

What to Do on a First Date?

And Women's Other Top Questions about Dating, Mating and Relating



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Introduction

Most women dread dating. What should you ask? How do you trust the man's answers? Could he be The One?

And should you go to bed with him?

Hi! And thank you for choosing to receive this booklet. I wish there were one perfect answer that would fit for every situation. Hopefully, this booklet will help you. I have gathered women's top questions and my best advice, based on my research findings, workshops, talks and psychotherapy from thousands of women.

I've arranged the questions in somewhat of a chronicle order, but you can flip to any question that you need at the time. To make my advice fun and easy, I've used cartoons from my book, "The Love Adventures of Almost Smart Cookie," where you can follow a year of my cartoon character Cookie's love missteps. Each strip is based on a key finding from my research. Cookie is a divorce attorney who is smart about helping people with their family and love issues—but not her own!

Not all advice fits everyone and every situation. Please use my tips as a combination of tested and trusted advice and road signs—not rules. Studying human behavior is tricky, and no theory or study can explain or predict everything.

Fortunately (and sometimes unfortunately), there are wild cards in life that bring you happiness even if they challenge even the best advice. My goal is to give you solid advice so you can at least minimize encountering a wild card that is not good for you!

Again, thank you for choosing to receive this booklet gift! And give yourself a round of applause for signing up to learn and help *you*!

Dr. LeslieBeth Wish

Your Top Questions

Question	Page
What Should I Do on a First Date?	4
How Much Should I Tell a New Person about Me?	9
Is There Such a Thing as “Love at First Sight?”	11
What Do I Do on a Second Date?	13
What Should I Do on a Third Date?	16
How Can I Trust My Judgment in Men?	20
Who Pays When and How Much?	24

What Should I Do on a First Date?

First dates can be a confusing mix of excitement and anxiety. You wonder: Will he like me? Will I like him?

And it's not fair that anxiety clouds your judgment—which is one of the top things you need to read your date and your feelings correctly. I hope these tips help.

First Date Guide

1. Start by putting the brakes on your enthusiasm about going on romantic and impressive dates. See if you can find what the following choices for first dates have in common: romantic dinners at special places or exclusive VIP access to events, places and people.

These first dates might sound good to you, but don't choose them—yet. These selections arouse your brain's neuro-chemicals for pleasure. Romantic dinners—often with gift included—and high profile events elevate your pleasure hormones. If you are the person who arranged the date, you feel important—even powerful and respected. If you are on the receiving end, you feel special—and even valued. Regardless whether you are the recipient or the top dog you both risk feeling prematurely close to each other *because shared intense, pleasurable experiences create positive memories that elevate mutual attraction to someone you barely know.*

2. If possible, skip the exciting—or even slightly dangerous—date. Think about what the following dates have in common: scary movies, rock concerts, helicopter rides and amusement parks. If you thought about the brain, you are on the right track. These experiences stimulate your fight or flight reactions that create an odd mix of fear and excitement. When we are afraid, one of our instinctive responses is to seek safety and emotional support with others. For example, survivors of disasters tend to feel closer to people who were with them during the calamity. Survivors often remain in touch with each other for years.

To confuse you even more, some of the neural pathways for fear, excitement, sexual arousal and pleasure overlap. *So it is no surprise that after a heart-pounding rock concert or roller coaster ride, you find yourself feeling more positive and attracted to your date.*

So, what do you do if you already have tickets to an exciting event—and you don't want to lose them? Is it okay to invite a man who interests you—or accept a date with a man who invites you to join him at a fun and exciting event? Of course it's okay to go! Just get smart!

Know that you are headed for an experience that will over-charge your arousal and attraction. Keep your wits about you. Stay sober. Stay alert about your racing feelings and thoughts about this guy being The One. These excitement-induced reactions can fool you into acting hastily and unwisely—such as having sex with someone you don't know.

Look at the Cookie cartoon below. Can you see how she is ignoring her excitement level already? If you are spending time agonizing over which outfit will most capture the man's heart, you are probably playing with fire. You might end up with his body—but not his heart and soul. Pay attention to your state of mind—and your unrealistic expectations.



3. If possible, choose activities that allow you to be present as you in a normal neuro-chemical state. Don't do things that cloud your judgment. In the beginning of getting to know someone, your goal is to maximize your mindfulness and assessment abilities by minimizing over-stimulating your brain. First dates are scary enough without any extra jolts! Don't impair your skills at reading people and your own emotional and physiological cues.

