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Are You Relationship Ready?

By Toni Coleman

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So, you want to fall in love? You are certainly old enough and moving well along your chosen career path. Many of your friends are either married or in committed relationships. You have grown weary of the singles scene and the solitary life. Therefore, you must be ready, right?

Not necessarily.

So what is relationship readiness anyway? Exactly what it says. You are adequately capable of handling the commitment and challenges that a healthy, intimate relationship requires.

How do you know if you are ready? What are the characteristics you need to have or acquire in order to be ready for true love?

There are four primary areas that you should explore in order to assess your present state of readiness.

1. Take an inventory of past traumas and related major issues.

You should mentally review these and honestly look at how well you have already addressed and resolved them.

As you work through each, ask yourself, "Is this impacting me negatively in my present life." Also explore with yourself the possibility that the issue could become problematic once you have entered into an intimate relationship.

If you believe that there are things you have not yet adequately dealt with, you need to go to work on these. If you are unsure, then they bear closer

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examination. Consider utilizing resources such as therapy or joining a support group.

An example of such issues can include, but not be limited to; emotional, physical or sexual abuse in childhood, parents' divorce, loss of a parent or other loved one, or a past abusive or dysfunctional love relationship.

2. How's your self-awareness and self-esteem?

If you do not possess adequate self knowledge and a positive sense of self; an intimate relationship will be difficult or impossible to sustain.

For instance, do you know yourself well enough to answer the following?

Can you state your most deeply held values?

Do you know what you can't live with or without in a relationship?

Do you have a good grasp of your life goals?

Do you know your own strengths and weaknesses?

Now, do a quick assessment of your self-esteem.

How do you see yourself?

How do others see you?

Remember you present different selves:

at work

with family

with friends

in gatherings with acquaintances

If your answers tell you that you have difficulty accepting and liking yourself, or if others frequently respond negatively to you in your interactions with them, then this is an area you should begin work on. Self-love is at the foundation of all healthy relationships.

3. Are your past relationships really in the past?

If we don't get adequate closure on painful experiences/issues from past relationships, we are at risk of bringing them into present and future relationships in order to relive and resolve them.

Therefore, it's important to know that you have dealt adequately with any significant hurt or loss and have learned from any dysfunctional dynamics you may have contributed to.

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If you find yourself slipping into unhealthy patterns in your thoughts or Behaviors as they relate to others; stop, identify, and then deal with that leftover issue.

4. Do you know what you want from a relationship?

We enter into relationships for many different reasons and with many different expectations. Knowing what yours are will help you to determine if this is the right relationship for you.

Too often we "choose" someone using an unconscious level of thought as our primary input. It is there that we hold our deepest unmet needs, fears and desires. Unfortunately, there is often a chasm between our conscious and unconscious selves that keeps this information "hidden" from our rational and thinking side.

Therefore, it is very important to examine all of your feeling and needs

regarding any future relationship. Honestly look at what you must have and cannot live without.

You must know what you want and need from a future partner in order to choose the right one for you.

Now, spend some time exploring these four important areas before you enter into a serious romantic relationship. By doing so, you will be helping to ensure that your new relationship will be a healthy and lasting one.

Toni Coleman is a relationship coach in Virginia. She specializes in working with singles wanting lasting, intimate relationships. Toni has over 20 years of post-masters experience in relationship and coaching. She is the founder and President of Consum-mate Relationship Coaching. She has written numerous email classes and holds teleclasses for singles on all aspects of meeting, dating and relating. She is the author of *The Art of Intimacy*, which goes out to thousands of subscribers monthly.

Are you ready or not for a relationship?

By Kevin Skinner PhD

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Ready or Not ...

by Kevin Skinner PhD

www.datingsmarts.com

Are You Relationship Ready?

All right folks, it's time for a wake-up call. Are you ready for a relationship or not? Do you even want to be in a relationship? During the past few years I have been teaching classes for singles. The problem I have observed the most often is people who are dating but aren't prepared for a relationship. The complaints I hear go something like this:

Jill: I've been dating Jack for two months now and finally he tells me that he's not ready for a relationship.

