

‘General Hospital’ Star Jen Lilley Says “Confidence is So Sexy”



By [Whitney Baker](#)

Fans of ABC's *General Hospital* recognize Jen Lilley as the most recent actress to step into the very fashionable shoes of the sassy, Maxie Jones. In addition to her role in the world of daytime soap operas, Lilley also appears on MTV's hidden camera romance show *Disaster Date* and plays a supporting role in the Academy Award-winning film *The Artist*. Her diverse acting resume, coupled with her family history (her parents are both marriage counselors), makes her a valuable source of advice for all questions related to relationships.

Lilley's time on *General Hospital* has already taught her a lot about the choices we need to make for love. As viewers of the show know, Maxie is currently involved with both Dr. Matt Hunter and Damian "Spinelli" Spinelli. "Maxie really wants her relationship with Matt to work because of the status it gives her versus the love and security it gives her," Lilley explains.

Despite the complications of Maxie's love triangle, there's a clear frontrunner in Lilley's eyes. "Ultimately, I really want Maxie to be with Spinelli," she reveals. "He's head over heels in love with her. He's very selfless and relentless in his love for her."

Unfortunately, Maxie could make a very common mistake by overlooking the good guy. "I think it's a subconscious thing that girls do because we feel like we don't deserve love."

Lilley went on to draw her characters experience to a real life example, explaining, "Maybe that's part of what's going on with Maxie. She thinks she doesn't deserve something so good with Spinelli."

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

Thankfully, Lilley's love life is much less dramatic than that of her character on *General Hospital*. She's been in an "awesome relationship" for eight years and is very much in love. She cites balance as one of the most essential parts of a healthy relationship and uses her own romance as an example.

"My boyfriend is an introvert, and I'm an extrovert. But it works for us," she says. "I have these really lofty dreams, and I want to do a million things at once, but he kind of brings me back down to reality."

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

As Lilley discovered from her time on *Disaster Date*, there are a few key things that a couple should agree on, such as

religion, finances and children. “Children are one of the *big* things that you don’t talk about on a first date – and I would always bring it up on *Disaster Date*,” she says with a laugh. “But it is important to know. If one of you wants kids and the other one doesn’t, your relationship is probably going to end. Hopefully, you won’t have that disagreement after you’re married.”

Of course, Lilley grew up with parents who were marriage counselors, so many of this was ingrained in her since childhood. From the time she was young, her parents made sure she, along with her three siblings, knew how to talk about whatever was going on in her life. “Even though I wasn’t in a relationship, they taught me how to discuss things rather than fight through them,” she explains. “In a lot of ways, they really helped me understand conflict resolution.”

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

They also ensured that their daughter developed a strong sense of self-value – an indispensable quality for a girl as she’s growing up. My parents always said, “You have worth. You don’t need a boyfriend. They also taught me how to have confidence in who I am and not crush on boys so hard.”

Lilley reveals that this guided her decision making later in life, “I think every person, before they get in a relationship, should know their self-worth. Know that you’re worth having someone love you.”

Perhaps most importantly, Lilley’s parents provided her with a wonderful illustration of a strong marriage. “My parents have been married for thirty years, and while no marriage is perfect, I really respect their relationship. They never fought in front of us, which was really nice. It was always very admirable that they talked through things,” she says.

Based on the example that they set, she developed a distinctive opinion about relationships. “I really, truly

believe that, in any relationship, the guy has to be a little more in love with the girl than the girl is with the guy," she begins. "I'm not saying that I don't 100 percent love my boyfriend – I do. But at the same time, for a marriage to last, the boy has to be a little bit more infatuated with the girl."

Referencing her parent's marriage, she adds, "My mom would do *anything* for my dad. They love each other so much. But my dad is still so completely charmed by her. It's very endearing."

Taking a cue from her parents' line of work, Lilley dispenses a bit of her own advice to our readers. She believes that guys are most attracted to confident women. "I just think confidence is so sexy – not self-centered confidence like Maxie but just confidence in who you are," she says.

Another suggestion for single women? Play hard to get. "My mom would always tell me, 'Jen, men are hunters by nature, and they don't like an easy target.' I hated it, but it's so true!" Lilley says. "I don't mean that you should be rude or be a bitch but just don't be so available. In the beginning, leave some room, leave something to be desired."

Keep your eyes open for Jen on General Hospital as she plays Maxie Jones and tries to decide between the hunky doctor and dorky Spinelli. For more information about what's next for Jen, follow her on Twitter or Facebook.

Country Crooner Jake Owen

Prepares to Tie the Knot



Country star Jake Owen's proposal to girlfriend Lacy Buchanan was a total surprise, even to Owen himself. According to [People](#), Owen spontaneously decided to bring his fiancé on stage at the Citrus Bowl and proposed while serenading her. Without a ring, but with plenty of hugs and kisses, Buchanan said "yes." Owen was so happy about getting engaged on the same stage he graduated on at Vera Beach High, that he tweeted, "I'm a happy man. Life is complete."

What are some unique ways to propose?

Cupid's Advice:

Proposals can be so cliché. It's important that you make your engagement personal. Here are some unique ways to pop the big

question:

1. Think small: Sometimes the simplest proposal can be the most romantic. Proposing during dinner at home can be the perfect start to a long and happy life together.

2. Make it personal: Every couple has their own story. Think about something that is just between the two of you and let your imagination run wild.

3. The ultimate surprise: Sometimes just asking, ring or no ring, can be the best way to go. Surprises aren't for everyone, but might be the best idea for your proposal.

What unique way have you proposed or were proposed to? Share your comments below.

Love Advice For a Stronger Long-Term Relationship





By Ricky Peterson

Everyone wants to have a great long-term relationship that keeps on getting better, but it simply won't happen without some effort on the part of both partners. Making a stable relationship and love work isn't always easy though, as we see many famous couples going through their ups and downs in public via celebrity news and gossip...and it's no different for us regular folk. That being said, here are four pieces of love advice (with help from some of our favorite celebrity couples!) that we can all use to make our relationships stronger.

Love Advice To Follow

1. Be prepared to listen to each other: Listening is the hallmark of all good relationships. If you don't listen to your partner or they don't listen to you, how can you hope to develop a strong relationship and love for the long haul? Talking is good, but recognize when listening is required of you, and practice doing it more often. Everyone feels more

valued when their partner sits and really listens to them. Listening means comprehending and not just making the right noises in the right places!

Related Link: [Relationship Advice On How To Fall In Love](#)

2. Don't ignore problems – they'll only get worse: You cannot hope to go through life with no problems at all. There might be minor setbacks in your relationship or problems that occur outside the relationship that affect you both. The trick is to never ignore them and to confront them head-on. Talk about these issues and decide how to tackle them as a team.

Celebrity Couple Example: Seal and Heidi Klum are a great example, as Seal's reported anger management issues seem to have caused a rift in their celebrity relationship. This is the sort of thing that, if worked on early, could have been resolved, possibly saving the marriage.

3. Never wait for the other person to apologize: The apologies have to come from both partners; otherwise, one of you will always be saying "sorry" even when the other one does something they shouldn't. You've probably heard the idea that you should never go to bed angry, and that definitely applies in this case.

Related Link: [Heidi Klum and Seal – What Blew Up Their Marriage?](#)

4. Be positive in lots of little ways: We would all benefit from being more positive in our daily lives. For example, if your partner has a job interview, be sure to call them just before they go in to provide some support. Then, call them afterwards to see how it went. You could even plan a dinner to mark the event, whether they were successful or not. You can either congratulate them or provide support and let them know the experience was still a positive one because it will help them gain experience for the future.

Celebrity Couple Example: [Angelina Jolie](#) and [Brad Pitt](#) have had their ups and downs, but recent reports of a date night show that they are at least making the effort. Sadly, the media is much more into reporting on Hollywood couples who are having problems than those who are happy, but little bits of effort like this can make all the difference. Let's hope it works out for these two!

Stronger Relationships and Love

By following this love advice, it'll be easier than you think to build a strong partnership that will survive the test of time. Be sure you know how to make the most of your relationship and love, and start putting more effort into it today for the best results in the future.

