

Are You Looking for that Perfect Relationship?

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Are You Looking for that Perfect Relationship?

By Susan Dunn

Are You Looking for that Perfect Relationship? by Susan Dunn, Personal and Professional Development Coach

If you ARE looking for that perfect relationship, stop reading this article and do one of two things: (1) Go to one of those websites that promises something like that and be "taken" again, or (2) Brush up on your emotional intelligence skills.

Looking for anything perfect is an unrealistic expectation. Promising that is a ploy people use to sell you things! It's also a personality trait that will make your life miserable.

Perfectionists expect too much of themselves and others, and though it may be from insecurity, it is perceived as arrogant and unpleasant. The worse thing it does is make you yourself miserable.

Nothing will ever be perfect, including yourself, including the other, including your job, your project, the weather, or your relationships. There will be wonderful moments, and "good enough" moments, but perfection is not an earthly quality! We're humans!

So, assuming you're willing to set aside "perfect," let's look at what it takes to have a GOOD relationship.

EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE SKILLS

When someone is talking to me about meeting someone new they've been dating online, they sometimes ask, "What should I do? How should I act?" The answer is always, "Just be yourself," and the higher your EQ (emotional intelligence) the better able you will be to "just be yourself."

Of course everyone puts their best foot forward in the early stages, but being ready to date and find a good relationship requires that you know yourself and accept yourself. Self-awareness is the cornerstone of emotional intelligence.

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Being ready to date means you've come to an understanding about past relationships, including relationships with your parents, siblings, and previous partners. Coming to peace with things as they are. Changing what you can change, and learning how to let go of the things you cannot change. Only when you reach this place can you approach each new relationship for what it is - a NEW one.

AUTHENTICITY

What we're looking for in a partner, is authenticity; unless the two of you are authentic - able to be who you are - there can be no meeting of two real people.

You can't be authentic, if you aren't perceiving clearly. If you still see in each new person of the opposite sex, traits of your former partner, you can't be authentically in the new relationship because you won't be reacting to them as they really are.

BEING ADAMANTLY AND RELENTLESSLY SELF-FORGIVING

This is another important EQ competency. It means you have put the past behind you and forgiven your former partner(s) AND yourself for past grievances, realizing everyone was doing the best they knew how to at the time, with the limited information they had available at the time.

Bear in mind, that forgiving yourself will always be the hardest thing to do.

I had a coaching client who was having trouble letting go of her former spouse who said, "I can't forgive him for what I did to him."

How will you know when you've made peace with the situation and are ready for a new beginning?

It means you can be around your ex and not react strongly about anything; I mean unless the house is on fire. In other words, they can't jerk your chain in old ways, or in the case of serious grievances, you have been able to let go "well enough". You can care about them in a general sense and wish them well. "Goodwill," you might call it.

It means knowing that "hating" is the same thing as "loving" because they have equal intensity, and until you can move into a neutral space, able to regulate your emotional response to your ex, you are in a trap, and not ready to love someone new.

DESPERADO

If moving ahead requires forgiving your parents, siblings, or your ex, do so. Don't be a `desperado' - remember that song? `Your prison is having to go through life all alone ... why don't you let someone love you before it's too late?'

"Letting someone love you" would seem like an easy thing, but it's not, if letting someone love you in the past has been painful. This applies to everyone in the past!

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If it requires forgiving your ex, do so. If you can't, turn it over to a higher power. I don't agree that it can always be forgiven, but you must let it go.

Here's something I recommend sometimes: Be willing to accept that they will stand before another judge, not you, and let it go.

Judging takes a lot of time and energy, and the price you pay is twofold, and damaging to yourself on both accounts.

The first is that you are the prisoner, and the one who suffers the damage. It is stressful to judge and harbor resentment, grudges and grievances.

Studies have shown how stressful it is, and how hard on our health, and yes, it is you, the one who has already suffered, who will suffer again.

Do you really want to do this to yourself again? Wasn't once enough? Studies show that each time you go over the old war story, you are stressing your cardiac system in the same way.

The second is that you will also be judging yourself ... and there we will be in that perfectionism again.

If you are having trouble figuring out how to forgive someone, work with a coach!

