

ONLINE HUMAN INTERACTION

PART 3

The actual experiences of web users detailing their tips,
thoughts and dynamics

A GUIDE TO INTERNET SAFETY AND EXPECTATION

THE BIG M: TYING THE KNOT

Of all the decisions you make in your life, few are as important as who you choose to marry or live with. Make a bad choice and you can spend your days and nights mired in unhappiness or consumed by anxiety or depression, conditions that not only rob your mental health but undermine your physical health as well.

So, do yourself a big favor and make sure you choose a mate wisely. Yes, you need some basic relationship skills like communication, problem solving and conflict resolution. But, you also need a partner who's willing to engage in all of them with you and create what most of us want more than anything -- a sense of closeness to someone else.

As you grow to know someone you determine what you can and can't trust. You also rely on him/her to meet certain needs. As time goes by, you develop some level of commitment. And finally, in a romantic relationship, there is sexual chemistry, which prompts touch.

These are the five bonding forces that form the glue of your relationship, he stresses. And, here's the catch -- they must grow together in a balanced way. You must keep your heart and your head in harmony. So you never let one of the five forces too far ahead of your progress in any of the others

Of all the decisions you make in your life, few are as important as who you choose to marry or live with. Make a bad choice and you can spend your days and nights mired in unhappiness or consumed by anxiety or depression, conditions that not only rob your mental health but undermine your physical health as well.

You might be consigned to economic instability or subjected to physical or verbal abuse. Or you might find yourself struggling as a single parent. The consequences of a poor choice, and of marital dissatisfaction or even disruption, are far-reaching, extending even to the next generation.

There is, ladies and gentlemen, a science of mate selection, as it's known in the psych biz. Relationships are not mysterious entities that enter your life through a magical flash of lightning

sometimes called “chemistry.” That, folks, has nothing to do with the ability to form an enduring bond.

Love isn’t blind at all. Healthy relationships are in fact built on love, trust, commitment, intimacy and attachment.

A relationship begins with knowing someone, and the state of what you know controls the other dynamics. Your knowledge of someone grows with mutual self-disclosure and diverse experiences together, shared together over time. It’s important to see the way your partner functions in a variety of settings -- with friends, with family, with bosses and coworkers, with strangers, with children.

There are five crucial areas to deeply explore and come to know during the dating process:

Family background and childhood dynamics.

Attitudes and actions of the conscience and maturity.

The scope of your compatibility potential.

The examples of other relationship patterns.

Strength of relationship skills. These are the areas that best predict what a person will be like as a spouse and parent. Using

this approach, Van Epp insists, you can follow your heart without losing your mind.

Conflicts in the Relationships

Have you ever had a disagreement or misunderstanding with your spouse? If you're truthful, the answer will most certainly be "Yes!". Conflict in relationships is inevitable. Even the best relationships experience conflict from time to time. The key to success in relationships is how couples handle their conflicts and differences.

About half of all relationships in the United States end in divorce. It is obvious that many people do not get married and live "happily ever after." However, relationships continues to be an important goal for most Americans. In fact, over 90 percent of adults will get married at least once in their lifetime. Most spouses start out full of hopes and dreams and are truly committed to making their relationships work. Yet as the reality of living with a less than perfect spouse sets in and the pressures of life build, many individuals feel less romantic and do not find as much satisfaction in their relationships. All relationships change over time. But with hard work and dedication, people can keep their relationships strong and enjoyable. How is it done? What does it take to create a long-lasting, satisfying relationships?

A volume of research indicates that most successful relationships share some key characteristics. This guide will explore these in detail. It will also focus on marital conflict and the skills needed to handle it effectively. Finally, the guide will discuss ways that spouses can strengthen their relationships.

Characteristics of happy and satisfying relationships

Consider the positive aspects of your relationships. What are you doing that works well and brings you and your spouse joy and happiness? If you have a satisfying relationships, chances are that your relationship has high levels of positivity, empathy, commitment, acceptance, love and respect. These are some of the characteristics that researchers have found to be common in successful relationships. Let's look at each of these factors.

Positivity

John Gottman, one of the nation's leading experts on marital relationships, has found that the main difference between stable and unstable relationships is the amount of positive thoughts and actions spouses engage in toward each other. Through careful observation of hundreds of couples, he has come to the conclusion that successful spouses have far more positive than negative interactions. If there is too much negativity — criticizing, demanding, name-calling, holding grudges, etc. — the relationship will suffer. However, if there is never any negativity, it probably means that frustrations and grievances are not getting air time and unresolved tension is accumulating inside one or both partners. The key is balance between the two extremes. There are many ways to foster positivity in a relationships. Being affectionate, truly listening to each other, taking joy in each

other's achievements and being playful are just a few examples of positive interactions that help make relationships successful.

Empathy

Another characteristic of happy relationships is empathy. Empathy means understanding a person's perspective by putting oneself in his or her shoes. Many researchers have shown that empathy is important for relationship satisfaction. People are more likely to feel good about their relationships and spouse if their partner expresses empathy towards them. Husbands and wives are more content in their relationships when they perceive that their spouses truly understand their thoughts and feelings.

Commitment

Successful relationships involve both spouses' commitment to the relationship. When two people are truly dedicated to making their relationships work, despite the unavoidable challenges and obstacles that come, they are much more likely to have a relationship that lasts. In most Western cultures, individualism is highly valued. Individualism focuses on the needs and fulfillment of the self. Being attentive to one's own needs is important, but if it is not balanced by a concern for the needs of others, it can easily lead to selfishness in relationships. Husbands and wives who only focus on themselves and their own desires are not as likely to find joy and satisfaction in their relationships. However, when spouses are committed to investing in their relationships and are willing to sacrifice some of their own preferences for the good of the relationship, they usually have high-quality relationships.

Acceptance

One of the most basic needs in a relationship is acceptance. Everyone wants to feel valued and respected. When people feel that their spouses truly accept them for who they are, they are usually more secure and confident in their relationships. Often, there is conflict in relationships because partners cannot accept the individual preferences of their spouses and try to demand change from one another. When one person tries to force change from another, he or she is usually met with resistance. However, research has shown that change is much more likely to occur when spouses respect differences and accept each other unconditionally. Basic acceptance is vital to a happy relationships.

Mutual love and respect

Perhaps the most important components of successful relationships are love and respect for each other. This may seem very obvious — why would two people get married who did not love and respect each other? The fact is, as time passes and life becomes increasingly complicated, the relationships often suffers as a result. It is all too easy for spouses to lose touch with each other and neglect the love and romance that once came so easily. It is vital that husbands and wives continue to cultivate love and respect for each other throughout their lives. If they do, it is highly likely that their relationships will remain happy and satisfying.

Managing conflict

Have you ever experienced a disagreement, difference of opinion, or misunderstanding with your spouse? If you answer

truthfully, the answer will almost certainly be, "Yes, of course." Conflict in relationships is inescapable. All marital relationships — even the best ones — will experience at least some conflict from time to time. However, many people are successful and happy in their relationships, despite the conflicts that arise. The key to their success is how they handle their conflicts and disagreements. This section will explore many issues related to conflict, such as common areas of contention in relationships, gender differences in communication styles, and the importance of proper management of conflict. It will also discuss skills for handling conflict and how to solve problems in relationships.

More on common areas of conflict

Although all relationships are different, spouses frequently experience several common areas of conflict. Here are brief descriptions of some typical issues that spark conflict in relationships.

Money

Regardless of the amount of money a couple has, it is often the biggest source of marital conflict. Husbands and wives often have very diverse ideas about how money should be handled because they have experienced different family values and goals regarding money. Potential disagreements about money include how to spend it, how much to save and who should be responsible for paying the bills. It is important for spouses to discuss their values and feelings about money so each partner can try to understand the other. Constructing a budget and financial planning often require negotiation and compromise, but they are important tasks and aid spouses in identifying their priorities and goals for the future.

In-laws

Conflicts over in-laws are usually most problematic in the first years of relationships. A common issue that arises is one partner feeling that his or her in-laws are too critical or intrusive. Husbands and wives may disagree about the length and frequency of their parents' visits. Some people may also feel that their spouse is too dependent upon his or her parents. All of these in-law issues can trigger conflict within the family. Spouses can deal with in-law problems by sharing their feelings and discussing what kind of relationship they would like with their in-laws. It is important to avoid being accusatory and speaking critically of one's in-laws, especially during such talks. Expressing negativity towards in-laws tends to worsen the situation because it alienates spouses from each other and promotes defensiveness.

Sex

Sex is an emotion-filled issue and many spouses are afraid of getting hurt or rejected by their partners in this area. Thus, people frequently avoid discussing their feelings and expectations about sex. Even when partners do talk about sexuality issues, they are often embarrassed and speak indirectly about their feelings. These patterns can lead to conflict in the marital relationship. Difficulties with sex often reflect problems in other areas of the relationships as well. In order for couples to resolve conflicts about sexual matters, it is crucial that they communicate directly and specifically about their needs and desires. Many people feel very vulnerable in this area, so it is important that the discussion be done in a gentle, loving manner.

Children

Child rearing is a time-consuming task that requires huge amounts of energy. It's easy for spouses to become frustrated with each other over this issue. Husbands and wives often have conflicting views about how to parent because they were raised differently. Agreement about the best way to raise children may not always be possible, so it is necessary that spouses learn to compromise and negotiate in this area. Whatever decisions and rules parents make, it is important that they be united in front of their children. Otherwise, the children will learn to play one parent off the other, further contributing to marital disharmony.

Gender differences in conflict

Due to a combination of social and biological factors, men and women have different styles of interacting and handling conflict. Women raise concerns and problems far more often than men do. Men are more likely to avoid conflict and downplay the strong emotions that they feel inside. When men close down and suppress their feelings, women often become more insistent that they discuss the issues that have been raised. At this point, however, men only want to withdraw further. These different ways of interacting can lead to frustration and misunderstandings.

In order to overcome frustration with communication styles, it is essential that both husbands and wives improve their methods of dealing with conflict. Wives need to make sure that they bring up issues gently and in a positive, non-confrontational manner. A soft, gentle approach in introducing a topic for discussion usually has a greater chance of leading to a satisfactory solution

for both partners. Husbands need to respond to their wives' concerns and complaints in a respectful manner. They can learn to recognize when their wives need to talk and take a more active role in resolving issues instead of withdrawing. It is each partner's responsibility to respect and honor his or her spouse and make an effort to communicate as effectively as possible.

The importance of managing conflict well

Although some conflict is unavoidable, it is critical that spouses manage their differences in constructive ways. There are several reasons for this. First, if husbands and wives do not handle conflict effectively, it is likely that negativity will increasingly become part of their relationship. As unresolved conflict and negativity grow in a relationships, the good aspects of the relationship often diminish and partners become disenchanted with each other. Second, research has shown that, when spouses are unhappy in their relationships, they tend to experience more physical and emotional problems than do happily married couples. People who are satisfied with their relationships even tend to live longer than those in unhappy relationships.

This finding leads to a third reason why it is important for spouses to manage their conflict well. A strong and satisfying relationships establishes a firm foundation from which spouses can function. When the quality of relationships is positive and supportive, partners can better attend to their personal responsibilities and obligations. A strong relationships also provides people with a greater opportunity to develop their personalities and talents than does an unhappy union. Although relationships requires a considerable amount of time and effort, it is crucial that partners care for their own needs and

development as well. They can best do this when the relationship is warm and encouraging and they know how to handle marital conflict effectively.

Finally, it is essential that spouses practice good conflict management skills for the sake of their children. Conflict and hostility are extremely harmful to children's well-being. Many studies have shown that marital conflict leads to poor outcomes in children, such as decreased self-esteem, greater stress and anxiety, low achievement at school and behavioral problems. Conversely, spouses who support each other and have peaceful relationships are more likely to have well-adjusted, competent children. However, an unhappy relationship should not be preserved solely for the children's sake. Children in two-parent families marked by a lot of conflict often fare worse than those in families that have undergone a peaceful divorce. Whatever the situation, it is important that spouses learn to manage their disagreements effectively and control the amount of conflict in their relationship. This will help foster the well-being of themselves and their children.