Ricky Peterson is a writer who works for passionsearch, an online dating site.

Is Your Boyfriend Hopping Around the Big Question?





By Daniela Agurcia

It's only expected for the next step in your relationship to be marriage after years of being committed together, right?

However, sometimes boyfriends evade the big question and you end up waiting for, well, nothing. Even if they do plan to spend the rest of their lives with you, they tend to forget that if you're left hanging for too long, you'll move on to find someone who's ready to get serious. But most of the time, it really isn't your fault. Here are some reasons why your boyfriend may be hopping around the big question:

1. He's waiting for the perfect moment, financially

When a man gets married, he feels the responsibility to provide and care for his family. These financial responsibilities will usually push a guy to taking any opportunity in order to make the most money he can. Getting married without being financially stable or without having a plan isn't in the books for him.

Related: [Building a Committed Relationship With 'Sealing the](#)

[Deal'](#)

2. He doesn't want to give up his buddies

A guy is usually obsessed with his male buddy and his ['guy time'](#) can be something he may feel like he'll be giving up entirely once he gets married. Especially if your boyfriend's friends are single, it will be harder for him to tear himself away from the group. He'll try to get all that guy time out of his system before deciding he's ready to be 100 percent committed to marriage.

3. He might not be ready to get married yet

Getting married leads to other huge decisions that go along with it. Marriage means getting into the topic of having kids, possibly moving someplace different and other responsibilities he isn't ready to get into just yet. It's better to know he's proposing when he is completely ready to make those decisions with you, so you don't run into any problems later.

Related: [5 Things Men Look For in a Wife](#)

4. He doesn't want to lose all his privacy

When you're dating someone for so long, you become a huge part of each other's lives. Marriage is another step ahead of that; you're around each other *all* the time. Privacy can be very important to a man, something that's hard for them to give up and share with a female. Realizing that everything unites once you're married may have made your boyfriend wanting to delay the proposal a little bit longer.

What you can do to help speed up the process before he gets too comfortable is to avoid trying to change him. Let him do his own thing while you're together, and if he feels he has to give up too much to be with you, it won't be something he'll want to make permanent. But, definitely make sure to have a

talk with him about your next steps together as you always want to be on the same page. If you are, marriage can't be too far into the future.

What are some other reasons your boyfriend may be hopping around the big question? And how do you keep from losing your cool? Share with us below.

Relationship Advice from the 'Hunger Games'



By Amy Osmond Cook, Ph.D.

If any of you saw the *Hunger Games* recently, you were in for a bloodbath—a very entertaining, very well produced bloodbath.

I'm a huge fan of Suzanne Collins, and the movie was one of the best I've seen in a long time. But while I cheered for Katniss, cursed the gamekeeper, and threw popcorn at President Snow, I couldn't help but notice that some of the lessons of *Hunger Games* could also be applied to relationships:

Hunger Games Tip #1: Don't Let Him (or Her) Own You

Before going into the *Hunger Games* arena, Peeta and Katniss spend a quiet moment looking over the city. With a wistful glance at his would-be lover and soon-to-be fellow Gladiator, Peeta tells Katniss, "I keep wishing I could think of a way . . . to show the capitol they don't own me. That I'm more than a piece in their games." And show them he does.

Healthy relationships are built on equality. If you feel owned or used, there's a good chance that you are being played in someone's game. You may be their most important game piece. But regardless of whether you are a queen or a pawn, if your relationship feels like a chess match, run!

Related: [Can Celebrities Actually Have Enduring Healthy Relationships?](#)

Hunger Games Tip #2: Don't Eat the Berries

While Katniss is out hunting for food, Peeta tries to be helpful and unknowingly picks poisonous Nightlock berries to eat with the meal. Foxface watches Peeta and picks berries of her own, thinking they are edible. She dies instantly upon ingestion.

Affairs, abuse, and drug and alcohol addiction are common forms of relationship Nightlock. While they are possible for some couples to overcome, they can be instant relationship killers. So if you are tempted to stray, to use, or to be

otherwise despicable, be aware that you are putting your relationship seriously at risk.

Related: [You've Cheated, So Now What?](#)

Hunger Games Tip #3: Just Be Yourself

When Katniss first arrives at the Capitol, she is told that she needs to make people like her. Sponsors, Haymitch (her mentor) states, can make the difference between life and death. Katniss fails miserably at this until Cinna, her stylist, tells her, "Don't try to make people like you . . . Just be yourself." When she forgets about public opinion and is true to herself, she becomes beloved by district and Capitol people alike.

It goes without saying that it's important to be yourself in a relationship. There's nothing worse than sushi and ballet when all you really want is barbeque and line dancing. Don't pretend to be someone you're not, if for no other reason than it's just plain tiring—and it's impossible to keep up the façade forever. When the walls come down and the real you shows through, don't you want someone who shares your secret passion for all things Woody Allen, or at least loves you for it?

Suzanne Collins is more about opposing the Man and the media than providing commentary on romantic relationships. But forging relationships based on equal power dynamics, avoiding toxic situations, and having personal integrity are lessons as applicable to the bedroom as the Hunger Games arena.

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.

April Fools Pranks to Play on Your Significant Other



By Ryan Boyle

Whether it's the prank of all pranks, or a cute and funny trick you play on your better half, taking part in some April Fools Day shenanigans is a great way to reacquaint your partner with your playful side. A couple harmless escapades can be exactly what you need to create those memorable laughs that help keep your relationship strong. If you're having trouble coming up with ideas, Cupid is here to help. Here are five tricks that are sure to get a rise out of your mate:

1. Bogus Lottery Ticket

It's no secret that we'd all like to be millionaires. So, it's time to trick your love with a fake ticket to Paradise. All you need to do is mix a bogus lottery ticket from a trick shop into a pile of real ones you've purchased from the local gas station. Leave them on the kitchen table, or a place in the house he'll be sure to frequently visit. When he gets home, tell him you were feeling lucky and decided to buy a few tickets for the two of you to enjoy together. Watch as his eyes light up with thoughts of all the ways he's going to spend his newfound fortune. Of course, when he returns from his triumphant jog and realizes the ticket was fake, you'll have to be there to playfully laugh at him and give him a long consoling [hug](#).

Related: [Chris Martin Says Marrying Gwyneth Paltrow is Like Winning the Lottery](#)

2. Have Him Think You're Planning a Massive Prank

Psych majors gather around in an effort to employ a little reverse psychology this April Fools. This non-trick will prove to be a bit more difficult to carry out, but will leave a lasting sense of trickery paranoia on your partner throughout the day.

Start a few days before the first of the month and tell your mate that you have something spectacular planned for April Fools and he's the target. Let them know that you've been talking about it with your friends and they're all in on the joke. As the days go on, he'll grow increasingly curious and when he asks you about it, [be sweet](#) and sinister in the way you let him know that he'll just have to wait and see. Of course, at the days end, he'll be sure to ask you about the prank, to which you reply "April Fools!"

Related: [Date Idea – Create Magic in Your Relationship](#)

3. Scratch Decals

If your partner adores their car, a few well-placed scratch decals will be sure to not only make it look old and in poor condition, but it'll put a quick scare into him or her on the morning of April 1st. Watch from the window as they notice the marks and erupt into a panic attack. Be sure to meet them at the curb with a smile on your face and your arms stretched out as you let them know just how easy these decals are to pull off.

4. Mildew Sandwich Bag

You were nice enough to make your partner that special turkey sandwich that he loves so much. Today however, embrace the April Fools trickery, and put that delicious lunch treat in a faux moldy sandwich bag. These bags appear to be your standard Ziploc lunch carrier, but upon further inspection, it becomes clear that there are green splotches painted on the outside that mimic the signs of old, molded bread. He or she will get a real shock when they tear open that brown paper bag at noon to see the sandwich they were looking forward to has turned into its own living organism.

5. Electric Shock Mouse

We'll set aside all offensiveness to our hairy pals at Geico, but it's obvious that you and your lover aren't cave people.

If you have electricity, chances are you're a part of the new age of technology. From texting on your iPhone, to Skyping, video chats, tweeting and status updates, our lives have become more and more blended with the results of advanced technology.