4. Make your dates resemble your real life. I hope it doesn't come as a surprise that your life in a committed relationship will consist of a lot of mundane tasks and not so thrilling activities—grocery shopping, filling your gas tank, taking the car for an oil change, raising children or being with friends and family. True romance usually grows naturally and more slowly from good matches. (Yes—there is that mutually satisfying love-at-first-sight phenomenon, but people who experience this shared joy tend to be already in a state of mature and mentally healthy conscious and unconscious emotional preparedness. They know themselves and how to read others well.)

But for the rest of us who need to go through the getting-to-know-you process of dating, you want to keep your wits about you.

5. Consider these suggestions for where to go and what to do on a first date. Again, if possible, choose *activities* instead of fancy dinner.

Go to one of your community's free activities such as charity events, boat or car shows, antique fairs, bird-watching, photography conventions, and any other event that seems interesting. Most of these events occur during weekend days and afternoons—which is a good thing because the time is limited—and doesn't tend to extend into the evening and its darkness that lures you into going back to his place or yours.

Walk around and observe your date's behavior. Watch how he treats others and you. Is he patient or does he begrudge doing some things you like?

Does he cling, allow you to browse, grumble, show off or decide unilaterally when to leave?

Does he dictate when and what to eat?

How willing is your date to be in learning mode or trying something new? Does your date brag and compete with the instructor? Is he afraid to eat something different? Does he run a critical assessment of the event and put in his two cents worth of criticism?

These unstructured events teach you about taking turns, experiencing the ease or difficulty of being together, and assessing his insecurity and many other qualities.

If there are no events in your town, meet for coffee or brunch or lunch. These times are safer and wiser since they also are usually time-limited. After your lite bite you could run errands together. Yes—that's right! These normal activities give you a sense of what daily life might be with this man. Happy couples report that the most mundane task such as grocery shopping feels special.

Another option is to do something with your friends or his. Observe your date's comfort with strangers. Pay attention to the reactions of your friends and those of your date. If you trust your friends' people reading skills, then you can also use this opportunity to get feedback.

Evaluate whether it is a good idea to include your children. Some people recommend bringing them so you can see how your date—and your kids—interact. Too often, however, your date might be in best behavior mode. And your children could either be little angels or monsters.

My recommendation leans toward not taking them in the very beginning. Young children and teens don't need to endure a parade of new people. Be sure, though, to let your date know that you have children!

6. Do not put yourself in a compromising position by tempting the fates—and raising the bet that there will be sex. Go home alone! If you want to extend the date, go to a hotel lobby or

late night bar and talk. Stay public. Stay very sober. Don't lie to yourself and say: Well, I was a little drunk last night so I can give myself a pass that we did what we did.

7. Give up the idea of “chemistry.” Change your goal of Finding the One to Reading Men Accurately. So, that means go on a second date to test your assumptions. Some men don't shine right away. And, if you've made wrong choices in the past, it might be because you relied on chemistry. Give most of your men second and even possibly third chances.

Think about all those romantic comedies where the guy and the girl who are best friends throughout the movie discover that they are in love by the end of the movie!

If you want to learn more about reading men, look at the question: [How Can I Trust My Own Judgment in Men?](#)

How Much Should I Tell a New Person about Me?

Those early stages of dating can feel as though you're on a roller coaster. On the way up the hill, you like the excitement of the beginning, and you want to tell him all while the thrill lasts.

On the way down, you fear the unknown, so you grip that handrail and hold back too much.

You're not alone. We all want to be loved and accepted, but the ride can be really scary.

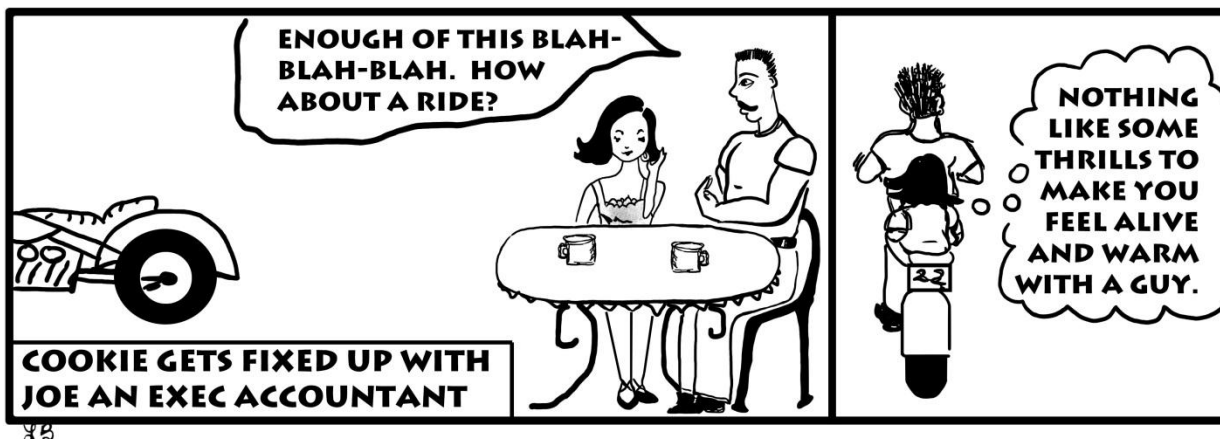
Here are some tips to help you get smart and brave about those first few dates.

