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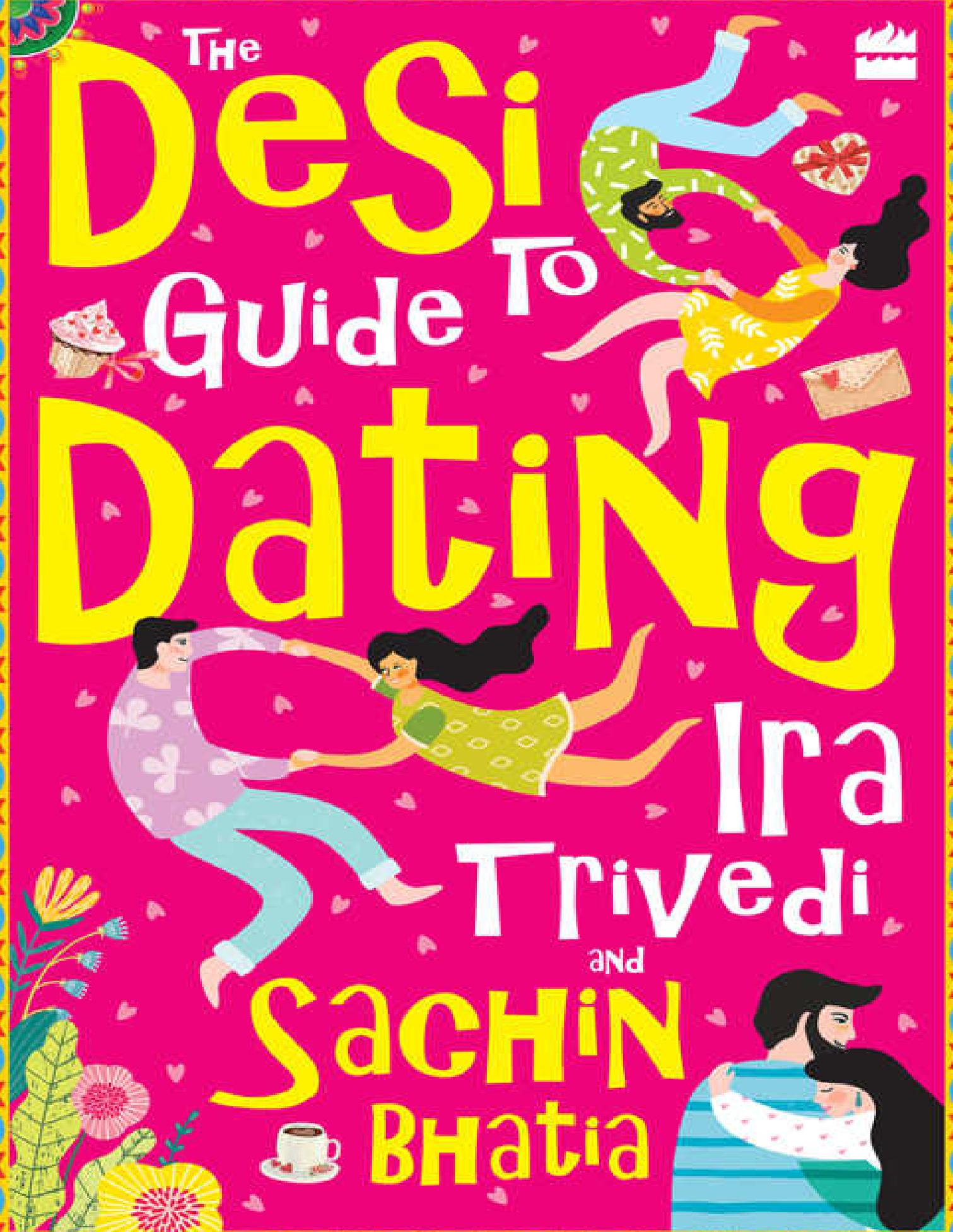
# Desi

Guide To

# Dating

Ira  
Trivedi

and  
SACHIN  
Bhatia



**THE**  
**DESI** **GUIDE**  
**TO**  
**DATING**

**Ira Trivedi**

**and**

**SACHIN BHATIA**



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So, you're ready to start dating?

But do you know what is the difference between friendship and dating? Do you really like someone, but just can't figure out how to ask them out on a date? Do you have a friend who likes you but you just don't like them back?

In the last few years, Indian society has become open to the idea of dating. People want to date, fall in love and find romance but the social rules of conduct are a little hatke for us desi folks. And these Hindi rom-coms don't teach us much. Friendships are being compromised, negativity is creeping into relationships, hearts are being shattered, love birds are left apart and, in general, there is chaos and misunderstanding all around. This book is a one-stop solution to all your dating needs. We're here to help you perfectly navigate this exciting yet confusing world with a step-by-step guide, which walks you through everything you need to know about dating successfully.

Happy dating, folks! Your time has finally come.

Ira and Sachin

# 1

## What's a Date?



If you like someone romantically, and they too seem to like you back, and go out with them, just the two of you – it's a DATE.

Sachin: Naah...liking comes much later. A first date is just a way for a girl to suss out a guy and vice-versa. Or for that matter, a girl to suss out a girl

and a guy to suss out a guy too. The end goal certainly is something romantic eventually, but that's not how it starts. Today, folks are increasingly meeting via dating apps and the first meeting does qualify as a date but romance isn't a necessity. That comes later, much later. Of course, once you get to like each other and meet again that's a date too!

So, let's just say that today a date is just two people meeting over a coffee (with an inkling that this might be the start of something romantic). And to be honest, how romantic can a CCD be?

We are of the belief that dating is a healthy and positive thing, no matter what your parents, elders, aunties, uncles or khap panchayats may say. It allows young (and sometimes old people, too) to get to know and understand each other. It allows us to explore the opposite, or same, sex and ourselves in a healthy way. It gives us an idea of what is out there in the world, and this will only help develop longer lasting, and happier relationships in the long run.

Sachin: Girls are increasingly exercising their choice, be it hobbies, education, work, etc. Then why not when it comes to men? The only way to navigate that problem is to have a choice and to meet more and more men. Now each of those meetings is a date. Keeping it healthy and positive is up to you.

Speaking of marriage. Contrary to popular belief, dating actually helps with marriage rather than take away from it. If you have dated, you'll never wonder if you could've found a better partner. Through the process of dating, you get to meet a wide array of human beings, you get to interact with the opposite sex in a fun and healthy way, and then, when you do decide to settle down, you've seen what's out there, and you can be more satisfied with your choice.

Sachin: Even in an arranged marriage you do get to meet your prospective spouse a few times before M-Day. This too qualifies as a date.

Seems simple, right? We wish. While dating today has become easier than ever before – with the advent of online dating, WhatsApp and what-not – the same factors have also made it more confusing and ambiguous than ever before. What does it mean if she's read your WhatsApp message, knows that YOU have read her message and STILL hasn't replied and it's been thirty minutes! And here you thought that a peck on the lips at the end of dinner meant the date went off swimmingly.

People often ask what's the difference between a date and meeting up with a friend for coffee? They ask us what the difference between a date and a one-night stand? Some people have even asked us what the difference between a date and marriage is (but that is a story for another day).

If you have asked some of these questions, we are here to help. In this book we aim to clear up all the confusion around dating and help you embark on a successful and happy dating career.

A few points to keep in mind before you begin:

- 1) Love comes much AFTER the first date, maybe even many years after. Please don't proclaim your love to someone on the first date, especially if you do not know them. We understand that you may have feelings, or chemistry towards your date, but that is certainly not love.
- 2) Friends do not go on dates. Please don't think that a co-ed dinner qualifies as a date. A date is when two people have some sort of romantic interest or chemistry between them. If you and a girl from college go out on dinner after a study night at the library, and you happen to pay the bill, it is not a date, especially if neither of you have specifically asked each other out. That said, IF you develop feelings for that girl after the dinner and she has them too, and then you ask her out, it then qualifies as a date.

Sachin: But the fact is that you don't suddenly develop feelings for a friend. You always had them but just did not accept it. But sure, once you do, it's a date.

- 3) A successful date means that two people like each other, at least enough to go out on the next date.
- 4) Dating does not have to be exclusive; you could be dating MANY people at the same time. If a girl goes on multiple dates, she doesn't become a 'loose character' or a bad girl, and a man doesn't become a Casanova if he does the same. It just means that you are exploring what's out there, and getting to know the opposite sex from a romantic point of view. So, go ahead, date a few folks till you come across someone you think is worthy being 'exclusive' with.

Sachin: Absolutely. Dating is like a tasting menu till you get to the real stuff (one). Go ahead date a few folks, narrow down those you want to meet again and keep at it till you find someone who seems perfect. And certainly, both can play the game, especially girls. At TrulyMadly, we get tons of feedback on how dating apps are so liberating for girls and they get to meet different guys beyond their neighbourhoods, campuses and offices.

It's important to know what a date is for several reasons.

– You can make your intentions clear.

Sachin: I wish we were very clear about our intentions as a race. Humans aren't. Tigers are.

– You avoid a lot of confusion later. We often meet couples where only one person thinks that they have a boyfriend/girlfriend and later, usually in unforeseen circumstances, they find out that feelings were completely one-sided.

Sachin: The availability of choice due to access to so many more people via FaceBook or dating apps may lead to some confusion. Our parents just had Colgate and Promise to choose from...now we also have Close-up.

– A big problem of our times – ‘friend-zoning’. It is a term popular in our culture now used for when you develop romantic feelings for your friend, but your friend does not reciprocate your feelings. While being friendzoned is not a problem, what can be a problem is if it's not clear to both people that ONLY friendship and nothing more is on offer.

Sachin: That's a safe exit strategy for a lot of folks. It happens. Be ready.

## How Do Ira and Sachin Define a Date?

– It's a date if you are excited, and feel butterflies in your tummies.  
– It's a date if you spend more than 10 minutes thinking about what you're going to wear, planning everything from your socks to your underwear.

Sachin: Used Listerine and Davidoff twice? Yup, it's a date.

– It's a date if you schedule a salon appointment.

Sachin: Multiple visits to the mirror to get that poof right.

– It's a date if you are on your A game.

– It's a date if you are both a tiny bit nervous, even if you have known each other or have been friends for a long time.

Sachin: If you are a teenager reading this and scared that some aunty from the neighbourhood will spot you, then yes, being nervous is normal.

– It's a date if you kiss at the end. Lucky sod!

– It's a date if he brings flowers, chocolates and a card along. No 'friend' gives us these, unless they have feelings for you.

Sachin: Yikes! Sounds like the chipku if he's doing this so early on... encourage him a bit but not too much.

According to us, it is NOT a date if:

– They come with their friends or family. While it's not unusual for girls to bring a friend along on the first date, if she does it the second time, perhaps she is looking for nothing more than friendship.

Sachin: Not so much in urban areas but in smaller cities and towns where dating culture has just started growing, we see a lot of girls bring a bestie along for the first date. And culturally, that is cool versus not going on a date at all.

– It's not a date if you throw on a pair of grimy jeans and an old T-shirt and don't care if you haven't showered or washed your hair. It's not a date if they invite you over to his house last minute, and their tries to hook up with you.

Sachin: A hook-up is a date too, just a different degree. But yeah ain't cool if that's not what you had in mind.

– It's not a date if you are studying together in the library.

Sachin: A lot of date fantasies are made of this scenario, let's not pour a bucket full of morally cold ice on it. The best part of this date is that you don't need to listen or talk! Footsie, the date Olympics sport, was probably invented in a library somewhere.

– It's not a date if she looks at you, or smiles at you. This can just be a girl being polite and friendly.

Sachin: In India, if a girl smiles at you matlab pat gayi, matlab we are dating, matlab she will be the mother of my kids, matlab only smile if you mean it.

– It's not a date if she winks at you.

– It is not a date if they are on the TrulyMadly app when hanging out with you.

Sachin: Nah, they are just checking how different you look in reality versus all the profile pictures on the app.

Sometimes all a girl wants is a friend... and why you should be okay with it.

Guys, here's what you do when you like your friend and she doesn't quite like you back 'in that way'. It sucks. I know it.

Here you thought you're the man of her dreams only to realize she's telling you about her dreams starring some unknown jackass. You've been nice to her, talked to her endlessly, dropped her home, made her feel safe and now she doesn't think of you that way? Ain't life a bitch?

Well, smack yourself in the head. You were being a friend and her liking you back is not the prize you get for this decent human behaviour. You like her? Tell her. She doesn't like you back? That's o-k-a-y. What's TrulyMadly there for, eh?

'But Sachin, she's my sachcha pyaar. I louve her, bro.'

Well, if you do, then respect her choice, stop moping like a roadside Romeo and be a good friend because women friends are super fun.

I am going to talk about friend-zoning from the male POV, keeping in mind that while friend-zoning DOES happen to girls, it is much more common with boys. Our society tends to place a higher value on romantic relationships than platonic ones, especially in heterosexual relationships. People look at 'friend-zoning' as a negative thing. But why is being friends with someone so terrible? Friendship can be a wonderful thing. When boys are rejected by girls, they can get hurt and angry. They may not want to talk to girls at all – not if she only wants to be friends with him. A girl is not obligated to like a boy who likes her, she is not obligated to return his romantic interest. No matter how much you like her, she does not 'owe' you anything.

While the 'friend-zone' in modern times is thought of as an awful place, a no-man's land, I want all men to consider it because being friends with a girl can be beautiful. For some people it can be genuinely difficult to consider friendship with someone they really like. In that case, it may be better to be upfront about it and to go lick your wounds away from them, till you recover completely.

## Questions from our followers

Hello

I recently went out on a date with a girl I have liked for three years. I took her to my favourite chai stall. I think she liked me because she brought three of her friends along to meet me also. I, being a gentleman, paid for all of them. I have been calling her and messaging her on WhatsApp, BBM and FBM, but no reply from her at all! Do you think something has happened to my girlfriend? What should I do?

Worriedandinlove

Dear Worriedandinlove

Unfortunately, she is not your girlfriend, and your 'date' doesn't qualify if she brought three of her friends along. It's clear that she is not interested, and I think that you should just let it be for a while, else you will be stepping into stalker category.

Xoxo

Ira

Hey Worriedandinlove

Bro, it's time for you to move on. But don't worry, there are many fish in the sea. But the fish need to know you are fishing and for that you need to have the right bait. It is important to make your intentions clear from the get go else confusion will ensue.

Sachin

Dear Ira and SB

I have been good friends with this one guy for two years. In fact, I consider him to be my best friend. Usually we hang out in a group, but for the past month, we have been going out just the two of us, which has cemented our friendship. He's also been sweet, getting me flowers and chocolates and leaving me notes in my locker. Now, suddenly out of the

blue, he just vanished, and has stopped talking to me. I don't understand why I have lost my best friend. I didn't do anything out of the ordinary. What happened? Please help!

Losingmybff

Dear Losingmybff

It seems clear that your friend was not clear in his intentions. Even though you didn't know it at the time, he probably thought that you were going out on dates with him. And since the dates haven't lead anywhere (you didn't even realize that these were dates), I can understand why he may have lost interest and then disappeared. It's not your fault, you didn't do anything wrong. I wish he had been mature enough to have had a conversation with you before he acted this way. Let's hope that he comes back. They often do. When he does, you should think about having an upfront and serious conversation with him about the nature of your relationship.

Ira

Dear Losingmybff

The writing is on the (locker) wall. He wanted to move the relationship from the locker to the... Well, let's just say the locker room. If you feel anything beyond friendship for your friends, you need to get the message across that you too want something more. If you don't, then you should make that clear as well! Your turn to hack his locker and start leaving notes.

Losing it

Sachin

Hello,

My name is Luv, and I am in love with a girl who is in my college. We are study-buddies, and we spend a lot of time together – in class, in the library and working on projects. I am pretty sure she is interested in me too. I tried to kiss her in the library the other day, and she went and

complained to the principal. They have suspended me for two weeks. Aren't you supposed to kiss the girl you are dating? What did I do wrong?

Thanks for the advice  
SuspendedLuv

Dear SuspendedLuv

First, studying with someone or being in the same classroom as her do not qualify as dates, and she is most certainly not your girlfriend. It is ludicrous for you to think this, and to make a pass at her in the library. I think you should contemplate your behaviour while you are suspended and read this book too to understand what consent is and how to ask a girl out if you genuinely like her!

Ira

SuspendedLuv

Stop watching Salman Khan films. There is a reason he's fifty and single!

Suspended & Banished  
Sachin

Dear Ira and Sachin

I like a boy and I want to marry him too. I want to spend some time with him and get to know him but I am afraid if I ask him out on a date, he will think I am a loose, impure girl and then he may not want to marry me. What should I do?

Sati Savitri

Dear Sati Savitri

Firstly, there is NOTHING wrong or 'impure' about going out on a date. It is the perfect move for you if you want to get to know him better. I don't suggest you rush into marriage with him or anyone else for that matter without going out with him and understanding what he is all about. If he

thinks that you are 'loose' by asking him out on a date, you should dump him immediately. He obviously belongs to some sort of a khap panchayat and I would never want any of my readers marrying a guy like that!

Ira

Dear Sati Savitri

I imagine when you say ask him out you mean like a cafe or a movie, not Netflix and chill (though that's cool too as far as I am concerned) and that's certainly not impure. If his threshold of impurity is a date at your favourite coffee shop, you certainly don't want this man to be your husband. Go for it, live on the wild side, suss him out on the first and, hopefully, many other dates. And yes, take Ira's advice and don't rush the marriage bit for now.

May you find your Satyavan  
Sachin

Dear Ira and Sachin

It was midnight. I liked her and so did she. She invited me over to her house and I had had a few whiskeys so I ended up going over, and we did the deed. Was this a date? I keep on messaging her but no reply. I have hazy memories of her, but I think I liked her very much. What should I do?

Hookey

Dear Hookey

This was not a date. This was a hook-up, aka a one-night stand. If you like her, call her and make sure that she is comfortable and okay with what happened. It's the gentlemanly thing to do. Throw in some flowers if need be, that would be great as well.

Ira

Hey Hookey

Stop blaming the whiskey and man up. Call her, talk to her, make sure that she knows you like her. Girls appreciate a straight shooter. There is nothing 'unmanly' about admitting your feelings for her.

Hazily  
Sachin

2

## The Proposal



Now that you know what dating is, how do you start dating? In this chapter, we will teach you how to plunge into the world of dating.

The first step is to find someone whom you can date. Most of us surround ourselves with the same groups of people, day in and day out. We want to stay within our comfort zone. We don't want to take risks. We fear rejection from the opposite sex. Some of us are just plain lazy, and it seems like a lot of effort to get ready and to go out there hoping to meet someone whom we may or may not click with. The thought of physically putting in the effort to meet someone (or many) and to actually talk to them, when it probably won't work out anyway, can be an intimidating task. But taking the leap towards open-mindedness is the first step to a successful dating life. You must go out there and be open to meeting new people. You must have a positive and open outlook towards your love life. Try joining a new club, try a new sport, go out partying with a new group of friends, or download an online dating app and put in some effort to create a nice profile for yourself. The more people you meet, the higher the chances of meeting a partner of your dreams. So, be open and take a chance. You won't regret it.

This is where dating apps come in. They allow you to explore the world of singles, yet give you control with no fear of rejection. Most apps do not disclose whom you have not liked or if you have not been liked by someone. Also, they are very private and never disclose phone numbers, location, etc. Only if there is a mutual like do you get on to a chat and you may then exchange personal information. So yes, it's a great way to meet new people.

## THE PITCH-PERFECT DATING PROPOSAL

Unfortunately, there is no formula for the perfect proposal. Everyone is different, and every situation is different. However, there are many mistakes to avoid, and pitfalls to navigate. The key to the perfect proposal is to do it in the most natural way.