This April Fools Day, set up a new mouse for you and your love to use on your desktop computer ... only this isn't an ordinary mouse. When he or she goes to sit and test it out on their favorite computer game, every time they presses the left and

right select buttons they'll get a gentle shock into the palm.

Be sure to watch on as they start frantically clicking around on the computer, but be sure to come to the rescue with a smirk on your face.

This year, hone those pranking skills, and turn this April 1st into one for the scrapbooks.

What prank did your partner pull on you last year? Tell us in a comment below.

Exclusive Interview: Mrs. United States Talks to Us About Life as a Married Beauty Queen





By Ryan Boyle

For a lot of men and women, the idea of balancing a lifestyle dedicated to both work and love can be downright stressful. Mrs. United States winner, Shannon Ford, filled us in on living the life of a beauty queen as well as a newlywed and how she makes time to enjoy both. Ford, a veteran of beauty pageants since she was 18 years old, is no doubt a busy woman.

"I'm traveling a lot," she said, "from Daytona to Texas to St. Petersburg. It's fun, but it can be tiring as well."

It's easy to see how all of this travel can put a strain on even the healthiest of relationships; not for this couple, however. Ford says of her husband, police officer and amateur Jet Ski racer Ray Quintana, "He's very understanding. There are things of his that I can't attend because of my schedule, and there are things of mine that he can't attend because of his schedule, but we're both trusting and understanding with each other."

Related: [Newlywed 911: Protecting Young Marriages](#)

Talk about finding Mr. Right. Ford and her husband met while attending college in Florida and dated on and off for 15 years before finally deciding to tie the knot. As many couples decide to rush into marriage, the decision to wait before making their vows was a blessing. "I really had no idea who I was or what I wanted to do with my life," she went on to say.

A major role in any partnership is making time to be with one another. After all, in a marriage, there needs to be a level of common ground that exists between husband and wife. "We're both very independent," Ford told us, "but when we go out together, it's because we want to and not because we're afraid of being alone."

Related: [Five Things Men Look For in a Wife](#)

When Mr. and Mrs. United States do find the time, it's not spent in as traditional of a sense as you may think. "We run a lot of 5K's" she told us. "We don't go out to dinner too often. I'm not very comfortable with going out to dinner, but running is a passion of our's, so we do that together."

It's not the camera flashes of the paparazzi that have the beauty queen feeling uncomfortable. "I have Celiac disease," she informed us. Celiac stems from the inability to process foods containing gluten, so it's no wonder that going out to eat proves to be difficult for Ford. In fact, she has taken a proactive stance on her condition and has begun a crusade to spread knowledge on the symptoms of Celiac and ways to raise awareness to those who could be suffering.

For more information, visit Shannon Ford's website. You can also visit '1 in 133' to learn more about the fight against Celiac disease.

Love Advice For Making Your Long-Distance Relationship Work



By Jemima Lopez

He lives in L.A, and she lives in London. While having a trans-Atlantic relationship is tough, if there's anything British celebrity couple David and Victoria Beckham prove, it's that long-distance relationships *can* work. Married for 12 years, they just welcomed their fourth child. Their American counterparts, Hollywood couple Brad Pitt and Angelina Jolie, have made it work too. Despite separation between films, they've managed to stay in a committed relationship for seven years, and they share six children.

But non-celebrities have remote relationships too. In fact, more than 3.5 million Americans were in a long-distance relationship in 2005, according to the latest statistics. With the development of new technology, that number is most likely on the rise. While us common folks can't afford to jet set or send extravagant gifts, that doesn't mean our long-distance relationship can't last just as long. Use this love advice to help maintain your relationship and love like the stars:

Love Advice For Long-Distance Couples

1. Use all forms of communication: Let's get the obvious out of the way: Physical interaction is scarce, so communication is key. Text messaging, instant messaging, or even Facebooking is a start, but make your "communication" more interactive. Here are some examples:

Related Link: [Five Ways Social Media Can Help Your Relationship](#)

– **Date nights:** "Skype dates" are the norm – a designated time couples agree to video chat. But try to have a *real* date instead. Each week, pick a movie and a meal to prepare or purchase. Arrange your laptop, screen facing you. Eat and engage in conversation like in a restaurant. Then, pop in the movie. This way, you can hear and see each other's reactions to scenes. Bonus: Other movie-goers won't tell you to pipe down!

– **Send photos:** Sending self-portraits are great, but always try to send photos of things that you find interesting or funny. It will allow your mate to become more in-tune with your personality and give them some insight into your world.

– **Make videos:** Hearing someone's voice and seeing their face is more personable than a text. But people don't always have

time to videochat. Instead of sending a text, create a 30-second SMS video. Your significant other can view or respond when they have time, and it's still special. There are apps that deliver "voice text messages," like Voxer.

Related Link: [Do's and Don'ts of Flirtexting and Sexting](#)

2. Send them a package: Sending your partner a gift for no reason is great love advice that can keep a smile on their face. Remember that you can also treat your boo to lunch or dinner because it's easy to get online and order a pizza that can be delivered to his or her front door. You can send traditional letters too. There is something incredibly personable about seeing someone's handwriting.

How to Strengthen Your Relationship and Love

3. Schedule monthly trips: You can talk for hours, but unless you see each other in the flesh at least once a month, your relationship will most likely fizzle. There are exceptions, like military relationships, which don't have the luxury. But for those that can travel at their own leisure, take turns planning monthly visits.

4. Be secure: Lastly, most remote relationships fail due to lack of trust. While understandable, if there is no trust, you shouldn't be together. Try not to let your jealousy get the best of you. That said, never completely ignore your intuition either. If something doesn't feel right, speak up.

Jemima Lopez is a freelance blogger and writer who writes for Zen College Life, the directory of higher education, distance learning, and best online schools. She welcomes your comments at her email: lopezjemima562@gmail.com.

How Decoding Your Love Map Can Heal a Broken Heart



By Rachel Sussman

When it comes to celebrity breakups, many of us spend plenty of time analyzing their trials and tribulations. We identify on many levels with our favorite Hollywood couples by getting inspired by their romances and mourning their losses. In fact, we even tend to fear that the same types of failures they experience can happen within our relationships as well.

Whether you're a celebrity or not, there are numerous ingredients which go into determining whether a connection

exists between two people. Love, attraction and pheromones are key components, but there are many others that dictate the choices we make as well, and they happen from the very beginning of our lives. It's important to remember that genetic/biological, social/cultural, and psychological issues determined your partner selection, romance and grieving period. In other words, they're part of your personal "love map." Through interpreting your love map, you will understand how important events from your past shaped your individual personality development and self-esteem, which directly correlates to your relationship behavior.

Here are two celebrity examples where creating a love map would be invaluable:

Demi Moore and Ashton Kutcher

Since the beginning of their relationship, Demi Moore and Ashton Kutcher's romance fascinated the public. They're both attractive and accomplished actors, and, of course, there's the famous age difference. Sadly, Moore has suffered from depression and grappled with addiction since the pair's split.

In a recent interview, she said, "What scares me is that I'm going to ultimately find out at the end of my life that I'm really not lovable, that I'm not worthy of being loved."

Moore's unworthy feelings most likely existed long before she ever met Kutcher. According to multiple reports, she experienced a difficult childhood and both of her parents were alcoholics, which undoubtedly influenced her relationship choices and her behavior in those relationships. By creating her personal love map, Moore would be able to work through her pain in order to regain strength and health.

Related: [Demi Moore Proves There's Hope After Divorce](#)

Heidi Klum and Seal

Heidi Klum and Seal also recently went through an unexpected

split. Many of us were thrilled to see a beautiful bi-racial couple with a large blended family who were happily wed. That said, Seal's hard childhood inspired him to create beautiful music, but it also affected him negatively as well. It's been reported that he was raised by a foster family, which would have influenced his personality development during his formative years. Apparently his emotional problems, in particular his inability to control his anger, had become too much for Heidi to take. In this case Seal should decode his love map to understand his psychological makeup. Heidi, on the other hand, should interpret her love map in order to discover what factors from her earlier life led her into the arms of a volatile man in order to expedite her emotional recovery.

