

# THE Ultimate Courtship HANDBOOK



A detailed guide  
outlining the  
appropriate amount  
to share  
during **each stage** of  
the early dating  
process.

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# HI I'M JESS, THE FORMER QUEEN OF INAPPROPRIATE OVERSHARING.

When Tom (my husband since 2019), first told me he loved me – it was in April of 2017.

Exactly 2 months after we officially became a couple.

We had met in late 2016 and had gone on about 7 dates in total. So with only seeing each other two handfuls of times, and texts and phone calls that gradually increased in length as our connection deepened I thought, *“how can this incredible man already love me when he hasn’t received all the sufficient information about me?”*

While I accidentally blurted out that I loved him first (where thankfully he hadn’t heard me!) much sooner than that, I felt that the whole thing – the exchange of *“I love you’s”*, that is – was heavily premature.

Why?

Well, many reasons.

First –

He hadn’t heard my radical salvation story yet.

Surely once he *knew* about my past before I came to Christ, he might have a different opinion about me?

Second –

He didn’t know of my tumultuous childhood.

*He should really know what he's getting into, nice guy like him, falling in love with a complicated chick like myself!* I thought.

Third -

He hadn't seen me at my worst - when I became my usual neurotic self, the reason why my last flame ended things with me abruptly (and traumatically, might I add!)

Yes - we were thoroughly enjoying each other's company, and no - I was not faking a 'self' just to appeal to his more "masculine nature".

However I just wanted to be a person of integrity. To really be true to him by being *my* truest self.

In a nutshell - I felt like his beautiful and sincere declaration of love for me was utterly undeserved on my end and very misguided on his.

So, what did I do?

I did what all good Christian girls do when they are trying to show a serious suitor that they are also very very serious.

I shoved my testimony of how I first became a Christian, down his throat.

# OVERSHARING OR SHOWING APPROPRIATE EMOTIONAL AVAILABILITY?

Let's flip this around and talk about you now though.

Say you just meet a guy you really like. You're hitting it off. You think this could go somewhere long-term.

You want things to move forward. So what is the appropriate amount to reveal about yourself to him?

I shared the story of Tom and myself because the **psychology** of my own personal **overshare** was this:

*"Love is only warranted when all the information about a person is revealed."*

*"Love declared without all the information is not love, but deception."*

However if I could coach the 2017-version of myself, I would show her a list of reasons why I felt the need to share-vomit all over my new boyfriend.

*You cannot stand close friends knowing intimate details about you, when this man you supposedly 'love' does not. You are over-focused on the negative parts about you, when your positive traits are equally true and deserve just as much attention.*

*You are not comfortable with a steady paced love that builds slowly.*

*You do not think you are enough to be slowly discovered over time.*

If you are a woman reading this book, know this:  
**Every woman willing to do the work of co-creating a healthy relationship that leads to marriage is worthy of being discovered *slowly* and *consistently* over time.**

This is the "mystery" of the feminine.  
The modern woman sadly believes that her worth is tied to her achievements, so she steps into a produce-an-outcome, *masculine* type of energy. This works for climbing her career ladder, buying her first property and getting tasks done, but when she applies this to her dating life, she loses so much.

Mostly – the joy of letting the man lead their courtship where love can blossom organically for both of them.

The beautiful unfolding of two people who naturally connect and fall in love is a stage-by-stage peeling back of layers of an onion.

At DATEABILITY, we call this **Vulnerability Modulation.**

What to share and when. What to do and when.

Falling in love is a beautiful, unforgettable process. This is a legacy you will pass on to your children, and the first layer of the foundation of your future marriage.

I know some of us do not want to waste too much time vetting a new suitor, but why would you want to rush this once-in-a-lifetime experience of falling in love?

Looking back, I actually did a better job sitting on my hands to allow Tom to pursue me, moreso than in relationships preceding him.

Before I worked on my own transformation with a Dating Coach, my anxiety to be chosen would drive me a bit bananas.

I had to know what the guy was thinking, and what exactly was happening between us. Men would initially be drawn to my outgoing, extroverted personality but once I got wind of their interest and I was interested back, I became suffocating.

Instead of growing the connection with the new guy, letting our banter just be banter and our unexpected silences linger in the air, I would grasp for control instead... with thick dollops of deeply unnecessary oversharing. (Ugh! I cringe thinking about it now). I usurped these men into a vacuum of heavy emotions. I was soooooo intense. Upon reflection I used this intensity like a security blanket as I believed that's what was required for men to see me as marriage material and nothing less.

While part of my story definitely involves healing from trauma and my faith in Jesus is a massive, massive part of this, for you however, it may just be a much smaller and more fixable problem.

It may be that you need to practice getting comfortable with not filling the sudden silence. That is where you might get caught with your foot in your mouth.

For others, you get very intense, very quickly, because you want this new guy to like you and unintentionally “lovebomb” the new connection. (I know that word gets a bad wrap, but I’ll explain that in the \*Second Date section!)

The principle of vulnerability modulation is this: What is your intention in revealing this part of yourself to this new person? Is it to gain sympathy? To feel automatically close and bonded to your new love interest?

Just like with actions, if you do this in the relationship, will it lead them on? Or will it accurately express how you want things to progress?

The greatest thing about growing emotionally close to someone is that it will happen in a way that is unique to the two of you. It requires you to tune in to how *they* are feeling as well as how YOU are feeling.

So much heartbreak could be avoided if we all wisely knew what was the appropriate way to act and the appropriate amount to share at each stage of dating!

This e-book will map out exactly what to do and how much to share, while explaining the psychology behind each stage.

\*Edit: I wrote “First date section” in the VMH sample version. I discuss lovebombing in the Second Date section in this final version.

# FIRST STAGE: YOU JUST MET

## Appropriate Actions: **ATTRACTION, RAPPORT BUILDING**

- Exchange of details via sharing social media handles or mobile phone numbers.
- Sending text messages for entertainment only to build rapport with each other. This sets the scene for deeper sharing down the track:
  - GIFs, emojis
  - Lighthearted banter and joking
  - Giving and receiving compliments (this is flirting about finding each other attractive or intriguing!)
- GUYS:
  - Sending text messages to organise a first date.
  - Liking her recent posts or photos after she accepts your friend request.
- GIRLS:
  - Responding to a text message to say yes to a first date.
  - After he adds you as a friend or connection, liking things he posts that turn up on your newsfeed.

