

Stop dating 'boys' and 'girls' — try men and women



SCRIBBLES OF SANITY

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The one thing I know about most men is that they don't know what they want when it comes to a relationship. But I can admit that women traditionally don't have a clue either. All we know is that someday, sooner or later, we would like to have one.

Small flings here and there seem okay for diversion, but what we really look forward to is something that lasts longer than a pizza at a frat party. Sadly, most of the time we look for these relationships in all the wrong places and in all the wrong people.

Now, I can't claim to be the guru of love. But after listening to people talk about their relationships with the opposite sex, I have gleaned some good advice that could help.

To those of the female persuasion, all I have to say is — look for a man, not a boy or a guy. And believe it or not, there is a difference.

Boys may be cute in a next-door kind of way, but any relationship with them should stay purely platonic.

These male miniatures still live off mommy and daddy, don't know how to do their own laundry and explode when they don't get their own way. Oh, please. All I can say to these toddlers is — it's time to grow up.

And guys can be found anywhere. This creature enjoys gastrointestinal communication and group hunting for the opposite sex. He is mostly found in bars, showing off his ability to drink beer and still look good. He makes eye contact with a number of women in the bar but refuses to actually go introduce himself to any of them. Instead, he expects the women to come to him.

The same name brand decorates a guy's clothing, and his hair is cut according to his friends' current style. In a sense, the guy is just one of a bunch of clones. This is because guys look to external forces to give them an identity, purpose and some control in life.

As for relationships, a guy is in them for as long as it is convenient and satisfying for him. The moment that the relationship becomes hard or requires more attention, it is time to cut and run.

Now, guys and boys do make good friends. They are fun to hang out with. That is why they seem like relationship potential. But in reality, they don't transition well into the boyfriend/dating stage. If

you really like one, wait until he grows up and then try again.

A man knows how to pay his own bills on time. He doesn't need his friends to help him make decisions, but he realizes the value of good advice. Emotions may not be his strong suit, but he tries to understand them without exploring his so-called "feminine" side. He has goals and ambitions but knows his priorities. In other words, he "works to live, doesn't live to work." A man can wash his own clothes and dress himself without consultation or approval. In essence, he is his own person without being self-absorbed.

In relationships, he listens and is willing to hold her even if he doesn't know why she needs him to. He doesn't pretend to know everything about her. Rather, he constantly works to know more. A rose on April 3 instead of Feb. 14 makes sense to him, because he knows it will express his feelings in a way no words could.

Do males like this exist? Yes, in varying degrees of development. As long as he has some of these basic qualities, in whatever quantity, and is constantly working to become better, then he is a man to admire and possibly love.

For all the men out there looking for a woman to match, you must understand that there are girls, women and then dominant

females. Be careful which one you end up with.

A girl is just like the previously mentioned "boy." She is cute and sweet. When you talk, she giggles. She hangs onto your every word and appears to have no will of her own. Her chatter, salon-styled hair and form-fitting outfits make serious conversation seem inconsequential. Makeup, hair and clothes consume her every thought, until she is in a relationship. Then he consumes every thought. Every sentence starts with "Well, my boyfriend thinks..." or "My boyfriend wants me to..." She wants to be with him every waking minute and doesn't understand when he wants some time to himself. She is like a doll, and she looks to her boyfriend to give her identity and a reason for being.

The dominant female is exactly the opposite. She knows who she is and what she wants, but she expects full agreement with her plans. Usually very intelligent and strong, this female knows how to get compliance — by manipulation. After a month, she has thrown out all of the comfortable clothes he likes to wear and replaced them with a style she likes.

She says the reason for this control is that she cares about him and wants him to look the best he can. It is for his benefit that she

chooses where they go and who they hang out with. She is only thinking of him, right? Wrong. She knows how to play him to get what she wants, and she does it well. With either of these types, a man would lose his identity and privacy.

But a true woman would merely enhance a man's life, not subtract from it. They say "behind every great man, there is a great woman." I believe this to be true. A woman seeks to understand a man and help him to become great, not change him into what she wants him to be. She is confident in herself and the life she leads. She also knows how to do her laundry and pay the bills.

Relationships are hard work, no doubt about it. But it is better to enter a relationship with your eyes open. Possible problems are easy to see if you know what you are looking for and what to avoid. However, don't look for perfection. There is no such thing as a perfect man or woman. But there is a person out there for you. They have faults enough. But those faults include chewing gum or liking purple hair; not stringing you along or clinging to you.

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Admirer bids for love by delivering flowers



HELP ME HARLAN!

HARLAN

Dear Harlan,

I've known this girl for about five months. I let her know that I liked her a few months ago, but she shot me down because she was getting over her ex. She still left it open for some future. I think she got scared by letting her know how I felt so early, but there was something there.

Here's my plan: On Valentine's Day, I'm going to disguise myself in a flower delivery man's uniform, fake mustache and glasses. She goes to a different school than me, so I'm going to find out from her (sneakily) what her schedule is that day. I plan on going to her class and delivering roses. Instead of signing for them, she's going to be signing a waiver, forgiving me for making a fool of myself, and also binding her to a contract that says she has to go on a date with me. She'll obviously know that it's me, and she'll of course have a choice of signing the contract. I know she'll love the flowers. She has a great sense of humor. Please tell me what you think. Is this romantic or am I crossing the line?

Valentine's Surprise

Dear Surprise:

One suggestion, deliver the roses to her house. This way she doesn't have to explain to her friends why she's dating the flower guy with the bad mustache who was arrested for trespassing on Valentine's Day. The worst thing that will happen is that she falls in love with the delivery guy and is disappointed when she dis-

covers it's you. Please, send an update (if you're not incarcerated).

Dear Harlan,

I have been with this guy for 16 months. Now it's over, but he didn't break up with me. No, I didn't break up with him either. Instead, he just stopped returning my phone calls, coming to see me and plain out ignored me. I figured out that he didn't want to be with me anymore, and at first I was fine.

Now, I feel as if I deserve an explanation. A year and four months is a long time and I can't just throw that away. I don't want to call him because I don't want him back and I don't want him to think I need him, but I still want to know. What should do you think I should do?

Deserve 2 Know

Dear Deserve,

His actions are unconscionable... unless he's been unconscious.

His silence says much more than any words could express. It says, "Hey babe, I'm totally immature. I can't communicate. Sweet thing, I'm dishonest, I'm confused, and I'm selfish. I'm also immature. Baby, I'm just too scared to be honest with you or my feelings. This is good bye."

Yes, it would help to understand, but you must accept this empty ending. Get angry, get upset, and then move forward. Actually, get upset, then get angry, and then move forward. The order of getting upset and angry doesn't matter, just allow yourself to feel everything. This way you can gain a new perspective that will enable you to learn from this experience and find a new relationship based on friendship, communication and mutual respect. As for your ex, he can keep running from his feelings, but one day, they'll catch up to him and you'll be long gone. Sucks for him...

Harlan is not a licensed therapist, but he is a licensed driver. Write Harlan via e-mail at harlan@helpmeharlan.com. Copyright Help Me, Harlan! 2001.

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