Related: [Heidi Klum and Seal Confirm Separation](#)

Creating and interpreting a personal love map will enable anyone, celebrity or not, to heal and recover from a bad breakup. It will also allow you to understand and change behaviors that may be negatively impacting your romances – and that is definitely something worth striving for.

Rachel A. Sussman, LCSW, is the author of The Breakup Bible, a licensed psychotherapist and the founder of Sussman Counseling, a psychotherapy practice specializing in treating couples and individuals with relationship dilemmas. She is an official relationship expert for Cosmopolitan, Destination Maternity and Celebuzz.com and has appeared on the Today show, the CBS Early Show, Martha Stewart Living Radio, and elsewhere. She holds a BA from Emerson College and a master's from NYU. For more information, visit: rachelasussman.com.

Five Bad Relationship Habits and How to Break Them



By Marianne Beach, GalTime

We've all heard the infamous break-up line: "It's not you, it's me!" But what if it really *is* you that's been sabotaging your relationship—without even knowing it?

Psychiatrist Rebecca Gladding, MD, co-author of "*You are Not Your Brain: The 4-Step Solution for Changing Bad Habits, Ending Unhealthy Thinking, and Taking Control of Your Life*," offers us the top five bad relationship habits we slip into...and how to break them once and for all.

Bad Habit #1: Pointless arguments

How to Break it: Stop, assess and refocus

Gladding says: If you find that what started off as a legitimate difference of opinion over something specific has devolved into either of you bringing up old issues or simply trying to make a point to win the fight, you need to stop the conversation and take stock of what's happening.

Rather than blame either person, simply note what just happened, take a breath if you need to and refocus the conversation on the original point. Say something neutral, like "I think we got off track, you were saying before that you thought/felt," or "I think we got off track, what I'd really like to talk about is..." By not placing blame and keeping to the original topic, you can avoid saying something that you both might later regret.

Related: [3 Habits Guys Find Most Annoying](#)

Bad Habit #2: Making assumptions

How to Break it: Ask instead

Gladding says: We've all done this. He does or says something that you take one way, when he really didn't mean what you thought he just implied; or, he doesn't do something in the way you expected him to.

Rather than assuming his intentions, thought process or feelings, ask him to help you understand where he's coming from. You might be surprised to learn he had actually thought something through more than you assumed, was planning to do something later or didn't realize how you might take his comment. So, when it's not clear, ask him."

Bad Habit #3: Endlessly seeking reassurance

How to Break it: Ask once (or twice), and then move on

Gladding says: Although it's important to ask him how he

feels or what he's thinking, there is a limit to this. For example, if you repeatedly ask him the same questions to get reassurance or more information about a prior event or conversation, he might begin to think you did not believe or trust him the first time.

Rather than asking him about the same topic/event several times, ask once or maybe twice, get the answers you need, say what you need to say and then move forward.

Related: [What to Do When He Pulls Away](#)

Bad Habit #4: Checking his email/texts

How to Break it: Have a talk about trust

Gladding says: This is very tempting— and people do it for all kinds of different reasons. Is he talking with an ex? Is he cheating on me? Is he getting me that ring? Invading someone's privacy in this way almost never leads to a good outcome and often results in mistrust and resentment. Rather than snooping, look at his behavior. Is he acting like he normally does or has something changed? For example, is he coming home at night at the usual time? Is he following his usual routines? Is he attentive and loving with you or is he distracted?

The bottom line is that if you do not trust him, checking his email and texts is not going to improve your relationship. You might need to have a conversation with him about your concerns and/or consider whether you trust him enough to be in a relationship with him at all.

Related: [Can We Have TOO Much Communication and Honesty?](#)

Bad Habit #5: Having serious conversations via electronic media

How to Break it: Wait to say it face-to-face

Gladding says: Although emoticons have helped some people, having a serious conversation via email/text is a big mistake. Not only are you unable to tell his tone, you are missing eye contact, body language and other vital information. And, while the phone or Skype might be an alternative in urgent situations, it's still not the same as being in the same room with someone.

I can't tell you how many fights get started this way when really it was a misunderstanding in how someone read the text and assumed subtext. In most cases, the entire misunderstanding could have been avoided if the two people talked in person. This is why I always recommend meeting in person if you need to discuss something important, especially if there is a chance one of you might misinterpret what's being said.

You've Cheated, So Now What?





By Melissa Caballero

You've done the unthinkable. You've cheated. But whether it was a one-night stand or an ongoing affair, something has to be done. You must find the courage to confront yourself, your life and your relationship. The aftermath of cheating is not an easy obstacle to maneuver through, but you are not alone. Reaching deep within can reveal many of the answers to those heart-wrenching questions that are most likely burdening your conscious. Whether you're a celebrity couple overcoming the adversity of the paparazzi exposing your cheating-capades or an everyday couple trying to find your way, here are a few tips on how to handle your embittered situation:

1. To tell or not to tell. If your affair was truly a one time lapse in judgment, it may be most beneficial to keep this information to yourself. Although you might think it will take a huge weight off your shoulders to confess, you will only be hurting your partner and destroying any trust that exists between you. If you choose to keep it quiet, remember not to blab to your friends or post eluding comments

on Facebook, increasing the risk of your partner finding out. You must only do this if you truly believe you will never cheat again.

However, if after you've cheated you feel there is no way to exist in your relationship without revealing your wrong doing or if in fact you want to end things and move on, disclosing the information may be the right choice for you. Without disclosure, it may not be possible for you and partner to move on in a truly honest relationship.

2. Work it out or end it. Was this really just a one-night stand or are you finding yourself chronically hooking-up?

Infidelity often happens because something is missing in the relationship. After you've cheated, you may realize you the made the biggest mistake of your life. If this is the case, you need to communicate with your partner about how you're feeling, and what's lacking in your relationship. Doing so, will make it easier to fix these things as a couple. This doesn't necessary mean you have to confess, but simply use your infidelity as a learning curve.

However, the lesson may very well be that you are no longer committed and you need to move on. Your actions may have been a subconscious act to sabotage your current relationship

Related: [5 Reasons Why Power Men Like Arnold Schwarzenegger Cheat](#)

3. Accept the consequences. Whether you fess up or not, every action has a reaction. Being unfaithful is a detrimental behavior and will impact your life drastically. If you do expose these actions to your partner, you have to be prepared for the worst. You cannot expect your partner to brush off this information or even forgive you. If you mutually decide to overcome this hurdle together, you must give your partner space and time to heal. You must also give constant reassurance that you have learned from your mistake

and are willing to move on honestly and faithfully. If you and your partner are committed to each other post cheating, the healing process may bring you even closer together.

Related: [NY Ink's Ami James Chats about New Season and Inking Your Partner's Name](#)

4. Find forgiveness within yourself. Mistakes happen. Rather than beating yourself up, step back and forgive yourself. Doing this allows you to free yourself mentally. While you are still responsible for your actions, this release of emotion can allow you to work on yourself, your relationship- whether it is the current one or a new one- and help you to change your bad habits and find personal growth from within.

How did you and your partner handle a cheating situation? Share your comments below.

Dr. Jean Cirillo Discusses Her New Book 'The Soul Mate Myth: A 3-Step Plan for Finding REAL Love'





By [Whitney Baker](#)

Thanks to the fairy tales that we heard as little girls, many women are searching for their Prince Charming, their perfect match. In our hearts, we believe that there is one man for each of us – our soul mate. Well, ladies, listen up! In her book, *The Soul Mate Myth*, Jean Cirillo, PhD, offers a new perspective on finding love, one filled with realistic expectations and attainable possibilities. Through her three-step program, she teaches women how to overcome their fears and fantasies so they can see love with fresh eyes and an open heart.

We had the chance to interview Dr. Cirillo about her book and she shared many words of wisdom along the way:

Can you tell us about your program and how it works?

My program involves three basic steps. The first step focuses on examining your present situation to see where your fantasy expectations have gotten you. The next step is grieving for the mythic man that never existed, much as you would grieve

the loss of a real relationship. And the final step involves reprogramming your brain and emotions to pursue a healthy, realistic relationship.

