

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. One question was asked of thousands and thousands of online daters: "What are your dating rules or dating tips?" These were the answers.

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.

"All of the men are looking for sex and all of the women are looking for free dinners"

"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:

Rule No. 1: Asking a woman out for a Saturday night date is a big deal.

If you ask some women out for a Monday or even a Thursday evening, beware. You could have the phone receiver slammed in your ear. "A woman takes it very seriously when she is not asked out on a Saturday night," said Dawn Sidney, who met her husband at a Chicago Jewish federation event. "She has a different attitude. She thinks the guy doesn't think she's special."

Rule No. 2: Fools shouldn't rush in.

To Shawna Gooze, a human resources assistant, it doesn't matter what day of the week a guy wants to see her. What happens after the date is more important. "I went out with a very good-looking, nice guy I met at a bar, but he started e-mailing me so much after the first date, it was a turn-off," she said. "In the beginning, it's better not to rush a relationship or come on too strong."

Rule No. 3: When you move an online romance offline, go public.

When trying to find a date in cyberspace, a set of unwritten rules applies, and some online daters simply make the rules up as they go along, according to Leslie Zimmer, who works for a Chicago-area synagogue and has tried several Jewish online dating services.

Zimmer, whose online dating odyssey has most been both frustrating and humorous, followed two main rules. First, she didn't disclose personal information such as home address, telephone number or work location. Second, she met an online date at a public place such as a coffee shop or restaurant. She also chose to have a few "phone dates" with an online dater before meeting him in person.

Hoping to attract a Jewish John Travolta, she began her personal ad with, "Shall we dance?" One guy responded with a cute, clever message that discussed their common interest in dancing. For their first date, they agreed to meet at local nightclub to show off some fancy footwork.

"There was definitely a chemistry," she said. "We spent three hours dancing, talking and laughing.

"After we danced, he just said, 'Good night.' I was dumbfounded. I happen to have a lot of moxie, so I e-mailed him. He e-mailed back that he just didn't feel any chemistry. I thought, when he finds someone with chemistry, it must be like an explosion!"

Rule No. 4: If you're a woman seeking cyberromance, don't be afraid to initiate the first cybercontact. The anonymity of online dating makes it easier to sever a bad connection, said Michael Slater, 25, a regional sales manager for a Chicago-based corporate relocation company. In other ways, it's leveled the playing field by making it acceptable for a woman to initiate cybercontact. "I know from several friends using Jdate.com that women are e-mailing guys and asking them out," he said.

Rule No. 5: Seek advice from a trusted friend if you're stuck in the dating doldrums.

While it's clear the Internet has changed the rules of dating, some things never change. Singles still seek advice and support from friends and family, said Slater, who is currently attached.

"Sometimes a friend will ask me what I think of a woman's profile, and I'll say, 'You're not going to know unless you try.' They just need an extra boost to click that 'send' button," he said.

"I don't want to be known as a yenta [matchmaker], but I just give my friends a push in the right direction. They've done the same for me."

Rule No. 6: Unfortunately, there are no hard-and-fast formulas that guarantee romantic success, except maybe: Love like you've never been hurt before, and be yourself"

- 1.) Never give out more than your first name over the Internet. Never tell anyone your address.
- 2.) It is fairly safe to exchange phone numbers although you should remember that your phone number can be used to find you. You can tell a lot about a person from their voice. If a person gives you their work telephone number instead of their home telephone number, they are probably already involved.
- 3.) If you have found someone you would like to meet, always arrange to meet in a public place such as a bookstore or coffee shop.
- 4.) Unless, someone looks frightening, always acknowledge the person you came to meet and have coffee or whatever. Never leave just because you don't like a person's appearance. It just isn't nice to leave someone waiting and wondering!
- 5.) Be honest. If you are not interested thank the person for meeting you and tell them in a nice way that you don't feel you have as much in common as you had hoped. A kind up front rejection is easier on you both.
- 6.) Always ask to see the persons drivers license. If they hesitate or don't give you their identification, they have their reason's. Get rid of them FAST! And, don't let them follow you home!
- 7.) Call home or a friend and tell them the person's name, address and license number which is on their license.
- 8.) A man has every right to request to see a woman's drivers license as well. There are a few dingy women in this world.
- 9.) If a woman fails to ask for your ID don't date her. Find another one because the one who didn't ask will show bad judgement in other aspects of life as well!
- 10.) In sexual matters follow the dictates of the religion of your preference. You will always be glad you did.
- 11.) Should you decide to become physically involved, never do so until you know the person well.
- 12.) You do not know a person well until you have seen them in their normal environment and have met their friends. Practice safe sex!
- 13.) If a person seems to have no friends or associations be very suspicious. A person will rarely abuse someone known to their friends. There is a social price to pay.
- 14.) Always trust your instincts. If you are uneasy about someone there is probably a good reason.
- 15.) Remember, that all you owe anyone on the first meeting, is courtesy for a very short period of time. You have a lot to gain and very little to lose by meeting new people as long as you use common sense!"

1. "Never love a man or woman more than you love yourself.
2. You must have attitude. Attitude is everything. Think of yourself as compelling, irresistible, and captivating because that's what you are!
3. Your attitude about yourself and how you expect others to treat you comes through in everything you do.
4. Know and play to your assets, know and downplay your deficits.
5. Women are the Queen Bees. It's a woman's job to attract men. Men are the wannabes. They wannabe with women. So ladies, let them. Men find women, women don't find men. Women let themselves be found.
6. Men troll and hunt for women. Women attract and magnetize men.
7. For women: You only love the men who love you. It is your job to attract lots of men and then choose from the ones you have attracted.
8. For women: Want a relationship? Stop acting like an alpha female and start behaving like Annie Get Your Guy. Alpha females are smart, sexy, successful and usually alone, because tough, fierce, competitive, and masculine energy only works in business. Annie Get Your Guy is soft, foxy not fierce, receptive, always feminine, and is the chasee never the chaser.
9. In relationships, men want women to act like women, so they can act like men.
10. For men: You are a hero. Accept nothing less from a woman than being "her hero."
11. In dating, know what you want and what the other person wants. Make sure you are both going in the same direction.
12. The secret to a relationship is: know what each player wants and then give it to them. Men want to be admired and respected. Women want to be cherished and adored, because that makes them feel safe. Good relationships are the result of giving all the players what they want.
13. Feelings are important. Men want to feel they are winning in a relationship. Women want to feel safe.
14. Don't rely on a make-over to find happiness. Give up the thought "I love you, you're perfect, now change." Accept "as is" the person you're in the relationship with.
15. Keep your heart open. For those who think war is hell, they should try dating. In dating, your heart may get hurt, but as long as it's open, there is room to let someone in. Love has no place to go when a heart is closed down.
16. Go on every new date and into every new relationship with the attitude that this could be "the one." As long as you think about past relationships, that's how all your relationships will be. "

"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 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."

"I don't have the answers.

