

The Fourteen Dating Traps

By David Steele

A "dating trap" is an unconscious relationship choice that results in an unsolvable problem in a relationship. Getting out of the trap often means leaving the relationship. When you are single, you can do a lot more than you realize to avoid these traps and prepare for a successful and lasting relationship.

1. Marketing Trap

You believe that you need to make yourself more appealing to attract and "sell" yourself with an attractive packaging and presentation. When you fall into the Marketing Trap, you fear that nobody will want you as you really are. By "marketing" yourself, you risk disappointment and relationship failure. So, when the excitement and promise of the "sizzle" conflicts with the reality of the "steak," one or both of you are left feeling disappointed and angry.

2. Packaging Trap

You focus on outside packaging - such as someone's body, looks, job, wealth, material possessions - and overlook the reality of the person inside. The Packaging Trap is the opposite of the Marketing Trap: instead of seeking to sell yourself with attractive packaging, you focus on the packaging of others.

3. Scarcity Trap

You believe there is a limited supply of possible partners, and therefore think that you have to take what you can get or be alone. The Scarcity Trap results in relationship failure because there is a temptation to settle for less: you believe you can't get what really want because there is not enough to go around. Unfortunately, it's a self-fulfilling prophecy because when you expect less, you get less.

4. Compatibility Trap

Assuming that if you have fun together and get along well, you are compatible and a committed relationship will work. Results in relationship failure when discovering the vast difference between a fun-focused, recreational

"dating" relationship, and a serious long-term committed relationship. Being so different, the process and criteria for choosing a recreational relationship needs to be very different from choosing a Life Partner.

5. Fairytale Trap

Passively expecting your ideal partner to magically appear and live happily ever after without effort on your part. Believing that finding your soul mate will just "happen". Results in disappointment when the frogs that happen to jump into your life don't become princes.

6. Date-To- Mate Trap

Becoming an "instant couple" as if giving each person you date an extended test drive. Believing that if you develop an exclusive relationship with someone you are dating, a successful committed relationship will eventually happen. Other terms for this are "Serial Monogamy" and the "Mini-Marriage. This approach is a costly use of time and emotional energy. The inertia in this trap is pressure to make the relationship work, attempt to solve unsolvable problems, and fit the round peg in the square hole because breaking up and being single again is an undesired outcome.

7. Attraction Trap

Making relationship choices based on feelings of attraction. Interpreting a strong attraction to someone as a sign that the relationship is a good choice and "meant to be". This approach results in relationship failure when unsolvable problems surface because you ignored the red flags while infatuated. Unconscious choices usually result in repeating unproductive past patterns. Attraction is like the radar that helps you find your target. But the Attraction Trap is blindly following this radar.

8. Love Trap

Interpreting infatuation, attraction, need, good sex, and/or attachment as Love. "If it feels good, it must be Love." "Love is all you need." "Love conquers

all." You feel so in love that you believe it must be a good relationship. After the initial infatuation is gone; you spend the rest of your time together just trying to get it back.

9. Sex Trap

Focusing on the chemistry under the covers by interpreting sex as love, using sex as a kind of "compatibility test" (if the sex is good then the relationship will be good as well), or becoming emotionally attached and considering yourself in a kind of committed relationship as soon as you have sex.

10. Rescue Trap

Hoping a relationship will solve your emotional and financial difficulties and bring you happiness and fulfillment, something like winning the lottery. You avoid taking responsibility for your life challenges, expecting to be rescued from them. Results in desperation, neediness, and relationship failure when your problems multiply instead of disappear.

11. Co-Dependent Trap

You expect someone to love you and give you what you want by giving the other person what he/she wants. You attempt to earn love and happiness by acquiescing, giving and helping. You really want to be in a relationship. You feel that you are not worthy as you are, and need to earn love. You pursue relationships hard because you feel incomplete when you're not in one. You want to be the hero and therefore seek someone who wants to be helped. But you learn the hard way that although it feels good to be needed, someone who needs you is not necessarily able to give you what you need. Needing to be needed often results in unconsciously attracting and choosing a relationship with a person who needs you, but - as you later discover - is unable to give you what you want.

12. Entitlement Trap

Believing you deserve to be happy and get what you want in your life without effort or changes on your part. Results in relationship failure as you rely on your partner to bring happiness and fulfillment and inevitably experience disappointment. "If you do what you've always done, you'll get what you've always got."

13. Virtual Reality Trap

Believing that "what you see is what you get." Making hasty long-term relationship decisions based on short-term impressions and inferences instead of actual experience and knowledge. Getting involved in a relationship focusing on "potential," hoping that some things that you really need to happen will get better or change over time. Results in seeing what you want to see, and relationship failure when later reality doesn't match.

14. Lone Ranger Trap

You live your single life focused on your goal of finding your life partner, believing that you don't need anyone else in your life. You evaluate people you meet for their relationship potential and do not take the opportunity to cultivate new friends. Results in isolation, perception of scarcity of potential partners, and risk of settling for less than what you really want because you don't want to be alone.