Why do you feel that finding “your perfect match” is a lie?

The idea that you can find your perfect match is a lie because, even if there was such a thing as your “twin flame,” where is the evidence that you could meet him in this lifetime? Why should he live in the same country, speak the same language or even be in a position to meet you? And even if the two of you *did* meet and hit it off, where is the evidence that you would continue to grow together, in the same direction, at the same rate? Clearly, there is none.

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

How and why do you think that fairy tales progressed from imaginary stories for little kids to something that grown-up women believe in?

Fairy tales would never be so popular if they only addressed the fantasies of little kids. Remember, they are written for children *by* adults, created from universal fantasies of a perfect life, ideal love and happily ever after.

How would someone rid themselves of unreasonable expectations that may prevent them from finding love? And which ones are most likely to get in the way?

The book takes one gently through the stages from ridding one’s self of unrealistic expectations toward replacing them with realistic ones. For example, a common unrealistic expectation is that one’s partner should enjoy many or all of the same activities. In truth, his need for sports and her need for shopping can easily be satisfied by other friends or family members.

As far as more difficult expectations, which usually center

around characteristics such as financial status, physical traits or ethnic background, the book explores the gains and losses associated with holding onto these demands. Often, we find that they represent personal needs that have little to do with our partner and can be satisfied in other ways.

What are the top three things a person should look for when considering a man who is worth loving for a lifetime?

First, you should look for similar values and long-term goals.

Do you and your partner share similar attitudes about family, children, religion, friends, fidelity, work, money, and so on?

These basic attitudes need to be discussed, and any differences should be resolved before making a long-term commitment.

Next, you should consider how difficult times effect your romance. Have you been together when one of you was going through a crisis such as a job loss or illness? It is important to determine if he will be helpful in a bad situation or simply add more stress.

And finally, does your relationship have the capacity for forgiveness? Can you still love and respect one another even when you are angry?

Women can easily be blinded by their desperate desire for love. How can they ensure that they love and are loved for the right reasons?

Through years of clinical practice and life experience, I've found that if a man comes out positive on the above three questions, he is someone who loves you for who you really are and not because you fulfill some momentary need or fantasy.

It means you have chosen wisely, from a clear mind and not a blurred fantasy.

Related: [How to Dignify Your Relationship](#)

In your experience, what is the hardest part of finding real love?

I am often asked why it is so hard to find real love. People seem so mystified by the issue when it pertains to love. Few of us ask why it's so hard to find real money or a real house or a fulfilling career, for that matter. The obvious answer is that it takes time, effort and commitment to find anything highly desirable. Unfortunately, the fantasy Soul Mate Myth has caused people to believe that real love "just happens."

Do you have any additional tips for our visitors?

First, just as real love requires work to get, it requires work to keep. Just as you work to advance your career or maintain your house, you must work to keep the love alive.

Second, other than yourself, your partner should be the most important person in your life. If you really feel this way, doing things for him should be pleasurable. After all, an investment in your partner is an investment in yourself.

Lastly, the romantic phase of your relationship – obsessive thoughts, constant sexual desire and so on – will naturally die down in about 18 months. We would all be exhausted if that didn't happen! That does not mean you have fallen out of love. It is the deeper form of attachment that indicates that this man has gone from being Mr. Right Now to Mr. Right. And this Mr. Right exists in reality once you overcome The Soul Mate Myth.

To improve your love life and learn more about The Soul Mate Myth, visit [Amazon](#) to purchase The Soul Mate Myth. For more information on Cirillo, visit her [website](#).

The Fragile MALE Ego? Not So Fast!



By [SMF](#) Marcus Osborne for [GalTime](#)

That headline should not be read as a knock against the X chromosome set. Consider it more an objective observation. Yes, I said, "objective." Hey, being a guy doesn't kill my ability to see a situation fairly. As a matter of fact, as I think more about this topic, I'm thinking mine may be the lone voice of impartiality here.

Constantly worried about hurting your man's ego? Think again. It seems that women are actually more emotionally insecure than they think.

For as far back as I can recall, men have been derided for the

fragility of their egos. It's been noted a gazillion times by professional therapists, pop psychologists, and basically anyone looking to take a shot at a guy's emotional fortitude.

Sure, I'll own up to some of the common insecurities men commonly and constantly battle. We love feeling "manly", which means many of us have no idea what to do with ourselves when you tell us that you can fix your own sink or change your own tire.

"You can??? Well what the hell am I supposed to do while you jack up that car? Good lord...I think I'm about to...pass out...getting...dizzy..."

Related: [Love Advice Q&A: Is It Weird That My Man Always Texts Instead of Calling?](#)

No doubt we struggle with some fear that you'd leave us if George Clooney (or George Clooney-lite) came sniffing around. This mainly due to the guilt we feel for knowing we'd do the same if there was a late night knock on the door and Halle Berry was on the other side.

And we sure as heck worry, no matter how many times you tell us not to, about whether it's *big enough*. Quick piece of advice, never look at your guy's "manliness" and proclaim, "Honey, it's big enough for *me*." Because then we know it isn't.

But what about the ladies? You want to talk fragile egos? Hoooo boy! Any man will tell you (if he's got nothing to lose) that women have a fairly hefty, Microsoft-esque market share in emotional insecurity.

Ever see what happens to a lady's self esteem if her guy turns down sex a couple of times? "Well why not? Are you not attracted to me? Is there someone else? Am I getting fat? You like my sister, don't you!"

Errrr-no. I just wanna watch the Raider game.

You can't mention her age without risking a stay in the doghouse. You had better not, ever, EVER, answer the question, "Do I look fat in these jeans?" in the affirmative. Bad things have happened to those who have. Guys, by the time they're all grown up, understand the delicate dance males must perfect in order to answer certain questions without *answering* certain questions. "Do you look fat in those jeans? Honey, you look great in *everything*...but you look amazing in those pants with the elastic waistband."

Related: Q&A: [Can I Ask My Boyfriend to Delete Facebook Pictures with His Ex?](#)

Whatever we say, it's got to be said just right so as not to send our partners into an eating disorder. Ask your guy. He'll tell you how he has to either avoid or massage a certain issue with you because he knows how easily you come unglued over the most innocuous comment. And even compliments can be a scary proposition.

Dude: "Wow, sweetie. Your hair looks great today!"

Dudette: "What? What's wrong with my hair every other day?!"

Oh, and the look-at-the-darkside, dot-connecting ability of ladies is unparalleled. To a guy, a toilet seat left up is just a toilet seat left up. To a woman, it's a direct reflection of a man's parental acumen. You left the toilet seat up again. That means you don't listen to her. And if you don't listen to her, that means you don't really care about her feelings. And if you don't care about her feelings, how could you possibly [love](#) and nurture your child's feelings? You, sir, have proven beyond a shadow of a doubt, that child protective services should be on high alert should you ever become a father!

So yeah, guys carry a boatload of insecurities. But women

drag around their fair share, too. Let's not so gleefully point out one's flaws when we could all probably use a little therapy!

Valentine's Day Advice: 10 Tips for a Romantic (and Green) Marriage Proposal



By Kate Harrison

Valentine's Day is one of the most popular days of the year to propose. As this special day approaches, men across the

country are struggling to find the best way to pop the question. Take a load off boys, because Green Bride Guide eco-wedding expert Kate Harrison has some engaging ideas to inspire your inner romantic while reducing your impact on the earth.

“For a great proposal, the key is to be both thoughtful and creative,” says Harrison. “Like your wedding day, your proposal should be all about her, so put her first in every way and you can’t go wrong.”

1. Location: No one likes to say they got engaged next to the laundry machine. Pick a location or restaurant that she loves or take her to your favorite green spot. Whether a mountaintop or an organic restaurant, your soon-to-be fiancée will appreciate a carefully selected location.

Related: [Date Idea: Star Light, Star Bright](#)

2. Look the part: Shower with your organic bath products, wear an outfit you know she loves, and put on a non-toxic deodorant or cologne. (Check the Environmental Working Groups Skindeep database to see how yours ranks today.)

