

# THE HOW TO USE MATCH.COM DATING BOOK: The rules and sociology of Dating

Version 2.07

This is a self-evolving book. Add your quotes and pass it on. Dating is, truly, the never-ending story....

The stuff they never taught you in school. Boy was it refreshing to read this and see that nobody has figured it out.

Women first (in the top section), then the men, then the definitions. Each quote was provided by a different person. This applies to both internet and real-world dating. This input ranges from the traditional to the bizarre but it is a mix of all the minds of all the people you will run into out there.

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## AND THE WOMEN SAID-

"Do not send more than a few emails or talk on the phone more than 45 minutes without meeting in person. The human mind will always create a bigger-than-life image of who you think you are talking to and it will be impossible for the other person to live up to that. You will set yourself up for disappointment and your experience here will always be unproductive. The longer you wait, the more likely you are to be disappointed because the vision and the real-world don't match."

"The Internet dating process can be both exciting and heartbreaking.. You will meet tons of beautiful, sexy, sharp people that you would, at first blush, be able to visualize yourself being boy/girl-friended with, or married to. This can be very

painful, though, if you have had great email and phone calls and both decided you really like each other. But the ones you like may tell you, right on the spot, that they are not attracted to you and the ones that want you strongly, you may not be attracted to. Prepare yourself and try to have no expectations, but don't deny that "chemistry" makes up to 25% of the first encounter and if there is no chemistry, it usually seems to fritter away rapidly"

"Most of the internet people will select one of the first few people they meet because they get overloaded after more people contact them. Most people, women more than men, get 30 to 200 responses and just get burned out after the first dozen meetings. The first people one meets tend to stick out in that persons mind more because the others start blending together in the density of increasing contacts, emails, phones calls and meetings. If you don't meet soon you will often be buried in the confusion that follows as the increasing volume of email contacts builds up. Most of relationships on match turn out to be with one of the first few people one meets according to the survey. If people are trying to meet quickly, they are probably trying to get in to your "emotional window" before it closes."

" Many of the people on there are just dabblers, or looky-loo's who never intend to meet anybody in person, some of them are even marketing people for the dating service acting as "shills". Ask them to meet soon to see if they are sincere."

"People who object to long initial letters or emails are really not interested in knowing anything about the people they are contacting. They are often just looking for flings and distractions. If the people can't deal with alot of information about you then

they may not be interested in a long term relationship(LTR) and could just be using the dating system for personal validation and not for creating a relationship"

"Women tend to get 10 responses for every one response men get online."

"Most people go in with the best of intentions...thinking that a great mind/intellect connection will make-up for any lacks in "chemistry"..but it has never turned out to be like that...everybody seems to, ultimately, let chemistry rule. Looks are not the whole driver but they are always a non-insignificant criteria."

"Bad breath can totally kill a date. How many losers have I been out with that would have been OK except their breath made me ill. Take 4-5 "Breath Assure" tablets at least 30 minutes before the date and eat an Altoid or some mint a few minutes before the date. Eat a little something before the date because an empty stomach can cause bad breath. Brush your teeth. See your dentist and have your teeth professionally cleaned."

"IF you are cute and you try to get off of the internet service they may not take you off very quickly because you are attracting eyeballs or customers for them, you can get many free months from the service if you work it right."

"Don't do internet dating unless you are prepared to meet people and you have from 6-10PM Free every night, 30-90 minutes a day to read and respond to emails and at least half your weekend free to meet a few people. I will not work for most people unless they make a commitment to the process, feel that getting a special person is the most important priority in their

lives (Over work, money, material things, etc.)and really treat the effort like a job. Most people are completely surprised by how much work is involved in this kind of dating. Many people select one of the first few people they meet just to avoid the time-drain. But, when you meet the person that you want to be with, it makes it all worth it ten times over."

"When you first notice something you don't like about the person, don't run away or write them off, you must remember that you are operating in a hyper-accelerated dating environment (Where else would you meet 20 guys in 60 days?), in the "normal world" you would be looking for all these checklist items or first a validating red-flag to write them off as a stalker/creep like you do here. The density of people can be daunting but don't let it make you too clinical in your approach."

"Most dating systems forward from an anonymous email to your personal email. Be sure and set your email system up so your emails pop up on your work desktop or on your home system to avoid coming home at night and finding a plethora of responses and replies that you don't have time to give proper attention to. That is unfair to you and to the people that are interested."

"I now want to meet as soon as possible because the "rejection intensity" seems to be less painful for both people if you have not gotten emotionally involved with lots of phone calls and emails beforehand. So it is important to meet as soon as possible to reduce the pain factor of the potential turndown. Of course, if both of you happen to be attracted, then you are done and you get a boyfriend or girlfriend."

"Don't ask a person if they like you on the date. It puts them on the spot and is too harsh to hear live and in person if they do

not."

"The marketing people at each of the bigger dating services will tell you that the demographics for the service are high-income, well educated, aggressive, driven business people. This can be both good and bad. The women tend to be more sexually aggressive and the guys tend to be busier".

"Men lie more than women but they both lie. Men lie because they had bad upbringings, or they are insecure or they are afraid. Men only lie about one thing so it is actually a misnomer to say men lie. It is better to say "Men are Polyamorous". Men don't think they are doing anything wrong unless there has been a very loud and official wedding or girlfriend/boyfriend-stage in the relationship announcement. Men never think they are lying..they really don't, they just think that the relationship isn't happening. Men think that women are too slow and careful and always shopping for the right man so they always think women are not going to stick around and they always keep their options open until a woman clearly commits. Women think that men move too fast so they wait for a slow one, but they rarely come. Both genders are wired different so it never really works out until one or the other lets their defenses down."

"Don't attack people who ask you for a picture and do have a picture ready to go. Having a digital picture ready to go is considered to be the number one "rule" of the web. Don't go online to date unless you already have one on your hard drive or you will just be creating a terribly frustrating experience for people you contact and most of them will be upset that you don't have a picture. The only difference in meeting people on the web or in person is that you have no visual context. Most

people make their primary assessment based on appearance, even if they deny that they do, it is a natural human process to seek visual confirmation. On the same note, don't judge a book by its cover. Many "pretty" people who seek only "pretty" people often find shallowness and vanity and no substance for that very relationship they seek...try a normal looking person, you will usually be surprised."

"There are no weirdoes and no normal people on the internet. There aren't people at all, just words and text. You have to realize it is a digital environment and employ it as an initiation place and then follow-up in the real-world. The unique thing about open network communication is that it has no established social order or boundaries so people are naturally supported in their theatrical creation. The difficult aspect of this is that there is nobody to reference you as you microscopically grow bigger or into other tangents of a character without even noticing it. So; people tend to be more flexible with the facts or narrative because they feel like they are co-writing a novel with some one in real time."

"Can girls and guys be "just Friends. (Harry met Sally) Yes, if neither is physically attracted to the other. If one is and the other isn't it will almost never work. In the case of one person being attracted but wanted to be friends, many of those people will either be in denial or embarrassed to acknowledge their attraction."

"Realize that time doesn't exist on the internet. What is a timely response or an appropriate development of social expectations will be too slow or too fast to the other person. Most internet socializing tends to move at "warp speed"...because it can."

"Whether you're searching for romance in cyberspace or at a SpeedDating event, the rules can be complicated and downright frustrating. Following are a few that real singles have used to navigate this brave new world of dating:

"It is the 2000's and it is a whole different ball game than the 1970-s to 1999. You must ask your date to get an HIV/AIDS/STD test and show you the test results. It takes 4 days for a really expensive test to come back and 30 days for a full test result. They need to show you tests taken 30 days since the last person they slept with. It is not only appropriate it is REQUIRED, ESSENTIAL and Expected that you ask somebody on the first to third dates, if there is any sexual interest. It is each persons responsibility to discuss this stuff immediately. If you don't do it YOU CAN DIE FROM SEX. Look at the statistics. AIDS is killing more and more mainstream "average" Americans monthly."

"Don't discuss emotional issues in email. They will almost always be is interpreted. Hence the smiley faces: ;-) :-) etc. Never have a fight or misunderstanding via email or you are done for. Context is not apparent in email."

"Many people confuse "Cute" for "Love". We are all conditioned by the media to find people with perfect features to be desirable. The pressure of being Cute all the time makes men and women who are "cute" go a little nuts, so it is hard to find cute AND sane at the same time. Try to see the attraction in normal people and realize that the attraction to "cute" can sometimes last only as long as the newness of the new cute person."

