

Love & Laughs: Comedian Eric Patrick Shares His Relationship Advice



Comedians are usually social anomalies, and that's why they're so respected. For anyone to stand in front of a gigantic crowd of people, living and dying purely on the words they say while at the same time trying to make a personal connection—takes a special type of person.

Eric Patrick is one of the hottest young comedians on the scene today—in more ways than one. His time on *The Real World: New Orleans* may have introduced him to a wider

audience, but his good looks, charm, and captivating comedic style have kept his audience growing, from the NYC scene, all the way to far-off Johannesburg and London. Described by MTV.com as a “handsome ladies man,” and by Entertainment Weekly as “energetic and engaging,” Eric Patrick knows how to create and cultivate a relationship, as well as a crowd. Here are a few tips to help daters of either sex lighten up, straight from Patrick’s experience:

Don’t take rejection personally—it’s a fact of life. “A woman can usually tell within the first 10-15 minutes whether she likes a guy or not,” says Patrick. “As you get older, you learn not to get hung up on it. If a girl’s not into me, I just move on, because there are other ones out there.”

Don’t put too much emphasis on physical appearance. “Women just want to hear something cool. If you can be funny or interesting, she’ll keep you around, regardless of what else you’re working with.”

Work in groups. It’s easier to win over a group of four to five people than one person, so try and work with groups of people instead.

Go with what you know. Change the subject to something you’re confident about if you want to feel comfortable in a conversation, rather than trying to seem knowledgeable about something you’re not.

Look for a change of scenery. Go to a foreign country if you’re having trouble meeting new people—the cultural difference gives both of you common ground. “I went to South Africa to perform, and they love Americans over there. From the minute they hear your accent, you have something to talk about. I’ve never been attracted to so many bald, black women in my life.”

“Don’t be afraid to put your best self forward.” Fear of

rejection will keep you from getting anywhere—and honestly, it's only the creepy, weird guys with three gold teeth who are completely unafraid of going for it. We need more normal people out there."

As for dealing with a relationship once you're in one, try to be more forgiving and look at things from a comedic point of view. "As a comic, I'm usually more abstract with my feelings than upset when something bad happens in a relationship," says Patrick, "because I'm always thinking about it in terms of potential material." The comedian type can also be needy though, says Patrick, so be prepared.

Patrick's energetic stage presence certainly attracts attention, but it helps him stand out, in the right way.

Patrick describes it as being like an NFL quarterback: "the younger ones are the ones scrambling and running all over the place, and as they get older, they either stay in the pocket, or they get hit hard."

Right now, Patrick certainly isn't afraid to give his audience all that he has to offer. More than anything, Patrick exemplifies the idea of "putting your best self forward" and being unafraid to try new things. His time in the U.S. State Department gave him plenty of life experience to work with, as did his stint on *The Real World*, where his on-and-off again relationship with housemate, Sahar, gave him plenty of future material.

But, as he says himself, Eric Patrick is always on the move, always looking forward, not back, and his best tip for women involved with comics isn't sugar-coated: "If you're a woman dating a comic, be patient with him. We *can* be emotionally involved and patient, but our instinct is to be nomadic. I took this job because I didn't want to punch numbers every day. I wanted to get out and see the world."

Hopefully, the world will get to see a lot more of Eric

Patrick. He's developing an animated television series called *Twenty Below*, as well as a digital rooftop talk show. And he's talking about returning to MTV to do another show for them. In the meantime, you can catch him on his website, www.ericpatrickcomedy.com, or follow him on Twitter at www.twitter.com/theericpatrick.

Country Crooner Chely Wright Ties the Knot



Chely Wright

finally found her happy ending after tying the knot with partner Lauren Blitzer last weekend, reports UsMagazine.com. The country singer, 40, met civil rights activist Blitzer, 30, just weeks after coming out. Last year Wright told NBC's *Today Show* that she "was hiding. I was gay, and I didn't want anyone to know that I was." The differing religions of the two brides meant that both a rabbi and a reverend were present at the interfaith ceremony.

What do you do in a wedding if you and your partner have differing religions?

Cupid's Advice:

When you and your fiancé practice different religions, your wedding ceremony will have to be altered. Cupid has some tips on how to make an interfaith union a success:

- 1. Two celebrations:** One option is to have two ceremonies, one for each family and each religion. This way you'll make sure to accommodate everyone, and plus you'll have two awesome parties to attend.
- 2. Interfaith:** You can also combine your two faiths in one wedding by having, for example, both a rabbi and a reverend preside over the ceremony like Chely Wright and Lauren Blitzer did.
- 3. Compromise:** If you're not religious, but getting married in a church has always been your partner's dream, be flexible and let he or she pick the place. Maybe that means you can choose the wedding cake.

What's the best way to make sure no one feels left out in an interfaith wedding? Share your comments below.

Jessica Simpson's Best Friend Cacee Cobb Is Engaged



It seems like Jessica Simpson won't be the only one heading down the aisle soon. [RadarOnline](#) reported that the singer's best friend Cacee Cobb is engaged to her longtime boyfriend Donald Faison. The excited groom tweeted, "If you like it you better put a Ring on it. – Beyonce." Cobb responded with, "If she likes it then she better say YES!!" Faison revealed his feelings for Cobb in an interview last November. "I'm sure I know in my heart I

love her and I definitely want to be with her forever, but sometimes you throw marriage in situation and it ruins everything," he told Vibe.com. Fortunately, he got over his fear and proposed to his girlfriend of nearly six years.