Boys, you have to find the right balance between the proposal being natural but also not too casual. You don't want her to think you're asking

her out simply as a friend. It's important to make your intentions crystal clear while remaining respectful and decent.

Girls, boys are shier than you think, even if they try to give the impression that they are confident, cool and oh-so-charming. At times, it is good to take the lead. If there is someone that you like, there is no harm in approaching him, talking to him and gauging if the two of you share some chemistry. If you feel that you do, you can subtly ask him out. For example, you can try saying, 'There's this really great new coffee place close by, I would love to try it out.' See if he bites and says, 'I love a good cup of coffee, why don't we go try it out together?' SCORE!

Sachin: Yup. This is not the age of subtleties, which are anyway lost on men. In all probability, this is going to happen over a messenger chat. Girls, you may need to take the lead here. If you like a guy, it's just a simple 'What's up?' he'll say, 'Nothing much,' and you seal the deal with 'Coffee?' Clean, simple and affirmative. And if he gets too clingy, pretend it was not a date but just 'time-pass'.

While being direct would be ideal, dating is a game, and to be successful at it, you must play it. The above is better than saying, 'I really like you, let's go on a date at a coffee place close by.' DO NOT do that. Use some of your feminine charms, be subtle.

Boys, if you like her, don't be lame, ask her out. There is a way to go about doing this. Most girls enjoy some degree of flirting pre-proposal. When it's time to ask her out, go the old-school and chivalrous way. Do it in person, that's always the best. Do not ask her out with a bunch of your guy friends standing around ogling or giggling. She simply won't take you seriously. Don't make a joke of it if you don't want to be treated like a joke. Girls, this goes for you too. If you like a guy, try not to get all your girlfriends involved. This seems to work out well only in Bollywood movies. In real life, this can be a mess.

Sachin: Don't over think this one. When all else fails, fall back on a messenger. WhatsApp is your new wingman. It's intimate yet casual. Use it

to the hilt. And yes, flirt a bit before. It's more fun and sets the tone.

While you may like her, don't act desperate. This is a turn off for both boys and girls. Boys, let me tell you from experience, a little bit of earnestness pays off and is appreciated, but there is a fine line between being earnest and being desperate. Same for you, girls. Be friendly, but don't be starry-eyed – this may lead him to take advantage of you. 'The Nice Girl' act only goes so far. You must never be taken for granted. You must let him know who's in charge from the beginning.

While we prefer you asking her out in person, if you really can't muster up the guts, you can do it over WhatsApp or any other such app.

## THE CHAT PROPOSAL

### A Good Scenario

Him: Hey

Her: Hi!

How are you?

Good...and you?

Great :) Listen... you mentioned that you like biryani. There's a great biryani spot that I discovered. I would love to take you there!

OMG, that sounds fab. I <3 biryani.

What works? Day after?

Yep, day after is perfect.

8 p.m.?

7:30 p.m. is better as parents want me home by 10.

I'll have you home by 10 p.m. sharp! See you

:)

It's a date!

Her: :)

A Bad Scenario

Him: Yo

Her: Hi...

How u?

Good and you?

Perfect

Look, I've been meaning to tell you something for a long time.

Um what...

I REALLY like you and have a huge crush on you...

U dere?

Hello? W r u?

HALLLLOOOO...

WTF

I was joking, I never really liked you. My friend did.

You're a jerk.

BLOCKED

Let's do a quick dissection of the two conversations. Both took place between two people who had an initial interest in each other. The first one went well, the second one... not so much. While we prefer face-to-face

proposals, the unfortunate truth is that they are becoming less popular. People prefer to hide behind their screens, where rejection is easier to swallow. The trouble with chats is that a lot is lost in translation. You lose out on the nuances of facial expressions, voice, tone, energy, body movement and SO much more. If in the second scenario, the boy had asked out the girl in person, we promise that the conversation would have gone much better. Even the line which did turn her off – ‘ I really like you and have a huge crush on you’ – would have gone down better in person. In this conversation, the line just confused the girl, and she began wondering if he was playing around with her. Because he had nothing to lose, the boy went ahead and made a silly move by saying – ‘I was joking, I never really liked you. My friend did.’ He did this to make himself feel better after she stopped replying to him. By saying this, he confirmed the fears the girl had of him messing around with her in the first place. The truth is he did genuinely like the girl and had they gone on a date, it would certainly have been a fun one. But he decided to take the WhatsApp route, and he totally messed it up.

Now let’s look a little closely at the first conversation. Here, the boy asked the girl out for biryani, and by doing this he proved to her that he was a good listener. He appeared sensitive and sweet when he told her that he would have her back by 10. His best move was to add the little line, ‘It’s a date’ JUST in case there was confusion that it was a purely platonic dinner. When she replied with a smiley, it was confirmed that both parties had the same intentions.

## PRE-DATE PREP

### **Texting**

Unfortunately, gone are the days when being sweet, charming, well-spoken and well-dressed were enough to make your dating life successful. Now you have to be an able texter too. Texting is your first point of contact to your potential date and like anything else in life, there are rules and standards for success. A disaster at this step will lead to no date, so control those fingers and text with caution.

## Thumb rule

Keep your fingers in check. Prior to your first date, don't over-text, just do enough to titillate and build interest. A little can go a long way: a flirtatious wink, a casual 'see you soon...'. Over-texting before the date is not good, no matter how well you two are virtually getting along.

## Don't text like a maniac

I know we are all compelled to write one line SEND, one line SEND, one line SEND, but instead of doing this, write one line, or two if you must, and then wait for them to reply. If the other person is taking time to reply, don't freak out, just try to divert your attention as much as possible (I know it's hard, but try candy crush, FB stalking, Twitter/Instagram scrolling). Messaging like a maniac will only make you look desperate.

## Rules of reply

Don't reply immediately every time. We don't want your prospective date thinking you're just sitting there waiting for their text, even if this is the truth. Play a little hard to get, especially in the beginning. Let them think you have other things going on, even if you don't. Also, I strongly suggest switching off the 'read' feature or any message receipt facility. You don't want feelings getting hurt at this stage.

Sachin: Damn rules. What happened to go with the flow? Use your instincts to decide when to reply immediately, and when to let things cool off. Practice makes perfect, hence chat with as many prospective dates as possible. And the only way is to use a dating app to get access and practice.

## Write out whole words

The one thing that annoys me the most is when people don't spell out whole words. Say 'Are you there?' instead of 'u der.' Write 'am' instead of 'm'. Most certainly don't write texts like, 'M here r u der 4 me' or 'Dnt B 18.' Don't write texts like gibberish, it makes the other person take you less

seriously. Be coherent. A couple of extra A's and O's won't take up too much time but will give your messages a more serious tone.

Sachin: Wren & Martin is out of circulation now. It's the age of the shorthand. Let me just say that start off with whole words, if they reciprocate play along. If they answer in with 'u' der, swallow your pride and just say 4 u with a grinning, show-of-teeth emoji.

Don't go crazy with the emojis

How many is too many? Emojis are cute, we all love them and, yes, a picture can tell a thousand words, but an emoji simply cannot. You can get your point across by sending one smiley; you don't need a whole line of them. In general, if you're sending more emojis than writing out text, there is a problem.

Sachin: Like I said, mix them up. If you are a teen, the expected ratio of words to emoji is 40:60; for people in their mid-twenties, it is 60:40; those in the late-twenties, 80:20; and if in your late-twenties you are at 40:60, move out of your parents' house this very minute and see your dating life improve.

Don't use multiple platforms to send the same text

They will not respond any faster if they get the same message on multiple platforms at the same time. If they haven't replied, they're just not that into you. Figure out what the best platform for communication is and stick to it.

Sachin: These days they have a term for folks who message across platforms – STALKER. Stick to WhatsApp, they will see it at some point. If they don't reply, the writing is on the wall (not the Facebook wall, but the proverbial one).

**The Display Picture**

Choose your DP wisely. Try to make your DP look as close to what you really look like. Apply filters but don't apply so many that you look like a totally different person. Try not to wear sunglasses in your DP, especially not really big ones. It's nice to change your DP occasionally, but there is no point of changing it every single day. Once in a while, it's nice to have a DP that is not your face, but of an object, place or saying that you really like.

DPs that get the most likes on TrulyMadly are ones that tell a little story and a bit about you. One holding your pet poodle – he likes pets. Another with the hills in the background – she likes the outdoors. A picture of you strumming a guitar – he's borrowed one and holding it for effect! But seriously, props can add so much to a picture. And rub that poodle under the neck to show you are a genuine dog lover.

Don't overdo it with the pictures, especially with the selfies. It's endearing to send your prospective a picture or two. But leave something for real life, and leave something to the imagination. There is no need to bombard them with your baby pictures, pictures of your best friend, your mother, your father, your sister, and your dog. Multiple selfies will make them think you're an egomaniac.

#### How to take a good selfie

Hold the phone as far away from your face as possible. Make sure the phone is ABOVE you, a good foot above, and that you are looking up into the phone. Your face will look rounder and more distorted the closer you hold the phone to your face and is also more likely to accentuate things like double chins and nasal hair. In case you can, use a selfie stick. It can be tedious to use one, but the quality of the selfi is far higher with a stick, and they are available online.

Also a note of caution, especially for girls. Don't take a selfie at your place of work near the company's logo in the background or the address of your house. A little caution and privacy is always better.

## **Sexting**

Sexting is avoidable till a later stage of a relationship. Of course there are always exceptions.

Sachin: Damn, wet blanket and this is the part I wanted to spend the next 100 pages on. But well, sane advice for now.

A no means a no

If she doesn't want to go on a date with you , you can try again, but not again and again and again and again. If she is not into you, then its best to move on. If both of you want to be friends, you can go down that route, but don't go creepy on her at some point in the friendship.

Keep these rules in mind, but also remember that texting is texting, it's not rocket science. There is no need to spend hours on one text and discuss it with ALL your friends. Your texting should not become sort of a group project. Be natural, be kind, be sensitive, be positive and more importantly be yourself.

## **SOME CARDINAL DATING TRUTHS FROM IRA**

I am sharing these truths with you early in the day, because these rules are golden and knowing them now will keep you in good stead later. Ladies, right now, at this stage of the dating game, the ball is in YOUR court. He is going to be fawning over you, asking you out, once, twice, thrice. But it may not stay this way for long. Pretty soon, after three to five dates, the dynamics will shift, especially if you like him, and he knows it. You'll see that you're the one now pushing to meet. It's not like he doesn't like you, it's just that he knows he has you, so he may tend to relax. And ladies, we don't want a man who relaxes. He should be working to keep you, especially in the beginning.

There are ways in which you can keep the power dynamics on your side, and that is by playing the game right.

- 1) Set the standards from the beginning. Even if you really want to see him, it's good to say no sometimes. If you're always available, he'll start taking you for granted. The harder to get you are at the start, the more he will appreciate you later on. This is called 'compensation', a basic psychological principle.
- 2) Don't play so hard to get that you turn him off completely, especially if you like him too. Don't say no so many times that he doesn't ask you out again. Don't reply to all his texts immediately, but also don't wait too long to reply. Be nice. Giving him the cold shoulder is not playing hard to get.
- 3) The dating game is all about power, and the more power you can keep in the relationship, the better. Remember the dating game IS a game. While in a long-term relationship, games can get pretty stale and boring, when you're dating, you must be prepared to play.

Sachin: Sounds like Tiger Mom equivalent, a Tiger Dater? Sure recipe for roaming the dating savannah all alone. Hey, there is no power play, it's a simple date, nothing super serious, you are just getting to know each other. Be natural. If he's clingy pull back, if she's fun, hang out more. If he's too horny, keep the pepper spray ready and move on to the next date.

### How To Get Him To Ask You Out

Ladies, as we have said before, it is okay to ask him out. Sometimes men need that extra boost, but it is preferable if you can pass him the right hints and get him to ask you out.

- Send him flirty texts, but not many. Remember that fine line between eager and desperate.
- When hanging out in a group, try to make him feel special by going and talking to him, smiling at him, paying him more attention.
- Sometimes your eyes can say more than words. Make sure he catches you looking at him once in a while and then turn your eyes away. Romance him with your eyes at this stage of the game.
- Also another psychological principle: if you're sitting in a group with your special someone, see where his navel is pointing – that is the centre of his attention. Try to place

yourself in the direction of his navel so that you are automatically in the sphere of his attention.

- You may be tempted to keep your girlfriends around you when talking to him. All of us feel more comfortable with our girls around, but it's important to step away from the herd and to get a little one-on-one time with him.
- While he should (and he will) like you for your personality, try to be your attractive best whenever you are around him, at least in the beginning. We will discuss more of that in the next chapter.

## THE ART OF THE PICK-UP LINE

Ironically, the best pick-up lines are the ones that do not sound like pick-up lines at all, but come naturally. You have to seem interested but not overeager and this can be trickier than you can imagine.

### **Do not use the L word**

Firstly, DO NOT go and tell someone that you 'love' or 'like' them and that you want to go out on a date. It's more elegant not to mention the word 'date' at all. Rather than saying, 'I would like to go out on a date with you,' it is better to say, 'I would love to take you out for a cup of coffee sometime.'

### **Be brazen**

This goes for both boys and girls. Don't be shy to go up to someone and talk to them. This can be intimidating for the best of us, but 9 out of 10 times, when you take that chance, there is absolutely nothing that you will lose. If you see a hot guy at a friend's party, go up to him and start a conversation. It can be something as simple as 'Hey, you look really familiar, have I met you with Sneha (the friend) before?' or if you find a girl really cute go up to her and say, 'Hey, I love that t-shirt you're wearing.'

I would love to get one like this for my sister, where I can get this from?' Even simple little lines like this can be great conversation starters.

### **If she's not interested, do not push it**

Guys, when she says no, once, twice, thrice, she means it. It is not cool to ask her more than three times. It is not okay to send her message after message, it is certainly not cool to follow her around hoping that she will soon fall in love with you. If she doesn't respond to your pick-up lines in the way that you like, it is okay, maybe she is not interested in getting to know you, and there is nothing wrong with that. Who knows, things could change in the future, and if you still like her, then you can try asking her out after a few months, but right now, let it be. Maybe there is something much better for you out there. Being positive means that you're already winning at dating.

### Questions from our followers

Hey guys

I really like this girl. She has accepted my Facebook friend request and we have been chatting for some time. I asked her out by sending her a WhatsApp message – she was replying a lot and then suddenly she stopped. I can see that that she has read the message, but sometimes WhatsApp can have bugs. I sent her the same message a few times on SMS, Viber, BBM and even email, but I haven't heard back. What do I do?

Eagerbeaver

Dear Eagerbeaver

A cardinal rule for dating – choose ONE medium for messaging and DO not send the same message more than twice. In the future, you should have a friend sit beside you while you reach out on social media. Friends don't let friends mix drinks or messaging platforms. There are other fish in the sea, let this one be.

Ira

Dear EagerBeaver

Companies that get sold for USD 18 billion don't have bugs. That's why they are so valuable and hopefully so is your time. Stop wasting it across platforms. Move on. Start finding more matches on a dating app.

Sachin

Hello

I've liked a guy for a long time. I want to propose to him, but I am feeling shy. Is it okay for a girl to propose to a guy or is it too forward?

Shygirl

Dear Shygirl

While it IS okay for a girl to ask a guy out, I think you can easily drop him hints that will get him to ask YOU out. Gauge the dynamic between the two of you. If you are hanging out with him in a group, try to get a little conversation going, letting him know (subtly) about your interest. Send him some flirty texts and see how he responds. Maybe even something as simple as a 'hey good looking,' or 'how is my main man doing today?' If he is interested, he will bite. If he doesn't bite despite your hints, be brazen and go ask him out! Sometimes all men need is that initial nudge to get them going in the right direction.

Ira

Dear Shygirl

Channel your inner goddess and go ask him out. Just don't let it get to his head. Play it right by following our rules and he'll come crawling into your waiting arms.

May the shyness leave you

Sachin

Hola

There is a girl in my class, and I KNOW she has a HUGE crush on me. She has been STARING at me for WEEKS. I decided that it was time to make her dreams come true, so I went and asked her if she wanted to be my girlfriend. She laughed and walked away from me. What is GOING ON?

Cheers  
BIGdaddy

Dear BIGdaddy

I am not surprised at her behaviour. Sometimes such a direct proposal can be a bit intimidating, even if she does like you. The best is to be subtle, yet friendly, about your intentions. If you genuinely like her, I think you should go about this in a slightly less pompous way than you have done. Don't ask her to be your girlfriend (who does that?) but tell her that you would love to take her out for a coffee or lunch to get to know her better. You may have turned her off permanently with your behaviour, but give it one more try... and leave your ego behind!

Ira

BigBaddy

Before you do anything, find out why she was staring at you. Do you have a big wart on your face, or a pimple? Maybe she can't help staring at it. You don't just walk up to a girl in class (or anywhere for that matter) and ask her to be your girl. Next time start with a simple hello and take it from there.

Go big or go home  
Sachin

Dear Ira and S

There is a guy whom I like, and we have been texting and emailing for over four months. I am waiting for him to ask me out, I have sent ALL the right signals – flirty texts, smiles, and once I even flashed him a little bit of my legs, but nothing has come off it till now. I see him talking to other girls

all the time. He often ignores me when he talks to these other girls! What am I doing wrong?

Patientlyours

Dear Patientlyours

I am so sorry to say this to you, but it sounds like he's just not that into you. He could be doing you a favour by staying away from you. You deserve a guy who likes you as much as you like him! That said, if you don't want to have any regrets there is no harm in asking him out. Go and ask him. You never know how the cookie crumbles.

Ira

Dear Patientlyours

Move on darling! He is just not that into you, especially if he is ignoring you in front of other girls. Nice one with the leg flashing, but let's save that for the right guy.

Be less patient

SB

Un-Single Stories from the TrulyMadly Archive

Gaurav and I met on TrulyMadly. I was initially reluctant to install any dating app as I had heard a lot of negatives against them. But TrulyMadly was recommended to me by a close friend and I thought might as well give it a shot, and it was worth it. A few days after installing the app, I came across Gaurav's profile and instantly swiped right, and it was a match. Post connecting, we only chatted for a month, neither of us called the other. Subconsciously, we both had in mind to build up till we meet. Chatting came very naturally to us. Gradually, we could talk about anything and everything. There were days when I used to tell him that I can't talk to him anymore since I feared falling for him

and I was not in the frame of mind to get into something serious. We then started sharing snippets from our everyday life, pictures from our office, our friends, etc. Then one day, during a conversation, I asked if he was implying that we were dating, and he said that he wasn't implying, he was saying we were. Things changed for the better after that. Talking to him over chats felt like writing a diary and reading a book. Finally he was to come to Delhi for his friend's wedding, which happened to be the same day as my birthday!

He was to reach Delhi at 11.30 p.m. on 30 April, my birthday, and promised me he would see me before it ends, and he did. There he was, standing right in front of me and we just smiled, there was no awkwardness and we hugged like we had always known each other. We got engaged in July and got married in November. My personal thoughts about dating apps, especially TrulyMadly, changed.

# 3

## The First Date



You have successfully found a (or some) date-worthy candidate, proposed and they've even said yes! Now it's time to plan that first dream date.

Remember, nothing prepares you better than preparation and as with anything else in life, a well-planned date will have higher chances of success. These simple tips will pave the way for a successful first date, which then sets the tone for all future dates to come. In this chapter, find tips from Ira and Sachin on where to go, what to do, how to dress and how to cope with those first-date jitters.

A wise person once said, 'First impressions are the last.' We truly believe in this and take dressing for the first date very seriously.