1. Start with the now, live in the present moment. If you are a parent, then tell your date. You can't hide it. But you don't need to go into the history of you and your ex.

2. Resist the temptation to rush the intimacy by telling your life story too soon. You don't yet know how this new person thinks. Telling all the ups and downs in your life makes you appear desperate to be loved. Speak about your past in general terms. Give the tip of the iceberg in the beginning. You might reveal that your divorce or was rough, but you're much better at managing it now.

In the cartoon below, Cookie is so anxious to connect with her date—a “sure-fire” fix up from her friends—that she goes on and on about her life. Look what happens.

ALMOST SMART COOKIE™



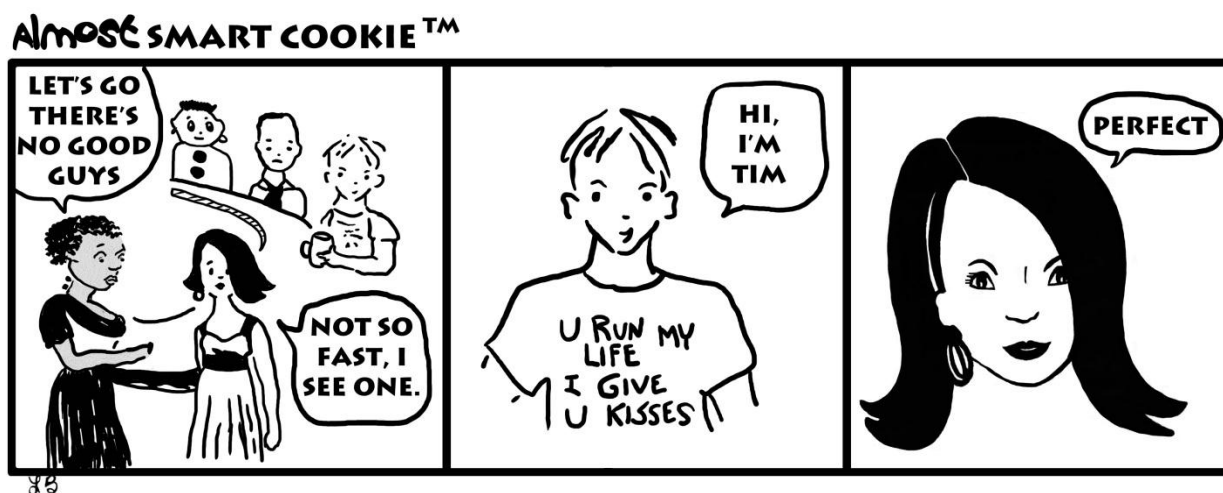
Be aware of your emotional state before the date. Cookie is clueless about how much she longs for a relationship. She's told Joe too much, and now she's allowing the mix of the anxiety about telling too much about herself--and excitement of riding off into the sunset on the back of a motorcycle with a prestigious guy--to blind her to him.

3. Reveal some less intense issues. Be you. Let him see you be indecisive or spill your drink. And then observe his reactions. Your comfort with his comfort with you will help you decide what, when, and if to reveal your more private side. Dropping some of your guard allows you to see aspects of his personality such as being critical, rejecting or supportive. Observe his reactions. Was he frustrated? Disgusted? Did he offer to help?

4. Establish a positive view of you. If he asks for more details, focus on how brave and strong you were to leave your ex. You can always tell him more if the relationship continues.

5. Think carefully whether you want to discuss your serious health and mental health issues. Many of the women in my study had chronic health issues such as lupus or vision problem or depression. There is no clear right or wrong answer. Some women told the man immediately. They felt more honest and forthright. Other women waited until they assessed that there was mutual interest. These women believed that if a man were genuinely interested and caring, he would accept health and mental health issues. Get smart. On the one hand you don't want to drive away a good match. But if you wait too long to tell a man about these important issues, he might feel that you misled him.

Is There Such a Thing as “Love at First Sight?”



Yes! It does happen—but usually only successfully when certain things are in place. But look at the Cookie cartoon above. Cookie feels attraction for Tim because she believes that a man who lets her run the show is her best choice. She evaluates on the spot that Tim is a nice guy who will be caring and affectionate.