How do you support your best friend with wedding plans?

Cupid's Advice:

Since a wedding day is one of the most important days in a woman's life, your best friend will count on you to support her throughout the planning process. Here are three ways to do so:

- 1. Support:** Assist her in finding the perfect dress and organizing the ceremony and reception. Celebrate with her at the bachelorette party and bridal shower.
- 2. Ceremony:** Help her get dressed and ensure that she looks elegant. Give her a reassuring grin whenever she glances your way.
- 3. Reception:** Stay until the very end to assist your best friend with anything she needs.

What are some other ways to support your best friend with wedding plans? Share your thoughts below.

Is He Husband Material?





By Kelly Rouba,

GalTime.com

The other day, my friend was distraught over how his wife has been treating him lately. The two had begun the process of getting divorced when she suddenly had a change in attitude and promised she would change. Sadly, that promise lasted only a couple of weeks.

After we discussed the situation, we began exploring what he should expect from his partner and it led me to think about what characteristics I should be looking for in a man so that I don't end up in a similar situation someday. For those single ladies, like myself, who are hoping to get married one day, allow me to share some expert advice on what you should be looking for in a partner:

“What makes a man husband material are emotional characteristics, including stability, reliability and honesty. These are the hallmarks of what makes a man a good

long-term partner,” says Dr. Seth Meyers, a licensed psychologist, relationship expert, and author of *Dr. Seth’s Love Prescription*.

In addition, and perhaps “the most surprising factor that is important is empathy, or the ability to be sensitive and understand how the other person feels,” Meyers adds. “When problems develop, as they inevitably will, having a man in your life who listens and cares about your feelings is one factor that helps to solidify mutual respect and intimacy.”

Stacie Ikka, founder of Sitting In A Tree, a consulting service that was created in response to the dating community’s need for customized and innovative approaches to help facilitate sustainable relationships, offers the following tips:

1. You feel as good about him when you’re not with him as you do when you are with him.
2. He’s never made you cry and you’re confident he never will. (There’s a saying that goes something like this: No boy/man is worth crying over and the one who is will never make you.)
3. He shows a genuine interest in the things that are important to you.
4. He fights fair.
5. He holds your hair back if/when you’re sick.
6. If your child were to come out EXACTLY like him, you’d be thrilled.

As for my own advice, which I shared with my friend, you need to learn to love yourself first. Learning to love yourself and finding self-fulfillment while single is crucial because you cannot expect a mate to fill those voids for you. Depending on a partner to meet those needs will never work and you’ll remain emotionally needy, not to mention more likely to put up with bad behavior just to be with someone.

Personally, I also promised my parents I'd never bring someone into the family who didn't fit in with them or get along with them because they mean too much to me. Plus, I want to be with a man who respects me, values me and treats me well because I will do the same in return.

Maybe this piece of advice seems obvious, but Robert Epstein, Ph.D., who is a distinguished research psychologist and former editor-in-chief of *Psychology Today* magazine, reminds us that the man needs to be "available (meaning not married or in a serious relationship), and he needs to be ready for a long-term commitment." Emotional availability (don't want someone who's pining for his ex) is also key.

Beyond that, women also need to watch out for deal breakers, meaning threats to having a future together, Epstein says. "When there is a deal breaker, that means that extremely important relationship needs – either your's or his – are not met by the other person. You want kids, for example, and he hates them. Forget about it!"

If you feel an issue is at-hand that could be a deal breaker, it's best to address it right away. "When there are deal breakers, you need to put them on the table and talk about them. If you try to hide them, they'll turn up anyway, eventually, and probably destroy your relationship – or at least make you miserable. Get them out in the open and see if you can work something out! Hey, maybe he can handle having just one kid! You never know until you talk."

Here's to happily ever after!

Kevin Federline Is a Dad Again



Happy day! Kevin Federline is a father again, according to [People](#). The former backup dancer and onetime rapper welcomed his fifth child, daughter, Jordan Kay, at 6:33 p.m. on Monday. This is the first child for his girlfriend, Victoria Prince. Federline, 33, and Prince, 28, a former competitive volleyball player from Washington State, began dating toward the end of 2008. Federline is also father to sons Jayden, 4 and 1/2, and Preston, 5 and 1/2, with ex-wife Britney Spears and son Kaleb, 7, and daughter, Kori, 10, with ex-girlfriend Shar Jackson.

How do you explain your broken relationships to your children?

Cupid's Advice:

The best thing you can do is be upfront and honest with your children. Cupid has some tips:

1. Honesty is the key: Situations are always a lot easier when you are honest with yourself and others. No matter what age, just be honest with your children. Let them know that nobody is perfect and everyone makes mistakes. Also, just because your past relationships didn't work out, it doesn't mean they were all bad experiences. Let them know that.

2. Don't play the blame game: Be sure to admit to your faults. Teach your kids that right is right and wrong is wrong. Don't make it seem like it's all the other person's fault, when it most likely wasn't. A relationship consists of two people and each has their own issues.

3. Reassure them: Tell your children that you don't plan on making the same mistakes again. Then, show them through your actions that you're serious about that statement.

How did you explain your broken relationships to your children? Share in a comment below.