## WHAT TO WEAR?

### **Ladies**

#### Clothes

A thumb rule for the first date is to wear something that brings out your best. You don't need to wear anything particularly expensive or sexy, but just something that is appropriate for the occasion, that you are comfortable in, that you feel fabulous in, and that defines your best features.

Sachin: Hey, why not? Bring it on...as long as it goes with where one is. I'm sure you can both look fab even when casually dressed for a date at an expensive cafe. As per the TrulyMadly date survey, 91 per cent women found men in simple blue jeans and a white T-shirt the sexiest. Forty-three per cent men found jeans and a t-shirt hot while 41 per cent preferred girls in a red dress and heels!

If you are going out on a coffee date there is no point wearing a micro-mini skirt and high heels. You can wear that if you are heading to a nightclub. That said, you don't have to dress like a nun either. If he thinks you're 'impure' because you're wearing your favourite spaghetti top, that's too bad for him (and he's definitely not worth your time). Steer clear of men who seem to care too much about the way you dress, especially of men who comment on the length of your skirt, or how tight your top is.

However, do not underdress either. Don't show up in yoga pants or leggings and an old t-shirt for your date! You can wear that when you're going to yoga class or watching a movie at home. If you want your man to make the effort to dress for you, you should make the effort for him.

It is important to be dressed like you. If you are a jeans and t-shirt kind of girl, don't show up in salwaar suit. Same goes for the other way around. If you are happy wearing a salwaar suit, don't try to rock up in a mini. We are hoping that this date manifests into another date, and maybe even more, so you can pretend for only so long to dress like someone totally unlike yourself.

## Lingerie

While you may or may not be taking off your clothes for a while, it is important to keep in mind all aspects of your clothing when you begin dating someone. While that five-year-old bra with droopy straps and loose elastic may be your favourite and most comfortable – do get rid of it because the longer you date someone, the higher the chances are of him seeing more of you! Same goes with undies. You must try to buy new underwear every year. This is not only hygienic, but will make you and him both feel better. The one-year rule goes for men as well. Do wear clean and fresh underwear at all times. When your innerwear is clean, fresh and sexy, you too will feel clean, fresh and sexy. Trust me on this!

Also ladies, I believe in comfort first and foremost. Do not feel pressured by anyone to wear uncomfortable underwear. Not only is it bad for your body, it will make you feel uneasy as well. Stick to simple, well-fitted designs and breathable cotton fabrics.

## Makeup

The less the better. Most girls think that the more makeup they apply, the prettier they look, but this is far from the truth. Over-application of makeup is not good for your skin and it doesn't make you prettier either.

In the makeup department, subtle is key. Use earth tones to enhance your cheekbones and pout. If it's night-time, try a simple smoky-eye look. If you

have a last-minute zit emergency, or have dark circles that you have to conceal, use basic foundation, but use it sparingly. I love kajal and apply it all the time. Eyes speak volumes, and sometimes giving the man the right kind of look can send a message that a thousand words cannot. A little bit of accentuation can go a long way and kajal or eye liner does the trick beautifully. Natural kajal with almond oil can actually be good for the eyes, so if you're a kajal-phene like me, try this.

Your date will want to see the 'real you' so show the real you. Plus the hope is that one day you will be comfortable around him with no makeup at all and won't have to worry about the way you look at all.

Sachin: Most men we speak to at TrulyMadly are only aware of the basic three (lipstick, nail polish and eyeliner/kajal) when it comes to makeup. They are unaware of the transformative power of foundation, blush and concealer. I'd say just enough make up to look as close as possible to your DP please for the first few dates. Oh yes, 89 per cent of men and 83 per cent of girls we interviewed found tattoos attractive and a turn on!

## Hair and Nails

I suggest a trip to the salon before your date, especially if it's important for you. Guys (and girls too) HATE stray hair and dirty nails. I've met many guys who have unnatural aversions to them (which seems unfair, because it is hair after all and they have SO much of it but this is just the way it is). When he falls in love with you stray hairs or dirty nails don't matter, but right now they do. Go for a quick round to the parlour to get your nails done, your extra facial hairs removed, and even a quick wax if you can.

Sachin: A date's a good excuse to go to the parlour (not that you need one!), so yeah, a bit of parlour time is good. And stray hair done right can look very cool, but you'll need to go to a parlour for that.

As for hair, you want to show off your best, so wash your hair, make sure it's not greasy and if you can, get a quick blow-dry. Remember to style yourself to the occasion. If you're going for coffee, no need to curl or

straighten your hair. If you're going to a five-star hotel for dinner, a messy bun ponytail is probably not appropriate. A good rule of thumb is to imagine how long the date will last, and use one-fourth of that time in hair-care preparation.

And don't forget deodorant. Perfume is not a substitute to deodorant and it does not do the same job. The worst possible scent is when body odour mixes with perfume. Bad body odour is a huge turn off. It is a demonstrated psychological fact that unpleasant odours leave the most long-lasting sensory impression. Invest in a non-scented, anti-perspirant stick, or if that is unavailable to you, try using anti-bacterial neem soaps, or apply a neem-leaf extract paste.

Sachin: Deodorant is good, especially if the date involves a ride in a metro to the date spot and he's shorter than you. We see a lot of guys carry a small deo in their backpacks for a quick squirt if needed. And we hear you get these flat pack deos that can just be carried in the back pocket of your jeans.

## Shoes

Pay close attention to the footwear that you wear during your date. Just like with clothing, remember to wear the footwear that suits the occasion. Do not wear heels if you are going for a walk in the park (I have seen many girls make this mistake) do not wear chappals/ flip flops (no matter how nice) if you are going to dinner. Perhaps the most important thing to keep in mind with regards to footwear is to make sure you are comfortable. Many women make huge sacrifices when it comes to comfort. I understand the 'no pain, no gain' philosophy but reality is that men don't pay much attention to a woman's footwear. If you are uncomfortable during your date because of footwear that pinches, you simply will not be able to be at your best, and this will take away from the date, rather than add to it. So wear footwear that suits you AND that you are comfortable in.

## Men

Grooming is not just for women! It is as important for you to look good. Remember that the standards you apply to your date also apply to you.

Sachin: Try looking like your DP, and not the one in the gym! Get the basics right – shampoo, trim (if you have a beard), after-shave, deo and clean clothes. Ideally no belts with a H or LV on the buckle on the first date.

## Clothes

We are not asking you to wear a suit and a tie, but make sure you wear clean clothes, clean socks and your shoes too have been given a good dusting. You can tell a lot about a man from his shoes. You don't have to go buy yourself an expensive pair, but make sure that whatever you are wearing is clean and well-kempt at least.

The three Cs of dressing are crisp, clean and casual.

Guys usually don't have a tendency to over-dress, but don't under-dress either. When in doubt follow the three Cs and if you are going for a nice dinner, throw on a blazer or put on a shirt with a collar. You may not care about what you wear, but she certainly does. I personally believe that a man should dress in order to make her friends jealous. Remember, that in dating, as in business, image goes a long way.

Sachin: Dress for the occasion. Jeans and a white tee go well in most situations (with collars for a dinner, round necks for everything else) you will find yourself in. And clean those dirty sneakers, please, and don't drop food on that white tee!

Do not wear your boxers with the brand showing above your jeans. Only Calvin Klein underwear models are allowed to do that. You are not an underwear model.

## Makeup

A solid NO to this, boys. I have known men who rock up with kajal, and it's very odd. When it comes to 'guy-liner', just say no. This is personally my opinion.

Sachin: Ira, stop putting silly ideas in our heads. It is okay to rock up with a girl called Kajal. Most girls we interviewed about this on TrulyMadly feel makeup is only for girls. They like their men to be well-groomed for sure but that does not include makeup. But then again, times they are a changing. I'd say stick to hair gel and maybe something to hide that acne for the first date.

## Hair and Nails

Make sure that your hair is washed and that your hands are clean. For guys, it is acceptable to have a (carefully) tousled look; in this case, hair product is key. Gel your hair if you must but mildly, not rock-hard. Make sure to take a few minutes to take care of any stray nose hairs or that unsightly monobrow.

Sachin: Remove the grime between your nails with a toothpick before the date. Shampoo your hair to remove all traces of the champi you got over the weekend. Mildly gel your hair if you must.

In terms of cologne, think simple and elegant – Polo by Ralph Lauren is always a winner as is Cool Waters by Davidoff. Make sure your nails are trimmed and clean. Who knows, you may even get a chance to hold her hand, so make sure that you are prepared.

## A note on stubble/ beards

Stubble and beards are all the vogue these days, but before you decide to go for this look, make sure that it is for you. A stubble does not suit everybody, and too much stubble can make you look tired, dishevelled and unattractive. If you are going for a stubbled look, make sure you keep the right length and trim often. I suggest that if you are going for stubble then don't grow your hair. In general, long hair looks better on clean-shaven men, whereas stubble looks better with a short haircut.

As for beards – grow one if you like, but remember that beard care is an art on its own. An ungroomed, unkempt beard looks horrid, so try not to go

down this route at all unless you have the time, energy, inclination and resources to take care of the beard.

The rule regarding facial hair for men is to keep it simple. Choose whatever style that you must, but make sure that it is simple and easy for you to maintain.

## WHERE TO GO?

Now that you look like a hundred bucks, it is time to actually go on the date. Where should you go? For how long? What do you talk about on your first date, and what if things are going terribly wrong? Ideally, the first date should be a short affair with the scope of becoming something longer.

We don't suggest a meal as a first date. A meal can become a bit of a commitment, plus it's awkward to talk when you're chewing on your food. Coffee or chai is usually a first step, and the venue can be any, as long as it's possible for you two to have a conversation. If the place is too loud or too crowded, and your eardrums are pounding instead of your hearts, you're doing something wrong.

A popular coffee shop chain is usually a safe bet. Just make sure that you're not going in peak hours when you won't get a place to sit and when you'll run into all your friends. A first date should be private so that you two can focus on each other. If you two get along, you can extend the date by going for a walk, getting a bite or watching a movie.

Sachin: First dates are tricky. Go to a public place. As a guy, suggest a place where you know anyone will feel comfortable meeting. Don't suggest a cosy, quiet, romantic place for a first date. It will make any girl feel uncomfortable and question your intentions. And girls, it's always a good idea to inform your bestie about where you are headed and with whom. Always have an exit strategy ready. If the date is a disaster, you can down your cup of coffee and leave in 30 minutes.

## **Gauging the Mood**

You may be nervous, but this is totally natural. After all, coming face-to-face with someone who you may have been crushing on for some time is no easy affair. Remember though that this is meant to be fun, it's not an exam, or a job interview, so take it easy, take a deep breath and tell yourself that you are going to try to have the best time that you possibly can. Have a positive intention, but don't have too many expectations.

Remember, you have to make the person in front of you comfortable, so try to be extra sensitive to the other person's mood. If they are talking a lot in their nervous state of mind, try to understand this and be a good listener. If they freeze, then try to fill in the gaps. The person sitting in front of you may be even more nervous than you, and the key to a good first date is to be kind, sensitive and to be adaptable to any situation.

While you're on your date, try to be polite, normal and sweet. There is no need to go over-the-top with jokes, or play it like Mr Cool and Mysterious. If you have strong political views, keep them to yourself for the moment. Think of a date as a normal and fun experience, with only a few mistakes to be avoided. Try not to be tongue-tied, don't stare at his chest or her breasts, or their behind and don't spend the entire date looking at your phone. In fact, try not to look at your phone during this time. Thirty minutes without looking at the phone have never killed anyone, and it will not kill you!

Sachin: You have to be sitting behind her to be able to stare at her behind. In which case you are staring at the behind on another table, which is certainly not done! And, yes, no staring at anyone's body parts, phone screen or into space.

Girls be sweet, be flirty, be polite, not too distant – but be a little distant. Remember that you are an interesting person, so don't feel shy about chiming into the conversation no matter what the subject. If you like him, play with your hair a bit (the universal symbol of flirtation) and talk to him with your eyes. If you're having a really good time, ever so often you can think about moistening your lips with the tip of your tongue or applying a

bit of lip gloss. The sensual movements that you make with your hair, eyes, lips can be very appealing to men.

## The Art of Flirting

### 1. Smile

There is nothing more attractive about you than your smile. Always remember that. Smiling at someone reveals your innermost feelings and desires in the most beautiful of ways. Smile at him, not just with your lips, but with your body and your entire being.

### 2. The Law of Attraction

When you flirt with someone, you create vibes that change the energy field between two people. Things go from being platonic to romantic and open up a whole new universe of possibilities. Keep this in mind as you begin your romantic journey with someone.

### 3. Be in the moment

Stop thinking. Your inner goddess knows exactly what to do. Believe this and stop thinking about the past with this person, stop stressing about the future, and just BE in the present. You will be amazed at all that you can achieve by just being. Just be. You are fabulous.

### 4. Sync your brain with your body

Your body is much more intelligent than you think. Let your body guide the flirting. Take deep breaths and try to block out any negative thoughts. When you breathe deeply, you relax your mind and in turn you relax your body. Give your body a chance. Let her move the way she wants. You will be amazed and at much body movements matter in the art of flirting. If you are crossing your arms, or cave in your chest, you give out negative vibes which don't serve either of you well.

## 5. Leave him craving for more

Keep your early interactions short and sweet. If you see him in the hallways, give him a radiant smile, maybe brush against his shoulder and then walk away.

At the start, keep the conversations short and sweet. Let him crave for more. Even the early dates should be kept short. Let him yearn to see you. This creates some beautiful chemistry when you finally do see one another.

## 6. Little touches

There is nothing wrong with a brush of your lips against his cheeks, a light touch on his chest, a gentle graze against his shoulder – even in the very beginning.

Men, show your interest in her with your ears and mind, not just your body. Be attentive. Use body language to listen actively, by leaning forward to show you are captivated by her stories, or laughing appreciatively at the punchlines of her jokes. Don't immediately touch her arms or her hair. Keep your distance. Touchy-feely guys can be a big turn off for a girl if they are not ready for that yet.

Should you pick her up?

Picking her up on the first date is not essential, but it is a nice gesture and nice gestures, especially in the beginning, go a very long way. If you are not picking her up, try to choose a location that is conveniently located to her. If you don't have your own conveyance, and you have to pick her up in a cab, do it, she will appreciate it. Even if she doesn't need you to pick her up, an offer is nice. Chivalry is a nice quality to have and picking and dropping a girl off after a date is a basic courtesy, especially if it's at night and safety in your town is an issue.

## End Notes on First Dates

Your first date may be your last with one person, but it is NOT your last date for life. If it doesn't go well, don't be dejected. Remember the golden rule of dating is to try, try and try again! That's the premise on which dating apps are developed. Be positive and success will come your way.

Dating IS hard, especially in the beginning, especially if you're not used to the one-on-one company of the opposite sex. If the date goes well, and we hope that it does, well, don't get lackadaisical. These first date rules are cardinal and they should apply for all dates from here onwards. We promise that they will serve you in good stead. Happy dating!

Questions from our followers

Dear Ira and SB

I have some sort of a terrible allergy and have pimples all over my face. I also have a first date planned, should I still go or should I cancel ?

Craterface

Dear Craterface

Facial pimples can be terribly unsightly. First impressions are really very important! Also, facial pimples can really give your self-confidence a dip. Schedule an appointment with the dermatologist, see if there is a quick fix and if all else fails, you can always postpone the date till you get better. If she likes you, she will understand and when you do meet her you'll bring your A game.

Ira

Craterface

Immigrate to the moon! That is till your date of course But, honestly, pimples are a part of almost everyone's life. They are easily take care of. If pimples are a regular occurrence, see a dermatologist. If you can get rid of it with some over-the-counter medication then that is an easier course of action.

May the force be with you  
Sachin

Dear Ira and S

I don't have much money to buy a new outfit for my first date. I don't know what to do. Does this mean that he won't like me? I'm freaking out here, I've waited almost six months for him to ask me out.

Sadly yours  
Penniless

Dear Penniless

While what you wear is important, it's not as important as the way you wear it. There is no need to go and buy a whole new outfit. After all, you don't want to give him a false impression of who you are. You should just try to bring out your natural best in whatever way possible. Wear whatever you have, make sure it is clean and well-ironed, make sure that you have shampooed your hair and have used deodorant. Everything will be great.

Ira

Dear Penniless

Men care a lot less about what you wear than you do. They hardly notice clothes (they notice skin a lot more!), so don't worry too much. Wear something that flatters your body and wear a colour that suits you.

Sachin

Dear Ira

I am nervous for my first date. Every time I think about it, I feel like I am going to cry. I really like him, but so far we have only been friends on the internet. What should I do?

Comingfacetoface

Dear Comingfacetoface

It is natural to be nervous, especially if you haven't met before. But if you feel like crying, that seems a bit extreme. Maybe you should try video chatting for a little while before meeting him. This can be an effective way of breaking the ice. Once you feel better, go meet him face to face!

Ira

Dear Comingfacetoface

Come here. let us hug you. Chill, it's just a date! Save the tears for the mandap. Tears can scare some guys, especially if he doesn't really know you very well. It's best not to have a breakdown especially on the first date.

Platonic hugs

Sachin

Dear Ira and Sachin

I don't have any money, but I like a girl. Is that a problem in a first date?

Brokebuthopeful

Dear Brokebuthopeful

You may not have any money, but you still have your brain! Get creative. You can ask her out to take a walk in a nice park, or meet you at a scenic spot. There are often free events in cities, and you can ask her to come with you on of those with you That said, while money is not a problem on the first date, it could be a problem later on, so make sure that you have a source of income before you begin dating. Knowing Indian parents, most will not support the dating life, so you have to come with other ways.

Ira

Dear Brokebuthopeful

Never was, never is. Be honest about it and I am sure she will pay. But tell her you don't have any money today and how you see the next few

months pan out. A girl can't live on your dreams alone, she needs a nice cup of coffee at times.

Dream on, date on  
Sachin

Ira and Sachin

I'm a guy and I like a guy. Can I ask him out on a date? What are the rules of dating for gays?

Boylovesboy

Dear Boylovesboy

Of course, you can! These rules of dating pretty much remain the same across all sexes. Sachin and I are ALL for every kind of love, so go for it!

Ira

Dear Boylovesboy

Short answer – yes! Just try to make sure he is gay too. That is the first and foremost rule of gay dating. Check out Delta, a safe and secure dating app for the LGBT community.

Sachin

Dear Ira and SB

My parents don't give me permission to go out on a date but I am dying to go on one. What should I do?

Jailbird

Dear Jailbird

This is an unfortunate scenario, and one, which many people are in. Is it possible for you to tell your parents that you are seeing a friend, or even a group of friends? It is unlikely that your parents will understand what a date or dating even means, and it may not be worth your while to try to explain it

to them right now. If your parents don't even allow you to meet your friends, that's a whole new problem. I strongly suggest that you start planning for a more independent life. Perhaps get a job, move out or take your life in your own hands.

Ira

Dear Jailbird

Why are you still with your parents? Are you a teenager? Well, then just resort to long chats, calls, Skype whatever. Having a duplicate key to the main door is a must. If you are not a teen, move out of that house and give your dating life a kick start.

Fly away

Sachin

# 4

## After the First Date



Say your first date has gone tremendously well, what are the next steps? How do you take dating to the next level? When do you become each other's girlfriend/boyfriend? How do you make sure that you don't scare them off? This chapter tells you how to conduct yourself after the first date and how to show your interest in an appropriate way. Having consistently good dating behaviour across all dates is the key to long term success.

