

Singles, Take This Test Before Your Commit!

“If you like it then you should have put a ring on it...”

So the song goes. But before you drop a few paychecks on a diamond and tell all your friends and family you’ve met “the one...” stop and consider the relationship’s staying power.

It’s easy to fall in love. The universe seems lined up to make these spontaneous liaisons occur. Falling is love is fun, too. You haven’t put each other through the paces of real life yet. You’re attached...but only when it’s convenient for you. Attraction isn’t the same as commitment, not even close.

Let me back up. As a couples counselor, I’m all for love and marriage. But for people who are unsure if it’s really true love, I have a checklist of sorts. Before you object that it’s not a hard science test, let me just say, I agree!

Who has the formula for everlasting love? No one. If you need hard science, then you’ll have work to do. In fact, digital strategist Amy Webb did just that, hacking an online dating site to find her husband. https://www.ted.com/speakers/amy_webb

Most people, however, don’t go that route. Some date, some dabble, some settle for good enough, other s fall headlong over the cliff with the wrong person. You’ve seen it yourself, when a friend or family member ambles blindly into a long-term relationship everyone else can see will never work out.

Real love isn’t blind like that.

And yet, in spite of everything, it’s the question I get asked all the time: How do I know if it’s Mr. Right (or Ms. Right) and not Mr. “Right Now?” How do I really KNOW?

Wouldn’t it be great if we could just grab a pencil and take a written quiz, or maybe get some kind of physical exam that calibrates our new relationship for bulletproof success?

It doesn’t work that way. What **does** work is paying attention to a few interesting if/then scenarios. Here are my favorite questions:

- **If you must stretch** to imagine the future with this person (i.e. spending time with his parents, enjoying a future vacation together, raising children), then it’s probably Mr. Wrong.
- If it **feels easy and comfortable**, it’s probably Mr. Right. Easy is a dead-on clue.
- **If you get good family cues**, i.e. if your family likes this person. You fit in with his family, etc. That ‘s a good sign.
- If the relationship **seems to fit your life seamlessly** without a lot of hoopla or change, then it’s probably the right relationship.
- If you have to **convince yourself that “it’ll be OK”** (no matter what it is – a bad habit, a character flaw, a hobby), then this person is a short term romance.
- If there **doesn’t seem to be anything wrong** with this person...It’s either the right one, or it’s too soon to tell. Keep dating for a while!
- Finally, **consider these two trump cards: Kids and dogs**. If your dog likes this person, then it’s probably Mr. or Ms. Right. Kids are another sure litmus test. If you’re single and lucky enough to have some children in your life, pay attention to how they react the first time you bring your new date around. They are lightning rods of truth.

Of course there are exceptions to all these rules, but if you take the whole picture and match it up against these questions, your gut check will point clearly to the answer your seeking.

No magic wand? It's OK. Sometimes the most magical relationships begin when someone seems to fit just right into your everyday life.