What Your Favorite Summer Song Says About Your Relationship Style





By Melissa

Tierney and Molly Jacob

Almost everyone has a song that reminds them of summer. Whether it's a tune you jam to in the car, or a melody repeating on your iPod, summer anthems represent a piece of who you are and how you think, particularly when it comes to love. That's why we've taken a look at this summer's hottest hits and analyzed what we think they mean about your relationship style.

Check out what we've come up with below:

1. 'Sugar' by Maroon 5: If you crank up the volume when this song starts playing, then you're probably in a passionate and dependent relationship. You crave your significant other like sugar, and you just "need a little sweetness" in your life. You may be in desperate need of attention from your partner;

when all else goes wrong in your life, you just need “one little taste” of their love.

2. ‘I Can’t Feel My Face’ by The Weeknd: If you’re into this summer hit, you’re a tragic lover. You love being in a whirlwind romance and think that “misery is necessary when we’re deep in love.” Your significant other is more than just your baby, they’re the “death” of you. Dating advice: don’t take dating so seriously; it can be fun, too!

Related: [Love Advice: What Your Sleeping Position with Your Partner Says About You](#)

3. ‘Cheerleader’ by OMI: This fun song has been playing over the radios nonstop this summer and if you find yourself grooving along, you’re in a great relationship. You’ve found someone who is there to support you and to give you “love and affection”! Dating advice: keep your “cheerleader” close to you well past the end of the summer.

4. ‘Shut Up and Dance With Me’ by Walk The Moon: Obsessed with this song? If so, you’ve probably been dancin’ the summer away! This upbeat song is all about letting go of your troubles and hesitations, and enjoying the moment. Perhaps you’re hitting the town in your “backless dress and some beat up sneakers” or you’re just grooving with your baby, but no matter what, you’re just enjoying summer as it comes. Love advice: keep enjoying yourself, but know when to settle down and get serious with someone!

Related: [Love Advice: 5 Signs You’re in a Lukewarm Relationship](#)

5. ‘Honey I’m Good’ by Andy Grammer: This song is all about someone enjoying their night out on the town and avoiding the temptation of “those long, long legs.” But if you’re into this song, you’re all about being faithful in relationships and love. You’re all about being devoted to the person you have waiting for you back at home!

What do you think your favorite summer song says about your relationship style? Share your thoughts below!

Brooke Burke Finally Weds David Charvet



Five years after announcing their engagement, Brooke Burke and David Charvet have finally tied the knot, according to UsMagazine.com. The *Dancing With the Stars* cohost, 39, and her *Baywatch* beau tied the knot in St. Barts Friday, Burke's rep confirmed. The

couple were joined by their four children during the Caribbean ceremony. "Want to thank everyone for their support," Charvet, 39, tweeted Saturday. "It has been a great day!" The couple are parents to son Shaya, 3, and daughter, Rain, 4. Burke also has two children from her previous marriage to plastic surgeon Garth Fisher, daughters Sierra, 9, and Neriah, 11.

What are some good reasons to date a long while before marriage?

Cupid's Advice:

It's important to dig as deep as possible to make sure you know your lover inside and out before marriage. Cupid has some reasons not to move too quickly:

1. Get all your questions out: Don't let any questions go unanswered. No matter how minor they may be, every detail is crucial to getting to know the man or woman you plan on spending the rest of your life with.

2. Ask his or her family and friends: Family and friends are the ones that know you the best. Chances are if they are aware you are serious about their loved one and plan on getting married to him or her, they will be honest with you.

3. As the time goes by: There are some things you may start to realize about your mate that you didn't notice earlier in the relationship. As the time goes by, the filter lessons and the quirks come out.

Why do you think it's good to date awhile before marriage? Share your answer in a comment below.

Top 5 Ways to Get Him to Propose By Labor Day



There may only be three weeks until Labor Day, but that's still plenty of time to encourage your beau to pop the question by the end of the summer ... or at least get him in the right mindset to do so.

Dana B. Myers, sexy lifestyle expert and author of *The Official Booty Parlor Mojo Makeover*, has a unique take on how to do just that. Here are her top five tips:

1. Work It Out: Boost your confidence by adding some extra gym or spa time to your routine this summer. Taking this time to yourself will give you a new self-assured attitude that your

man will find to be oh-so-sexy.

2. Take Charge: Plan a date night that is all about him. Incorporate some of his favorite date night activities and make a reservation at his favorite restaurant. Then, prep your bikini area because if everything goes well, your night will just be getting started when you return home. Dana suggests the painless at home hair removal device, no! no! Hair. And another tip: share your little secret at the beginning of the night so that the anticipation to see what you've done will make the date even better.

3. Heat Things Up: The best way to a man's heart is through his stomach, so make him an old-fashioned, home-cooked meal, like roasted chicken or lasagna. The traditional meal will remind your man of family and starting his own. And, if you're in with his mom, ask if you can borrow one of her recipes.

4. Get Hands-on: Let your man know you're there for him after a long, stressful day of work by setting up some special pampering time just for him. This can be as simple as giving him shoulder, neck and/or foot rub. For a full body treatment try the Don't Stop Massage Candle. The candle provides a seductive glow, and when you're ready to start the massage simply blow out the flame and drizzle the warm oil onto bare skin for a uniquely intimate, exciting massage experience.

5. Change Locations: Plan a romantic summer getaway together. The vacation could present the perfect opportunity for him to pop the question, or inspire him to plan a special event on his own.

