

Healthy Things for Single People to Look for on Dates

1. Do They Say What They Mean and Mean What They Say?

A wonderful laugh-out-loud book that teaches this lesson is the mystery **Lucky You** by Carl Hiaasen. You have to love an author who makes a Hooters waitress a heroine.

2. Dialogue

If something seems nutty, bring it up. If a real dialogue emerges instead of a defensive, deflecting monologue, WOW.

3. Are Your Boundaries Respected?

Boundaries can change if they are respected to begin with. Boundaries should not be apologized for, they are a good reality check and a way to take the temperature of the relationship.

4. Someone Who Takes Responsibility

From the ages of 13-27, a lot of latitude can be granted. Particularly after the age of 27, an adult needs to take more responsibility if they mistreat someone else or are narcissistic. If the point of love is to be able to grow and become a better person, then taking responsibility and being able to hear honest feedback about yourself is important.

5. They have friends of the same sex

6. Will slowed down sexuality be acceptable? This may sound very old-fashioned but fast sexuality easily clouds perceptions. Take time to find out if she/he is worth the investment of your knowing them. Restricting yourself to oral sex is not slowed down sexuality.

7. A willingness to problem solve and offers respect for your point of view

8. They're Grown Up

This means they honestly face painful situations which leads to building character

9. Do they respect you enough that you can influence them?

Being able to influence someone else is the ultimate test of respect.

10. Do They Have A Life Of Their Own???

25 Ways for Those Who are Single & Dating to be on Guard for:

1. Manipulation and Blame

Someone stuck in the Victim, Rescuer, Persecutor game, someone who is obsessed with manipulating others, or someone who is an active addict; they are all looking for someone else to play games with. (Note how the main character is manipulated by the wealthiest woman in town in **Empire Falls** by Richard Russo). More about The Drama Triangle in Module 5.

Stay on the lookout for those who never make statements of responsibility, or those who find comfort blaming everyone else. These are NOT people of substance. Stay alert to your own willingness to be a target for blame.

2. Charm

Run because underneath charm is emptiness and narcissism. Your role will be the boring one of the constant audience; not very engaging for an entire lifetime. Rent the movie **Mansfield Park** (by a British Female Director of Jane Austen's Novel which illustrates this point.) People allow themselves to be seduced by charm because it is glorious to leap over awkward beginnings in relationships. In the long run, you will be disappointed.

3. Desperation

No one will be attracted to desperate neediness if they are in their right mind. Give up the Rescuer role, thinking that you will be a good person by fixing them up. Let them hire a therapist instead, where relationship boundaries require them to do 50% of the work. Rescuing is you doing 60-98% of the work-bad idea. A client informed me that Dr. Phil says put out an “I want to be with you” vibe instead of “I need to be with you.”

4. If Heterosexual – Determine their relationship with their opposite sex parent (Freud had a few things right). If a person is gay, it may have more to do with the same sex parent. Check out both relationships to be on the safe side. Extremes such as excessive adoration, disgust, or indifference in parental relationships can be trouble. Basically you want someone who gets along with their parents. The point being that if a son had a hateful relationship with his mother, you may take her place in the future. A good book to teach you how your childhood experience leaks into the present in your partnership is: **Getting the Love You Want: A Guide for Couples** by Harville Hendrix.

5. Never Feel Sorry for Anybody

Nothing good comes from this, erase it from your emotional vocabulary. Feeling sorry for someone is a treacherous place to be because it lacks respect. Respect is more important than love in keeping a long term relationship working. Respect offers more room to not like aspects of someone, it offers the respect of being different. Love too often disguises a desire for a clone.

6. Women, Stop the Myth

Stop the myth that any man is better than none. **With or Without a Man: Single Women Taking Control of Their Lives** by Karen Gail Lewis, is about single women taking control of their lives.

