

DATING: some things to think about

There are two major parts to everyone's life: career and relationships. If you are responsible your career will do well. Relationships are much tougher at which to be successful.

Anytime you care about someone you open yourself to being hurt. It feels good to have someone like you; they see qualities about you they find appealing--self confidence goes up. If they reject you then those qualities must no longer be as appealing--self confidence goes down. In addition to the rejection is loss: the loss of the companionship, loss of affection, loss of a fun-mate, ... You feel sad.

We must enter any relationship knowing that things can change. As hard as it might be, we should try to view the loss as experience; now you a little wiser, experienced and have a better idea of what you do or don't want in a mate.

Set your standards, expectation before you start to date: do you deserve the best? Does the person need to be interested in what you want to do with your life? Education? Dreams/aspirations? Motivation? What is your bottom line below which you will NOT date?

Warning signs: (that is, turn and run, do not get too involved)

She/he is perfect: Reality is that NO ONE is perfect. It is human nature to show your best side in the beginning. It is only over time that people reveal their true self. If you believe someone is perfect, you are setting yourself up to be disappointed as well as putting too high of expectations on the "perfect" person. "Terrific" works better.

Non-negotiable(controlling): everything has to be his/her way. If either person walks away and says "I got everything I wanted" the relationship will not work. Both have to be willing to compromise; evidence of this: both people are getting MOST of what they want from the relationship. Also, 50-50 doesn't work; it sometimes needs to be 0-100, and 100-0, and 30-70, and 60-40...(basically, you don't keep track! If you are keeping track, that is not a good sign.).

Possessiveness: (very similar to "jealous") one person defines, controls the relationship. Being very "exclusive" can seem like you are very "special," which can make you feel warm and fuzzy all over. But both people need other friends; guys need guy friends and girls need girl friends. Also there should be some allowance for friends of the opposite sex. Possessiveness stems from a lack of trust and a desire to control. Not a good sign.

People can change: (or "I'll be able to bring him/her around") Attempts to change someone is controlling; who died and made that person God? The best predictor of future behavior is past behavior. People can change only themselves and even that is tough to do. Think you can change them, not a good sign.

Bad moods: irritable, grumpy, never satisfied or pleased, short fuse, pessimistic...basically pretty negative much of the time. See above: *people can change*.

He/she is so giving: it is great to be on the receiving end, but too much is going to lead to resentments by the giver. It will eventually feel 0-100. The "giver" may be doing this due to deep down insecurities which *you may not be able to change*.

Bottom line: date, enjoy the time together. It is practice for future, enduring relationships. If it doesn't work out there are **many** other candidates.

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