This might be funny for you, or it might not. I found this card at a Hallmark display:

Bad Date #132:

He likes you. You don't like him. He says he'll call and does.

Bad Date #133:

You like him. He doesn't like you. He says he'll call and doesn't.

Bad Date #134:

You like him. He likes Jim. He dresses better than you.

Bad Date #135:

He wears too much aftershave. He flirts more with the waitress than with you. But that's a good thing.

Bad Date #136:

He talks all night about his ex. Then he cries.

Bad Date #137:

You like him a lot. He likes you a lot. Then he changes his mind.

I've been on all of those, and then some. My friend pointed out that the existence of that card means that it happens to loads of us. Somehow that thought should make us feel better, right?"

"Rule One: Sexual intercourse changes every rule. Nudity of one party or both parties can in some cases modify the rules.

Rule Two: Every rule has an exception or two or three.

Rule Three: The ambulance-chaser rule. There is an appropriate waiting period after someone breaks up before you can ask them out. I am unsure as to exactly what this waiting period is, but I know it is longer than five minutes and shorter than a month.

Rule Quatro: The rebound rule. Never, ever date people who are not over their last significant other. This is bad. You will be forced to listen to stories of love lost and told you can't go to Applebee's because he used to take her there.

Signs she is still holding a flame: She refers to his current girlfriend as the whore from KU, and she is mysteriously busy on weekends he is in town.

Rule Five: As Olympia Dukakis said in "Moonstruck," "Don't shit where you eat." Try your hardest not to date anyone you work with.

Teachers should not date students. Bartenders should not date servers. Checkers should not date baggers.

The only possible exception to this rule is if the individual you wish to date works in a different department or section of the organization than you. Even then, use extreme caution.

Rule Six: The I'll-call-you rule. Men seem to have a particularly hard time with this one.

Let's say after a night of conversation, a woman gives you her number and tells you to give her a call. It is appropriate to call the next day; you will not seem too anxious.

This first call should be a casual call, and you should include your name and the location of your first encounter so she can definitely identify you.

You may at the time of this first call express your intent to call again later in the week with plans for a date.

Rule Seven: The sisters, aunts, cousins and mothers of women you have dated are off-limits unless you live in Arkansas or certain counties in Mississippi.

Her best friend is a no-no, as well as the sisters, aunts, cousins and mothers of any of your friends.

The rule that is eight: The rule of who pays. The man.

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 their 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"

"1. In an imaginary world a kiss would signify the end of sexual tension and the beginning of a relationship. In college, it means somebody's horny.

2. In an imaginary world, "I really like spending time with you" and "you're cool" mean I REALLY like spending time with you and you ARE cool. In college, it means "will you fuck me?"

3. In an imaginary world, holding hands is the first sign of true love, in college it means someone is too drunk to stand on their own.

4. In an imaginary world the guy buys dinner and a movie and kisses you goodnight at your front door. In college, there is no such thing as a dinner and a movie and at the end of a date, most guys want a hell of lot more than a kiss goodnight.

5. In an imaginary world, men aren't afraid to admit their feelings. In college, if you ask them what they want or why they kissed you they respond, "Why do you think?" Refer to number one for definition.

6. In an imaginary world, sleepovers are sleepovers. Just that. In college it's a fuckfest or pretty close to it.

7. In an imaginary world the guy might call you the day after. In college, you're lucky if he acknowledges your presence when you walk by. Or if they do call back, refer to number one again, for the reason.

8. In an imaginary world even gorgeous guys are nice. In college, cute guys are asses, unattractive men are desperate, and nice guys finish last.

9. In an imaginary world, sex is sacred and special. In college, it happens every night between drunk strangers, who don't even know each others names.

10. In an imaginary world, men have only one girl, chickie, babe, woman. In college, you are the only one, except for, Jodi, Jean, Alisha, Sara, Laura, Liz, Christy, Carrie, Jen, Mary, Katie, Jeff, Gretchen, Andi...

Why are these important if you aren't in college? Because college behavior almost never ends after college!!!"

"

From the famous "THE RULES":

1. Be a "creature unlike any other."

* Be confident.

* Act "as if..."

* Carry yourself with dignity

* Do your best to correct appearance flaws, but don't dwell on them.

* Be sweet and light

* Be restrained and courteous

2. Don't talk to a man first, and don't ask him to dance first.

* Don't hang around him, hoping he'll ask you to dance

3. Don't stare at men or talk too much

* Smile at the room in general

4. Don't meet him halfway or go dutch

5. Don't call him and rarely return his calls

* If he leaves a message on your answering machine to call him - don't

* If he only calls on your answering machine, turn it off

* If a man calls you on Friday night, don't answer - use your answering machine or caller ID

6. Always end calls first.

* Limit phone calls to about ten minutes

* Don't let him put you on hold. If he does, hang up

7. Don't accept a date for Saturday night after Wednesday

8. Fill up your time before a date

9. On dates 1, 2, and 3, dress nice, be nice, good-bye and go home.

* Don't fantasize before the date

- * Treat it like a business appointment
- * Be nonchalant/non-committal
- * Play it safe. This man is still a stranger
- * Time Limits:
 - o Meet for a drink: 2 hrs
 - o Dinner or movie: 4 hrs

10. Behave from date 4 to commitment

- * Don't get too heavy about your feelings
- * Keep unpleasant life issues to yourself
- * Don't go into details about very personal subjects
- * Act independent

11. Always end the date first

- * If he gets rude or hurtful on a date, don't try to work it out. Leave immediately

12. Stop dating him if he doesn't buy you a romantic gift on your birthday or valentine's day.

13. Don't see him more than once or twice a week.

- * If you're engaged, you may date up to 3-4 times a week

14. No casual kissing on the first date

15. No sex before marriage

- * Don't rush into intimate contact while dating

16. Don't tell him what to do

17. Let him take the lead in the relationship

- * Don't say, "I love you," until he says, "I love you," first

18. Don't expect a man to change, or try to change him

- * You can't treat a man like you treat your girlfriends
- * Don't try to get them to talk about their feelings
- * Immediately dump any guy who doesn't treat you well

19. Don't open up too fast

20. Be honest, but mysterious

- * Don't let a man know about the Rules

21. Accentuate the positive in you

- * Wear clothes that accentuate your best features.
- * Be cheerful and optimistic
- * Get a life
- * Try to find fun alternatives to the "bar scene"

* Take advantage of personal ads, dating pages, and internet services, but always be positive in posted ads.

22. Don't live with a man (or leave things in his apartment)

23. Don't even think about dating a married man.

24. Slowly involve him in your family

* Don't introduce him to your family until he introduces you to his

25. Practice, practice, practice! Get good at the Rules

* Go to as many social events and interesting public activities as possible.

* If you don't have a date on Friday night, go to some public place or event.

* Don't be afraid to go solo

* When you meet a really attractive man, stay focused on the Rules

26. Even if you're engaged or married, you still need the Rules

* Engagement is not equivalent to commitment

* For a man, putting the ring on the finger and saying "I do" is commitment

27. Do the Rules, even when you're friends and family think it's nuts

28. Be Smart, and use the Rules while dating in High School

* If you have acne, do whatever it takes to get rid of it.