Related: [5 Ways to Get Him to Propose By Labor Day](#)

3. Make it a party: Surround her with the people she loves the most for an engagement with an audience. Keep some chilled organic sparkling wine on hand to pass around after you pop the question.

4. Daily gifts: Create a count-down to Valentine’s Day with little gifts each day like fair trade chocolates, heart-inspired socks or underwear, movie tickets, and love notes.

5. Summon a crowd: Does she love an audience? Purchase tickets to a concert or theatrical presentation, and propose in front of a crowd.

6. Customize a puzzle: Once it's put together, it reads, "Will you marry me?"

7. Go vintage: Buy a Lite Brite board on eBay and write the words "Marry Me" in pretty colors.

8. Flowers: Shower her with organic, fair trade or locally grown flowers. You can buy freeze dried petals online and sprinkle them in the tub, on the bed, or even in the car. Use them to spell out your proposal, or tie a note to a bouquet.

9. Candles: Light up the bedroom with soy, palm or beeswax candles.

10. Get nerdy: Create your own original poem, write your own song, or make a YouTube video to ask for her hand in marriage.

Kate wrote The Green Bride Guide (Sourcebooks, 2008), after planning her own green wedding in 2007, and founded www.greenbrideguide.com in 2009. In 2010, she created the country's first green wedding professional certification class – a four week, online course – with the Wedding Planning Institute to help wedding planners learn about eco-friendly alternatives.

**Giveaway: Free Love
Consultation with Renee Lee**





This post is sponsored by Renee Lee.

If you are frustrated with dating, or wondering why you aren't getting into a relationship, or meeting "the one," this 45-minute session will give you some clarity. Renee will look into your dating/relationship past, and assess areas of improvement. You will gain insight on what you are currently doing, and what you can improve on. You also will be screened for current matches in our database we can set you up with.

This is a great opportunity to come in confused, and potentially leave with a lead for the person of a lifetime!

Renee has a Masters Degree in Counseling from New York University's Department of Applied Psychology. She also received her Bachelor of Science from NYU in Communication, where she did a specialization in interpersonal relations, and focuses on non-verbal communication, conflict resolution, and public speaking. With ten years of experience under her belt, Renee Lee has been featured in numerous publications.

For more information on Renee Lee and her practices, visit www.datingdefined.com.

~~Giveaway Alert: Sign up for our weekly e-newsletter before February 29, and you will automatically be entered to win a free 45-minute consultation with NYC matchmaker, Renee Lee.~~

This giveaway is now closed.

Video Exclusive: Food Network's Anne Burrell Gives Valentine's Day Cooking Tips



center>

Food Network star Anne Burrell knows a thing or two about

spurring the fires of romance over the flame of a hot stove.

Cooking has always been revered as a mutual romantic touchstone, and no day is better to exploit this fact than on Valentine's Day. Be it chocolates or spaghetti with a nice bolognese sauce, treating your partner's palette with care can lead to delicious consequences. Anne dishes on how to cook for your partner this Valentine's Day, using the kitchen as an aphrodisiac atmosphere where love can only grow.

For more videos from CupidsPulse.com, check out our YouTube channel.

'The Bachelor' Contestant Jennifer Says Ben Should Run from Courtney





Although Jennifer Fritsch was eliminated during the rose ceremony last week by *The Bachelor*'s Ben Flajnik, she isn't holding it against him. That said, she *is* rooting for all the final girls but one, and that's front-runner Courtney.

Fritsch claims to no longer be bitter towards Flajnik for his surprising elimination, but says that Courtney is not the girl for him. She believes the skinny-dipping model is in it for her career, and she doubts that she even has feelings for Flajnik. In her opinion, Courtney is as bad of a person as she's portrayed to be on the show. In an interview with [People](#), Fritsch said she would advise *The Bachelor* to "run for the hills" when it comes to this contestant.

How do you know when to take your friend's relationship advice seriously?

Cupid's Advice:

Some people have been your friend your entire life, while others act as your friend when they need or want something.

Cupid has some tips to help you recognize a good friend without an ulterior motive:

1. Trust: Relationships provide gossip for everyone, so make sure that you're not spilling your love life problems for everyone to hear, and only take advice from friends who are close to you and know more about your relationship.

2. Motive: If a person whom always seemed to be in love with your partner buddies up with you the minute they hear you're having issues, be skeptical. If they think the best way to resolve your problems is to break up, they may try to snatch up your potential ex when they're vulnerable.

3. History: The best person to take advice from is someone who knows your relationship history. Just because they may tell you something you don't want to hear doesn't mean they're trying to sabotage you. It probably just means they care enough to point out the obvious when you're too blinded to see it.

Who's dating advice have you found the most helpful? Share your comments below.

Date Idea: Cheer for Your Favorite Football Team





By Ché Blackwood

Super Bowl Sunday is in just a couple of days, so it's time to start prepping for the big day! This event is synonymous with snacks, tackles, and fun. Not to mention, it's a great way to get hyped with your honey or engage in a little friendly competition with your pals. Fuel your partner's appetite by whipping up their favorite dips and other game-day treats – it'll be love at first bite. Below, you'll find Cupid's [dating advice](#) on ways to make the most of the biggest sporting event of the season.

Dating Advice to Plan the Perfect Super Bowl Sunday

You and your other half have been waiting all season to see which team is going to take it all home. Will it be the Denver Broncos, led by quarterback Peyton Manning and the best defense in the NFL, or the Carolina Panthers, led by quarterback Cam Newton? Take a cue from one of our favorite celebrity couples [Carrie Underwood](#) and Mike Fisher as

well as their celebrity baby Isaiah Michael and host a homey get-together for the occasion. Plan ahead of time to save you trouble in the long-run.

Related Link: [Throw a 'Gilmore Girls' Viewing Party and Get Love Advice from the Series](#)

A viewing party is the best way for you lovebirds to enjoy the spirit of the game with your closest friends, and the right decorations, food, and activities will make your party unforgettable. Make sure you have your team's jersey ironed and ready to be worn for good luck. If you really want to go all out, then decorate your living room and/or backyard with your team's paraphernalia. It can be as easy as picking up some streamers and balloons in orange and blue or blue and black. If you have pets, don't forget to get them something to show their team spirit as well!

Since everyone is feeling competitive, you can organize a contest for "best dish" or "best game-day attire." Then, you can hand-make voting cards, and on the day of the game, everyone can decide whose food and whose outfit they like best.

Related Link: [Date Idea: Cheer on a National Sports Team](#)

If you are lucky enough to live near the stadium, plan a tailgate in the parking lot for this date idea. You don't need a view of the field to have a good time, and sites like Tailgating.com can give you tips on making the most out of your parking lot party. If you and your date are cheering for opposite teams, make a friendly wager on the game.

What do you and your dearest have planned for Super Bowl Sunday? Dish your dating advice in the comments below!

The Psychology Behind Status Updates



By Jennifer A. Powell-Lunder, Psy.D., GalTime.com

A few days ago a guy I was friendly with in college changed his status from 'single' to 'in a relationship.' The flurry of speculative phone calls that followed reached epic proportions. "I didn't even know he was divorced," cried one friend. "Who would marry him?," asked his ex-girlfriend from college.

There were a couple of real ironic things about this surge of

interest; first, it reconnected me with college friends I had not spoken to in a while. As you can imagine, the conjecture-laden conversation turned from hypothesis about him, to catch-up about us. Secondly, while this gentleman was a good friend in college, time and distance weakened the bond between us.

In reality, none of my friends really spoke with him except through *Facebook* and even then contact was indirect (i.e. an occasional 'Like' regarding a posting he'd made).

Related: [New Study: Does Facebook Cause Stress!?](#)

"So," I wondered, "why all the interest?" I mean it was very unlikely that any of us even knew his new love!

I think the answer lies in part in human nature. We are biologically programmed to be a curious bunch. Perhaps boredom contributes to our interest as well. We are all looking for a way to connect, to interact interpersonally.

Status updates can break the hum-drum routine of daily living.

They offer us an excuse, an opportunity to reconnect and refocus. They may even provide us with an opportunity to live vicariously through other's life experiences and events.