Skills for handling conflict

Because managing conflict is so important, it is essential that you practice certain skills that will enable you to handle conflict well. The following sections highlight some of the skills needed for dealing with differences and disagreements effectively.

Open communication

Good communication can be difficult at times — especially during conflict. People often hear a different message than what the speaker intended. There are several possible reasons for this. First, spouses are often preoccupied with their own concerns or are preparing a rebuttal and do not really listen

to what their partners are saying. Second, spouses may perceive their partners' messages negatively if they are tired or in a bad mood. Finally, different styles of communicating can also result in misunderstandings.

Partners can learn to communicate better by developing more effective ways of speaking and listening. It is important to take turns in a conversation so each can have the opportunity to express his or her thoughts and ideas. The person talking should focus on his own feelings and not attempt to read his partner's mind. He should also be positive and avoid making accusations or criticizing his spouse. The person listening needs to be aware of her body language. Eye rolling, negative facial expressions and crossing one's arms may signal disapproval to the person who is speaking. Even if the listener does not agree with what her partner is saying, she needs to make an attempt to understand his viewpoint and be respectful. Showing genuine interest in someone's feelings and refraining from giving unsolicited advice go a long way in creating an atmosphere that is conducive to positive communication.

Ideas for effective marital communication

- When your spouse talks to you, try to understand what he or she is feeling.
- Give your partner both verbal and nonverbal feedback so he or she will know that you have understood what he or she meant.

- Be aware of the nonverbal messages you send when someone is talking to you, such as facial expressions or body posture. These can be very powerful!
- Refrain from voicing judgmental comments and jumping to conclusions before your partner is done speaking.
- Show respect for your spouse's perspective, even if you do not agree with it.
- Take the time to really listen when your spouse needs to talk. Doing this will help him or her feel that you value his or her opinions and ideas.
- When you need to have an important discussion, remove distractions as much as possible so you can talk with each other more easily. For example, take a walk outside in order to get away from the telephone or talk in your bedroom where the children will not interrupt.
- Communicate clearly and directly so your partner will have a greater opportunity to understand you.
- When you are speaking, focus on expressing your own feelings, not trying to guess what your partner is thinking.

Controlling negative thoughts

The way a person treats others usually reflects the kinds of thoughts he or she has about them. This pattern holds true for spouses, especially during times of conflict. When partners focus on each other's shortcomings and weaknesses, they often fall prey to having negative thoughts about each other. This negative thinking makes it more likely that they will treat each other unkindly.

Suppose a wife comes home from work at the end of a long, hard day in a bad mood. Her husband is in the kitchen making dinner and calls out, "How was your day?" Instead of responding to his question, the wife snaps at him for having left his coat and briefcase on the kitchen table. How might the husband react? If he is in the habit of thinking positively about his wife and giving her the benefit of the doubt, he may think, "She must have had a really hard day." He might stop what he is doing and give his wife his full attention so he could try to find out what is really bothering her. However, if the husband takes offense at his wife's complaint and thinks, "Here I am, cooking dinner, and all she can do is criticize me," he will be more likely to respond negatively to his wife's complaint and further escalate the conflict.

Research supports these ideas about the power of one's thoughts. Relationships researchers have determined that stable relationships have more positive than negative interactions, while the opposite is true for unstable unions. Because negative interactions are often fueled by one's thoughts, negative thinking can have a significant impact upon a relationship. Therefore, because the substance of a person's thoughts is often a powerful determinant of his actions, it is very important for spouses to control the way they think about each other. Husbands and wives can do this during times of conflict by focusing on the troublesome issue instead of their partner's flaws. By keeping their feelings about the issue and their spouse separate, it is more likely that they will manage conflict better and have a healthier relationship.

Forgiveness

Because there will be hurt feelings and conflict from time to time in every relationships, it is very important that spouses forgive each other when

arguments and disagreements occur. Forgiveness enables partners to stay emotionally connected and keep their relationships positive. If people want their relationships to grow and become stronger, they must be willing to forgive their spouses whenever necessary. When spouses do not forgive each other, remain bitter and hold grudges, they often experience physical and emotional problems. Thus, forgiveness is important to the individual health of each partner as well as to the health of the relationship!

Problem solving

All couples will encounter problems in their relationships that will require problem solving skills. At these times, it is very important that the spouses work together as a team, instead of insisting on their point of view and working against each other. It is crucial to understand problems before attempting to solve them. Problem solving is a much smoother process when spouses have discussed the issue thoroughly and each partner feels understood. Surprisingly, research has shown that after a good discussion about a troublesome issue, most people are so satisfied that there is no need to come up with a solution to the problem. Usually, people just want the opportunity to express themselves and feel as if they have really been understood.

Of course, many problems still need to be resolved, even after open, productive discussion. Markman, Stanley and Blumberg, a team of prominent relationships researchers, have identified an effective process for solving problems.

- It helps to set a specific time to work on the problem so that partners can mentally and emotionally prepare. During the meeting, spouses should think of as many solutions to the problem as possible, ruling out nothing until all possible solutions have been presented.

- The next step is to choose the solution, or combination of solutions, that will best solve the problem. It is likely that negotiation and compromise will be necessary at this step of the problem solving process.
- After testing the chosen solution for an agreed upon length of time, it is important for spouses to discuss the solution and whether the problem is being solved adequately. If not, adjustments should be made.

Not every issue that arises will require such an extensive problem solving process, but these steps can help couples solve their problems in a calm, controlled manner.

Changing oneself first

It is common for husbands and wives to overlook their own weaknesses and focus instead on the faults of their spouse. In some relationships, one person feels that his or her partner is the cause of their marital problems and the only one who really needs to change in order for the relationship to improve. This may occasionally be true. However, in the vast majority of relationships, both partners make a contribution to the conflict and problems that arise.

It is crucial that spouses realize that the only person's behavior they can control is their own. In relationships, it is typical for partners to become annoyed or irritated with what they perceive to be their spouses' personal shortcomings, unusual habits and weaknesses. For example, a wife may feel upset because her

husband arrives home from work late on a regular basis. Or, the husband may resent how his wife cuts him off in the middle of conversations. Frustration over shortcomings such as these often builds over time, motivating people to insist that their partners change. However, people usually end up discovering that their demands are not granted and their efforts to change their partners have failed.

Instead of trying to compel each other to change, it is more effective for partners to honestly assess themselves and think about what they can do to make the relationship better. Considering the contributions they make to disagreements and trying to overcome their own weaknesses will accomplish far more than dwelling on their spouse's faults. **When husbands and wives stop trying to change each other and instead shift their attention to improving their own behavior, they will likely be more content, even if their partner continues to do the things that they do not like**

When spouses choose to make changes in themselves first, regardless of what their partner does, they are often surprised to find that the overall quality of their relationship improves dramatically. In an ideal situation, of course, both spouses continually strive to improve themselves and overcome their weaknesses. However, one spouse is often more committed to self-improvement than the other, at least for a while. Nevertheless, even if the other person does not feel a need to change himself or herself, the relationships will likely improve through the efforts of the one trying to change.

Strengthening the marital relationship

Although it is important for spouses to learn how to resolve differences, having a good relationships requires more than just

being able to manage conflict effectively. What else is needed to create a strong and satisfying relationships? Recent research has shown that the most satisfied spouses have relationships based on good friendship. Nurturing the positive aspects of the marital relationship on a regular basis is also important. This final section will highlight ways in which husbands and wives can strengthen their relationships, including being good friends, performing daily acts of kindness, sharing enjoyable times and creating family traditions.

Remain good friends

Many people say that having a friendship with their spouse is an important goal of their relationships. Life usually becomes more complicated as relationships progresses. If a marital relationship is not built upon a solid foundation of friendship, it may become more difficult for partners to stay connected over time. It is also easy for spouses to become less polite and respectful to each other as time passes because they feel more comfortable with each other. However, spouses who remain good friends throughout life usually find much more enjoyment and satisfaction in their relationship.

There are many things spouses can do to keep their friendship alive.

- Set aside a specific time each day to talk and reconnect. In some relationships, spouses stop confiding in each other and stop having stimulating discussions, only to later discover that they do not know each other very well

anymore. All people change over time, and partners need to continue to learn about each other's thoughts, feelings, and ideas.

- Another way to maintain friendship in relationships is to have weekly "dates." Dates allow spouses to spend time along together, which can be especially important if they have children. Partners can also build friendship by trying to avoid conflict during "couple times," making the time spent together more enjoyable and memorable.

How to be best friends

- Talk.
- Hold hands.
- Go for walks.
- Dance.
- Play games.
- Work on a mutual project together.
- Plan little surprises for each other.
- Laugh together.
- Compliment each other often.
- Create memories together.
- Leave unexpected notes of praise.

- Develop signals that say "I love you."
- Go on a date.
- Say "thank you" for little kindnesses.
- Talk about your dreams.
- Listen to music.
- Say "I love you."
- Remember birthdays and anniversaries.
- Have a candlelight dinner.
- Go for an evening or afternoon drive.

Perform daily acts of kindness

Another way for couples to strengthen their relationships is to express fondness and concern for each other on a daily basis. Showing kindness in little ways is important for several reasons. First, it enables spouses to increase their love for each other and become better friends. It also keeps little annoyances from being blown out of proportion, which helps the relationship stay strong. Daily acts of kindness can also promote the growth of romance in the relationships. When many people think about romance, they envision going away for a weekend to celebrate their anniversary or receiving a dozen roses. Instances such as these are certainly romantic. However, John Gottman has found that true romance is best preserved when partners frequently respect and care for each other in ordinary ways.

There is an endless variety of little things spouses can do to show thoughtfulness to each other on a daily basis. A few examples include writing love notes or sending special e-mail messages, helping each other with a project and preparing a favorite breakfast. It is important that spouses do not take for granted the power of such actions. Performing small, simple acts of kindness regularly can have a dramatic impact upon the quality of one's relationships.

Share enjoyable times

Most relationships start out with a lot of emphasis on dating and having fun together. After they get married, many spouses become busier and stop making special times a priority. However, **it is very important for partners to take the time to enjoy their relationship**

Research has shown that the amount of fun time spouses spend together is a major factor in the happiness of their relationships. Sharing enjoyable times prevents people from getting bored with their relationships and helps rejuvenate them when they are very busy and preoccupied with other cares and concerns.

In order for spouses to increase the amount of enjoyment in their relationship, it is likely that they will have to deliberately plan leisure time into their schedules. Planning and scheduling goes a long way in ensuring that the activity will actually happen and not be shoved aside by a more pressing matter. Spouses can have fun together in simple ways, such as going on picnics, taking walks, laughing together and having long talks. They can also plan more extensive times for pleasure, such as all-day outings or vacations. It does not matter what the activity is, as long as it allows both partners to relax and enjoy each other's company.

Create family traditions

Observing family traditions and rituals is another way spouses can strengthen their relationships. Traditions and rituals serve many important functions in families. First, they enable husbands and wives to figure out what is important to them and their relationship. They also give meaning and predictability to relationships and families. Rituals help couples recharge themselves from the stresses of everyday life and increase the amount of intimacy in their relationships. A relationship that is marked by many traditions and rituals is often richer and more purposeful than those that are not.

There are many ways to incorporate traditions and rituals into the marital relationship.

- Having a private conversation at the end of each day is one common ritual observed by many spouses.
- Going on a weekly date is another typical relationship ritual. However, traditions and rituals can be less formal than these examples. In fact, many relationships include traditions and rituals of which the spouses may be unaware.
- Kissing each other goodbye each morning, talking on the phone during lunch and taking walks on a regular basis are all examples of less obvious rituals.
- Many spouses also have rituals connected to special days, such as Valentine's Day and wedding anniversaries.

These traditions enable them to reaffirm their love and devotion to one another. Whether traditions and rituals in relationships

are simple or elaborate, they are important and give the relationship shared meaning and significance.

Equal Opportunity

Our Relationships prohibits discrimination against any individual on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, age, national origin, physical or mental disability, sexual orientation, or because of marital, parental, or veteran status. This policy extends to all rights, privileges, programs and activities, including housing, employment, admissions, financial assistance, and educational and athletic programs. Our Relationships recognizes that non-discrimination does not ensure that equal opportunity is a reality for all friends, applicants for employment, and acquaintances. Because of this, the Relationship will continue to take affirmative action to ensure that friends and acquaintances alike are treated equally during their employment and/or matriculation.