## Appropriate Emotional Sharing:

- GUYS:
  - *"Hoping to see you very soon."*
  - *"Oh so you're beautiful AND funny. I'm glad I'm texting you."*
  - Comment on a photo: *"You went skydiving? Very impressive."*
- GIRLS:
  - *"It was lovely to meet you."*
  - *"You're very kind. Ok... I think I'll let you take me out on a date."*
  - Comment on a photo: *"Maybe you can teach me a few tricks or two!"*
  - Replying to comments he makes on your photos: *"Haha yes, it was terrifying. I'll tell you all about it when I see you next."*

# FIRST STAGE: YOU JUST MET

## **Inappropriate Emotional Sharing:**

- After a few pleasant exchanges via any medium, saying
  - *"just so you know, before we go any further you need to know I have been diagnosed with \_\_\_\_\_."*
  - *"Here's something you need to know about me, I have xyz issues."*

The psychology behind this is - what is your true motive to share this? Do you fear that down the track they will not accept you? Using the Self-Soothing Tool (p.11) we learn to accept all our emotions and therefore get to a place of complete and utter SELF-acceptance, making this new connection's acceptance of you irrelevant to the degree you accept yourself.

Know that the version of yourself without problems is ALSO a true and completely valid version of yourself no matter what you're going through. The time will come when it is appropriate to share the deeper stuff, but let them **earn** your trust first.

So have fun, relax, you've literally just met this person!

Some go-to phrases you can use to slow down the pace that still show your interest:

- *"I'll share more as we get to know each other in due course."*
- *"There's a time to tell that very long story... I'll tell you when our connection permits it handsome man ;-)"*
- *"Maybe some other time as I unravel/peel back more layers/when we figure out what this is between us ;-)."*
- *"I'm touched by your curiosity about me! If/when we get to that stage I'll definitely tell you."*
- *"Maybe you can ask me out, and then I'll share a bit more with you."*

# A CRASH COURSE IN GUARDING YOUR HEART

How to regulate your emotions from sadness to excitement using The Self Soothing Tool:

**Step 1.** Sit down and lean back in your chair (like the driver's seat of your car before a date).

**Step 2.** Put your hands on your heart.

**Step 3.** Breathe deeply and slowly, using all your lung capacity for 4 seconds, then hold for 4 seconds, and breathe out for 4 seconds.

**Step 4.** Notice where you feel the emotion in your body and apply a little bit of pressure with your hands there.

Repeat this process (4 x 4 breathing cycles) and you should start feeling calmer with a slower heart beat.

## The low investment + high authenticity mindset

Be honest about who you are in a measured and appropriate way for where the connection is at. Reserve your beautiful emotions for the later dates! I recommend taking kissing or anything physical off the table until you are exclusive (see p.28).

Be low investment about how a new connection responds to you. This is why I recommend going for high volumes of people in these early stages of meeting and first dates. This *gamifies* dating at the onset, so you protect your heart from getting too invested. You can start getting your feelings involved on Dates 4-6.

## But what if I read this book and *still* make a mistake?

Then you make a mistake. Who cares! Dating is personal development. You cannot learn by sitting on the sidelines. Go forth and take action! Read on.

# “BUT I DON’T WANT TO PLAY GAMES.”

## GAME-PLAYING VS SHOWING GODLY RESTRAINT

Dating to find the love of your life *is* a game. It’s a game because your heart is too precious to simply hand over to anyone random girl or guy because they asked or accepted. It is a game that requires you to grow and mature past the greatest fear of many people – getting rejected. If you want to marry someone who is compatible with you, where you are building a beautiful life with your soulmate, then maturing past the sting of rejection is an absolute necessity. The mindset of low investment + high authenticity allows us to do this with significantly less pain.

In the privacy of my coaching container, I have had the privilege of bearing witness to a woman confiding through tears that she has ‘*never been chosen*’ by a man at the age that she was at the time of our conversation.

On the male equivalent, men have told me vulnerably that he fears he will ‘*never be accepted*’ in the eyes of a woman he will one day love.

Let me take this black hole of despair down a few notches. In my own love story with Tom, *I* was the one who approached *him* for a conversation first. When I tell some people this, they say “*well that means he didn’t have to do any work to get you.*” Code for: that means he didn’t choose you. I laugh especially when women say this, because *approaching* a man is not the same as *pursuing* a man.

When women think that ‘being chosen’ by a man requires them to sit idly and wait for the man to approach them for a conversation out of thin air, it becomes very dicey territory for their self-worth.

Dating requires a skillset that most of us were never taught. In order to play the game properly and meaningfully, we must get through the first phases of interaction and rapport building with the opposite sex, and not conflate a mere approach with a full romantic pursuit.

# GAME-PLAYING VS SHOWING GODLY RESTRAINT

After 9 years of being a Christian Dating Coach, the most common problem I see with female clients is that they are not even standing on the court to play the game.

So how can they **win** at a game where they are still waiting on the sidelines?

When I approached my now husband simply as I thought he was handsome, I was simply just *positioning myself onto the court*. I had to see if he had a sufficiently attractive personhood to match. This energy is markedly different from the desperation that many singles fear is within them.

While it's outside the scope of this handbook to discuss the whole gamut of Romantic Intelligence, (something I've been taking my clients through since 2016) I will highlight some of the key differences between playing the dating game shrewdly, with godly restraint, and playing it blindly with zero or poor strategy.

ZERO/POOR DATING STRATEGY (GAME PLAYING/PROJECTING)	SHREWD & STRATEGIC DATING (SHOWING GODLY RESTRAINT)
Clocking a person's suitability for you based on what you see of them from the outside (eg. looks or reputation).	Actually just getting to know their real character slowly and consistently, over time.
Indirectly communicating out of fear they will reject you (eg. not answering texts to appear cool and aloof).	Communicating directly with respect to the stage you're at with them, and your own core confidence.
Sending too many text messages in a row.	Waiting for a reply, and if you don't get one, recalibrating your expectations of this person's emotional availability.
Projecting into the future when you've only just met them.	Staying present with where the connection is at and regulating your excitement.

# SECOND STAGE: FIRST DATE

## Appropriate Actions:

### STILL ATTRACTION, RAPPORT BUILDING STAGE

- Asking about their interests, hobbies, job, passions, family and childhood.
- Going on a walk with a takeaway coffee, people watching at a cafe, going to a lively night market, something externally focused that will create a third stimulus away from just each other. You are still strangers at this point!
- Keep the first date casual, relaxed and positive.

## Appropriate Emotional Sharing:

- *"I'm really passionate about my church. My faith is a huge part of who I am."*
- *"I became an accountant because of the job opportunities. I appreciate having this skill but I'm also interested in other things."*
- *"My childhood was hard. I am thankful for how it shaped who I am as an adult though."*
- *"My family are from Sydney. We love to eat and have probably gone to all the best Vietnamese restaurants you can find on Google maps."*

# SECOND STAGE: FIRST DATE CONT.

## **Inappropriate Emotional Sharing:**

*"My testimony of how I became a Christian is xyz"*

*"I hate my job. I should not have become an accountant. It's horrible.... [goes on a diatribe of why job is so horrible]."*

*"I was emotionally neglected and abused as a child. When I was 6 xyz happened to me..."*

*"My family are from Sydney. My father was in a gang. [Explains history of the gang father was in]."*

## **Why is all this inappropriate sharing?**

Just like prematurely getting physical or having sex, your new love interest has literally just met you and has not earned the right to your secret thoughts or your history.

