10 Teenager Dating mistakes Grown Ups Make!

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My mother liked to use old sayings to guide me. One of the ones she loved to say was “he who knows and knows that he knows, knows not.” Now that couldn’t be truer than with adult singles. I always thought people got smarter when they got older or books smarts related in some way to common sense. Neither could be further from reality because I never knew how dumb people over 30 and 40 could be until I was well into my 30s. I’m not just talking about the people on the TV show Cheaters or the guests on Jerry Springer, I’m talking about the upwardly mobile, people who are doctors, lawyers, corporate executives, Political strategists and Academics, people who think they know everything. People who love the letters to the editor in Essence magazine where the target audience is 25-50 and read books like Steve Harvey’s “Think Like a Man, Act Like a Lady”. They even listen to radio shows like Michael Baisden’s where the discussions are so adult focused that he advises parents to take their children out of the room during of many of his shows. All of this professional “adult” geared advice makes you think the solutions to their dating issues are different than the issues facing teenage daters. Since I’ve been a dating coach I have found that many of the mistakes that adults make are the same mistakes that teenagers make and the solutions are also the same. So I have listed some of the most common mistakes adult daters make that people think are exclusive to teenagers.

1. Dating on the DL!

“You know girl we don’t need to tell all your friends about us because all they’re going to do is try to break us up. You know I’m your man and that’s all that counts.” I wonder if that’s what the players say. I bet most of these two timers don’t even have to say anything because “grown folks” don’t think it is necessary to ask each other out. What’s so risky (I’m trying not to say stupid) about having a private relationship is twofold. First you never know that you are in a mutually exclusive relationship. Second, when you don’t tell people about your relationship you aren’t able to tell if the person really likes you. They may just like being with you privately but they are ashamed to tell the important people in their lives about you. Like family and close friends. These are the very people who would know the other people the person your dating maybe in a relationship with. The DL is a cheaters playground.

2. Having sex to fast!

“Yo Jeff I’ve been having sex since I was in high school.” “It doesn’t matter when you have sex with somebody. If that’s all they want from you they will wait a week, two weeks or even 60 days.” I totally agree with the waiting a certain period of time advice. What I mean by saying too fast is that they have sex with people before they have respect from the person. People especially grown folks have sex before they decide whether they want to be in a relationship with the people they date. Some people think safe sex is just using a condom or another form of contraceptive but condoms still allow feelings to be transmitted. So, I say the safest place to have sex is within a committed relationship. Otherwise you risk getting your heart broken. Terms like “just a booty call” or “friends with benefits” are risky activities and for people who are having problems finding a spouse it is probably the source of their dating problems.

3. Playing games!

People play so many games with each other while dating they don't even notice they are playing games. You know what I'm talking about ladies like waiting two days to call somebody you've liked since the first date. How about sitting at the bar at a dance club instead of dancing, Jocking for drinks from men you aren't interested enough to talk to them. Men, I mean grown ass men in their 50s play unnecessary games. They flaunt luxury sports cars but they don't live luxurious lifestyles. Men, old men, divorced men who haven't been single still think they can say things to make a woman like them. So they focus on their lines so much they don't represent who they really are. They even call what they're doing game. They say "you need to get some game" or "you ain't got no game." The truth is playing Games may get you a Grand Marnier at the club or it may get some booty but it is the wrong way to start a relationship. What's wrong with telling the truth, People? Nothing! The truth is who you are and if someone likes you it's a wrap, a done deal. No more fear of being discovered. No more acting or fronting.

4. Shallow attraction criteria.

Whoever said teenagers were the only people who scheme of ways to date the quarterback of the football team or the hot cheerleader? They must have never talked to a single 30 year old woman or a man in his 40s who is newly divorced. These are grown people who should be mature enough to be able to control their emotions but yet they still let some person they think is attractive do things to them they would not let a less attractive person do. One of the first things people let go is basic respect and emotional compatibility. I'm not saying people should marry people they don't find attractive. People date people who they are only attracted to physically and then they try to change their behavior. When I hear couples talk about they just grew apart I don't believe them. I just think they found out who the person was they were in a relationship with.

5. Failure to learn the dating history of the people they date.

Some people laugh when I ask "Do they date better than Flavor Flav?" but the reality is many people don't As silly as the show Flavor of Love was, Flavor made sure each season he not only talked to his dates about their past relationships he invited the exboyfriends to dinner. This is what I call learning the dating history of the people you date. You could be dating a "Chris Brown" type of guy who physically abused his last girlfriend. Or you could be dating a "Rihanna" type of girlfriend who was so verbally abusive to their last boyfriend it got violent. Even though it is not as easy to just invite people over for dinner like on TV it is still very important you learn the dating history of every person you are dating from somebody other than them. Friends and family are my favorite choices to learn dates history from.

6. Not Getting rid of their own baggage.

Most of the time the examples of how to handle problems shown in movies is worse than what people do in real life but when it comes to dealing with a break up the movies handle things better. In real life some grownups let a past relationship totally change the people they will date in the future but some people have been known to change the gender of the people they date. No matter how bad a relation was it should not change your entire opinion of a gender or an entire race or culture of people. When a hard breakup causes you become prejudiced that's called baggage. Learn how to put your past relationship into perspective. It can be very hard but is important.

7. Thinking they can change the people they date.

Whether it is a man who thinks a woman will follow his every command if he continues to shower her with gifts or a woman who thinks she can sex a man so well that she can get him to do anything she wants, a lot of people think they can change the behavior of the people they date. Thinking you can permanently influence people is a big mistake. On the street we call this hustling. Hustling, seducing or any kind of tricking a person is disrespectful. If someone doesn't want to do something don't try to trick them into doing it. Tricking people doesn't last forever. When the people realize they have been dooped they can get very mad and even violent. Trickery is what gold diggers use. It is true people in long relationships can grow to like the same things and that is a change but it is a natural change. When a person doesn't like something their date does and deliberately tries to change them is when they have

stepped into a dangerous area. Change is not guaranteed. So if your boyfriend doesn't talk much don't expect to be able get him to start talking after you get married.

8. Not using contraceptives.

First it is damn near stupid to have unprotected sex now-a-days. Health groups and health departments do regular programs promoting safe sex and the use of a condoms to teenagers. They even give out condoms to them but nothing is done for older people. That's why when I talk to groups of grown folks some of them say they are too old to get pregnant so they don't use rubbers anymore. I don't know whether people think they are immune or they think they can trust their senses but STDs affect old people the same as young people. I ask these risk takers one question, "How many times do you need to catch AIDS or Herpes?"

9. Not clarifying their relationships.

People as they get older assume too many things. Assuming that somebody understands the terms of your relationship is one of the most common. Teenagers are notorious for not asking each other out but "will you be my girlfriend?" is unheard of in adult relationships. Grown folks use sex or meeting family to define relationships. The best thing to do is to ask the question. Here's a good one "so, what are we?" Once you get the relationship clarified which should be boyfriend and girlfriend you should make it public. I say tell everybody about your relationships because I am 100% against the down low (The R Kelly version of Down low).

10. Staying in toxic relationships too long.

Dating is not easy for everyone. Young people often get scared they will not find a person as good as the person they are with. Older people feel the same way. The older people get the less choices they have of potential dates. Therefore, if they are dating someone they don't have a strong connection with many times they don't break up because they're scared they may not find someone better or someone who they are more compatible with. Granted some people have unrealistic requirements for the people they date still no one should stay in a relationship which is depressing or degrading. You should feel better being around the person you are dating than when you are apart. Staying together for children is another conversation. I'm just talking about dating here.

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