Our Relationships strongly encourages minority group members, veterans, disabled individuals, and women to apply for positions for which they are qualified and that are of interest to them.

Boundary Issues:

Using Boundary Intelligence To Get the Intimacy You Want and the Independence You Need in Life, Love, And Work, by Jane Adams, PhD:

- Define To Ourselves and Articulate To the Other What Our Own Boundary Style Is:
 - Identify How That Affects Ours and the other person's perceptions of priorities made and boundaries drawn in context of the relationship.
1. Awareness: Why? Have boundaries; why have defined or NOT defined them?
 2. Insight: understand what are our own and others' impulses, desires, and decisions are and utilize knowledge to relieve internal and external conflict between us.
 3. Intention: Why blurring of boundaries, lack of definition, how does the intention or lack of intention affect our relationship?: Develop strategy to resolve conflict: Need to compromise to share losses and future gains together for health of relationship
 4. Action: Implement Course of Action
- Man would identify by agreed on period if he is serious
 - Based on that, he would cease dating activities or anything else that might give impression that she is not important.
 - Activities Include:
 - Man would see women on an as-needed business basis in any setting that is prudent and does not violate the

relationships.

- In event that business requires one-on-one meetings to be held in traditional office during normal business hours.

How this policy applies to meeting strangers in public or service providers: financial planners, real estate, friends? Employees that you would inevitably hire and inadvertently develop a crush on you

- Being civil and friendly is the norm.
- Differentiate business prospects from flirtations; If you like public flirtations, you're not ready for a truly serious relationship in my opinion.
- If they ask you personal questions, inquire about their boyfriend or husband, tell them you have a serious girlfriend and are happy, even if I made you miserable that day.
- Steer conversation away from personal chatter.

How Does This Policy Apply To Women He Already Knows?

- Communications With women, if he is serious would be business related only.
- Sexual suggestively or flirtatious communications, phone calls, conversations, jokes, or e-mail are out of bounds to either receive or to send.
- If he has been the object of this behavior by an acquaintance and they have no significant business production, he would cut them out of his social circle.
- He should not be in proximity of a woman whereas she would be able and close enough to touch him in a suggestive manner. (Physical Boundary)
- He should not be in any conversation either in the phone or in person to a point that he can be propositioned (or boundaries have not been set either with the person or in the conversation).

Pre-Nuptial Terms

If the idea of bringing up a prenup seems uncomfortable...you are not alone. Many people carry preconceived notions (and baggage) about prenups (prenuptial agreements also known as premarital agreements). However, more and more couples are using the prenup process to stimulate important conversations about how they define and safeguard their marital union (lifestyle, roles, financial responsibility). While prenups have

received a lot of public and media attention lately, many people still don't understand their value. Not convinced yet? Read on.

Why?

Bringing up the subject of a prenuptial agreement can be a great way to learn more about your expectations, dreams and hopes. By starting down this communication path now, you are well on your way to creating a mutually fulfilling partnership. Whether you have high assets or are just starting out, have children or don't, there are dozens of reasons a prenup is beneficial to you and your spouse. Here are just a few:

- To determine how you and your spouse define equality in your partnership
- To establish the value of non-monetary contributions to a relationships, such as being a stay at home spouse and career sacrifices
- To cover your pre-relationships nest egg (such as your home, pension plan, stock portfolio, or property with emotional value)
- To protect gifts and inheritances you receive
- To ensure that in the event of death or divorce, you will avoid difficult disputes over property (such as family businesses, stock options, professional degrees, licenses and practices, pension plans, and copyrights)
- To ensure that children from a prior relationships receive their intended inheritance

- To allocate any pre-relationships ownership/partnership in a business
- To protect yourself from your partners' pre-relationships debt, ie credit card debt or prior loans

When?

Sliding a prenup across the dinner table a week before the wedding is not the appropriate time to bring up this important conversation! Conversations about concerns, expectations, and responsibilities are best had early in the relationship. As your relationship gets more serious, your conversations should get more detailed and specific.

Where?

Where do you normally discuss topics important to your partnership, such as life goals, finances or family? Find or create a calm, neutral spot where you will both feel open, at ease and unpressured. Whether it's your living room sofa, an afternoon walk or a quiet dinner, you'll want to create an environment where both of you are most comfortable- mentally and physically.

How?

You've gone through the why, when, and where, now here's the "how". Even when couples understand the reasons for these relationships contracts, many aren't sure just how to initiate the discussion. Take a look at these suggestions to get you started on the "HOW".

- Openly, honestly, directly

- State your specific concerns
- Present an idea to be implemented by the two of you over time
- Invite discussion about any underlying issues that arise
- Work out your issues collaboratively

Conversation starters:

"I believe that relationships is a fifty-fifty proposition, and I'm concerned about giving up my job to become a full-time stay at home spouse. Can we establish a principle of 50-50 sharing at the outset?"

"Let's talk about our future, what we both want, our lifestyles, our present and future finances. I want to make sure all our money issues are addressed and resolved in an agreement. Then we won't have them hanging over us when we get married."

"One thing I have to consider before I get married is my parents' business. I need to be confident that the business will remain in the family in the event the unthinkable occurs."

There's HELP!

Need more help bringing the topic of a prenup up and having the conversation? This guide will help anyone who is looking to effectively build a strong and honest long-term relationship.

Prenup No-no's

- Springing a prenup upon your intended
- Presenting the idea of a prenup as a fait accompli

- Suggesting a prenup at the last moment
- Being overbearing or heavy handed

REMEMBER: Don't let a prenup fall to the bottom of your "To Do" list. The discussions you have revolving around the prenup are conversations you **WILL** have once you are married. Getting to know your partner's position on these important aspects **early** can help head-off more difficult discussions during the relationships. If you can't talk about touchy issues, it doesn't bode well for the relationships.

We agree to sign a prenuptial agreement

The terms will be:

Notice: This free prenuptial agreement form is provided for general informational purposes. Before you utilize any legal form you find on the Internet, you should have it reviewed by a lawyer in your jurisdiction to be sure that it meets your legal needs, and will be held valid by a court in the jurisdiction where you reside. For best results, both parties to a prenuptial agreement should be represented by counsel of their choice, the agreement should be custom-drafted to their specific circumstances and the law of the jurisdiction in which they reside, and the prenuptial agreement should be executed at least a month before the wedding date.

Prenuptial Agreement

This pre-marital agreement is made on this ____ day of _____, 200__, between _____ and _____ .

Whereas the parties intend to marry under the laws of the State of _____, and wish to set forth in advance of their relationships the rights and privileges that each will have in the property of the other in the event of death, divorce, or other circumstance which results in the termination of their relationships;

Whereas the parties have made to each other a full and complete disclosure of their assets, as set forth in Exhibits 1 and 2 to this agreement;

Whereas both parties have been represented by independent counsel of their own choosing, and whereas both parties have received a full and complete explanation of their legal rights, the consequences of entering into this pre-marital agreement, and the rights they would possess were it not for their voluntary entry into this agreement; and

Whereas both parties acknowledge that they have read and understand this agreement, have not been subjected to any form of coercion, duress, or pressure, and believe this agreement to be fair and to represent their intentions with regard to their assets and to any estate that shall result from their relationships;

The parties hereby agree as follows:

1. Each party shall separately retain all of his or her rights in his or her separate property, as enumerated in Exhibits 1 and 2 to this agreement, free and clear of any claim of the other party, without regard to any time or effort invested during the course of the relationships in the maintenance, management, or improvement of that separate property.
2. At all times, the parties shall enjoy the full right and authority with regard to their separate property as each would have had if not married, including but not limited to the right and authority to use, sell, enjoy, manage, gift and convey the separate property. Both parties agree to execute any documentation necessary to permit the other to exercise these rights, provided the act of executing the documentation does not impose upon them any legal or financial responsibility for the separate property of the other.
3. The parties agree that each shall be responsible for any tax obligations associated with their separate property.
4. The parties agree that neither shall contest the validity or provisions of any will, account, trust agreement, or other instrument executed by the other which disposes of his or her separate property or which creates any interest therein in another. To the extent that such an action would create any right or interest in the separate property of the other, both parties hereby waive any right in the property of the other, whether created by statute or common law, including but not limited to any right to elect against the will of the other, or to take an intestate share of the other's property. The wife hereby waives any dower interest in the husband's

separate property, and the husband hereby waives any curtesy interest in the wife's separate property.

5. In the event of separation or divorce, the parties shall have no right against each other for division of property existing of this date.
6. Both parties acknowledge that they possess sufficient education and job skills to adequately provide for their own support, and hereby waive any claim to spousal support (alimony) except in the event that:
 - i. One of the parties suffers medical disability and the other remains both employed and physically able, in which case the disabled party may receive reasonable spousal support consistent with state law until such time as the disability is resolved, or the other spouse retires or becomes disabled from working, either by agreement or by judicial determination;
 - ii. The parties mutually agree that one of the parties shall reduce his or her work hours, or shall refrain from working, in order to care for any children born during the course of the relationships, in which case, if the parent's employability is affected by this full or partial withdrawal from employment, that parent may receive reasonable remedial spousal support consistent with state law for a period of not more than two years, either by agreement or judicial determination.
7. In the event of separation or divorce, marital property acquired after relationships shall remain subject to division, either by agreement or by judicial determination.

8. This agreement shall be binding and inure to the benefit of the parties, their successors, assigns, and legal representatives.
9. Without regard to the location of any property affected by this agreement, this agreement shall be interpreted and enforced under the laws of the state of _____. In the event that any portion of this agreement shall be held invalid or unenforceable, it is the intent of the parties that all provisions of this agreement be regarded as separable, and that all remaining provisions remain in full force and effect. It is further the desire of the parties that all provisions of this agreement be considered as evidence of their intentions by any court, arbitrator, mediator, or other authority which seeks to divide their estate, and that their intentions be respected whatever the legal status of this agreement or any of its terms.
10. This Agreement and the exhibits attached hereto contain the entire agreement of the parties. This Agreement may only be amended by a written document duly executed by both parties.

Signed this _____ day of _____, 20__

Fiance

Fiancée

Signed in the presence of:

Witness

Witness

[Note- Each witness should sign separately. You may wish to execute the agreement before a notary public.]

Post-Marital Endorsement

The parties, having entered into this prenuptial agreement in advance of their wedding, which was held on the ____ day of _____, 200__, hereby reaffirm that they entered into this agreement voluntarily, free from coercion, duress, or pressure, with the benefit of the advice of independent counsel of their own choosing, and continue to believe this agreement to be fair and to represent their intentions with regard to their assets and to any estate that shall result from their relationships.

Signed this _____ day of _____, 20__

Husband

Wife

Signed in the presence of:

Witness

Witness

[Note- Each witness should sign separately. You may wish to execute the post-nuptial endorsement before a notary public.]

Relationships are a challenging endeavor that requires hard work, determination and discipline. However, as this guide has shown, it also has the potential to be very rewarding and satisfying. Spouses who seek to incorporate positivity, empathy, commitment, acceptance, and mutual love and respect into their relationship are more likely to have a fulfilling relationships. Husbands and wives also benefit when they understand the nature of conflict and know how to manage it successfully. Finally, when people base their relationships on friendship, thoughtfulness, fun and traditions, they usually find joy and happiness in their relationship. Creating a strong and satisfying relationships is possible, and it is definitely worth the effort!

Personal Awareness Questions:

When you know the answer to every question on here, about each other, THEN you can probably get married.

These are to be answered live and in-person by both people:

Are you a creature of habit?

Are you a good listener?

Are you adventurous?

Are you afraid to get close?

Are you ambitious?

Are you ambitious?

Are you an "indoors" person?

Are you an artist?

Are you and "outdoors" person?

Are you assertive?

Are you comfortable continuing this relationship if there are things in my past that I am not willing to share with you?

Are you competitive?

Are you content to stay home and cook?

Are you creative sexually?

Are you creative?

