



Relationships: Beyond Dating

27 ways to know if you've found the right relationship for you

By **Stacy D. Phillips**
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There is nothing more glorious than falling in love! What a wonderful feeling it is, when, after all that searching and seeking, you finally hook up with that compatible mate. But wait! How can you know that the person you think is right for you, really right for you?

It's easy, well, maybe. All you have to do is make sure that you ask the appropriate questions — queries that will help you establish how your likes and dislikes, and needs and wants, line up with those of your significant other (should that new love become truly significant in your life).

And, of course, the reality has to match up to the answers to these questions.

1. Kids or no kids?
2. Smoking or no smoking?
3. Drinking or no drinking? (Same for drugs)
4. Religious beliefs: Match? Blend? Clash?
5. Who works? Who stays home (especially when the kids come along)?
6. Who wants to live where?
7. Who controls the checkbook?
8. What is his/her personal relationship with his/her family? Too distant? Too close? Too weird? Appropriate to your standards?
9. How are holidays spent? At home? With family? Alone? Vacationing?
10. Windows opened or closed? Heat/AC on or off?
11. What side of the bed must you (he/she) sleep on?
12. Where to spend vacations? Leisure time?
13. Sick: Left alone or babied?
14. Appropriate gift giving: birthdays? Yuletide holidays? Special occasions?
15. Who does what around the house?
16. What is acceptable hygiene?
17. What are his/her hobbies, pastimes?
18. Preferences: Music? Movie? Book favorites?
19. Favorite foods?
20. Pets or no pets? What kind?
21. Decisions about the children: School, church, discipline, allowance, extra curricular activities, friends, and curfew?
22. Mealtimes: Early or late?
23. Furniture: Vintage or Contemporary?
24. Sleeping habits: Four hours or eight?

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Personals: User's Guide

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Three more compatibility factors

If this list is not enough to help you determine whether or not your new love is right for you, try these as additional ways to size up the compatibility factor: How does your new love handle a crisis? Behave in public places? Treat your friends and family?

I also think you can tell a great deal about your new mate by the way he treats his mother and how she treats her father. Observing how a person regards that parent is key in establishing how he or she will treat you!

If you are in love — if you've finally met Mr. or Ms. Right — step back from all that awe and wonderment for a moment and get answers to all of the above. You will find out whether or not this new relationship (the one you've been looking for all this time) is one that will or will not last. As they say, love can be blind, but if it is going to last, love also has to be practical!

Stacy D. Phillips is a family law attorney and managing partner of Phillips, Lerner & Lauzon in Century City, Calif. She is certified by the State Bar of California as a family law specialist. In her practice she represents celebrity and high-net-worth individuals in marital and custody matters. She has been named as one of the "top 50 female litigators" by the Los Angeles Daily Journal and is listed in Best Lawyers in America.