Playing the long game, even if both of you shared about your 'sinful pasts' and could completely accept each other despite this, there would still be the ongoing *experience* of each other to contend with.

Relational trust is when you feel emotionally connected and safe with a person. We live in a society that believes this process can be fast-forwarded by doing research on each other via 'social media stalking', or simply sharing our stories. No amount of research or sharing can guarantee whether your heart will feel safe with this person in 3 months, 12 months, 5 years or 45 years. You can't rush this process. It happens over time.

Functional trust is when you know they will do what they say they will do. If they say they will turn up at 7pm, they do. These practical bits are also ironed out over a long period of getting to know someone.

# SECOND STAGE: FIRST DATE

## Typical Inappropriate Actions:

- Sharing deeply personal things to unburden yourself. Knowing you have done this in the past because you thought it would make you feel closer to someone. That is called *trauma bonding* and will create a spike of adrenaline in the nervous system. This is consistent with any form of insecure (anxious/ambivalent, disordered) attachment style, because crisis or drama “gives you butterflies” or makes you feel “alive”.
- Asking or talking about exes, past relationships, how many people they have dated, slept with, lived with in a negative and emotionally charged way.
- Hotly debating over politics, current affairs or anything that will easily stir dissension or unease.
- Going to an expensive and fancy restaurant for dinner. The psychology behind this is it creates too much expectation and pressure on both parties to give a performance instead of relaxing and simply enjoying the conversation for what it is.
- Having sex or doing physical things close to this on a first date. This dramatically escalates bonding as it creates a chemical release of oxytocin, making you think are more attached than you actually are.

**Note:** Reach out to me via email if this triggers any painful memories or emotions for you. Rest assured, we only learn by doing. Making mistakes is inevitable, and you are not alone in this. Things can only improve in your love story from here <3.

# HOW TO STOP PROJECTING WHEN OUR DESIRE IS SO STRONG

We don't see the world as it is, we see the world as WE are.

So when we **project** what we want on a new connection, we are blind to the person in front of us. If we want marriage so much that we are starving for it, *anyone* can look adequate.

Anyone who has followed DATEABILITY for some time will know that I am no stranger to desperation. In fact I encourage it. I don't like working with lukewarm energy. In life, we don't get what we want, we get what we absolutely *have* to have! (Tony Robbins).

We think desperation makes us look like a pathetic loser. And maybe so for a temporary season. However you will probably reach the finish line with what you want (a spouse!) and the people that pointed and laughed at you will still have their "dignity" but be alone for longer than they need to be. (Sweet justice, this is what happened for the person who mocked *my* desperation for marriage!) Or they will have marriages that happened by accident which they don't appreciate as much as you will appreciate *your* marriage.

So how do we curb our intense longing and desperation?

We tie ourselves over.  
Huh?

Ok - think of when you're on the train home after a super long day and you are so famished you feel like you could eat a chicken, a cow and a horse in that order.

Lucky for you though, you've packed some corn thins in your bag and you have a peanut butter satchet on hand to slather on top. You're not full, but you're no longer on the brink of starvation either.

Nice metaphor Jess but how does this translate IRL?

Of course the end game is marriage.

In the mean time we can learn to be a *version*-of-happy in our singleness while we search for a spouse (ie. the peanut butter corn-thins in the food analogy). For me it was moving out of home in my late 20s, getting a secure job that allowed for a steady rhythm of work/life balance so I had time to date on nights and weekends, save decent money for the future, and cultivate a thriving social life with both single women and men that led to more new connections.

Relationally, the curbing-hunger game is different for men and women though. Whatever sex you are, you decide how to do this in the healthiest way.

### **WOMEN:**

All women need healthy male attention from brother, uncle or Father figures in her church community. Men who will connect with you in an emotionally intimate, but *appropriate* and platonic way.

Attention is like food for the feminine spirit. Sometimes my female clients get sheepish about wanting attention. But it's actually how God designed you as a woman! (Key Bible verses about this: Esther 2:7, Song of Songs 4:7).

I think we have gone so far the other way as a church culture that men are afraid of complimenting a woman's beauty, in case she becomes a "conceited seductress". However I am speaking to godly women like yourself, whose identity is mostly about her non-physical attributes that she is sometimes starving for validation to confirm her status as a beautiful woman. (Don't roll your eyes. This is a real thing!)

Once a woman is grounded in her God-given beauty she just gets on with it. The goal is for every woman to feel that she is valuable and desirable as a future wife.

## Curbing Hunger For Men

To all my brothers in Christ, excuse my directness and didactic manner of speaking to you in this section.

*Your steps are as follows:*

Go out and talk to women.

Get rejected. Or don't.

Let your wolfpack surround you in support and solidarity if/when the worst happens.

Overcome those feelings with the brotherhood.

Go to the gym, play your sport or some other physical activity to help even out your testosterone levels.

Reframe rejection as a necessary step to personal growth as you find a woman that is actually compatible with you.

Forget about the "Bachelor" types, focus on yourself and your inner game.

Accept that it will take time, but you have to commit to action, failing fast, learning and applying what you've learned.

Talk to women again.

Collect female friends who will be kind and encouraging, like sisters and nurturing Mother types.

Repeat the process again.

Ask the girl out, put on clean clothes without holes, have a shower, brush your hair and teeth.

Women are annoyed that in the dating game, men get to do the asking. So use that to your advantage and make life happen for yourself! Often the only thing blocking you is your own fear and comparing yourself to other men.

There is a woman out there for you!

# THIRD STAGE: SECOND DATE

## Appropriate Actions:

### SHOWING THE FIRST ONION LAYER

- More texts about entertainment or logistics, but referencing the conversations you had on your date.
- Doing a fun activity that reveals how you deal with low-level pressure, like hiking, a mutually achievable sport, board games etc.
- Girls - at this stage continue to let the guy lead by asking you to go on dates. You can invest in him back by paying for smaller things, like dessert after dinner or parking.
  - The psychology of this is you remain in your feminine energy by leaning back and relying on your inner magnetism. This is a much more sustainable way of seeing whether he is a match for your feminine. Always be willing to walk away if you find he is not aligned with your personal values. While tempting, it is too early to let him take precedence over your already existing schedule. However you are showing glimpses of yourself as a potential teammate, someone who is ready and willing to contribute as you understand the dating process is sussing out whether you two could become a powerful team (ie. couple) together.

