

HOW TO

be dating- and relationship-ready

Kate Elliott, *Divine Intervention*

You may think that being relationship-ready is simple. You are a successful professional who interacts with people at various networking groups, work functions and professional dinners. Whether socializing with colleagues or speaking in front of a room full of people, you constantly make connections and form relationships with others. But it can be hard to turn off your business personality. It becomes like an invisible barrier that can

hinder your romantic relationship-building skills. Divine Intervention, a boutique matchmaking company in Vancouver, has a few tips on being dating- and relationship-ready in your personal life.

One of Divine Intervention's beliefs is that an ideal date is only half the equation. "Clients are encouraged to look at their relationship readiness," says Susan Semeniw, principal of Divine Intervention. "As we get older and have been through a few relationships, it becomes increasingly difficult to maintain an open heart and an open mind."

One of the most important ways to be relationship-ready is to feel really good and comfortable in your own skin. When you look good, you feel good, and in turn you are happy with the way you present yourself to the outside world. Staying fit and dressing the part are two ways to boost self-confidence.

Ladies, remember that you can choose to be feminine in your looks and your attitude; you may have to compete and seem tough in the boardroom, but that's not the case when you're dating. Pretty skirts and dresses go a long way, and remember to maximize your best assets. Avoid clothes that seem too businesslike.

Men, make sure you look great, too! You may look good in a suit but lack hip, casual clothes. Wear something

of an up-to-date cut and fabric.

Have a clear goal in mind about whom and what you want. If it's marriage you're looking for, be forthcoming about your expectations.

Even very successful men can be nervous, especially on a first date, so ladies, cut them some slack. Put them at ease if necessary; men love to be praised. A genuine compliment goes a long way. Men, pick up the tab at least on the first date or two – no questions asked. Keep the date light for an initial meeting: an hour-long coffee, walk or

Don't put together ridiculously long lists of must-haves; often this can be a protective mechanism that sets standards no one is good enough to stack up to. Expand your horizons: the person you end up with may not be the same person you set out to find. And remember to be positive: dating can be tough for both parties.

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cocktail creates less pressure than dinner.

Forming a substantial relationship requires a realistic assessment of what sex and dating mean to you. Sex in the early stages can be detrimental. Giving yourself away in the beginning may mean you have little left to offer. The longer you take, the more quality time you will have and the more you'll get to know someone.

Remember to remain open-minded. As people get older, they tend to get "stuck" in their thinking and in the way they interact with others. You never know whom you are going to meet and where. Whether in business or in romance, everyone you meet has something of value to offer, so be kind and respectful.

Have fun, relax and be polite.

circles ... We break that barrier and introduce them to like-minded people, with similar social, economic and career-oriented backgrounds ... or whatever specific criteria are important to them. It's a win-win experience," says Semeniw.

In the modern age of technology, making money and whirlwind lifestyles, many of us don't have time to find love, let alone form relationships that last longer than the boardroom or the casual cocktail. Semeniw caters her specialized matchmaking services to successful singles using a personalized and highly discreet approach. Being relationship-ready means focusing on yourself first, your expectations and goals, and having fun! Remember, there's nothing more engaging and approachable than someone who smiles. **H+**