This swift attraction is what many people call “chemistry.” But—oops! Just because you are attracted to someone, it doesn’t mean that person is a healthy choice for you!

But you also probably know people who say that they “just knew right away” that their date was The One. And most high schools had one romantic couple that lasted forever.

So, can you trust your feelings of attraction? Here is a quick recipe to help you trust those feelings that you’ve fallen in love wisely and quickly.

Quick Recipe for Falling in Love at First Sight

1. Mix together in your brain, thoughts and feelings two cups each of:

- Ability to trust your judgment, instincts and people-reading skills
- Capacity to love, care and commit to a relationship
- Honest acceptance of your limitations and emotional needs
- Understanding of who your parents are and aren’t
- Inner strength to forge your own identity and values—even if your parents don’t approve of who you are

2. Fold in a cup each of:

- Emotional bravery to take reasonable risks
- Optimism
- Problem-solving abilities
- Emotional control of your negative, knee-jerk emotional reactions
- Being in a good place in your life—or at least a place where you feel you have some degree of control, independence or inner shield from bad times

3. Sprinkle generously with:

- Sense of humor
- Luck!

As I hope you can see, falling in love at first sight requires all the ingredients of a prepared mind and a ready heart that come together at the same time.

What Do I Do on a Second Date?

Second dates might mean second chances—which is often a good idea, but second dates usually mean that you are both interested in spending time with each other. But what should you do? What should you ask—or tell? Below is a quick guide to second dates.

Second Date Guide

1. If possible, aim to balance your dates between casual and structured time. If you did *not* spend your first date by just hanging out with friends or strolling flea markets or attending casual, community events such as an antique or home show, then I highly recommend that you do some kind of casual activity together where you can observe your date's ability to share, be patient, interested, and engaged with others, and reveal other key aspects of his character.

Consider not going to movies or any activity such as attending a concert because these situations limit your interaction. Don't worry if you can't structure your second date so you can see your date's behavior. There is always something to observe and learn, and you can make your next date function as a second date.

Ideally, though, if you have choices, I suggest either making your second date similar to your first by going for a stroll in the city, a walk in the park or dinner at a casual place where you can sit and talk without feeling pressure from a long line of people who want your table or from the wait staff who want you to leave.

Or, have a painting or moving party! Recruit your date and friends to pitch in. Or help out at a soup kitchen or some other casual activity. When you are relaxed, your anxiety goes down, and you are better able to assess your date's behavior.

If friends are present, you can also get feedback from them.

2. Still be mindful of how much of your past you want to reveal. Some couples use this time to tell their “war stories” about their divorce or recent breakup. There's nothing wrong with talking about these experiences, but often these conversations range from anger to criticism to

stories that could match any Lifetime Movie Channel true story. Your second date may not be the right time to tell all the details of your drama or trauma.

3. Become more wary of your reactions on those exciting dates. Remember what I said about avoiding getting caught up in thrills on a first date? I warned you that brain arousal can also stimulate your desire for sexual highs.

Second date thrills and chills can be even more intense because you may have dropped your guard about love too soon. You probably think to yourself: “Wow, he asked me out again! He must really like me. I won the prize!”

Get mindful of your physiological and emotional reactions. Take a break and go to the restroom to assess you. Is your tummy flip-flopping? Is your heart fluttering? What are you thinking? Are you already fantasizing about moving in together?

These are all signs that you are moving too quickly. Ask yourself: Why am I already in the future?

Instead, ask yourself: Have I felt this way before? How did that turn out? What is going on in my life right now that I need to rush love?

4. Focus on reading your man. Think about his body language. Does he move into your space too quickly? Does he talk too much about himself? Or is he too focused on you—to make you feel special? Does he show off his expertise about wine, for example? Or does he act like he owns the place and has to make a show of saying hello to everyone?

Or, on the other hand, when your table is right next to the swinging door of the kitchen, does he hesitate to make a fuss?

Look for both extremes and subtle behaviors.