**YOUR DATE WENT WELL AND YOU LIKE THEM**

- Set up your next date before the date ends. If she says she loves going for walks, tell her that you would love to go on a walk with her the next day. If she says she loves Chinese food, tell her that you know the best Chinese place in town and set up a time right then and there. She may flake if she doesn't like you, but at least you are doing your best to capture the next date.
- Ladies, don't be shy. Go ahead and tell him what you would like to do next, give suggestions. Girls are often more creative when it comes to date ideas than men, so come up with some interesting ideas and share.
- If you lock down the next date, you will come out of this first date feeling over the moon!

### **Text them after the date**

- Ask her if she got home okay. This is old school, and many people don't bother with this these days, but it's a sweet and thoughtful thing to do.
- Text her to tell her you had a great time.
- Text him to thank him, even if it was a cup of coffee or tea and even if you split the bill.
- If you like her, then tell her via text. Say that you really enjoyed spending time with her and you hope to see her again really soon. Guys, you may think this is sappy, but this is exactly the kind of stuff girls love and appreciate.

If and only the other party seems willing, some mild phone flirting can begin. This helps create some sexual tension before your next date. You can disguise your flirting with seemingly harmless questions such as, 'Your skin looks so soft, how do you moisturize?' or 'You are so fit, do you go to the gym?'

Sachin: Iraaaaaa...evoking sexual tension while talking about skin and muscle tone! She will be thinking that you are already dreaming about slathering her with sun block on a beach or checking her out in her leotards at the gym. I say leave the sex and the sexual tension for later, rock star.

**YOUR DATE DID NOT GO WELL**

There is way to conduct yourself if this happens. Even though there are 1.3 billion of us, we live in an inter-connected world with just a few degrees of separation between us all. You don't want the other person to think that you're mean and spreading rumours about you. It is best to handle the failure of your date in an elegant and adult way.

Sachin: There is a way to behave if this happens. Hit the bottle, listen to Guru Dutt or Atif Aslam songs and sit in a dark room. And girls, go cry your heart out to your bestie and eat a tub of ice cream! Just kidding. Ira is right. Be mature, move on and this is the reason god gave us dating apps.

- Text her to tell her you had a good time, no matter what. It can just be a polite text; don't overdo it else she will think you are leading her on.
- Text him to thank him, just to be polite and especially if he paid.
- If you don't intend to see him again, don't lead him on by sending him smiley and kissy faces. Definitely no winky face. Some of these emoticons can be very suggestive, especially blushy face.
- Respond to his texts. Be polite, send one-liners. If he does not get the point and continues to text, then you may have to stop texting all together.
- If you don't intend to see her again, don't just ignore her. Reply, but be distant and polite.
- What if one person is texting incessantly and just doesn't seem to get the hint? In this case, it's best to just text/email and tell them that you don't think that it will work out between you and best of luck in the future. If they ask for further explanations, you don't owe them any. Just move on and ignore.
- If you are the person receiving this end of the stick, I am sorry for you. You did nothing wrong, it's just not a great fit – not everyone is and there are unfortunately no reasons for this! It comes down to chemistry and if your equation doesn't balance, it's better to get out of the laboratory.
- Remember – a no is no. If she is not interested in you, no matter what you say or do, she may not change her mind. Do not resort to online or real-life stalking. It is detrimental and harmful to everyone involved and she very well may report you to the cops or Facebook at least. Stalking is an absolute no and unlike what SRK may say or do in his films, it will get you nowhere but in jail.

After the first date, he should be texting you at least a few times a day/night. Ladies, you are the one who sets the pace in the relationship, typically guys want to take things really fast. Only go at the speed you are comfortable going at. Usually fast ignition leads to fast combustion, whereas slow and steady wins the pace. Take your time in getting to know him, emotionally, mentally and physically.

If he ISN'T texting you day and night, and if you feel like you are doing the chasing, this is not the best sign, especially so early in the game. If you really like him, send him a text or two, but don't go overboard. Guys don't appreciate girls chasing them, it can be a big turn off for them. The male ego always likes a bit of a chase, so you have to play it cool. Sometimes silence sends the right message, even more clearly than words. So a few silent periods at the start is a good way to keep him wondering what's going on in your mind.

Sachin: Please chase us a bit, we too want to feel wanted. A lot of guys today look at girls chasing them as mature and being sure of what they want.

Ladies be wary of guys who are OVER-flirty, especially at the start. Try to gauge what he wants, and see if that is in line with what YOU want. Does he want a relationship or does he just want to get into your pants?

If you REALLY cannot figure out what they want, you can casually mention that you are going on another date. This will surely precipitate a response. Every action has an equal and opposite reaction: Newton's Law is good for dating, as it is for thermodynamics.

Sachin: Oh, please, no politics! Not so early in the relationship. If he flirts and you like him, flirt back mildly. If he's getting too flirty, just tell him off and most guys will get it. If they don't, it's a sign to reconsider. But no games please.

### **When to be serious and when to tease**

Sometimes, especially in the beginning, if you two are texting back and forth a lot, things can be misinterpreted and feelings can be hurt. Your jokes may offend her or your teasing can be belittling for him. It's important to mind your words in the early stages of dating. You can lightly tease her in person, but try not to do it too much online, till you get to know her well. Same for you girls, try to get to know him a little better till you start teasing him.

## **Speaking of your past**

There is no need to bring in your past into your present relationship. Even if you have had many partners, do not mention them or bring them up. Do not compare the present with the ex, not even by mistake. It is natural to make that comparison, we are all human after all, but bringing up the ex can be detrimental to the relationship. Sometimes, we want the other person to know that we HAVE had a past, and that we aren't newbies on the field. If you feel that this is necessary, do so, but be vague and most certainly do not take any names. If they quiz you incessantly about the past, especially on the early dates, you do not have to answer. Your past is nobody's business, except your own and even if you are totally comfortable with your past, the other person may not be. Personally, I find it annoying when men ask me too many questions about my past. It shows their insecurity and I find that the men who care most about my past are the ones who turn out to be terribly possessive later. Don't give him too much information about your exes or your history with intimacy. Men are driven by pride, they are often thinking, 'What can I do for her that is different than any other man?' When you are talking of the past, be aware of what his levels of pride are and structure your conversation accordingly. The past has a way of corrupting a man's imagination because of the male ego and pride.

## **Facebook and other social media**

Chances are that the moment they like you, they will stalk you on social media. Our social media accounts are how we present ourselves to the world, and just like we maintain bodily hygiene, it is best to maintain social media hygiene. If you are in the dating game, and don't want your present to see pics of your ex and you, take those pictures offline. If there are untoward comments that someone has made, make sure to delete those as well.

Sachin: While we don't want you to be sneaky about your social media habits, it is prudent to keep your accounts private and only for friends. Facebook is the trickiest of the lot but you do have options to keep your

posts private. For example, choose only certain friends who can see each post. On Instagram, choose a setting that only allows people you follow to see your posts and keep the account private. Snapchat, given its ephemeral nature, is your best option to stay in touch with the world and still retain privacy.

### Questions from our followers

Hey!

I really like a girl, I am not sure she likes me though. We went out for a coffee, and she has agreed to meet me again. Shall I invite her over and have my mummy and papa meet her? Is it okay to ask for her time of birth?

Thanks

Happyman

Dear Happyman

While it's great you are interested, you don't want to scare her off or overwhelm her by moving too fast. Most definitely no parents, or TOB. Go on a few dates, and read the next chapter. It will serve you well.

Thanks

Ira

Ha, Happyman

Dude, take it easy. Coffee, tea and mummy! How can you like a girl so much in one meeting. She's not a pair of Levi's hanging on a rack. Hang out a bit, get the feels and then figure out if both of you are right for each other.

SB

Hi

This boy from my college has asked me out five times, and I finally said yes. After the date, I began liking him, but though I have texted him three times, no reply! Did I do something wrong? Does he not like me anymore?

Dazedandconfused

Dear Dazedandconfused

Remember that dating is a game and like any game, it should be fun! So lighten up a bit if you can, and wait. Maybe his phone got lost or stolen, maybe he had an emergency. I know we all expect instantaneous responses in this day and age of social media, but breathe, have some patience and wait. There is a tiny possibility that the date went badly and he doesn't like you anymore, in which case you should make an assessment to see where you went wrong and do better next time.

Ira

Dear Dazedandconfused

He's not topped up his pre-paid card, that's all. Top it up for him and he'll be texting and calling you. Or he might just be a bit nervous. Don't be quick to jump to conclusions. Just wait and watch!

Sachin

Hello

I went out on a wonderful date with a girl. She told me after the date that she really liked me, and I like her a lot too. Yesterday we chatted all day and all night – 7 hours on the phone, and 1,000 text messages. Does she love me?

Chatterboxinlove

Dear Chatterboxinlove

I think this is all a little too much. It does seem that you guys like each other, and I am very happy for you, but take it easy cowboy! Remember, fast ignition, fast combustion, so you don't want to overdo it these early days. Be in touch, chat with her – that's all good – but limit yourself on the phone and messaging, and try to spend more in-person time if possible, especially at the start.

Ira

Dear Chatterboxinlove

People love chatting. Chatting is no indication of love, friendship yes, and that's a great way to start a relationship. Ira is right, meet in-person and figure out where this is going.

SB

Ira and SB

We went on a date and poof she vanished into thin air.

Mystified

Dear Mystified

I am not sure if this is question or a comment. Whatever it is, I think you were perhaps asleep. Time to wake up and ask her out on another date.

Ira

Dear Mystified

The technical term for this is 'ghosting'. It's when one ends a personal relationship with someone by suddenly and without explanation withdrawing from all communication. Don't get too upset, log into your dating app.

Sachin

Un-Single Stories from the TrulyMadly Archive

I am very glad to have found someone like Pratik. Before joining TrulyMadly, I never thought love really existed. Because of my past relationship, I was broken.

Then my friend suggested I join TrulyMadly. Honestly, I am an introvert and talking to someone unknown isn't something I am comfortable with. So I was a little reluctant to join dating apps. Then, somehow I created an account just for the heck of doing it and I saw this very cute guy Pratik. And he too liked me back. That was a lovely surprise. We chatted for a day on the app, exchanged our numbers, met for a coffee and spoke a lot. What I realized is that we were both different yet similar. Pratik is down-to-earth, sweet and funny. I enjoyed spending time with him. On my way back home, he confessed his feelings for me, and I just couldn't resist telling him yes. And that's how our beautiful love story began.

5

## The Third Date Onwards



The first date and the follow-up went well and you've been chatting non-stop ever since. What happens now? Is this a relationship? Are you exclusive? In this chapter, Ira and Sachin reveal the secrets of the perilous second and third dates, including fresh dating ideas, and signs to tell if it is going well or if it's a fail.

## THE THREE-DATE RULE

The third date is an important milestone. You'll have covered a lot of background and will know whether your values align or not. You will understand what makes the other person laugh, and more importantly, what makes them tick. By this time, you should be texting frequently, you should have a decent idea about the person and who they are, what their interests are, and know a bit about their daily schedule and lifestyle. If after three dates, you find you don't know anything about them, I suggest that in the future you start talking less and listening more. Remember boys and girls, the two sexiest muscles in your body are your brain and your ears.

Three dates are also enough to know whether you want to carry on with the other person. It should give you enough of an insight into the chemistry that you feel with them, how well you get along with them and, most of all, if you look forward to seeing them again. If you are bored or confused after three dates, then it is most likely that you will be bored and confused forever. After three dates if you don't see it going anywhere, it is best to drop it before you waste any more of your time. The first thing they taught us over at Columbia Business School was to not throw good money after bad money and sell fast when an investment sours. If you are truly confused about how you feel, and are unable to take a decision, pause communication for a few days and see if you miss the presence of the other person in your life.

If after three dates you like them, don't drag your feet. Make that person the focus of your personal life and do what you can to move swiftly into the relationship zone. Show your interest clearly and leave no room for doubt. Remember that ambiguity and anticipation are sexy in the bedroom, it is nice when you're playing the dating game, but when it comes to relationship-building, openness and honesty are key.

## FUTURE DATES

In an ideal situation, a first date should be over a cup of coffee, the second date should involve a meal (lunch or dinner) and the third date should be an 'activity date' because it is important to see how you two interact together

in non-eating/drinking situations. After the third date, you will probably feel more comfortable with planning things since you have done the three most essential activity types already. At this point you can start spending some time in each other's personal space – if you have one, whether it's a flat, bedroom, PG, etc. It's nice to bring the person you like into your personal space, it helps them understand a bit more about who you are. It also allows you to move into the intimate space, something we will discuss in the next chapter.

It is likely that many of you don't have personal spaces, in which case, it is good to put some energy into planning your dates. While meals and coffee dates are easy to organize (do some online research to decide on restaurants that are convenient to get to, have good ratings and reviews and that are within your budget), activity dates can be harder to plan. Here are a few ideas for some activity dates that are not only fun, but will also help you get to know the other person better.

### **Date Ideas**

- Go for a walk to a scenic location, be it a park, a lake, or near a heritage site. Having heart-to-heart conversations while taking a stroll amidst nature is one of the most blissful experiences. This not only allows you the chance to get to know him/her, but also lets you showcase any special interests or knowledge in botany or heritage that you may have. Knowledge is the most powerful aphrodisiac. Girls, a long walk gives you the ability to showcase your fitness levels. Boys love girls who can keep up. Ladies, remember to wear a comfortable pair of shoes for this. I often see girls wearing high-heeled shoes in parks and as they walk, they are visibly uncomfortable.
- It can be fun to choose an activity that neither of you have done before. It may be bowling, going to a fair, concert, or a literature festival. This way you are both on neutral ground,

and you get an insight into how you and your partner react to situations that are new for both of you.

TrulyMadly Tip: Go window shopping or even better, take a food tour. It really tells you what each of you are into, the styles you like, food tastes for that next big dinner date. It's a great inexpensive way to spend time together.

- If you really like him/her, try to plan a half-day trip together to a nearby site. If either of you have any culinary skills, this can be an opportunity to showcase these, if you pack a small lunch to take with you.
- Rediscover your city. It's fun to be a tourist in your own city and explore its historical and cultural side.  
Sachin: Yes, given that all your cultural exposure has been through watching movies like and visits to Khan or Crawford Market, this will do you good.
- Do things that you haven't done ever since you grew up – go to the zoo, go boating, go to your favourite ice-cream place. This can be more fun than you think. When you relive childhood activities, then certain childlike qualities like joyfulness and a sense of being carefree tend to return to you.
- Go on a long drive. You may not have a car, or a two-wheeler, but you can go on a long drive on a comfortable bus, or even just cruise around in an Ola/Uber. Autorikshaws too can be fun sometimes.
- Think out of the box. Come up with ideas that will interest them and let the other person learn something new about you.

Sachin: Spot on, Ira. It's time to get a little creative. The age of candlelight dinners is diminishing (no pun intended!). But let

them choose and decide on their own. The idea is to let the process be interactive and as much fun as the activity. Go back and forth on her suggestions, value add to them, but always let her feel totally comfortable with the idea. And yeah, don't yet try to steer the conversation this early to a night / weekend out ... we will get there in a bit.

- Girls, it's important to let your hair down here and show the other person a more relaxed side of you. Less makeup and comfortable clothes are often the most attractive aspect of the third date. You want a man to see the real you and this is a good point to start.

## PAYING FOR DATES

This can be confusing, even for the most clear-headed of us. Sometimes men insist on paying, they won't have it any other way – a woman paying the bill hurts their pride. At times, girls refuse to let guys pay for them, it hurts their sense of worth. Sometimes, couples just go Dutch, especially if they are in college and on a budget. Every dating couple has the right to decide what works best for them depending on their circumstances.

Generally, though, the person who is earning more should be paying more, whether that is the man or the woman. The other person should pitch in according to what they are comfortable with. This is fair and ethical and also should not hurt anyone's ego. If a girl is much more well off than a boy (this could be due to a number of factors, including age, family background, job, etc.), there is no harm if she is paying more. Boys, do not let your ego get in the way. There is no gain in paying for things that you cannot comfortably afford, no matter how much you love her. After three dates, you should have an understanding of the other person's financial capabilities and you should split the bill accordingly.

Sometimes, boys insist on paying the bill, and some girls let them. Ladies, I urge you to pick up a bill or two, even if they are small ones, like

coffee or taxis (if this is all you can afford). It sends the right kind of signal to men, and tells them that not only are you capable of paying the bill, but that you are fair-minded and are happy to contribute to this relationship in every way. If he is the type of guy who feels he has some sort of 'right' over you just because he is footing the bill, then you paying once in a while, will keep his ego in check.

Sachin: Girls are clearly ahead of the curve here and more with the times. As per the annual TrulyMadly Date Survey, approximately sixty-one per cent of girls feel that Dutch is the way to go. Going Dutch sets the right tone for the future where both of you are equally responsible for the relationship and all decisions around it.

## ON BEING PHYSICAL

You've seen them three times plus, and you guys really like each other. Should you move on to physical intimacy now, or is it too soon? Will he think you're 'loose' if you kiss him, or will she think you are too aggressive if you make a move? Take the below points into careful consideration before you move into the physical space with him.

Keep physical intimacy out of the equation (maybe except hand-holding) for the first three dates. It is important to keep your head tightly screwed on in the beginning so that you can accurately assess if he/she is a keeper.

Sachin: Right and you will certainly be left holding hands forever ... your own (and I do mean hand!). At TrulyMadly, we see girls today are very sure of what they want and are confident of dealing with emotions. Maybe even better than most men. So my advice would be to go with the flow. If there is mutual physical attraction, make a move to test the waters – nothing strong, maybe a light touch there, a gentle peck here. If there is reciprocity, take things ahead. But know when to stop – that is super critical. Respect the other person and you will take the right decision.

At times, getting intimate with someone can blur that clarity. Awkward or uncomfortable intimacy can ruin a perfectly good dating streak. Perhaps it

was too soon to be intimate and discomfort from either his or her side made the physical interaction a fail. Or, the kiss was so wonderful that you get blindsided to how aggressive he is, or what a bad listener she is. There is nothing wrong with being intimate with the person you like, but endorse ‘mindful intimacy’, where you take well thought-out decisions about the physical steps that you want to take with someone instead of letting your hormones dictate the terms.

If you really can’t keep your hands off each other and there is intense, uncontrollable mutual physical attraction, you may make a move to test the waters. Keep it limited to a light brush of the hand or a gentle peck on the cheek. Know when to stop; that’s important. Though, the better you get to know him/her emotionally, the better the physical aspect of the relationship will be. Enjoy getting to know them without the pressure of getting physical and try to build a genuine friendship before you decide on jumping into the haystack.

Remember, anticipation plus imagination equals titillation, so sometimes waiting a little can work in your benefit and make the moment even sweeter when it does finally come, and come it will if you follow our advice. Keep in mind that most women need a reason to be physical while most men just need a place. That crucial difference is imperative to keep in mind here. Take your time, ladies. If he likes you, he will wait. Always. Do not feel pressured by him, by your friends or by anyone else to do something that you are not completely comfortable with.

Sachin: Like Motley Crew said ‘Use it or lose it, sweet pain is the name of the game’. Intimacy and sex is a physical need, just like hunger. When you are hungry you don’t think much ... you choose between a fruit and chips at best. Maybe a little deeper thinking when it comes to sex but the same principles apply. If you are sure of the guy and sex is what you need, go for it.

Here are a few things to keep in mind as you cross the third-date barrier:

- Do not declare your undying love. It is still early and it may turn the other person off.
- Never assume you own her, or that she owes you something, because you paid for coffee.
- Boys, do not brag to your friends about your new ‘conquest’. Girls, do not share every single detail of your interaction with him with your girlfriends. We know girls like to talk, but the relationship is between two people, not between you, him and your friends.
- Don’t be in a hurry to tell your parents you have found ‘the one’. No matter how close you are to them, sharing details of your dating life is not really a parent-child activity. If your parents are really chill and you share a lot with them, let them know that you met someone you like, but there is no need to share more than that.
- Boys, never confuse ‘no’ for ‘maybe’. A no means a no means a no. When she says no, she means it.