"Guys talk about sex 70% more than most women. It is genetic memory-burned into their brains. Many guys, though, use sex as emotional validation but they are incapable of admitting it, the

rest are just horny. Society has programmed men to feel afraid to show sensitivity because it might make them look weak or gay.

If you talk about sex in email or on the phone, before you meet, and you both seem to be equally interested in it, it will probably, then, never happen because you did that. By building it up in advance you create a psychological fantasy which your mind will always make bigger than reality can possibly live up to. When you meet and find out that neither of you are the "Fabio" or "Miss America" (..fill in name of whoever floats your boat) of your assumptive projections then your boat is sunk."

"Most people find the picture issue necessary but disconcerting. Many people's friends tell them they are not photogenic and never look the same from shot to shot. Most people look better in person than in a picture unless a modeling studio shot them. You can't really tell what a person looks like unless you have seen 5-6 different pictures in different settings."

"Many "socially-beautiful" men & women are conditioned to only go out with GQ/FratHouse looking people. These people have been taught that it is all about facial balance, symmetry and small featured proportion; the majority of the real world does not have that symmetry. Frat House/Sorority people are singled out by a culture and guided to ...Frat Houses and Sororities for reinforcement from common-culture types.! If only we could stop and look deeper than the shell..but those social imprints and media conditionings represent strong mnemonic triggers."

"Avoid the "Sherlock Holmes" technique. Many people feel that they have to squeeze as much information out and draw conclusions about that information in the first date. Don't make



assumptions or second-guess others. If somebody responds to one question you ask with a lengthy answer about food, work, cars, etc; don't assume that they are obsessed with one or the other. They may just be a long-winded or detailed communicator or they may just feel obligated to try to give you as much info as possible about something you showed interest in. Try to adopt a flexible attitude in assessing a persons process based on one initial meeting."

"Cosmo advises that previous marriage should be an issue but the US census shows us that the Likelihood of new marriages ending in divorce is 50%. If your potential date has not been married, facts now show that they may have been smarter and more dedicated to a permanent relationship potential by waiting until after their 30's. Others have just not met the right person and hold the ideal partner dream firm. Some have asked people to marry them but the other person said no. So, not being married after 30 does not mean, today, what it might have meant in your parents times."

To hell with women's liberation. If you are the man, and I am sure you know how to tell, you will be footing the bill unless otherwise arranged before the date. In same-sex relationships the person who asks for the date pays.

Ninth in the list of rules: Follow your heart. Rules are meant to be broken. We can't all be as lucky as ferrets, but if you bite someone in just the right place you might get lucky. "

"Guys and gals of all ages... I want to say that whomever you fall for, regardless if their dorky, popular, weird, smart, crazy, etc.. don't be pressured by the stereotypes of high school! Open your heart and be honest about your feelings. When one person

breaks those "Rules of dating in high school", it can give everyone else the courage to break those silly dumb pathetic rules as well. I know it's even harder when you're getting pressure from your friends. Especially if you're honest and, for instance our one of the "popular guys" and then you say to your buddies that you like that little chubby girl in your Math class, and everyone is like, "Dude... you like HER?!" Then of course you turn bright red and deny it. But if they're true friends, then they'll back you on what you believe. Stereotypes are nasty evil things... and deep down... most of us don't believe them... and most of us wish we could go against them... but we're afraid. Therefore, I suggest we all work on it together.

Next time the dorky girl or guy, popular girl or guy, crazy girl or guy, etc... comes up to you, instead of jumping to conclusions about who they are based on what they've been "labeled" by the school, reach out your hand to them.... who knows, you might meet that Mr. or Mrs. Right of your dreams. And my last point.... don't try so hard to go searching for love when you're young. While there are the percentage of people that do meet in high school and get married, chances are, it doesn't work. You have your life ahead of you to meet that special person for you. Enjoy high school and meet friends of all social cliques, and don't concentrate so much on whether or not someone is going to accept you or not accept you. Just be yourself."

"Cowboys. Though I have nothing against cowboys per se; I just don't want to date one. I'd even venture to bet that line dancing is a joyful activity, good exercise even, but again, not for me.

Seatbelts. I admire a man who uses a seatbelt. It says a lot about him. Like the fact that he enjoys his life and wants it to continue.

Transportation. I admire a man who actually has a car. Having to pick a guy up is a little fishy. Due to the complete dearth of mass transportation in Brainerd, it can often mean there's been some trouble with the law.

Glasses. I'm quite particular about the issue of glasses. Small and the right shape work well for me, but if they go anywhere near a square and over three to four inches tall, my enthusiasm dwindles. (I'm quite aware of how shallow I'm sounding. Really, I'm a decent sort. Large, square glasses are fine for my uncle or my grandpa or the grocer, but in terms of a potential mate, they're not my ideal.)

Smells matter. As it turns out, metallic licorice types of smells do not appeal to me. Neither do excessively manly colognes. Clean, soapy scents or woody, incense campfire types of smells do appeal to me.

Shoes. Again, I realize I'm showing the shallow side of myself here, but cowboy boots that make a man appear to be teetering on high heels don't do it for me. Solid loafers that don't make clicking noises on the floor work nicely. I'm OK with certain types of sandals. And outdoorsy boot-shoes work for me big time. Call me crazy.

Hair. This is a very precise category. Feel free to take notes if you must. A man who spends a lot of time on his hair does not appeal to me. My motto is hair can be gorgeous without lots of work. (Motto may be a bit strong, but the thought has crossed my mind.) While I'm not sure gorgeous is an adjective that can be used to describe my hair; at least I don't end up spending inordinate amounts of time in front of the mirror, cursing and

wracked with self-doubt. I can get my cursing and self-beratement done in about five minutes.

Any man who spends more time than it takes to watch an episode of Boy Meets World, back combing, teasing or adding products of a fruity nature to his hair turns me off.

Not unlike the issue of glasses, the hair should not be more than three or four inches in height.

Lack of hair. This works. Only if the hair that does exist is not used to overcompensate for the lack of. This shows a certain self-confidence. I also have found that long hair is not my favorite. It should, however, be all one length. Layers or bilateral "hockey" cuts -- short on the top and sides but long in the back -- do nothing for me. Actually, they make me want to run to the nearest restroom labeled "does" or "bucks."

Height. This category is a freebie. I'm only 5 feet 1, so while I might be uncomfortable with a man less than my height; statistically that does not occur very often. Other than that, I'm pretty open.

Weight. Actually, I'm pretty flexible on this too. Mostly because I'm no Ally McBeal. Not only am I not Ally McBeal, but sometimes I have seething anger about how Ally McBeal (i.e. the media's representation of the ideal bulimic woman) can make me feel like the body I live in is wrong.

OK, so I guess Ally McBeal can't actually make me feel that way, but there's definitely a link of some sort. So, in hopes that I will not be judged as harshly as I sometimes feel, I am pretty open about size. I like men who are active yet are not obsessed with

fitness or the size of their "pythons." It is for this convoluted, irrational rationalization that weight is not an issue with me.

Questions. I need someone who asks them and then listens to the answers. Go figure. This in turn makes me want to ask questions and have real conversations. A definite necessity.

Touching. Too much touching right away is confusing and not so good. No touching whatsoever is also confusing. No real verdict on this one.

Reading. Let's just say this is a good thing. And no, I do not consider porn actual reading.

Age. So far, I've been dating men older than me. Some much older. Telling someone your real age is good. Hedging and answers like "I believe you're as young as you feel" are not good signs.

Humor. As it turns out, this one of the biggest pluses by far. By humor, I don't really mean jokes. Stand-up comedian wannabes who consider one person a way to try out new material do not appeal to me. But a wry skepticism of the world at large is rather quite nice"

Here's a homework assignment. Develop your own list of killer questions. The way to do it is to analyze your previous love relationships. What character trait or behavior pattern of a romantic partner destroyed the relationship? Formulate a question to find out whether a prospect has this trait.

"How do I know that my prospective romantic partner is answering my killer questions honestly?"

Unfortunately you can't always trust people. They're going to be tempted to tell you what you want to hear rather than the truth. One way of getting around this is to quiz their parents, relatives, and friends. The ideal person to ask, of course, is their ex-spouse. Find out the "dirt" about a prospective romantic partner before you fall in love. This advice is decidedly unromantic, but it sure beats finding out disastrous information after you fall in love.

"If my partner finds out I've been snooping around their private life, there's going to be hell to pay!"