Have some ideas on how to get your man to pop the question? Share your thoughts below.

Tara Reid: Engaged and Married All In One Day



Just hours after tweeting that she “just got engaged,” Tara Reid tied the knot with her fiancé Zack Kehayov in Greece on Saturday. UsMagazine.com reported that the *American Reunion* actress recently split from her boyfriend Michael Lilleun. She was also previously engaged to Internet entrepreneur Michael Axtmann, but called it off in April 2010. Even further back, she was engaged to Carson Daly – *The Voice* host – and they ended their relationship in June 2001. Things might be happening very quickly for Reid, but we wish her all the best.

What are the advantages to eloping?

Cupid's Advice:

Weddings are expensive and can be stressful to plan. Here is why Cupid thinks eloping can be the best decision for you:

- 1. Cost:** Couples who elope will pay a nominal fee compared to those who have a wedding. Marriage licenses range from \$10 (Colorado) to \$100 (Minnesota). Your other expenses will only be your outfit, transportation and lodging.
- 2. No stress:** Planning a wedding is stressful. If you elope, you won't be overwhelmed because all you have to plan is when and where you want to marry the one you love.
- 3. Avoid drama:** If your parents object to the marriage, then avoid the drama the wedding will cause. By eloping, you'll have a simpler ceremony and won't have to deal with people who don't support you both.

Do you think it's a good idea for couples to elope? Let us know about your thoughts by commenting below.

'The Help' Star Viola Davis Plans to Follow Hollywood Trend and Adopt a Child





Yet another celebrity is jumping on the adoption bandwagon, reports [Hollyscoop](#). At the premiere of her new movie *The Help*, Viola Davis and husband Julius Tennon confirmed that they are about to adopt a baby domestically. This is the first child for the couple and third for Tennon, who has two children from previous relationships. Davis is following in the footsteps of many celebrity moms who have also recently adopted, including Sandra Bullock and Denise Richards. Bullock adopted son Louis Bardo after splitting from husband Jesse James. Denise Richards, who has two children with Charlie Sheen, adopted daughter Eloise Joni around the time her new book, *The Real Girl Next Door*, was released. Who will be next?

How do you decide whether to adopt a child or not?

Cupid's Advice:

The decision to adopt a child is extremely important and

should not be taken lightly. Cupid has some tips on how to decide if adoption is right for you:

1. Timing: Deciding to adopt requires the same amount of thought and preparation as having a child naturally. If you and your mate are emotionally ready to take on the responsibility of raising a child, then consider adoption.

2. Money: Adopting a child is very expensive. You and your partner must be financially stable before you consider it.

3. Other options: Nowadays, there are a lot of different ways to have kids. Consider all the other options, like having a child naturally, through a surrogate or becoming a foster parent before you settle on adoption.

What are some other factors to consider when deciding whether to adopt? Share your comments below.

Millionaire Matchmaker: Patti Stanger is Back, Single and Ready to Mingle





***SEASON PREMIERE* of BRAVO's The Millionaire Matchmaker 5, Monday 8/15 @ 9/8c**

Patti is back! And back where she belongs, among the beautiful blondes that need her dating guidance on the West Coast. After a stint in NYC, Patti is happy to be back in LA to tackle the troublesome single scene. Patti's first client Michael seems to be the complete package. But is it possible that he is as good as he seems? Patti digs deep to figure out what his issues are and why he is still single. Will Patti make her mark on California and keep her clients happy, or are there some drama-filled dates in this matchmaker's future?

Single and Ready to Mingle: Patti Stanger is back in LA and back on the dating scene.

Too Good to be True: Patti Stanger tries to figure out why a

good-looking guy like Michael would be single.

→

Date Idea: Play Games Amusement Park-Style



Going to the movies and dining in a nice restaurant can make for a great

evening, but it can also make time pass by way too quickly. After all, the best types of dates are the ones that last for hours and involve a lot of excitement. Are you searching for a date idea that will consist of hours of fun? Then feel the thrill of love in your relationship by visiting an amusement park with your significant other this weekend.

The best amusement parks may not be located in your area, but it's definitely worth it to drive there. The live entertainments, expositions, game booths and rides will make your day unforgettable. And who better to share these memories with other than your partner?

Take some risks by riding on roller coasters. Not a fan of heights? Then take a journey on a train around the park or ride on the bumper cars. Nothing is more romantic than taking a spin on a carousel and riding on the Ferris wheel, while looking at the skyline.

Perhaps the most exciting part about theme parks are winning games. Excite your mate by trying your luck at playing a few and winning him or her a prize. If you plan on competing with each other, make a deal at the booth – first to win will get a kiss! Of course, that would be a win for both of you.

As the day comes to an end, plan on grabbing a bite to eat before hitting the road home. Amusement parks have an abundance of great eateries, ranging from hot dog stands to five star restaurants. Maybe keeping it simple with some cotton candy or funnel cake will make for an oh-so-sweet ending.

Have a favorite date idea? Comment below and share with our readers. Until next time, have a great week!

Ali Fedotowsky Postpones Wedding Due to Femur Injury



One of the few successful couples from ABC's *Bachelor/Bachelorette* franchise have canceled their wedding – but fortunately, not for good. Former *Bachelorette* Ali Fedotowsky and the man she picked, Roberto Martinez, had to postpone saying “I do” because Fedotowsky is still recovering from a femur injury. “We had a date set, and that date has now passed,” the reality star, 26, told [People](#). “The decision to postpone [the wedding] was very difficult. I definitely shed some tears.” Fedotowsky underwent surgery in July and said that they decided to defer walking down the aisle until she could actually, well, walk.

