

How To Avoid Marrying a Jerk

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At one time or another, we have thought about that old saying, "LOVE IS BLIND." It might have been at that miserably mismatched wedding you attended; Or, when your best friend forgave his or her partner the hundredth time for the SAME CRIME; Or, after your divorce, and after looking back with analytic contemplation, you finally saw the warning signals of the person you ended up marrying; Or, perhaps it occurred within the depths of your own soul when you had someone you love break your trust.

The accumulation of experiences like these lead you to wonder if you could ever...**FOLLOW YOUR HEART WITHOUT LOSING YOUR MIND.**

In other words, is there really any explanation for why love is blind? Do we have any hope for learning how to avoid marrying a jerk or jerkette (for this program is for BOTH males and females)? The answer is a resounding... **YES!!!!**

Much, if not all, of what a person will be like can be clearly predicted during dating.

Unfortunately, most people do not understand what attaching forces or dynamics operate in their relationships. And yet, there are five adhesive dynamics which create the feelings of attachment in every relationship. When these dynamics are out of balance, then you overlook signs of future difficulties in order to maintain your emotional closeness.

Without knowing what these forces are and how they are inter-related, most people will form over-attachments of the heart which will override the judgments of the mind. And yet, these bonding forces fully explain the mysterious glue which creates the thing we call "love."

LEVEL ONE: KNOW

The first bonding dynamic is "what you know about the person you are dating" (KNOW). When you spend time talking and doing things together, a deeper understanding of the person occurs. This understanding, or "knowledge," creates a growing feeling of closeness.

To accurately predict what a person you are dating will be like in marriage, five areas must be thoroughly investigated. These are the areas to "get to know" in the first bonding dynamic:

- "F" Family Dynamics and Childhood Experiences
- "A" Attitudes and Actions of the Conscience
- "C" Compatibility Potential
- "E" Examples from Previous Relationships
- "S" Skills of Communication

LEVEL TWO: TRUST

As you gather these pieces of understanding about this person, you arrange them to create a portrait of what you believe this person is like. This portrait is your "internal image of this

person.

LEVEL THREE: RELIANCE

It is this mental picture which prompts your expectations and feelings of trust. The more positive your picture... the stronger your trust and attachment. Based on your level of trust, you form a "dependency upon this person to meet more and more of your needs." If the person lives up to your expectations, you alter your picture in positive ways... and become even closer.

LEVEL FOUR: COMMITMENT

Your growing trust and reliance produce a "deeper definition of your relationship." This commitment gives you a greater feeling of security and attachment.

LEVEL FIVE: SEX

Your closeness is expressed in the "extent of your physical involvement." As with the other bonding forces, the farther you go... the closer you become.

Each of these five dynamic forces has a range of bonding influence in a relationship. The level of each one, however, must be kept in a balance with the others in order to insure that your attachment does not override your awareness of the signs of future problems.

When an imbalance does occur, then unhealthy attachments result and you move into an "unsafe zone" in the relationship. The rule of thumb for staying in a safe zone is **THE DEGREE OR LEVEL OF EACH BONDING DYNAMIC SHOULD NEVER EXCEED THE LEVEL OF THE PREVIOUS.**

In other words, imbalances in these bonding dynamics will lead to an unsafe over-attachment, vulnerabilities and distorted judgment.

The ***HOW TO AVOID MARRYING A JERK*** five-hour video program presents Dr. Van Epp's live seminar which comprehensively and humorously describes both the five dynamics that create attachment, and the five crucial areas to explore in a premarital relationship.

A forty-two page, Video Series Discussion Workbook is available to assist you with the outline of the tapes. In addition, there are numerous reflective questions which personalize the material. At the end of the workbook is a list of questions to answer in the premarital relationship. In addition, a second, faith-based workbook is also available.