* If you have extra money, spend it on quality makeup and nice clothes.

* If you have a crush on a boy, dress feminine and let him make the first move. Don't be loud or try to get his attention.

* Get in the habit of attending social events, but don't act bored or nervous.

* Don't have sex with boys.

* Don't smoke, drink alcohol, or take drugs.

* Stay active in sports.

* If a boy doesn't ask you to the Prom, don't ask him. Go with someone who asks you or go with a group.

29. Take care of yourself, and use the Rules for dating in College

* Don't hang around, fruitlessly hoping some guy will notice you.

* Play it safe. Just because they're college guys doesn't mean they'll behave

* Concentrate on your studies

* Eat healthy

* Wear makeup and be fashionable and feminine

* Be involved in interesting extracurricular activities

* If you don't have a date on Friday and Saturday night, get out and socialize

* Get serious about your career goals. Nobody wants a loser

30. Next! and other Rules for dealing with rejection

* Don't personalize or blow a breakup out of proportion.

* Don't console yourself by eating.

- * Get dressed up, put on your makeup, and go to the very next social event in town
- * Don't lose your cool about him. Get over it
- * Say "His loss" and "Next!"

31. Don't ever discuss the Rules with your therapist

- * They don't live in the real world, so they just wouldn't understand

32. Don't ever break the Rules

- * If you do break the Rules with a man, be prepared to write him off as a lost cause
- * Don't dwell on the ones you may have lost by following the Rules, they aren't worth it.

33. Do the Rules and you'll live happily ever after

- * Even if you don't get married right away, you'll be happier and more relaxed in your single life.

34. Love only those who love you.

- * You can afford to be picky
- * You deserve to be treated with respect and dignity
- * Immediately dump any guy who doesn't treat you well.

35. Be easy to live with

- * Don't whine.
- * See a professional to help you with your neuroses "

"RULE #1: HAVE REALISTIC EXPECTATIONS

Have you ever noticed that 95% of us seem to be chasing after the same 5%. I call them the "lucky 5%". They have no trouble meeting someone for a romantic relationship. They are blessed with physical beauty or money or status or all three. Relationships come to them rather than the other way around. Looking at things logically, if 95% of us are chasing after the same 5%, each of them has to date 19 of us simultaneously in order to keep all of us happy. And that's not going to happen.

How realistic are your expectations? Take a good, long, honest look at yourself.

"I've got a great personality and a heart of gold", you say. That's great, except that you live in a world in which people judge you initially by superficial things like the beauty of your face, the slimness of your body, the clothes you wear, the car you drive, and the job you hold.

So if people find your exterior to be unattractive, you've got a tough road ahead of you. For example, if you're a 3 on a scale of 10 in terms of initial attractiveness to the opposite sex, don't expect to attract a 9 or 10. If you're a woman, forget about Tom Selleck or a millionaire. If you're a man, forget about meeting a Playboy bunny. Settle for someone nice who finds you attractive.

"Does that mean I have to lower my standards?"

Sadly the answer is yes. I know it's hard to give up fantasies of Prince Charming or the beauty queen. Just remember that it's even harder to go through life without romantic love.

Newsweek Magazine's cover story for June 2, 1986 demoralized single women throughout the nation. The article claimed that if you are 30 years old, college-educated, and never been married, that you only have a 20% chance of ever finding a husband. If you reach age 35 without a spouse, your chances

drop to 5%. And if you have the misfortune of being single at 40, according to Newsweek you have a greater chance of "being killed by terrorists" than finding a husband.

The Newsweek article was based on a study by two professors at Harvard and Yale Universities. Fortunately the figures have been discredited by the U.S. Census Bureau. For one thing, the Harvard-Yale Study was based on a relatively small sample. More importantly, it was based on a critical assumption: that single women in the United States would continue to follow three patterns in selecting a mate as they have in the past:

1. Marrying a man who is older than she. The average woman in America chooses a man two to four years older than she. Since men live seven years less than the average woman, this means that the older a woman becomes the fewer men are still left that are older than she. At birth there are more boy babies than girls (a 1% surplus of boys). This continues until age 35 where there is an equal ratio of single men to single women. From that point on the men start dying off so that at age 60 there are three and one half single women for every single man in the United States. This statistic becomes even more grim when you consider that many of these scarce 60 year single men are dating women in their forties and fifties! Obviously if single women continue to prefer older men their chances of finding a husband will diminish.
2. Marrying a man who is taller than she. Women who are tall (over 5'6") and like to wear high heels have a problem in meeting suitable men. I have spoken to many women who insist that a man be over 6 feet tall. That eliminates 90% of the single men in this country!
3. Marrying a man who earns more money than she. Even though women in this country still only earn 62 cents on the dollar in comparison to men, this doesn't apply to successful professional women, who have literally priced themselves out of the market! They have a very tough time finding a man who is older, taller, and wealthier than they.

The main flaw in the Harvard-Yale Study is that there's no reason why you can't adjust to these realities. Why not choose a man who is younger, shorter, or less prosperous? For years women have been complaining about how superficial men are. They chastise men for overlooking inner beauty, intimacy, and communication. Perhaps single women need to look at their own superficial prejudices regarding age, height, and money.

Single men have their own set of unrealistic expectations. They tend to prefer young, slim, pretty women. These women are at a tremendous premium. They have men standing in line for them. Unless you're rich and handsome, what are the chances that you'll attract one of these beauties? The reality is that few women in this country have the slim figure of a model. Women begin with one third more fat than men. That is nature's way of preparing them for pregnancy. Otherwise our species might not be around today. The old adage that "beauty is only skin deep" may sound corny, but it's true. So don't worry if she is a few pounds overweight. Find yourself a loving woman with whom you can share a happy life.

RULE #2: TAKE ADVANTAGE OF YOUR FRIENDS

"Oh no, don't tell me I have to go on blind dates. You only get to meet losers."

The number one method for meeting people in this country is through mutual friends. Spread the word to your friends that you'd like to meet more people. Be sure to share with them exactly the qualities you are looking for. Ask them to include you on their guest list for dinners and parties. Have them introduce you to their friends, relatives, and co-workers as well.

Don't be afraid of blind dates. They are still a very common way of meeting people. Just don't expect too much. The likelihood is that on any particular blind date either you or the other person won't find the other to be attractive. So be patient.

RULE #3: EXPLOIT YOUR JOB

"Hey, wait a second. I'm not going to choose a job on the basis of whether it's a good place to meet people. I've got to put food on my table."

Most people choose a job on the basis of such things as money, status, enjoyment, and proximity to their homes. There's nothing wrong with that, but think about adding one more criterion: likelihood of meeting new friends. 10% of all romantic relationships begin between people who meet each other on the job, according to a study of 3000 singles. (Simenauer, J. and Carroll, D., *Singles: The New Americans*, N.Y., Simon & Schuster: 1982). Furthermore, according to a survey of 1,800 professional women between the ages of 21-45, "a romance between coworkers is four times more likely to last than one between a couple who met elsewhere.... About 20% of on-the-job romances lead to marriage." (Marin Independent-Journal, March, 25, 1986.)

