

5 Ways to Find and Keep Mr./Ms. Right

Dear Jane,

I can get into relationships and out of them. What I haven't done is find the "right" relationship worth keeping. What can I do to increase my chances of finding Mr. Right?

While some self-help books focus on strategies to get into a relationship, anyone who has ever been *in* a relationship knows that they require tending or they die on the vine. So how can you stop wasting your time on romances that fizzle out? What really makes a romance blossom into a long-term commitment? Here are 5 key strategies to finding and nurturing Great Love:

1. **Tell the truth.** Truth and love are synonymous. But be careful because telling the truth is not the same as being honest. Honesty may contain judgments, such as, "I think you're narrow minded for saying you wouldn't marry a Republican." Truth is more vulnerable and does not contain judgment. Restated, the truth might be, "When you say you would never marry a Republican, I feel hurt and scared. I'm afraid that if I disagree with you politically, you will leave, regardless of the other great things about our relationship." If you don't feel safe telling the truth about your past, your personality, or your quirks to your new relationship, tell your partner that you need to keep some things private still. But don't massage the truth, don't go into an act, and don't lie. Remember, it's hard to regain trust that's been broken.

If you've lied to someone you're involved with, don't spend one more day torturing yourself with the shame, guilt, and fear that's inside of you. No matter how afraid you are that you will be rejected or abandoned, clear the air without excuses. (The only exception to this advice is if you have reason to believe that telling the truth will endanger you physically. If this is the case, get professional help.)

Truth is sexy. Truth is passionate. Truth is intimate. Truth is love.

2. **Be the love you want to receive.** We all want love, loyalty, intimacy, respect, compassion, and friendship. But to deserve it, we need to offer those same things to our partner. And we need to offer them generously. An open heart is much more inviting and accessible than a protected one.

3. **Become your partner's safe haven.** Becoming a safe harbor for someone is one of the greatest gifts we can offer and is very much appreciated. Allow your partner to express feelings, even negative ones, without rushing to judgment or trying to fix him/her. Feelings don't need fixing anyway.

4. **Fight fair.** This is the hardest prescription on the list for many people as we've learned bad and sometimes destructive habits. If you can admit right now that you don't know how to fight in such a way that you end up closer rather than more estranged, then get help. Hire a life coach or therapist or read books on conscious, loving communications (including my book, *Enough Is Enough! Stop Enduring and Start Living Your Extraordinary Life*). The sooner you become adept at this skill, the less resentment your relationship will build. Fighting well is cleansing and makes make-up sex even better!

5. **Make a list of the 10 Things That Make You Feel Most Loved.** Ask your partner to do the same. You may be surprised to hear each other's lists. They often don't match. Keep your partner's list and look at it every day. If your partner loves to receive roses, then don't send irises, even if they're on your list of favorites.

In *Enough Is Enough!*, I talk about how I feel loved when my husband remembers that I like yellow mustard, not Dijon. We're all quirky in what makes us feel loved. Honor your

partner's list and you will build a strong foundation that will get you through the hard times.

Does this seem like a lot of work? It is! But you will definitely reap the benefits. Even if the romantic relationship you're in currently isn't the one you will be in forever, all this practice will prepare you for Mr./Ms. Right as well as prepare you to become Mr./Ms. Right.

Jane Straus is a trusted life coach, dynamic keynote speaker, and the author of **Enough Is Enough! Stop Enduring and Start Living Your Extraordinary Life**. With humor and grace, Jane offers her clients and seminar participants insights and exercises to ensure that the next chapter of their lives is about thriving as the unique individuals they have always been and the extraordinary ones they are still becoming. She serves clients worldwide and invites you to visit her site, www.stopenduring.com. Here you will find excerpts from her book, more articles, TV and radio interviews, and clips from her presentations.

She is also the author of *The Blue Book of Grammar and Punctuation*, www.grammarbook.com, an award-winning online resource and workbook with easy-to-understand rules, real-world examples, and fun quizzes.

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