For some reason, the lives of others can often sound more exciting and thrilling than our own. Status updates can however generate gossip, rumors and out right raucous lies.

This can happen quickly.

Related: [Which Kinds of Posts on Facebook Are Most Popular?](#)

Posted comments can contribute to creating rumors as well. I remember not too long ago a friend of mine posted a sarcastic comment in response to one of my postings. I thought it was hilarious because it related to an inside joke we have.

What was surprising to me however, were the host of direct messages, and even a few phone calls assuming the posting was

true. One friend suggested I was the victim of bullying!

While I understood where she was coming from, the thought had never crossed my mind as I knew the comment was not meant to be mean spirited. One seemingly innocent comment however, was enough to generate various reactions and assumptions. I think it was in that moment that I truly began to understand the power and potential of social networking. Another thing to keep in mind is that research indicates that neutral comments are often interpreted as hostile. What does that say about human nature?

Some final thoughts:

Related: [Are You an Oversharer?](#)

- If you post it they will talk! And some of the talk maybe downright ridiculous gossip!
 - If you post it, or someone posts it about you, they will contact you. Hey, it's a great way to reconnect with friends you haven't talked to in a while.
 - Be mindful about the comments you post about others. An inside joke or neutral comment can easily be misconstrued.
 - If you are bored log on to a social networking site you are sure to be quickly amused. You may learn something interesting or exciting about a friend of a friend of a friend. The question is, do you really care?
 - While you may be enthralled or even envious of the lives of your Facebook friends as read their postings and status updates, take a step back. The grass often seems greener on the other side. The reality: people's lives often sound more exciting than they really are. It's a good life, enjoy and appreciate it!
-

Exclusive Interview: Celebrity Attorney Ann- Margaret Carrozza Discusses the Pitfalls of Prenuptial Agreements



By Steven Zangrillo

With the national divorce rate spiking like a batch of Twisted Tea, it's no wonder that we've seen a renewed interest in pre-nuptial agreements. More than ever, these agreements have become an integral part of the arrangements a couple will make before tying the knot. Between high profile splits like the Kardashian catastrophe to the everyday scenarios of your

neighbors down the block, the specter of divorce knows no singular demographic. As your relationship nears towards the ever-ominous edge that teeters between “dating” and “marriage,” you’ll probably be in need of a little perspective.

“Everyone should consider pre-nuptial agreements, especially high net worth individuals,” says New York City based Celebrity Attorney Ann-Margaret Carrozza. “Sometimes they can lose about half of their net worth unless they are properly protected,” Carrozza adds.

Related: [How To Get Back Into The Dating Scene After Divorce](#)

It’s not hard to imagine how difficult these negotiations can become. After all, marriage can be a huge financial risk. In Carrozza’s experience, she says that the party with fewer assets seem to be a little more contentious. “They are big proponents of adding benchmarks to the agreements. That is, these people will make sure they are given a percentage based on the years they dedicate to the marriage,” she says. In essence, they’re arranging prorated marriage agreements. If you put in five years, you get a cut.

Related: [‘Divorce Court’ Judge, Lynn Toler Talks Divorce and Hollywood Couples](#)

As far as mediating this process with perspective in mind, Carrozza says “It goes beyond being a lawyer; I try to expand the discussion. In fact, I tell many of these couples that this will be the least romantic thing they will ever do!”

In truth, prenuptial agreements sound about as comfortable as dental work and with a recent rash of hotly covered high-profile divorces in Hollywood, it appears attitudes towards commitment are shifting. Seal and Heidi Klum, Kim Kardashian and Kris Humphries, Ashton Kutcher and Demi Moore, Katy Perry and Russell Brand, and Jennifer Lopez’ heavily documented

split from Marc Anthony are all situations that beg a bevy of questions. Is Hollywood getting it wrong? Are we?

Carrozza thinks that it's a little bit of both. She believes that, at the very least, pre-nuptial agreements are indicative of how we approach the institution of marriage. Divorces are going to happen, the best we can do is prepare properly.

"I think that not only with celebrity, but any divorce proceeding, each party wants to protect themselves," she concludes.

That may be all it really is but it's alarming how we've gone from protecting one another to protecting our assets.

Is Russell Brand Writing a Memoir About Katy Perry?





Russell Brand is full of surprises. After filing divorce from Katy Perry, Brand has decided to do what celebrities do best after a break-up: write a feel-for-all book. According to UsMagazine.com, Brand will reveal all the details of his marriage with Perry in a memoir. A friend of Perry said, "Katy is insulted and feels betrayed that Russell has treated her so poorly. She will never forgive him. Ever."

What do you do if your ex airs details of your failed relationship?

Cupid's Advice:

It would be nice to think that after a break-up, your [ex](#) would refrain from giving away the good and the bad of your relationship. However, sometimes it happens. Here's how to cope:

1. Ignore: It may seem easier said than done, but you need to be the bigger person and show your ex that you are a confident single gal.

2. Fight fire with fire: If you want to get rid of your babbling ex partner, why not tell everyone a secret from your past relationship that will put him/her to shame? This may be stooping to his level, however, so think about it carefully before doing so.

3. Own up: Go ahead and confess to the bad that your ex is laying out to the world. You will look like the honest ex who has nothing better to do, but move on.

How have you dealt with your ex telling details of your failed relationship? Share your comments below.

“Should I Stay or Should I Go?: A Guide to Knowing if Your Relationship Can – and Should – be Saved”





By Tanni Deb

When you're struggling in an unfulfilling partnership with someone you love, you may not know whether it's best to move on or stay together as a couple. Communications specialist and author, JAC Patrissi helps support women who are uncertain of their current relationship or are healing from a destructive love life with your partner. Her latest book – co-written with author Lundy Bancroft – *Should I Stay or Should I Go?: A Guide to Knowing if Your Relationship Can – and Should – be Saved*, offers guidance to help women understand the path in which their relationship is going and how to move on – with or without their partners.

We had a chance to interview Patrissi about her book, and this is what she had to say:

What made you choose to write about this topic?

First, let me ask you if you personally know any women who have not asked the question, "Should I stay or should I go?"

Most women find meaning through satisfying connections with others. We care about our partnerships, so we talk and read

about them.

Yet, even while there is a lot of thinking and talking about relationships, there isn't a lot of good advice about what to do if your partner is acting destructively. This book helps you figure out if you're in a destructive relationship. If you are, then you need to know the root of the destructiveness. Most importantly, this book helps you decide what to do about it. It summarizes what I've learned by collaborating with other women for more than two decades.

Related: [Hollywood Portrayals of Domestic Violence](#)

What challenges did you face while writing the guide?

There is so much more to say about each area. For instance, what if you are in a same sex relationship – how are the dynamics different or the same as when you are in a heterosexual relationship? How is it different for men who are with destructive women? Are all destructive relationships abusive? We had to keep on a narrow track to help women answer essential relationship questions, but I felt the pull to address so many related issues.

What are the main pieces of advice readers can expect to find?

First, we help you sort out what's going on with your partner. We show you what to look for so that you can come up with an accurate picture of what you're facing. Here we ask you to believe in what you have experienced and not to be afraid to name what's happening. We also encourage women to expect *all* of the attributes of a healthy relationship – not just a few. Set your bar where it ought to be.

Next, we help you establish a firmer relationship with yourself, your goals and your identity because this is going to help you sharpen your tools of discernment. My goal is to support the creation of a throng of women who will be very hard to confuse after they work through this book.

From there, we give specifics on what to demand of your significant other who is destructive. One of the most helpful pieces is about the ongoing process of apology and making amends. We stress that it isn't over until it is over for *you*. Apologies must be made in a manner that is helpful and meaningful to the person hurt.

Related: [How to Have a Relationship with Yourself](#)

When should someone move on from a difficult relationship?

I think some of the most troubling problems women face with their partners are: immaturity, addiction, unresolved or untreated mental health issues (including the after-effects of trauma, depression and personality disorders); and abuse. Each one of these has its own warning signs.