## Questions from our followers

Dear Ira and SB

We have gone on three dates and I am still unsure about him. What does this mean? While I kind of like him, I find certain things about him a little off-putting – for example, he can’t stop staring at my breasts while we are having dinner, or sometimes he just keeps on scratching himself. I also suspect that he has weird social skills. What do I do?

Sticklertotherules

Dear Sticklertotherules

While our rules for dating are very good, they aren’t hard and fast! There is no harm in giving him a few more chances unless it’s too uncomfortable. Maybe wear a high-collared top and see if it’s still happening? About the scratching, what body part does he scratch? Maybe it’s just an allergy or a rash? Just make sure it’s not an STD. I strongly suggest you try to set up a couple of ‘activity’ dates where you get to spend a few hours together. That will help you gauge whether he is the right person for you or not. Good luck!

Ira

Dear Sticklertotherules

Run! Especially if he's staring and scratching at the same time. On a more serious note, while our guidelines are there to help you ace the dating game, they are not a map. There are no hard and fast rules when it comes to relationships. You make your own rules as you go along on the dating path, and these rules can change with different people. Go with your gut and trust your intuition. In most cases, it won't serve you wrong. If you feel like you need five or six dates to see if you like him, go for it!

SB

Ira and Sachin

I went out with a guy for three dates and I decided that while he was a nice guy, there was no chemistry between us. I told him this but he doesn't seem to get it. He keeps on calling and calling and calling. I have had to block him on almost everything – calls, Facebook, WhatsApp, Instagram. I am getting a little worried, I am trying to be polite but am also feeling scared.

Beingstalked

Dear Beingstalked

This guy sounds like bad news. The only way to deal with stalkers is to ignore them completely and to disengage. Don't reply to him, don't try to be polite, just block him out completely and I am pretty sure he will back off. If things get serious – for example, he shows up at your home, college or workplace, make sure you take precautions. Have an emergency contact ready (ICE on speed dial) and if you truly feel threatened, involve a friend, family member or police. Remember, you're always better off safe than sorry.

Ira

Dear Beingstalked

The guy needs a restraining order. Disengage completely.

Sometimes, one polite and subtly threatening email/message can do the trick. Make sure that your message to him is straightforward and does not beat around the bush. Tell him that if he continues stalking, then you will report him to the authorities. Cyber stalking is a crime, punishable by law and everyone should know this.

SB

Dear Ira and SB

He tried to have sex with me on the second date. He invited himself up to my apartment to use the bathroom, and then I found him lying naked on my bed! He told me I gave him 'signals'. Did I do something wrong?

Redlight

Dear Redlight

This guy sounds like a complete idiot and, more importantly, a danger to women. Not only do I advise you to get rid of him immediately, but I suggest you treat this as a valuable experience to share with your friends and colleagues. Women are never 'asking' for it, and 'no' always means 'no'. Use this unpleasant experience to build and share your strength with the people who matter to you.

Ira

Dear Redlight

Next time (ideally, there should not be next time) open your apartment door and call in the neighbours. Or better still, pick up his clothes and walk out. You were being hospitable and that's not a 'signal' for anything. But yeah, don't fall for this one again. Remember, you are 'asking for it', only when you ASK FOR IT.

Be alert!

SB

Dear Ira and SB

I went out with a girl three times, and I really like her. After the third date, she told me that she wanted to see me again. I tried calling her and texting too, but she went cold turkey, I haven't heard from her at all. I am following the rules, and not texting her too. Does she not like me?

Imaturkeytoo

Dear Imaturkeytoo

Congratulations, you're a free agent again! I'm glad you've been judicious with the texts so far. To be honest, it sounds like she is just not that interested. I would suggest you stop texting her completely and start focusing on your own hobbies and interests. It is always important to not lose sight of yourself in any relationship, no matter how intensely you feel. Remember, at the end of the day, you are your own best companion.

Ira

Dear Imaturkeytoo

There are more turkeys out there and plenty of chicks too! And turkeys are always cold. You did well. Fresh pastures and a dating app await.

SB

Dear Ira and SB

I like a girl and we have been dating for a bit too. The thing is that her parents are very strict and don't let her out of the house. With great difficulty, I managed to go on three dates with her, but now it's getting harder and harder for her because her parents have caught on. What do I do? How will I manage future dates with her?

Lovesickromeo

Dear Lovesickromeo

This sounds like it may get more complicated in the future. We don't want her getting in any kind of trouble with her folks, or you too for that matter. In our country, acceptance of love can be a very complicated and

potentially dangerous issue. Too many people harbour a backward and regressive attitude to modern relationships. Try and correspond on text, phone, and email as much as you can, and then if you really like her, think of some creative ways of meeting her. If not, it's best to drop it early unless you have a way to explain things to your parents later on.

Ira

Dear Lovesickromeo

This is a typical Indian (maybe global) problem. The trick is to stay in touch and keep the fire burning. I suggest moving beyond text and video call every now and then. I am sure she can sneak away once in a bit to meet. Be creative ... meet her when she steps out for chores or for study dates at her bestie's place.

And no serenading from under her balcony!

SB

Un-Single Stories from the TrulyMadly Archive

After matching with many people on TrulyMadly, I finally met her. When we began talking online, I was in USA. I did not, however, mention that I was not in India.

It was summer and a relatively free time for both of us. I was on my semester break and we had so much time to video chat, almost throughout the day. I started living in two worlds, one was hers and the other mine. It had been three months and we wanted to meet.

I took the initiative, and after some toiling with my parents, I finally convinced them to come to India for a holiday. The date told to them was a fake one; I arrived twenty days before. This could not have been better; she came to the airport to receive me, and after some difficult moments of anticipation at the airport, we finally met, and it was amazing. She looked gorgeous, way better than she seemed in the

video, and we fell in love once again. We went to her place and she made me eat parathas she had made for me. We hit it off instantly. We had the most blissful moments of life in those fifteen days; it was as if we were meant to be.

The decision to be together could not have been better. Though I am back in the USA for my studies, we are going strong and we have already told her brother about us and he is very happy for us. This is indeed a fairy tale come true. I really could not have imagined that I would come to India just to meet her. This decision, that I will never ever regret, is the best decision I have ever taken. Hopefully God also understands it and makes our story a beautiful one throughout our life.

# 6

## Acts of Intimacy



Everyone knows that the first kiss is a memorable and potentially life-changing experience. But before you embark on this beautiful experience, there are important stages that must be cleared first. The pre-kissing stages of a relationship can be exciting, flirtatious and informative. You learn not only whether you two connect physically, but also whether he/she has the most important quality there is in a potential partner: the ability to learn,

adapt and grow. Every fire starts with a spark, and so does every relationship. But remember that a spark starts with friction, and friction starts with action. In this chapter, we outline the simple actions that can get your fire burning, but safely – because remember, a controlled fire in the long-run can lead to new growth, new life and new love.

## THE ART OF HOLDING HANDS

So you've texted with panache, gone on a couple of dates and are now wondering how to take things to the next level. Holding hands sounds simple, but it is often the very FIRST step in your intimate relationship and if you get this wrong, your future love life is in jeopardy. Hand holding can be very scary, very intimate and also very sexy and romantic.

Get it right by following some simple rules below.

Fun fact: Fingertips contain one of the highest concentrations of nerve endings in the human body.

### **Hand Hygiene**

There is nothing more gross than dirty hands and gritty fingernails. Before stepping out for a date, make sure your hands are washed and your nails are trimmed properly. One word: cuticles. Invest in a basic file and clippers so that your nails aren't scratchy. Some basic hygiene will go a long way. If you take public transport, then it is advisable to buy some hand sanitiser (preferably lightly scented) so you can quickly clean your hands without the hassle of finding a restroom.

Sachin: The TM Big Date survey shows that today, both girls and guys believe that men need to be well groomed. The old gritty biker look is best left for the movies and magazines.

### **Clammy Palms**

Damp and moist palms are a big turn-off. This is like holding a piece of uncooked chicken – not only unromantic, but potentially unhygienic as

well. If you suffer from this affliction, I suggest keeping a simple linen handkerchief in your pocket, for periodic drying. If it gets really bad, consider a light application of talcum mid-date. If you're very nervous and you just can't control this, then I suggest you don't hold their hand till your situation improves.

Sachin: This is a tough one. I know guys who keep dabbing their palms on their jeans to keep them dry or simply entangle the pinky finger instead of holding the whole hand! If holding hands becomes too cumbersome, just gently put your hand on the small of her back and guide her wherever it is you want to take her.

## **Hand on Top?**

This is the age-old debate: hand on top or hand on the bottom? There are many angles and implications to consider. Hand on top implies leadership and protection. Hand on bottom signals flexibility and open-mindedness. Judge the mood of the date and take the call. It is important for men to be proactive but women often like to be the ones to signal their intentions first. So, guys, when in doubt, go for hand on bottom. It's always a bad idea to be pushy. Let her take the lead, and then who knows what will follow?

Not only does this decision set the stage for early power dynamics, but there is also a question of manoeuvrability – boys, you want to have the freedom to access some techniques which we describe below.

Sachin: Hand on the bottom! Ira is getting ahead of herself now ... But seriously, you are already nervous about holding hands for the first time and then expecting you to take all these top or bottom decisions is a bit much. Do what comes naturally and yes, as Ira says, manoeuvre as you move along.

## **Let Her Lead You**

It's kind of sexy to let her have control of holding your hand. Let her decide when to hold on or to let go. Trust me, when the time is right, she will make her move. Guys, you can make the process easier by keeping your hand in

an easy-to-access location, palm facing slightly out. Coordination is important too. There is nothing more awkward than when one person is clinging on to a limp unwilling appendage.

Sachin: Oh, all our key vitals are in easy-to-access locations, ears for nibbling, lips for kissing ... need I go on? And yes, the hands too!

### **Just the Right Pressure**

A little squeeze now and then is perfect. A gentle pressure to simulate the beating of your heart can be very deep and sexy. But too much is not always better. Wringing her hand like a bell does not show her how much you like her.

Sachin: Yup, keep a manometer handy. 15 psi is just about perfect.

### **The Scratch**

The sexiest part of holding hands is the titillating little games you can play. Try the 'palm scratch' first to gauge her reaction. This is a very simple manoeuvre that entails tracing a line down her palm with the nail of your finger. Think about just grazing her skin – you don't want to plow a furrow in her hand. If she reacts well, you can move on to the other more intimate ways, otherwise just keep doing more of the same.

Sachin: This is a little complex. Ira, please demonstrate this 'manoeuvre' to me when we meet and hold hands next, please.

### **The Stroke**

Just because you are using one hand, it doesn't mean that you can't use the other one. Use your other hand to stroke the hand you are already holding. This can include tracing little signs and words like 'cute' or 'be mine' and you can make a fun game out of it while flirting. Little interludes like this keep the contact exciting and interesting.

Sachin: I'm just excited to see where all this is going. Scratching, stroking, I can read 'massage' below. Read on...

## **The Knuckle Massage**

The points in between the knuckles are erogenous zones of the body. Relieving these pressure points triggers the release of chemicals in the brain that are similar to the chemicals that are emitted when a person is in love. Take full advantage of this fact by massaging those points slowly and gently.

## **The Kiss**

You may not have arrived at kissing yet, but that doesn't mean there can't be any lip-locking at all. You can certainly be spontaneous and lean down to kiss the back of his/her palm in a tender and romantic moment. This is very sexy and will make him/her swoon.

Sachin: Avoid the urge to say 'you taste nice'. It's a peck Ira is suggesting, not licking the hand.

## **The Fingertip Nibble**

The ends of the fingers have a higher concentration of nerve endings than in any other part in the body. So it's worth a try. If you're watching a movie together or are seated under the stars, try kissing her fingertips softly, applying a gentle yet firm pressure. But remember to go light on the teeth – less is always more.

Fair warning: Finger nibbling is a brazen step. It's worth a try but boys, keep a towel handy, you may get a glass of water thrown in your face.

Sachin: Chew away, you beaver. Begin by using your incisors, if you hear cooing sounds, move on to your canines and then gnaw away with those molars. I'm already hungry! I'm being sarcastic, follow what Ira said.

## **Other Charms**

- **Arm-in-arm action** – There is nothing more delicately erotic than linking arms with a man. Boys, you must extend your arm out (and build arm strength to hold it there), so she can place her arm on top of it. There is important symbolism in this gesture. By extending your arm, boys, you are saying you can be her rock and her foundation, that she can depend on your stability, strength and integrity.
- **Playing footsie** – A nice little thing to do when you're holding hands or when you're having dinner with a group. Start with the lightest love-tap, and graduate to some coy stroking or gentle rubbing. Just make sure you don't get the wrong foot!

Sachin: Thank your mom for all those exercises to develop your motor skills. You need to coordinate your hands, legs, mouth all at the same time.

- **Playing with his/her hair** – Guys, women often take great pains with their hair, so you don't want to ruin her look and send her back to the salon the next day. But some sweet ruffling and stroking will often help elevate the mood of an intimate evening for two. Start by sweeping any stray hairs off her eyes, and tuck them gently behind her ear while maintaining eye contact. Then, if she is wearing her hair loose, move into gentle combing with the fingertips. It is a gesture that is soothing and sexy, and if you can work in some light scalp massage, then you're getting two birds with one stone.

Sachin: Best to practise on your bestie who has long hair or better still a Golden Retriever.

- **Neck massage** – This is a great way to get his/her juices flowing. Start by kneading and gentle knuckling, making

circles with your thumbs. As the muscles become loose and engaged, slowly increase the radius of the massage-zone, making sure to spend time on her shoulders and neck – especially if she spends time hunched over her keyboard at work. While you do this, pay attention to what her body tells you: if she is tense, her back will have knots in it; if she has ever been seriously injured, her body will compensate on the alternate side. Make sure your hands stay above the shirt, else this can become seedy instead of romantic, but when done properly, massage is a therapeutic and effective way to connect with someone close to you.

Sachin: An exercise in restraint and self-control. Like Bon Jovi said:

‘Don’t you know I only aim to please.  
If you want me to lay my hands on you  
Lay your hands on me’

## **Backstroking**

Women love backstroking. The spinal nerves are highly sensitive and stroking/kissing these erogenous zones can make a woman go cuckoo. The key is to go slow and steady. Start by tracing concentric circles with the flat of your palm, applying gentle but consistent pressure. The effect is simultaneously re-assuring and deeply intimate. Vary direction and speed as needed. If you can, you can even try to kiss her on her neck/upper back over her clothes.

## **Tickling**

Tickling is one of the oldest forms of erotic play. Start by giving her a playful squeeze around the mid-section, and once you both become comfortable, you can add more tricks to your repertoire. But remember – tickle, don’t scratch. You’re a human being, not an animal. Also, not all

people are comfortable with being tickled, so don't go overboard: this should be playful, not painful in any way.

Not everyone is ticklish in all the same spots. Find out what his/her tickle spots are and then gently tickle those. Start by gently grazing these areas with a fingertip. Stimulate the nerve endings to create a highly agreeable sensation of anticipation. The key is not to make her scream with laughter, but to make her giggle and wonder what might be coming next.

Sachin: I think we oversimplify physical intimacy when it comes to men. There is enough research out there that women love intimacy and sex as much as the guy next door. Just like women, we too cherish and love those brief moments of intimacy, be it pecking, tickling, stroking, or even holding hands. We too want our hands stroked, have someone brush away that whisk of hair on our forehead and straighten that tie. Maybe a lot many guys are just shy of PDA and more comfortable displaying their affections in private. There is non-sexual foreplay that we too enjoy and we don't expect sex each time we get intimate. We need to be turned on too (yes, biologically we get turned on much faster!) and the moment has to be right. So yeah, don't view us as horny toads with only sex on our mind, when we suddenly tickle your palm.

IRA ON PRUDERY

## **The Do's and Don'ts**

Girls, walking the line between prudery and over-intimacy is one of the oldest challenges known to (wo)mankind. There is a common misconception that guys are only after one thing: a physical connection. While this is true for a few individuals, it is incorrect for most men. Men and women alike want connection, laughter and love.

The real secret is men don't want sex, they want intimacy. The difference is that a man, every man really wants to show his entire self, the good, bad and ugly to the woman he loves and wants total acceptance. Ladies, if you can keep this in mind then there will never be any pressure to

rush into an uncomfortable scenario when it comes to a relationship with a man you like.

Physical intimacy is not inherently dirty or bad. With a loving partner in a trusting and committed relationship, it can be a healthy and joyful expression of love. The key is knowing what you want, and moving at the pace you're comfortable with.

That said, there are some common mistakes you can avoid:

- Communicate. It can be awkward to talk about physical intimacy, but the more you do it, the better and more helpful it will be for the relationship. Talk about your fear, discomforts, and also your hopes and desires.
- Ladies, please don't put up an ice-queen act. It gets stale really soon. If you're not that into him, let him move on and live his life on his own terms. If you have real issues with physical intimacy for any particular reason, you should share this with him; it will only help the relationship. If this is all a first for you (and it may very well be, there is nothing wrong with that), then let him/her know that too. It will help the other person understand your point of view and be more sensitive towards your feelings.
- Don't push him away all the time. Little do we realise how offensive this can be to guys. If he keeps on trying to hold you privately or publicly and you're not comfortable, instead of pushing him away, just let him know kindly. This in no way means that the girl should give in to the guy's desire to get physically intimate, if she doesn't want it. It is very common for women to give in because of emotional pressure or fear of offending. Consent is key.
- Ladies, take the initiative sometimes. He doesn't always have to be the first one to hold your hand, or to tickle you or do any of the above. It's really nice if a girl does it too (we advise crossing the three-date zone before this happens).
- Don't make out in public. PDA, especially in India, is not advisable, especially with all the untoward forces at play. Safety should be our number one concern, and we would not want you getting into trouble. We know it is difficult to find places to be intimate, but be creative, think out of the box, pool your resources, and you will be surprised at what you can come up with. Just remember that we live in a society which is a mix of traditional and modern. While you may well try to be a modern-minded person, you have to be sensitive of the 'cultural' (in the minds of some) forces at play in India.

## Questions from our followers

Dear Ira and Sachin

My boyfriend does not want to be intimate with me. We have a great relationship, but he isn't making any moves on me. Is there something wrong with me?

Waitingtobekissed

Dear Waitingtobekissed

I don't think there is anything wrong with you, but there may be something wrong with him! Anyhow, let's be positive – why don't you try to make the first move? Offer him your hand, or gently take his in yours. Maybe he's just shy and respectful, or inexperienced. Most women don't realise that men feel a lot of pressure to be 'macho', and this can make even stud muffin crumble. If he is worth it, make the first move – and if he still won't connect with you intimately, then you know it might be time to make another move ... by dumping him.

Ira

Dear Waitingtobekissed

Make the first move, a touch here, a squeeze there. If he does not succumb, you can try having a chat with him about it. Sometimes, boys can just be really nervous.

Peck away!

Sachin

Dear Ira and SB

He tried to grab my hand on the first day of our meeting and I felt very uncomfortable. He held on to it and I felt like I almost had a heart attack, I was so nervous. I want to see him again, but I am afraid that he will do it again.

Scaredgirl

Dear Scaredgirl

It is natural to be nervous, especially if this is your first dating experience, but I think you are over-reacting a little bit! If it makes you that uncomfortable, I would just drop him a text and tell him that while you want to see him, you want to leave intimacy of any kind out at this stage. The key to a good relationship is communication.

