

2020

THE IT'S JUST LUNCH
GUIDE TO DATING



Chapter 7

**Beyond The
First Date**

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BEYOND THE FIRST DATE

Well, you both enjoyed your first date experience so much that you've agreed to see each other again! While you might feel somewhat relieved that your dating life is finally looking brighter and the hope of finding someone you really like is imminent, just like the first time around, you're probably having similar anxieties about your second date. This time it could be worse because the stakes have been raised — you like this person and the fear of whether or not it will work out has caused that internal voice of doom to rear its ugly head again.

Try to stay in the NOW, the present moment. Don't let your mind get ahead of the actual events here. A second date is a second date is a second date. It's not happy coupledom, it's not the date on which you are guaranteed sex, and it's not the time to determine if he or she is "the one" — it's just an opportunity to



spend a little more time with someone you like.

Trust us, you'll know exactly the right moment when all of the above should take place (if at all), but to relieve your anxiety, you can rest assured it's not on the second date. Remember to stay grounded, keep your expectations in check and your antenna high.

The Second Date

This could be the “make or break date” for you, depending upon how smoothly the evening flows. We usually recommend going on at least three dates before you decide not to see someone again. Sometimes it can take two or three meetings before the chemistry kicks in. On the other hand, if you have to give yourself a pep talk every time you go out to meet this person, you might want to consider calling it a day. Going with the flow too long isn't smart. One of you could get emotionally attached and that makes it harder to break it off later. Again, trust your instincts.

As you did before, choose a place where you feel comfortable and one that suits both of your tastes, otherwise you might be distracted and not able to focus your attention on your date. Hopefully on this date you are both more relaxed and able to open up and reveal some insight into the things that make you the unique and wonderful person that you are. Remember, your aim is to discover as much relevant information about him or her as possible. Take it easy and don't rush things. Remind yourself that perfect people do not exist in this world and everybody has strong and weak traits — you included.

Your goal is to gather some fundamental facts, discover more of his or her personality and notice your chemistry... oh, and have fun! To do that you should:

- Ask questions and listen carefully.
- Let them see the real you. Drop the façade, open up, disclose more detail and be vulnerable.
- Share yourself — express opinions, desires and interests.
- Know what you want — it's the only way you can determine if you are a match. If you are sure that you are not ready to be a step parent, find out if they have children from a previous marriage.
- Try to see them as they truly are, not as the people you want them to be. It's easy to get carried away with the excitement of meeting someone you really like and to place him or her on a pedestal, while losing sight of the real human being underneath it all.

Don't worry if all your questions aren't answered on this date. Give it time and let the information come out naturally. If you need a little help, check out the conversation starters in chapter six. You don't want to appear as if you're conducting a formal interview. At this stage you shouldn't be trying to determine if you've got a life match, so give yourself some room for romance.

What to Do on Date Number Two

You might feel like you have to do something lovely and amazing that will totally blow your date's mind, but it's really not necessary. At this stage you want to spend time alone, one-on-one, to see how you relate to one another and to notice if there's chemistry. You can move on to an adventurous activity or involve other people on your next and subsequent dates. That will give you a chance to see how your main squeeze-to-be gets along with others (an important clue to their personality). But for now, keep it intimate.

Having dinner together is a great idea, especially if you didn't do



it on your first rendezvous.

Say Goodnight

At the end of the date, don't make false promises about what comes next if you know you're not interested in taking the relationship further. Be honest, tell them what you enjoyed about them and let them know you don't feel the chemistry.

If your date doesn't ask to see you again it probably means that s/he's not interested. In this case, you probably won't hear from them again. They don't want to hurt a person's feelings and are more likely to make excuses about not being available for another date.

If it ends, though, don't sweat it. Breathe a sigh of relief that you got out emotionally unscathed, and turn your attention to the millions people of the opposite sex out there.

What to Do on Dates Number Three, Four, Five...

If you've made it this far, it probably means that the two of you are "in like," you enjoy being together and are eager to get to know each other better. Time to up the ante and try out a variety of fun activities that put you into all kinds of social situations. In short, you get to play at being partners by experiencing many different things together and seeing how well you fit and work as a team.

Spice up your dating game with some adventurous dates, play games and share activities, or try something simple and romantic like a moonlit walk. After a while, you might want to add in a few mundane activities to keep it real. Let's face it — long-term relationships include daily chores like shopping, taking the dog to the vet or fixing up the yard. Ask your date to hang out with you while you're at it or to help you out with these chores too.

If your long-term goal is to find a fulfilling relationship, you should pay attention at this stage and see how well you make decisions together or handle real life situations such as dealing with crises or family obligations. Don't over-analyze every result, since that will kill the fun. Just be aware, observe and communicate your feelings. As each date progresses, you'll get a stronger sense of whether or not you are compatible.

