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**Hooking Up vs Lasting Love: It's Your Choice**

**By Toni Coleman**

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"hooking Up"  
"friends with benefits"  
"booty call"

These terms have become all too familiar in today's dating world. Are they words that you can relate to? Have you lived them in some way? If so, how have you felt about the experience(s) both during and after? Chances are that you have mixed feelings at best. Depending on your age and sex, you may give a somewhat different response to this question. Whatever your answer, a close look at this "dating experience" that impacts so many singles in so many ways may be useful to you as you think about what your long-term relationship goals are and what you REALLY want from a relationship.

So what exactly do these terms mean?

"Hooking up" is getting together for sex. There is generally no formal "date" involved.

"Friends with benefits" usually refers to two people who are "friends" who also have sex together. Again, there's a distinction between what they share and "dating".

"Booty call" usually describes the act of a man (woman) calling up another person to come over for sex. The sex doesn't follow dinner, a movie or other "quality" time together, getting to really know each other. It's physical.

Do you define this activity (even loosely) as dating? Has this become a new intimacy for some or many of you? If so, it's important to look at how/if it meets your needs and if it aligns with your basic values and relationship wants and goals.

Begin by asking yourself some core questions, such as:

Am I comfortable with intimacy?

Am I comfortable with a purely physical relationship?

Am I able to be physically involved with someone while remaining emotionally detached?

How do I feel about myself when I engage in this behavior?

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Am I doing this to please someone or win his or her affection?  
Is monogamy and marriage my goal?

If your answers reflect discordance between how you feel and what you do; it would be helpful to understand the reasons behind your behavior. Do any of these sound familiar?

"It's convenient"

"It's easy"

"It's safe"

"It requires no commitment on my part"

In addition to these explanations, some singles express a belief that "everyone does it" or "it's expected". Therefore, they often report engaging in it, but not feeling really ok or satisfied afterwards.

Others use it as a substitute for real intimacy, referencing their difficulties in meeting and dating in general.

Then there are the people who have sex hoping it will lead to love. This too is a desire for intimacy that can lead to sadness and disappointment and the possibility of contracting a dangerous and life-altering infection. It reminds me of the line in a song, "if I can love you good enough on the outside to make you feel it on the inside, then maybe you will stay..."

If you recognize yourself in any of these statements and want to address your issue, begin with an inventory of your values and self-awareness.

Read the articles: "Defining Intimacy", "Clarifying And Living Your Values", and "How's Your Self-Awareness".

You can find these on: <http://www.consum-mate.com/articles.htm>

If you would find feedback that deals specifically with these issues helpful, take the "What's Your Intimacy IQ" and "Are You Relationship Ready" quizzes.

These can be found on: <http://www.consum-mate.com/quiz.htm>

Once you have determined what you really want from a relationship you can begin to make clear, thought out choices that will open the path that points in the direction you wish to go. Until you do so, you face the possibility of more disappointing and short-lived encounters that leave you feeling more alone and less hopeful about the possibility for lasting happy love.

Toni Coleman is a relationship coach and psychotherapist who specializes in working with singles seeking lasting love. She offers individual, couples and group coaching by phone and/or email sessions. She has authored many articles and offers a free monthly newsletter.

### **Secrets Of Happy And Long-Lasting Marriage – Sound Difficult? Not So...**

**By Sarah Williams**

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Do you still remember the moment you together with your husband or wife swear in front of the altar that you will be keeping your marriage vows in sickness and in health, for better or for worse, and until death do your part? Good for the two of you if you still keep that scared vows you have made when you were married. Unfortunately, there are couples who happen to be filing divorces for different grounds.

Why there are couples who are making separate ways after they have taken that marriage vows? There are many reasons to mention, but the gravest of all is the loss of love and trust to one another. All the problems are rooted from this reason. How will you trust your partner if you do not love him/her? How will you love your partner if you do not trust him/her? These two questions will lead you to a very serious one, "How will I make our marriage happy and long-lasting?"

That is not a new question for every couple. Before marriage, they are exactly asking the same question. But this time, it is really serious. Remember that you have sworn before God that you will love and take care of each other until death, or even after death.

As mentioned earlier, the gravest reason of divorcing couples is the lack of love and trust. So what will you do to maintain or in case lost, return it in your relationship?

First thing to do is to have an open communication. One of the reasons of lack of trust is miscommunication. For instance, there will be an instance where you will not be revealing your problem to your partner even though he or she already noticed it. First thing that will come to his or her mind is that you do not trust her anymore because you are not revealing your problem.

Find ways of opening your communication. Have a talk every night before you sleep. You can confer to your partner experiences of the previous day. Let your partner know that you want him or her to be a part of everything you are experiencing with, most especially on cases when you have problems.

Another is to make sacrifices on some circumstances. It is one of the secrets to have a happy and long-lasting marriage. Both of you should be prepared to put your partner's happiness ahead of your own from time to time.

There are instances that small problems become large problems if you will be showing that you are the boss of the relationship. You must learn to give way, after all a happy marriage is allowing your partner to be satisfied with your relationship. For instance, you can volunteer yourself on washing the dishes after dinner. Just see the smile on the face of your wife if you will do such small things for them. In addition, it also shows that you care for your partner.

Always be careful with your finances. If you do not handle your financial situation carefully, it can destroy your marriage. When financial crisis arise, it is important that the two of you should discuss the problem so that you are both aware of the situation you are facing and at the same time finding solutions. Working together on this particular issue will make each other feel that each of you is an integral part of the decision making process.

There are so many variables that affect your marriage. Just remember that love and trust will bind you

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together. Make each other realize that the two of you must continuously work on all of these aspects to ensure that your marriage will be happy and long-lasting through the rest of your lives.

You Can Save Your Marriage And Secure For Yourself And Your Spouse A Great Future That Can Be Enjoyed Forever! Visit

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