# THIRD STAGE: SECOND DATE

## Appropriate Emotional Sharing:

- *"I've been going to xyz Church Congregation for x amount of years. The story of how I got there is..."*
- *"I went to my first sushi class the other week! It was so fun. I am currently shopping around for the best place to buy a tatami mat, sushi rice and seaweed. Cooking is so relaxing, I could do it all weekend and not get bored."*
- *"I'm probably closer to my friends than my family. Growth and authenticity is what I really value. I didn't realise this until I was in my 30s."*

## Why is all this **appropriate** emotional sharing?

While it's not about getting things *exactly* right, the principle here is the dates should naturally allow for conversation about why things are the way they are with you, and they with them.

Why you chose the job you did, the church or communities you are a member of, what your current hobbies are and why you're passionate about them. Reflecting on your family of origin and how you have individuated from them now as an adult.

Stick to expressing joy about a life lived according to your passions and values. Watch how your date communicates about their life.

Treat it like making a new friend of the same sex. Would you spill your guts on the first or second date? Or would you share little things about who you are, to test the waters?

# THIRD STAGE: SECOND DATE

## Inappropriate Actions:

- Anything that goes beyond a pure reciprocation of their investment in you, like:
  - Expressing grandiose statements of love and devotion like saying *"I can picture us getting married"* - it's too early for this!
  - Getting physical - again, too early. Hugs and the man kissing the woman on the cheek is appropriate.
  - Ladies - Not accepting dates from other men because you "really like him". He hasn't proved himself to you yet and 2 dates is not enough of a gauge to decide to cut ties with other suitors... yet.

Now about each guy - ladies, match his move for move, like in a chess game. Do not give him dibs on your schedule. He is still a stranger of fairly low priority to you at this point.

For example, he took you to a nice cafe and paid for breakfast on your first date.

You texted him to say thank you and that you enjoyed getting to know him over eggs, bacon and an oat latte. This message should be enough for the masculine to derive interest from the feminine, so rely on your magnetic pull here and don't initiate. Your positive response here is enough of a move.

If he likes you he will ask you out again as you have expressed positive interest.

Guys - as written above, if she likes you she will say she enjoyed herself. Show your leadership qualities by taking things forward and asking to see her again.

She will be touched if you ask her out at least a week in advance. Also - it's now appropriate to take her to dinner.

The reason I suggest a dinner date at Date #3 minimum is because there is enough rapport here between the two of you to enjoy, and the start of a little more conversational depth. Dinner is the ultimate high pressure/low stimulus date – HUGE connection tester. There is nothing to discuss or look at except your meals and each other.

## QUESTIONS TO HELP YOU REFLECT ON HOW IT'S GOING

### GUYS:

- Do I like her company so far?
- Am I attracted to her physically?
- Do I want to see her again?
- If yes to all 3 Qs, text her something like *“I'd love to take you out to dinner, what's your favourite cuisine?”* and set up the date and time. If it's a yes, she will swooon gentlemen.

### GIRLS:

- Would I accept another date from this guy?
- Am I physically attracted to him?
- If I'm not completely sold about his looks, do I think it could grow based on our connection?
- If yes to all 3 Qs, wait for him to ask you on another date. If he texts you about your favourite food, tell him! The masculine needs a clear direction on what to provide for you and impress you accordingly.

## WHEN YOU HAVE TO SLOW DOWN THE PACE

Let's say you like this new girl/guy you are seeing but they are sharing much more than what is due for your connection. Or they are asking to see you more when you've only just met them. This is tricky because we are dealing with someone else's heart. We must always be as delicate as possible.

My female clients report on men responding abrasively when they push back on refusing to share certain details, but I suspect this is because the man felt embarrassed and wanted to save face. Majority of men don't like feeling they are incompetent or not in control. It's not your job to protect his ego ladies, but setting boundaries with warmth and kindness should be our starting point. Slowly escalate to a firm tone if he's not getting the message!

## THINGS YOU CAN SAY

WOMEN SAY	MEN SAY
Playfully: "I must be that amazing to you that you want to see me again so soon! ;-)"	Gently: "When it's time to ask you, I will most definitely ask you. ;-)"
"I would love to, but I have something called real life to attend to. How about next week? ;-)"	Calling her and reassuring her that you also feel the connection and the spark, but to trust the slow pace you want to take her on. eg. "I really like you, I just want to make sure we don't move faster than we should."
"My IG handle? I'm a second date kinda girl for things like that. :-)"	"I'm touched you are so curious about me, how about next week I take you to ___ and I share xyz [at the appropriate level]?"

# WHY SHARING TOO MUCH TOO SOON IS LOVEBOMBING

Lovebombing is premature, unwarranted declarations of love, particularly with the motive to convince the recipient of the lovebomb that the 'love' is authentic. It's when the guy tells you after one date, that he is in love with you and wants to commit. This sounds and feels nice except it moves too fast to be genuine. You don't even know his middle name! An emotional connection can feel incredible but a real-life love will pass the test after the oxytocin-fuelled honeymoon stage fizzles out.

If you are in a hurry for someone to commit early, you are vulnerable to being lovebombed. I know that is hard to hear. It can feel amazing to receive disproportionate amounts of attention, especially when we are starving to be seen.

A woman once shared that on her second date with a guy, he had downloaded his entire testimony and childhood traumas onto her, being upfront and honest about where he was at and his intentions. She stated "I was refreshed by his honesty, other guys aren't even sure they want to commit." They were also very physically attracted to each other, which I suspect factored into her decision to enter a long term relationship with him so quickly.

While to her it seemed that he had waited until Date #2 to be "refreshingly honest", he really just dropped a lovebomb onto her. Because he gauged she was the caring, nurturing type, downloading all that emotional stuff onto her was taking advantage of her kindness (*cough cough* manipulation! *cough*). The attraction was palpable between them. In their same level of emotional immaturity, they confused rabid oversharing with emotional intimacy.

You may know who you are, and what you want, but you don't know who they are, and if what *they* want is a genuine love that becomes a strong foundation for marriage.

## **SELF-CONTROL IS MY FAVOURITE FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT.**

I would say as a type 4 enneagram (I am the self-absorbed, Romantic Artist type that loved deep intense conversation immediately!) and raving introverted extrovert, self-control is where the Holy Spirit has worked in me most.

Projecting husband material on the hot new guy I met at church last week? Yup, did *that* all the time.

Dreaming about our future kids' names because the other worship leader on roster with me finally asked me on a date? Guilty (and cringing!!).