Dating Dilemmas

When They Don't Call or Text

If you've had what you thought was an incredible date and they don't reach out to you, it's normal to wonder what went wrong. You start to think you imagined the chemistry, and that perhaps there's something wrong with you after all, or maybe blame is your thing and it must have been something you said or did. You're starting to obsess. Stop it! Don't go down that road. Who knows what happened? There are lots of reasons: He lost his job and slipped into depression, she's not over her last relationship, he's a non-committer (better you find out now), her self-esteem was too low, or he fell down a well. Hey, it's possible!

Whatever the reason, it may not have anything to do with you at all. So don't sweat it. Drop your date one follow-up email and if you don't receive a response, cut your emotional ties right away. Remember, there are billions of people on the planet, so even if there was no chemistry connection on his or her part, who cares? Give yourself a pat on the back for taking a chance. There are plenty more fish in the sea, so don't take it personally.

Textiquette

Texting comes with its own set of benefits and woes. According to Business Insider, Americans send roughly 26 BILLION text



messages every single day! In this day in age, it is easier than ever to communicate with your special someone. Texting is an avenue that allows two people to stay in constant contact. Likewise, it is so easy to get caught up in the convenience, which could lead to communication issues in your relationship. It is important to remember that men and women communicate differently. This is especially true via text. Text Messaging should always be a supplemental form of communication, not a primary method to talk to your partner. Limiting texting may help keep your relationship fresh by always being able to tell the tone in the conversation. Furthermore, we hear from our clients how much they appreciate a good old fashioned phone call.

Managing your Textpectations

With the advent of technology comes instant gratification. Back in the olden days (ahem...), we didn't walk around with cellular phones attached to our hands. We had landline phones and answering machines, so if you wanted to connect with your love interest, there was a delay. Simply because we can stay in touch more easily, doesn't mean we should. Pace yourself! Keep the romance alive and leave them wanting more. There's no shame in creating a little mystery for your potential mate.

It's crucial to understand why you are texting. If it stems from a desire for attention, don't do it. If it's because you're anxious to know whether they are still interested, again, don't do it. It's difficult to read a person through text and it's easy to misread a person through text. Not everyone has the same texting style and frequency, so if you find yourself needing to text throughout the day, counting the hours between texts, or overthinking every word and emoji, you may need to reevaluate your textpectations.

When to text:

- When you are at work/event that makes talking on the phone difficult
- Checking in/Thanking someone after a date
- Scheduling future plans
- If you think of them, share an inside joke, and can send something without expecting a text in return.
- Reigniting communication

When NOT to text:

- Breaking up. Wo/man up and call the person. Especially if you've been on more than five dates.
- Checking on how someone's day is. Yes, it seems thoughtful to text someone, "how are you?", but it's bland and isn't moving the relationship forward.
- Apologizing
- Asking someone out

The Perfect Match

While there is no such thing as the perfect person, there is an ideal match out there for you, and actually, there are several. To find that special someone, you must first let go of your ideas about finding the perfect person...believe it or not, everyone has flaws!

Our fantasies are usually about Mr. or Ms. Perfect and often we eliminate Mr. or Ms. Right because they may not reveal all the perfect qualities. The older we get, the more we rationalize our way around things, and it can ultimately mean we never make any decisions. We get hung up on the "what ifs" and feel sure we know how it's going to turn out. The truth is you never know how something is going to turn out. At a certain point, if you



determine that you really want to be in a lasting relationship, you will have to take a chance and work through the ups and downs.

Don't lose sight of the valuable lessons you learn while you're dating — you gain self-confidence, a stronger sense of self, a clear idea of what you can and can't compromise. More importantly, as an experienced dater, it becomes much easier for you to identify your soul mate when he or she finally shows up. So keep the faith. Make sure your goals are clear from the get go, keep an open dialogue, have a no-bull policy, and you might find yourself in love before you know it.

Are We Exclusive?

Some people don't like to bring this subject up for fear of scaring off their new partner, but until you actually have an agreement to stop seeing other people and focus solely on each other, you shouldn't assume that you are in an exclusive relationship. The whole point of dating is to try out different people, and neither of you has to limit yourself to one person.

Don't rush into exclusivity until you know for sure that you want to focus solely on this person. If you were interviewing candidates for a partnership at your company, you wouldn't pick the first person who came along, would you? Well, you are the CEO of your life and the more potential partners you meet, the easier it will be for you to find your ideal candidate.

While you're interviewing, never stop learning about the opposite sex. Get interested in them. The more you know about men or women, the better partner you will become. Talk to them, listen to them and most of all laugh with them.

When you decide to be exclusive with someone you've been dating, it's only fair and respectful to let your other dates know

that you're no longer available. Don't just disappear out of their lives without so much as a "see ya." Tell them that someone else you've been dating has become a serious relationship. Don't forget to mention how much you enjoyed dating them and what you liked about them. Try to leave them feeling good about the whole experience. You could even remain friends.

