

Five Levels of Relationship

1. Community Friendship

We were all created for community. The majority of our relationships in life won't go past community. This is not the same as acquaintance. These are the people you do everyday life with. Church, Work, Gym, Activities, Social Events. This is where you start with apps, community match-making and usually by text, then maybe phone and/or video.

2. Dating/Discovery Phase

This is when you would like to get to know someone more one on one. You can be doing this with more than one person. This is a chance for you to find out more about the other person. You probably will start to see green, yellow and/or red flags. You are still friends at this stage. This is low stakes dating. Ideally there is not physical romance and limit emotional intimacy. You are not in constant contact and you limit long dates. You may not think marriage necessarily but starting to open up more. It is a yes until it is a no. This is real dates, live dates or video dates. If you are still just texting/talking on phone this is not dating. If you are local, you should be moving from video to live dates within a few weeks.

3. Courtship

This is decision time. This is when you both decide to be exclusive and down to one person. When you get here is unique to each of you but typically once someone wants to start getting more romantic and future talking. In our community it is intentional courtship towards marriage. But, don't make promises you cannot keep. This can go on a long time or a short time depending on the couple and if it is long distance or children involved. You are spending time to really learn about this person. You may realize what your non-negotiables are. You can do the couples class SYMBIS if you really think you are headed to engagement.

4. Engaged

Making a promise that you are my person for a Covenant Marriage with a defined marriage date. Great time to do SYMBIS if you have not already.

5. Covenant Marriage

In any relationship: Pay attention to any kind of pattern at all: take a deeper look at it. Remember hurt in relationships healed in relationships. You can only heal so much alone in this heart work. Some of it will happen in the dating and courtship process. If it is a yes, we are encouraged to stay in it vs. cutting and running. Great time for revealing for healings. Where there is an unhealthy pattern (you or them) there is a lie being believed. Time to look at that.

What we believe about ourselves we attract. If you are not happy with yourself and your life or if you are not bringing enjoyment, wonder, or enthusiasm to the dating process it will be hard to attract a healthy man.

When you are critiquing (swiping left, saying no) a man, are you holding him to a higher standard than yourself?

You set the tone right from the beginning. If you text all your thoughts and feelings upfront, don't be surprised if that is how they will want to always communicate. If you get intimate quickly, it will always be at the front of the relationship. Pace the relationship.

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Dropping the hanky: if it's a spotlight, highlight a few things they mentioned and where you align and say you would love to book a 15 minute low stakes video chat. Don't say things that count you out, age you older than them in your response. (If he has teens, I wouldn't mention immediately that you are a grandmother should you be one).

If you are not online, or talking to new men in your everyday life, joining community meet ups or dropping hankies on SingleNation, you are not doing your part to make this your last year single. Unless you are marrying the Amazon delivery guy, you must be willing to do something different to get different results.