"I don't want to limp down the aisle," she said.

What are some ways to decide when to have your wedding?

Cupid's Advice:

It seems like setting a date for your wedding should be the easy part, but sometimes unexpected factors get in the way.

Cupid has some tips on how to decide when to say "I do":

- 1. Seasons:** Love the heat? Or are you a winter weather fan? Lots of couples want their wedding to be in a certain season, so deciding on having a spring wedding, for example, should help you narrow down the date.
- 2. Family:** If you really want your grandmother to be at your wedding, but she can only travel in the summer, you may want to plan your wedding around her (or other family or friends') availability.
- 3. Planning:** When you're planning a huge wedding, you may need up to a year to plan everything. Think about how much time you need to prepare and set the date accordingly.

Are there any other factors to consider when setting the date?
Share your comments below.

8 Alternative Wedding Trends for 2011





By Cara Davis

Today's brides and grooms aren't settling for what has always been done. They're infusing creativity, personality, cultural trends and most of all, they're having fun. They're creating memorable experiences not just for themselves, but for friends and family who contribute to their big days.

Author and marketing guru Seth Godin recently spoke at a Chick-fil-A Leadercast about how the new normal is not normal at all. People are questioning why we do things the way we do, thereby turning tradition on its head. It's affecting all industries, including the wedding industry.

Here's a look at eight alternative wedding trends that are popping up in 2011:

1. Mini Wedding Dresses: Whether it's glammed up, vintage or breezy casual, knee-length wedding dresses are more practical and personalized for today's bride. As more stores roll out

wedding boutiques like J.Crew and White House Black Market, brides can pick up a wedding dress from their favorite retail store. And let's not forget that for some, that's Etsy, where they can pick up a custom hand-made gown for as little as \$40.

2. Fun with Color: From black accents to bold color blocks, color is king this year and it's not limited to the bride!

Non-matching bridesmaids are coordinating in patterns or complementary color combinations like this crafty DIY wedding of mega-blogger Elsie Larson. In addition to bold color palettes, shades of gray and stripes continue to be the big color trend for the year.

3. Alternative Gift Registries: Many couples are registering for gifts that will help them in a practical way. Travel agencies are starting to offer honeymoon gift certificates and some auto dealers are offering gift certificates toward the purchase of a new vehicle. CardAvenue.com allows couples to create a gift card registry for national retailers. Couples can get as creative as they want; they can request gift cards to home improvement stores to offset costs of home renovation or register for local restaurants so they can continue dating as newlyweds on a budget.

4. Punchy Personalization: While the structure of the wedding remains the same, (you've got a bride and groom, an officiant, a group of family and friends, a ceremony and reception) the look is anything but. The time may be different (think brunch), the seating may be smarter (seated at tables & staying put for reception), the furniture may be funky (varying size and shape or non-traditional choices) and forget the wedding favors – today's couples are giving personalized takeaways, like souvenir photo booth picture strips.

5. Eco-friendly Finds: Outdoor spaces, reclaimed furniture, flea market finds and even wooden rings are helping eco-conscious brides and grooms celebrate in a big way without the environmental impact. Green weddings can feature locally

grown food and seed-lined wedding invitations that can be planted.

CarbonFund and Terrapass offer wedding carbon footprint calculators, where air travel is most likely to be the big offender. Couples can purchase carbon offsets to lessen the impact, or request contributions as gifts.

6. The Rustic South: There's been a rise in rustic weddings in the past several years and it mirrors a growing hunger in popular culture for all things Southern (think The Civil Wars, J.Crew fashion, artisan jeans and home-brewed beer). Today's vintage and rustic weddings are all about embracing simplicity and infusing new life into old things. From location (barns or old warehouses) to furniture & decor (antiques and flea market favorites) to apparel (vintage clothes and even brooch bouquets), many couples are going for the nostalgic feel of the old South.

7. Cultural Cues: Couples who are looking to add levity to their big day are incorporating pop culture trends. Food cart fare is showing up in pre-wedding cocktail hour and the after-party. Culturally significant themes like retro Asian flavors and ethnic icons like sushi, ninjas, geisha girls and Chinese lanterns are being used in inventive ways. Vintage board games are showing up as Monopoly pieces in bouquets and Scrabble letter tiles as signs for the buffet.

8. Death of the Wedding Cake: The exorbitant cost of traditional tiered wedding cakes has given way to nontraditional desserts like square mini-cakes and cupcake tiers. Furthermore, dessert buffets may feature pies, macaroons, Whoopie Pies, cake pops, color-coordinated candy and even ice cream sundae stations or cookies and milk bars.

Weddings expert Cara Davis is the author of Cheap Ways to Tie the Knot. She also blogs from her home in Orlando, FL about cheap ways to spend and save at CheapWaysTo.com.

Carey Mulligan and Marcus Mumford: Engaged After 5 Months?



Two talented Brits are ready to walk down the aisle ... after only 5 months! Carey Mulligan and her musician boyfriend, Marcus Mumford of Mumford & Sons, reconnected last winter after being childhood pen pals in London. Mulligan, 24, and Mumford, 26, started dating seriously after the actress attended a secret Mumford &

Sons show in Nashville in February. The Oscar-nominated actress had split from Shia LaBeouf last October. A friend of the two tells UsMagazine.com, "They're a great couple. Very sweet."

