

The Dating Game

The Dating Process

If you're beginning to think we're trying to change the way singles are dating nowadays, you would not be mistaken. For some reason, over the past decade, the chivalry of dating has been replaced with the ever elusive 'hanging out.' And even when people do go out on an official date, the dates are not as productive as they should be. The misconception begins with one's definition of dating, which in our opinion is one of the steps needed to decide whether or not you have a future with this person and finding out if this person has the proper qualities you need in a lifelong mate. Just spending time together doesn't cut it—you need to really get to know each other.

Sometimes it seems as if people are excited to date for the wrong reasons: to see the latest show, eat at the hippest restaurant, get picked up in the flashiest car or be seen on the arm of the most coveted guy or girl. For others it's as if they've become a dating service—going on an endless stream of dates with no real prospects in sight. There are even some who date just to 'go out,' which may prove more harmful than it is helpful. The idea of two people dating each other needs to make sense—there has to be a good chance that these people will have intellectual and spiritual chemistry and if they have that, the physical chemistry usually follows—not necessarily the other way around.

Advice to Both Men and Women:

Here are some tips—some of them basic superficial dating tips and some of them tried and true tools to really get to know the other person. Some are first date tips, others are ideas of what to think about as you continue to date. Remember not all



advice applies or holds true to everyone.

- Be on time.
- Smile.
- Look your best.
- Relax before the date, unwind, don't rush and come to the date harried.
- Don't text or use your phone during the date.
- Go with an open mind. Give it a chance, don't make quick judgments.
- Never stand someone up.
- Don't talk about past relationships on the first date (and especially don't speak negatively about anyone).
- Don't talk only about yourself—ask your date about him/herself. Be a good listener.
- No wandering eyes during the date.
- If it's not clicking, ride it out. Always act like a lady or a gentleman and never be rude. Always leave a good impression.

- Show respect to your date as well as to waiters and others.
- Don't be flashy or extravagant.
- Don't drink too much.
- Be yourself.
- Don't expect instant chemistry on the first date. Bells don't necessarily have to go off like they do in the movies.
- Be realistic.
- Don't ask yes or no questions, share thoughts. For example, "What college do you go to?" requires a one-word answer. "Why did you choose that college?" or "How are you enjoying the college; what is your major and why does it interest you?" all require a deeper answer that lets you get to know the person.

As you begin to date more, ask questions that tell you about their character. For example: What are your dreams, your future goals? What accomplishments are you most proud of? Where do you see yourself in 10 years? What are your

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views on political issues? What does your family talk about at the Shabbat table? How do you spend your free time? Tell me about your childhood. What types of hesed do you do?

Think to yourself: What is their true character? Could this person fit into my world? Does he/she have the long-term qualities that are important to me? Does he treat others around him in a polite and respectful manner? What type of parent would he make? What type of home would he build? Do I admire him? Would I want my child to be like him? Would I be a better person with him by my side? Does he enjoy life? Is he happy? Does he have an ego or humility? Is he responsible and dependable? What are his priorities? Is he very demanding? Does he always need to go first? How well does he handle a stressful situation?

If you envision being alone with this person, away from the public and all material things, and you think you would still be happy with each other, then you are on the right path.

If you are dating someone with children, ask about their children; ask to see photos. Show interest.

How many times should you go out until you know? Every case is different. If you are unsure keep going out until you are 100% sure either way. As long as this person is a possibility then keep going. Some people are nervous on first dates so they may not be themselves, keep this in mind. That is why many have a two date rule because they need to get that first date out of the way so they can feel comfortable. Some say that by the fifth or sixth date you should begin to know if this person is a serious prospect or not.

Basic Advice to Men:

- Don't let a girl take a cab to meet you unless she offers. Never call a cab or put her on a train to go home unless she insists.
- Walk her to the door before and after the date.
- Hold the car door open for her to enter and leave, as well as at restaurants, etc.
- Stand and hold her chair when she sits. Always make sure she sits first. Stand up when she gets up.

"Respect yourself and don't do or say anything that compromises that respect."

- Allow her to order first, or ask her what she'd like and order for her.
- Have the date planned—don't wing it on the first date; women like it when you have a plan. If you want her input, ask her when you call to take her out.
- Movies are not a good first date. Dinner is best, or you can even go for coffee.
- Compliment her.
- Have her home at a reasonable hour.
- Don't drive fast.
- Don't promise you'll call if you're not going to.
- Don't take her someplace where you'll see a million people to distract you.
- Go with your gut—if you feel you had a nice time, tell her you'd love to see her again. Try to avoid playing games.

Basic Advice to Women:

- Girls should not call guys—at least in the beginning. Don't be too aggressive.
- Let the man make the moves. Don't ask about the next date on the first date.
- Be careful about the signals you are sending. Many girls are too nice and give the man the impression they are interested, even when things are not clicking. Always be respectful and polite, but don't say "I'm having a great time—let's do this again" if you don't really mean it.
- If he had too much to drink, offer to drive or go for coffee first, or take a cab home together and he'll get his car another time. Do not feel forced to do anything unsafe.
- Don't dress too provocatively.
- Respect yourself and don't do or say anything that compromises that respect.

This column is a culmination of the knowledge, feedback and advice that we, the administration and agents of Sephardic Link, have acquired thus far. We thank everyone who has guided us along the way and have included much of their advice in our columns as well.

Due to our strict discretion policy, we would never divulge anything personal, but rather make constructive suggestions based on the learning experience of others. Our past IMAGE columns can be viewed on the Advice Tab of Sephardiclink.com

Remember, anything you see here in this column should not replace the advice of rabbis, parents, or experts in the field. It is just an opinion. □

For comments, feedback or suggestions for future topics please email Kelly@sephardiclink.com.