Ira

Dear Scaredgirl

You are not obliged to hold anyone's hand, especially someone's who grabbed you! Grabbing is wrong, no matter how much you like him. Make sure that he doesn't do it again. Violence of any kind must be stopped early on in its track. In this book, we prioritise safe and healthy intimacy above all else.

Cheers

SB

Hola

I have been trying ALL of these tactics above, but I feel like I have scared off the girl! These tips suck!

Unhappyreader

Dear Unhappyreader

Sorry to hear that. SB, the members at TrulyMadly and many other readers have had a lot of success with these. You are probably just doing these wrong. Also, you're not supposed to practise all these together, but one at a time, just in case that wasn't clear.

Ira

Dear Unhappyreader

Tactics are what you use to win a match. Look at each tip and suggestion in light of your own situation. The process should be fun and like a friendly game. Keep at it and, like many believers before you, you too will be proudly announced as someone's boyfriend soon.

SB

Hi

I have tried all of these and I think I have over-excited my boyfriend. He is always pawing at me, and now he seems to think that I want to sleep with him when I don't!

Boyfriendinheat

Dear Boyfriendinheat

Firstly, is your boyfriend a human being or a dog? Well, the point of these is to excite but not to over-excite. Have a chat with him, tell him that you're not ready to sleep with him till you are. It's always best to talk about these things, so you don't find yourself in a sticky situation!

Ira

Dear Boyfriendinheat

This sucker needs a cold shower!

SB

7

## The First Kiss



The movies make the first kiss seem like the easiest and most natural thing in the world. The reality though is very different. First kisses are more

likely disasters than they are not, especially if you are not prepared. There are many factors that go into creating a memorable and romantic first-kiss experience. Head-tilt geometry, leaning-in vectors and lip-to-lip pressure forces must be considered, along with the less tangible elements like mood, setting and weather. More complex than you thought, right? Not to worry, worrying you is certainly not our intention – the good news is that kissing is an art form, and like any art form, it can be studied, practiced, and perfected over time. In this chapter Ira and Sachin help you navigate the tricky first-kiss terrain with the panache of a pro, no matter what experience level you are at.

Start revising those geometry and physics lessons. You are going to learn from the Pythagoras of kissers.

## **Timing**

The ideal time for the first kiss is after three or four dates. Ladies, it is good to wait a little bit before the first kiss simply because the more you get to know him, the better you will like him and the better the kiss will be. On the first or second date, he will be thinking about the kiss. By the third date, both of you may be ready for it and will want it to happen. By the fourth, fifth or sixth date if a gentle kiss doesn't happen then one party may be confused and unsure. You don't want to wait too long else he may lose interest or confidence.

You don't want to over-plan a kiss, but you should know that you want to kiss the person and have some idea of the when, where and how you want it to happen. You can never forecast it perfectly, but you should create possible scenarios where that amazing kiss will take place.

Sachin: Yup. If you have not kissed by the fourth date, it's too late. Melt with that ice in his drink and show him some love. And a sign of the times is that 62 per cent of girls said in a recent survey that they made the first move.

Men are usually more eager to kiss or get physical for that matter and that's just how we are wired. But I guess we enjoy (or dislike) the same

things about a kiss that girls do. Men find it hot if the girl makes the first move and why not! Our advice to men is to be sure that both of you are ready for that first kiss and let it be natural. If both of you enjoy that first experience, believe me, there will be many more and a lot more spontaneous.

## **Setting**

The setting can be the difference between an average kiss and an incredible kiss. Make sure the first kiss is in a semi-romantic setting – in a garden, next to a lake, a pretty corner on campus, somewhere where it's only you and her and you can take time with the kiss. It's no fun to kiss someone on a sweaty dance floor with people bumping into you, or in a coffee shop or a movie theatre where you'll have people staring and you risk getting kicked out. It's not always possible to set the mood, because we can't always plan our first kisses perfectly, but try to keep this in mind.

Sachin: When both of you kiss each other for the first time and enjoy it, that's the romantic setting. It could be by the water cooler or in a parking lot or while watching Alien Resurrection. But, yes, certainly a moment to cherish and remember. I still fondly remember my first kiss and it was amazing. Trying to recreate that magic is what keeps a relationship steaming.

## **Mood**

Sensuality is sexiness plus gentleness. So, while setting a hot and heavy mood can be exciting, being gentle, soft, and sweet is always nice at the start. While women want a man who knows how to take charge, they also want someone who is strong enough to go with the flow and allow her to sometimes (or often) take the lead.

## **Hygiene**

This sounds like an obvious point, alas, I only wish it were. I strongly urge all boys and girls in anticipation of their first kiss to carry chewing gum,

mints and any other convenient forms of mouth fresheners with you. Not only should you brush your teeth regularly in the morning and evening, but if you are anticipating your first kiss, you should take extra steps to keep your mouth in tip-top shape. Indian food has a lot of onion and garlic, and a stinky kiss is no way to start a relationship.

Fact: Flossing can go a long way to mitigate halitosis, and can actually also prevent heart disease.

Along with oral hygiene, don't forget lip hygiene. It is no fun kissing dry, chapped or cracked lips. Carrying a tube of Vaseline in your pocket is not effeminate; it's a sign that you take care of your body and your appearance. It will make her think that you're serious about your lips, the kiss and her.

Sachin: I'd say up your game from Vaseline or some lip balm. Or something peppermint-y to let the kiss tingle. And yeah no kissing after that lovingly shared plate of seekh kebabs.

When you kiss someone you get very close to the other person. You taste their mouth of course but you also smell their hair, clothes and, of course, body odour.

Ladies and gentlemen, please wash your hair. Hair carries strong scents and the smell of unwashed hair can be overwhelming. If you are dating someone, wash your hair frequently, or a quick fix is to use dry shampoo, now easily available in the market. As for clothes, the smell of unwashed clothes can become unpleasant over repeated wears, so make an effort to wear well-laundered clothes if you are frequently seeing someone whom you like. Last but not the least is body odour – use a deodorant, and use a nice one.

## **Who Leans In?**

I strongly believe that girls should initiate the first kiss. Boys assume that girls are shy, and so often make the first move themselves. Sometimes this works against them. It may lead girls to believe that they're just trying to get into her pants, and can cause her to be suspicious or even put off. If you really like her, then you should wait. And if she really likes you, trust me, she will kiss you.

Sachin: An exploratory peck by the boys is fair game. If she reciprocates, you are home. If she resists, let her make the next move. Maybe she is just unsure and building up her confidence to kiss you back.

Ladies remember, prudence – yes, pride – no. If you like him, and want a relationship (even if you don't), the first kiss will mark your entry into the relationship zone. Some girls are afraid that if they make the first move, he will think that she is 'loose'. Dump any guy who thinks this way, it is probably better for you to find out that he has this kind of mentality to begin with. If you kiss him first, he will admire your confidence. He will also understand who controls the pace of the relationship.

## **Pace**

This is more for boys than for girls. Don't throw yourself at her, and don't act desperate by getting too intense too fast. Let the kiss start out slow and gentle, and let the intensity grow as you proceed. Remember that you kiss not just with your mouth but with your entire body, so your body movements just mirror the pace in your mind and mouth.

## **Eyes**

Close your eyes. The most beautiful things are not seen by the eyes, but felt by the mind, heart and spirit. Surrender to the moment and enjoy it for all of its aspects. Plus, staring at someone you're kissing can make them feel self-conscious, and that's a sure-fire way to ruin what could potentially be the most romantic moment of your life.

Sachin: I think kisses are enjoyed with eyes closed, but most people take a peek and if you peek at the same time, you are so made for each other. Kiss on!

#### More Pointers

Practice makes perfect.

Find a friend, a doll, a stuffed animal. Do what it takes to get the technique down. There are many YouTube tutorials available, but these can be misleading. Also keep in mind that it is a mistake to do internet searches for 'kissing videos', especially if you're in a library or a public setting.

Do you mean like those sex dolls they have in other countries? One gets to learn so much about authors through their writing. Just watch the kissing scene with Ryan Gosling and Rachael McAdams in *The Notebook* and you are all set. And it's a great date movie to boot.

When it comes to the tongue

Keep it in your mouth. Little butterfly touches say more than an anaconda invading alien territory. Make an impact with your subtlety and style, not with your saliva. Remember, you get NO points for creativity or weirdness when it comes to kissing. Keep it old-fashioned. Leave your creativity for other aspects of intimacy.

To tilt or not to tilt?

This is not something that one thinks about, but it can lead to a disastrous and embarrassing head on collision. During the lift-off process take a second to gauge which way his/her head is tilting so you can adjust yours accordingly.

I gather one needs to be an Aerospace engineer or a space pilot to be a good kisser. Maybe Neil Armstrong has left some lessons for us. Oh, just kiss each other and enjoy it.

You don't kiss with just the lips.

You kiss with your whole body. Every inch of you should be involved in that kiss, especially your hands. Keep the 3 Bs (breasts, back and bottom) in mind; also don't forget to stroke her hair, play with her ear lobes, touch her neck. You can even try kissing the neck and then moving slowly up. These little tricks get the nerve endings revved up in an unexpected and exciting way.

Keep them wanting more.

Stop just as it gets good. They will be pining for more.

You killjoy ... you! No please I beg you not to stop.

Be mindful

Enjoy every moment of it, as opposed to focusing on being scared, or nervous, or thinking of what more you can do to get into her pants. Kissing, like living, is not a race to be won, but a process and experience to be enjoyed from every angle and perspective.

In conclusion, we want to say that while it is good to be well prepared for a kiss (and everything else in life) do keep in mind that being relaxed is the most important. Do not put too much pressure on yourself and certainly not your partner, do not let the thought of the first kiss stress you out, instead look forward to it, enjoy the act itself and be positive and hopeful about all the sweet kisses that are waiting for you the near future.

Sachin: A real test of a kiss that went well is when you pull back but she does not. The memory of that lingering kiss makes for great phone or text chats to keep the romance alive. I don't mean dissecting the kiss, the tilt and the thrust but just talking about what both of you felt. Yeah, a good kiss does cement the relationship.

Questions from our followers

Dear Ira and Sachin

I really want to kiss her, but I am so nervous. Every time I think about doing the deed I start to shiver and tears start forming in my eyes. What do I do? Please help!

Nervousheart

Dear Nervousheart

There is no quick fix for this. I suggest visualization techniques. Imagine kissing her, and one day hopefully you will muster up the courage. The other thing is, spend more time with her and don't put so much pressure on yourself. Good things come to those who wait.

Ira

Dear Nervousheart

It's not a 'deed' you are about to 'commit'. I agree the first kiss is tougher than it appears and you're not the only one who feels the pressure. That said, take your time, try not to think about it too much and kiss away.

SB

Dear Ira and SB

We have actually done everything on the sexual front, but she refuses to kiss me. What do you think the problem is?

Neverbeenkissed

Dear Neverbeenkissed

Hmm ... Have you seen your dentist of late? On a more serious note, remember that communication is key and can really help with physical intimacy. It can be awkward to talk about kissing, but since this is bothering you, you should bring it up.

Ira

Dear Neverbeenkissed

Talk to her about it.

SB

Dear Ira and SB

I tried kissing him and it was total disaster. Firstly, I missed his lips, secondly, my braces got stuck in his lips and they started bleeding and then thirdly he ended up biting my lips. What do we do?

Kissedandscarred

Dear Kissedandscarred

Do not worry, you are not the only one in the first-kiss-disaster-kiss. The important thing here is not the quality of the kiss, but the fact that both of you are willing to try to make it better. Practice makes perfect especially in the kissing department. Also try kissing lying down, it's sometimes easier to manoeuvre this way.

Ira

Dear Kissedandscarred

Don't take off your glasses next time, get your braces tightened and make sure he's well fed next time around.

Sachin

Dear Ira and SB

The first kiss was amazing! Thanks for the tips. Is it OK for us to have sex now?

Hornball

Dear Hornball

I think you should have this conversation with your date. But a good kiss doesn't always mean good sex. Sex is an important step in a relationship, and it is important to be in a committed and trusting relationship where you

can communicate openly and honestly. So please don't rush into anything. When you start talking about sex, you have to start thinking about lots of other things like unplanned pregnancy, methods of contraception and ways to keep safe from sexually transmitted diseases. We are all for people sharing and showing their love, but we think the best way to do this is safely, slowly and sweetly.

Ira

Dear Hornball

If she is ready (make sure she is a 100 per cent ready) sex is a fun way to end what starts as a kiss. Be safe, have (lots of) sex and have lots of fun.

Sachin

Dear Ira and Sachin

I am dating a guy who I really like, but he is the WORST kisser. He bites my lips, drools on my t-shirt and is really very aggressive when he kisses. I don't want to break up with him because I really do like him, but I am getting fed up of these terrible kisses.

Kissedbyafrog

Dear Kissedbyafrog

With the right guidance any frog can turn into a prince, I guarantee it. While it is awkward to straight up tell him that he is a bad kisser and that he needs to change certain things, you can give him hints. Try saying, 'I would like to try gentle kissing', or 'It feels so good when you give dry kisses rather than wet ones.' Just use your charm and guide him gently.

Ira

Dear Kissedbyafrog

Seems you were kissed-by-a-lab! Read out the complete chapter to him, then make him read it out aloud ten times and commits it to memory. Only then let him kiss you next.

Sachin

Dear Ira and Sachin

I have been dating this girl, and both of us really like each other. I know she has never kissed anyone before and she is really very shy. I have been trying to get her to kiss me over the past few weeks but it just hasn't worked. Every time I lean in, she giggles and turns away and I also giggle, but the truth is that I am crying, screaming and praying (yes, all together, it is possible) on the inside. What do I do with my ice princess?

Deepfreeze

Dear Deepfreeze

Firstly, let her become comfortable with physical intimacy by hand holding and soft touches as explained in the previous chapter. Secondly, try to have a conversation about it in a nice, gentle way (don't come across as being aggressive or angry, this will scare her off). Ask her why she is afraid of kissing you. LET her know that you really would like to kiss her. Lastly, stop TRYING to kiss her, maybe this is what is turning her away in the first place. A little patience will go a long way my friend, especially if you like her. Our golden rule for kissing is, let it get to the point where SHE is comfortable enough to make the first move on you.

Ira

# 8

## The Dos and Don'ts of Online Dating with TrulyMadly



While online dating is a boon to mankind by bringing a virtual world of dating to your fingertips, and making it easier than ever before to meet people, it can also be confusing, ego-smashing and sometimes, even heart-

breaking. It doesn't have to be though! You can very well use online dating to your advantage and how. It can be an exciting way to meet a range of people you would have never been able to before. There is a code of conducting yourself in the digital world, and Ira and Sachin, along with the expert folks at TrulyMadly, India's biggest online dating website, tell you how to navigate the world of online dating and find love.

## ONLINE DATING 1.0

### **Understanding the App**

Pick one or two apps that you want to register on, and then take ten or fifteen minutes understanding each app. Play around with it. While most apps are fairly straightforward, there are a few unique tricks that they offer. Do take advantage of them.

Sachin: Since TrulyMadly has been created keeping women in mind, our verification process is a little more thorough and involved. Make sure the app you use has some level of verification even if it's the basic Facebook login. A verified profile simply means that you will be matched with a real person and not a bot, the display picture that you see is real and not of Tom Cruise. At TrulyMadly, we even investigate if the Facebook account used is authentic and make sure it hasn't been created recently merely to be used on dating apps.

### **Create a Good Profile**

You only have 200 words to catch someone's attention before he/she swipes to the next. Make sure every word counts. Try to be as creative as possible, adding in some cool and unique details about yourself. Try to be grammatically correct and not have any typos. As we have previously said, first impressions can often be the last, especially in the world of online dating.

Sachin: Dating apps use a lot of your social data to showcase what you like, what your interests are, the music you listen to, the books you read, the kind of pictures you take, etc. Your social profile will tell the real story, so make sure what you have liked on Facebook is a true reflection of your personality and your Instagram pics showcase your real interests.

### **Study Buddy**

Take your bestie's help to make your online dating profile. You may not believe it, but he/she knows you much better than you know yourself. Before you post your profile, get a friend or two to whet it. You'll be pleasantly surprised at some of the details they come up with.

### **Steer Clear of Clichés**

Many of us actually do like to watch the sunset alone, but in the world of online dating, avoid banality and clichés. Think of something they haven't just read on the last profile. You may not be able to come up with the craziest, most creative thing, but that does not mean that you have to use clichés. A cliché tells the person reading your profile that you haven't given even a second's worth of thought to what you're uploading.

### **Honesty Is the Best Policy**

You can hope to impress him/her with lies and exaggerations but it will only get you so far. Just be yourself. If you truly want someone to like you for who you are and have a long-lasting and happy relationship, honesty is the best policy.

### **Keep It Fresh**

Updating your profile regularly with relevant and recent information will make you more appealing. Include information about recent trips, job changes, successes (or failures), any recent hobbies, maybe even a song that you really like.

## **Keep It Short**

The average time that someone takes to screen a profile is three seconds. Limit your profile to 200 words or even less. The shorter and catchier your profile, the better.

## **Funny Side Up**

Even if you are no stand-up comedian, write something humorous and light. Something that would make people feel as if they would have a fun time with you.

## **The Science behind the DP**

After tracking profiles that have had the most hits, TrulyMadly has deciphered these mantras to get a winning DP:

**Say cheese!** – Nothing is more enigmatic and attractive than a big and happy smile on your face, even more than a pout or your bulging biceps. Don't put up a morose or serious picture. Smile, even if you don't love your teeth.

**Your best is now** – Don't put up a picture from five years ago because that's when you had all your hair intact or you were slimmer. Try to use a recent picture, one taken in the last one year. The more recent the picture, the more honest you are being with people seeing you online. The aim is that you take the date offline really soon, and you don't want your date to get the surprise of her/his life then.

**Centre of attraction, but only in your photo** – It's your dating profile, not your buddy's, not the beautiful beach behind you, nor the cafe where you are having coffee with a dozen other friends. Put up a photo where you are centre stage and are clearly visible, no matter how insecure you are about your looks. The other person should be able to see you clearly and not feel that you are hiding your weight or your face behind those of your friends.

**Action packed** – Don't post your drunken feud memorabilia online. Instead, let them get a glimpse of your skills in action, say, you playing a melody on your guitar or hiking in the hills.

**Photoshop with caution** – Don't morph or brighten your picture so much that the person in the picture does not even resemble you. The aim of online dating is to take it offline too and when you finally do meet people, you don't want them to be unable to recognize you.

Sachin: Profiles that get the most likes are ones where the pictures tell a story. If you like the outdoors, use a picture from your last hiking trip; if you have a pet, use a photograph that has you cuddling your poodle. Do you sing? These days, many apps allow you to put up a video profile. Use video profiles to the hilt – strum a guitar, read out some poetry, sing a song, show some dance moves (but not an item number!).

## THE ART OF SEDUCTION

Posting a topless picture of yours or one with extensive cleavage is definitely not artful. Ladies, there are too many creeps out there, so have modest pictures on the internet. That said, don't try to come across as a 'good girl' by wearing a salwar-suit. Just put up a picture of you wearing what you think represents you the best. If a kurti is your norm, go for it. If you're like me, and live your life in yoga pants, then feel free to put that up as well. Try to wear bright colours that are eye-catching. A pink top is better than a black one.

Sachin: True for guys too. It's not cool to use a topless pic or one where you are in a dotted ganji. Works for Salman, not for you. No pictures of you chugging beer or in shades so huge that one can't see your face. These kind of pictures either get rejected during verification on TrulyMaldy and, on other apps, get the least likes.

Now that you've understood the app and created a killer profile, it is time for you to actually start using the app. With hundreds of boys and girls out

there, how should you choose?