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AND HERE IS WHAT THE GUYS HAVE SAID:

"I would like to see a process which goes:

1. Meet casual friends in normal life. This doesn't work easily for people

who have non-perpetuating social contact circles, or who have restrictions

on dating people at work or don't attend social functions where there is a

substantial population of single people of a reasonable age group. Thus

match.com, which is not normal life, but will have to do in a pinch.

1. Develop a devoted friendship, where you can get comfortable with someone

without wondering whether each time is the last time you'll ever see them.

1. Become lovers. Do a great romantic weekend somewhere to start this off.
2. Get married. Or some derivation of this until both of you are ready.
3. Have a family. Optional according to taste.

One can stop anywhere along the above continuum with great happiness, if you

haven't skipped steps. If you've skipped any steps, you'll hate each other

and yourself (you can demonstrate this by trying steps 5 through 1 in

reverse)."

"I never met so many goldiggers and gals with superficial checklists in my life.. yikes.. you've got to be careful."

"The bottom line is make genuine contact at all costs. If you connect on a genuine level, you have the ball. Shake it up and have fun. Everyone is bored and sick of the bullshit. An honest moment of connection is refreshing"

"There's plenty to go around. If you hog the ball, the team loses. Your friends are not your adversaries. Work together and everyone wins. Petty competition makes everyone look bad. Worst of all, you look desperate or bitter. everyone likes fun. Keep it fun. It's fun to share."

"People like to fill in the blanks. People also want things to be perfect. Keep your mouth shut and they'll fill in the blanks perfectly. Don't try to guess what they're looking for. It's not about what you say, it's how you listen."

"Women are smart. Take this into consideration. They're good at reading the vibe and are in tune with what's really going down. They know what's happening. Don't manipulate, deny, and condescend. It's insulting."

Women like attention. It's flattering as long as you're respectful and honest. Formalities

"Be honest with yourself and with them. If you want intimacy, then own up to it. Don't come at them like you're interested in their nail polish if what you really want is intimacy. It's insulting. You're a man, she's a woman. Deal with it. The more you pretend that it's not about sexual attraction, the harder it will be to redefine the parameters. Honesty works like magic if you're free from guilt. The truth shall set you free."

"Lying is bad. Forget the ethical issue, it's bad business. It demonstrates a lack of self-confidence. Even if you get away with it, you're going down the wrong road.

But if a friend gets in trouble, sometimes a simple lie can be a perfect parachute."



"You're a man, so present yourself as one. Confidence and being comfortable with one's self is very attractive. So if you're attracted to a beautiful baby, be both confident and comfortable with that. Don't apologize or qualify how you're feeling. She'll respect you for it."

"There's nothing like a good entrance. You wouldn't want to sit at a table that wasn't set. If you're there too early, you look desperate. Show up late like you're "just stopping by," and you come off like the man about town."

"Everyone wants a mystery. Staring deadpan at a beautiful baby cheats her out of the suspense and courtship she deserves. Keep it intriguing and give her the gift of a challenge."

"The strongest will survive. Don't waste your time filling your head with self-doubt. The competition's fierce, so always give yourself the edge. A sense of self-respect makes all the difference in the world. You can be the king of the Jungle or just another hyena cowering at the water hole. It's all up to you."

"Don't hide the fact that you like sex. That doesn't mean act like the fourteen year old on the back of the bus who's constantly pulling on himself and making obscene noises. It just means own your sexuality and don't apologize for it."

"Be a man with a slow hand. The ladies love foreplay, and that's exactly why you wait a few days before you call. No reason to rush it. Let her savor the wait. She'll thank you later."

"Our generation is the first to be presented with the challenge of the answering machine. A good message can put you on the fast track to paradise, a bad one can lead to public ridicule and

endless playbacks to the delight of family and friends. The stakes are high. This is no joke.

The golden rule is keep it simple. Don't try to overexplain who you are or how you're feeling. It's a moment frozen in amber. It's a small piece of your soul. Give her a taste--the little pink spoon, not the whole sundae."

"Sometimes it just happens. Let it. Don't let stupid rules from a book get in the way. If you're lucky enough to have things unfold organically, don't ruin it. You're money."

"You're always better off trusting yourself and playing your game. You wouldn't ask Stockton to bang the boards for rebounds and you wouldn't want Shaq trying to drain threes. Stick with what feels right. That way, even if you fail, you've learned something. Trust your instincts and think for yourself. "

" The first date is always in a public place, you take your car, they take their car, both of you leave in your cars and go back to your own homes. The second date is exactly as the first. Exactly as the second. The fourth date can be in one car, mutually agreeable that each of you will return to their respective homes alone. There is to be no touching as far as long kisses, arms around each other, longer than a few seconds hugging. At no time are the two of you to be alone together. Any vehicle causes a chance for being alone. When you arrive home, get out of the car and go inside. There is nothing wrong with being walked to your door. However, talking outside is fine, you enter your home alone. It is my suggestion that you date for the minimum of one year. If there are children from previous marriages or relationships, they are not to meet your date for the first year. This causes damage to the children; as they will see people

going in and out of your life that they become attached to. Remember, being without their father or mother is already traumatic enough.

Sex before marriage is absolutely out. Many times I have heard people talk about their "friends." I ask them if they are sleeping with them, and they say yes. I tell them they are no longer friends. Remember, you don't sleep with your friends! Any time alone together is dangerous. Inappropriate kissing, fondling, etc. will only lead to hormone adjustments and crossing the line is much easier to do in the heat of the moment. Don't set yourself up to fail.

If you are a single parent with children, just because you had sex at least once in your life, doesn't mean it is all right to have it again. Become a born again virgin.

Avoid conversations that are sexual in nature. Using the "someday" technique may put you in the present moment faster than you think. If you cannot stand someone's children, don't marry that person. You will resent the children later and the relationship will fail. Practice makes perfect. Continue practicing friendship. You will need this later in your relationship."

"If you examine it closely, your situation makes a great deal of sense. Men in their twenties have a very different set of priorities than men in their thirties or forties and "seasoned" men are often more mature. The nice thing is, in this case, you and your friends are the beneficiaries.

Twenty-something year old men are still searching for who they are, what talents they possess and the type of women they desire. They are experiencing many aspects of life for the first

time. Physically, they are approaching their sexual prime and seek physical relationships more often. Sex, money, personal-improvement, material possessions, sports and status are their primary interests and motivational forces. Their 'me' mentality has not yet matured into a "we" philosophy and jealousy often surfaces seemingly without provocation.

For older men, this is not the case. By their late thirties, most know who they are or at least who they are not. Many are in the second or third phases of their careers and have learned that there is more to life than money, sex and prestige. You will find that they avoid playing the "mind games" that younger men engage in as they realize this is simply a waste of time. They have learned what physically, emotionally and intellectually satisfies a woman. Seasoned men will be more responsible, get things done and have a life beyond their relationship with you. They will not hang on your every word, nor pressure you for sex, but will truly appreciate the time they spend with you. They realize that in today's busy and complicated world, time is precious.

Women assume very different roles in the lives of men depending on the age of the man they are dating. Younger men see women as being there for them. Older men take great personal pride in dating younger women and strive to connect with them on their level.

Women indicated that time spent with older men was more meaningful, loving, and enjoyable. They had the ability to hold women's attention, had more life experiences to draw upon and focused less on themselves. "

"If a guy breaks up with his girlfriend, and goes out with another girl within ten to twenty years, he is a "jerk" and "dumped her for someone else."

On the other hand, if the girl goes out with somebody mere seconds after she broke up with her ex, its not being mean or shallow, its because her ex is a shallow insensitive jerk who beat her.

If a guy dumps a girl, he did it because he is a "selfish pig" that "cares about nobody but himself." But, on the other hand, if a girl dumps a guy, she was "doing what's best for both of us" because its "not you, its me."

No matter how persuasive his argument or how much he explains why he broke up with a girl, that girl, her family, and friends, will always somehow "find out the real reason" or "just make something up so the girl doesn't look bad."

If guys act senselessly or stupid, its because they're "jerks" or "assholes" or "selfish pigs that don't care about other people's feelings."

If a girl acts senselessly or stupid, its either because:

A) Its the guy's fault

B) Its that time of the month (even though they've been acting like it for 3 weeks) and/or they're having "personal problems"

C) They weren't acting senselessly or stupid, you just think that, but you're wrong.