Is time a factor when it comes to getting engaged?

Cupid's Advice:

Some people believe that you should date for awhile before getting engaged, while others think that when you know you've found the one, why wait? Cupid has some advice:

1. Past the honeymoon phase: Once you've gotten past that initial butterflies-in-your-stomach phase and still want to be together, then you might be ready to walk down the aisle.

2. No point in waiting: Some people subscribe to the theory that when you know, you know. If you're 100% confident that you've found the one, there's no reason to wait any longer before getting engaged. Plus, you can always have a long engagement.

3. Living together: Time might also be a factor if you're considering moving in together. While opinions differ on whether to live together before getting married, if you want to take this step before popping the question, wait a little while to get settled before getting engaged.

How long do you think you should be dating before getting engaged? Share your comments below.

Date Idea: Get Wet and Wild on the Water



With this great summer weather, it's time to have some fun in the sun. What better way to do that than by getting wet and wild on the water?

Grab your boo and head out on the water for some great waves and fun. If you don't have your own boat, why not rent one for the day? Head out to Montauk or take a ride around New York City to see some memorable sites, and cherish the time you get to spend with your love. Bring along some lunch or dinner to make your own romantic meal on the water.

If you're up for more intense action, rent a jet ski and get crazy. It's sure to be an adventure! If you're on the West Coast and are ready to have some extreme fun, why not go white water rafting? This gives you an excuse to get close to your honey when you're going over steep falls or bumps.

If you don't feel ready to hop on a jet ski or go white water rafting, take a dip in the water and go for a nice swim with your beau. In the Midwest? The Great Lakes are a "great" option. Take a trip to Southwest Michigan and indulge in some beautiful lakeside beaches, like Silver Beach in St. Joseph. No matter what you and your partner choose to do, you're bound to have tons of fun in the sun.

Do you have any tips on how to get wet and wild on the water this weekend? Share your thoughts below!

'The Bachelorette' Reality TV Star Ashley Hebert Says Her Sister's Reaction to J.P. Was Shocking





[Ashley Hebert](#)

looked forward to introducing Ben Flajnik and [J.P. Rosenbaum](#), the final two contenders on [The Bachelorette season 7](#), to her family. Her whole family loved Flajnik, but Rosenbaum didn't have the same luck. In fact, her sister was especially disapproving of her relationship and love with the contestant. *The Bachelorette* star told [People](#), "What bothered me the most was not that she didn't approve but how aggressive and unsupportive she was. All I needed at this point was someone to be supportive of whatever I was feeling...and she wasn't." Although she was crushed by her sister's reaction, Hebert decided to take her opinion with a grain of salt: "I used her uncertainty to make me ask the questions I was scared to ask but by no means did it change the way I felt about him." Hebert followed her heart and recently celebrated her celebrity engagement with Rosenbaum.

Hebert's sister wasn't thrilled about *Bachelorette* contestant Rosenbaum. What do you do if your family doesn't support your relationship and love?

Cupid's Advice:

You're torn inside. You love your partner, but your family doesn't think he or she is right for you. If you're really close to your family and value their opinion, it may be very difficult to be in this situation. Cupid has some love advice on what you can do to ease the tension:

1. Get to the heart of the issue: Talk to your family members. Find out exactly what bothers them about your boyfriend or girlfriend. Do they think your partner's not good enough for you? Do they think they are having a negative influence on you? Maybe they're simply afraid of losing you. It's important to communicate!

Related Link: [Former 'Bachelorette' Desiree Hartsock Shares Celebrity Wedding Photos](#)

2. Be firm: In order to confront your family's prejudices, you need to be firm. Tell them that you hope that they can be happy for you. Instead of asking them if they approve of your relationship and love, assert that you would be grateful to receive their support for your decision.

Related Link: [Reality TV Host Chris Harrison Reveals Twist for New Season of 'The Bachelorette'](#)

3. Allow for bonding: You've tried convincing your folks that your significant other is a great person, and it turns out that words alone won't do the trick. Your next best bet is to

have them spend time with your beau so that they can get to know each other better. Try to find some common ground between them.

Ever had a boyfriend or girlfriend your folks disliked? Share your story below!

Kim Kardashian Chooses Wedding Dress Designer Vera Wang





Bride-to-be Kim Kardashian has been in the media a lot lately, due to her recent engagement to Kris Humphries. Well, she's now being examined for what her wedding dress will look like. Kardashian revealed Monday that Vera Wang will be designing her wedding gown, according to UsMagazine.com. "Vera has been a close family friend for a long time and we had talked about this moment for years," Kardashian, 30, wrote on her blog. "So when it came to picking my wedding dress designer, she was the first person I thought of. No one designs gowns the way she does!"

How do you make choosing a wedding dress a special occasion?

Cupid's Advice:

Just have fun with it! Here are three ways to make shopping for your wedding gown an unforgettable experience:

1. Don't go by yourself: Everything always seems more fun if the ones you love are involved. Nothing is different about

shopping for your wedding dress. You want the people that you cherish to come help you along the way. They don't necessarily have to make the ultimate decision for you, but if you value them, you value their opinion.