Are you creative?

Are you curious?

Are you dating now?

Are you easy to get to know?

Are you emotionally available?

Are you emotionally available?

Are you extravagant?

Are you Gay? Bi? Straight?

Are you gentle?

Are you good in social situations?

Are you handy?

Are you happy staying home-snuggling-eating popcorn and watching a movie?

Are you jealous?

Are you looking for a boyfriend/girlfriend, lover or husband/wife?

Are you more concerned about being loved or loving?

Are you neat? When do you usually shower?

Are you open minded?

Are you open to meeting and getting to know them?

Are you polite?

Are you predictable?

Are you reliable?

Are you romantic?

Are you romantic?

Are you selfish

Are you self-reliant?

Are you sensitive?

Are you set in your ways – if so are you willing to be flexible or make changes?

Are you shy about your body?

Are you sincere?

Are you sleeping with anyone now?

Are you sleeping with anyone now?

Are you spontaneous?

Are you spontaneous?

Are you still in touch with any of your childhood friends?

Are you supportive?

Are you thinking about moving in the next few years?

Are you thoughtful, loyal, patient?

Are you thrifty?

Are you touchy feely?

Are you willing and wanting to grow together?

Are you willing to sign a non-disclosure agreement for work purposes?

As a couple, how do you socialize at parties

Can you adapt?

Can you admit when you're wrong?

Can you be alone?

Can you be decadent?

Can you be laid back and put work away for awhile?

Can you be monogamous?

Can you be supportive?

Can you express yourself physically and verbally?

Can you go play during the day? At night? Midweek? Weekends?

Can you handle intensity?

Can you have a monogamous relationship today?

Can you laugh at yourself?

Can you make decisions?

Can you make love but also have raw-hungry sex?

Can you share your thoughts, dreams and desires?

Can you socialize and carry on a conversation with anyone?

Could you talk to me seductively over the phone?

Describe your childhood?

Describe your sense of humor?

Describe your work?

Do they live with you? Ages?

Do you appreciate the simple things in life?

Do you believe in ghosts?

Do you believe in God?

Do you believe in the supernatural?

Do you believe that one person can have a productive impact on world change?

Do you believe that what goes on behind closed doors is okay?

Do you believe there are evil spiritual forces in the world?

Do you believe we choose our own course in life or is it preordained?

Do you brush your teeth after eating?

Do you drink alcohol?

Do you drink coffee?

Do you drink daily?

Do you enjoy your work?

Do you expect your future wife to take your last name

Do you face your fears?

Do you feel differently about people that are not as fortunate as you?

Do you go out to eat a lot?

Do you go to bars?

Do you go to church?

Do you have a best friend?

Do you have a favorite food?

Do you have a favorite time of day for sex and how much is too much?

Do you have a large family?

Do you have a pet? What kind?

Do you have a temper?

Do you have call waiting? If someone calls do you get rid of the person you were talking to?

Do you have children?

Do you have compassion?

Do you have good manners?

Do you have insomnia?

Do you have unprotected sex?

Do you like a house with lots of sun or kept dark and cave like

Do you like art?

Do you like foreplay?

Do you like going to new restaurants and trying different food?

Do you like going to the movies?

Do you like it cold and use a big down comforter and snuggle or do you like it warm when you sleep?

Do you like museums, the theater, concerts?

Do you like quickies?

Do you like sex toys?

Do you like soft touch?

Do you like sunsets and sunrises?

Do you like the rain?

Do you like them?

Do you like to argue?

Do you like to be held while sleeping?

Do you like to cook or bake?

Do you like to cuddle?

Do you like to dress up?

Do you like to go alone?

Do you like to kiss?

Do you like to play outside or inside best?

Do you like to putz around the house?

Do you like to read?

Do you like to shower alone?

Do you like to sleep with the windows open

Do you like to travel and explore?

Do you like to watch sports on TV? In person?

Do you like your bedroom dark?

Do you live in a house, condo, apartment, etc?

Do you meet new people easily?

Do you move around allot?

Do you own a car? What kind?

Do you own a computer? MAC or PC?

Do you own a FAX and what is the number?

Do you practice any particular diets or eating habits?

Do you prefer to talk or be quiet during sex?

Do you remain friendly with your ex's?

Do you set goals?

Do you sleep-in on Sundays?

Do you smile easily and often?

Do you smoke at all?

Do you smoke?

Do you Smoke?, If so will you quit?

Do you snore?

Do you snore?

Do you socialize often?

Do you take a shower at night or in the morning on a regular basis?

Do you think alone time is important?

Do you think you have ever truly been in love?

Do you try to find the good in all?

Do you understand and distinguish between the five states of intimacy (IE: Being sensual, being erotic, having sex, making love, F**ng)?

Do you want a relationship?

Do you want children?

Do you wash you hands before eating?

Do you wear pajamas?

Do you wiggle or kick in your sleep?

Do you work 7 days a week?

Favorite food?

Have you ever been to an analyst, psychiatrist or psychologist? Why?

Have you ever made love outside?

Have you ever paid for sex?

Have you ever seen a double rainbow?

Have you ever slept with someone on the first date?

Have you ever spent all day in bed!?

Have you had a recent STD test since you were with someone? Are you willing to provide a doctors certificate of HIV/AIDS testing from the last 30 days if your partner also does?

Have you recently broken up with someone?

Have you seen a green flash at sunset?

How are you at compromising?

How do you feel about a woman having male friends?

How do you feel about being touched?

How do you feel about house cleaners

How do you feel about public affection?

How do you feel about someone that already has children?

How do you feel if views are different?

How do you feel if you have to go to work earlier than your mate and they get to stay in bed and sleep longer?

How do you feel right now?

How do you look at each new day?

How do you prefer the weather?

How does answering these questions make you feel?

How does fast make you feel?

How does stress affect your lovemaking ability?

How important is it to you that everyone likes you?

How is trust earned?

How late do you usually stay out?

How long has it been since your last significant relationship?

How long have you lived where you live?

How many dates have you ever had?

How many different people have you ever been with sexually?

How many friends do you have in your social circle?

How many parties do you go to in an average month?

How much do you earn per year?

How much is too much to drink?

How much time do you spend on the phone each day?

How much time do you want to spend together – what is too much, what kind of time together– working, volunteering, socializing, just hanging out, all of it or some of it.

How often do you change your sheets and towels?

How often do you talk about yourself?

How should who-pays-for-what be allocated when going out?

How would you describe your personality?

I like gentle and sometimes not so gentle-how do you feel about that?

If we eliminated physical attraction from our relationship, what would be left?

If you could live anywhere in the world where would that be?

If your mate was sick or stressed, how long do you put up with them being like that before looking elsewhere?

In what ways?

Is family important to you?

Is religion a part of your life?

Is spirituality a part of your life?

Is there anything sexually you would not do?

Is there anything we have not discussed that concerns you about our relationship?

Is trust automatic until something occurs that takes it away, or does evolve over time?

Is your monthly cycle likely to interact with a date or trip we have planned? Do you have sex during that time of the month?

Jealous?

List three things that really push your buttons?

Name a place you would like to go?

our position on recreational drugs?

Possessive?

Use an adjective to describe how thinking about it makes you feel?

What 3 magazines do you read most?

What angers you?

What are the medical tests and requirements for you to safely have barrier-free sex?

What are you allergic to?

What are you in the birth order?

What are you most grateful for?

What are you the most frustrated about in your life?

What are your erotic "kinks"?

What are your expenses per year?

What are your favorite clothes to relax in?

What are your favorite TV shows?

What are your feelings about having children?

What are your feelings about relationships?

What are your hobbies: and interests?

What are your sexual needs relative to specific actions or techniques?

What areas do you feel you need to work on?

What can't you tolerate?

What did you like most about me when we first met?

What do you dislike about being single?

What do you expect on a first date?

What do you fear in relationships?

What do you look forward to?

What do you not like about me?

What do you say it is?

What do you think of you and me in a relationship, so far as you can tell, all other things being equal, based on projection?

What do you value

What do you want-friend-lover-wife-or all of the above?

What do you wear to bed

What do your friends say is your worst habit?

What does being "In Love" mean to you?

What gives you goosebumps?

What happens to us when we die?

What I really want to know is what is your favorite flavor of ice-cream???

What is and what is not cheating?

What is desire?

What is the best way for me to show that I care for you?

What is the best way to turn you on?

What is the longest you have worked at one job?

What is the most exciting aspect of your life?

What is the most positive, and negative, relationship experience you have had?

What is the purpose of your life?

What is your favorite place on the whole world?

What is your stand on religion and politics?

What is your astrology sign?

What is your bodytype?

What is your ethnicity?

What is your favorite animal?

What is your favorite body of water?

What is your favorite color?

What is your favorite drink?

What is your favorite form of exercise?

What is your favorite pastime?

What is your favorite season?

What is your favorite sport?

What is your favorite surface or texture?

What is your favorite time of day?

What is your favorite way to relax?

What is your idea of a great weekend escape?

What is your personal policy re: homeless people?

What is your political viewpoint?

What is your position on how much money you should be provided with by your boyfriend or husband each day, week or month?

What is your position on who should pay for what?

What kind of birth control do you use?

What kind of books?

What kind of education did you have?

What kind of intimacy have you been used to on a first date?

What kind of movies do you like?

What kind of music do you like?

What kind of music do you like?

What makes him/her so?

What makes you feel good about being with me?

What makes you feel important?

What makes you feel lonely?

What percent of your ex-mates do you still talk to?

What side of the bed do you sleep on

What sign are you?

What style of clothes do you wear?

What time do you generally get up?

What time do you generally go to bed?

What time do you usually go out at night?

What turns you off sexually?

What was the reason you were terminated from all of the jobs that terminated you?

What would your friends say is your best quality?

What's your favorite childhood memory?

Where is the most favorite place you've ever been?

Where is your favorite place to get away?

Which do you like best, the beach or mountains?

Who are your heroes?

Would someone's past haunt you or do you think you could let it go?

Would you dance with me in the rain?

Would you go to the gym with me?

Would you go with me to do some volunteering?

Would you like me to dress interestingly for you?

Would you still respect me in the morning if I did something totally naughty in bed the night before?

Would you switch from morning to night or vice versa?

Would you tell me if I did something you didn't like?

Would you understand if your mate couldn't sleep if they held you all night?

Your drinking habits?

FACIAL SYMMETRY AND ONLINE DATING HATE EACH OTHER

Online dating requires a front-on 2D image but our brains are trained to reject most faces. Here is the problem:

All of these people have stereotypical *"yuppie"* kinds of *"upscale"* faces sought by sorority and fraternity houses at elite colleges. These kinds of faces are thought, by some, to *"keep the line pure"*. Other people think that sort of thinking is nonsense:

So how do you get a date when your subconscious brain is fighting against you? First, you need to understand the biology of the challenge.

As you see in the report at:

<http://www.faceresearch.org/students/notes/symmetry.pdf>

Why Are Symmetrical Faces So Attractive?

There is a surprising reason we are drawn toward symmetry, especially in faces. You are addicted to staring at certain movie star's faces because of their "addictive facial symmetry".

- "Love-At-First-Sight" is almost entirely about your attraction to a person's facial symmetry and their practiced use of facially exaggerated expressions and social face muscle exaggerations.

- Political candidates, movie stars and business executives get their jobs almost entirely because of their facial symmetry

What constitutes beauty as seen on the internet?

Among cultures and through history, standards of beauty have changed considerably. At certain times, stoutness was a symbol of wealth and influence and thus was considered attractive. At other times, hardy physical fitness was the gold-standard. Different variations of skin tone, facial hair (men), breast size (women), eye color, hair texture, color, and style have all

experienced wide swings in their perceived [attractiveness](#) at different points in history and in different places.

Source: Jean Alves/Pexels; RoyalAnwar/Pixabay

When it comes to physical [attraction](#), cultural forces far outweigh biological ones, but there are a couple of features that seem to cut through the cultural conditioning and are seen as universally attractive. (Read about how [our brain computes attraction](#).)