Girls are all heart and don't care about material, one-dimensional things like those "damned male pigs" do. That's why they have hundreds of pairs of shoes and will only love you if you buy them unbelievably expensive jewelry that has no real purpose or function other than to drain you of what small funds you have."

"Well, okay. It's not exactly the rules. After all, we're talking about something being written by a fellow whose romantic career has been... less than exemplary, shall we say? But, it's bits and bobs I've come up with, especially in talking things over with friends recently due to once again getting interested in someone and having it not immediately turn into utter bliss.

### 1: Get a Life

Ah, how many times have we heard this shouted at some poor anorak (harmless obsessive) who just can't seem to let go of their pet addiction? Most of us feel contempt-tinged pity for the poor fools who seem oblivious to anything but collecting stamps, or trainspotting, or studying fourteenth-century medieval warfare - and yet sign right on up to the Sad Bastard of the Month Club when it comes to love, complete with the free boxed set of 'Bad Poetry No One Should Write' and '101 Ways to Say "I'm a Sap"'. When you have Romeo and Juliet as a cultural icon of romance, the phrase 'Get a Life' seems rather trite.

Still, this is perhaps the most important advice anyone can take. No matter how interested in someone you are, you can't just dive on in, making them the end-all be-all of each and every day. After all, you need something to talk about, right? Doesn't happen if you spend all your time together. You have to have

things that happen in your life that you can discuss and relate to each other.

It also lets off steam. What use is it to love someone else's company if you don't know what missing that company is like? And no two people, no matter how compatible or alike they are, like all of the exact same things in the exact same proportions. Or do you *really* think that she enjoys playing Tekken for several hours each night?

Also, in a sad, manipulative way, it shows that you aren't desperate. The fact you have outside interests, outside things to do, shows that you can get on perfectly well without the other person - you just prefer not to. It's that old, well-used argument of want versus need. It's much, much better - and I know this from experience - to be wanted, rather than needed. Wanted is a choice, one that doesn't come loaded with requirements and expectations of action. Being needed has a great deal to it in terms of things you have to do for the other person, because they can't provide it themselves or can't do without it.

This also allows for the Consolation Prize category. Should things not end up happening or working out, the fact that you kept up your previous life - and hopefully didn't talk everyone's ears off about your relationship - means that you actually have people you can do things with in the future. Most people don't like being abandoned every time you decide to chase a woman (in my case) or a man - it shows a lack of balance. And, after all, we all know that one of the best ways to meet new people is through your friends...

2: Take it Easy

This is my personal bugaboo. I am not a patient man when it comes to romantic relationships. If the way I tend to handle relationships was compared to highway driving, I'm the fellow that your local law enforcement would always be pulling over for thinking that the accelerator in the car is an on-off switch - either not in use or fully pressed to the floor. Lead foot. Speed demon. Michael Schumacher doesn't hold a candle. Etc.

But, no matter how much you think you can break into the Formula 1 race of dating, pushing things at maximum speed isn't the way to go. Most meaningful relationships aren't going to start with racing ahead to the formal aspects of a relationship without getting to know one another. I shudder to consider people who go home with each other from the club without knowing anything about the other person's personality, likes, dislikes, personal phobias, or even what they prefer for breakfast. If nothing else, relationships should require the same cooling-off period as purchasing a gun in most states in the United States. Sure, it seems a good idea when you're hot and bothered... but do you really know what you're getting into?

I tend to dwell on things in my mind, build them up into gigantic proportion, and then melt down into a little ball in no time. It's probably because I'm a relatively repressed individual, not used to any large swings of emotion one way or another (any disputes with this statement can be given to me. Directly. And I'll bludgeon you until you agree with me). This is Not Good, with capitals. Why, you ask?

Because it labels you as an obsessive. Obsessives are bad. Obsessives cannot react rationally to emotional matters. Obsessives can hurt people, either emotionally or physically.



They can become like one fellow, who's been contacting my cousin on a semi-regular basis for several years after she refused to have anything to do with him. Yes, I know, you look at the movies, and think it looks cute. Think again - most places now have laws against that sort of activity, and if you're remotely decent, becoming one of these poor souls is one of the most truly mortifying experiences you can have. Talk about shattering the self-image.

Think of it like cooking. If I'm baking up a batch of my 'dive bombs' (double chocolate chunk cookies, yum!), the only result of cooking them at gas mark 9 will be small charred bits of chocolate dough only good for a Palestinian to throw at Israeli soldiers. However, if I cook them at gas mark 5 for the right amount of time, I have confections suitable for use in bribing large numbers of friends and relatives. Now, I don't know about you - but until I join the intifada, I'll stick with the lower temperature.

If you don't overpressurize and overcook the situation, your relationship, potential or in place, will have time to grow and flower. Nothing happens in a vacuum, and nothing happens in an instant. Let it grow, let it develop. Get to know the person, and let them get to know you. After all, they have just as much of a right to see what they're getting as you do to see what you are trying to catch. That process also allows you two to see that you are both interested in each other for each other, and aren't some sort of raving maniac.

How to deal with this one? Don't expect immediate results. Indulge liberally in Rule Number 1 - Get A Life. Not too much - you do want to show you're still interested. But do other things.

Don't hover over her, being there all the time, no matter what the time. Do other things. Put other parts of your life forward as being important, and do them - even if that can put you out of doing some of the things you could otherwise be doing with her. Allow some time to lapse between seeing each other - a day or a few can really bring home how much you wish you were seeing each other. As opposed to you both wishing you were not seeing each other, and won't they please just go away!

### 1. Be Sincere

We all know Cary Grant. Suave on screen, the man exuded charm. Hair always perfectly in place, clothes always perfectly tailored unless he's been diving through some cornfield in the middle of Illinois. He knew the right drink to have - and to order for the lady, too. Never a fashion faux pas, always the master at being the best example of sophistication you could imagine. This man could charm the ladies left, right, and centre, with the right compliment, the right gallantry, the right whispered phrase.

Now, look in the mirror. Does that look like Cary Grant? I hate to be the one to break it to you, bub...

In the real world, that doesn't work. Well, yes. It can. But it shouldn't. More importantly, if you're reading this, it isn't likely to work *for you*. You are more likely to come off sounding like some Turkish rug dealer from a B movie from the forties, slimy, lewd, and frankly somewhere farther down on the evolutionary scale than your everyday common garden slug. How's that for a comparison?

There is a certain art to seduction involving complimenting a woman in such a way that most women these days recognise all

too well and want no part of. It's often erroneously attributed to Mediterranean men, though I've seen Germans, English, and Americans try it too. It takes a certain knack, a certain arrogance, and in my opinion, a certain contempt for women to try it. I don't think I'd *want* the type of woman who would go for it.

Now, I'm offbeat, often disconnected mentally, and awkward at the best of times. While that sounds bad, it's also my charm, so we go with what we have. And that, my friends, is the exact point I'm making. Women are just as quirky, if not more so, than men. But what they prize is getting to know your quirks. Honestly is immensely flattering. Telling someone they look beautiful because you happen to think they do, rather than as some pickup line, does amazing things for your standing in their eyes. Being who you are, and trusting them enough *to be who you are* is just as flattering.

This doesn't mean you have to sit around grouching about the last sporting match you happen to see and scratching itchy parts of your anatomy. That's not honest either. What is needed is to show how you honestly feel. If you are interested in them, what they have to say is important - so show you're listening. Respond to what they have to say - if they've any respect for you, they'll listen when you in return have something to expand on, or take a position opposite to whatever they're saying. Even if you agree, nodding to show that, or saying something to that effect shows that you heard what they have to say, and that it actually got processed by that grey goo called a brain that resides between your ears.

Want to know something? Ask a question. Just make sure you listen to the answer. Don't like something they're doing? Tell

them - politely. Feel a certain way? Tell them, but in a respectful fashion. You will be amazed what credit it does for you to be able to sit down, without some massive emotional hyperbole but with intense, deep sincerity and meaning, and tell someone that you are interested in them as more than a friend and wish to know how they feel about you. Don't declare your undying love, don't wail about how you can't live without them - because, let's face it... you can. Or else you're in that obsessive category we discussed above, and therefore don't deserve them. What you are doing is letting them know precisely where you stand - no hyperbole, no exaggeration, no untruths. Provided you've picked a good one, they'll give you the same back in spades.