What about the risks involved? Will you have to find another job if your office romance doesn't work out? According to the survey of professional women cited above, "only 5.3% of the women said they felt their relationship had hurt their career. Only 1 in 400 reported losing her job."

If possible choose a job where you are dealing with the public on a daily basis. Unfortunately these are often low-paying jobs (e.g., waiters and waitresses, bank tellers and cashiers.) The pay-off is that you meet lots of new people. Another option is to choose an office where there are plenty of attractive single people of the opposite sex.

What if you don't work and don't need the money? Consider a volunteer job. There are all kinds of interesting opportunities to help others and make your community a better place to live. Call up your local volunteer bureau to find out how. Along with "contributing to society" you'll also increase your visibility in the community and meet new friends. See the chapter on Volunteer Work.

RULE #4: GET OUT OF THE HOUSE

Staying home is natural. It's comfortable. It's safe. It's inexpensive. There's only one problem. You'll never meet anybody by staying at home. Most singles spend almost all of their free time at home. Then they wonder why they never meet anybody!

How often should you get out of the house to meet people? That depends on how soon you want to meet someone special. If you're willing to wait 20 years, then don't sweat about it. Once a month is fine. On the other hand, if you want to meet someone soon, remember that every night you go out looking hastens the day when you succeed.

RULE #5: HANG AROUND STRANGERS ALONE

When we're kids our parents warn us to stay away from strangers. That's good advice at the time. Strangers are dangerous. What's also true, however, is that the love of your life is probably a stranger to you right now. So if you want to meet that person you're going to have to forget what your parents taught you about strangers. A good example of the problem is the following conversation:

Julie: "Are you going to the party Saturday night?"

Sally: "No, I don't think so."

Julie: "Why not?"

Sally: "I won't know anyone there."

Sally's attitude is typical. She's afraid to go to a party full of strangers. But that's exactly the party she should go to. She'll have the greatest chance of meeting someone special if she knows few of the guests. In fact, the ideal party would be one where you knew absolutely no one, not even the host. In other words, a party you crashed.

The hardest part of Rule #5 is the word "alone". If you're like most single people, when you go to social functions you usually drag along your friends. I call them bodyguards. Their purpose is to insure that you won't meet anyone new. As long as you have your friends to engage in conversation, you won't have the motivation to meet new people.

Hanging around your friends is a particularly serious problem if you are a single woman, because your bodyguards make you unapproachable. Most men are scared to approach you if you're alone, due to fear of rejection. Think of how much more intimidating it is for a single man to approach you if you are part of a group! A man will wait patiently for the magic moment that never comes--the time when the women stop talking so he can introduce himself.

RULE #6: HANG AROUND THE OPPOSITE SEX

"Don't insult my intelligence. Of course I know that I've got to hang around people of the opposite sex in order to find a romantic partner."

It sounds a little ridiculous to make something so obvious into a rule. Unfortunately what is obvious isn't always followed. Most people feel most comfortable hanging around their own sex. Don't believe what you read about women's liberation or men's liberation. The fact of the matter is that men and women are very different. Men usually prefer to do "masculine" things and women like to do "feminine" things. As a result, more times than not the sexes don't mingle.

If you want to meet a man, ask yourself this question: "What do women hate to do that men love to do?" If you're a man ask yourself, "What do men hate to do that women love to do?" Whatever it is, do it. You'll find that there will be very little competition. You'll have all those attractive men or women to yourself. For example, if you're a woman, the best place to meet men is at a basketball gym.

"Are you crazy? I'm only 5 foot 2 and I have long nails. How am I going to play basketball?"

Who said anything about playing basketball? What's to prevent you from going down to the gym to watch?

"But what if a guy comes up to me and asks what I'm doing there?"

You have two options: you can tell the truth or you can lie. If you have the courage, by all means tell the truth: "I'm here to meet men." If you haven't the guts to be honest, then lie: "I thought the NBA game was on tonight and was dying to see some good basketball." All's fair in love and war. If you have to tell a lie that hurts no one in order to find someone for a loving relationship, isn't it worth it? So rush down to the gym. If nothing else you'll get to see a bunch of good looking hunks all night running around in their underwear!

In general just about any sport is a good place to meet single men. Some sports, of course, have a greater surplus of men than others. The rule of thumb is "the bloodier, more violent, more dangerous, more demanding the sport, the greater the surplus of men". Boxing, martial arts, wrestling, and hockey have a greater surplus of men than tennis or bowling, which are quite popular among women. See the chapter on Sports for specific places to watch or participate in individual sports.

"Enough of this advice for women. What about us guys? Where are all the women hanging out?"

Try an aerobics class. The ratio is usually 10 women for every man! Or try folk dancing. Here the ratio is usually three to one. In fact you'll usually find more women than men in any kind of event that features dancing (other than singles bars). Women are also more likely to attend classes, seminars, pot luck dinners, and singles clubs in general.

RULE #7: INITIATE CONTACT

"Oh, oh. I knew there was a catch. I'm willing to lower my expectations, get out of the house, and hang around strangers of the opposite sex. But don't ask me to put my ego on the line and initiate contact. I might get rejected!"

When you get right down to it, it's the fear of rejection that causes millions of singles to remain single. We're all just plain chicken.

"All right, I'll admit it. I'm chicken. So what's the solution? How do I overcome the fear of rejection?"

There's only one way: go out and get rejected. Each time you get rejected you build up scar tissue.

You'll find it a little easier to approach someone the next time. Pretty soon you'll be desensitized to the pain of rejection to the point where your fear is manageable.

But don't expect to ever get rid of the pain of rejection. That will always remain. I've been rejected many, many times, but it still hurts. It's just that the pain has subsided to the point where I don't have a nervous breakdown each time I get turned down. So go out there and make contact!

"Hold it a second. Men don't like women who initiate contact."

This is pure b.s. I've asked hundreds of men in my classes this question and over 90% of them answer that they love women to take the initiative. If you're a woman, put yourself in the shoes of single men.

All your life the pressure has been on you to initiate contact. You've been rejected countless times.

Wouldn't you love to reverse the tables?

Where does this myth come from that men don't like forward women? I think it has to do with the Law of Rejection: Unless you're one of the lucky 5%, most single people will not find you attractive. In other words, most men are going to reject you. It has nothing to do with them not liking women who take the initiative. They just don't like you.

"O.k., you've talked me into it. But how should I initiate contact?"

The first thing is to make eye contact with someone you find attractive and smile. If they return the smile, you're in! If they turn away or fail to smile, things get riskier. If you approach them you know there's a high probability they're going to reject you. On the other hand, they may just be shy. There's only one way to find out. Take the plunge.

