

# When One Date Leads (Happily) To Another.

By Carolyn Gloeckner

Jason and Kelly have been dating for six months and they seem to have a wonderful time together. John and T.J., on the other hand, have gone out twice. On the first date they hardly said a word to each other. On the second, they argued the entire time and decided not to date each other.

Why? It's fairly obvious if you think about it. How much people enjoy being with each other depends almost entirely on how well they relate to one another.

What is a good relationship?

Experts list at least eight aspects of a healthy relationship. Some are likely to be more important to you than others because they reflect your personal values.

## 1. Attraction

This is not really surprising. Two people find each other

attractive... the way he smiles, or her wide eyes and cheerful personality.

## 2. Honesty and Open Communication.

On your first date, you are both apt to be careful about what you say and do. Once you get past that initial caution, however, it's important to be honest with each other, both about who you are and about what you want from the other person.

What your mother has always told you is true: Be yourself.

Otherwise, how will you know it's you he or she likes?

Moreover, be honest about what you want from the person you date. Are you interested in an occasional good time, or are you looking for a more serious commitment? Do you really enjoy watching football on TV or

would you rather be doing almost anything else? Open communication-expressing your feelings sincerely-is tied to honesty and is every bit as important. Again, it's hard when you are just beginning to date to talk easily about your feelings. Open communication is the glue of intimacy. It ties people together by letting them really get to know each other.

### **3. Compatibility**

How alike are the two of you? People who get along together tend to have similar values, interests and background. They do things on dates that both enjoy, whether it's going to school athletic events or choosing a movie to see on a Saturday night.

### **4. Trust**

People who have a good relationship trust each other. Each knows that the other can be relied on to keep confidences and promises, and to avoid endangering the other person's emotional or physical well being.

### **5. Commitment**

A comfortable level of commitment is important in a good dating relationship. You want to know that the other person you're with wants to be with you. Equally important is that the two of you are committed to the relationship to the same degree: One isn't head over heels in love and already planning a family while the other thinks they are just good friends.

### **6. Mutual Nurturing**

People need encouragement. They like to hear nice things about themselves. People also flunk tests,

have problems with parents, and experience crushing disappointments; and at these times a few words of sympathy can help ease the pain. Mutual nurturing-giving compliments and encouragement and sympathy when it's needed-is an important part of a good dating relationship.

### **7. Constructive Fighting**

Do you think that people who enjoy being together never fight? People disagree and they should speak up when it's important to them. But fighting should be constructive-that is, an argument or disagreement should end with some kind of agreement, not just go on forever. Two people may reach a compromise or they may simply agree to disagree and change the subject.

### **8. Independence**

You may be seeing somebody every weekend on a date and every school day in class, but each of you should retain your independence. Each of you should have interests separate from the other's, and spend some time with your family and friends, just as you did before you began dating. Certain aspects of your life, such as your relationship with your family or your friends, should not have to be sacrificed for the person you date.

These eight qualities make up an "ideal" dating relationship. No relationship is perfect, but you will find that some, or all, of these characteristics are part of your relationship if you are having a wonderful time together.