2. Keep your big day in mind: It may get very stressful, but if you constantly keep your big day in mind, you have no choice but to smile. Think about the reason you're shopping, because the happiest day of your life is soon to come. Don't let minor things spoil this special occasion.

3. Take pictures: Take pictures? Of you in the dress shops making a decision? Yes! Memories last a lifetime, and if you can look back on those photos, you'll know that you made gown shopping an unforgettable experience.

How did you make choosing a wedding dress a special experience? Share below in a comment.

10 Signs You're Ready For a Relationship





By Marianne

Beach, GalTime.com

I'm admittedly a recovered relationship addict. I went from relationship to relationship with little or no break in between. Luckily, I was finally able to break that cycle and stay single for two years – before finally meeting my dream guy (and now husband).

But staying single for a serial monogamist is often easier said than done. After all, you're used to having a second opinion, someone to take to dinner parties and curl up with in bed. An empty house can be frightening for someone addicted to love.

But Jennifer Oikle, Ph.D., relationship psychologist, dating coach and founder of **MySoulmateSolution.com**, insists that though it's difficult, it's also ultimately rewarding and will prepare you for the relationship of your dreams.

So how do you start? First, she says, forget being committed

to a relationship and start becoming committed to yourself instead. “Become delighted by the idea of discovering who you are, without having to please someone else.”

In fact, she suggests not dating at all for a certain amount of time, so you don’t fall into old habits. “Avoid all of the typical ways you usually behave to find a new beau (going to bars, trolling the Internet, etc),” she says. “Ask a friend to be your sponsor and help you stay single.”

During that dating fast, start living for yourself. “Become involved in new hobbies, activities and same-sex friendships to help you discover who you are, what you love, what you don’t love,” Dr. Jenn says. “Allow yourself to discover new strengths, become aware of patterns which no longer serve you and begin trying out new behaviors so that you become a strong, confident, self-sufficient person, before you head back onto the dating field.”

When you are feeling more secure with yourself – and you don’t need a relationship to survive – start with casual dating first, rather than jumping in with both feet.

“By casually dating, often more than one person at a time, you can slow yourself down, by spreading your attention over more than one person – keeping you from getting over – invested in any one person too quickly,” Dr. Jenn explains. “You want to keep dating until it’s comfortable – until you aren’t running into a relationship to get away from the insecurities of dating.”

How do you know when you are finally ready to enter a real relationship? Dr. Jenn suggests you look for the following signs:

1. You’ve been on your own for at least 3-6 months and you no longer feel like you NEED a relationship just to survive.
2. You feel like you are good on your own.
3. You feel confident.

4. Your mood is stable – you don't let the little ups and downs of life throw you overboard.
 5. You can hear other people's opinions and criticism and not take it personally.
 6. Your worth isn't directly related to what other people think (as long as it is, you are too vulnerable to date).
 7. You aren't preoccupied with your ex and your emotions are no longer raw.
 8. You can think of the past and just feel mostly gratitude for what you learned AND you can explain what you learned, how you contributed to the cycle and how you will proceed differently. If you can't name those things, you aren't ready to date because you'll just make the same mistakes.
 9. You now have interests, hobbies and friendships that you are passionate about and invested in and you are serious about not dropping them for ANY man!
 10. Ask your friends – they will know! ☐
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'Bachelor' Star Elizabeth Kitt's New BF Is Spotted on Cheating Website





Elizabeth Kitt seems to be unlucky in love, to say the least. After being dumped by Jake Pavelka on *The Bachelor* and splitting from ladies' man Jesse Kovacs after dating him on *Bachelor Pad*, it looks like Kitt has found another winner. Her current squeeze, Joshua Rowley, has been spotted on Cheaterville.com, where he is listed under the headline, "Cheater is looking for easy girls online". Rowley denied the accusations of infidelity, telling [RadarOnline](#), "This is hilarious. I was only on-line dating for a week before I met Elizabeth, then I logged off. To whomever the woman is who posted this, thanks, it is a good picture. Elizabeth and I had a good laugh over this!"

What do you do if you keep ending up in dead-end relationships?

Cupid's Advice:

Some of us seem to be doomed to end up in relationships that

go nowhere. Cupid has some tips on how to avoid those dead-end affairs:

1. Date outside your comfort zone: Like bad boys? Try dating nice guys. If you start dating people who aren't your usual type, you might get different results.

2. Change your behavior: Love is a two way street, and after every breakup, you need to think about what you could have changed. Take what you learned to make the next relationship better.

3. Ask for help: Your friends have been with you through all the ups and downs in your love life. Find out their opinions about your next boyfriend or girlfriend to see if they think you're going down the wrong path again.

How do you break the cycle of bad relationships? Share your comments below.

Jesse James and Kat Von D Split Due to Distance





The rumors are rolling once again about Jesse James and Kat Von D, as they recently announced that they are calling off their wedding. This time it's official. Not only did they call off the engagement, but they've also broken up. They were in a long distance relationship, with James in Austin and Von D in LA. When [People](#) asked Von D whether she would relocate to be with her boyfriend, she responded, "If only it were that easy. Having two places we call home will be good for now. In the end, home is where the heart is, and my heart's with him. " Unfortunately, the couple couldn't keep doing the long distance thing.

What are some ways to keep a long distance relationship strong?

Cupid's Advice:

Surviving a long distance relationship can be tough. Cupid has some tips on how to prevent letting distance loosen the bond:

1. Communicate: Make an effort to frequently communicate. You're probably both caught up in your daily routines, but make sure to schedule a regular time to talk to your loved one via skype or phone. You can also keep each other up-to-date via email and text, but it's important that you hear each other's voices.