For example, across cultures and times, [height is reliably rated as desirable in men](#). For women, [a low waist-hip ratio](#) is seen as attractive globally. Of course, these two features are each just one aspect within a full suite of qualities for a specific person and do not overpower everything else. However, there is indeed something special about them simply because they are so universal while most other "attractive features" are not.

There is another feature that drives perceptions of attractiveness and does so almost equally among men and women: facial symmetry. Across many clever experimental designs, researchers have confirmed that we rate faces that are more symmetrical as more attractive than those with less symmetry. Like height in males and waist-hip ratio in females, [symmetrical faces are more attractive](#) to people across cultures and historical times. But where does this biological attraction to facial symmetry come from? First, we must consider how symmetry develops.

Source: CFF/Wikicommons

Like all vertebrates, humans have bilateral symmetry about the sagittal plane. For the most part, our right side develops as a

mirror image of our left side. Beginning during embryonic development and continuing through growth and maturity, the same developmental [genes](#) should be activated in the same cells, at the same time, and with the same dosage. In the ideal situation, all of that unfolds identically in the left and right sides of our faces, leading to perfect symmetry between the two halves.

Of course, in the real world, the tiniest fluctuations in gene expression and cellular activity lead to small differences between the two halves of our face. Look closely at your face in the mirror (or a [friend's](#) face). You can usually see that one eye is slightly larger than the other. The larger eye is also usually higher. The nostrils usually show asymmetry in their size and shape as well, and the height and size of the ears can be surprisingly asymmetric also.

All of this asymmetry adds up to a symmetry score for each human face and these symmetry scores strongly influence how attractively we rate faces. Using CGI, researchers can transform an image of a face that most people rate as highly attractive into one that rates poorly simply by tweaking the symmetry.

But why do we find symmetrical faces more attractive? The dominant scientific explanation for the attractiveness of facial symmetry is sometimes called “Evolutionary Advantage Theory.” If the grand choreography of developmental gene expression is perfectly executed, the result is perfect symmetry. Therefore, anything less than perfect symmetry indicates some kind of dysfunction, however small. If, on one side of the face, a gene gets expressed too much or too little, in slightly the wrong place, or a bit early or late, the tissue will take shape in a slightly

different pattern than on the other side. Most of these small fluctuations result in what is called micro-asymmetry, which we can't detect with the naked eye (but which we may be subconsciously aware of).

However, larger differences in symmetry may indicate issues that have occurred (or are ongoing) with the growth and development of the individual. Some factors that are known to affect facial symmetry are infections, inflammation, allergic reactions, injuries, mutations, chronic [stress](#), malnourishment, DNA damage, parasites, and genetic and metabolic diseases. Each of these is a potential handicap to the success of the individual and possibly his or her offspring. While the resulting facial asymmetry is probably the least of the person's worries, the rest of us respond negatively to it because it could indicate reduced fitness. Since mating strategies invariably involve the pursuit of the highest quality mate possible, facial asymmetry knocks someone down a few pegs in terms of their attractiveness. This is the currently dominant thinking about why humans strongly prefer symmetry in each other's faces.

The preference for symmetrical faces is not limited to sexual attraction and mate selection. Facial symmetry appears to influence how we pursue friends and allies as well. Of course, we all want a "high quality" mate and co-[parent](#) of our children, but we also want friends that are high quality and, dare I say it, high status. It's an awful thing about us, but everyone wants to be friends with the rich, powerful, and popular. This reality has become crystal clear in today's society where people can be "famous for being famous," having produced essentially nothing of value to anyone and possessing no identifiable skills, talents,

or accomplishments and still somehow be known as an important “influencer.” I digress.

It's not altogether surprising that we, as a species, would read so much into faces. We speak face-to-face and we spend a lot of time looking at each other's faces even when we're not in conversation. We also have an [exceptional degree of diversity in our faces](#) and this probably comes from the face-centric nature of our social interactions.

In sum, facial symmetry is universally associated with beauty and attractiveness in both sexes and in sexual and non-sexual contexts. The most well-supported theory for this is that our species has evolved to recognize symmetry, if unconsciously, as a proxy for good genes and physical health. This gives us a tentative answer to the question: What's in a face?

While many studies have shown that symmetric faces (e.g. left image above) are preferred to relatively asymmetric faces (e.g. right image above), the reason why symmetric faces are preferred is controversial. The Evolutionary Advantage view proposes that symmetric faces are preferred because symmetric individuals are particularly healthy. The Perceptual Bias view, however, proposes that symmetric faces are preferred because symmetric stimuli of any kind are more easily processed by the visual system than their asymmetric counterparts.

Which version of this guy is more attractive to you?:

A “Super Hot” yuppie girl is never going to pick a guy without a symmetrical yuppie face because society has spent decades of social programming her to reject any guy without a yuppie symmetry. Modern dating site prep software, though, can adjust your photos in order to make your face symmetrical.

Symmetry is one aspect of faces that has been extensively studied by many researchers in relation to attractiveness. The most common method used to investigate the effect symmetry has on the attractiveness of faces involves manipulating the symmetry of face images using sophisticated computer graphic methods and assessing the effect that this manipulation has on perceptions of the attractiveness of the faces. Typically, perfectly symmetric versions of a set of face images are manufactured and presented to subjects along with the original (i.e. relatively asymmetric versions). Participants are then asked to indicate which face is more attractive, choosing between a perfectly symmetric version of a given face and the original version. Because the faces used in these tests differ in symmetry but not in other facial characteristics, these findings demonstrate that symmetry is a visual cue for attractiveness judgements of faces. Although studies have generally shown that people prefer symmetric versions of faces to the original (i.e. relatively asymmetric) versions, there has been considerable debate about why people prefer symmetric faces.

Two different explanations have been put forward by researchers to explain attraction to symmetric faces: the Evolutionary Advantage view (which proposes that symmetric individuals are attractive because they are particularly healthy)

and the Perceptual Bias view (which proposes that symmetric individuals are attractive because the human visual system can process symmetric stimuli of any kind more easily than it can process asymmetric stimuli).

The Evolutionary Advantage view proposes that symmetric faces are attractive because symmetry indicates how healthy an individual is: while our genes are such that we are designed to develop symmetrically, disease and infections during physical development cause small imperfections (i.e. asymmetries). Thus, only individuals who are able to withstand infections (i.e. those with strong immune systems) are successful in developing symmetric physical traits. Indeed, some (but not all) findings from studies of health in humans and many animal species have observed such a relationship between symmetry and indicators of health, with healthier individuals being more symmetric. For example, swallows and peacocks with symmetric tail feathers are particularly healthy and preferred by potential mates. Under the Evolutionary Advantage view of symmetry preferences, symmetric individuals are considered attractive because we have evolved to prefer healthy potential mates.

While the Evolutionary Advantage view suggests that attraction to symmetric individuals reflects attraction to healthy individuals who would be good mates (i.e. will have healthy offspring), the Perceptual Bias view of symmetry preferences makes a very different claim. Our visual system may be 'hard wired' in such a way that it is easier to process symmetric stimuli than it is to process asymmetric stimuli. Because of this greater ease of processing symmetric stimuli, symmetric stimuli of any kind might be preferred to relatively asymmetric stimuli. Under the perceptual bias view, preferences for symmetric faces are no

different to preferences for symmetric objects of any kind. Indeed, it has been shown that people prefer symmetric pieces of abstract art and sculpture to relatively asymmetric versions.

Little and Jones (2003) carried out a study that investigated why people prefer symmetric faces to asymmetric faces, testing predictions derived from both the Evolutionary Advantage view and the Perceptual Bias view of symmetry preferences. Previous studies have found that symmetry had a bigger effect on the attractiveness of opposite-sex faces than own-sex faces and have suggested this is because opposite-sex faces are an example of 'mate choice relevant stimuli' (i.e. they are the faces of potential mates and own-sex faces are not).

Little and Jones noted that it is well established that inverting face images (i.e. turning them upside down) reduces the ease with which they can be processed and are perceived as being people. While people find it easy to process faces that are the right way up, face processing is disrupted by inversion to a far greater extent than processing of other types of visual stimuli is. Furthermore, inverted faces are processed more like other objects when inverted than when they are upright. Inverting faces, however, will obviously not alter how symmetric the faces are. So while opposite-sex upright faces are 'mate choice relevant stimuli' (i.e. are easily perceived as potential mates) inverted faces will be perceived more like objects, even though both inverted and upright faces will be equally symmetric. While the evolutionary advantage view suggests that preferences for symmetric faces will be weaker when the faces are inverted (because they will be perceived as less mate choice relevant), the perceptual bias view suggests that inversion will have no effect on symmetry preferences because symmetry is attractive in any

type of stimulus. With this in mind, Little and Jones tested if inverting the faces used to assess preferences for symmetric faces weakens the strength of symmetry preferences (which would support an Evolutionary Advantage account of symmetry preferences) or if symmetry is equally attractive in upright and inverted faces (which would support a Perceptual Bias account of symmetry preferences).

Little and Jones found that symmetric faces were judged more attractive than asymmetric faces when faces were shown the right way up, but not when the faces presented were inverted. Because this suggests that symmetry is more attractive in mate choice relevant stimuli than in other types of stimuli, Little and Jones' findings support an evolutionary advantage account of why symmetric faces are attractive and present difficulties for the Perceptual Bias account (which proposes that symmetry will be preferred in stimuli of any kind).

THE GOLD-DIGGER OR 'FOODIE CALL' VAMPIRE DATES

A large percentage of people use dates for free food with no intention of ever engaging with the other person. Here are some discussions of this issue:

In the current recession, many people date for expense offset. One must be clear, up front, if this is their agenda. If your dating partner has visions of a traditional relationship and later finds out your plan is to use them for income, the results will never be good.

The best program is to state this up front in a clear manner. Do NOT be suggestive, the other person will almost always interpret the implied comment as the more traditional implication and sadness will result.

There is a current standard structure in most major cities: \$300/per hour with a volume commitment discount. \$3000/per month. If the person is unusually hot, has super defined abs and super model facial structure the "donation can go up to \$10,000/month. A once a week, twice a week or "anytime" get-together frequency rate is arranged between the two people.

It is a highly competitive market. There are hundreds of thousands of people doing it in each major city and super hot ones are coming here from overseas, every week, to do it. 90% of the arrangements are cancelled after the first month because

the other person realizes that competitive market rates are lower than they first thought.

Wealthy men in technology cities and industrial cities consider it a business status factor to brag about their mistress to other businessmen.

The code words in ads and profiles are:

"Arrangement"

"Discrete"

"Gentleman"

"Generous"

"Studying in college"

"Complete my degree"

"Single mother"

Is being a mistress or gigolo OK? Check with your local laws, therapist and personal compass and tell the other person, in the very FIRST conversation, about this being your agenda. Silicon Valley, New York City and Los Angeles have the largest number of Dating-For-Cash people on their dating sites.

[Millionaire, Gold Digger dating sites](#)

<https://www.allonlinedatingsites.com/millionaire-dating-sites>

Millionaire & rich **dating**. Here you will find all millionaire **dating sites**. Millionaire **dating sites** are created only for wealthy people or beautiful **gold digger** girls seeking rich men. In this list you will find a collection of international millionaire **dating sites**. RichHookUp is a focused rich men **dating site** where you can hook up rich men.

[Gold diggers dating sites - ITD World](#)

<https://itdworld.com/gold-diggers-dating-sites/>

Gold diggers dating sites - Men looking for a woman - Women looking for a man. Find a man in my area! Free to join to find a man and meet a woman online who is single and hunt for you.

[Single Gold Diggers Interested In Gold Diggers Dating](#)

<https://www.golddiggersdating.com/browse/singles,33,gold-diggers-dating.html>

Gold Diggers Dating is part of the Infinite Connections **dating** network, which includes many other general and sugar daddy **dating sites**. As a member of **Gold Diggers Dating**, your profile will automatically be shown on related sugar daddy **dating sites** or to related users in the Infinite Connections network at no additional charge.

[How to Spot Gold Digger on Online Dating Website ...](#)

www.love-sites.com/how-to-spot-gold-digger-on-online-dating-website/

Gold diggers - be it gorgeous Russian ladies or American beauties - are very manipulative and can be so subtle that most men don't suspect anything before it's too late and she drains their bank account. There are certain ways you can spot a **gold digger on** online **dating** websites.