Friend: So what did you say?

Jill: Nothing -- other than tell him that he was a big jerk.

Friend: Oh!

Jill: I mean, can't guys get a clue? Hello! If you are really not ready for a relationship, don't date me for two months and call me every day only to tell me later that you aren't ready for a relationship! I just don't get guys.

Such dialogues are common. Perhaps you have been on the receiving end of such a relationship or perhaps you have been on the giving end. Whatever be the case, may I give you a suggestion? Look in the mirror and decide if you have what it takes to be in a relationship. Questions you might want to ask yourself would be:

a) Am I prepared for a long-term relationship? Or do I want to date lots of people? If you know the answer to this question, don't be bashful--tell the people you are dating what you are looking for.

b) If Mr. or Ms. Right came by today, would I let them into my life or would I ask them to wait until I had dealt with personal issues (e.g. like getting a divorce, putting my finances in order, or ending another relationship that I am not sure I want to end)?

c) Do I have the skills to succeed in a relationship? Be honest with yourself and others. Ask yourself these questions: "How do I make the people closest to me feel? Do I create an environment that draws people to me, or do I make the people around me nervous or uptight? Am I confident in my ability to create a healthy relationship?"

d) Am I staying in a relationship with someone who isn't capable of taking our relationship to the next

level? Sometimes people stay in dead-end relationships because something is better than nothing. This is a big mistake. Because you are so set on being "IN" a relationship, you ignore big problems. Look for more information on this subject in an upcoming article.

e) Do I know how to find and meet new people? If you want to be in a relationship, you are going to have to be a good salesperson. You are marketing yourself. The better you are at marketing yourself, the better chance you have of finding someone with whom you can share the rest of your life. Don't expect God to drop someone in your lap.

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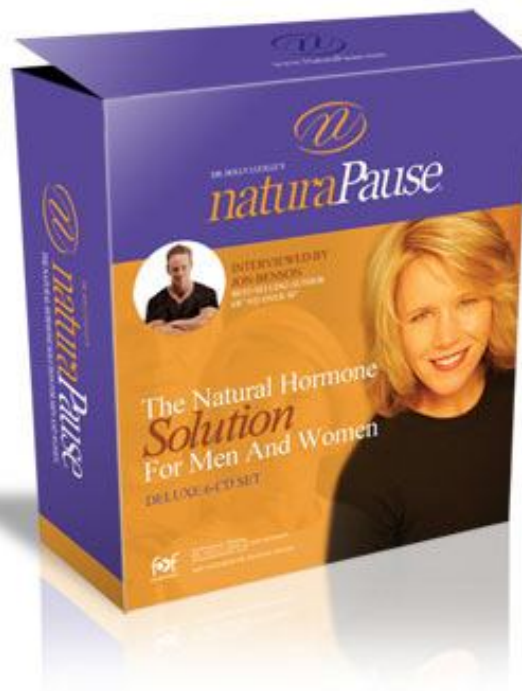
Marketing yourself DOES NOT mean making things up about yourself to fit what you think others want to see! If you don't market the REAL you, your relationships will most likely be dead before they ever really get started. There's more to come on "Methods to Marketing Yourself" in another article that you'll be seeing soon.

So, are you ready or not? Consider your answers to the previous questions. If you are ready, move forward with confidence and a belief that you can create a successful long-term relationship. Successful daters are confident in themselves. They aren't too confident, but they send a message to others that they believe in themselves.

If you aren't ready, that is okay. Take your time and get yourself ready. Whatever you do, don't date someone or lead him or her on if you aren't ready for a commitment. When you are ready to be in a relationship, you will be more comfortable with yourself and your ability to succeed in relationships.

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For individuals who are interested in testing their dating and relationship intelligence, www.datingsmarts.com offers a Relationship IQ test to help single people look at how they behave in their relationships. The Relationship IQ test covers 20 key categories that can make or break relationships. When you take the test you will be creating your own interactive book. Answers, ideas, and suggestions are given to you for each of the 140 items on the test.



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