

WELLNESS ■ LOVE &amp; DATING

## 5 Common Mistakes People Make When Starting a New Relationship

by KELLY DAWSON | UPDATED 08/19/19



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The beginning of a [new relationship](#) can be a lot of fun. Someone out there thinks you're funny! And cute! And smart! They respond to your texts at once and want to know all about your day—even the parts you think are boring. Nothing they do is ever frustrating, or annoying, or downright weird. It all feels like you're in a montage of bliss, and maybe, just maybe, this feeling will last forever. But here's some advice for all you new lovebirds out there, courtesy of [Kelly Campbell](#), PhD, associate professor of psychology and human development at California State University, San Bernardino: Be cool.

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"My advice for couples starting a new relationship is to follow the theory of ‘social penetration,’ meaning you discuss superficial topics at first and gradually lead into more intimate topics," she says. **"People often make the mistake of disclosing too much too soon, and this can be disastrous for new relationships.** At the start of a relationship, you want your exchanges to be reciprocal and gradual, not one-sided and not too fast."

country, the more similar the partners are, the happier and more long-lasting they are.

To make sure that your new relationship's butterflies and giggles can transition into a long-term bond, we asked Campbell to elaborate on the dos and don'ts to take into account at this stage. Here's hoping that your blissful montage turns into a feature-length movie.

## The 5 Don'ts



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**Don't blow up their phone.** "Keep things reciprocal and gradual," Campbell notes. "If they initiated plans the first time, you can initiate the second time and so on, but don't always be the person texting first, calling, and initiating plans."

**Don't get intimate with a person until you are comfortable discussing everything with them.** "If you aren't comfortable asking them about STDs and STIs or telling them about your own sexual health, it's not yet the time to have sex," she says.

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**Don't have sex until both partners are 100% ready.** "Having one partner who is ready is not enough," she says. "The amount of time to wait before having sex differs for every couple; there is no such thing as too soon or too long. The right time is when both people are 100% ready."

**Don't be a Debbie Downer in the early stages.** "Try to remain open to trying new foods and participating in new activities," Campbell advises, "and don't discuss topics that are controversial or depressing. The start of a new relationship ought to be light and fun, and things can become more serious with time."

**Don't denigrate yourself.** "If you have things in your past that you consider less than ideal—for example, if you just got fired or your previous partner cheated on you—then find a way to discuss or disclose these things in a positive



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**Make varied plans with each other.** “Don’t only see each other in one context. Mix it up,” Campbell says. “Go for morning walks, lunch dates, and dinners with friends or colleagues. It can be illuminating to see your partner navigate different situations and relationships. Maybe they’re always nice to you, but they turn competitive around friends—these things are good to know before you get too involved.”

**Be sure each person is maintaining a balanced lifestyle.** “Early on, partners usually want to spend all of their time together,” she continues. “Try to remember that balance is important. Continue to spend time with family and friends, exercise, work hard, and value your alone time. When people spend all of their time with a new partner, they risk losing themselves—and losing their friends, too, because they won’t appreciate getting ditched. Even in the most long-lasting relationships, partners should still maintain a sense of independence.”

**Watch out for red flags.** “If your partner makes plans and repeatedly cancels, or you catch them in a lie, or you see them treating other people poorly, or they criticize you, it’s a sign they might not be worth investing in for the long-term,” Campbell notes.

**Treat yourself well, and it will set an example of how your partner should treat you.** “There is nothing wrong with being principled, knowing yourself, and being yourself,” Campbell says. “You should still be doing things for yourself, like taking time for self-care.”

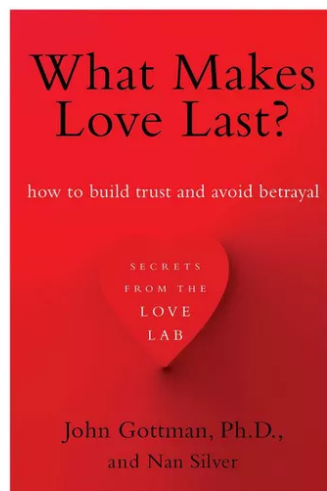
**Communication can be one of the most important factors for maintaining a happy relationship.** “Say what you mean and mean what you say, be direct and considerate, choose battles wisely, treat your partner well, and avoid destructive things like yelling, insulting, and judging,” she explains. “The start of a relationship can lay the foundation for the future, so pay attention to how you communicate. If you don’t have the skills to communicate effectively, get professional help or a self-help book written by a psychologist—John Gottman has great books on this topic—and work on this vital relationship characteristic.”



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Bottom line: A new relationship is a lot of fun, and you should enjoy it. But also, don't ignore your own needs or any red flags. "In the early phases of a relationship, people are often wearing rose-colored glasses—they minimize or ignore their partner's faults and exaggerate or only see their partner's positive attributes," Campbell says. "My advice is to balance out the emotional component with rational thinking. If you're having a hard time being rational and weighing the pros and cons of this person as a partner, ask your family and friends for their opinions."