[10 Signs you are Dating a Gold-Digger - idateadvice](#)

<https://idateadvice.com/10-signs-you-are-dating-a-gold-digger>

10 Signs you are **Dating** a **Gold-Digger**. The second date involved a reservation at the most expensive restaurant in the city and a black Dior dress with a pair of sky high Jimmy Choos. Fast forward to two months later, I had spent thousands of dollars on this girl and her sweet personality had mostly vanished.

[Are Chinese Dating Sites Full of Gold Diggers? - Chinese ...](#)

<https://www.chinesedatingsitesguide.com/articles/chinese-dating/gold-diggers/>

Some men end up spending a lot of money chatting to girls on pay per contact **sites**. Other men fall prey to scammers, and end up wiring off their life savings via Western Union. Top on the list of worries is the issue of **gold diggers**. So are Chinese **dating sites** full of **gold diggers**, and how should you avoid them?

[Gold Diggers Dating Site](#)

gold-diggers-dg-site.dtwellddp.com

Gold Diggers Dating Site - Chat and meet beautiful girls and handsome guys on our **dating site**. We are leading online

dating site for singles who are looking for relationship. These **sites** offer personalized services for foreign men looking for Russian women to marry or establish an online relationship.

[Why women r **gold diggers**?! | Mingle2](#)

<https://mingle2.com/topic/575233?page=2>

Everybody's life should be their own... live and love freely... these insane laws of who gets what is ridiculous... except where common law is practiced you should enforce a union where you still have the ceremony but the courts are out of jurisdiction... that piece of paper has ruined a lot of soulmate connections making them feel unworthy of ever finding that special someone because they have!

[Ukrainian **dating** experience with a **gold digger** - Russian ...](#)

<https://www.ukrainiandatingstories.com/ukrainian-dating-experience-with-a-gold-digger/>

This **site** contains the personal opinions and other expressions of the persons who post the **dating** agency reviews. UkrainianDatingStories.com does not control or guarantee the information contained in these reviews or information contained in links to other external web **sites**, and does not endorse any views expressed or services offered therein.

DATING LATER IN LIFE

After six months of coffee dates with women he met through an online dating site, Dave Prochniak was ready to give up.

"I met too many angry goofballs. I thought, the hell with it, I'll just be single and work on my garden," said Prochniak, 55.

But then he spotted a profile that intrigued him. "I found her mysterious," he said.

Barbara Allen had been on the site for two years, an experience that had prompted her to pare down her profile. "I'd been a stay-at-home mom and I saw how that freaked guys out so I disappeared for a while, then turned my profile back on to try again," said Allen, 55.

The two, who live in a suburb outside St. Paul, Minn., texted, then talked, and then Prochniak invited Allen to meet him at a coffee shop where he was hanging canvases for a show of his paintings.

The chemistry between the pair, both of whom had been divorced, was immediate. "I walked her to her mom-minivan and gave her a hug," Prochniak recalled.

Within two weeks, he said, they were in love.

Stories like that are not unusual, but for every midlife encounter that hits, there are a near-infinite number of disappointing, unfulfilling or just plain weird dates that miss.

There are, however, strategies from those who study online dating that can help even the odds of finding a match, whether for a night on the town or a lifelong relationship.

Try before you buy

The online dating industry recognizes that people of all ages want to pair up, whether they're longtime singles with experience connecting over the internet or the divorced or widowed who are returning to dating.

There's a proliferation of sites and apps specifically targeting over-50 daters, both same-sex and straight; that's in addition to all-ages sites that boast significant numbers of older members.

"It's a societal misnomer that people stop wanting to find love and give up having sex at a certain age," said Amie Clark, founder of [The Senior List](#), a consumer site that regularly publishes stories about online dating for its midlife readers.

A recent post [ranked the best apps and sites](#) for older daters. Clark said most of the top finishers allow prospects to test them out.

"Our advice is: try before you buy. Sign up for a free limited trial and browse before making a financial commitment," Clark said. "Our research found many dating sites are owned by the same

companies. They seem to work about the same, but cater to niches.”

Clark said there’s no secret to success, but advises daters to “take the time and energy to put out there what you want back.”

‘Treat this like a business’

The U.S. Census Bureau calculates almost half of American adults are unmarried, and dating sites and apps foster interactions for those singles.

Online options are preferred by busy older people who don’t have the time, patience or interest in meeting a companionable prospect in the hunting grounds of their youth. Dating in the workplace is fraught with peril as people move along in their careers and the bar scene has lost its appeal.

“My favorite people to work with are 50 and over,” said Denys Crea, 62, vice president of the Pairings Group, a relationship and matchmaking agency. Crea specializes in dating re-entry and coaching online daters, male and female. “By the time I meet them, they’re exhausted and frustrated (from online dating). I tell them, if you know how to cast a wide net, you will have fun and get results.”

Crea, who charges \$1,295 for her services, advises clients on their photos and assists them in crafting a profile that makes the right first impression. She helps them select a site that suits their personality, guides them in evaluating dating candidates and then offers post-date analysis.

“You have to treat this like a business,” Crea insists. “Commit the time, set goals. Don’t mess around. Think about the qualities you’re looking for and really read the profiles to see if they have them.”

Crea says the one consistent deal breaker for everyone looking for love (or some facsimile of it) should be dishonesty from a potential match. She tells her clients to lead with their own authenticity.

[Also see: Dating after 50: Who pays? And should I accept a date by text?](#)

“At this age, life is complicated. Everyone has some baggage. But dating is simpler. They’re not looking for someone to have kids with; they’re often not looking for marriage. They’re looking for a romantic partner,” Crea said. “They’re adults and they can look over someone’s accomplishments and choices and see what they’ve done with their lives.”

Done being single

Navigating midlife dating, relationships and romance is the subject of the [Done Being Single](#) podcast and internet radio show. Hosts and spouses Treva and Robby Scharf, who were in their 50s when they married (the first time for each), bring decades of experience in the search for love to their listeners. Both have used apps and sites and see online dating as a crucial but imperfect resource for midlife singles.

“People would not be dating without [online dating]; it’s not easy to meet eligible people. But it has its drawbacks,” said Treva. “There’s so much selection that it can paralyze you or leave you

dissatisfied, feeling like no matter who you choose, there might be someone better out there that you're missing."

The Scharfs advise daters to switch up their game to make successful cyber connections.

"They have to learn how to flirt in a two-dimensional medium, using the way they write instead of eye contact," Robby said. "Coming out of a long-term marriage, they might feel they've lost their touch. It's ego-flattering when they see who contacted or swiped them. But they have to resist getting lazy and spending their time with superficial back-and-forth messaging instead of getting out there."

That's why the couple urges daters who click in an online connection to waste no time setting up a face-to-face meeting. "Get out there. Meet quickly and find out if there's real life chemistry," Robby added. "Don't confuse online interactions with dating."

While Treva bemoans the fact that online dating can be "cruel, soulless and depressing," she also finds it magical.

"It's one part effort and one part faith. You must put in the effort; go onto different sites, get nice pictures, work on your profile," she said. "Then let it go and let faith take over; believe that the universe will do its part in bringing you to who you are supposed to meet."

A meeting, a marriage

Last spring, Barbara Allen and Dave Prochniak bought a marriage license. They are talking about staging a "pop-up

wedding” this summer, gathering her three daughters, his son and their close friends to witness a low-key ceremony where they will speak their vows.

“We’re a good fit; we get along and communicate so well,” said Allen. “We have a lot to look forward to.”

“We feel really lucky,” added Prochniak. “Lucky and thankful.”

Five things to know about online dating

1. Three-quarters of online daters never update their original profile. But if you switch up the text and add new pictures, site algorithms will likely reward you by sharing your profile to new and different eyes.

2. Sunday is the busiest day for online dating. Make time after brunch to get on your app and browse. This is also an excellent time to post your freshened profile.

3. Safety first. Arrange a public get-together, tell a friend the details of whom you’re meeting and don’t overshare on first or even second dates. When you use your real name, a quick Google search can reveal your address, property you own, professional information and more.

4. There’s someone for everyone. In addition to mainstream sites, there are dating platforms for people of different religious and professional backgrounds and some oddly specific narrow niches, including sites for the gluten intolerant, cannabis fans, and people with STDs.

5. Practice saying this: “I don’t think you’re a match for me.” Only you know what you’re looking for. When you don’t feel a connection, be frank and don’t waste your time — or theirs.

HONEY TRAPS WILL BE SENT BY YOUR COMPETITORS, ENEMIES AND POLITICAL ADVERSARIES

If you are successful in business, politics, media, social change or, really, anything that affects other big players, expect to have a few too-good-to-be-true hotties try to date you on match.com, OKCUPID, PLENTY OF FISH, TINDER or other big sites.

They may be shells sent to destroy you.

If someone does not like you, they can reverse search your photo or vital statistics and find every dating site you are on. Then they can target you for a social kill. Here is how it works:

[Honey trapping - Wikipedia](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Honey_trapping)

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Honey_trapping

Honey trapping is an investigative practice that uses romantic or sexual relationships for an interpersonal, **political** or monetary purpose to the detriment of one party involved in this romantic

or sexual affair. Investigators are also often employed by wives, husbands, and other partners usually when an illicit romantic affair is suspected of the "target", or subject of the investigation.

[The History of the **Honey Trap** - Foreign Policy](#)

<https://foreignpolicy.com/2010/03/12/the-history-of-the-honey-trap/>

One of the best-known **honey traps** in spy history involves Mata Hari, a Dutch woman who had spent some years as an erotic dancer in Java. (Greta Garbo played her in a famous 1931 film.)
During ...

[Politicians at mercy of **Honey Traps** - 30 Minutes - TV9](#)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7-xZR690K70>

TV9 Telugu LIVE : Sujana Chowdary in Encounter with Murali Krishna TV9 Telugu Live 3,447 watching Live now Baahubali Black Holes : Questions without Answers - Spotlight - TV9 - Duration: 13:42.

[The Professors, George, and The **Honey Trap**](#)

www.politicalpaige.net/5-may-2019-the-professors-george-and-the-honey-trap.html

the professors, george, and the **honey trap** A 9 minute free range take on this blog article is now available above as a

PodCast. For this and more episodes of the PodCast, check out PoliticalPaige.net Blog at its home on Spreaker .

[How to Spot a **Honey Trap** - ClearanceJobs](#)

□ <https://news.clearancejobs.com/2016/08/28/how-to-spot-a-honey-trap/>

Something about small favors. If **honey traps** are in it for the long haul, they start actual relationships with their marks. Long term relationships built on sex and secrets. They probe gingerly at first—asking for something small. Some tiny secret that can help her somehow. For work or whatever.

[Honey trap case: Accused woman, an IAS aspirant, has trapped](#)

...

□ <https://www.indiatoday.in/india/story/honey-trap-case-gujarat-bjp-mp-kc-patel-delhi-police-974954-2017-05-03>

Honey trap case: Accused woman, an IAS aspirant, has trapped over 20 MPs. The activity of the gang came to light after Valsad MP KC Patel filed a complaint of extortion with the Delhi Police earlier this week. While there have been a series of cross allegations between the woman and the BJP MP, sources from the police claimed that it was an organised crime.

[Honey traps: Do spies use sex to extract secrets? - slate.com](#)

<https://slate.com/news-and-politics/2010/12/honey-traps-do-spies-use-sex-to-extract-secrets.html>

The classic **honey trap** is seduction to extract secrets. Perhaps the best-known **trap** layer was the Dutch exotic dancer Mata

Hari , who was executed by firing squad in France in 1917 for allegedly ...

[Malaysia Flip Flop: Caught in **political** sex trap](#)

<https://malaysiaflipflop.blogspot.com/2015/02/caught-in-political-sex-trap.html>

The ONA is also recorded as saying that Dr Anwar's **political** enemies engineered the circumstances from which the sodomy charges arose. "ONA assessed, and their Singapore counterparts concurred, 'it was a set-up job and he probably knew that, but walked into it anyway'," the cable states.