2. Visit: Of course the sound of your partner's voice isn't always going to be enough. You'll need some physical contact in order for the relationship to persevere. Take turns making trips to see one another, and make sure that you share the responsibility equitably.

3. Trust: Starting a long distance relationship means unforeseeable changes and challenges in both of your lives. If your partner starts forming new circles of friends or engaging in new activities, don't assume the worst. Just take a breather and have faith that your partner will remain loyal to you.

Have you ever been in a long distance relationship? Share your experiences below.

Cameron Diaz and A-Rod Spend a Domestic Weekend Together





A movie star and a New York Yankee: could there be a more glamorous couple? But in Miami this past weekend, Cameron Diaz and Alex Rodriguez actually spent a low-key, domestic couple of days together. According to [RadarOnline](#), the high-profile twosome was spotted having a casual meal out and stopping at a local Whole Foods grocery store. Diaz, 38, is enjoying a break from filming her new movie, *What to Expect When You're Expecting*.

What are some signs that you've settled into a serious relationship with someone?

Cupid's Advice:

After the honeymoon phase of the relationship is over, you and your sweetie will either get serious or call it quits. Cupid has some signs that you've settled down with your mate:

1. It's the little things: Doing everyday things together, like grocery shopping, shows that you're serious as a couple

because you don't need to impress each other anymore.

2. You have a routine: If you know that Tuesday night is pizza night and Saturday you go to the park together, you've settled into a routine with your partner. Once you've gotten into a groove, you've also settled into a serious relationship.

3. Nothing to hide: When you and your mate are totally honest with each other and don't care about showing your flaws, you're in deep. You're probably past the honeymoon phase when you're comfortable being in your sweats with no makeup on in front of your mate.

How do you know when your relationship is serious? Share your comments below.

Justin Timberlake Says He Should Not Be Giving Love Advice





Not everyone can dole out love advice like Cupid can. At the premiere of his new movie *Friends With Benefits*, Justin Timberlake said he is the last person anybody should ask for relationship tips, UsMagazine.com reports. "I think it's pretty obvious that I should not be giving anybody love advice," the actor/musician said, adding, "Yeah, listen to a single male... That'll work out." Timberlake, 30, split with Jessica Biel in March.

How do you know if someone giving you love advice is credible?

Cupid's Advice:

Some people have more bad luck in the love arena than others and may not be the best source of relationship advice. Cupid has some tips on how to know when someone is giving you reliable tips:

1. Single: Don't get your relationship advice from one of your perpetually single friends. There's nothing wrong with being single, but if they've never had a long-term relationship,

they probably can't help you out.

2. In a relationship: On the other hand, someone who has been in a perfect, trouble-free relationship for as long as you can remember might have trouble giving you tips on how to overcome relationship hurdles.

3. Different experiences: If you ask a friend who doesn't believe in monogamy what to do when you think your mate is cheating, they may give you a biased response. In other words, talk to someone with the same outlook on love.

Who do you go to (besides Cupid) for relationship advice? Share your comments below.

How to Deal With Life After Divorce





By Mark Shields

Divorce can be a truly painful experience, and people deal with the aftermath in different ways. Some begin to see the light at the end of the tunnel quickly, while others continue to foster darkness and deeper feelings of pain and loss. The key is to choose the path that leads you towards the light by keeping yourself active, staying close with friends, developing new relationships and becoming a healthier person mentally, physically and spiritually.

Stay Active

Once divorced, you may find you have much more time on your hands to participate in activities you've always wanted to do. Have you ever wanted to take a tennis lesson? Now is the time to do it! You might also consider joining an adventure group who experiences the wonders of the outdoors and who climbs, bikes, hikes or simply meanders through the paths and trails of nature. There are organizations of all kinds that don't necessarily call themselves 'support' groups, but just turn

out to be supportive. It's a great way to meet new and interesting people and to get in touch with yourself. Some other ideas include: book clubs, ballroom dancing and taking fitness classes at a gym. No matter what your interest, do some research to find your niche.

Write

Writing is another way to exfoliate your pain. Grab a leather journal, and begin a journey. Write down everything you feel, think and dream without anyone looking over your shoulder. There should be no one there to judge you; you're just answering to yourself. It's a great way to cleanse your system of all of the hurt and pain you've recently experienced.

Hang with Friends

Staying close with those you care about is important. How many times have you been there for your friends when they were having a tough time? Just try to remember that you're not burdening your friends when you need them during the divorce process. Feeling lonely in an empty house? Call up a pal and go for a walk or watch a funny movie together. Being surrounded by love in this hard time is one of the best forms of medicine, as long as you open up and allow them inside to comfort you.

Be Healthy

You will also want to get on a health routine if you haven't already started one. Working out helps boost your endorphins and can turn sadness and sorrow upside down, giving you hope and happiness. Join a gym, a hiking club or a sports team. Even just getting out there for and walking your pain away can be just what you need.

No matter what you do, let go of your past and live in the

present. Once you've used these ideas to fully move on, you can look forward to your future.

Mark Shields is a partner at the law offices of Gillespie, Shields & Durrant. His specialties as a Phoenix family lawyer include Paternity and Grandparent's rights. He has been practicing law in Arizona since 1997.