



Celebrity love lessons

By Margot Carmichael Lester



We're inundated with information about celebrity couples every day. Why not learn something from it? We asked relationship experts and pop-culture gurus to spotlight celebrity pairs whose love lives might be particularly instructional. Here's what they had to say about romance and the rich and famous.

Celebrity couple: Jennifer Aniston and Vince Vaughn

Our expert: Beverley Pekala, personal relationship attorney and author of *Don't Settle for Less*

Love lesson to be learned: Love in the workplace (the twosome met while filming *The Break-Up*) is an all-too-common scenario. HR people are always trying to stop it, but it's an unstoppable force. People who work together or are in the same industries tend to have similar interests and goals—so they do tend to get romantically involved. (Plus you're together so much of the day, it's practically a case of a relationship waiting to happen.) Now, while all of America seems happy for Jen and Vince, if you're in the middle of or about to start an office romance, you need to be very, very careful. Different rules apply to actors. In real life, you might win at love but lose at work. There's something about a heady, carefree summer romance that can lead coworkers to be especially sloppy about covering their tracks and behaving professionally from 9 to 5. So let Jennifer and Vince — and their incredible discretion about their affection — be your role models.

Celebrity couple: Maggie Gyllenhaal and Peter Sarsgaard

Our expert: April Masini, author of *Think & Date Like A Man*

Love lesson to be learned: Maggie Gyllenhaal and Peter Sarsgaard have enjoyed a quiet relationship out of the press for quite some time. It appears they've done everything right getting to know each other and themselves—and now there's a baby on the way, too. So what can a single person like you, who's out there dating, learn from these two lovebirds? Take your time. Don't be pressured by outside forces like peers, family members, or your own arbitrary timetables. Get to know one another, spend time doing what you two like to do, without feeling as if you have to meet the parents or party with friends. Don't think that just because it's summer you have to plan an amazing beach getaway. Keeping things low-key is a fine way to get to know — and appreciate — each other.

Celebrity couple: David Spade and Heather Locklear

Our expert: Victoria Michaels Rogers, author of *Finding a Man Worth Keeping*

Love lesson to be learned: It's been noted that perhaps, looks-wise, Heather Locklear is out of David Spade's league. So let the fact that they're hanging out — a lot — convince you that there's no such thing as being not "good enough" for someone. That means you should ramp up your own self-esteem if it's flagging and chat up the hottest person you come across at the beach or while sipping margaritas outside. And if you're sometimes guilty of lookism, remember not to set too much store by first impressions. Give someone a chance; you just might find out he or she is far more intriguing and alluring than you expected. And, lastly, the pairing of funny guy Spade and hottie Heather prove that if you can make someone who's allegedly "out of your league" laugh, you're golden. So polish up your clever chit-chat.

Celebrity couple: Britney Spears and Kevin Federline

Our expert: April Masini, author of *Think & Date Like A Man*

Love lesson to be learned: The tabloids have been buzzing with rumors of marital strife. If you believe these reports, the issue is that party-loving Kevin hasn't settled down now that he's married and has had a baby with Britney. Whether this is just gossip or not, it does point to an important fact about love and relationships. Don't think a person will change his or her ways once you establish a relationship. Just because you have chemistry or share interests with someone doesn't mean he or she shares your relationship goals and will necessarily work hard to achieve them. So take a good look at your potential partner, warts and all. Listen to what he or she says (and you may just be working with clues here, so go ahead and ask if you're not hearing info you can use...) about long-term relationships. And if you hear a perspective that contradicts yours, recognize that as much as you may like this person, it's probably not possible (nor is it your job!) to make over this date in your own image. It may be time to say, "Next!" before the season of summer romance ends.

Margot Carmichael Lester learned plenty of lessons from the stars as a writer living in Hollywood. She now lives and writes in Carrboro, NC.