

DATING

101

[BY SUSAN SEMENIIV]



Following a few fundamental principles can put you in a constant state of preparedness to attract that special someone

With life unfolding frantically, many of us feel that there aren't enough minutes in the day—yet we all share the same basic desire to be in a loving relationship. So what to do if you simply don't have time to seek a partner? Being ready to date doesn't require boatloads of free hours and energy. Following a few fundamental principles can put you in a constant state of preparedness to attract that special someone, no matter how busy you are.

Set realistic expectations

So many of us have monumental expectations of what our partner should be like. We've been brainwashed by Hollywood films and fairy tales—real life is different. Let go of your demands for superficial traits like height, hair, cars and jobs. We spend too much time imagining what our perfect mate will look like, sound like and be like. But the fact that you like dark hair doesn't mean a brunette is going to share your

thoughts on parenting. Yes, men often want looks and women often want security—but those alone are seldom enough. For the package to work long-term, make your list more comprehensive on many other levels.

Attitude is everything

If you want to be date-ready, the most important thing is to have a good attitude about it. You must possess a deep-rooted belief that there are good members of the opposite sex out there and that you will meet someone. Bitterness and hopelessness are things that others will easily detect in you. The energy you exude is powerful and the only way to give off the impression that you're open to meeting someone is to believe so yourself. The simplest changes in attitude can reap dividends. Smiling is huge—you have no idea how differently people will react to you when you flash them a smile.

Terms of engagement

One of the biggest crimes in dating is a lack of engagement. Dating is not a job interview or a chore and it should be fun. Every new contact you make matters—it may not turn out to be a love match, but that person may still have something to offer you. Every extra window you open can lead to more and more opportunities in love. Always be mindful of how you treat others!

Do something proactive and break out of your comfort zone

Get off your backside and change the dynamic of what you're doing to meet people. Do things you like to do so you can meet like-minded people—volunteer at an animal shelter or hospital, help out at a soup kitchen, coach a sports team. Go to art galleries, seminars, wine tastings, museums or sign up for a class. We are a super-active outdoorsy city, so take advantage and get outside.

DATING 101 SUMMARY:

Dating is difficult. To avoid complete disaster, follow these simple guidelines:

Appearance: First impressions count—choose carefully how to present yourself.

Location: Make it classy. You should also be able to see and hear each other clearly on a first date.

Alcohol: Sure, have a couple of cocktails—but don't make a fool of yourself.

Punctuality: Always be on time.

Courtesy: Always be polite—of course!

Technology: Turn off and hide your phone.

Duration: For a first date, an hour to an hour and a half is fine.

Focus: Stay present. Concentrate on getting to know your date.

Honesty: Relax and be yourself. **W**