### **AN ADDITIONAL STORY TO ILLUSTRATE WHY SELF-CONTROL IS SO IMPORTANT**

Say you are the owner of the most successful coffee chain in your city. You are thinking of who to partner with to expand your business. You meet someone at a business networking event, and it turns out they are an extremely renown patisserie Chef in niche dessert circles. What are the chances?!

Excitement abounds. Contacts are exchanged. An appointment to try their creme brûlée samples (the most popular dessert to pair with your delicious beans) is arranged.

The day arrives, and while you're impressed with the Chef's work, you notice something about them is a little off. You're not sure what it is exactly, but they keep pressuring you to make a decision to do business together, in the form of a deal that they insist will be highly lucrative.

What's the hold up? You think. You know the coffee business inside and out, you've been in it for over a decade. You know what you want in a dessert supplier, so why wait?

It is a truth universally known in business that your reputation is *everything*. Things move as fast as the speed of trust.

How much you know and understand the character of your potential business partner.

Who they have worked with in the past.

What their former employees or partners thought of them.

Whether you share the same or complementary work ethic.

How they have learned from their mistakes.

Whether they are reasonable people.

Whether they are easy to work with.

In essence you are looking at what other people say about them to figure out whether you can actually trust them to make a decision so quickly.

When I managed a Mental Health team and had to hire 6 new counselling staff, it took forever! Two interviews per candidate, police checks, reference checks, even academic transcripts were reviewed. If I had made the wrong decision on a candidate, we would know within their 3 month probationary period. The lived experience of working with this new hire could not be faked on their end.

It is baffling to me that so many consider it justified to only wait 2 weeks to 6 months to decide whether to commit their entire mortal life to someone. Many clients have told me “I know who I am and what I want”. And maybe so. But nobody can predict how that person will fare during significant life challenges.

The shorter your dating and courtship season before marriage, the greater the gamble.

# FOURTH STAGE: THIRD DATE

## Appropriate Emotional Sharing & Actions: SHOWING THE SECOND ONION LAYER, ENJOYING ATTRACTION and THE FIRST STAGE OF ROMANTIC/SEXUAL TENSION

- *I'm quite attracted to you because...*
- Short phone calls and texts - this will gauge whether you have a genuine emotional and intellectual connection. E.g. if 45min passes effortlessly over the phone this should establish your romantic connection quite easily!
- Guys:
  - It might be appropriate to test out your level of chemistry. Things will remain platonic if you stay in emotional/intellectual connection and don't move into the attraction and sexual tension realm.
  - Do this by going in for a brief kiss, touching her hand, putting your palm on the small of her back after her consent is established. Simply asking her "is this ok with you?" should be enough. Chances are though, she will see a kiss coming and stop it if she doesn't give her consent.
  - While the first 3 stages are to build and establish rapport, we assume you have spent time investing in this girl because you see her as potential wife material. If you are not enjoying her company outside your attraction to her, it would be wise to suss out your concerns on this date. If you are completely sure it's only physical attraction with this girl and nothing more, man up and end things in person.
  - If the attraction is through the *roof* with this girl, you will demonstrate your maturity by showing restraint. Take the lead by setting boundaries and saying something like "I would like to kiss you for longer, but I'll save that for later." Believe us, she will love this! It shows you see her as more valuable than just a sex fling.

# FOURTH STAGE: THIRD DATE CONT.

## Appropriate Emotional Sharing & Actions: SHOWING THE SECOND ONION LAYER, ENJOYING ATTRACTION and THE FIRST STAGE OF ROMANTIC/SEXUAL TENSION

- Girls:
  - The job is so much easier for you. Flirt with your date, brush his arm as you pass, sit close to him, smile and make eye contact. All these will signal you are keen for things to progress romantically.
  - His label and association remains the same. You are still to protect your heart by calling him "the guy I am currently seeing" to your friends and family, or whoever you are sharing with about your dating life. It is too early to call him your boyfriend, partner or think of him as anything more than a guy you have gone on a few dates with.
  - If you are reading this and feel that kissing is overstepping a boundary for you, ie. that is reserved only for an official relationship, you may test romantic chemistry and sexual tension in other ways, like holding hands.
  - If you feel that any form of physical affection is too early by Date #3, tell the guy this but have in your mind when you may be ready to test the attraction with something physical. My gentle advice is this though - going on more than 4 dates with a guy without establishing a physical attraction might lead him on, and it may turn out you are not actually attracted to him at all! This does not serve either of you. This has happened to me out of trying to be a *"godly Christian woman"* and I felt awful about the amount of time we spent together and the expectation it created on his part! If you are not actually wanting to move closer to him physically I strongly recommend you end things.

# FOURTH STAGE: THIRD DATE CONT.

It is super important that IF you are enjoying the beginning stages of physical touch and affection, you are NOT to:

- assume exclusivity or an official boyfriend/girlfriend relationship. A truly masculine man will wrestle with his own anxiety to have this intentional conversation properly with you (see Fifth Stage for the script).
- share that you are seeing him with anyone that cannot maintain confidentiality, or will make a bigger deal out of things than they need to be. You are simply exploring your attraction to each other as more than friends.

Now LADIES at this stage, let's address common nuances:

## 1. Telling other people about him:

Most women we have coached in the DATEABILITY Community have learned to only share with a select few people about their dating lives. Choose people who will understand you are still sussing out where the connection is going, rather than be over-excited you are 'finally dating' and put unnecessary pressure on the outcome of you and him.

## 2. Labels

At this stage he remains *"a guy I am currently seeing"*. When there is a conversation about not seeing other people and only each other, he becomes *"the guy I'm seeing exclusively"*, or *"we're exclusive but not official"*.

When he initiates a conversation about introducing you to his friends and family, and him to yours, that is when you both can decide if you are officially *"boyfriend and girlfriend"*. Again, a masculine man will have this intentional conversation with you to secure you as his woman. He will want to do this to show his leadership capability. (Again, see Fifth Stage for the script).

# FOURTH STAGE: THIRD DATE CONT.

## 3. Multiple dating - Accepting dates from more than one (1) guy.

The DATEABILITY Team strongly believe that women who desire marriage should adopt a multiple dating strategy.

This may sound controversial. Here are our REASONS:

- I (Jess) accepted dates from 4 guys at one time during my single season. I put in appropriate physical boundaries, and made it clear and transparent on Date #3 with each man that I was *'accepting dates from other guys'*. I explained that I was wanting to make an informed decision about who my life partner should be. Then I would ask where the guy thought we were going. This helped me cull the serious suitors from the not so serious suitors!
- If you are above age 28, you do not have time to enter a 12-month relationship with a guy and not have it turn into marriage. Multiple dating applies the right amount of pressure on the guys because they will ask themselves how serious they are about courting you for marriage BEFORE you get into the exclusive relationship stage.
- Additionally, it will keep you in your feminine energy as they work hard to earn your trust, affection and choice. These men are already competing for you to choose them - this screams 'high value'! Also, men are competitive by nature. This is a healthy way to use this to your advantage.