1. Know when to back off.

Ever Star Wars? I'm sure you know the scene - the Rebels are attacking the Death Star, and Gold Group is making its trench run in their spiffy little Y-wings to hit that exhaust port, while Luke and the rest of the X-wings are chopping their way through the TIE fighters above. Remember the radio traffic for that scene? Let me paraphrase:

Gold Leader: I can't get a shot

Wingman: Stay on target...

Gold Leader: I can't manoeuvre!

Wingman: Stay on target...

Gold Leader: You're too close!

Wingman: Stay on target...

Gold Leader: Loosen up!

Wingman: Stay on target...

Meanwhile, dear old Gold Leader is doing his best to imitate the nine o'clock fireworks show at any Disney amusement theme park you can name. Pull this stunt, and your intended love interest will likely blow up - but you'll be the one to get incinerated.

This is probably the hardest part for most people. No one likes being helpless, or waiting for someone else to make a decision. We all want to just say that one thing more that will cause the clouds to part, the sun to shine, and everything to be all right. Surely, there's just that one phrase we're just about to find that will convince them that we are The One, that everything will be All Right, and that they can indeed find happiness and contentment in your arms...

Hate to tell you, but the road to hell - or the exhaust port on the Death Star, depending on how much your life is wrapped up in LucasFilms - is paved with exactly those sorts of good intentions. You can be doing wonderfully to convince someone of the rightness of your cause, but belabour the issue so much you end up annoying them to the point where you put yourself right out of contention. More is not better. More is just... more.

I'm not saying you should back off from everything. Anything but. If you have an objection to something, make it - otherwise you're just a sap. If you have a point to make - make it. But do not, under any circumstances, just keep nattering on. That shows a disrespect for your intended, as she will see it as you not

believing you heard her, and that you think she can be convinced simply by sounding like a broken record player.

Take for instance one of those hypothetical situations when you've broached the possibility of a relationship with her. She's interested, but lists off a few reasons as to why now is not a good time - and why it may never happen. Contrary to some people's beliefs, you are allowed to register objections to these reasons. However, you have to do so in a specific way. You can answer these points cogently - make your response to the point. Make it reasoned, without whining, yelling, or other such cheap emotional ploys, and actually address the points they bring up. Make your point while fully accepting their reason as valid - do not blow it off as specious. After all, they are convincing *to her*. Telling her in not so many words that she can't reason her way out of a paper bag is not a good start to a relationship! Finally, make your points only once. There is likely never going to be a conversation where she is listening more intently to you than in those moments - so make them count.

Bringing it up again at another time does you no good. You are not, as much as it would seem you are, trying to convince her at the time to date you. It's unlikely to happen. The idea of dating someone is, obviously, an emotional one, and emotions don't tend to change just by snapping the fingers. She will need time to mull over what you have to say, to mull over her feelings and how things have been changing between you lately, and mull over what changes in her life this will bring. It may take hours. If so, count yourself lucky. It may take days. It may take weeks. Or months. Or even years - though by that point it's likely moot. But it *will* take time, and you need to be patient with it. Pushing it will

only label you as obsessive, or obnoxious, or as a cretin. Or all three.

An addendum to this. Don't push your friends too much. Yes, talk to them about the matter - but try to keep it to when you need to. Otherwise they won't be nearly as willing to listen to you after several sessions of playing the Boy who cried Wolf. Even if they are still willing to listen, they won't be in a position to give you nearly as good advice, much as a soldier who's been on watch for several hours is not nearly as effective as one who's just taken up his post.

### 1. Enjoy it As it Comes (Or, Don't Write The Script)

I once had a girlfriend who would begin the most blazing arguments with me over what seemed to be the oddest things. Say a special event in our mutual lives had come up. I'd perhaps get her flowers, and then take her to dinner. The night would seem fine, but she'd get more and more angry, no matter how witty or charming I might be, no matter how good the food was, or anything else I could do. Then, later, when it was much, much too late, I'd find out what my sin was.

Simply put, I'd not followed the script.

In nearly all of these cases, my fault was not what I had done, or even having forgotten to do something I'd promised to do. It was for having not somehow read her mind and done what she had imagined the night would be like, and I would do. I'd have gotten her roses, instead of Irises, or picked the wrong restaurant, or not greeted her in the exact way she liked. Every time, her Rudolph Valentino would miff his lines, and turn out to simply be me, played in a special performance by me, and with

Warner Brothers absolutely refusing to negotiate a change of actors for the current film.

This is a warning about expectations. Simply put, the more you have, the more likely you are to be disappointed in a big way. Having reasonable ones is fine - being surprised at being treated politely by another human being is standard, and showing such surprise makes people wonder about your home life. But making expectations about how someone will react to your romantic advances is a great way to get yourself in trouble.

Expecting the girl to swoon at your feet the instant you even hint at liking her is ludicrous. If they do, I'd check your wallet. Moreover, expecting such a reaction will set you up for one large emotional fall. Building up this amazingly rosy picture in your mind is like creating any complex piece of art - getting it shattered hurts like hell. The point of expressing your interest in a relationship is to demonstrate your willingness to invest in them as a person. If you've invested in some fanciful creation of your mind, you are missing the point.

Thinking too optimistically in that way is bad - it can even make you arrogant. But don't write the script as a failure, either. That creation can affect how you go into the conversation - so if you think she's just going to turn you down, she likely will if you let yourself act like it's a foregone conclusion. Part of showing that interest and having that conversation is that you are confident enough in yourself as a partner that it is actually a decision that she needs to make, as opposed to being an obligation on her time by asking her a question that you yourself have already decided is a 'no'.



In short, don't freight the possibilities with too much emotion. Consider it a mystery in life that you wish, out of sincere curiosity, to have answered. I am interested, therefore I want to know if you are interested. Don't turn it into an arrogant request for a rubber-stamping of your decision that you two are in a relationship, and don't turn it into her having to console you for being inadequate as a human being. Make it straightforward, make it respectful, make it from one equal to another. After all, we are talking about romantic relationships, which should be about two equals dealing with one another. If you had something else in mind, you're reading the wrong piece of work.

The key to this whole wonderful world is enjoying what comes of it. If you are trying for a true relationship with this person, you should be enjoying her company as a friend as much as you would enjoy her company as a partner. So enjoy it! Take the time of getting to know her as a person and as a friend and make the most of it, enjoying it all the while. If you can't enjoy her company in a situation where you're not in the midst of full-blown loving, you have serious problems that have to be worked out, fast. If you can't let go of control enough to account for anything that comes up... then you shouldn't be asking to share your life and control thereof with someone else - anyone else.

### 1. Allow for the Sequel

... and don't do it in order to make another 100 million dollars at the box office. I don't care how much you enjoyed the wire work in *The Matrix*, the horror films of the eighties and the umpteen 'Rocky' movies should have convinced everyone that sequels merely for form's sake or for another buck are just wrong. Mel

Brooks was spot-on with his line in *Spaceballs*: "And hopefully we'll meet again in *Spaceballs 2: The Search For More Money*."

No matter how dire the film industry is in rehashing good movies into dog food and tossing them back into the cinema-viewer's trough, there is a glimmering of a good idea in this. Simply put, when you ask your interest if she is interested in a relationship, you need to make sure that there is actually able to be the follow-on period after the question.

Let me put it another way: you do not live in an sit-com where the screen will fade to black with a laugh track going when you find your way to inform her that you want a relationship. You'll still be there, right in the middle of thing, as will she. No 'cut!', no pause button - and no rewind and no edit. However much you may be cringing inside and desperately wishing to rewind your life just a few precious seconds.

This is the part where you consider the short-term, medium-term, and long-term consequences. Love is great, as is the thought of it - but have you actually thought, or are you caught up in that rosy glow that usually involves fanciful creatures such as pink elephants running by at the edge of your peripheral vision? Much as I enjoy Fantasia - the old version - I wouldn't want to live in the movie. If you haven't stopped to consider things rationally, it's time to start.

First, the short term. Are you asking her in a way that's not going to leave one or the other of you so embarrassed or angry that a 'yes' is not a possibility? However nice the emotion is, sending it over via a stripper is not likely to win you any points. Nor is taking more time than the current session of Parliament to get your speech out - Jimmy Stewart didn't look so hot by the end of

'Mr. Smith Goes To Washington', and there's good reason why. Each person is different, so you have to make the pitch appropriate to the person who it is aimed at. Some people find gallantry wonderful, while others wretch and look for the gong to bang to get you pulled offstage. It's the same for any sort of approach.

