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15 Dating Lessons Learned After I Met My Husband

#7 The right person is happy with you the way you are



Dee Dee Patterson Mar 19 · 9 min read ★



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When I opened my email on the morning of my 10th wedding anniversary, I saw an email from my husband titled, “Happy Anniversary to the love of my life.”

Then I read through the email about what I meant to my husband. I read the email slowly to soak in every word.

One of my favorite lines was, “To be able to come home to you every day makes me feel like the luckiest man in the world.”

I felt loved, cherished, and like I was exactly where I was supposed to be. It was not easy getting to that place. Dating was hard. With marriage being my main goal, it was even harder.

Now that I have been happily married for 10 years, it made me think of all of the things I got wrong about dating.

I know some of the things on the list below are obvious. They weren't obvious to me. I just knew that I wanted to get married and start a family someday. I wasn't prepared for all of the other frustrations.

Maybe some of the things I learned will help you as you're looking for a spouse. Here's what I learned:

1. Most dating relationships do not lead to marriage so don't take failed relationships too seriously

You only need to find one person to marry. Even so, I used to get upset when a date failed or a relationship ended. Odds were that I wasn't going to marry the person I was dating. Most dates do not end in marriage.

It reminds me of when I was ready to look for a new job. I would get rejected over and over again. Most times I wouldn't hear anything from the job I applied to or even get a call for an interview. I would express my frustration to my husband.

"You only need one," he'd say.

I kept applying to new jobs knowing that I would get hired by the right boss in the right job eventually. Dating is the same way.

Most times you will get rejected over and over again or you will continue to meet or date the wrong person.

That's normal. The odds are stacked against you. It's more likely that you will meet the wrong people first.

It's easy to get upset about failed relationships, especially if you think you were closer to finding the one to marry or if you think you're running out of time.

Once I did meet my husband, I realized that all of the awful relationships weren't for me in the first place. They were meant to fail.

2. You can be attracted to someone and they're not the right one for you

I remember when I was in school, my basis for a good guy was if he was cute. Even as I became an adult and started dating, I would consider the person's looks first.

There are many attractive people in the world, it does not mean they are marriage material.

The person being attractive did not validate bad qualities, such as unfaithfulness, being underemployed, or having a bad personality.

Although the person didn't have many other redeeming qualities, sometimes I stayed too long in relationships because I was attracted to the person.

I learned that besides being cute, the person had to have more qualities that would make the relationship last.

3. Not everyone you have a good time with is someone you should marry

Not only could you be attracted to someone, but you could really enjoy spending time with someone.

I had some awesome dates and had a lot of fun. While I had fun with members of the opposite sex, it did not mean I should marry them.

There were other factors that I needed to consider, such as shared values and shared goals.

Enjoying someone's company wasn't going to be enough to have a strong marriage.

My husband and I having the same goals and the same Christian values have made marriage simple for us. As a bonus, we love spending time with each other too.

4. Less communication, means less interest

I used to really like the people I was dating. Then I started to hear from them less and less. I always made an excuse for the less frequent communications.

I thought the person might be busy or something was going on with them. It always ended up that the person was no longer interested in me.

After the first date with my husband, we talked on the phone or saw each other every day until we got married a year after we met. Communication remained steady.

A person interested in a long-term relationship with you will consistently communicate with you. If the communication becomes infrequent, move on. They're not the right one for you.

5. A person needs to heal on their own

There were times that I wanted to help a person get whole again. I gave money when I shouldn't have. I stayed by their side even though they had many issues.

I realized that I should let a person heal on their own. Growing a relationship when I'm doing so much work to support the person did not work.

My husband was whole when I met him. He had a good job and his own place. He didn't need me to support him. He already healed from a recent break up he had.

In the same way, I needed to be stable when I met my husband.

I thought I was ready to get married after I graduated from college. I was wrong.

I spent the time before I met my husband living on my own, learning how to support myself, and strengthening my self-confidence. I also had to heal whenever I had a bad relationship.

By the time I met my husband, I was ready to build a strong marriage with him.

6. You can't force someone to change

When I met someone, who didn't have the qualities I wanted, I would still consider them as someone I could marry.

I would think of the changes they would need to make to be perfect for me.

I would suggest ways the person should change. Most of the time the relationship ended without the person making changes.

With my husband, I liked him just the way he was. I didn't need him to change.