# FOURTH STAGE: THIRD DATE CONT.

## 3. Multiple dating – Men's Edition

The DATEABILITY Team (namely Male Coach Josh and myself) have hotly debated whether the same freedoms can be applied to men.

After much thought and consideration, my present conviction at the time of this writing is:

As men do the pursuing, it would seem outside of his integrity to seriously consider more than 1 woman as a potential wife. If the stakes are low investment, I see nothing wrong with a man spending time with different women, granted he is not being physical with anyone or making grand declarations of love or commitments to either of them.

Alas, the game changes once a man realises he is beginning to fall in love. He will likely feel dishonourable toward the woman he has lesser feelings for. Thus he should communicate he is stepping out of the race so to make space for a more serious suitor for her.

What likely happens in Christian dating is the woman may have greater feelings. Slow down the pace in this situation and be upfront and honest. It may hurt her feelings but rejection is a means to keep people apart who are not meant to marry each other!

In the next section I address how to actively converse with God in your dating journey – from single with zero prospects to falling in love and awaiting God's confirmation.

# HOW TO PRAY FOR A SPOUSE

Sometimes we just don't know how or what to pray about in this area of our lives. So we go for the broadest type of prayer knowing God in His infinite love and grace, will ask the Holy Spirit to assist in bringing revelation to us (Romans 8:26-28).

It scares me when people take a Gideon-fleece or an Isaac and Rebecca approach to finding a spouse.

Respectfully, I call these "Genie-in-a-Bottle Prayers" - wanting a quick-fix without the hard work of character and confidence development.

Here are my favourite examples of lazy prayers about the desire to be married:

*Lord, close my eyes until you introduce me to my husband.*

*Lord, give me a sign that this is the woman you want me to marry.*

*Lord, give me a shooting star to confirm I should say yes to being his girlfriend.*

*Lord, if you wanted me to be married by now you would have brought someone along.*

*Lord, do you want me to be single forever? Show me if that is Your plan for my life.*

I mean no disrespect to anyone who has prayed these prayers. Only that marriage is too important a decision to involve God like a genie or silent spectator about your life. He says in His word - albeit implicitly - that your desire to be married is an **active** decision on your part, not a passive one. Jacob worked for Rachel for 14 years. Isaac sent his servant to find a wife in Rebecca. The Bible starts (Adam & Eve), ends (Jesus & The Church, Bride of Christ), and is parted right in the middle (Song of Songs) with weddings!

If the Creator of the universe (Jesus) is truly your Saviour *and* your Lord, then you will give in to the process. The adventure He has for you is the refinement of your character and abundant confidence as a person.

Imagine this - a confident version of you, kissing your future wife, with little insecurity about whether you are good enough to be her husband.

Imagine being pursued by a kind-hearted, godly man without always waiting on the other shoe to drop.

To *have* the result of marriage and to *enjoy* the result of marriage also.

So excuse my smugness, but here are much better prayers to pray!

As this book is for both men and women, I have listed and addressed the prayers for both sexes. Adapt them according to the relevant happenings in your world. Let these speak to your growth and closeness to the Lord as you seek security and contentment in your identity in Christ. Most of all, these need to be paired with ACTION!

### Asking God to lead you to quality matches:

Lord, you know the desire of my heart is to be a mother and a wife in your perfect will. Give me discernment when I am talking to a man of good and godly character.

Lord, you know my desire is to find a wife and obtain Your favour. Give me discernment when I talk to not only a beautiful woman, but a godly woman.

### Asking God to see the opposite sex with His heart, not yours:

Lord, help me see men with the value that You place on them. Heal my wounds so that I see him as he is, not what I project from the past.

Lord, help me see women with the value You place on them, not the value that I place on them.

## Asking God to help you stay in the moment and not project a future that hasn't yet come when you meet someone you like!

Lord, guard my heart by helping me be present with attractive men. Help me respond to what is happening in the moment, instead of imagining a future that hasn't been realised.

Lord, guard my heart by helping me be present in conversation with attractive women. Help me respond to what is happening in the moment, instead of fear of rejection or my own ego.

Lord, remind me of my worth and value in Christ. Help me be patient to wait for a man to ask me on a real date. Even as I encourage him in my godly feminine nature which you created me to be.

Lord, remind me that I am Your son. Help me be bold to ask her out intentionally. Help me communicate especially when I don't know what to do or say.

## Involving God when you go on a high-stakes date:

Lord, I am so grateful to have this experience and potential for romantic love. Help me enjoy what is happening and get to know this man for the person he is.

Lord, I am so grateful she said yes! Help me enjoy this moment as I get to know this new girl.

## Involving God when you're falling in love:

Lord, I'm falling in love with this man! Help me enjoy it and not get ahead of myself. [Then wait on the Holy Spirit to respond]

Lord, I'm falling in love with this woman! Help me enjoy it and continue guiding me as I ask her on more dates to see if we're suited for marriage. [Then wait on the Holy Spirit to respond]

## Asking God to help you overcome any mindset blocks:

Lord, I am feeling unattractive and insecure. Remind me that I am fearfully and wonderfully made in Your image. Help me focus on enjoying conversations with men, no matter how I feel.

Lord, I am feeling inadequate. Help me focus on what I can control. Give me the courage to execute so my confidence is grounded in concrete actions.

## Asking God for a version-of-happy as you search for your Person while still single:

Lord, show me Your presence in my life. Reveal the places and people You are speaking through. Help me get full of Your Holy Spirit so that I overflow with joy when I talk to men.

Lord, reveal the steps to take me from uncertainty to confidence with women. Surround me with godly people to do life with in this season of singleness.

Lord, while I strongly desire to be loved by a godly man, teach me how to be happy in every season first.

Lord, You know I desire to be a husband to a beautiful woman one day. Show me the way to live where I am content and One with you first.

## Asking God to be with you during heartbreak and rejection:

Lord I am devastated. Be with me as I cry. I know Your plan for me is better than this, but hold me in my brokenness for now [Let the Holy Spirit comfort you and intercede for you].

Lord, You know the state of my soul right now. Minister to me. [Let the Holy Spirit comfort you and intercede for you].

## When you've been searching for what feels like forever and are sick of dating!

*Lord, I have nothing left. Be my strength and my shield.*

*Lord, reveal the places in my heart where I am standing in my own way of Your good and perfect will for my life.*

*Lord, I trust You. I have done everything possible to search for my Person and can see no way forward. Minister to me. Give me peace. Be with me Holy Spirit.*

## **FOCUS ON WHAT YOU CAN CONTROL**

A wise Christian counsellor once said to me, while I was in the thick of intense anxiety about a guy (from Bible College!) that praying prayers like *“Lord, speak to this man about pursuing me.”* was akin to witchcraft. At first I was taken aback, obviously! But after a beat I saw immediately what she was getting at.

