

#6: Healthy Dating Inventory Common Sense Rules for Adult Dating*

“My boyfriend used to ask his mother, 'How can I find the right woman for me?' and she would answer, 'Don't worry about finding the right woman-concentrate on becoming the right man.’”

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Determine *compatibility* BEFORE making a sexual or long-term *commitment*.
*Dating is defined as the information gathering stage of an adult relationship designed to determine the overall compatibility of a potential life partner.



Healthy Adult Dating Prerequisites

Ideally, prior to dating, you should be able to answer yes to each question:

I. Independence.

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| 1. Are confident being alone? | Yes | No |
| 2. Have you developed a personal life plan?
(Plan should be more detailed than
“wait for Mr. or Ms. Right to ride in on a white horse”). | Yes | No |

II. Emotional and financial stability.

Healthy dating requires each person to have his/her personal and financial business in order. **Emotionally needy or financially dependent dating creates parent/child relationships.**

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| 1. Are you emotionally and financially *stable? | Yes | No |
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Examples of instability: *Excessive spending or gambling, unemployed, laid off or severe debt problems, recently experienced severe loss, trauma or crisis, addictions with less than one full year of recovery, recent or recurrent psychiatric hospitalizations, legal problems such as on a tether, probation or incarcerated.*

III. *Completely single—with no strings attached.

If you or your potential date are entangled in another seriously committed relationship, whether you admit it or not, you are in a threesome.

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| 1. Are you and your potential date both single and available for dating? | Yes | No |
| 2. Rebounding: has the divorce finalized or the roommate completely moved out? | Yes | No |

*Remember, the word “*separated*” means “*still legally married!*”

Once you have answered “Yes” to each question above, you may move on to the common sense rules for dating found on the next page.

7 Common Sense Rules for Healthy Dating

Let the dating begin!

- 1. Avoid alcohol and substance abuse.** Getting drunk or high on a date is like attending a job interview intoxicated. If you or your date consumes more than one drink per hour, consider reviewing the DSM-IV-TR substance abuse criteria in Chapter 1 or attend a 12-step meeting. **Alcohol abuse and illegal drug use sabotage healthy relationships.**
- 2. Use dating as a fact-finding mission.** Follow the same advice you would give a friend. Go slowly and proceed with caution. Get to know your date based on his or her actions, values and character. Do not let appearance, sex appeal or sweet talk distract you from seeking the truth. *Words can promise anything, behavior tells the truth.*
- 3. “Keep it real” as you date.** Speak your mind, be yourself. The only way to discover if your date really likes YOU, is to be yourself.
- 4. Establish compatibility BEFORE commitment.** Determine if lifestyles, character, goals, values, hobbies and interests are compatible *before* committing to a sexual relationship. Read Steve Harvey’s “90 day rule” described in his 2009 book “*Act like a Lady, Think Like a Man.*”
- 5. Expect respect.** No name-calling, threats or violence of any kind. **Jealousy is not love.** Hot tempers and jealousy are issues of insecurity, immaturity and control. If your date’s temper frightens you or s/he treats you disrespectfully, stop dating!
- 6. Understand that dating is an “as-is” agreement.** Do not try to rescue, fix or improve your date. Hoping for change indicates current incompatibility and unrealistic expectations. Familiarize yourself with Alanon if you are hoping your date will clean up, sober up or grow up.
- 7. Discontinue dating if you discover that either you or your date is seriously pining after someone else.** No one deserves to be the “rebound” the “substitute,” or “better than nothing.”
- 8. Maintain independence.** Do not abandon your hobbies, family or social life simply because you are dating someone new. Do not co-mingle funds, cohabitate for financial reasons or serve as your date’s bank or lending institution. Financial “help” creates a dependent relationship.
- 9. Caution! “Love is blind” but your valued friends and family have their eyes wide open.** If the people who you respect most in the world criticize your choice of partner, pay close attention! Ask yourself, “Would I approve of my son, daughter, sibling or best friend dating someone exactly like the person I am dating?”
- 10. Consider the “one year” rule.** Date for a minimal of one full year before deciding on engagement or cohabitation. Infatuation fades with time. Winter personalities may differ slightly from summer personalities. Minimally, see your relationship through all four seasons before deciding to build a future together. What’s the rush? Use your full year of dating to practice the relationship tools outlined in this chapter.

#5 Relationship Pyramid: Which level are you?

Dependent: Level #1 *“I can’t live, if living is without you”*

Dependent people believe they are incapable of taking care of themselves. Dependency may be emotional, physical or financial. Some people trade dependency on parents for dependency on a partner. Others create a “role reversal” by becoming dependent on their children.

Emotional dependence: *“My self-esteem depends on your approval.”*
“I’ll do anything to please you. I’m nothing without you.”

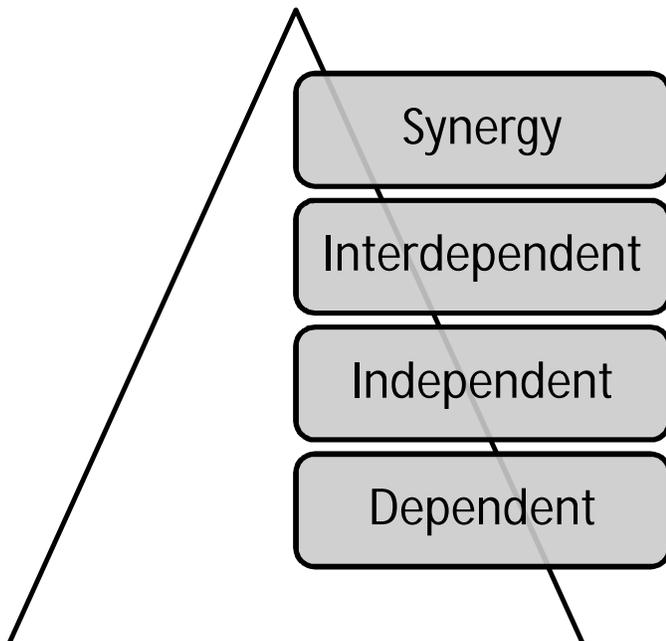
Physical dependence: *“I can’t make it on my own, I need someone to take care of me.”*
“Don’t leave me! I am afraid to be alone.”

Financial dependence: *“I have no way to support myself.”*
“I don’t trust my ability to make financial decisions.”

Independent: Level #2. *“I Did It MY Way”*

Independent people believe in their own value and ability. Secure in the knowledge that they are able to care for themselves emotionally, physically and financially, they are comfortable taking responsibility for fulfilling their own needs. They are not afraid to learn, make mistakes and grow.

“I have to be true to myself. I like finding my own way.”
“We can agree to disagree. I respect your right to view things differently than I do.”



Interdependent: Level #3

“You Light Up My Life”

Independent people do not **NEED** others, so when they **CHOOSE** others, they create **Interdependent** relationships. They **choose** compatible people interested in sharing common goals and gaining mutual support.

“I surround myself with people who reflect the positive plans I have for my life.”

Synergy: Level #4

“You make me want to be a better person”

Synergistic relationships occur when interdependent individuals choose to be in relationships with those who inspire them to

grow, improve and excel. This relationship becomes a catalyst for extraordinary trust, intimacy and success.