REALITY TESTING

Only when you've gotten rid of the "ghosts" from your past, can you perceive your current situation clearly.

Why? Because, as we learn studying Emotional Intelligence, our brains do not know the difference between the past, present or future. They do not know what's a 'perceived' threat (an insult) and a 'real' threat (a car barreling down on you).

If you see each man as "every man", you are going to react according to things that have happened in the past.

For instance, if your last partner was unfaithful, and you fail to intellectually and emotionally understand that all partners are not faithful, you'll be dragging this into the new relationship. It is not only unfair to the new guy, it's going to make you fearful and fear is antithetical to love, yes?

Men and women are first and foremost people. Even though you read a study - a scientific one - that says "Women tend to be," listen to the wording. It is only talking about "some" women, not all women.

Beyond that, each women or man is different and unique, just as you are!

Each new relationship is a fresh one, unless, that is, you're dragging around old emotions from past experiences. In that case, since your brain doesn't know the difference between past, present and

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future, you are having only one relationship and the same one over and over. UG!

Q: What is the definition of a nightmare?

A: Having the same bad experience over and over and over again.

WHAT TO DO?

We recommend taking an EQ assessment (<http://inyurl.com/z94t>) and then working with an emotional intelligence coach to sharpen your EQ skills. EQ is all about identifying your emotions, understanding them, managing them, and regulating them. Improving your EQ will benefit you in all areas of your life, and clear the air for new experiences in your life.

©Susan Dunn, MA, The EQ Coach, <http://www.susandunn.cc> . I offer coaching, distance learning, and ebooks (<http://www.webstrategies.cc>) around emotional intelligence for your continued personal and professional development. EQ matters more to your relationships, health, happiness and success than IQ, and it can be learned. Looking for a compatible new partner? Try here: <http://tinyurl.com/2lyea> .
Mailto:sdunn@susandunn.cc for free ezine.

Getting The Most From Romantic Relationships

By Alan Detwiler

You can improve how good your relationship is. A few basic guidelines will make your relationship more enjoyable and beneficial for both of you.

A romantic relationship has many benefits: companionship, being inspired by someone else's example, and stimulation by the other person's ideas. Keep in mind that those benefits are there and that they are important.

Don't use a relationship as a way to solve your problems. Dating and marriage are not ways to overcome unhappiness, escape from boredom, and improve self-image. You must do those things for yourself. Using a relationship for those reasons puts burdens on the relationship that make it less pleasant and less rewarding.

Your gotta be tolerant. A relationship is a place for honesty and openness. Those principles allow a couple to share ideas and to gradually change in ways that let them more enjoy living. Your attitude should signal the other person that you will try to patiently work through each other's shortcomings. If that's too much strain, decide that separation is best and graciously part company without bitterness.

Romance and love will more likely happen if you allow them to happen instead of making them a goal. Making the relationship better should be the goal. Pay attention to treating each other fairly and helping each other. If love happens, it will be based on believing that both of you can continue to build a good relationship.

Don't expect a perfect relationship. That happens only in fairy tales. If you expect too much, it makes

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your relationship less valuable by comparison. Problems will occur. You will get hurt. Don't be so concerned with minor problems that you lose awareness of what is good in the relationship. When appropriate, offer advice not the threat of disapproval. You want to develop a spirit of mutual benefit.

Respect each other's attitude about physical affection. Be patient. Your partner is not a mind reader and may not be aware of the problem. If something about the physical part of the relationship is a big issue for you, let your concerns be known. Being aware of a problem is the first step in solving a problem. Anxiety about a problem can be lessened just by knowing that the other person is aware of the problem.

Take time for mutual interests. This can be in many forms including hobbies, conversation, recreation, an interest in art, and family activities. Mutual interests keep a couple from gradually becoming uninvolved in each other's lives.

Encourage your partner to act and make decisions. Both of you will be able to accomplish more with the other's support and encouragement. When there is a disagreement, don't automatically think it is necessary to correct the other person. Your encouragement will produce more good results than will your objections.

Alan Detwiler is the author of the ebook *Date Ideas: Fun Things To Do For Couples* available at

He has a web site with a section about fun

things to do for couples at

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Can We Still Be Friends?
Feel Your Grief

The First and Second Adam
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How to Gain and Retain More Customers
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