[The Brilliant MI6 Spy Who Perfected the Art of the '**Honey Trap**'](#)

<https://www.atlasobscura.com/articles/the-brilliant-m16-spy-who-perfected-the-art-of-the-honey-trap>

The Brilliant MI6 Spy Who Perfected the Art of the '**Honey Trap**' ... D.C., where they hobnobbed with the **political** elite. Betty, sent to the best boarding schools, well-versed in high-society ...

We now date six people at once and then we just ghost them when we've lost interest

- Rachel Hosie
- @rachel_hosie
-

Any young person who's tried to explain the concept of "seeing" someone to their parents will be able to testify that the dating arena has changed enormously over the past couple of decades.

It's no longer as simple as going for dinner and a movie and instantly becoming boyfriend and girlfriend - we "see" people, often more than one at a time.

The extent of this trend has been revealed in a new study which claims it's now normal to date an incredible six people at once.

Assuming the average person isn't out on a date every night of the week, we can also infer that two dates with the same person must be pretty spread-out too.

The results of the study, carried out by eHarmony Australia, reinforce the idea that in today's dating society, people are loath to commit to one person, seemingly always wanting to keep their options open.

And although there seems to be a new dating tactic arising every week - have you been benched, breadcrumbed or unghosted of late? - it seems the trend for ghosting, where you simply stop replying to a potential suitor's messages and inexplicably disappear, is still going strong.

The researchers found that over the past year, 64 per cent of singletons have been ghosted by a date. But there's a good chance a lot of those aren't perfect either, with 51 per cent of those studies admitting to ghosting someone themselves.

Although considered by some to be rude and inconsiderate, the allure of ghosting is the opportunity to avoid having to explain why you've lost interest in someone and just hope they'll work it out themselves.

Couples meeting on dating apps is the norm now, but could it be that knowing there are always more potential love interests just a swipe away is leaving us spoilt for choice and confused?

"The research here and around the world shows there is a lot of dissatisfaction in the outcomes of many dating apps," Nicole

McInnes, Director of eHarmony Australia, told Cosmopolitan.

But with new apps launching all the time, it doesn't look like a dating app backlash is going to happen any time soon. So, best start lining up your next six dates then.

In the San Francisco and New York online dating scene women have become "free dinner whores" and men move up in the dating hierarchy depending on the size of their house and how much money they spend on dates.

Daddies, “Dates,” and the Girlfriend Experience: Welcome to the New Prostitution Economy. How Silicon Valley Guys Actually Get The Women They Are With

A growing number of young people are selling their bodies online to pay student loans, make the rent, or afford designer labels. Is it just an unorthodox way to make ends meet or a new kind of exploitation? Nancy Jo Sales investigates.

By

[Nancy Jo Sales](#)

DADDY DEAREST

A model illustrates the fantasy of “the girlfriend experience.” Photograph by Mark Schäfer.

•

The waiter with the handlebar mustache encourages us to “participate in the small-plate culture.” Geraldine’s, the swank spot in Austin’s Hotel Van Zandt, is brimming with tech guys, some loudly talking about money. The college student at our table recommends the ribs—she’s been here before, on “dates” with her “daddies.” “There are a lot of tech guys,” she says. “They want the girlfriend experience, without having to deal with an actual girlfriend.”

“The girlfriend experience” is the term women in the sex trade use for a service involving more than just sex. “They want the

perfect girlfriend—in their eyes,” says Miranda, the young woman at our table.* “She’s well groomed, cultured, classy, able to converse about anything—but not bringing into it any of her real-world problems or feelings.”

Miranda is 22 and has the wavy bobbed hair and clipped mid-Atlantic accent of a 1930s movie star; she grew up in a Texas suburb. “I’ve learned how to look like this, talk like this,” she says. “I work hard at being this,” meaning someone who can charge \$700 an hour for sex.

Her adventures in “sugaring” started three years ago when she got hit on by an older guy and rebuffed him, saying, “Look, I’m not interested, so unless you’re offering to pay my student loans,” and he said, “Well . . . ?” After that, “he paid for stuff. He gave me money to help out with my living expenses.”

It ended when she went on a school year abroad and started meeting men on Seeking Arrangement, the Web site and app which match “sugar daddies” with “sugar babies,” whose company the daddies pay for with “allowances.” Now, she says, she has a rotation of three regular “clients”—“a top Austin lawyer, a top architect, and another tech guy,” all of them married. She adds, “Their relationships are not my business.”

She confesses she isn’t physically attracted to any of these men, but “what I’m looking for in this transaction is not sexual satisfaction. Do you like everyone at your job? But you still work with them, right? That’s how it is with sex work—it’s a job. I get paid for it. I do it for the money.”

And not only the money. “I’m networking,” Miranda maintains, “learning things from older men who give me insights into the

business world. I've learned how to do an elevator pitch. I've learned so many soft skills that will help me in my career.

"ALMOST ALL OF MY FRIENDS DO SOME SORT OF SEX WORK IT'S ALMOST TRENDY TO SAY YOU DO IT—OR THAT YOU WOULD."

"While in college," she goes on, "I've had the ability to focus on developing myself because I'm not slaving away at a minimum-wage job. I reject it when people say I'm oppressed by the patriarchy. People who make seven dollars an hour are oppressed by the patriarchy."

"She's in control of the male gaze," says another woman at the table, Erin, 22.

"I thought about doing it," says Kristen, 21, tentatively. "I signed up for Seeking Arrangement when I couldn't pay my rent. But I was held back because of the stigma if anyone finds out."

"What right does anyone have to judge you for anything you do with your body?," Miranda asks.

“Just Another Job”

The most surprising thing about Miranda’s story is how unsurprising it is to many of her peers. “Almost all of my friends do some sort of sex work,” says Katie, 23, a visual artist in New York. “It’s super-common. It’s almost trendy to say you do it—or that you would.”

“It’s become like a thing people say when they can’t make their rent,” says Jenna, 22, a New York video-game designer. “‘Well, I could always just get a sugar daddy,’ ‘I guess I could just start camming,’” or doing sexual performances in front of a Webcam for money on sites like Chaturbate. “And it’s kind of a joke, but it’s also not because you actually *could*. It’s not like you need a pimp anymore. You just need a computer.”

“Basically every gay dude I know is on Seeking Arrangement,” says Christopher, 23, a Los Angeles film editor. “And there are so many rent boys,” or young gay men who find sex-work opportunities on sites like RentBoy, which was busted and shut down in 2015 by Homeland Security for facilitating prostitution. “Now people just go on RentMen,” says Christopher.

As the debate over whether the United States should decriminalize sex work intensifies, prostitution has quietly gone mainstream among many young people, seen as a viable option in an impossible economy and legitimized by a wave of feminism that interprets sexualization as empowering. “People don’t call it ‘prostitution’ anymore,” says Caitlin, 20, a college student in Montreal. “That sounds like slut-shaming. Some girls get very rigid about it, like ‘This is a woman’s choice.’”

["Is Prostitution Just Another Job?"](#) asked *New York* magazine in March; it seemed to be a rhetorical question, with accounts of young women who found their self-esteem "soaring" through sex work and whose "stresses seem not too different from any young person freelancing or starting a small business." ["Should Prostitution Be a Crime?"](#) asked the cover of *The New York Times Magazine* in May—again apparently a rhetorical question, with an argument made for decriminalization that seemed to equate it with having "respect" for sex workers. (In broad terms, the drive for decriminalization says it will make the lives of sex workers safer, while the so-called abolitionist movement to end prostitution contends the opposite.)

The *Times Magazine* piece elicited an outcry from some feminists, who charged that it minimized the voices of women who have been trafficked, exploited, or abused. Liesl Gerntholtz, an executive director at Human Rights Watch, characterized the prostitution debate as "the most contentious and divisive issue in today's women's movement." "There's a lot of fear among feminists of being seen on the wrong side of this topic," says Natasha Walter, the British feminist author. "I don't understand how women standing up for legalizing sex work can't see the ripple effect of taking this position will have on our idea of a woman's place in the world."

A ripple effect may already be in motion, but it looks more like a wave. A string of feminist-sex-worker narratives have been weaving through pop culture over the last few years, as typified by *Secret Diary of a Call Girl* (2007–11), the British ITV2 series based on the memoir by the pseudonymous Belle de Jour. Belle, played by the bubbly Billie Piper, is a savvy college grad who hates working at boring, low-paying office jobs, so she becomes

a self-described “whore,” a lifestyle choice which always finds her in fashionable clothes. “I love my job,” Belle declares. “I’ve read every feminist book since Simone de Beauvoir and I still do what I do.” And then there is [The Girlfriend Experience](#)(2016–), the dramatic series on Starz, a darker take on a similarly glossy world of high-priced hotels and high-end shopping trips financed by wealthy johns. “I like it, O.K.?” snaps the main character, Christine, played by Riley Keough, when her disapproving sister asks why she’s working as an escort. Christine likes sex work so much she leaves law school to do it full-time. Both shows feature graphic sex scenes that sometimes look like porn.

“We talked a lot about agency” when conceiving *The Girlfriend Experience*, says producer Steven Soderbergh (who directed a movie of the same name in 2009), “and the idea that you have this young woman who is going into the workforce and ends up in the sex-work industry, where she feels she has more control and is respected more than she is at her day job,” at a law firm.

PRETTY WOMAN

“My friend who does it says, ‘I do it for the Chanel,’ ” a young woman told the author.

Photograph by Mark Schäfer.

Since Seeking Arrangement launched in 2006, practically a genre of sugar-baby confessionals has emerged. [I WAS A REAL-LIFE “SUGAR BABY” FOR WEALTHY MEN](#), said a typical headline, in *Marie Claire*. The anonymous writer made clear, “I’d always had personal agency.”

Meanwhile, sugaring has its own extensive community online—also known as “the sugar bowl”—replete with Web sites and blogs. On Tumblr, babies exchange tips on the best sugaring sites and how much to charge. They post triumphant pictures of wads of cash, designer shoes, and bags. They ask for prayers: “Pray for me, this will be great to have two sugar daddies this summer since I quit my vanilla job! I’m trying to live free lol!”

On Facebook, there are private pages where babies find support for their endeavors as well. On one, members proudly call themselves “hos” (sometimes “heaux”) and post coquettish selfies, dressed up for “dates.” They offer information on how to avoid law enforcement and what they carry to protect themselves (knives, box cutters, pepper spray). They give advice on how to alleviate the pain of bruises from overzealous spanking and what to do when “scammers” refuse to pay. They ask questions: “How do you go about getting started in sex work? I’m honestly so broke.”

In interviews, young women and men involved in sex work—not professionals forced into the life, but amateurs, kids—in Austin, New York, and Los Angeles, talked mostly about needing money. They were squeezed by college tuition, crushed by student loans and the high cost of living. Many of their parents were middle- or upper-middle-class people who had nothing to spare for their children, derailed by the economic downturn themselves. And so they did “cake sitting”—a specialty service for a fetish that craves just what it says—or stripping or Webcamming or sugaring. Some beat people up in professional “dungeons”; others did “scat play,” involving sex with feces. They did what they felt they had to do to pay their bills. But was it feminism? And no, that isn’t a rhetorical question.

Landing a Whale

'It just seemed so normal, like no big deal," says Alisa, 21, one night at Nobu in Los Angeles, a place she's been with her daddies. She's talking about how she started sugaring when she was 18. "People kept telling me and my friends, 'There are rich daddies who will take care of you.' "

She had profiles on Seeking Millionaire and Date Billionaire when she landed a whale on Seeking Arrangement. He was a high-profile venture capitalist in San Francisco and founder of a major tech company—"the real deal." (Friends confirm their connection.)

"THERE ARE A LOT OF TECH GUYS. THEY WANT THE GIRLFRIEND EXPERIENCE, WITHOUT HAVING TO DEAL WITH AN ACTUAL GIRLFRIEND."

Soon after they met he flew her to New York and installed her in a chic hotel. Alisa says he was busy most of the time, but she and her friends ran up \$60,000 in room service and spa services while he worked. To make up for his absence, he took her shopping at Alexander McQueen, "my obsession."

