What Are the Terms of Your Dating Relationship?

January 19, 2011 By Jeff Carroll

One of the most popular parts of my dating education workshop Stop the Game, is when I try to dive into specific dating activities and I present my Hip Hop Dating Contract. It was during a presentation at James Madison University in Virginia that the thought of creating some sort of list for dating goals that the idea of a dating contract came to me. I asked the audience my usual questions: What do you want from the people you date? What is your agenda? The students were very aggressive. They had lots of comments and ideas, such as go to the movies with me and don't have sex with anybody else. Their suggestions helped me compile a list of standards that anyone seeking a happy, long-term relationship should expect from a dating partner.

Since the students were so smart, I took the conversation a step further and asked how well they stick to their requirements when they meet someone they're physically attracted to. This time, the response was not so loud.

Dating is your personal vetting process and your expectations should be the same with everybody you see, whether they are older or younger, very attractive or rich.
Imagine, when John McCain looks back, what questions he wishes he'd asked Sarah Palin before selecting her to run as his Vice President. What questions do you ask your future life partner? What do you look for? What activities do you do?

Dating is the process used to find a life partner for the purpose of marriage. Everybody needs to understand that a dating process is really just a long job interview. Never expect marriage to change people rather use the time you are dating to find out what kind of person you are dating. The behavior people demonstrate while dating is how they will behave when married. So, it is your job to construct a set of activities that allow you to learn as much about a person as you can about them.

Everybody isn't lucky enough to have Donald Trump produce their dating show but I guess if you are Omarosa you need the help. An easy way to construct your dating process is to think of yourself as the producer of your own Reality TV Dating show where you are both the bachelor or bachelorette and the producer. In reality there are two dating shows going on at the same time. While you are choosing a life partner the person you are dating is doing the same.

So in this world of marital contracts and divorce agreements, I decided to create a dating agreement. Consider my Hip Hop Dating Contract as a pre-prenuptial agreement. However, there is a slight difference with my agreement. Prenuptial agreements are signed by both parties with lawyers and are legally binding. The Hip Hop Dating contract is an informal agreement between you and yourself. It is to be used as a guide for people to make sure they are getting what they want from the person they are

dating. The contract is for your individual use, so personalize it to fit your values. I have listed and explained the seven terms which I think are core for a solid relationship. If you think of something I don't have on my list please add it to your contract.

Yo Jeff's Seven Point Hip Hop Dating Contract:

1. Only have sex with me. It was sexual intercourse that sealed the deal on my relationships in my early years of dating. It's better to practice monogamy when dating, so it won't be so hard to commit to after marriage--just ask Tiger.

2. Listen to my problems. It is important for the person I am dating to listen my problems because the way I react to and solve them shapes my character and molds me into the individual I will become. I may not be able to deal with my new stepfather or know how to talk to an aging parent and I need to vent.

3. Share your problems with me. Now just as it is important for the person I am dating to listen to my problems, it is important for them to share their problems with me. I know I'm sexy and can make you say AH! But I want to be respected for my mind. If you have just met your birth father or you have a nagging boss at work maybe it's a problem I have had to deal with before. I also want to learn how you plan to address your problems and see how you well take advice.

4. Spend time with me. I want to see the person I am dating in person. I want to see you during the daytime, not just for DVD and pizza at midnight (that's a booty call). Couples do everything together when they get married, so I want to know if we get along and work well together while I'm dating you.

5. Include me in your activities. When I'm dating someone they are auditioning to be my best friend, my lover, my child's other set of DNA. And I am auditioning to be theirs. I don't want them to tell me what they do, I want to join them in doing it. I also want them to see what I do. No secret activities for me.

6. Help me if I need it and let me help you. I am not perfect and I will need help in doing the things that I do. This is more than just problem sharing this is more like with chores or tasks. I hate sitting around watching my wife wash the dishes or assemble a new piece of furniture so I jump in and help. I don't want to date someone who just tells me what to do. I want them to get their elbows dirty helping me doing it. Marriage is a partnership, not a boss-employee relationship.

7. Be proud of our relationship and me. Tell everyone about us. If I choose someone to date I really like them and I want them to really like me. I want them to be my biggest fan because I will theirs. If I find out the person I am dating has not told people about me then I wonder how they feel about me. Publicizing our relationship is a sign of pride and happiness. I have been in maybe just one relationship where I liked the person more than they liked me and it was murder. You have to have a real low self-esteem to date someone who is ashamed of telling people about their relationship with you.

These are the terms of my dating contract. They are what define the basis for my dating activities. I created the Hip Hop Dating contract because I found that people let love eclipse their rationale. They forget what they really want and lose their dating agendas. This is not an official contract, it is to be used figuratively. Keep it in the back of your mind. I ask people to check out my terms and send me any terms they feel are important that are not on my list.

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