Similarly, pay attention to where and when you do it. The situation is just as important as the general state of your current friendship with the person. Asking a gal on a date while the other guy is on his knee proposing to her is usually considered bad. In all honesty, though, think about it - if you've been fighting all day over something or other, it's not usually a good time. In general, if it will merely add stress to the person's life rather than being something positive, don't bring it up. There are better times, and you are needed more as a friend than as someone trying to change the current situation - which requires them to be strong.

Know when to end the conversation. This has been covered earlier, but is important to know. If she says yes, well, no worries. But if you get a qualified statement or a no, you need to make it possible for a graceful exit with no one being hurt. Don't just stammer something out and high-tail it out - that's rude. Be adult about it, let conversation go elsewhere or just drop if that's where it happens. Say goodbye when you go - show that you have no hard feelings. This is immensely important. Just because they can't always take you up on your offer doesn't mean they are personally insulting you. It just means they aren't taking you up on your offer. *Nothing more.*

Now the medium-term. This is the next few weeks or even months. Again, a 'yes' is easy to deal with - you have the relationship and go on with life. If it's qualified, you have to figure out that balance.

Do you wish to continue showing interest? Know before you ask the question about the relationship. If you get that qualified 'no', with reasons given for not taking you up despite your both being interested in each other, you need to know where you stand. If you wish to continue showing interest, make sure that she knows you will do so, and make sure that this is acceptable to her. Doing so puts all your cards on the table and makes it so that there are no misunderstandings whatsoever. It is not asking her to change her mind - it is merely a request on your part to continue courting her in a gentlemanly, relaxed manner, giving her the option to bring back up the possibility of romance if she wishes it.

If this is welcome, consider carefully how to do it without stressing them by being too close, how to keep showing your interest by not dropping away entirely, and how you can relate to each other while waiting in limbo. Do *not* bring up again the question of relationship. The fact you're still flirting and talking with her and showing that interest that you were just before asking is enough to show the question is still there. But it's in her court. Don't bring it up for a couple of months, at least - otherwise you're a pest.

Be very careful here. It is all too easy to read into everything after this point and truly screw up your friendship, let alone anything deeper. It is utter hell - trust me, I know. But it can be worth it. Eventually, you will either lose interest, they will tell you

to stop - in short, move things to a 'no' - or they will take you up on your initial request for more than friendship. But it's in their court.

If they do say no, you need to know how to conduct yourself around her in the future. If you are good friends, very little should actually happen, unless you made it so awkward in asking that she'll always feel the awkwardness. After all, a good friend doesn't like causing their friends pain - and if you make it difficult, she'll feel the fact she's causing you pain, thus causing the awkwardness. Know where you stand - whether you can continue being friends, or whether you need to escape for a bit before taking the friendship back up again. Whatever you do, don't make it so that there's bad feeling. That's just handling life badly.

In the long-term, everything is a different ball-game. Your intent for this should be to make anything possible, really. If you get a 'yes', I sincerely hope you're still operating under the mandate of that answer for a very long time. If you get that 'no' - things can change over time. But wait a long time, so that things can change. You would be amazed what six months can do, or even longer. Just make sure that it is a long time - your feelings need to change too, or at least move with time and not simply remain frozen in that previous moment. As for the qualified 'no', make it so that should at some point she changes her mind, she can come to you, or so that she'll be good friends with you and cheer you on when you find someone else. Should you still be interested in her later on, and you've been courting away for a long while without her telling you to quit... says something, doesn't it? You'll have figured out if you're getting strung along

by a certain point. Just be sure to be able to acknowledge when things aren't going to change.

In Conclusion...

Dating is hell. I have never undergone anything that can make my heart pound as wildly, my lungs seize up so dramatically, or my brain fry in a pan as much as trying to get that girl right there - no, the one just to the right there - to agree to go have a coffee with me. I have made nearly every error possible for a guy to make while still staying with legally and morally safe grounds in trying to get that question across, and I'm still here, and still trying. I've even succeeded a time or two. The final point: don't give up hope. I've done so numerous times, and have been proven so, so very wrong. You may have found 'the one' - and may do so repeatedly. I have, much to my own amusement. My experience has taught me that there is a different 'one' for nearly every time in our lives, and that it is a rare (but wonderful) thing for one person to be that for all those times. Do not despair! There will be more chances, more opportunities, more people in your life - and finding all that out and learning from the experience of doing so is some of the best entertainment out there, not to mention good for getting your heart rate up for long periods of time. Give humanity a chance - you'll be surprised at the results"

et laid. You want to be nice or in the sack? I thought so. "

"I just read that 47,000 women answered People Magazine's reader's poll on the subject of what women want in men. They reported that the most important attribute for a man to have is a sense of humor, according to 43%. 31% value sensitivity first.

19% say intelligence. 6% rank good looks first, and just 2% say money is most important.

Once the guy gets her phone number, 47% of women expect him to call within 24 hours, and 47% will wait up to three days. Only about 5% are still willing to hear from him after a week.

I'm curious on your take, Doc. What do you think? Which is the truth and which is the brainwashing? Gordon - who wants to know if women are capable of communicating what they actually want.

Hi Gordon,

Brainwashing, yep, you can say that again. As usual, the politically correct Feminista-dominated media have come up with a bunch of half-truths when it comes to understanding women. Why? To confuse you guys even more that you are.

Remember that trying to find out what women want by asking them is like trying to get Gary Condit to tell you how he honestly feels about marriage and commitment. You'll get an answer, but it won't have much to do with reality.

"The money deal makes us guys crazy. If the guy pays, then the girl should drive to see him, or sleep with him or absorb some other offset. No matter what a guy says, under any circumstance, in any world, in any place.. if the guy pays then he expects some kind of reciprocation from the girl PERIOD. Now, He might not even consciously acknowledge this but you better believe that millions of years of genetic programming is not going to disappear in the few generations since womens liberation. Oh Yes.. Womens Lib.. Wasn't that the thing where

women wanted everything equal from that point forward into history.. OH Right except when it comes to getting guys to pay for things.. uh, huh... and also on genetic programming, scientists have proven with absolute certainty that it exist. It has al;so been proven without a doubt that men were programmed to hunt the dinosaurs and jump all the women and the women were programmed to hang out in the cave and wait for the guys, so women have actually evolved more than guys and guys would have to acknowledge this. But, It is unfair for women to say that guys only want to have sex and not acknowledge that they have no control over their biochemical drives. Women need to be more understanding of all of guys built-in problems. We can't help it, we can only try to control it."

"Respect a women with your entire heart and you will win hers everytime."

"The women on one major dating site have this huge question sheet they send to all of the guys. I got one and I fixed it up so it works for everybody. Here, use it. If you get all the answers off of somebody you can pretty much mary them, sign them up as roommates or whatever, on the spot:

Are you looking for a boyfriend/girlfriend, lover or husband/wife? What is your ethnicity? What kind of education did you have? What are your hobbies: and interests? Are you afraid to get close? Are you ambitious? Are you emotionally available? List three things that really push your buttons? Name a place you would like to go? Are you an "indoors" person? Are you an artist? What is the most positive, and negative, relationship experience you have had? Are you and "outdoors" person? How many friends do you have in your social circle? Are



you creative? In what ways? Are you Gay? Bi? Straight? Are you romantic? Are you shy about your body? Are you sleeping with anyone now? Are you thinking about moving in the next few years? Are you willing to sign a non-disclosure agreement for work purposes? Can you go play during the day? At night? Midweek? Weekends? Can you have a monogamous relationship today? How often do you change your sheets and towels? Describe your childhood? Describe your sense of humor? Describe your work? Do you believe in the supernatural? Do you wash you hands before eating? Do you brush your teeth after eating? Do you believe that one person can have a productive impact on world change? Do you drink alcohol? Do you enjoy your work? Do you go out to eat a lot? Do you have a pet? What kind? Do you have call waiting? If someone calls do you get rid of the person you were talking to? Do you have children? Do they live with you? Ages? Do you have insomnia? Do you like to be held while sleeping? 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? Do you like to cook or bake? Do you live in a house, condo, apartment, etc? Do you like soft touch? Do you own a car? What kind? Do you own a computer? How does stress affect your lovemaking ability? Do you own a FAX and what is the number? Do you practice any particular diets or eating habits? Do you sleep-in on Sundays? Do you Smoke?, If so will you quit? Do you snore?

Do you take a shower at night or in the morning on a regular basis? Would you switch from morning to night or vice versa? 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 wear pajamas?