- For starters, don't just swipe right with your eyes closed (boys, this is for you).
- Do not try to match with just about anyone who matches with you. Be discriminating, it will serve you in good stead. Take a good look at the photo, take a few seconds to read a little bit about her/him and then swipe right (or left). It's not about the quantity of people you match with, it is all about the quality. If you spend a little bit of time actually reading the profiles, then you will stand a chance at getting a better match.
- Try to gauge his/her intentions. TrulyMadly has just introduced a short survey to help people match on the basis of intention. Take a few seconds to fill this out because it will take you a long way in your online dating streak. She wants to get married, you just want to go on a fun date – it doesn't seem like this match will go very far! Trying to figure out the intention of the person that you match with early on will be critical to your online dating success.

You've swiped and ta-daa! You've matched! What do you do now?

## CHATTING

- Remember this is the first interaction that you are having with this person, so be polite. She is NOT your old pal, so don't take liberties. That will put her right off.
- Grammar, grammar, grammar! Remember, Ira is watching you ALL from above. No incorrect spellings and grammar; try to present the most educated picture of yourself. Take a few seconds to proofread your texts (or get an app to do it for you).
- Move it quickly from the app to SMS, WhatsApp or anything else more personalized. This adds more intimacy to your

exchange.

- For more tips on messaging, please refer to Chapter 2.

Sachin: We need to move beyond a basic ‘Hi’ or a ‘You have a lovely name’ or a ‘You have a nice smile’. These are the most used opening lines on TrulyMadly and the ones that get the least likes. We have had to launch ‘Spark’, where we recommend an opening line based on what we know about both of you. If both of you like Arijit Singh, Sparks will recommend you refer his latest song when initiating the chat.

Inside tip: Sparks is a paid feature; just look up her profile and see what she’s into and try to make a connection based on that. We’ve seen folks who start using Sparks get 40 per cent more likes than when they were not. So, clearly, some magic happening there.

You’re getting along great on chat, what now?

Don’t stay on chat for eternity! Move it QUICKLY to the real world. The point of an app is to discover new people. We don’t want you sticking around on the app forever. Move it offline by setting up a date.

Sachin: Keep conversations on with as many matches as possible. You never know when you get ghosted and, often, for no fault of yours. The one guy you are chatting with has to suddenly travel for work for two weeks and goes silent. A girl you seem to be hitting it off with meets someone else and decides to uninstall the app. The more people you chat with, the more likely you are to meet and find someone you want to get into a relationship with.

Questions From Our Followers

Dear Ira and SB

We’ve both liked each other on TM, and the first thing he did is ask for my kundli. What do I do?

Starsuncrossed

Starsuncrossed

Go ask him to marry a tree. And then delete him off your list.

Ira

Dear Starsuncrossed

Tell him to ask his mom to create his profile on a similar matrimonial site. Kundli matching types have little use of a dating app.

SB

Hi

In some pics, she looks really good, in some she looks like a totally different person. I don't know what to do. Can I ask her for more photos? Or would that be rude?

Loveatfirstpic

Dear Loveatfirstpic

Not a great first sign that she has photoshopped so extensively. But you can politely ask her to take a selfie and send it to you or ask her to share her day via pictures (because a picture can say a thousand words, after all). Take your decision after that, though remember that beauty is only skin deep and what matters more than the way someone looks is the way they make you feel.

Ira

Dear Loveatfirstpic

Bro, it's probably not Photoshop but just really good make-up. Make-up can really transform girls and why not?! Perhaps try meeting her early morning at a gym to see what she really looks like.

Dear Ira and Sachin

I was talking to this girl for seven days in a row; we talked about everything from movies to past relationships and then, she suddenly disappeared. What did I do?

Phantomoftheinternet

Dear Phantomoftheinternet

I'm not sure if you did anything wrong (or did you? We hope you've been following our rules). Maybe she just met someone else. Dating in the online world can be hard. There are obvious advantages of having thousands of profiles at your fingertips, but that also means that you too are just another profile on someone else's fingertips – that is till you meet her, of course. In the future, try to move the date into the real world as soon as you can.

Ira

Dear Phantomoftheinternet

This is common on a dating app. Girls usually have the upper hand because they have more to choose from than guys. She has probably found someone else to chat with. Don't lose hope! Keep at it. Swipe more profiles and chat with as many girls as you like and then choose a few who you want to meet. You don't have to chat exclusively online. It's good to chat with a number of people and see what clicks.

Sachin

Hi

This guy I've been chatting with seems nice but every time I try to get him to share his opinion about something intellectual, he sends lame emojis as a response. How do I get him to have a proper conversation?

Emojified

Dear Emojified

Disable emojis on your phone and then let him know that you have! If he still doesn't bother typing out full sentences or responding with some sort of mindfulness, then don't waste any more of your time. Wave him goodbye and find someone else who wants to engage with you as much as

you want to engage with him and who actually takes the effort to type out entire sentences!

Ira

Dear Emojified

First, SMS changed usage of expression and now emojis are changing SMS. Don't judge a chat by its emojis. It's how people communicate on any messaging app. Try communicating over a phone call and see if he can be a bit more expressive. If he still restricts himself to 'LOLs' etc., delete him from your app and your life.

Sachin

Hi

I'm bald now. Is it bad if I put a picture of mine with all my hair? After all, I want to form a good first impression, don't I?

Baldbutbeautiful

Dear Baldbutbeautiful

You want to form a good first impression, not a false one! Imagine walking up to meet her for the first time and she doesn't even recognize you. Maybe while you're on your date, you can show her that photo with hair on your head after you make a joke about your hair loss. If you're deeply insecure about it, why not find a solution to the problem itself? Have you ever considered a hair implant or a headstand? Headstands have been proven to help with hair loss and are an inexpensive way of growing a whole head of hair.

Ira

Dear BBB

It's tough, man. Losing hair is usually genetic, so it's not your fault. It's like being short or tall – it's in the genes. A lot of women dig the bald look.

Try, instead, to work on creating a really catchy profile. Maybe even make a joke about your hair? Women love humour, even more so than hair!

SB

Dear Ira and Sachin

I have met three girls on the app and I really like ALL OF THEM. I am chatting with them non-stop but I am not sure who to choose to be my girlfriend. What do I do? I also feel a bit guilty, like I am cheating on all three of my lovely ladies. I won't lie though, I am enjoying the attention quite a bit!

Thanks!

Tripletrouble

Dear Tripletrouble

Congratulations on having success on the app. There's no harm in dating multiple people as long as you're honest about it. And once you do develop a preference, do let the others know gently, in a dignified manner.

Ira

Dear Tripletrouble

Firstly, well done. Secondly, it's a mutual choice and you don't get to choose. Maybe all of them are chatting with multiple guys too. I suggest you meet them in person and see how things move ahead with one or all of them.

Have fun

SB

I created the profile, when a very good friend of mine asked me to try out this new application, in November 2014. Out of curiosity, I did. And after a couple of random conversations with random people, I met Rohit Singh. Well, long distance it was for us. I was in Delhi and he was in Kharagpur, finishing the final year of his M.Tech. It wasn't love at first go. We liked each other's profile, started with an awkward but a very rhetorical 'hi'. He asked me for my Facebook id and we soon exchanged numbers and it took off gradually.

It's been a good seven months now. And by God's grace, everything is going well. Now he is moving to Delhi and all I can say is that life is easy to deal with, with a loving and caring partner around.

# 9

## The Relationship Zone



How do you know that you are in a relationship? Is there a timeline? Does he officially ask? And if you are sure that you guys are 'girlfriend-boyfriend', then how should you conduct yourself now that you are in a

relationship? In this chapter, Ira and Sachin reveal all the secrets to a happy, healthy and forever loving relationship.

You are in a relationship if:

- You've deleted the dating app off your phone
- You talk to them every day and text each other multiple times a day
- If you prioritize them above all your other friends
- If you text them first thing in the morning and also the last thing at night
- If you feel crushed at the thought of them being with anyone else
- If you know their daily schedules – eating, sleeping, and the like
- You talk to the person even if you don't want to or even when you are angry at them, because if you didn't, you would feel like something were amiss
- You get angry with them and you don't understand why. Love and anger are different sides of the same coin. You only get angry at them because you care about them. If you didn't, you wouldn't want to waste those emotions at all.

## THE RELATIONSHIP CONVERSATION

There can be some ambiguity around the relationship status. This is expected because relationships are formed over time and there is no set rule around how many dates make a relationship. Confusion around the relationship status can be stressful and can take a toll on the relationship. For this reason, we suggest that all couples should have the relationship conversation. Sit down and have a chat about whether you are, in fact, in a relationship and if you are, what your expectations are. Before you have this conversation, make sure you know what your own expectations are. If you have a boyfriend, then do you expect him to see you every day? Or is a

phone call enough if you live at a distance from each other. Do you want your friends to know? And your family? You should have clarity around some of these critical issues and then, bring them up with your partner.

Make sure you understand what the other person's expectations are and be realistic about whether or not you can work with them. For example, if he is not comfortable with you having any male friends, then this could be a no-go for the relationship. Similarly, if she expects you to call her six times a day, and you have a hectic day-job, then you should be honest in telling her that while you do like her, this is not something that you may be able to commit to. Having this conversation will help iron out a ton of future problems.

## RELATIONSHIPS TAKE WORK

A relationship is different from dating. He is your man, and she is your woman and if you want to be in a healthy, happy and stable relationship, then you should commit not only to one another but also to the relationship. There are far too many couples that break up, make up, break up, make up every few hours, especially in the time of WhatsApp when break-ups often happen over a text message. This is emotionally destructive and stressful and it's better to rid yourself of the drama of a wobbly relationship than to go through it at all. That said, it is much easier to break a relationship than to make one, so if you have something good going on and you want a relationship, work on keeping it positive, keeping the drama out of it and keeping the love alive. Relationships, like anything else in life, require TLC (tender loving care). While there are lots of benefits of being in a relationship and it's great to have a partner-in-crime, relationships take effort and you have to work at getting to know the person and improve the equation every day.

Here are some tips to make your relationship as solid and stable as it can possibly be:

- **Define your relationship goals** when you have the relationship conversation right in the beginning. Circle back to these goals every so often either by yourself or with your

partner to make sure that things are on track. Make clear to the other person what you want. If you want a ‘serious’ relationship, let them know. If you want to keep seeing other people, let them know. If marriage is on your mind, let them know that too.

Sachin: Yes, ‘intent’ is the biggest reason for friction we come across amongst couples at TrulyMadly. Perfectly compatible couples lose out on being together because each partner wants something very different out of the relationship. At times, a girl is looking at something casual just to get to know a guy better and the guy wants commitment. Someone wants nothing more than a one night stand and the other wants something more long term. Define what you are looking for early on and communicate it well to avoid needless heartache later.

- **Don’t cheat.** It is just not worth it. If you find yourself wandering, getting bored and thinking about other girls/boys, then maybe you should think about exiting the relationship, rather than sticking on and making things worse.

Sachin: It’s important to understand that your partner has a life outside the relationship. But cheating is a complete no-no and is not worth it, unless you are in an open relationship – but that we will cover in the sequel.

- Being clingy sucks. Give him/her their space. This allows your relationship to flourish. It is healthy for him/her to have their own set of friends. Even if you love each other, take out a few evenings a week to do your own thing. You’ll be glad you did.

- Being possessive is terribly exhausting in a relationship. Boys, if you can't handle other boys looking at your girl, then well ... you need to think a little more carefully about why your self-confidence levels are this low. She has chosen you and only you. It is not her fault if boys look at her and you honestly cannot control everyone. Instead of feeling bad about this, or doubting her, try to look at it with a sense of pride. She's an attractive woman and she has chosen you. Thrive off that feeling. Girls, same goes for you. That said, if she/he is responding to the attention continually, then that means she doesn't have yours. In this case, have a serious think/talk about the relationship.
- Fights. There are bound to be fights, especially after the three-month honeymoon phase is over. Some make fighting an integral part of the relationship drama, but that is unnatural and terrible. If you do fight, try to talk about it and resolve it as soon as you can. If you are fighting too much, remember it is not healthy and you should rethink your relationship and what you want from it. Ladies (and even gentlemen), do not tolerate even the minutest sign of physical or verbal abuse. Walk away immediately. No second chances on this one.
- Demands – physical, mental, emotional and otherwise. Relationships are demanding, often draining, but we deal with them because we really like the other person and we see their value in our life. It is only natural that our boyfriend/girlfriend will have expectations in the relationship. At times, they will guilt-trip us about spending less time with them, about not getting more intimate, or not calling them enough.

You have to be clear in your mind about what you can or cannot give the other person – in terms of time, emotions and, sometimes, even money

(vacations, gifts, etc.). If you are clear within yourself, then you will be clear with your partner as well.

- Learn how to listen. One of the most important parts of being in a relationship is learning how to listen. If you are always talking and never listening to your partner, then something is wrong. Listening to the other person's problems can resolve so many petty issues that couples go through. Remember, listening is more important than speaking. If there's too much negativity in the air, silence can often get the point across much more strongly than words. Talk less, listen more – try to put yourself in the other person's shoes, especially if there is any cause of disagreement between you two.
- Petty fights. These can be the nastiest part of any relationship and can also be the cause of eventual downfall. We fight because we don't put the other person before ourselves. We fight because we are selfish and we want to impose ourselves on the other person. The cause of most quarrels is a battle of the egos, but if we just keep egos out of the way, then any relationship will be a lot smoother and happier.

An integral and fun part of being in a relationship is the physical intimacy that two people share. Once you emotionally and spiritually connect with someone, then the physical connection comes naturally and helps cement a relationship. Physical intimacy is something beautiful that two people share and there is nothing wrong, dirty or cheap about it. You may or may not decide to have pre-marital sex. For women, this can be a big decision. Make the decision to share your body with a man only when you are comfortable to do so. Do not let any man force it upon you. Some women think that sex is a way of 'keeping' a man. This is a myth. Plus, you don't want to be with a man who is with you only because of physical intimacy. This does not make for an honest relationship.

## IRA ON SEX

Sex is a tricky thing and women respond to sex differently than men do. When women have sex, hormones are released in their body that make them feel like they are in love even when they are not. Men don't have the same reaction. When men have sex, the emotional attachment is substantially less than what women feel. This is the unfortunate and unfair fact of the male/female anatomy. It is important to keep in mind that when you have sex with him, you will find yourself emotionally involved in a much deeper way than before. Make sure you are well prepared for this switch to take place.

Once you have made the decision to have sex, you should have a conversation about the kind of precaution you want to take. Keep in mind that by having sex, as a woman, you might experience major changes in your body, including disease. You may get a yeast infection, or a UTI (urinary tract infection), and at times even both. These can be painful and scary, and you need a good man by your side who, even if he is uncomfortable with all this at first, is there to support you, holding your hand. Always use a condom, even if he doesn't want to. It takes a fraction of a second to get pregnant, and if you do, then that's a whole new challenge to deal with. Don't let men convince you to use non-barrier methods. The birth control pill and morning-after pills are becoming increasingly popular, but they do not protect you from sexually transmitted diseases in any shape or form. Plus, these forms of contraception can have damaging effects on your hormonal system.

Sachin: Wet blanket type of stuff but very practical and important. It's not worth going to battle without a helmet. While women are more at risk from STDs than men, it impacts men too in large numbers. Some STD symptoms are easier to identify in men than in women due to obvious anatomical reasons. Sores and rashes are the first signs and are rather easy to spot. So always carry a condom and remember to use it; it's the best way to protect your partner and yourself.

Once you have had sex, it is important to communicate the likes and dislikes. This can be awkward but it will make your sexual experience better. Don't let pornography fool you. A healthy sexual relationship takes work, it doesn't come easily or naturally. The first few times may very well be awkward and painful but as you continue your sexual exploration and understand each other's bodies, things will get better.

Sex can be a wonderful thing. It connects two people in a beautiful way and it is part of a healthy relationship. But make sure you are emotionally and physically ready for it and, more than anything else, that you are prepared. Men often don't think about these things, but as women we have to take control of our own bodies. I suggest not picking up too much advice from the internet. It can often be quite confusing as well as scary at times. See a doctor if you can, else rely on solid experienced girlfriends.

## SACHIN ON SEX

Should having sex be a planned exercise or is it best left to chance and circumstance? I think sex just happens. The 3 Ps – place, privacy and protection – are more of hygiene factors. When the physical desire is mutual, you will be getting each other's clothes off. The more you think about it, plan for it, the less the chances of it being great. Also, watching porn is the worst way to learn about sex. Porn is like a superhero movie – too good to be true and nowhere close to reality. The best sex is always impulsive. But if it's on your mind and you are unsure of the next step, it's best to talk about it to each other. At this stage, the only reason to have sex is to enjoy it. Enjoyment and procreation is sex's *raison d'être*. And I'm sure the latter is not part of the plan.

## Questions from our followers

Dear Ira and Sachin

I had sex with him and I really thought that made him my boyfriend. We went to a party and he introduced me to everyone as his 'friend'. I was appalled and I left the party and spent the rest of the night crying. He hasn't

even called me to ask me how I am. I gave this man my body, how could he do this to me?

Sexiled

Dear Sexiled

I don't think you read this book carefully at all! If you had, then you would have avoided this pitfall. Having sex with him does not mean that you are his girlfriend. In fact, his behaviour makes it clear that he doesn't think you are. You must have the relationship conversation with him to avoid pitfalls in the future. Give him a call and have a frank and honest conversation. This can be difficult but I promise that in the long run, it will lead to less confusion.

Ira

Dear Sexiled

Firstly, why did you leave the party? Let's be positive. Guys can be emotional about sex, sometimes even more than girls! I suggest you try to reach out to him. Irrespective of having slept with him, you still want to know how he is looking at this relationship.

SB

Hi

I have been out with her for five dates and I think we are in a relationship, though I can't be sure. What should I do? Should I ask her?

Confusedater

Dear Confusedater

Have you kissed yet? If you have, then this can be an important turning point for both of you. If you think it is too early to have the conversation, then you can teasingly call her 'girlfriend' and see how she reacts to it.

Ira

Dear Confusedater

Yeah, kiss her, man and kiss her like no man has kissed a woman before. If you like someone, kiss her. If she comes back for more, she's yours. If she doesn't, then it was never meant to be.

SB

Dear Ira and Sachin

I am in a good healthy relationship with a girl, but she refuses to have sex with me. My friends say that she is only truly in love with me if she makes love to me. Is this true? If so, what should I do?

Untrulyinlove

Dear Untrulyinlove

As you will read in the next chapter, you shouldn't always listen your friends! Sex does not equal true love and you will realize that once you have sex with her. She may need her time. If you respect her and like her, you will give her that time. Let her decide when is the right time for her. This is what a real man does.

Ira

Dear Untrulyinlove

Did you both do an executive health screening? Why are you telling your friends all this? Have any of them ever had sex? If she refuses, let it be for a bit. Instead, talk about it and see when and if she is ready. And again, don't talk to your pals about this. Actually, they are not your pals if they are giving you this dumb advice.

SB

Dear Ira and Sachin

She was cool when we were dating, but now that she is officially my girlfriend, she has totally changed. She wants me to call her five times a day, text her twenty times, see her after lunch and dinner and, then, hang out

with her ALL the time. I like her but this is getting too much to handle. What should I do? It's driving me nuts.

Goingscrazy

Dear Goingscrazy

This does not sound like ideal behaviour. Try talking to her about it. Tell her what you told us. Explain it to her with love and patience. Give it some time. If it doesn't get better and it is still driving you crazy, you have two options. Either you cope with it or you don't. You should try to clear the air with her though, especially if you really like her. That said, don't be too hasty to jump ship. Relationships can be annoying, especially at the start and, like everything else in life, they require effort and patience.

