

## The Number One Thing to Look for in a Partner

Written by sathia

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By: Karen Salmansohn

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Just because he's sexy, smart, charismatic and successful that doesn't mean you should date or marry him! Here's why what you've been looking for might not be the best thing to look for anymore.

Are you prioritizing finding a partner who is sexy, smart, charismatic, successful-in-their-field right now? If so, Charles Manson, Ted Bundy and Mussolini fit your bill — but trust me, that doesn't mean you should date or marry them.

In my book Prince Harming Syndrome, I share an article from The New York Times about the psychology of evil which included "The Psychopath Checklist." Criminal psychiatrists use this helpful list to test the potential of someone being a hardcore psychopath, capable of committing repeated evil and violent crimes. Guess which traits psychopaths share? Glibness, extreme charisma, the need to always be doing something, feelings of high self-worth, pathological lying, proneness to boredom and emotional unavailability.

To my amusement, all these adjectives also described my now ex-Prince Harming boyfriend, who was an adorably charismatic, fun, active, confident guy. But in the end, he turned out to be a two-faced cheater.

What's the love lesson learned? One of the top traits to look for in a partner is an appealingly strong character. Think about it for a moment. Good character values not only come in handy on a day-to-day basis, but during those eventual, inevitable times of conflict.

If you and your partner do not value putting in the effort of acting with strong character values during times of disagreement, disappointment, stress, crisis, temptation, sadness, monetary-challenges, illness, vulnerability, misunderstandings — then your relationship will always suffer!

Indeed, John Gottman, the famed psychologist and researcher who runs The Love Lab, says he can predict how long a couple will last, not by studying how well a couple gets along, but by studying how well a couple doesn't get along. A relationship is only as strong as its weakest link — how a couple handles their challenges.

The good news: If you're involved in what my favorite philosopher buddy Aristotle called a "Relationship of Shared Virtue" — you will both want to deal with conflict by facing up to it with "strong character values" and viewing it as "a laboratory for growth."

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Basically, you must accept right here — right now — if you are going to be in happily ever after love, then your relationship must have a duo function.

1. "Den of pleasure" — for fun, companionship, sex, laughter, etc. which you as a human need — so you can keep your soul alive with passion!
2. "Laboratory for growth" — the ultimate place of challenge for your soul to be nurtured to grow—where you inspire one another's "character development" — so you can both grow into your most esteemed selves - which is what Aristotle put forth was what true happiness was all about!

Unfortunately, many people solely view a relationship as a place to experience pleasure — leaving out the soul-ly aspects of love — where you nurture each other to grow!

In fact, when I ask the women I coach to describe what they're looking for in a partner, they always start off listing sexiness, funniness, smartness and wealthiness! But these are all personality traits — and pleasures of the body and ego — not character values which nurture the soul/core self.

If you want to "live happily ever after in love" you must prioritize finding a man who:

1. Values growing as a person
2. Truly understands a relationship serves the double function of "den of pleasure" and "laboratory for growth"

After all, if your partner doesn't value growth, he won't be ready to deal with non-fun, inevitable conflicts in a high integrity way. As a result, when those aforementioned disagreements, disappointments, stresses, crises, temptations, sadnesses, monetary-challenges, illnesses, vulnerabilities and misunderstandings arise, your relationship will suffer. Or worse, your partner will run for the hills — end of story, end of relationship.

You know what's funny? How we all know that embracing strong character values really does matter in life and love. Yet, our world mostly offers relationship tips like: "Buy these sexy clothes!" "Be more successful!" "Tighten your buns!" Nobody ever comes out and says: "Yo! Value good strong character values in yourself and others!"

I suppose that's because it takes more time, effort and patience to work on strengthening one's character values — and to truly understand another person's inner character — than it does to quickly buy a superficial new sexy outfit, or share a leisurely romantic candlelit dinner.

Hence why you must prioritize getting to know a guy's inner character up-front — before you drop your guards — or even your panties. Yes, if you want to live happily ever after with a man, it's essential you prioritize strong character values over strong biceps.

Remember, it's called "finding a soul mate" not "finding an ego mate"! And if you're going to

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connect soul to soul, you must take the time to see your partner's soul and feel safe enough to reveal your own soul. For this feeling of safety to occur, you must trust your partner's integrity. Take the time to find out if your partner values embracing empathy, listening, direct communication, honesty, loyalty and growth. After all, a guy's character will always be the determinant behind his choosing to be naughty or nice — thereby making you feel sad or happy.

Think about all those fabulous Prince Charmings in fairy tales. What makes a Prince Charming truly "Princely"? Prince Charmings are made of good strong character. They're noble, kind and generous with good deeds. Plus, they support a Princess in becoming liberated, so she can venture forth to become her fullest royal potential.

Meanwhile, evil Prince Harmings are just as good-looking, rich and charismatic as Prince Charmings. A Prince Harming's huge difference is the one spotted within his spotty character. Prince Harmings suffer from major character defects which create scenarios to torture and imprison a Princess.

Meaning? Although you might feel as if you're experiencing love at first sight with a Prince Harming, what you're really experiencing is infatuation at first sight — because all you're simply crushing on is this man's superficial self, not his superinsidehim self.

All of this leads me to a very important question: Do you really prefer to place a higher value on a guy's superficial aspects (his sexiness, funniness, smartness, wealthiness) more than you value his superinsidehim self (his character, his soul)?

If so, then there is a big danger you will wind up involved with a guy who's rude, angry, dishonest, disloyal, hurtful, non-communicative, unempathic and selfish! As a result, all of his inner bad qualities will make you feel unhappy, insecure, unsafe, frazzled, neurotic and totally crazy. Your love life should not be your suffering life. The number one reason to spend time with a guy is that he makes you feel happier and he is improving your life.

I used to look at a cute, funny, charismatic guy and think: "Yum, yum! I want him!" Now I know better. Now I look at loving, happy couples — watch the happy, healthy dynamic between the guy and girl — and think: "Yum, yum! I want that!"

True love is a that — not a him. True love is not a wish list but a "wish feeling." And the number one feeling — even before the feeling of love — is the feeling of safety. Without feeling safe, you will never feel true love. You must have trust in your partner's character and prioritize finding a partner who is honest, communicative, and empathic — someone who values growing — so you can feel safe to vulnerably be your truest core self with him — and then together the two of you can support one another to grow into your best possible selves.