

Dating • 8 minute read

Need Dating Help? These Are the Best Tips for New and Experienced Daters



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Looking for dating help? You're in the right place.

Dating Help Part 1: Newly dating? Pieces of advice to help you build a healthy relationship

Work on your relationship with yourself

Reflect on what you want and what your deal breakers are.

Be honest about your wants and needs

Understand your strengths and weaknesses

Don't put so much pressure on first dates to be perfect

Give yourself the grace to make mistakes and learn about yourself (and others)

Build a solid support system

Don't take dating (or yourself) too seriously!

Get out there!!!

How can I be good at dating?

Remember: Dating isn't a test you can fail or a game to lose.

Rather than trying to be good at dating, focus on:

Dating Help Part 3: What are the 5 stages of dating?

What I wish I knew before I started dating

Why is it so hard to date right now?!?! From being ghosted for the third time this month to finding out your new match is catfishing you and the ups and downs of situationships, dating in 2023 can be *tricky*. Plus, just trying to meet other singles can be a challenge.

We have more freedom than ever to define our dating priorities – which is awesome, but it can also make it tricky to find the right person in a sea of varying goals and expectations.

While we can't change others, we can change how we approach dating to better get what we want.

Whether you are brand-new to the dating scene and looking for first-time dating help or a seasoned dating veteran looking to find love, we have you covered with the best dating tips.

Dating Help Part 1: Newly dating? Pieces of advice to help you build a healthy relationship

Work on your relationship with yourself

Getting to know yourself and learning how to care for yourself will only strengthen your ability to show up in relationships and find the right person.

Psychotherapist [Amy Morin](#) reminds us that we are responsible for our own emotions.

Don't give away your power by depending on someone else to make you feel happy or secure.

Reflect on what you want and what your deal breakers are.

This can be tricky when you are just starting to date, so don't worry if you don't have it all figured out! Part of what makes dating so transformative is having experiences that teach you about yourself.

But don't get so caught up in deal breakers that you limit possible connections.

A realistic dealbreaker: Not dating people who don't want kids if having children is a priority for you.

An unrealistic dealbreaker: Not dating people who put ketchup on their mac and

cheese, even if you *really* don't get it.

Be honest about your wants and needs

Many of us fall into the trap of thinking that if we find the right person, they should be able to read our minds. Communicating our wants and needs is the only way our partner can truly understand us and vice versa.

Understand your strengths and weaknesses

None of us are perfect, and dating can shine a light on our strengths and weaknesses. Know what you have to offer another person while actively working on the areas that could use some strengthening.

Don't put so much pressure on first dates to be perfect

Make your primary goal of a [first date](#) to simply establish if there is a connection worth exploring. You don't need to know by the end of the date if you're going to marry this person. Even if you don't find love on your next date, it can still be a fun, interesting chance to meet other singles.

Give yourself the grace to make mistakes and learn about yourself (and others)

Human beings are complex, so there is no perfect formula for dating. You can and will make mistakes along the way. As long as you are making an effort to be mindful of others' feelings, it's okay to mess up every once in a while. Every mistake you make can be a learning experience you can grow from.

Build a solid support system

Clinical sexologist [Myisha Battle](#) encourages daters not to underestimate the importance of having supportive friends and family to help you navigate new dating experiences. Having friends to share both the good and the bad experiences with can help us keep a balanced perspective while dating.

Don't take dating (or yourself) too seriously!

Have fun, laugh a lot, and treat dating as a chance to meet someone you may not have otherwise.

Get out there!!!

All of the relationship advice in the world won't help if you aren't putting yourself out there. Luckily, there are lots of ways to meet other singles. Go to a slam-poetry night at your local queer bar, join a knitting or stand-up comedy group, tell your besties that you're open to meeting someone, and start swiping right on cuties on [HER](#).

How can I be good at dating?

Be yourself, and everything will be fine! Just kidding – although I really wish it was that simple.

Dating is a very subjective experience, so start by asking yourself what being "good" at dating means to you.

If it means going on four dates with four new people per month, try: To meet other singles using multiple pathways. Dating coach [Bela Ghandi](#) recommends expanding your dating pool by not limiting yourself to meeting people one way. Get out there and meet people IRL, call on your network to connect you with potential matches, and put yourself out there on dating apps.

For all my queer, lesbian, trans, & non-binary folks, make sure to check out HER's excellent relationship advice and [queer and lesbian dating resources](#).

If it means ending your next date with a steamy makeout sesh, try: Building up the level of flirting throughout the date. If your date returns with even more flirting, consider making the first move (with consent, of course!). While everyone expresses themselves differently, some non-verbal signs that your date feels you include prolonged eye contact, a flirty touch on your arm, and sitting close to you. When in doubt, ask! It may be the question they have been hoping for all night.