Most singles procrastinate for an hour before making their move. They keep waiting for an opening where they can come over comfortably and initiate contact. Before that happens usually one of two things occurs: the person leaves before you meet them or someone else beats you to the punch. In either case you lose out because you waited for the perfect opportunity.

The secret to initiating contact is to do it right away before you have time to talk yourself out of it.

"But what do I say? Give me a sure-fire opening line."

Sorry, there's isn't one guaranteed to work with everyone. You've just got to come up with the best line you can and hope for the best. If you try a funny line you may impress someone with your sense of humor or you may just end up with egg on your face.

If you try the straightforward approach, "Hi, I'm Charlie", they may dismiss you as a nerd. So you can't win all the time. But that's not the point. Nobody's keeping score! You only have to win once. Then you're set for the rest of your life. So don't worry about the flops. "Damn the torpedoes; full speed ahead!"

RULE #8: HAVE SUPERFICIAL CONVERSATIONS

"Wait a second, did I read that right? Have superficial conversations? That's the whole problem with meeting people, you wind up talking about Reagan, the weather, or the latest sports scores. BORING!"

Do you expect people to spill their guts the first five minutes they meet you? If so, you're very unrealistic. People usually want to feel you out before they open up. They want to make sure it's safe.

Every intimate conversation with a stranger begins on a superficial level. You have to kiss a lot of frogs to find one prince. A dozen phony, boring conversations may be the price you pay for one sincere conversation with someone special.

RULE #9: PIN DOWN YOUR NEXT CONTACT

Does this situation sound familiar? You meet someone special. You get involved in a superficial conversation. Before you know it, both of you start opening up with private things and feelings. You start laughing. You almost feel like you've known each other all your lives. Could this be the big one? After all the searching, is this it?

But then the moment of truth arrives. If you meet at the beach, eventually the sun's gonna set. If it's at a bar, at 2 a.m. it's closing time. Sooner or later, wherever you met, the party's over. Before you leave, one of you has to end the conversation. So the two of you stand up and stare at each other, nervous and hesitant. Finally you break the silence. "I had a real nice time talking to you. Hope to see you again." Your new friend replies, "Yeah, catch you next time."

Disaster can strike so quickly at the moment of truth. Let's look at things logically. If you've seen this person once in forty years, what's the likelihood that you'll ever see each other again? Both of you have blown it. It's back to the drawing board.

This kind of tragedy happens all the time. Two people meet, obviously are attracted to each other, but then fail to follow through. And so all is for nought.

"But wait. I'd never be so dumb as to say 'catch you next time'. I'd exchange phone numbers."

That's a little better, but not much. Think of all the times you've exchanged phone numbers in the past. How many times did you actually get to see the other person again. Probably less than 50%.

People always are puzzled about this. The women all ask, "How come I meet this guy, we have a great conversation, he asks for my number, I give it to him, and then he never calls? What's wrong with men?"

Many women are quite bitter about this. They feel betrayed. Often they rush home from work the next three nights expecting him to call. The silence is deafening. What's going on here? There are many reasons why a man doesn't call after asking for your phone number:

1. He lost it.
2. He forgot who you were. This is common in situations where a great deal of drinking has gone on.
3. He remembered who you were, but forgot what a great time he had with you.
4. He fantasized that you might reject him and therefore chickened out.
5. He called a few times, nobody answered, so he gave up.

"But wait a second, I have an answering machine. Why didn't the jerk leave a message?"

Many people hate or fear answering machines. Just count the number of times people call and fail to leave a message. In a stressful situation like calling someone for a date, is it that surprising that he might hang up?

Of course the guys have their version of the story. "How come I run into women all the time who give me their number and then come up with a song and dance about how busy they are each time I call to ask them out?"

There are many reasons why a woman might not respond positively to your telephone call:

1. She forgot who you were.
2. She lost interest once she sobered up.
3. She is genuinely very busy.
4. She's afraid of dating.
5. She never intended to go out with you in the first place.

The last reason is the hardest for men to deal with. "If she didn't want to go out with me then why did she give me her damn number?" The best way to answer that question is to pretend you're an attractive woman. All your life men have come on to you and asked you out or for your telephone number. It's hard to say to someone, "I find you unattractive" or "I don't want to go out with you" or "No, you can't have my telephone number". So what do you do? You give up your telephone number, hoping he'll never call. If he does call, you lie. You say that you're busy Saturday night or you have a boyfriend. It would be great if we lived in a world where people were honest and didn't play these games. Unfortunately, such is not the case. The price you pay for flirting with women and asking them out on dates is that a certain percentage will lie and pretend to want to go out with you. If you were a woman you'd probably do the same thing.

One piece of advice that is critical for both men and women is to always confirm a date ahead of time. Occasionally you will find that the phone number that was given to you is a phony or that the person has no intention of meeting with you. You can avoid the pain, frustration, and anger of being stood up by taking this simple precaution.

RULE #10: DON'T FALL IN LOVE WITH THE WRONG PERSON

The great American fantasy is to fall in love and live happily ever after. Unfortunately your heart is a poor judge of character. Many single people fall in love with the wrong person and live miserably ever after. Following your feelings can be a recipe for disaster unless they are based on sound information about this person. How do you get the facts about a potential spouse? The answer is you ask. Unfortunately most singles are afraid to getting personal for fear of scaring off a potential loving partner. So they "play it cool" at the beginning of a relationship. They especially avoid "heavy" subjects like sex.

That's fine as long as your feelings towards each other are casual. But what happens when you fall in love? All of a sudden you panic and realize that you know very little about this special person. So now you start with the personal questions. Then disaster strikes. You discover a fatal flaw. For example, you want to have children and they don't. You want marriage and they don't. They want to move to Denver and you love the Bay Area.

Now you're on the horns of a terrible dilemma. You can drop the person and go through the agony of a broken relationship. Or you can do what most people do: marry them and hope to change them. Fat chance! You'll probably end up being married to someone inappropriate and resent them for not changing. The way to avoid disastrous relationships is to get personal early in a relationship. "Hold it a minute. Get personal with a stranger? That's too risky. They're going to think I'm nosy if I ask intimate questions. There's no doubt that it's risky to get personal. Some people can't handle intimacy. They are closed and feel uncomfortable being around someone who wants to share secrets and intimate feelings. But don't you want to find that out as soon as possible? Or would you rather date a guy for 6 months before discovering that he's an emotional cripple?"

Of course there's nothing wrong with playing it cool for a while. At some point, however, you're going to have to bite the bullet. You're going to have to do two things: pry and reveal. When you pry you ask personal questions. When you reveal you let the other person learn personal things about you. That's all there is to it.

If you want to play it safe, pry and reveal simultaneously. For example, suppose you're talking to someone who mentions that they were recently living with someone but moved out. Here's your chance

to get personal and raise your superficial conversation to an intimate level. You could ask, "Were you dumped or did you do the dumping?" That's getting personal, but there's a good chance you're going to offend the other person with such a heavy-handed question. An alternative is to say, "I was in a relationship until three months ago, but it broke up very painfully for me. How did yours end?" "How soon should I get personal?"

