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# 10 Relationship Rules You Should Be Breaking

by Mikey Rox on 15 April 2015

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I don't know what it was like to be in a serious relationship back in the day — pre-social media, I mean — but I can imagine that it was much easier than it is in 2015. So much has changed over the past 20 — heck, even 10 — years that some of the most trusted and seemingly infallible relationship rules are now all but obsolete. The new school of thought on the issue? Adapt your relationship to today, or face certain doom.

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To catch you up to speed, here's a look at some of the most prominent relationship rules of yore that you should start kickin' to the curb.

## 1. Not Going to Bed Angry

My parents still adhere to this rule — or at least this is a piece of advice that my mother gives me when my marriage hits a rough patch — but I don't buy it. When we first started out, we tried to resolve the issue at hand before bed, but it rarely resulted in a truce, and the more time wore on, we were just like, screw it, I'm tired, let's resume our battle stations in the morning.

I know we're not alone.

"If you follow this rule, it could mean a lot of late nights, and nothing escalates an argument more than sleep deprivation and mental exhaustion," says Dr. Jared DeFife, a clinical psychologist and relationship coach. "I see couples in my practice who feel like they have to adhere to this rule or resolve an argument right away, leading them to drawn-out disputes where nothing gets accomplished and everyone's nerves are fried. When it comes to arguments, it's ok to take a break; in fact, it might even be necessary. You can use that



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time to calm down, understand your emotions, and return with a level head and a more nuanced perspective."

And hey, there's always the possibility of make-up sex in the morning!

## 2. Thinking That Love Means Never Having to Say You're Sorry

Excuse while I LOL at this one. Whatever narcissistic dude came up with this (and I'm 100% certain it was a dude) was smokin' the good stuff — and I want some. Because the truth is, sometimes we're real capital Bs to our partners, and apologies are absolutely necessary.

"Nobody's perfect," Dr. DeFife reminds us. "Sometimes we're grumpy or short-tempered or do the wrong thing. The mark of a good partnership is not in never screwing up or having conflicts, but in being able to recognize those concerns and to effectively make repairs when things go awry. A well-thought through and meaningful apology can actually strengthen a relationship in areas of discontent or disconnection."

I think I'll have that quote printed on a stack of Post-it Notes and hide them in my husband's desk.

## 3. Playing Hard to Get

Playing hard to get can be fun. But giving the guy or girl the runaround for an extended period of time so you can feed your own ego as they try harder and harder to get your attention also can be dangerous.

"This includes waiting an X amount of days or minutes before calling or texting, dumping men who do not initiate contact, and only scheduling activities on certain days or times of the day," explains Dr. Carolyn C. Ferreira, a licensed clinical psychologist. "Playing hard to get is unattractive to both sexes, and it also prohibits people from being their real selves and expressing their true feelings, which is an overall bad way to begin a relationship."

## 4. Waiting a Set Amount of Time After a Breakup

Breaking up or getting a divorce can sometimes feel like somebody died. You've spent most of your time with your partner for however many months or years you were together, then all of a sudden, they're gone. If this was a serious relationship, grieving this loss is a normal emotional reaction, but you shouldn't let other people dictate how long you take to heal. Whenever you feel like you're ready to get back out there and find your next future ex, put on your going-out pants and get back in the game.

"People grieve loss at their own pace; someone may be over a divorce in a month, whereas it might take someone else six months," Dr. Ferreira says.

## 5. Perpetuating Gender Stereotypes at Home

My husband and I have battled with this since the day we moved in together — and we're two dudes. Speaking as a man then, it's kind of insulting when someone expects that you'll do the cooking and cleaning because that's traditionally what the female in the relationship does. Not that I mind doing it — for the most part — but I don't want it to be an expectation because I'm the smaller, more creative partner in the relationship. I still have dude parts, dude. This type of thinking applies to any scenario, and as far as I'm concerned you can take that "Honeymooners" BS and shove it.

"Adhering to household tasks based on gender roles and stereotypes should also be reconsidered by couples," adds Dr. Ferreira. "Instead of completing tasks because you're the man or woman, couples should look at their strengths and weaknesses as a couple in order to decide who does what. For example, it does not make sense for the man to take care of the finances if he does not know what an Excel spreadsheet is, but his wife does because she's a business owner."