The Honeymoon Phase

Many relationships start off peachy keen. We've all been there: Every little mannerism is just adorable, every single statement they utter is worthy of a Nobel Prize, they're so understanding, so wonderful, so beautiful, and miraculously you seem to agree on everything. Welcome to the honeymoon phase.

Oh, it's a joyous time in those first three to six months; after all, there's never any bad news. Unfortunately, it can all come to a grinding halt. While you've spent the past several months eating off her plate and hand-feeding him dessert, you suddenly discover that you hate sauteed mushrooms and if you see one more lettuce cup you'll faint.

Some relationships survive the end of the honeymoon period, other's fall by the wayside. But there's no need to feel bad if you can't make it past go and your engine loses steam. Believe it or not, that's how love works and this stage of romantic love is nothing more than Mother Nature's way of ensuring reproduction. Anthropologist Helen Fisher, author of *Why We Love*, claims that romantic love has a limited shelf life for a very good reason — we'd all die of sexual exhaustion if it didn't. She believes that romantic love wasn't built to last forever; it's there to fire our engines and get us all to work, making babies and building houses, and to keep us together during the early stages of child rearing. The intense attachment we feel toward each



other ensures the survival of the species

And to think, Hallmark has made a business off this! So, how do we survive this period and keep the love alive? Well, according to Ms. Fisher, the answer is to do novel things together. Novelty, she says, drives up levels of dopamine — a brain chemical that is associated with arousal, motivation and goal-oriented behavior — the stuff love is made of.

So, there you have it: the answer to everlasting love. Might we add one more piece of advice, just in case it turns out to be a false start? Pace yourself during this honeymoon stage. Don't spend every spare moment with your new love. Your friends and family aren't there to fill in the gaps until that special someone comes along.

Remember, you're in the "getting to know you" stage. You might decide that this is not the right person for you and will have to return to your life. If you've blown off your friends and your work has suffered, don't expect to find things exactly the way you left them. Also, keeping your own life going while you are in the honeymoon phase takes the pressure off the other person "to be your everything."

You Can't Hurry Love: Is This Going Anywhere?

So, you've been out with your new sweetheart several times, but you're still unsure if the relationship is going anywhere and you find yourself wondering if this person could be "the one." How do you know she is right for you? Will he tell you he cares, will he show you he cares or will he only tell others he wants you in his life?

Timing is everything in a relationship. Some people take time to let things develop before making any serious commitments,

while others jump right in and grab the bull by the horns. If you're not going at the same pace, there could be a clash. The truth of the matter is you're ready when you're ready and not a moment before. Try to let the relationship evolve at a natural pace without bulldozing ahead just because you're "primed" or imposing too many expectations on whether or not this can last forever.

Sometimes it can start off hot and heavy, but later you find out you're totally wrong for each other. Or you can start dating someone who may not be your usual type, but over time you fall for him anyway. Give it time to develop and you could be surprised.

You Have Passed Go: Sail Away with Your Sweetheart

Along the way there will be lots of positive signs if things are progressing nicely. These little gems have been culled from thousands of ex-clients who now are happily married:

- You think about each other when you're apart.
- He asks you what you would like, then does it.
- She can make you laugh and lift your spirits.
- He is caring and considerate, asks for and listens to your opinions and feelings.
- You communicate easily and can talk about a variety of things with respect.
- You work together to solve problems.
- You accept each other's differences and can agree to disagree without resentment.
- She is an independent thinker and has her own thoughts and opinions, not just agreeing with yours.
- She is a well-adjusted, balanced person with a full, interesting



life.

-You respect, admire, and appreciate each other.

WARNING SIGNS: PROMPTLY HIT THE REJECT BUTTON

-One of you makes all the effort to make plans.

-His/Her attention is inconsistent.

-S/he breaks dates often or cancels at the last minute.

-S/he doesn't call when s/he says s/he will, is frequently late or doesn't show up at all.

-S/he answers every cell phone call, regardless of where you are.

-S/he prefers spending time with his or her friends than with you

-His or her eyes are wandering around the room checking out other prospects.

-S/he has controlling behavior, is angry or jealous and wants everything to go his or her way.

-S/he is neurotic about money and counts every penny, or is a compulsive spender and blows large sums of money frequently.

-S/he is dishonest or is reluctant to open up about past relationships.

-S/he is a loner and has no one in his or her life but you.

Wow, we've covered a lot in this chapter — great ideas that will keep your dating journey fun and interesting, some of the dilemmas you might face along the way, the stages of hooking up and the signs to watch for on the road to a successful relationship.

You're fully armed with everything you need to do some honest evaluation of the whole experience and decide if you want to continue building this new relationship. The next step? Dating exclusively.