We cannot control what our love interest will do or not do. What they will think or not think. If they will receive our love and love us back. We can only control our own thoughts and our actions. We are the ones who make the choice to grow and mature, to become more like Jesus, to properly prepare for marriage. (Yes, I know Jesus didn't marry a person - He married the church! But you get what I mean).

The Bible says we have the mind of Christ (1 Cor 2:16). When we step into this identity that we can align with Jesus' way of thinking, everything should change. Intimacy with the Father evolves as you are doing the dating journey *with* Him.

Involving Him in your self-talk, your thoughts about whether to text that girl you like, your decisions about accepting a date from that guy you have mixed feelings about, letting the Holy Spirit minister to you as you feel insecure for the twentieth time.

I should note that “*a peace which transcends all understanding*” (Philippians 4:6–7) about the person you’re newly dating is not synonymous with “*we should get engaged right now*”. Courtship is a season of discovery and trust building. In essence, it is where you build both a friendship *and* a romance simultaneously. This is a very difficult tightrope to walk, because attraction and connection are causing sparks to fly all over the place. While this is a challenge to navigate, in the whole scheme of your one glorious life, this is a great problem to have!

We can fall in love without knowing all the details about someone. I asked Tom later, a few weeks after the ILY exchange, “What if I told you I was really a monster with bulbous warts? “What if I told you I had slept around and had a zillion STIs?”

He had said “then we would deal with those problems, but it wouldn’t change how I felt about you, and how I feel when I’m in your presence.”

It was then that it dawned on me – we fall in love with a person’s **spirit**. Their presence, aura and energy. How they truly are when there is nothing left to achieve or prove. Just the pleasure of their no-frills company. We are protected against lovebombing when the relationship is not on fast-forward, and the natural rhythms of life cause both parties to show their true character.

This is why I could have an incredible connection with another man, who is also very attractive, but it would not compare to the life I have built with my husband. There are too many layers and foundations this new connection would have to compete with – which makes the concept of cheating very confusing to me. There is too much at stake.

# A TOO-FAST COURTSHIP HORROR STORY

At 35 years old, my friend \*Lydia prayed daily for a husband. She saw a grandfather clock in her dreams with a man standing beside it. "I think that when I meet my future husband he is going to be standing beside a grandfather clock," she once said to me.

Fast forward to her church retreat - Lydia and her friends visited the town's pop-up market together in between sessions. "Oh it's an antique fair!" One of the girls in the group exclaimed.

Reece and his friends happened to also be there. As Lydia was absent-mindedly looking at an antique timekeeper at the clock stand, she lifted her head only to find a cute guy (Reece) running his finger along the dark wood of a grandfather clock. Somehow they met eyes, Reece took his chance with this beautiful woman, and the rest as they say, is history.

6 weeks later Reece proposed to Lydia inside her apartment. They both listened humbly to their mentors and friends about it being "too fast", but would swipe away their concern by stating *"we are doing heavy premarital counselling and marriage preparation courses. Plus we know this is from God. Spiritually we know this is **right.**"*

And preparing heavily they were! Lydia and Reece would meet 3 x per week at their local library and go through "101 Questions To Ask Before You Get Married" together. They were saving money for their future. They were being frugal and planning the next 10 years together. They were doing their "due diligence".

With 70 guests at their backyard Engagement Party, Lydia walked out in a semi-formal white dress and announced to the crowd that this was in fact their wedding - surprise! From meeting beside the prophetic grandfather clock at the antique fair to walking down the garden to her groom, it was 4 months from go to woah - meeting to marriage.

18 months later Lydia messaged me on Facebook telling me that after travelling around the US with her new husband, she was now back in Sydney. "How's Reece?" I asked, excited to see my friend again.

"I ended things with him," she replied.

"He wouldn't even let me catch up with Dave when he came to New York (Dave was a mutual friend of ours). He was so controlling and possessive. We tried working it out but I just couldn't take it anymore. I am staying with some family up the coast. I need to rebuild my life again."

"Jess I just wasn't willing to listen to anyone," Lydia continued. "No matter how much sense and wisdom other people had, I was so excited that it was finally happening. I loved being married, just not to him. I still believe in love. In hindsight I think we should have taken our time and had a period of dating and feeling each other out. I was so fixated on starting a family and just didn't want to be single anymore."

**Psychologist Lindsay Gibson in her book, "Self-Care For Adult Children of Emotional Immature Parents", states in her chapter called The Gumby Effect about the green plasticine stretchy toy of the 1990s. Anyone can stretch and make a good first impression, but when they revert back to their normal shape, that is their real level of psychological maturity. "When people don't fully develop psychologically, they have to compensate for their emotional immaturity by learning to stretch in order to look good and get what they want."**

I honestly think this is what Reece was doing to Lydia. Stretching each limb as far as it could go, capitalising on the fact that Lydia was desperate to become engaged in a short amount of time due to her age and what she believed were Holy Spirit confirmations.

While I don't think Reece was being intentionally malicious, he could have taken some more time courting her. Listening to their pastors and mentors, they could have had a dating period of 6 months at least, and allowed their first argument as a serious couple. This would have given them the opportunity to learn how to repair after a fight, which would have taught them deeper things about what they wanted and needed from each other. Maybe they would have taken a day apart to assess their compatibility - are we right for each other? Can Reece give Lydia the reassurance she needs? Can Lydia give Reece the form of respect he is asking for? This would have taught them key marriage skills which would have strengthened their foundation as a couple. If they allowed the test of maturity and not passed, then *not marrying* would have been the answer.

Now that we know what not to do, let's come back to Best Practice Dating.

It is during Dates 4-6 that it makes sense to let your feelings be known explicitly if you haven't done so already. Sometimes our feelings are expressed via touch and affection before our words are. *Ah, romance!*

I will explain the hoops to jump through in this final stage of early dating before officially becoming a couple.

# FIFTH STAGE: DATES 4-6

## Appropriate Emotional Sharing & Actions: ENJOYING EACH OTHER'S COMPANY AND PICTURING BECOMING A COUPLE.

Congratulations! If you have reached Dates 4-6 I presume you are both pretty into each other. If you are reading this book confident in your level of self-knowledge about what kind of spouse you are looking for, then you would know by Date #3 whether you'd want to call it quits.

While there are many schools of thought on this, I love Aleeza Ben Shalom the Jewish Matchmaker's advice: "Date 'em til you hate 'em" if you aren't sure how you feel about them definitively.