Ira

Dear Goingscrazy

You still like her?! You are god. She is ready for marriage, but not to you. At times, people can be difficult to deal with, especially when they like you too much.

SB

Dear Ira and Sachin

I have been in a relationship for four months now and I am starting to get bored. Everything is getting stale and I find myself looking and thinking about other girls all the time. That said, I really like my girlfriend. She has become a part of my life and I can't imagine life without her. Can I have both? Is that possible?

Doubletrouble

Dear Doubletrouble

It sounds like you are in a bit of a spot. The only way to make a decision is to give this relationship a little more time. If after a month, you find yourself drifting towards other women and losing interest in your girlfriend,

then it may be time to break up with her. If you get more attached to your girlfriend, then your answer is clear. If you find that your position has not changed, then you may have to have a talk with your girlfriend and suggest a break for a week or two. Sometimes, a little space brings a whole lot of clarity.

Ira

Dear DoubleTrouble

Do you usually get bored so early on in a relationship or is it the first time? If it's the first time, then take Ira's advice. If it's a habit, then you need to give your next friendship/relationship time; be sure she's the one and then get into a relationship. Else make peace with having short, sweet and ephemeral relationships.

Sachin

## Parents, Pals and Other Problems



Congratulations, you have reached the end of the book! We hope that by now you are well on your way to a vigorous dating life or maybe even a happy relationship. I would love to tell you that the difficult part is over and that from this part onwards it will be easy. Unfortunately, it has all just begun. Do not worry good people, you have us to help you out with navigating your way through common problems and to ensure a merry dating life or a long-lived relationship.

Perhaps the most universal hindrance to dating, relationships and the like are parents. It is not that they don't love you or care about you, or don't have your best interest at heart, it is just that most parents have never dated, and think that dating is a Western concept polluting their children.

## PARENTS

Most parents now do know what dating is. But most parents will never understand what dating even means. Most parents do not want to understand it either. In many of their universes, there are still some taboos regarding dating and it is tucked into that Pandora's box along with boyfriends, sex, divorce, cigarettes, short shorts and whatever else. It is up to us, the younger generation, to change this perception, but when has changing our parents ever worked? We should and will try, but as we do that, we still have to deal with them as we date.

Sachin: At TrulyMadly, we see that there is still a lot of taboo around online dating and dating in general. But if you and your ilk can't change that perception, how will it ever change? Dating is cool, dating is fun, dating is a great way to socialize and is way better than just being on social media. So be honest and open about it, and even a wee bit rebellious. You have to make your parents accept that when you go for a coffee to CCD to meet a guy, it's a date, and more importantly nothing more.

How do you navigate dating when you have your parents breathing down your neck?

**Talk less.** We are not asking you to lie, we are just asking you to be discreet. Don't mention or talk about your dating life. There are some of you who feel the need to reveal everything to your parents, but this may not bode well now or in the future. It's probably best that you let go of this habit early on in your life, starting just about now. If you must say something to your parents, say that they are your friend, maybe even your best friend, and that you are bringing them over to take a look at your 'stamp collection', or to work on a school project. Maybe more like watch Netflix together in this day and age!

Now if your parents are the sort who don't like you talking to anyone of the opposite sex, then this is going to be trickier than we think. Either you explain to them that it is 2019 and this is the norm or you start plotting your move away from your parents' place.

Is it bad to lie? Yes! It is. But you aren't lying. You're saying nothing at all. You just don't want to get things too complicated, not at this stage anyway. A boyfriend/ girlfriend is NOT your husband/wife. They don't have to be part of your family; in fact, it is better to keep both family and friends out of your dating life.

Sachin: Like I said earlier, be the change. Start talking casually about your friends. Get them comfortable with the idea that you have friends from the opposite sex. Have girls and guys over at the house so that your parents get used to the idea and, more importantly, get to trust your choice of friends. They will eventually get it; they must. Or spend the next few years hiding and in guilt, which is never good for any relationship.

## PALS

No matter how great your pals are, our personal experience is that dating is an act between two people, and not between four friends. Don't get your friends involved in your relationships. It's a recipe for disaster and also negativity and politics in your relationship. While it is important to hang out with your partner in a group (after all, no matter how much you love one another, you can't be one-on-one all the time), you don't have to get your friends involved in all aspects of your relationship, especially not in the details of your physical intimacy. Don't ask your best friend to call your boyfriend and ask him to apologize to you after a silly fight. Don't call her best friend begging her to ask your girlfriend to call you when she won't answer your phone after a fight. Don't constantly hang out in a group because it's more fun. If you are so bored in their company that you find yourself doing this, then maybe you should reconsider the relationship.

Don't discuss your problems (too) much with your friends. Sometimes we all need a shoulder to cry on, but don't put all that weight on that shoulder. Your friends will eventually get tired of listening to you and soon

you'll find yourself falling. Good friends can be an asset to a good relationship. It is always nice to have someone to vent to when you really need to. But it is best to keep friends on the side-line, not centre stage.

## LOVE IN THE TIME OF FACEBOOK

While Facebook does connect people in beautiful ways, the truth is that it can be perilous to relationships. I know so many couples who have broken up because he found messages in her inbox between her and a friend of his, or she found a selfie between an ex and him deep in the recesses of his inbox. It is human nature to snoop, and when the snoop comes across something that they do not quite understand, they often jump to conclusions and this can be disastrous to relationships. When you get into a relationship you must learn how to respect each other. There must always be boundaries, and you must not allow yourself to snoop through your partner's social media no matter what the temptation. Snoops get what they deserve, and you should simply put an end to any sort of snooping activity which may ensue.

Sachin: We actually asked our readers if they would share their Facebook password with their partners. Here is what they said: Sixty per cent females voter 'No way' while fifty per cent males were okay with sharing the password.

## OTHER PROBLEMS

### **Astrology**

Your janam patris do not match, or they are maanglik. Do you break up with them? NO! Please throw all of these out the door. A mind-boggling number of people come to us with astrological problems but astrology has no role in the world of online dating. After dating a few people, you will realize that caste, creed and religion don't play a role in a successful relationship, and therefore neither should janam patris. Most astrologers are quacks anyways, and their 'remedies' just a money-making scam.

## **My partner is a control freak**

Some people like to have such partners, especially if they need someone to make all the decisions for them. For the rest of us, this can be bad news. The key to solving this problem is nipping it early in the bud. Talk about it and stand up for yourself. The more you let them control you, the bigger the problem will get and the more problematic your relationship will become.

Sachin: If you are the type who likes being controlled, so be it. But something tells me that if you have read more than 100 pages of this book you are quite a free spirit. Stand up for yourself and control the relationship equally.

## **Patriarchal boyfriends**

### **(Ira hates these)**

In the beginning, he was so sweet, but now he doesn't even let you wear a skirt. If you talk to any guy other than your brother, he looks like he will blow up.

These men make the worst sort of boyfriends, and the problem doesn't get better as the relationship progresses. As time goes on, he tightens the noose around your neck, till one day you just choke. A patriarchal boyfriend can be a difficult problem to solve for but if you really like him, and want to be with him, you have to be strong and simply put your foot down on his controlling ways.

It's not like wearing short skirts is critical to your life, but him trying to stop you from doing something because he doesn't like it, is not a good precedent for the future and if you don't correct this now it will become a problem very soon. Taming the patriarch can take time, but I promise you that it is possible. It can be an unpleasant process and many girls may want to opt out, but if you work at it, anything is possible.

Sachin: As a woman, use patriarchy to set yourself free. If he is too controlling, it's a good reason to walk away from him. Men and women are

born free and no one, especially men have any right to ‘grant’ you freedom to wear something, freedom to work or freedom to meet others. Guys, you should seek out strong, independent women as they will be the ones motivating you, letting you take risks, be yourself and not get mired in little insecurities. Relationships are about balance. If he won’t let you wear a skirt, he should have no problem watching a sappy rom-com with you instead of chugging beer and watching cricket. And vice versa. If he’s cool with whatever you choose to wear, you should be cool giving him his space to go on that biking trip or playing on the XBox.

### **Has she gone crazy or is it just me?**

She’s sweet one second, and the next she’s ready to chew your head off. She was telling you how much she loves you just twelve hours ago and now she has blocked you on WhatsApp.

Love can sometimes manifest in strange ways. Sometimes we can attribute this to hormones, confusion, stress, immaturity or a combination of the above. If all of this is happening too often, you have to reassess the situation. Do not allow yourself to be part of the drama. If your partner is having these mood-swings, you have to let them know that this sort of behaviour is simply unacceptable. If you give them the leeway to behave badly, the behaviour will most likely continue or get worse. So try your best to curtail it, or let the relationship go. You are better off without it.

Sachin: These are confusing times for sure. Too many external pressures and influences. Mood swings aren’t good and maybe therapy is the solution. This calls for long and multiple chats, accepting one has a problem and being ready to seek professional help.

### **Are you falling out of love?**

For the first few months you were caught up in the whirlwind of first love. You spoke all night on the phone, watching the sun replace the moon and the chirps of crickets turning to bird song. You longed to see her, so much that sometimes it felt like you may just explode (or some body parts at least). Every text of his put a smile on your face, and every time you saw

him, your heart did a somersault. But now things are no longer the same, and it seems like that sparkle is suddenly gone. You feel like you're falling out of love. Is it time to say goodbye?

Not so fast, friend. What you are feeling is normal. That tingly first love feeling can only last so long. Soon the relationship will move into a less passionate but steadier place. It can sometimes take some time for these feelings to convert. Don't expect to smile every time you see his text. That feeling will be replaced by a different, perhaps not as exciting, but equally important feeling – a sense of security and stability, and the comfort of knowing you have found someone with whom you can share your life.

Sachin on five ways you can kill a perfectly good relationship

- By not listening and only talking.
- By being too clingy and possessive.
- By not being honest.
- By making your relationship the centre of your universe. It is important to practice some amount of detachment. Being detached does not mean that you aren't loving.
- By cheating.

Ira on why ladies need to stop looking for their future husband and start having some fun

The biggest problem to your relationship is not your parents, not your pals, but you.

Women sometimes sabotage their relationships by looking for everything in their boyfriends, and that is simply expecting too much. He can't be your best friend, your financier, your ride, your partner-in-crime, your lover, girlfriend, your father and your brother all at the same time. A boyfriend is a boyfriend is a boyfriend. You may not end up with him – you may not even fall in love with him – and you may not even remember him after a month. Try to live in the present and enjoy the moment without having too many expectations. Don't go crazy by giving too much of yourself. Play by your own rules, don't

break them for him or anyone for that matter. Just treat him and yourself with love, kindness and respect. Remember if you listen to your inner goddess, only good things will come your way.

## PRACTISING DETACHMENT

In any relationship, especially a romantic one, it is important to practice detachment. This does not mean that you are ‘aloof’ or ‘distant’ or that you ‘do not care’. Detachment from your partner means that you give to the other person without expecting in return. For example, just because you stayed up coaching her for her economics exam, doesn’t mean that you expect her to do the same for you. Just because you threw him a surprise birthday party, does not mean that you need to do the same for her. Expectations are the number one killer of all relationships. We get angry, sad, harrowed, when we ‘expect’ something from someone else, and they do not deliver. If we don’t have those expectations in the first place, we are at a lesser risk of disappointment later.

It’s not natural for us to have zero expectations, but we can try our best. Try to trade in expectations for appreciation and you will be pleasantly surprised with what you receive. Even if you really like or even love your partner, try to give more and take less. Also, this sounds fatalistic, but mentally prepare for the worst. Understand that relationships are fragile and emotions are volatile and anything could happen to your relationship. You should cherish your partner but also keep in mind that a break up is a possibility. Even if you are in a good relationship, be self-reliant, particularly emotionally.

## **The Menace of WhatsApp**

WhatsApp can be a lifeline for any relationship. It is quick, easy, and free. We know that the app can really help build relationships; it makes it so easy for two people to be in touch, but it also makes it easy for two people to fight. It is human nature to avoid unpleasantness, so when a tricky solution arises, we may be tempted to resort to WhatsApp to solve it. This is the wrong move. When friction arises in a relationship, it’s best to pick up the

phone, or better yet see the person, face to face, to resolve the situation. Fighting on WhatsApp is a sure shot formula for disaster. Words are misinterpreted, the 'tone' of the message is misread and the worst is assumed, rather than the best. The golden rule of WhatsApp – when negativity arises, take the conversation offline.

## BREAK UP 1.0

This book is not about breaking up, but breakups are often part and parcel of dating. Breaking up with someone can be really awful. Here are a few tips from our end to deal with the heartbreak:

- Though it may feel like it, ending a relationship is not the end of your life. In fact, it could very well be the start of a new dating life. When one thing ends, we create the space for another to be born. Who knows, this break up could lead to your best relationship ever.
- Try to find closure as fast as possible. Make peace with the fact that you are no longer together. If you need to reach out to the other person to find closure, do so, but have the conversation and quickly move ahead.
- We are all tempted to talk poorly or bitch about our partner after things end, but this only creates bad vibes. Avoid this, and if you MUST, take a pen and paper, jot down your negative thoughts and then trash that piece of paper in the bin. Breakups are negative, there is no point making things worse by adding more negativity into the pot.
- Rebounds are tempting and can often be a quick-fix solution to a broken heart, but rebound with caution. We make the worst decisions post-breakup and that also means choosing the wrong people. If you must rebound, try to give yourself at least a two-week window between your two relationships.

- Do not resort to unhealthy habits like eating or drinking out of control. If you're feeling sad, try to inculcate healthy habits, like running, starting a new hobby or learning a new language.
- Recruit a 'breakup buddy'. Ideally this is another person who has gone through a breakup, but if this is not possible, then ask a good friend. If you have a nagging urge to call your ex, or want to cry, call your buddy. Don't use your them as a punching bag, but use your friend as a temporary brace till you become stronger.
- Immerse yourself in yourself. Refocus on the things that matter most to you. Learn something valuable about yourself that the other person could perhaps not see in you.

#### Breaking up on social media

- Don't break up through a WhatsApp message
- Don't publish your breakup story on social media
- Don't diss your ex-partner on social media
- Don't think about putting any intimate videos or pictures on social media. Revenge porn is punishable by law
- Change your status to single on Facebook and download TrulyMadly again

#### Questions from our followers

I am dating this girl. I am thinking of asking her to keep Karvachaut for me. Being a girlfriend basically means that she is kind of like my wife, right?

Crazyforlove

Dear Crazyforlove

She is most certainly not your wife, asking her to do Karvachaut is a silly idea.

Ira

Dear Crazyforlove

If you ask her, then you will ensure that she will never be your wife! If you have any hope of this relationship to be fruitful, let go of all patriarchal norms.

SB

Dear Ira and SB

No matter what I do I can't seem to get a girlfriend. I've tried everything, even dating apps and nothing has come my way till now. I am starting to get depressed. Am I not meant to have a love life at all? What is the problem with me? Am I cursed?

Lonelyman

Dear Lonelyman

You are not cursed. There is someone in this world for everyone. Don't give up hope, keep trying, but don't try too hard either. The right girl will come into your life when she is meant to. Till then, read this book and get prepared.

Ira

Dear Lonelyman

You are not alone. Many people are lonely and find it hard to find a suitable mate. If things are not going well, sometimes it is best to step back and go do some of the things you enjoyed doing solo. Meet friends, pick up the sport you loved again, browse bookstores and you never know who you might meet where and what that leads to.

Sachin

Dear Ira and SB

I really loved her or so I thought. Over the past few weeks she is getting increasingly annoying and I just can't stand her. I'm not sure what is going

on. Is something wrong with me? I fell in love with her so fast, so could I fall out of love like this?

Deeplyoutoflove

Dear Deeplyoutoflove

Easy come and easy go. The problem with declaring your love so soon is that can simply be hormone-induced. That is why the good old adage 'slow and steady wins the race' applies so well in the dating game. Don't beat yourself up about this. Some relationships go downhill. There are other fish in the sea.

Ira

Deeplyoutoflove

This sounds to me like infatuation, not really love. Love can take a while, sometimes even a lifetime. We date, not to fall in love, but to explore and have a good time. If love does come, then we are lucky, but it is best not to have any expectations.

SB

Hi

I love him, but my parents hate him. What do I do? Should I run away with him?

Worriedaughter

Dear Worriedaughter

I don't suggest running away with him unless you have agreed to marry and spend your life together. Most parents don't love the boys their daughters bring home, they want to bring home the boys for their daughter. But they are your parents and they love you and want the best for you, so I suggest that you try to speak with them. Emphasize his good side and let them see how happy he makes you. Do not marry him just because that is the only way you can be with him. Marry him because you are ready for

marriage and because that is the relationship you want with him. Best of luck, we are all rooting for you.

Ira

Dear Worriedaughter

Running away from anything never works. Parents will be parents till they are sure about him. It's up to you to convince them of how much he likes you and vice versa.

Don't worry, be happy.

SB

Dear Ira and SB

I find her incredibly hot and amazing. My friends though keep on telling me that I can do much better and that she has a bad character. There is a lot of pressure for me to break up with her. What should I do?

Peerpressured

Dear Peerpressured

Your friends don't have to date her, you do. Your friends do not have to kiss her, you do. Your friends don't have to hang out with her, you do. Your friends don't have to make love to her, YOU DO. Right? Then why do you care what they think about her?!

Ira

Dear Peerpressured

They are just jealous and I am sure don't have girlfriends. Dating is about two people, not about a crowd. Keep the friends out of your relationship as much as possible, it will be good for you in the long run.

SB

Dear Ira and SB

I just want to let you know that reading this Desi Guide to Dating has truly transformed my life. I never knew such happiness and bliss existed in this world! I want to date till I die.

DatetillIdie

Dear DatetillIdie

Thank you but I think you may be taking this to an extreme that neither of us recommend. The whole point of dating is to find a relationship, preferably long term that can lead to a loving, supportive partnership in the long run. The end goal of online dating is certainly not marriage, but sometimes it can just be a natural outcome. We don't encourage online casanovas, that is not our intention at TrulyMadly, we much prefer happy endings.

Ira

Dear DatetillIdie

Dating till you die

It sure feels good to be alive

But someday you'll be dating going on fifty-five.

It will feel real stupid, so get a life.

Don't be dating till you die.

– Anonymous Canadian Rocker

## About the Book

So, you're ready to start dating?

But do you know what dating is? Do you like a girl but can't figure out how to ask her out? Do you have a friend who likes you but you just don't like him back? Perhaps you've downloaded a dating app but are unsure about how to start a conversation?

Look, we know dating ain't easy and, for the average Indian, it seems that much harder as we've never been taught this stuff. Our society is unique and so are the problems we face. In an age of ghosting, cheating, blocking and ignoring, finding love is difficult but **The Desi Guide to Dating** is here to help you out! This book is your one-stop solution to all your dating needs.

It helps you navigate the increasingly confusing world of dating with a step-by-step guide. How to ask her out, what to wear on your date, how to protect your heart, how to kiss the girl, how to fend off creeps and stalkers, and much more. Happy dating, folks! Your time has finally come.

## About the Authors

**Ira Trivedi** is a bestselling author and acharya of yoga. She was part of the team that led the first international yoga day celebrations at Rajpath, which created the Guinness Book of World Records for the largest yoga class in history. She is the founder of Namami Yoga, an NGO which supports underprivileged children and the creator of Om the yoga dog. More on Ira can be found on [www.iratrivedi.in](http://www.iratrivedi.in).

**Sachin Bhatia** is the CEO & Co-founder of TrulyMadly, a popular online dating app for Indians. He is the co-founder and ex-CMO of MakeMyTrip. He is also the first investor and backer of Delta, India's first relationship and networking app for the LGBT community.

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