Do you wiggle or kick in your sleep? Favorite food? Have you ever been to an analyst, psychiatrist or psychologist? Why? Have you ever made love outside? Have you ever slept with someone on the first date? 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? 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 prefer the weather? How does answering these questions make you feel? How does fast make you feel? 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 parties do you go to in an average month? How much do you earn per year? How much time do you spend on the phone each day?

How should who-pays-for-what be allocated when going out? How would you describe your personality? Is religion a part of your life? Is spirituality a part of your life? What 3 magazines do you read most? What are the medical tests and requirements for you to safely have barrier-free sex? What are you allergic to? 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 marriage? 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 your friends say is your worst habit? What is the longest you have worked at one job? What is you favorite place ion the whole world? What is your astrology sign? What is your favorite body of water? Use an

adjective to describe how thinking about it makes you feel? What is your favorite season? What is your favorite surface or texture? What is your idea of a great weekend escape? What is your political viewpoint?

What is your bodytype? What are your sexual needs relative to specific actions or techniques? If your mate was sick or stressed, how long do you put up with them being like that before looking elsewhere? Can you handle intensity? What kind of birth control do you use? What kind of intimacy have you been used to on a first date? What kind of music do you like? What percent of your ex-mates do you still talk to? 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? How late do you usually stay out? What was the reason you were terminated from all of the jobs that terminated you? Who are your heroes? What are you the most frustrated about in your life? Would you understand if your mate couldn't sleep if they held you all night? Your drinking habits? Your position on recreational drugs? Do you smoke at all? What is your position on who should pay for what? What is your position on how much money you should be provided with by your boyfriend or husband each day, week or month?"

" Most of the gals will cancel a few hours before the day or the same day as the date. They get so many offers that they will take the best one for that day or they will get cold feet at meeting a real person and bail. Plan on a large percentage of last minute cancelations and plan a back-up plan"

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DEFINITIONS:

PARTY: 1. (verb, transitive) To engage in markedly heterosexual activities (e.g.,

"She's dressed like she wants to party.") 2. (adj.) Exemplifying a proclivity for

heterosexual activity (e.g., "I hear she's a party girl.") 3. (noun) A social gathering.

DATE: Function: verb

Inflected Form(s): dat ed; dat ing

Date: 15th century

transitive senses

1 : to determine the date of

2 : to record the date of : mark with the date

3 a : to mark with characteristics typical of a particular period b : to show up plainly the age of

4 : to make or have a date with

intransitive senses

5 : to reckon chronologically

6 : ORIGINATE

7 : to become dated

8 : to go out on usually romantic dates

9 : to go to a public event with another human

10: To engage in an activity which is planned and which one person or the other pays for

11: To ask and receive acceptance by another single individual with whom you do not have an ongoing significant relationship, to engage in an entertainment event for the purpose of engaging in sexual activities after a series of interpersonal rituals within the date or event.

12: To engage in rituals designed to produce sexual activities with a person whom you recently met

13: To engage in a review process to determine if you and another individual wish to marry or become boyfriend and girlfriend

14: To arrange to go out for a fun activity with friends of any gender or intention

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## RESOURCES

At last count, if you go to <http://www.amazon.com>, and enter the word "dating", in the Search window, for Books, you will find over 351 books on dating.

Your friends.

Newsgroups, ie. alt.rec.dating

"NOT" advice columnists.

Workshops in the alternative newspapers in your city.

Classes in things you are interested in. The number one dating class in 2000: Yoga, followed by Photography, followed by Cooking.

Best place to meet people: Your City's largest grocery stores in the best neighborhoods between 4:30PM and 7PM (The San Francisco Marina Safeway being the founder of this tradition). Art gallery openings. Supply stores, ie: Sports, Cooking, Photo, pets, etc.

Clubs. Community service groups. Political groups.

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SAFE SEX-

Boys and girls have sex. We all know that. But do we all know how to have it safely. 40,000,000 people have aids.

Get Tested:

Buy one of these HIV home test kits at:  
<http://www.homeaccess.com/02/02/>

or call the Private HIV test line at 1-800-584-8183

Or just ask your doctor to test you.

Share your test result paperwork with each other.

Condoms are made of latex or similar materials, and have thousands of natural, microscopic, holes in them. That is the nature of latex. HIV is much smaller than the holes so condoms

only decrease the odds, THEY DO NOT PREVENT HIV/AIDS 100%!  
Get tested.

Testing isn't a quick turn-around, it can take 1 week to 3 weeks to get reasonable results back. If you like somebody, plan ahead, get tested now.

Use soap and water before and right after sex. Yes, soap really kills alot of bad things.

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In Contempt of Courtship

By Elizabeth Austin, Washington Monthly

June 3, 2003

Monica Lewinsky has a new job: doling out her sage dating advice as host of a new Fox TV "reality" show, "Mr. Personality." In the show, a babelicious young stockbroker named Hayley is asked to choose a lover from a group of 20 masked suitors. The masks, we're told, are used to conceal the men's looks and force Hayley to base her decision on personality alone - a concept that assumes a lady never glances below her date's chin. Unlike Ms. Lewinsky (described in the show's promotional materials only as a psych major-turned-handbag designer who "currently lives in New York City and is considering a future career in law") Fox execs limited their pool of eligible suitors to unmarried men who do not live on Pennsylvania Avenue.

As host, Ms. Lewinsky functions as Hayley's on-site girlfriend, giggling with her at hidden-camera footage that shows the suitors misbehaving at a party and helping her to make the

undoubtedly difficult decision to dump the guy who slipped off into a bathroom to share a few intimate moments with a hula dancer. The show has spawned plenty of off-camera controversy - the spurned suitor later claimed that the sound of a zipper opening, heard through the bathroom door, was a sound-effect added in post-production - but primetime audiences' enthusiastic reaction to it has skipped over one huge question: What does it say about our society that we now consider Monica Lewinsky qualified to help anyone find her soulmate?

Lewinsky's show is only the latest in a whole slew of dating-based "reality" TV shows, which include "The Bachelor," "Meet My Folks," "Married by America," "Blind Date," "The Fifth Wheel," "Elimidate," "A Dating Story," "Dismissed," "Rendez-View," "Change of Heart," "Shipmates," "Temptation Island," "Looking for Love," and "EX-treme Dating." In my personal favorite, "Joe Millionaire," 20 women were whisked to a romantic French chateau to compete for a man's affections. The women were told the young man had recently inherited \$50 million and was "looking for a special someone to share his newfound wealth." I spent the show's entire seven-episode run wondering where Fox managed to find 20 grown women gullible enough to believe that a tall, underwear-model-handsome guy with \$50 million might need professional help in finding a date. But the success of these shows - 40 million viewers tuned in to watch Joe Millionaire choose his guileless mate - shows how much we love to watch other people date, especially when there's a better-than-decent chance of witnessing an emotional trainwreck. Why do so many eligible singles prefer to sit at home watching other people go out to dinner, walk hand-in-hand, and smooch in bubbling hot tubs than to actually go out on dates? When did we start to consider dating a synonym for hell?



It's almost impossible to find a positive depiction of contemporary dating anywhere. Television sitcoms from "Friends" to "Frasier" delight in the antics of lovelorn singles - not because they're more glamorous than their married counterparts, but because the vicissitudes of modern dating lend themselves to easy laughs. In novels, we see Bridget Jones as the modern-day counterpart of Jane Austen's Elizabeth Bennet - only somehow the centuries have robbed our heroine of her ability to bring Mr. Darcy to his knees.

Wasn't the sexual revolution supposed to make courtship more fun? Yet everywhere we look, we see single people bemoaning the loneliness, the despair, the just plain drudgery of dating. Dorothy L. Sayers once said, "The only sin passion can commit is to be joyless." But how much joy is there in courtship these days? Dating, it seems, has become a necessary chore, rather like scrubbing down the storm windows.

### The Rules of Court

Something has gone drastically awry in the process of meeting and mating. I recently played confidant to a friend who has valiantly decided to re-enter the courtship arena. From her description, it sounded like she was applying for a new job - reading the want ads, circling anything that sounded halfway promising, sending in her r sum  via e-mail, and then trudging out on a series of high-stress interviews. (The only difference was, most employers usually don't advertise until the post is actually vacant, whereas at least one of her hot prospects hadn't quite gotten around to telling his wife that the family organization was planning to downsize.) To hone their "interview" skills, desperate affluent singles are driven to hire

dating consultants to tell them how to do it right. One New York consultant bragged to Fox News that she charges her female clients \$350 for a half-hour consultation to assess the dateworthiness of their hair, makeup, and wardrobe, while men pay \$15,000 upfront for introductions to a dozen eligible pre-screened women. That fee also includes a virtual date with the consultant, who then scrutinizes the poor insecure fellow's manners and conversational skills.