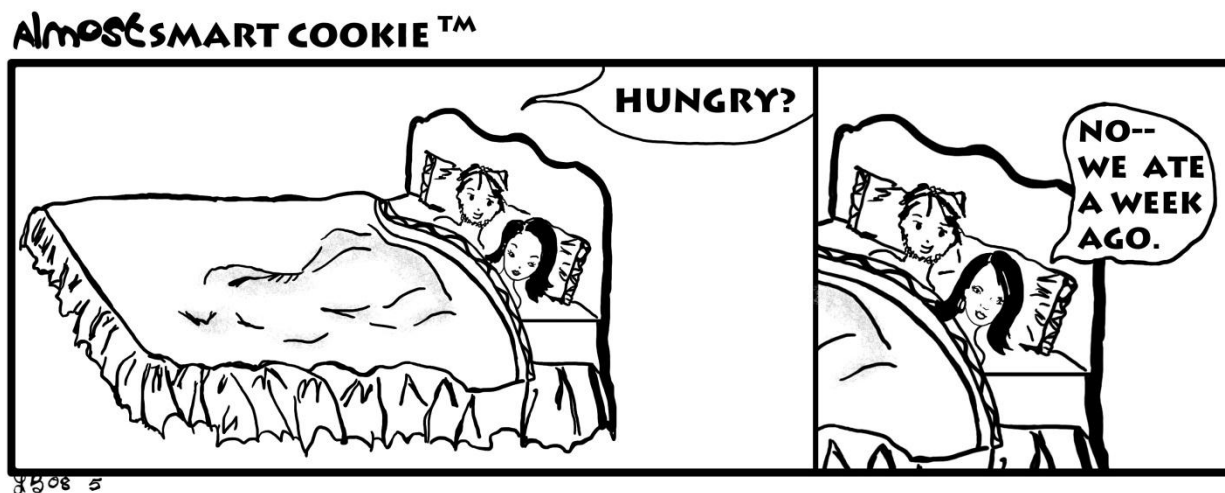
How would you describe your man so far? What animal does he remind you of? A teddy bear? Be careful. Teddy bears are often needier than you are. A lion? Be careful again. Lions may be men of authority—or they may be authoritarian.

Overall, get mindful of your date's words, body language and tone, and also to be mindful of how he makes you feel—all while, well, just talking and being together.

Sound difficult? Not necessarily. You automatically live on at least two tracks—being present and being mindful—every day with people, but you just aren't consciously aware that as you talk, for example, with a new colleague that you are also making observations. I'm asking you to be more conscious. Enjoy yourself *while* you are being a Dating Sleuth.

5. Don't use sex to show the man that you reciprocate his feelings—and to seal the deal. It's easy to allow sex to happen on a second date because you tell yourself: Well, I didn't have sex on a first date, after all. And if he asked me out for a second, then it means that he really likes me.

But, oops, that might not be true. You hardly know this person! Maybe he didn't have anyone else to ask to this event! Look at the cartoon below.



Cookie ended up in bed too soon with a man she hardly knew. And she doesn't even know her own feelings toward him! Yet, she let herself get so carried away that she's even lost touch with her signs of hunger.

6. Keep your mind clear by keeping your impulses in check. Postponing sex is a very good way to prevent your brain from blinding you to assessing your man. Giving in to sex too soon bonds you without personal meaning. It also blinds you to seeing him clearly.

What Should I Do on a Third Date?

Okay—you've made it to the third date. Yes—*that* third date which somehow in the United States and possibly other countries—signals that you *should* or *could* have sex. I have no idea where or how that idea got started, but please don't heed that advice.

Think about it. If you haven't done so already, do you really want to take off all of your physical and emotional clothes, and allow your heart, mind, soul, values and hope to be invaded by an unknown person--a person with whom you've spent scant hours? Haven't you watched enough stories on *Dateline* or *48 Hours* to know how easily people hide their worst and often dangerous behavior?

Oh, and I hope you didn't fall for other messages that are floating around out there about having sex too soon: "*If you feel it, do it.*" Or, "*If I feel it, it must be right.*" Really--you're going to act on an impulse that grew from, probably, mostly words rather than behavior over a course of time? And by time, I mean time spent hanging out together—not just sitting in silence in a movie theater or dining at a very romantic restaurant that wows you and makes you feel special and wanted and hopeful and giddy and saved and redeemed and—most importantly—less lonely. If you are a woman, don't let these thoughts steer you to the bedroom so soon. You don't want to end up like Cookie in the cartoon below.



Cookie allowed herself to be seduced by a man who seems like a mover and a shaker. She thinks: “Wow—I’ve caught the brass ring. He’s rich and handsome and daring.”

But now is not the time for *you* to be daring with your body, safety and heart and soul.

If you are smart, you know how to tamp down those impulses to connect by sealing the deal with sex. It might surprise you, but both men *and* women want to fall in love. The problem with sex too soon is not necessarily a matter of ethics or values. *The problem lies in your inability to curtail your anxiety about the urgency of having to attach to someone.*

If you feel urgent, it’s likely that you don’t feel very positively about you. When you lead with these negative feelings that are associated with a negative self-view, you automatically put yourself on a love course that could skid out of control.

What if the feelings flame and burn out? What if you end up hurt, dumped and disillusioned—and then wall up your heart so much that you don’t put yourself out there again for love until loneliness and fear intensify to the point that you are at risk for making yet another wrong love choice?

