remember that while you want to look your best, this is the bride's day. Out of courtesy, stay away from ivory, or all-white dresses. If the event is taking place in the evening, consider darker, jewel tone frocks. Follow these tips and you can't go wrong. Who knows, you may just end up meeting your future husband – possibly a groomsman?

*Author Bio: While I may not be a professional stylist, I pride myself on choosing fashion that looks polished and classic, and I'm always helping friends choose their date outfits.*

*Although I'm a writer for HandbagHeaven.com by day, outside of work I take joy in being a matchmaker, a newlywed, and a momma to my precious puppy, Luna.*