For those who can't afford individual instruction, there are guidebooks like "The Rules," billed as "time-tested secrets for capturing the heart of Mr. Right." The authors promise their husband-hunting readers that faithful adherence to a few basic rules, such as "Never Call Him, Always Let Him Call You" and "Don't Talk Too Much" will help them land the spouse of their dreams. (From the vision of dainty femininity sketched out in "The Rules," one reaches the inescapable conclusion that all the eligible bachelors out there have posters of Donna Reed plastered above their beds.) The bad news, of course, is that once a girl has adopted the primly determined Rules persona to capture him, she has to keep up the hard work in order to keep him. Hence, "The Rules for Marriage," the follow-up to the runaway bestseller. Hewing firmly to "The Rules" over the course of four or five decades is a daunting prospect, as the recent divorce of one of the co-authors confirms.

### Dueling Rulebooks

Perhaps the continuing popularity of "The Rules" - in spite of its co-author's marital track record, they're still charging \$3.99 a minute for dating consultations - is a sign that singles today are desperate for some set of principles to follow. Unlike the well-

established courtship rituals of the 1950s, what we have today is a motley set of individual expectations, most of them patently mystifying to everyone but ourselves. Courtship has become an unending pick-up game of playground ball, with each player operating according to his or her own individual rulebook. A woman may make a seductive gesture fraught with symbolic meaning - only to find that, to her partner, it's a request for a time-out.

Take, for example, this star-crossed couple who poured out their story of dueling social semiotics to a women's magazine a few years ago. Both sides agree that he invited her out on a dinner date, and that they had a wonderful time until the bill was presented. "When the dinner check came, I took it," explained 32-year-old Charlie. "But Susie reached for her wallet. 'Can I help pay?' she asked. My heart sank. I was sure she didn't like me. I figure if a woman wants to split the check, she's telling you that she wants to be friends. After that, the evening ended kind of awkwardly. I didn't know if I should kiss her or anything, so I kind of hastily said good-night."

Susie, 28, told the reporter that she saw the encounter very differently. "I offered to split the check because I didn't want him to feel obliged to pay for me. I figure if he had really liked me, in a girlfriend/boyfriend way, he wouldn't have taken my money - not on the first date, anyway. And I guess I was right: he didn't try to kiss me or say anything about another date."

It's revealing that teenagers no longer "date" in the traditional sense. Instead, they move in intersecting herds, and actual dating is reserved for those who are already official couples. Formal events, such as homecoming and prom, are arranged

with the help of intermediaries: The parties involved set up embassies in the lunch room, and send out ambassadors to arrange the necessary treaties. When one young swain recently called and directly invited a 16-year-old girl to Homecoming, her parents gave the courageous young man two thumbs up. But the girl herself was put off. "It seems so forward, just calling and asking someone out like that," she explained after declining his suit. Her parents are now resigned to a life without grandchildren.

### The Lost Art of Flirting

At the risk of being stripped of my right to wear Birkenstocks, I have to admit that the courtship rituals of the 1950s make me feel a little wistful. The gender roles may have been constricting and the shoes were impossibly tight across the toes, but it's impossible to deny the now-guilty pleasures of sweetheart bouquets, dinner dates, and nightclubs where heterosexual men danced voluntarily. (And I'm far from alone in my nostalgia, as proven by the release of a recent retro-romance movie, "Down With Love," starring Hollywood A-listers Renée Zellweger and Ewan McGregor.) I can't help envying the "smart and sophisticated woman" described by Helen Gurley Brown - author of the once-scandalous "Sex and the Single Girl" - who responded to men's advances with this polished reply: "You're really lovely, but do you honestly suppose I can sleep with every man who asks me? The answer for now is no." Brown claimed that one importunate suitor finally gave his iron-knickered lady a silver charm engraved with the words, "We'll see."

I can just hear the anguished screams of "That's just game-playing!" And that's exactly correct. Both parties were playing a

game - defined in my dictionary as "a way of amusing oneself; a pastime; diversion." The game was called "flirting," and it's what people used to do while they were trying to decide whether they might be able to stand each other's company over the hyperextended road trip that is married life. It's funny: The men who most oppose the idea of "playing games" in courtship are the same ones who can spend endless hours debating the merits of the designated hitter rule. In all forms of human behavior, there are rules. (For instance, we now shake hands upon introduction instead of sniffing each other's sweat glands.) The trouble is, the rules governing courtship today are vexing and often destructive, reducing the stuff of poetry to something akin to emotional dodgeball.

### One Rule To Ring Them All

Why is dating today so stressful? The answer is simple: Sex.

I know. That sounds perilously like those counter-feminist conservatives who rail at modern woman for coldheartedly indulging her lustful desires instead of saving her precious flower for the lucky man who will someday lift her bridal veil. But my argument is based not on morality but on sheer utility: The way it's being done lately, courtship isn't any fun.

That's because there is currently only one broadly accepted rule of courtship: The Third Date is The Date (unless, of course, you're a glued-together-at-the-knees Rules girl.) If either party declines sex on the Third Date, it's a clear sign that the relationship is going nowhere. And if the Third Date culminates in sex, they're officially a couple - or at least, the guy's a real loser if he doesn't ask the girl out again afterwards. (Sex before the Third Date is a

signal that a) you believe in love at first sight; b) you're a promiscuous floozy; or c) you think a, he thinks b.)

It's time for all of us to admit that this courtship model simply doesn't work. If lightning doesn't strike by Date Three, you can end up walking away from a perfectly lovely person who might just be a little shy, or having a bad hair day. Or worse, by rushing headlong into a "committed relationship" with someone you've met only a few times, you can end up wasting weeks, months, sometimes even years of your life on someone you don't really like very much, on the grounds that you're already "invested" in the relationship.

The problem is, we can't bring ourselves to admit that we're going to have to give up the prospect of instant sex - however rarely it actually happens - for a longer period of pre-intercourse courtship. That's understandable - and not just because we all like to think of ourselves as the proud owners of constantly pulsating loins. Given how dreadful dating has become, we hate to think of prolonging the agony as we wait for the only foreseeable good part. (Though from what I hear from my single girlfriends, the sex isn't all that hot, anyway.)

But if we could decide collectively that sex is worth waiting a bit longer for, we'd find that courtship itself might become a lot less stressful and a lot more fun. Right now, those first couple of dates are incredibly intense; we give ourselves only six or eight hours of conversation before deciding whether we want to commit to a monogamous sexual relationship. If we had, oh, six or eight - maybe even 10 - dates to make up our minds, we could focus more on the actual date and less on its sequel. By investing a few extra hours in the process, we might draw out of

a shy person an unexpected vein of sardonic wit or a deep well of political insight. With luck, we'd screen out some of those false charmers who have learned to conceal their mean-spiritedness for a week or two. And after the eighth, ninth, or 10th date? Well, let's just say that some things are greatly improved by anticipation.

## Heroic Couplets

I suppose I should make a confession here: I haven't done any dating for a long, long time. I'm what Bridget Jones author Helen Fielding would call a "Smug Married." And quite frankly, when I hear my single friends bewailing their dating lives, I do feel a bit complacent. But when I think about what courtship could, and should, be, I remember one night when my husband and I went out to celebrate some double-digit wedding anniversary.

We had hired a babysitter, gotten all dressed up, and treated ourselves to dinner at some sleek new restaurant in the city. A comfortable, compatible married couple, we were having a very nice time - joking, relaxing, knocking back a little too much Chardonnay. Then we noticed the man and woman sitting next to us. They were visibly trembling with desire. (The waiter didn't bother to ask them if they wanted dessert.) It was clear that this was no standard Third Date, to be promptly followed by a tidy hour of pre-programmed abandon. There was none of the awkwardness of fresh acquaintance, no conversational false starts or miscues. It was obvious they were madly in love, and that they were looking forward to a long-awaited, devoutly wished consummation. They were co-adventurers, taking that first exhilarating leap over Niagara Falls. And somehow, as we

sat watching that couple from the smooth safety of the shallow waters far downstream, we didn't feel smug at all.

To me, that's what courtship ought to be. And if it's not, we're doing it wrong.

Elizabeth Austin is a Chicago writer