That depends on how long you're willing to wait before falling in love. If you want to chitchat for six months before getting serious about someone, that's o.k. Just remember that you are not allowed to fall in love unless you have the answers to your critical questions. I call them killer questions. If any of them are answered incorrectly the relationship is dead. You drop the person immediately.

1. Are you single? Pretty obvious, isn't it? You'd be surprised how many people assume that someone by themselves at a party or a dance is single. Always ask. In addition, it makes particular sense for women to ask a man for his home telephone number. If he hands you a business card ask him to write his home number down as well. And be sure to call that number to make sure he isn't married or living with a woman. Be careful with people who answer that they are separated. "Have you moved out?" and "Have you filed for divorce?" are indispensable killer questions. If they are still living with their spouse or haven't yet filed for divorce, it's best you pass and move on to greener pastures.

2. Are you involved with someone romantically? Here's where you avoid someone who already loves someone else.

3. Why didn't your other romantic relationships last? Find out as much as you can about their marriage(s) or past relationships. Hopefully you'll find out their negative qualities. Then you can decide whether you can live with that flaw or should move on to someone different. You can also find out if they are incompatible with a certain kind of person. For example, maybe they can't stand being with someone who is possessive and is always checking up on them. If you are that kind of person, you can move on to someone compatible with your flaws.

4. How do you deal with conflict and problems in relationships? If their preference is to sweep problems under the rug or to fall into a rage, they are not good relationship material.

5. Do you have children? How many? Do you want children? How many? How soon do you want to have children? I have dated two women in the past who wanted to have children. By terrible coincidence both wound up falling in love with men who had had vasectomies. Talk about falling in love with the wrong person! Ask questions first; fall in love later.

6. What are your long term goals? Do you want to get married? Do you want to change careers? Do you plan to go back to school? Are you happy in this area or would you prefer moving elsewhere?

7. What do you like to do sexually? What are your sexual fantasies? Most singles are squeamish when it comes to asking these questions. The result is marriages that are unfulfilling sexually for one or both partners. Another potential result is your partner fulfilling their fantasies with others rather than you. Sexual questions are particularly important if you don't believe in pre-marital sex. In that case there's only one way to find out their sexual preferences--ask.

8. Do you have any contagious diseases? Have you engaged in high risk behavior (intravenous drugs or sex with bisexual or homosexual males)? These are literally killer questions. Falling in love with the wrong person can kill you.

9. How much do you drink? Which drugs do you do, and how often?

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!"

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.
2. 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.
3. Become lovers. Do a great romantic weekend somewhere to start this off.
4. Get married. Or some derivation of this until both of you are ready.
5. 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 survives. 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."

"Rule #1

HOW WELL YOU ENJOY THIS GAME = HOW WELL YOU MASTER THE RULES.

It is up to you to learn the rules. Ignorance of the rules will not protect you from the consequences of breaking them.

RULE #2:

HOW WELL YOU ENJOY THIS GAME IS BASED ON THE PURPOSE YOU GIVE IT.

For example, if your purpose is to have fun, to learn about yourself and others, and to develop your social skills, then you can enjoy any given date. (Dating is a great opportunity for learning about you and others, if you so choose). On the other hand, if your purpose is to meet your "soul-mate" (whatever that is)-who will magically and instantly turn your unhappy life into a happy one-then it is virtually certain you will not enjoy any given date, nor the game itself.

RULE #3:

GET A LIFE! (if you don't have one already...)

This means: define and pursue your own interests-and consider building non-romantic relationships with a variety of people, including couples. Dating requires that you invite another person into your life. If you don't have one, you are unlikely to attract someone you would want as a mate, since we tend to attract people who are at a similar "level" as we are. By the way, there is a "rule of life" at work here, which some people don't like: YOU alone are responsible for your happiness; no one else can 'make' you happy. So make your life full and happy!

RULE #4:

MAKE AN ABSOLUTE COMMITMENT TO LOVE YOURSELF- EVEN IF YOU THINK YOU CAN'T OR DON'T KNOW HOW.

A successful relationship is built on three cornerstones: communication, caring, and commitment. And there is no way you can give these to another if you withhold them from yourself. Consider using this affirmation daily: "I AM MY OWN BEST FRIEND AND STRONGEST SUPPORTER; I LOVE AND APPRECIATE WHO I AM!" A powerful "stand," such as this, will support you in practicing Rule #5. Also, being more loving to others will increase your self-love. Plus you'll be much more attractive as a person. **

RULE #5:

GET A HANDLE ON YOUR SELF-TALK!

Your enjoyment of the dating game-or any activity-is related to your self-talk. Most people disempower themselves, at times mercilessly, with negative evaluations of themselves and others. Learn to observe your "internal dialogue" with detachment, like images on a movie screen, and not react to it. (Meditation is very helpful for cultivating this ability). *** Especially, don't take rejection personally: "chemistry" has nothing to do with who you are!

RULE #6:

CHOOSE A COMPANION

-not a friend or love interest: that comes later... (A companion may be defined as a person with whom you share activities, where the activity is more important than the particular person). Pick three (3) people you'd like to get to know better. (If you don't know three such people, go back to Rule #3). Select an activity that you enjoy. Then pick the one person you think you would have the most fun being with, and invite them to share that activity with you.

RULE #7:

EASE UP ON YOUR EXPECTATIONS!

Don't expect your first date with anyone to be "the one." A loving, committed partnership requires, in addition to "chemistry," shared values and life-style preferences, compatible goals, complementary personalities, and similar expectations of (and capacity to nourish) a relationship. So, plan to meet and go out with lots of people, until you find a real "match." Meanwhile, if you relax and allow things to just unfold, you'll be able to enjoy and get to know your date. And your date will relax, without feeling "sized up." You can discover other kinds of valuable relationships if you're not just focused on romance. And, men, you need to know that "friends" can become "lovers" if you're patient, respectful and loving: a true friend!

RULE #8:

KEEP IT LIGHT:

Don't tell intimate, personal secrets on the first (or second) date! Healthy people know how to protect themselves, and you do this by keeping your sharing to the public level: this means it would be OK for anyone to know this about you. Be genuinely interested in your date, and ask them questions about their life-their interests, work, friends and family, hobbies and preferred fun activities, etc. The more interested you are in them, the more interested they'll be in you (if not, you have a red flag!). Also, it's critical to balance showing interest in the other person and making room for them to show interest in you: if you're always pursuing, it's likely your partner will retreat!

RULE #9:

YOU DECIDE: IS THIS PERSON A FRIEND?

If you determine that you have enough in common, after the first date, and you enjoy one another's company, then it's time to ask yourself this question. At the friendship level, the person is more important than the activity. Here, communication is very important, and you need to be able to recognize and move between levels of sharing. See if you can begin to share at the private level (personal thoughts and feelings you wouldn't want publicly known), and at the intimate level (thoughts and feelings about the other person)-and notice their response: is it accepting or judging (or aloof)? It is useful to imagine four levels of depth in sharing, and to go no more than one level deeper than your partner does. Also, don't confuse private and intimate sharing: e.g., giving details about how you were abused as a child is not a turn-on!

