

Linda K. Laffey, MA, MFT
Marriage and Family Therapist
License# MFC 37134

16861 Ventura Boulevard, Suite 304
Encino, California 91436
(818) 591-2989

2277 Townsgate Road, Suite 108
Westlake Village, California 91361
(805) 375-5860

10 Tips for Successful Dating and Relationships

1. Before beginning a new relationship, make sure you have taken the time to heal from one that has ended. If you are still hurting, you will not be emotionally available to the new person, and the unresolved pain will cloud your decision-making process.
2. Prior to dating someone, have a conversation with them about your dating goals, and theirs. If there is a big difference—for example, one of you is looking to get married and the other is dating for fun--you are likely to save a lot of time and grief by not even getting started. Having similar long term dating goals will contribute significantly to the ultimate success of the relationship.
3. Take your time. Going slowly and creating the opportunity to really get to know the other person well will optimize your chances of making good decisions and creating the kind of relationship you want to have. It takes even the most educated and experienced experts on human behavior at least six months to determine another's true character.
4. Communicate openly and honestly. Masking your feelings or who you really are will not result in a good relationship. Give up the need to be right. You can each have your points of view without making one right and the other wrong.
5. Take responsibility for your own happiness. Don't expect your partner to take care of you.
6. Take care of yourself physically, emotionally, financially, socially, and spiritually. Two people who are individually successful in these areas have the best chances of creating a good relationship.
7. Be flexible. Compromise is essential to a healthy relationship. Give up the need to be in control. Relationships flourish when you can "hold" each other with wide open arms.

Linda K. Laffey, MA, MFT
Marriage and Family Therapist
License# MFC 37134

16861 Ventura Boulevard, Suite 304
Encino, California 91436
(818) 591-2989

2277 Townsgate Road, Suite 108
Westlake Village, California 91361
(805) 375-5860

8. Don't expect your partner to change. Falling in love with someone's potential is bound to disappoint you.
9. Don't avoid disagreements. Conflict resolution is part of a healthy relationship. Listen to your partner, and ask them if they feel heard. Keep listening and asking until they do.
10. If you find yourself repeating the same relationship patterns over and over again with different people, individual counseling can help you to break that cycle and replace it with a new, healthier way of relating that will yield more of the results you are looking for.

Counseling can help:

- Create happier, healthier, more loving relationships.
- Increase self-awareness and understanding.
- Improve communication skills.
- Decrease stress; increase peace of mind.
- Develop healthy conflict resolution skills.
- Improve parent/child relationships.
- Facilitate change in patterns of relating which are not working.
- Heal past hurts which are getting in the way of your present happiness.
- Resolve recurrent issues so your life is more of what you want it to be.
- Aid in the process of grieving a lost relationship.
- Conquer eating disorders and addictive behavior.
- Assist in personal and spiritual growth.

This material is provided for informational and educational purposes only. For further information or help with related issues, please call me at **(818) 591-2989** or **(805) 375-5860** or call another licensed mental health professional.