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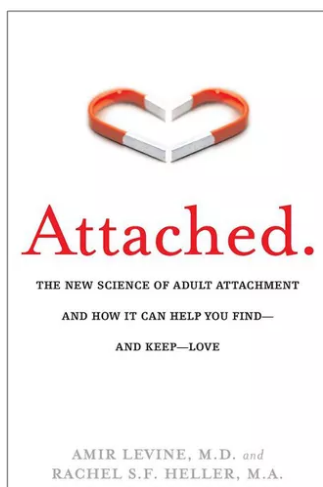
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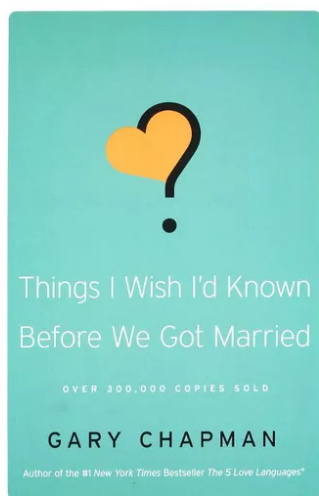
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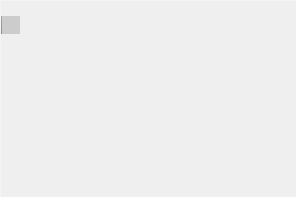


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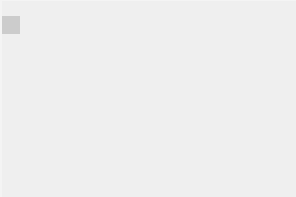
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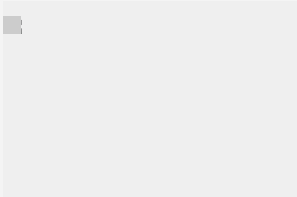
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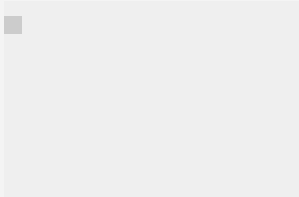
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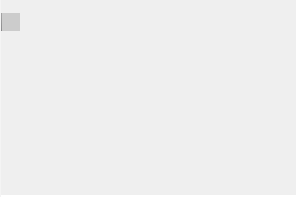
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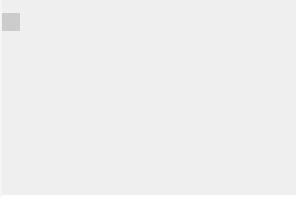
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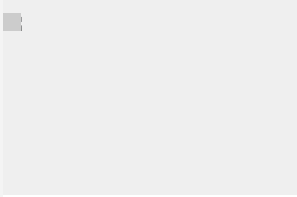
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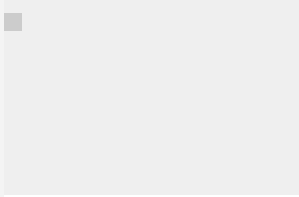
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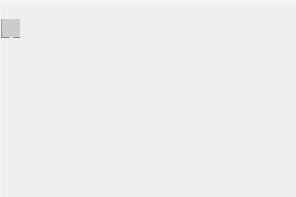
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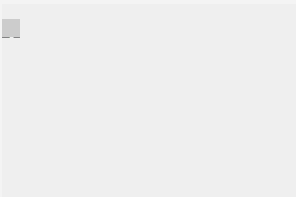
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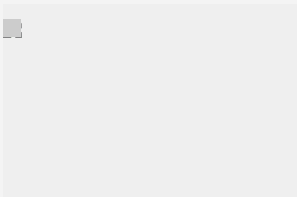
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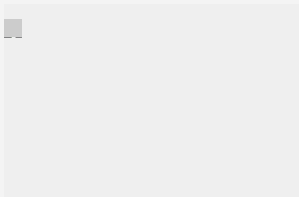
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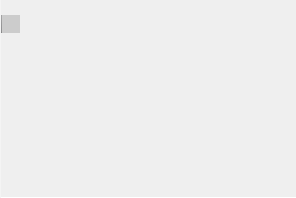
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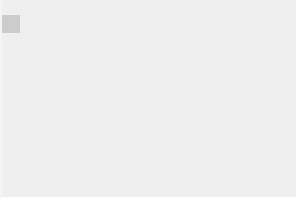
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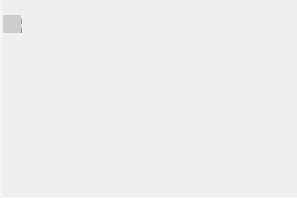
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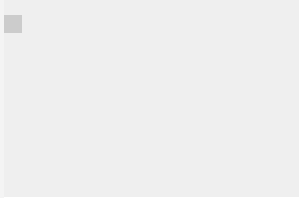
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