JUST SAY "WHOA" TO SEX!

If you feel comfortable, safe and mutually attracted with your new friend, then it may be appropriate to explore sexuality...(healthy relationships are based mainly on comfort; unhealthy relationships are based mainly on intensity). WATCH OUT HERE! You need to be rigorously honest with yourself: if you're starving for contact, it's very easy to think you see a friend on a first date. But the reality is that they're a stranger, and having sex with a stranger is dangerous!

It is critical to know what sex means to your partner: don't assume anything, ask them. You also need to respect and admire each other as people: you simply can't build a satisfying relationship without these two qualities. Chemistry is important, but it can distort your thinking. Sexual feelings stimulate a myriad of chemicals in the body, which are proven to alter perception like drugs. So exceptional care and consciousness are called for! If you have a history of 'crash and burn' relationships, it's a good idea to get feedback from your friends, before you jump in"

"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!

3. 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.

4. Know when to back off.

Ever Star Wars? I'm sure you know the scene - the Rebels are attacking the Death Star, and Gold Leader 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.

5. 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 muffle 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.

6. 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"

"THE "RULES" for guys:

1. Be a "creature unlike any other."

However, in particular think in terms of "The Creature from the Black Lagoon" (Universal 1954), a dark monster that conquers her. Beauty and the Beast. Chicks love that shit.

2. Don't talk much to a girl (but do take her dancing.)

She only wants to talk about relationships and girl stuff anyway. So take her dancing. They go nuts for this. Learn enough to get by and look cool, though you won't need it much after you have her hooked. In the meantime you can flirt with the other girls on the dance floor.

3. Pay her way on the date, but expect to get back in kind.

Buy her a nice meal, so that she knows what she owes you in exchange for the meal. In addition, if you buy her a fancy schmancy \$50 dinner at some ritzy place, she won't be able to turn down your request for a \$300 "loan" until you can "get to the cash machine." Good investment.

4. Don't call her after sex.

Make her wait a few days. Girls do this stare at the phone thing, makes them all anticipatory. Don't give them what they want. Call her in a couple of days or if you get horny again. Also, after sex, just roll over and go to sleep, even if she hasn't had an orgasm yet. You did a lot of work and you're tired, and you have important work to do tomorrow.

5. Always end phone calls first.

Especially if she's read the Girl's Rules that tell her to do this, you won't have to worry about long phone calls. I mean girls can yak so long on the phone.

6. Don't give her any warning about a date.

Make sure she stays free all the time in case you call. And more to the point, keep yourself free in case something comes up elsewhere, if you know what I mean. If you call and she's not available, act real hurt, make it seem like you will end the relationship if she does this a lot.

7. Tell her what she wants to hear (ie. Lie.)

You like long walks on the beach. You love kids. You like to cook. You're looking to settle down in a country home with that one special girl. You love horses, paris, chick movies, sushi and Meryl Streep. You support her goals. Tell her you're rich, famous, whatever. She'll figure out the more ridiculous ones eventually but if you play this right you'll get laid first and have her captured. Don't be scared to eventually talk to her about "the relationship" -- girls go for this. Just be sure not to believe it yourself.

8. Stop dating her if she doesn't put out by the second date.

Pretend like you're not super eager to get laid but drop the hint with gentle physical contact. It is nice to date easy chicks and all and get laid on the first date, but some of the hottest ones like to wait a date. However, if she doesn't at least give you a blowjob by date #2, #3 at the latest, there are better investments out there. On date #3, remind her of the "third date rule."

9. Tell her you love her.

This is the big corollary of rule #7. Don't do it right away but definitely do it if she's showing reluctance on that blowjob. Practice saying it like you mean it. As the old saying goes, "Sincerity is everything. If you can fake that you've got it made."

10. No more than casual sex on the first, or 100th date.

Definitely don't get too involved, as she might ask to be monogamous or something. Make sure that you never let yourself get tied down.

11. Tell her what to do.

Hey, in the end they all want to be dominated. So make all the decisions and see how she goes for it. If so, you can probably get this to continue in the bedroom. No girl is perfect, but most of them like to please a man so you can change the one(s) you have to fit your needs.

12. Be the bad boy.

Girls love the "bad boy." They hope they can "reform" him, or they're a case of point #11 above. Either way, you can be as bad as you like. Treat her like she doesn't exist. Be mysterious. Dangerous. Wear cuffs and a leather motorcycle jacket, even if you drive a Hyundai. (Park the Hyundai somewhere else and walk to where you meet her, though.) Remember, nice guys don't get laid.

13. Don't let her know anything she can pin on you.

Girls like to get close to their guy, and "communicate." But later, if you break up, she might try and get back at you so for crissake don't let her know anything she could use or spread to others. Invent deep intimate stuff you can tell her in bed, she'll go for it. If you can't think up your own, buy one of those books with Fabio (the guy from the "I can't believe it's not butter" commercials) on the cover and be one of those guys. (God, this guy can't tell butter from margarine and chicks swoon over him? Something strange going on here.)

14. Don't tell her you're married!

For some reason they get really upset. When you take off your ring, get some tanning lotion or put your hand under a sunlamp to make sure it's not visible where you took it off. Or tell your wife you just don't want to wear a ring; invent some sort of bizarre hand disease or rice picker accident. Anyway even the ones who haven't read the Girl's Rules don't want to date married guys so don't let her (or your wife) know.

15. Be a pain to live with.

Well, this isn't a thing to so much try to do as a reminder to be yourself. If you shack up, don't alter your own life just to make it easier for her. One exception, which is admittedly a royal pain, but worth it -- put the toilet seat down after you take a wizz. She sees that and she'll think she's found god's gift to girls, and she'll give you better sex than a \$300 hooker. Compare -- 5 seconds of your time each day to put down the seat vs. \$300 blowjob. No brainer!

16. Don't get caught staring at her tits or other girls'.

For some reason girls don't like it when we stare at their tits when we talk to them. And they don't like us staring at other girls' either. As if we have a choice! Anyway, they're watching for this so don't get caught. Check their eyes, then do your looking.

17. Don't let her leave your things in your apartment.

Or give her a key, until you're sure you can count on her for very regular nookie. Otherwise they might try to insinuate themselves into your life before you are sure of this.

18. Even if you're engaged or married, you still can play around.

I mean, do they own you or something? This rule is the most fun.

19. Do The Rules even when your friends or parents think you're nuts!

Truth is, you're getting laid, and they are just jealous.

20. Don't give her the ring, but make her think you will -- or give her a fake ring.

Drop hints and pretend like some day you want to be married to her, but don't actually do it. You can even get engaged if you want to lock in some regular pussy. There's no law that says you actually have to follow through with the ceremony. Plus, it takes an expert to tell cubic zirconia from a diamond, and if she takes her ring to an expert she clearly doesn't trust you and is a lost cause anyway. You can get one of these rings for about \$100 and trust me you'll get a fuck worth far more than that out of it.

