

Dating: More Than Just The Basics!

eCourse 1:

Making Sense of the Dating Process

By Jackie Black, Ph.D.



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*Very importantly, the process is different depending on why
you are dating.*

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eCourse #1

Making Sense Of The Dating Process

Lesson 1:

What Is Dating? Why Are You Dating?

Dating is a process with a beginning, a middle and an end. Very importantly, the process is different depending on why you are dating.

Usually men and women date for one of these reasons:

- Friendship
- Social opportunities
- Sex
- To find their ideal match and co-create a long-term, primary, monogamous love relationship.

Of the four reasons, **most men and women are dating to find their ideal match** and co-create a long-term, primary, monogamous love relationship. The entire eCourse series, ***Dating: More Than Just The Basics!***, focuses on dating to find your ideal match. The first part of Lesson 1 offers points of view to consider relative to the three other legitimate dating alternatives.

Think back in your life. For what reasons have you dated?

Often people choose to date for friendship or to create social opportunities:

- After relocating to a new city
- As an alternative to being consumed by work and when one may not be ready for a committed relationship
- Following the ending of a relationship when one may not be ready for a committed relationship

Answering the following questions may help put things in perspective for you.

Are there any other good reasons you can think of to date for friendship or to create social opportunities?

Have you ever dated for friendship or to create social opportunities?

Looking back, and knowing what you know today, was there ever a time in your life when dating for friendship or to create social opportunities would have been a better choice?

If yes, what happened when you dated someone and you weren't ready to be fully present in the dating process?

If you could, what would you do differently today?

If you are not interested in dating to find your ideal match and co -create a long-term, primary, monogamous love relationship, please take the time to find the right words for you to let the men or women you are dating know that.

While it may be unfamiliar and uncomfortable (or darn right embarrassing!) to be so direct, I assure you that men and women alike will be very appreciative.

Dating for *friendship* or to *create social opportunities* is completely legitimate. Honor yourself and your choice by telling the truth about where you are presently in your life.

Here are some examples of speaking your truth about not being interested in a co - committed relationship:

- “I am interested in spending time with you, and I want you to know that right now I am not ready to date anyone seriously.”
- “Right now in my life I want to date for fun and for friendship. I like you and I would like to get to know you better.”
- “I’m pleased that we met, and I would like to see you again. I want to say that I am not dating to create a love relationship...only for friendship.”

Take a moment and read my examples out loud.

How do they sound to you?

How comfortable were you saying them out loud? Very comfortable? Comfortable? Not very comfortable? Did one feel better to you than the other? Do you honestly think one is more or less do-able for you than the others?

Did you notice feeling uneasy anywhere in your body? Where? What were the sensations?

What do you think about people who are so direct?

Before you go on to the next section, play with putting some words together right now. Write at least five sentences that accurately reflect your lack of interest and unwillingness to get into a committed relationship at this time.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

Expressing our *truth* takes a lot of practice. Most of us did not learn to honor and regard our needs, or to speak honestly about ourselves to others. Now is your time to learn and practice this essential life skill.

Sometimes, men and women date to have *recreational sex*. If that's you, I only have one word of advice. Be sure you are clear with the men or women you date that you are not interested in either friendship or co-creating a long-term love relationship. When you know what you need and want, honor your knowing and your needs. Tell yourself and tell others.

The remaining portion of Lesson 1 proposes an easy way of thinking about dating to find your ideal partner.

The **beginning** of the dating process goes something like this:

Step 1:

- You see someone across a crowded room and you are instantly “attracted.” You must make your way over there!
- You meet someone or are introduced to someone and for that moment, she or he is the only person in the room.
- You are speaking with someone, and you notice you have difficulty being articulate or you are completely tongue-tied and can’t think of anything to say.
- You are friends with someone and begin to notice that your feelings are changing and you are becoming attracted to him or her or are falling in love with him or her.

The **middle** of the dating process is a very slippery slope for most people, and it goes something like this:

Step 2:

- You enjoy her company and continue asking her out.
- You aren’t enjoying his company so much, but he’s so nice, how can you hurt his feelings and tell him you don’t want to see him again?
- You keep going out because there isn’t anyone else more interesting.
- You don’t want to take her out one more time, but you’re afraid she’ll get upset and yell at you or cry.

The **end** of the dating process is virtually unknown to all but a very few brave souls. It goes something like this:

Step 3:

- “I want to let you know that I have enjoyed meeting you and getting to know you. I am starting to notice that even though I enjoy your company and we have a good time together, you and I are really not a match. I am dating specifically to find my ideal partner (match) so I need to stop dating you. I thank you for spending time with me and I wish you well. Goodbye.”
- “I really like what we are creating between us. I enjoy..., appreciate..., value... and I would like to talk about taking our relationship deeper, to the next level.”

I can only imagine how this must sound to you now. **“Now”** is the operative word! Understand that a lot of what I’m going to introduce in this eCourse is new and unfamiliar.

▶ **My request:** Think of a time in your life when you may have been dating someone, and you knew you were not interested in continuing to date him or her. Do you remember how you handled that? Fast forward to today. What would you say to him or her today? Spend some time and write down some thoughts and ideas about what to say and how you might say it.

▶ **Remember:** If you keep doing what you are doing, you will keep getting the outcomes you are getting. If you want a different outcome, stick with me, keep reading, keep answering the questions and working the exercises throughout each lesson. Keep an open mind and be curious!

Lesson 2 explores who you are and what you really want in your life.

See you there!

Only You can make it happen!

Dr. Jackie

