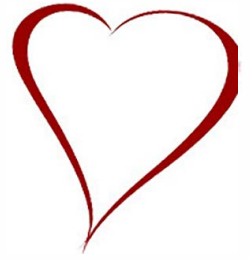


DATE

Don't Mate



And Other Tips to Help You Find Love



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Make Sure You're Over Your Ex

Before you can move forward and find someone new, it's important to make sure you're really over your ex. Otherwise, it can back up on you. This is especially true if they really hurt you. That can make it hard for you to trust again. It shakes your confidence in your ability to pick someone good.

Of course, it's important to learn how to find someone you can really trust. But, what's even more important is learning to trust *yourself* again. When you can see the red flags you may have missed and when you start trusting your gut, you'll feel more confident putting yourself out there again.

Practice Flirting

As a woman, you have to let a man know you're open to being approached. This starts with smiling and making eye contact. Otherwise, you'll only be approached by men who don't care if you're open to being approached. Or you'll attract men who are only interested because they think you're *not* interested.



The only problem is they will lose interest as soon as you become interested.

And guys, you need to be able to read a woman's signals so you know when she's open to being approached. When you smile at a woman, she might not realize that you're actually smiling at *her*. So, she might look away at first. Give her a minute to look around to make sure you're not smiling at someone else. Then watch to see if she smiles back at you (Whaling, 2002).

Find Your Village

Andy Whaling (2002) talks about how in “olden times” when we lived in villages, it was much easier to find a quality person. You knew a person's history. You probably knew their family. You shared similar values like religion and culture. So, all you had to do was find someone you were attracted to and you had the foundation for a good relationship.

Even though we don't live in villages today, you can still find your village or your “people.” Your village might be the dog park, a church, a political campaign, or any place where people hang out who share your values. Then when you find someone that you really like there, you'll already have the important pieces in place for a great relationship.



Run Away from Your “Type”

If a relationship with your “type” hasn’t worked in the past, there’s a good chance it won’t work in the future. This doesn’t mean you have to choose someone you’re not attracted to. It just means you may not have initial chemistry or fireworks.

That kind of initial chemistry just means someone fits the hardwiring in your brain from your family-of-origin relationships. So, if you don’t want a repeat of your past relationships, or if you don’t want a relationship like the ones you saw growing up, initial chemistry may not be your friend.

This doesn’t mean won’t have passion or chemistry together. It just may take some time to develop. But, it will be real. Because it’s based on who they really are and who you really are. So, it won’t go away after the infatuation fades. In fact, it can actually get better.

A good rule of thumb is, there’s the 10% you’re dying to kiss, the 10% you’d die if you had to kiss, and there’s the 80% in the middle — that’s where you want to date. Those are the people you have the best chance of developing a good relationship with. And if chemistry or passion doesn’t develop, then you know they’re not for you.

Guys, since you’re more visual, you might need more initial chemistry than women do.



Keep It Light on a First Date

Andy Whaling (2002) used to say the only goal of a first date is, “Do I want a second date?”

This especially applies to women. This is not the time to be deciding if he would make a good husband or asking if he wants kids. A first date is about getting to get know each other in a low-key way. Talk about hobbies, movies, fun stuff until you know each other better. Men like to pursue. So, if you come on too strong it can push him away.

And guys, be aware of the tendency to talk *at* her rather than *to* her, especially when you're nervous. Remember to keep the conversation going with back-and-forth questions. You ask, she answers. She asks, you answer. Take turns so you both get a chance to share and listen.

Trust Your Gut

Pay attention to your instincts and intuition. If something feels uncomfortable or weird, it probably is. When you feel something in your “gut” it is actually pressure on your solar plexus, which is connected to your brain. Your brain has been quietly gathering information for you in the background (Lewis, Amini & Lannon, 2000). So, pay attention to it.



Remember, This is Him (or Her) on Their Best Behavior

When you're starting out, everyone is on their best behavior. So, this is not the time to give someone the benefit of the doubt. If there are any red flags like substance abuse, lying, infidelity, meanness – now is the time to cut and run. Because the closer you get, the harder it will be to trust yourself and make good choices.

Remember, the First 3-6 Months is Infatuation

The first few months of a relationship is like being on drugs, in terms of your hormones and brain chemistry. Your brain stops working right. *Really*. The anxiety and caution centers in your brain get really quiet in the early stages of love. That's why it's easy to miss the red flags that everyone else can see (Brizendine, 2006).

It's okay to enjoy the ride. Just remember, you don't really know someone until after the first 3-6 months. Once the dust settles, then you get to see if you still *like* each other.



Date, Don't Mate

When women get physical, they usually bond. That's why "hooking up" and "friends with benefits" rarely works. Because, when you get physical too soon, it throws things off balance. It's normal to want exclusivity and commitment from someone you've had sex with. But, if you have sex before you have that kind of relationship, it can make you clingy and needy. That can turn him off, which will make you feel even worse.

So, guys, if you want a real relationship, wait to have sex. Otherwise, you could end up ruining a good thing.

Build Your Relationship Step-By-Step

Do you like each other? Do you enjoy hanging out and just being together? Do you have fun? Are there activities you enjoy sharing? Do they treat you right? Are you good friends? Do you have romance and passion? Do you have shared values and a shared vision of the life you want to have together? Are you both ready to make a commitment? (Gorski, 1993)

If you answered "Yes" to these questions, then you're on your way to getting the whole package – a deep, meaningful, lasting love!



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