21. Double check the birth control.

There's a trade off here. On one hand you don't want to use condoms, so get her on the pill ASAP. On the other hand if she runs the birth control she might blindside you with something annoying like a kid

just to hook you. You decide. If she gets pregnant, take the new "morning-after" pill for guys. (It alters your blood type.)

22. Don't discuss The Rules for Guys with girls.

Like I need to explain this one to you? Do they explain their rules to us? Thought not.

22a. Don't discuss The Rules for Guys with your therapist.

Because if you have a therapist you've really missed the point of The Rules for Guys.

23. Figure out her romantic dream.

Almost all girls have one. In 90% of cases it's the knight in shining armour, the handsome prince or the tall, dark and handsome mysterious stranger. Harlequin Romances isn't exactly going broke selling girls books about how a guy comes into the girl's life and does something as simple as fixing her car to make her life right and sweeps her off her feet. You would be amazed at the "mileage" you can get just by taking her car down to the shop. Though if you can find a good mechanic, let me know, OK? Anyway, subtly find out her own personal romantic dream, and play-act it. On the cheap, of course -- you only have to play-act. While she may dream of a billionaire who whisks her away to his ranch in his jet, she'll settle for a \$60 rental limo and a \$40 1-hour rental horseback ride.

24. Sometimes ya gotta break The Rules.

Hey, Burger King said it best. And it's a great place for a cheap date (use \$4 from the \$300 she "lent" you.) But in this case I mean you gotta break the Girl's Rules.

25. Do The Rules girls. Yes, you can!

If you suspect that some really attractive girl is following The Rules for girls, take heart. I mean if she's a dog, lose her. But if she's got a great set or you have some other reason to particularly want her, you now know her exact game and can use it to get her. The book tells these girls to follow its rules religiously, even when they don't make sense. You will have to wait 6 dates, but the authors do tell girls over 30 it's OK to have sex, so they will. Forget young "The Rules" girls unless you are really keen on virgin-plucking. You only have to date 'em once a week -- if you date them Friday then you are free as a bird on Saturday; they'll end calls and dates; they won't call you when you have other girls over -- a lot of advantages, and as long as you see past all the manipulative "hard-to-get" tricks you won't be fooled, just laid.

First, you have to check if she's a The Rules girl or just a stuck-up bitch. Sometimes it can be hard to differentiate them. Test this by first telling her how much you admire a girl who sticks to her principles, and then call her Thursday telling her you just got front-row Orchestra seats to the Boston Pops (a classical musical group) concert on Friday. If she says yes, she's the stuck-up bitch. Say, "Did I say Boston Pops? I meant Iggy Pop!" and dump her.

If she says a reluctant no, she's a The Rules girl. The book tells them never to accept a weekend date after Wednesday. Rush out to the bookstore to get a copy of The Rules. You'll find it in the dating/relationships section. Since there is zero chance you've ever gone near that section before, ask at the cashier's desk. When you get to it you'll know why you've never been to this section before from the titles of the books. Venus and Mars Together Forever. Men who hate women and the women who love them too much. Like Dave Barry says I am not making this up. You're the only guy in weeks to go to this section other than to laugh at the titles, so if you're lucky some chick might even hit on you. But if not, go buy the book, and then read it. It's short.

Now you'll know her exact game. Problem is, as noted, it will be 6 weeks until you get laid. Be sure you have something else on the side during those six weeks. But look at the advantages. Other than those noted above, you'll learn that she won't bring up crap like "marriage" or "kids" or "the relationship." She expects you to bring these things up. Soon the book will tell her to dump you. Track this, and make sure to start dating another The Rules girl before the breakup -- 6 weeks before the breakup if you can time it right.

26. Do The Rules For Guys and you'll get laid.

Don't forget this. You may be tempted to break them, to be "nice" or "sensitive" or even listen to her. But everybody knows that nice guys don't get 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.

I have interviewed thousands of women and not one ever said to me:

1. I want a man whom I can't control.
2. I want a man who, when I test him, does not give in.
3. I want a man who keeps me guessing.

But you will see many women in long term-committed relationships with guys who have these traits.

OK Gordon, now let's go over this list so I can un-brainwash you and the rest of mankind.

Yes, most women do prefer a guy with a sense of humor. When a guy is able to consistently make a woman laugh, it shows her that he is confident and also fun to be with. And as we all know, girls just want to have fun. But the idea that a sense of humor is the number one attribute that women look for in a man is a bunch of malarkey.

In order for a woman to even give a hoot whether you have a sense of humor she first has to find you physically attractive. If she's not physically attracted to you, you can be more hilarious than Robin Williams on speed and you still won't have a chance for romance with her. The Reality Factor says that you have to pass (her) Physical Attraction Test first in order to get to first base.

If a sense of humor were really the trait that women found most important in men, then all the funny guys who look like Danny De Vito would be as successful with women as all the handsome hunks. It's fascinating to observe how reluctant women are to admit how important looks are to them - as evidenced by these poll results. You don't necessarily have to be the hunk from heaven, but in order to click with a particular chick, you need to have a look that she likes or you ain't gonna get the love boat out of the dock no matter how hard you paddle.

The poll results revealed that 31% of women say they value "sensitivity" foremost. Now there's a loaded word if I ever heard one. What do they mean by "sensitivity?" They don't explain it, do they? What a woman usually means when she says she wants a "sensitive" guy, is that she wants a guy who will share all of his emotional pain, will dutifully listen to her complaints about everything and will happily take orders from her. Of course this type of guy is always getting rejected or he is kept around as a dartboard for all of her zingers. You see, Gordon, more female propaganda.

So almost half of the women who responded to the poll expect a guy to call within 24 hours? Yeah, they EXPECT a guy to call within 24 hours because 90% of men can barely wait even that long before they call. Unfortunately, thousands of guys are going to read those poll results and will feel even more justified in jumping the gun as they always do.

And according to the poll, only 5% of women are willing to hear from a guy after a week. FALSE! It would have been much more helpful and revealing if the People pollsters had asked those women a question like: Have you ever had a relationship with a guy who waited a week or longer to call you? If so, why did you date him even though he waited that long? Then we would have gotten some valuable information.

19% (1 in 5) want intelligence. Does this mean that 4 out of 5 women are looking for stupid life long partners?

And now guys, for the biggest whopper of them all. According to the poll, only 2% (1 in 50) of women are gold diggers. How does that jive with your experience? How many women have asked you, "What do you do?"

Remember; don't get brainwashed by the poll-takers questions and women's answers."

"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 marry 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 your favorite place in 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"

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\B7ed; dat\B7ing

Date: 15th century

transitive senses

1 : to determine the date of <date an antique>

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 <a friendship dating from college days>
- 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

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 Cities 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.

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.

In Contempt of Courtship

By Elizabeth Austin, Washington Monthly

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,"

"Eliminate," "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 résumé 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 date-worthiness 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