7. Expectations

The problems with expectations are twofold; you can have too few or too many. It is important to strike a balance. Either of these polarities can get you into trouble. There are three wonderful books that illustrate the problem of too few expectations (look under homework and go to books listed on this web site) Don't bury the other person in all your unmet childhood needs. Try to keep your list of expectations from erasing all the possibilities. If the man has a good heart, a good mind, keeps game playing to a minimum and has a decent relationship with his mother, what more could you want? More about Expectations in Module 7

8. Isolating Behavior

If your new love interest maneuvers you into leaving all your friends behind instead of being interested in meeting them, be careful, something is amiss.

9. Self-destructiveness

It's simple, if you smell it stay away. Often accompanies active addictions or dry drunks.

10. Emotional Sadism or Masochism

Examine your own masochism if you are in a relationship you know is unhealthy and you stay anyway. Those who enjoy being sadistic do not try to examine themselves, so they will not be on this web site.

11. Remember Nice is Not the Same as Good

Why do people find it so easy to confuse these two? The big bad wolf was really nice to Little Red Riding Hood.

12. Don't Become "Enchanted"

The role of rescuer to a lost boy/girl can be enchanting. In reality you will come to feel like a mother or father instead of a lover. Consider the well-known relationship of Mr. and Mrs. Lincoln, who addressed each other as mother and father. It doesn't require a lot of imagination to suspect that their marriage was not warm and wonderful.

13. Serious Mental Illness

Everyone deserves love. Water seeks its own level in couples; don't point the finger at someone else unless you are willing to look at yourself. Blame is so convenient. Rather than blaming, take responsibility. For example, if either of you requires medication, it is that person's duty to explore this option. Spilling all over people you love is not a birthright. Remember the tragic life of Van Gogh. Imagine the burden Vincent Van Gogh's brother, Theo, must have carried for Vincent's entire life.

14. Survival Conclusions or Personal Myths

We all more or less grow up unfinished. We often fill in the gaps with ways to cope or ways to believe about life and relationships that are twisted up to fill in the gaps. Work to be more self-aware. One example might be having a mother or father who abandoned you growing up, which is not grounds for entitlement to drown your lover in neediness. Survival conclusions have an expiration date.

15. Cope Instead of Persuade

Reality really is your best friend. So you risked the question, "Do you love me?" and got the answer you didn't want. Instead of insisting that the other person deny his or her reality just to reassure you falsely, deal with the truth. It is better to know instead of pretending.

16. The Enmeshment of Codependency is not Love

You will learn more about codependency in Module 2

17. “Love me no matter what”

This is an extremely emotionally dangerous requirement. This is a set up for the drama triangle. This is a crazy thing to demand of another adult if you are 18 or over. More about this in Module 5

18. Mirroring the system

An example of this would be the person you date is a problem drinker and your alcohol intake increases when you are with them. It's important to maintain your own boundaries, to recognize when you've lost track of your own values or sense of self in loving somebody else.

19. No Remorse

Someone without this quality is dangerous to be around. It's someone who doesn't have a heart.

20. Beware the Distancer

There are many who make an art of never really sharing their heart, who only feel safe buried in distance. Don't make the mistake of believing you'll be the one special enough to break through.

21. Bitterness

There is an ugliness to living with this that is suffocating.

22. Monologues

Do they consistently erase or discount your reality with long-winded monologues? When authentic dialogue and respectful disagreement are missing, that's a problem.

23. Narcissism

There is a range to self centeredness. If you end up feeling that you are never on the stage but always in the audience that is a

problem. Feeling invisible or erased means the relationship is too lopsided in favoring the other. Be sure to ask yourself; How easy was it for you to allow this to happen?

24. Lack of self awareness

In their 20's someone can easily lack self awareness, after 30 that's pretty unattractive. It is honest self awareness that helps us honestly face our dark sides & grow up.

25. They don't respect your differences

You have to be able to be yourself. Don't lose your identity. Pleasing someone else should not involve losing track of yourself.