If it means finding a casual connection for some flirting and fun, try: Being upfront about what you're looking for (and not looking for) at the moment. On dating apps, this can be as easy as filling out your preferences and maybe adding a cheeky blurb in your bio and swiping right on people who are also looking for something light and fun.

If it means ditching the situationships to find the right person, try: Communicating what you're looking for with potential matches. Hoping for a situationship to turn into

something more serious can waste time you could otherwise spend with someone more compatible.

It's also key to ask yourself if you prioritize finding love or just waiting for it to happen. Sometimes, we forget that building strong relationships takes work. LGBTQ dating coach [Daphney Poyser](#) recommends approaching your dating life with the same intention and energy as you approach your career.

Remember: Dating isn't a test you can fail or a game to lose.

As a recovering people-pleaser, I am guilty of focusing so much on making sure the other person likes *me* that I forget to ask myself if I even like *them*. Don't get so caught up in winning over your date that you forget to tune into how you feel about them.

Rather than trying to be good at dating, focus on:

- Being confident in yourself.
- Communicating your wants and needs.
- Actively listening to your date.
- Setting healthy boundaries.
- Not taking rejection too personally.

Dating Help Part 3: What are the 5 stages of dating?

Most relationship advice focuses on finding a connection, but what happens after the initial excitement fades? Movies present us with the fantasy that once you meet "the one," everything else falls into place. In reality, most relationships go through peaks and valleys – and this is totally normal!

Let's look at the five stages of dating that most couples experience.

1. Attraction

The "honeymoon" or infatuation phase is when you feel super excited, things seem to be going perfectly, and you're ultra-attracted to your new beau. This is the all-consuming, can't eat, can't sleep, can't-stop-thinking-about-them stage.

2. Reality

After the comedown of the first stage, you may feel a sense of uncertainty as reality hits, and you realize that you and your partner have some differences. The rose-colored glasses fade as you realize you are just human beings — flaws, scars, and all.

3. Commitment

After getting vulnerable and working through their differences, couples decide to commit to each other. You may choose to solidify your commitment to each other by defining what your relationship means for you.

4. [Intimacy](#)

A couple has developed a strong emotional and physical connection in the intimacy stage. You share more of your dreams, values, and vulnerabilities with one another. If one (or both) partners struggle with vulnerability, this can create a challenge for deepening the emotional bond.

5. Engagement

The engagement stage happens after a couple has found ways to work through their differences and has developed a strong emotional bond. At this stage, a couple may start building a life together by moving in together, getting engaged, or adopting a fur baby together (the highest commitment IMO).

What I wish I knew before I started dating

If I could go back and give my teenage self some dating help, it would be: Girl, go to therapy first!

But in all honesty, it wasn't until my mid-20s that I finally took the time and energy to get to know myself, understand my attachment style, learn how to set healthy boundaries, tend to my traumas, and recognize what I wanted out of dating and relationships. Like most people, I am a work in progress, and I'm still just fumbling along, trying to figure out dating and relationships as I go.

Whether you are just starting to date for the first time or getting back in the game after a while, remember that dating can be fun, messy, awkward, exhilarating, confusing, and

super rewarding all at the same time.

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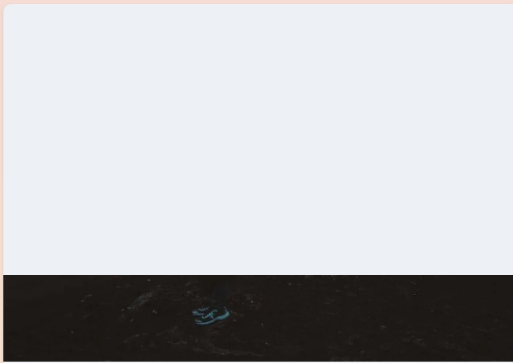
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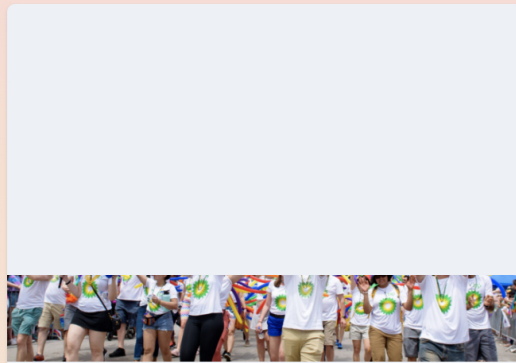
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