I know you want your partner, but sometimes the partner you want doesn't come without issues. And that's the heart-breaker. But is it a deal breaker? That depends on a number of things, including where you are in your own life, where you are in your relationship, and what is safe and possible for you.

What advice would you give to those who are in an unfulfilling relationship?

Figuring out what to do with your relationship takes a lot of energy. If you want to hold on to the clarity you find, you'll need to shift back to the center of your own life.

You'll need to rediscover what brings you joy, reinvest in a daily routine that will support you, rediscover some of the values you hold, create a self-nurturing plan that includes skills for regulating your emotions when you feel out of sorts and, for mothers, creating a parenting-from-your-center plan.

In order to stop spending all of your time waiting to figure out what's going to happen between you and your lover, you'll need to create your own "No-Matter-What-Happens" life goals

for yourself. That is the typical kind of life-planning people do. If you're in a healthy, but sadly unfulfilling partnership, this re-direction to your dreams and beliefs will help make your process of working on the relationship or deciding to leave much less fraught. But if you're in a destructive relationship, you'll notice that it's a whole new game. Therefore, you'll need to turn your attention back to your own growth.

Our book will help you regulate your own powerful emotions, teach you to invest in your own rediscovery of joy, and create a routine that supports you, your values and spiritual beliefs. From there, you can use your new strength to invest in your life goals even if you decide to give your partner some time to work on his or her issues.

To gain greater clarity about your relationship and which path to take, visit Amazon to purchase *Should I Stay or Should I Go?: A Guide to Knowing if Your Relationship Can – and Should – be Saved*. For more information on Patrissi, visit her website, www.growinganewheart.com

Is Facebook Destroying Your Love Life?





By Jennifer Harrington

Popular social networking sites, such as Facebook, are great for many things. Re-connecting with old classmates, checking out your best friend's vacation photos and sharing the news that you had an exciting celebrity sighting, are some of the best reasons to log on. But when it comes to your love life, is Facebook your friend... or foe?

Social media provides access to all of the key information about the object of your affection. Status updates revealing their whereabouts, wall posts indicating updates from their friends and photos that can point to previous romantic partners, offer you a glimpse into their private world. If relationships are about getting to know the other person better, it's easy to see how checking your better half's page many times per day might be justified.

With newspapers like *The New York Times* dedicating articles to teaching kids how to break-up nicely online, it is apparent Facebook has changed how we interact with each other. Therefore, Cupid advises you that when it comes to Facebook

and your love life, Facebook is a relationship mine field that must be navigated carefully. So, before you hit the “refresh” button on your sweetie’s page again, ask yourself a few questions to figure out if Facebook is destroying your love life:

Are you using Facebook as a window into another person’s life?

If so, get off the computer immediately. Pick up the phone to chat with your special someone, or make a date to catch up over coffee. Nothing takes the place of live interaction when building and maintaining a relationship.

Related: [5 Ways Technology Is Ruining Your Dating Life](#)

Do you get upset about things you see on Facebook?

There’s a lot of room for misunderstanding; from old pictures being posted to comments from friends taken out of context.

If you see something that upsets you, take the time to talk it through with the other person. Don’t draw conclusions solely based upon what you’ve seen online.

Does your honey know you are stalking their page?

If you have found yourself slipping and mentioning to your significant other things you’ve noticed on their page, this is a warning sign. People like to be noticed, but not stalked online. If your partner knows you are snooping, it may make them feel like you don’t trust them.

Have you de-friended your significant other (or their friends) out of anger?

Always avoid de-friending in a moment of fury. Reports suggest that *The Jersey Shore*’s Sammi “Sweetheart” Giancola has de-friended her on- again, off-again boyfriend, Ronnie Ortiz Magro’s friends in moments of rage – and everybody knows that is not a model relationship.

Related: [Are Jersey Shore's Sammi and Ronnie Back Together?](#)

While it's hard to imagine life without Facebook, don't lose sight of the fact that relationships are built on love and trust and not what appears on Timeline. If you're interested in learning more about maintaining healthy relationships both online and offline, check out a recent article from The Huffington Post titled "6 Tips for Healthy Relationships" which highlights relationship advice from experts including Dr. Drew and Dr. Phil.

Has Facebook destroyed your love life? Share your stories below.

Newlywed 911: Protecting Young Marriages





By Malia Karlinsky, GalTime Love/Sex Editor

Sad news about one of Hollywood's hottest couples—Russell Brand has filed for divorce from wife Katy Perry. The news about the break-up does not come as a complete surprise. Celebrity gossip columnists have been buzzing about a rift between pop music princess Katy Perry and her actor/comedian hubby Russell Brand. Married for just 14 months, the often lovey-dovey pair reportedly spent this past Christmas miles apart (two-thousand miles to be exact). Photos showed Perry splashing around on a Hawaiian beach (without her wedding ring), while Brand was also snapped on a beach— in Cornwall, England— sans Perry.

What broke this celeb couple up? We may never know for sure, but Us Weekly recently reported that Brand's lack of respect for Perry's parents' Christian beliefs as the cause of some tension.

If that's the case— the problems of this glamorous newlywed couple are quite common.

Jeanine and Mark Earnhart, spouses who co-authored a book titled *Marriage Works*, cite the in-laws as one of the biggest issues that cause problems in new marriages. According to the Earnharts, there are some very predictable problems that plague the newly married.

Related: [Delve Into a Modern Day Marriage With 'The New I Do'](#)

Top 5 Issues Newlyweds Face

1. In-law issues
2. Finances
3. Sex
4. Time spent with friends (without the spouse)
5. Household chores.

Jeanine Earnhart suggest communication as way to get over these newlywed “speed bumps” on the road to a happy marriage. “It may seem like a simple answer, but it works for every one of these problems,” she explains. “If a couple gets their communication skills down right from the start, they can talk about anything and solve most problems.”

Tina B. Tessina, PhD, (aka “Dr. Romance”) a psychotherapist and author of *Money, Sex and Kids: Stop Fighting about the Three Things That Can Ruin Your Marriage*, suggests putting some work into the relationship before *putting a ring on it*.

Tessina shares that there are several questions every couple should consider **before** moving in together or making joint financial commitments.

Related: [Cupid's Weekly Round-Up: Rushing into Marriage](#)

7 Questions Every Couple Should Talk About

1. What is your definition of commitment? If you don't know what your relationship means to the both of you, you risk repeating past mistakes, getting stuck in uncomfortable roles, or fighting about what a healthy relationship is.

2. Have you discussed finances? Different financial habits (one likes to save, the other spends more, or doesn't keep track) can become a source of argument.

3. What about household responsibilities? If you're not yet living together, take a tour of each other's homes. Drastically different decorating styles, neatness, and organization levels can become sources of argument, and so can housekeeping and chores.

4. How close are you to family or friends? If one of you has a lot of family or friends, and the other does not, find out what those relationships mean. Where will you spend holidays? If there are family members who have problems, such as addiction or mental illness, how much will that impact your relationship?

5. How do you handle anger and other emotions? We all get upset from time to time. If you are usually good at diffusing each other's anger, and being supportive through times of grief or pain, your emotional bond will deepen as time goes on.

6. How do you show love to each other? Sharing what actions and words mean love to you may be surprising. Even if it's a struggle, discussing how you give and receive love will improve your relationship.

7. How well did you discuss these very questions? Asking yourselves these questions are excellent tests of your ability to define and work out problems. Constructive discussion that leads to a mutually satisfactory solution means you know how to solve problems in your relationship. If not, get counseling before going further.

So how can bickering newlyweds resolve their issues— and create a stronger relationship? Tessina suggests some simple steps.

Related: [Pamela Anderson Says 'Marriage Has Its Ups to Downs'](#)

Simple Steps to Create a Successful Marriage

- **Talk frequently and honestly to each other:** Discuss everything from your frustrations to your appreciation of each other.
- **Strive to work together to solve anything that comes up:** Don't get stuck on who's right or wrong, focus on solving the problem.
- **Keep your connection going:** Connect through communication, sex, affection, understanding and concern for each other.
- **Have a sense of humor, give the benefit of the doubt, care about each other.**

Our hearts go out to Katy and Russell.