But don’t worry if you’ve already had sex and now have doubts or regrets. You can always dial back the relationship and tell him or her that you want to slow things down.

So, just what should you do on your third date? Here’s a quick guide.

Third Date Guide

Hopefully, you are already doing the items on this list. I’ve mentioned some of these ideas in the sections on first and second dates, and these ideas expand them.

1. Continue to hang out with each of your friends. Develop deeper and more genuine closeness with them. Act as though you are beginning a wonderful friendship with a woman. After all, they might be in your life! Besides, they can say positive things about you—and you can learn more about your date from them.

2. Spend more time just hanging out together. Relax. Be you. If you want to watch the end of the reality show, then say so. Don't "pretty up" things about you.

3. Sharpen your observations skills even more. Keep an imaginary continuum line in your mind about key categories such as: Extrovert vs Introvert. Critical vs Accepting. Pessimism vs Optimism. Assertive vs Passive.

There is no right way to be *all* the time. In fact, happy, long-term couples show flexibility in these categories. Your job is to observe.

Be on the lookout for seriously wandering eyes, rude or seductive treatment of the wait staff. Does the person talk and talk about only him? Does he want to learn about you? Is the person judgmental and negative about you? Are the person's fingernails chewed to the quick due to anxiety? Does the person touch his or her face while speaking—an indicator of dishonesty. Read ahead of time books about how to read people.

4. Become more of an expert in your own emotional and physical reactions. Are you still hoping to get "carried away"? Or, are you beginning to have more doubts? If so, what about? What are you observing or feeling that might make you cool your attraction?

Take a mindfulness check. Go to the rest room, and this time *write out* your emotional and physical reactions. Does your head hurt or your tummy churn? Are you nervous? Is your heart beating rapidly?

Know your Emotional Default Drives. When have you felt this way before? What was the result? What are your typical love traps of attraction? Do you, for example, tend to choose people who later turn out to be mean, insensitive or impossible—even though you didn't see this behavior? When you know your automatic attraction valence, then you can get more diligent about looking for these signs and hints in your date.

5. Reveal something more serious about you that you are not sure someone would accept. Now is the time to drop some more of your guardedness. You might talk a bit about your divorce—not the whole story necessarily but enough to test the waters of your date's reactions. Show more of your quirks such as being a klutz or devouring your monthly treat of sweets or confessing that you tape game shows or reruns of your mother's favorite television shows.

6. Once again, don't put yourself in a compromising position by going back to one of your places just because it's the third date. Ask yourself: Why am I agreeing to have sex—or putting myself in a situation where the chances dramatically increase of saying yes?

A great guide is to ask yourself:

Am I willing to let him know my body before he knows me?

Am I fooling myself in to thinking that sex will bring us closer *before* I feel close emotionally?

Do I feel safe with him alone, at night, and perhaps even far from where I live?

Am I settling for sex instead of being loved first?

Am I “tossing caution to the wind?” just to please or nab him?

Take your time. Keep your eyes open. Read the next question to learn more about how trust your judgment in reading a man.

How Can I Trust My Judgment in Men?

One of the most important issues for women on dates is how to build trust in their judgment of men. It's not easy. We're taught not to judge. Think of that maxim: People who live in glass houses shouldn't throw stones. Or recall these words from the Bible in Matthew 7:1: Judge not, that ye be not judged.

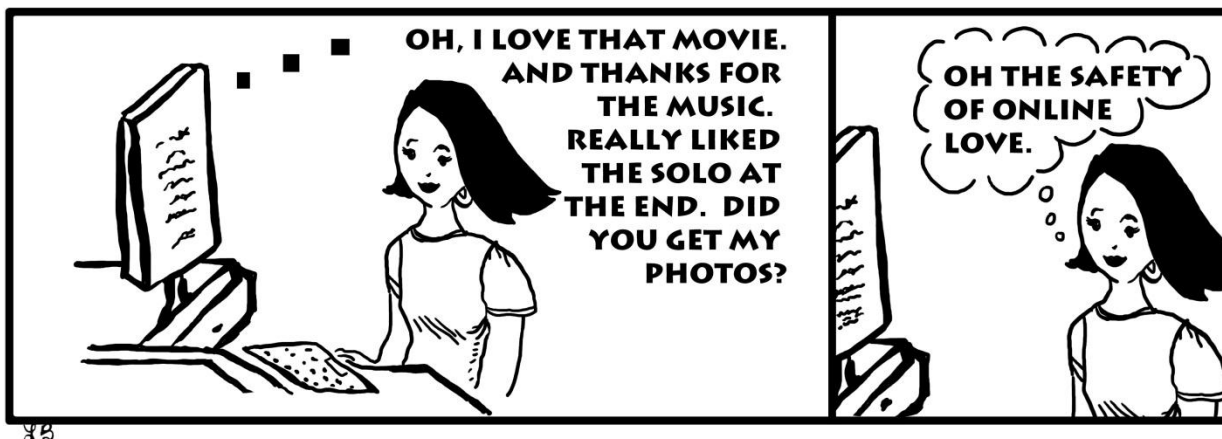
This saying is so powerful that Abraham Lincoln used it in his Second Inaugural Address. Wow—that's a whole lot of cultural pressure to hold back your assessment of men. But when you dial down those warning signals in your head that say "danger, danger," you put yourself at risk for over-accepting or minimizing worrisome behaviors in your man.