Look for someone you can spend the rest of your life with without them changing. A person is not guaranteed to change after you get married.

My husband is the same way he was before we got married.

7. The right person is happy with you the way you are

Not only do you want to pick a spouse who doesn't need to change, you would want someone who doesn't want to change you.

There were many relationships where I tried to be the person my mate wanted. It was awkward because I didn't feel comfortable being myself.

With my husband, I am truly myself all the time. He likes me the way I am and of course it makes it a lot easier to enjoy our life together.

8. The right relationship brings out the best in you

My husband brings out the best in me. I like who I am with him. I'm more patient and understanding. I'm confident. I'm ambitious. I feel like I can accomplish anything.

My husband encourages me to go after what I want in life.

In other relationships, I did not like who I was in the relationship.

I had relationships where I felt insecure all of the time. I dated guys whose head constantly turned when they saw other women.

I had relationships where I was always angry and upset about the actions of the person I was dating.

The right relationship will bring you peace. You should like what the relationship does for you.

9. If a person you're dating doesn't ever want to get married and you do, you're wasting valuable time

Some people do not want to get married and that's their right. If you do want to get married, it's better to date people who feel the same way.

Sure, you can have a lot of fun with someone who doesn't want to get marry. However, you won't reach your goal with them.

It's like wanting a promotion and staying in a job with no promotion potential. You're at a standstill and you're not progressing towards your goal.

You might hope the person will change their mind. More than likely the person has already made up their mind about marriage.

10. If your goal is to get married, dating someone you don't want to marry sets you back

Although marriage was my goal, I stayed in relationships even though I knew I didn't want to marry the person.

I liked being in a relationship and having someone to talk to on the phone and go on dates.

I realize that I probably could have spent that precious time improving myself.

I even drove 3 hours on weekends to visit the guy I was dating in another city. I could have put that gas money towards savings.

There is a saying my brother used to say to me:

“Don’t spend quality time with unqualified people.”

While I did eventually meet my husband, wasting time with the wrong person could have kept me from meeting him.

11. It’s easier to be in a relationship with someone with the same values

As a Christian, I sometimes dated guys who did not have similar beliefs. Those relationships did not last long.

We did not have a lot in common with each other. If I married someone who did not have similar values, a strong marriage would have been difficult to maintain.

I would have to go to church alone. We wouldn’t be able to agree on how to raise the children. Coming to a consensus on everyday decisions would be challenging.

It’s much easier to build a life with someone who has the same values as you do.

12. The right person will feel the same way about you that you feel about them

I was always hurt when I liked someone and that person showed me that they didn’t feel the same way.

They showed me how they felt by not calling me on a consistent basis or by not treating me right.

I started to have negative thoughts about myself and thought something was wrong with me.

It wasn’t until I met my husband that I realized that the right person will feel the same way about you.

I didn’t have to worry about the people who didn’t like me. I just needed to find someone who loved me the same way I loved him.

13. When it’s the one, you’ll know

When I questioned whether someone was the right person to marry, they were not the one. It wasn’t until I met my husband and dated him that I knew I met the right one to marry.

I didn’t have any doubts on our wedding day that I was making the right decision.

I actually don't remember when I knew. By the time he proposed to me after 8 months of dating, I was ready to say, "Yes."

When it's the right one for you, you'll know. The person will have the qualities you have been looking for in a spouse.

14. Prayer works in finding a mate

I, along with celebrities, such as Viola Davis, Megan Good, and Ciara, prayed for a husband.

I prayed often for a man that had the qualities that my husband has.

I was so clear in what I wanted that I recognized that the person I was dating was not the right one for me.

Although we went ring shopping, the other person was missing some of the important qualities that I prayed for in a mate.

When I decided to break off the relationship with him, I met my husband a few weeks later.

My prayers were answered. While it took longer than I expected, I believe that prayer works when finding a mate.

15. There's someone out there for you, be persistent

Not only did I pray for my husband, I also took actions toward meeting him. If I hadn't done a search online, I would not have met him.

While you may be discouraged in your quest to find a spouse, keep trying.

As I said earlier, you will meet many people who are not right for you. You only need one person to fit what you want.

I'll admit that there were days that I started to question whether there was someone out there for me.

I'm glad that I didn't stop trying to meet people. Keep believing that you will meet your spouse. It's not too late for you.

While it may seem like a daunting challenge, all things are possible with God. Keep the faith. Don't give up on your dream.