Might be time to start shakin' things up on the homefront, eh?

## 6. Believing That Fighting Is Healthy

Having lovers' quarrels every now and then is okay; it's good to get issues off your chest. Screaming in each other's face on a regular basis isn't. It's wise to note too that the term "fighting" is relative, and it behooves you to keep your definition of it in check to avoid a dangerous downward spiral.

"There are many myths and expectations about fighting in marriage," says Dr. Tina B. Tessina, psychotherapist and author of "[Money, Sex and Kids: Stop Fighting About the Three Things That Can Ruin Your Marriage](#)." "Couples come into my office frequently believing that fighting is a necessary part of being a couple, that all married couples fight, and it's a normal part of marriage. But the fact is that fighting accomplishes nothing, and it isn't necessary for couples to argue, to yell, or to have heated discussions to get problems solved. Hanging on to these ideas makes it difficult to let go of fighting."

P.S. Don't ever let anybody hit you. Ever. It's not your fault, and you don't deserve it.

## 7. Searching for Your Soulmate (When You May Not Have One)

What if your soulmate died before you had a chance to meet? Too depressing? I'll let Patricia Johnson and Mark Michaels, relationship experts and co-authors of "[Partners in Passion](#)," explain why you may not have a soulmate in a more palatable way.

"In contemporary society, there is a very common superstition that finding one's soulmate — sometimes called a 'twin flame' — is the key to having a true pair-bond, and that in the absence of this 'other half,' no intimate relationship will be fully satisfying," Johnson and Michaels say. "Two very damaging concepts are implicit in this belief: first, that there is a single, ideal partner out there in the world for every individual, and second, that people are incomplete until they find their 'other half.'"

In other words, stop holding out and start living more. You never know who you'll encounter along the way.

## 8. Accepting That Men Are From Mars, Women Are From Venus

Society — especially American culture — wants us to believe that men and women are so different that it's like we're each from separate planets. Yes, we have differences, but we also have many similarities that nobody ever seems to want to talk about because it's not interesting enough to sell 50 million books worldwide.

"We're not the first to observe that people of all genders are from Earth," Johnson and Michaels explain. "Beyond that, men and women have more in common with each other than with any other creature on the planet. To make blanket generalizations is not helpful except on the most superficial level. This model builds on older myths — the concepts of 'opposite sexes' and 'the battle of the sexes' — and reconfigures them in therapeutic terms. Despite this reframing, the model is still an adversarial one, and adversarial models are not optimal for nurturing harmonious relationships or fueling sexual passion, except in very small doses. Having the sense that you're on opposing teams will only foster conflict."

## 9. Assuming That Monogamy Is Natural and Optimal

So I don't get in trouble down the road for providing my personal opinion on long-term relationships and monogamy, I'll let Johnson and Michaels give you theirs.

"If human biology inspires us both to form intimate pair bonds and to seek contacts outside of those bonds, then what makes for a healthy relationship is considerably more complex than dogmatic advocates of monogamy (or non monogamy for that matter) would have us believe," say the pair. "At the same time, the impulse to bond deeply with another is not something that should be dismissed lightly. Our species varies a great deal, and it's a mistake to think about absolutes when it comes to monogamy and non-monogamy."

## 10. Dating Within Your Type

Just like I don't want all skinny, redheaded, melanin-free friends, I don't think it's very interesting to pursue a certain "type" of person in a romantic capacity. I've dated all types of quvs — white, black, Asian, Indian, Middle Eastern, and Latino — and it has only served

to broaden my horizons. Still, I have plenty of friends — especially the religious ones — who refuse to date outside their race or faith. To each their own of course, but I totally think they're missing out.

Relationship expert April Masini agrees.

"One of the best ways to get out of a dating rut is to date a Republican if you're a Democrat, or someone rich if you're poor, or a creative type if you're by the book," she says. "Date out of your religious or racial group. Date someone your mother wouldn't fix you up with — were you to let her. It'll shake up any rigidity you've succumbed to, and it's a great way to find love. It also expands your resources and gives you a bigger dating pool."

What are some of the relationship rules that you think we should be breaking? Let me know in the comments below.



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