We all make mistakes in love, in part, because people are often very good at lying and hiding things. One way that you can decrease unwanted surprises and emotional pain and disappointment is to *change the goal of dating from finding Mr. Right to reading men accurately.*

The women in my study found that one of the more reliable ways to assess men is to ask smart questions to get smart information. *Don't concentrate on getting just facts--get information from your dates or partner by asking questions that give you a living, moving picture of your man in real life.*

Don't do what Cookie is doing in the cartoon below. Her questions revealed mostly shallow information about her date.

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I know it can feel awkward to ask questions, but do it anyway! Make it fun. Or, if the conversation is steering in the direction of the information that I am suggesting below, then fit the questions into your existing conversation. You can always continue by saying something like: “Well, we’re on a roll. How about if we ask each other questions?”

You may not be able to ask every question that you want on your first few dates, but eventually you will assess your man better. You’ll need to experiment.

Here are questions and topics to get you started on getting a living view of your man. Explain that you are on an uncritical learning mission and that you would not ask a question that you wouldn’t answer about yourself.

Smart Questions, Smart Conversation

Ask your man to tell you a *story* about the following topics so you can run a movie about him and see his life:

What did your previous partners or your ex-wife dislike the most about you?

What do you dislike the most about these partners or your ex?

What are the top things you learned about you in relationships?

How do you spend a typical week?

What can't you live without? (For example: sports, being left alone, shopping, decorating, movies, calling your mom, being with you friends, drinking & using other substances, dining and wining, traveling, doing things on a whim, etc.)

What would be your ideal vacations?

What are some key incidents that depict your family and how they affect you?

How are you different from your family?

What are your inner strengths in what you've overcome?

How would you describe your temperament on a frustration continuum? What makes you go nuts or "lose it?"

What are one or two annoying—but not serious—behaviors that you do? For example, how do you handle getting lost or getting cut off by another driver?

How would you like me to act when you are stressed?

What would you like to change about you or the way you handle problems?

What adjectives best describe you?

What would others be surprised to know about you?

How would describe your attitude toward any and all of the following topics:

Religion, Money, Children, Neatness, Fitness, Food, Alcohol

What are your life goals and plans?

What dissatisfies you the most about your life now?

How would you honestly describe the state of your bedroom, television room and kitchen? Just how disgusting or too neat are they?

How would you describe a time when you were or weren't there for your partner in a crisis?

How are you at negotiating for a car or home?

(These questions will tell you about the person's management of his anxiety, ability to be there during tough times, and assertiveness.)

What are examples of relationship deal-breakers from your past relationships?

(Be careful about your own deal-breakers. Many people misidentify them. Make sure you know the difference between real deal-breakers and mere likes or dislikes that may not be a significant factor in establishing a healthy love life in new or existing relationships.)

What would you like to do on our next date—and sex is not an allowable choice!

Remember--the goal is to get smarter—not pickier. You need to be more flexible and to discriminate between important and unimportant issues. Most importantly, you will need to build the emotional bravery to face you!

Who Pays When and How Much?

Has dating etiquette about money really changed from the days when men paid for everything? Yes and No. In the not too long ago past—talk to your parents and grandparents—men paid for almost everything on a date. Oh, once in a while the woman would treat him to something that was not expensive, but the cultural etiquette was that men were expected to pay.

Yes, the sixties invited more balance and equity, but that idea faded somewhat. For a time in the 1980's when women's earning power increased, some women paid a larger share and often took turns paying. Unfortunately, today, there still isn't a rule book. Yet, common sense and awareness of men and women can shape your dating etiquette. Let's look at the most frequent questions.