"Being in the L.A. atmosphere, and at the age of 16 or 17 going out in nightlife—it's all very based on appearance," Alisa says. "Out here, as long as you're wearing Saint Laurent and the newest items, that's all people care about, so my friends and I were obsessed with fashion. I think with our generation, Instagram also has a lot to do with it—people are constantly posting what they have." She's explaining that she became a sugar baby in order to buy luxury goods.

“My friend who does it says, ‘I do it for the Chanel,’ ” Alisa says wryly. “We both come from upper-middle-class families, but we never felt right asking our parents to buy us designer handbags or something, to put that burden on them financially. I was already working full-time,” at a clothing store, “and all my money was going towards helping my parents to pay for school.” So there was nothing left for shopping.

Her assignments with the billionaire went on for two years. “It was purely for financial purposes,” she says. “He was not my type whatsoever.” She’s reluctant at first to say whether they had sex, but finally admits their relationship was physical. “If anyone tells you they’re not sleeping with these guys, they’re lying, even if it’s just a blow job, because no one pays for all that without expecting something in return.”

It ended when he started dating a famous beauty; Alisa read about it on a celebrity blog. She had other daddies, during and after him, but then last year she stopped sugaring. “I haven’t done it in a really long time,” she says, “solely because of how it made me feel. Like it just makes you feel worthless ‘cause they don’t pay attention to your brain, they don’t care what you have to say. They just care that you’re attractive and you’re listening to them. I don’t want to ever have to look back and think, like, I made it to this point just because I used my body to get there.” A friend who got “envious” of her postings on Instagram also told Alisa’s parents what she was doing. She says, “She called me a prostitute.”

“It’s Transactional”

“She’s a pro,” murmurs the young guy at the bar at Vandal, the hot new restaurant on New York’s Lower East Side. “And so is she.” He’s cocking his head toward some women in the room who are drinking alone. “How do you know?” I ask. “You know,” says the guy. “They let you know.”

“The thing is, nowadays,” says his friend (they both work in real estate), “there’s the hidden hos. Like they’re hos, but they pretend to be just some regular girl hitting you up on Tinder.”

“I hate that,” the first guy says. “The hidden hoochies.”

“The ho-ishness,” the second guy says, “is everywhere. I used to take girls out to dinner, but then I’d see they’d eat and bounce—they just want a free meal—so now it’s no more dinner, just drinks.”

“IF ANYONE TELLS YOU THEY’RE NOT SLEEPING WITH THESE GUYS, THEY’RE LYING . . . NO ONE PAYS FOR ALL THAT WITHOUT . . . SOMETHING IN RETURN.”

Their complaints are of a type commonly heard online, on social media and rampant threads: “All women are prostitutes”; women just want to use men to get money and things. The Internet holds a mirror to the misogyny doing a bro dance in the background of this issue.

I ask the guys why they think some men pay for sex, especially when dating apps have made casual hookups more common.

"It's transactional," the second guy says. "There's no one blowing up your phone, demanding shit from you. You have control over what happens."

I tell them how Seeking Arrangement promotes itself as feminist. ("Seeking Arrangement is modern feminism," says founder Brandon Wade, 46, an M.I.T.-educated former software engineer, on the phone. His InfoStream Group includes a number of other dating services, such as Miss Travel, where a woman can find a traveling "companion" to "sponsor" her vacation.)

"Oh, come on," the first guy says. "They call them 'daddies.' They call women '*babies*.'"

"You can't tell who the hookers are anymore," says another guy at the bar, a well-known D.J. in his 30s. "They're not strippers, they're not on the corner, there's no more madam. They look like all the other club girls."

He tells a story of a young woman he let stay in his hotel room one weekend while he was working in Las Vegas. "She met up with this other girl and all of a sudden they had all these men's watches and wallets and cash. They were *working*." He laughs, still amazed at the memory.

"It's like hooking has just become like this weird, distorted extension of dating," the D.J. says. " 'He took me to dinner. He throws me money for rent'—it's just become so casual. I think it's dating apps—when sex is so disposable, if it doesn't mean anything, then why not get paid for it? But don't call it prostitution—no, now it's liberation."

\$50 for the Powder Room

Jenna says that a friend of hers was sexually assaulted by a man she met on a sugaring site. “She didn’t want to report it,” she says, “because she didn’t want her parents to know what she was doing.” Women in sex work reportedly experience a high incidence of rape, as well as a “workplace homicide rate” 51 times higher than that of the next most dangerous job, working in a liquor store, according to the *American Journal of Epidemiology*.

“If prostitution is really just physical labor,” says the Canadian feminist writer and prostitution abolitionist, Meghan Murphy, on the phone, “if it’s no different than serving coffee or fixing a car, then why would we see rape as such a traumatic thing? If there’s nothing different about sex, then what’s so bad about rape?”

Jenna, the video-game designer, did Seeking Arrangement for two years, between the ages of 19 and 21. As with other young women I spoke to, the catalyst for her was when she couldn’t pay her rent: “I had like negative \$55 in the bank. My mom was guilt-tripping me about asking her for money.”

The night Jenna Googled “sugar daddies,” she says, she’d also just come home from a “very bad date” with “a guy who smelled.” “I was like, I can’t take this anymore, these guys are horrible. I just want someone who’s gonna have some manners, or at least some better hygiene.” It was a refrain I’d heard from others, including Miranda in Austin, who complained, “The dude bros are infantile, they’re rude.” “Wish you could send an invoice” to a

“fuck boy that used you,” said a young woman on a sugaring page on Facebook.

“So I was like, If I’m gonna spend my time with some guy and have it be horrible,” Jenna says one night at a dark East Village bar, “then if I get some money at the end of the night, at least I get something.”

The guys she met on Seeking Arrangement weren’t horrible, she says, but some of them were “weird.” “Because I know a lot about video games I tend to attract, like, the nerdier [Brooklyn] tech guys. Like the ones who are looking for someone who can talk to them, like, ‘Oh, you’re into Harmony Korine? You like *Trash Humpers*?’

“They’re actually profoundly lonely guys,” she says, “and think this is the only way that they can meet women.”

There was the guy who just wanted to brush her hair, for hours, as she sat watching television in a hotel room. He brought his own brush. And there was the guy who was “fat—not like morbidly obese, but big.” He liked to take her out for long dinners.

She usually charged around \$400 for an encounter. “The guys don’t like talking about money, so they’ll just like leave money in your purse.” What Holly Golightly called “\$50 for the powder room” was discreetly offered, she says, “because then it can feel more like real dating to them.”

A model poses as a “sugar baby.”

Photograph by Mark Schäfer.

But it wasn't real dating, and after a while it began to bother her, as she realized the men, although "generally nice," didn't actually respect her. "I think the sugar daddies just see the sugar babies as whores," she says. "They would never consider a monogamous relationship with someone who would need to do this to survive. It's like a class thing. They see you as beneath them, desperate.

"Sometimes I think, Did I really have to resort to this?" she asks. "Or was I being validated in some way?" She was a "late bloomer," she says, and wonders if part of her felt reassured of her attractiveness by having someone pay to have sex with her. "But that's crazy."

She stopped sugaring when she got into a serious relationship; now she lives with her boyfriend in an apartment with four others. "One day, one of our roommates was watching porn, and he says to me—he had no idea what I'd been doing—'Do you think there are sex workers who are really into it?' I think it's, like, a male fantasy."

Wish Lists

Interestingly, the young men I talked to who do sex work voiced few qualms about whether what they were doing was empowering or disempowering. One straight guy I spoke to who's on Seeking Arrangement (the company claims to have more than 400,000 "mommies") did say that he was sometimes uncomfortable with "not being in control of the situation."

One night at Macri Park, a gay bar in Williamsburg, Brooklyn, Derek is having a drink with friends. He's 20 and an art student from New Jersey. "I do RentMen, I do dominating," he says. "People want to be hit, beat up—mostly older guys. One's a Broadway actor. I work for dungeons and I have private clients. I don't have to have sex with them—just whip them with devices, or beat them with my hands. Or I do muscle worship"—where guys ogle and touch his body.

"If I do it two or three times a week," he says, "I can make my rent, I can eat, I can make my art."

Once upon a time, young artists and musicians came to New York looking to find a creative community where they could thrive, but now, as David Byrne noted in a piece in *The Guardian* in 2013, the city has become virtually unaffordable to all but the 1 percent, inhospitable to struggling artists. "One can put up with poverty for a while when one is young, but it will inevitably wear a person down," wrote Byrne.

"Especially with the intern culture—like New York runs on interns—it's impossible to get a decent job," says Katie, the visual artist, at Macri Park. "I was sending out 20 e-mails a day for the first

five months I lived here," looking for jobs, "and I was like, This isn't working." Now she does Webcamming. She says she "feels O.K. about it," and uses it to "fuel my art." She dresses up as a Disney princess for men to explore "the effects of princess culture on my sexuality." If a client turns out to be a "creep," someone whose attitude she can't abide, she'll just "nuke them," or turn the Webcam off.

"IF I DO IT TWO OR THREE TIMES A WEEK, I CAN MAKE MY RENT, I CAN EAT, I CAN MAKE MY ART."

She and her friend Christopher start talking about the Amazon "Wish Lists" that sex workers set up for their clients. In lieu of money (which is sent through PayPal or Venmo), clients can pay with gifts. "I know guys who've gotten iPhones, laptops, a flat-screen TV," says Christopher.

"A lot of people have the really practical ones—like 'I want silverware, a blender,'" says Katie.

"I've seen people put furniture, even like shaving cream and razors," Christopher says. He pulls up one of his friends' Wish Lists on his phone. The young man wants a stuffed Pokémon doll.

Travis, 27, a porn actor from Virginia, has been a professional escort for years. He says he bemoans the way social media has made it so easy for anyone to do. "There's a lot of people with day jobs now who are making good money and doing escorting on the side—you'd be surprised." Why do they do it?, I ask. "'Cause they're greedy," Travis says. "The market is flooded. I'm so over it."

Benefactors

At the Seeking Arrangement Party 2016, a masquerade ball, babies and daddies crowd into Bardot, a lounge in the Avalon Hollywood nightclub, in Los Angeles. Exotic dancers writhe around on risers. General-admission tickets are \$100, the drinks aren't free, and many babies aren't drinking. Some seem antsy. Many have spent the day at the Seeking Arrangement Sugar Baby Summit, hearing how they should expect to be "spoiled" and have men pay for things. So they've gotten dressed up, put on *Eyes Wide Shut*-like masks, and come here to meet their potential "benefactors."

"I'm just looking for someone to pay for my boob job," says a small blonde woman who flew into town from Utah; she's a Mormon. "I thought I must be doing something wrong because all the guys I've met on the site so far have been sending me dick pics and hairy-butt pics."

The place is filled with guys who resemble John McCain. "My daughter's 36," I hear one saying to two rapt young women. He pulls out pictures from his wallet to show them—actual photo printouts.

There's another type of guy here, the jumbo-size Danny DeVitos. "I thought they said these girls were gonna be 10s," I hear one of them telling some other guys. "But this is like a buncha 5s and 6s. Maybe they'll take an I.O.U." The other men chuckle.

"Why do men pay for sex?," I ask a young man, the handsomest in the room. "Sometimes in Vegas if you're drunk," he says with a shrug. I ask him why he's here. "I work all the time, and I don't

have time for a girlfriend." He says he works in tech. "But I like to flirt and have company, not just sex," he goes on. So he does Seeking Arrangement. I ask him how much he pays the women. "Depends how much I like them."

There are a lot of young black women here. "I'm kind of surprised," says a young black woman named Nicole, 25, "but not really. They're probably here for the same reason I am, which is there's a lot of racism on the site, like guys will just openly say, 'No black women,' so maybe they thought they'd have a better chance in person."

Nicole is lovely and has a job as an executive assistant. I ask her why she's seeking an arrangement. "I want to start a handbag line," she says. "I have all these great designs and ideas. And I just don't see how I could ever get together the capital. So an investor would really help."

She seems to truly believe the Seeking Arrangement marketing, that she might find that supportive, encouraging person here. We look around the room. There's a John McCain with his hand on the behind of a young black girl. Her smooth skin looks so young and fresh in the lamplight, next to his wizened face.

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