Notice I did not say "decide whether you want to commit to each other now", but rather, at this point you should know in your mind and heart whether you feel:

	<i>Deep enough ATTRACTION</i>	<i>Deep enough CONNECTION</i>
MEN	If it was Biblical, you would consummate things with her in a heartbeat.	She laughs at the same jokes. She understands the life path you're on. You get her, and she gets you. Conversation is easy and flows seamlessly.
WOMEN	You want him to kiss you and you're holding back!	When you're together you forget where the time goes.

Here's where it gets tricky. Women will be expecting somewhat of an exclusivity conversation, and men might be still trying to suss out a few bits and pieces about how they might work as a couple - like how exactly she would fit into his life.

# FIFTH STAGE: DATES 4-6

## Appropriate Emotional Sharing & Actions: ENJOYING EACH OTHER'S COMPANY AND PICTURING BECOMING A COUPLE.

Assuming both are a YES to continue dating, the table below is a Best Practice guide on what to do. I have based this on singles I have worked with over years of coaching. Here, we tip over into “Should We Become A Couple?” territory.

(I understand some move slower than this, but these are the expectations across the board from hundreds of Christian singles worldwide):

	MEN	WOMEN
FEELINGS	<i>I really like this girl. I'd like to introduce her to some important people in my life, like my close friends. I'd also like to take her to [an important place to him].</i>	<i>I'm really excited about this guy. I want to guard my heart and not get ahead of myself, but I hope he is my Person!!</i>
ACTIONS	<p>Takes her on dates (average 1 per week) that invite more intimate conversation and revealing of character.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hiking</li> <li>• Panic Room Challenge</li> <li>• Dinner to restaurants that are a <i>little</i> bit fancier. This signals “I am investing more.”</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Says yes to every date.</li> <li>• Gives back with equal emotional investment, but still allows him to lead. (Eg he planned the slightly fancy dinner date for Date #4, so she suggests a local theatre show and gets the tickets for Date #5)</li> </ul>
	Initiates the conversation about exclusivity (see next page for script).	Gives him the space to have this talk with her.

# FIFTH STAGE: DATES 4-6

## THE EXCLUSIVITY CONVERSATION MEN'S GUIDE

Gentlemen, below is a script you can use as a guide for how to start the “*Would you be my girlfriend?*” conversation. Some call it *going steady*, others call it *becoming official and exclusive*.

The greatest mistake many make in modern dating is continuing to see each other without having these terms explicitly stated. This is dangerous as it means you are expecting her to read your mind. Actions speak louder than words – yes, but that does not mean words are unnecessary!

**NB:** Let this **very** important conversation be clunky and awkward! The most important thing is that you speak from your heart. She will feel more secure (and deeply touched) that you initiated this talk with her in the first place.

*I just want you to know I'm really enjoying our time together. You're an amazing woman.*

*I wanted to ask how you would feel about only seeing each other from now on?*

**[Let her respond]**

**If she likes you back, say:**

*My intention is to court you, to see if engagement and marriage is in our future.*

*I want to do things properly, to really get to know you intentionally and see if we are right for each other.*

*I want to take things slowly.*

*If it's alright with you I'd like to start introducing you as my girlfriend.*

Go back and forth checking in with her feelings for you. Enjoy the honeymoon phase of your new romance.

# FIFTH STAGE: DATES 4-6

## Appropriate Sharing & Actions: DEEP & MEANINGFUL CONVERSATIONS

### LADIES:

If he hasn't had the Exclusivity conversation with you yet, refer to the section on Multiple Dating Strategy and remain low investment about this man. Continue enjoying his company but keep your heart protected by recalibrating your expectations. By Date 5 or 6 use the first bullet point to help you on page 31 if you need to.

### Post exclusivity:

- Your desire to get married and if you want to have children.
- How many children you would like to have.
- Your expectations on courting timeframes. *“If in 6 months we can't see ourselves talking about marriage, we will go our separate ways.”*
- Holding hands and kissing if both of you feel ready for this!
- Gradual introductions to friends and family. Some people need to make family introductions to their new partner before becoming official. This is understandable.

NB: Gentlemen – if you are falling in love with her and want her to know this, wait to see if she will say it back first before taking the plunge!

### Inappropriate Actions:

- Anything that doesn't prioritise deepening the emotional bond.
- Moving in together or having sex (acting married without being married).
- Getting engaged – still too early!

Note: It is outside the scope of this handbook to discuss the stage of marriage preparation through to engagement (the first 6–12 months into the relationship. See next page for more advice).

## A FINAL NOTE: ENJOY THE PROCESS!

You might loathe me for saying this, but I actually *miss* dating. It is a process I look back on fondly, with great nostalgia and warmth. (I know what you're thinking - *easy for you to say, you're all settled now!*)

The work I did growing in confidence as a single woman has paid me dividends as a married woman. Namely to my husband and my children, and the DATEABILITY community. I don't wonder what else is out there, because I took everything I could from my dating season. If you want this for yourself, group or private coaching could be the perfect container for you to be supported, held and seen through the ups and downs of dating.

Your Person is special because they are so difficult to find. Our culture has made a mockery of marriage, asserting that defacto relationships are the same as they bear the same legal rights. But where is the romance in a relationship that requires no accountability, no community, no true oneness, and no covenant before the Lord your God?

Enjoy searching for your Person and the process of falling in love! It is one of the sweetest gifts of life if you let it be.

# IF YOU HAVE FURTHER QUESTIONS...

Or just need to talk about a memory this book triggered for you or anything at all...

book a FREE 15min consult with me by emailing the word **CONSULT** to **jessica@dateability.io**

Or DM me the word “CONSULT” on Instagram:  
**@\_dateability**

Ps. I have SOOOOO many more resources to help you with Romantic Intelligence. See below:

- You: *I rarely meet any men these days that I would even NEED to “modulate my vulnerability”. How do I even meet quality men to start with?*
  - E-book: How I Got Asked Out By 17 Men in 12 Months Without A Single Dating App.
- You: *I’d love to know HOW to actually have the “I’m saving sex for marriage/engagement/later” conversation... can you show me how?*
  - PDF: How & Why To Save Sex For Later Script
- You: *I think I’m actually waaay too guarded. How do I flirt and show my interest in the appropriate way that you talk about?*
  - E-book: The Conversation Starter Cheat Sheet
  - Guide: The Flirting Menu
  - Video: How To Know You’re Ready to Meet Your Soulmate
- And soooo many more ebook and video resources to equip you for your future Person!!!



**GET IT!  
NOW!**

Until then, may the experience of getting to know someone new be slower paced and steady, so you can enjoy every moment!

Loud-key excited for your love story,

Jess x