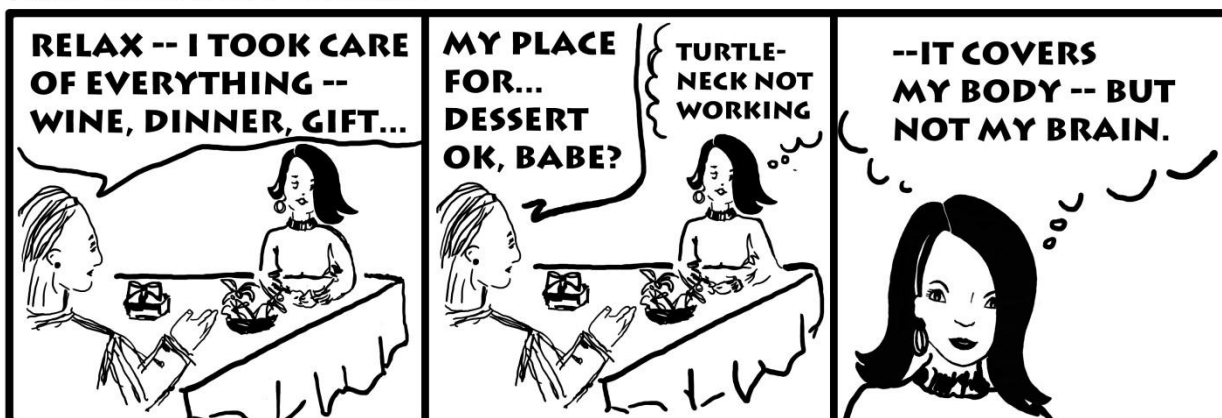
1. Who pays for the first date?

The person who initiated the date usually pays. Usually, this person is the man. No matter how “modern” we get, men still tend to like to court women. They tend to like pursuing, decision-making and appearing in charge. Some women might like to offer to pay for the tip or dessert and coffee, but if the man insists, then let him pay.

2. Should I try to impress the person with a really fancy, expensive or exclusive date?

Skip the “wow” factor. If you are someone with access to exclusive and exciting activities, put that urge on hold. You don't want to be liked for the wrong reasons. Sometimes those over the top dates can backfire because your date senses that your exaggerated efforts are hiding insecurities—or revealing your real goal of sexual seduction. Be suspicious of all emotional eagerness and over the top behavior. Look at the Cookie cartoon below.

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Cookie senses that there is something wrong with her date. He is not only trying too hard, but he is indicating that he will be the kind of man who will take charge of every little thing in your life.

Cookie wore a turtleneck sweater as a reminder not to jump into sex so soon. But she forgot about her date's ability to seduce her mind.

3. What should you do if the person paying for the first date says something like “you can get the next check” when you offer to pay--but you don't want to date the person again?

Oops! Now you see the risk of offering to pay for some of the first date. My advice is to let the person who set up the date pay for it! And if you don't want to go out again, say thank you.

4. What if the person asks you out again, but you don't want to go?

Make sure you are absolutely certain that you don't want to go out again. If you don't want another date only because you don't feel that hit in the head that makes you feel “chemistry,” then accept another more casual date such as lunch or an evening with his friends. Hanging out together and observing his or her interactions in a more relaxed setting can give you a living picture of the person.

Be empathic. After all, if you liked someone, wouldn't you want a second chance? Think of your dating history. If you have not been successful in finding a good match, it might be wiser to date someone who is different from your usual attraction.

But if you truly don't want to go out again, then be short and sweet. Reduce your date's embarrassment or sense of rejection by saying something like: "I can tell you're a really good person, but I'm not a good match for you." And don't go on and on or over-explain.

5. What if there are huge income disparities between you and this new partner who takes you on expensive dates?

Do not pay for something beyond your means. However, you can make "caring payments" by buying a breakfast, lite lunch or dessert. These gestures can help the wealthier person feel appreciated or loved for being him or herself—and not for his or her money.

6. If your incomes are more equal, how much do you pay as the relationship progresses?

The rule is that there aren't too many rules at this stage. Typically, the person who arranges the date is the one who pays. Other options are to split the payment or to pay for the wine and dessert, for example. Always keep these questions in your mind: "Do I feel taken advantage of and not cared for? Have I been generous and expressive of my appreciation of this person?"

7. If we finally become a couple, how do we pay for our expenses when we do things together?

You and your partner will most likely develop a rhythm that grows organically out of your mutual sense of trust and respect for each other. For example, if you are a caring and empathic person, it will automatically occur to you that your date has been paying for movies a lot lately.

But don't fall into the trap of keeping score and insisting on "even-Stevens" or "your turn, my turn." This behavior can become argumentative and insulting. Trust your instincts.

We have come to the end! I hope this booklet has been helpful. Please email me with your questions, comments and success stories! Thank you so much for stopping by and signing up for this free gift.

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