

Easy ways to avoid middle-age belly bulge!



Relating / 0911



Could that Summer Fling be the Real Thing?

Maybe. We tell you how to tell if it's right for the long haul—or not

Ahh... you met at W Scottsdale during a pool party and spent the summer happily enjoying the sun and water together. Or, perhaps you are the one who met someone waiting in line at Whole Foods, and have had a wonderful summer of food and fun together.

Now, as summer winds down and you head back to the daily grind, you may find yourself wondering if that summer fling is worth hanging on to, or if it's time to let it go. (Of course this dilemma also often presents itself in any relationship, not just a summer romance!)

There are a few essential steps to knowing whether a relationship is worth working at. First, you have to know your-

self—who you are and what you want—as well as what your partner wants. Then determine if you are both willing to make your two wants come together.

First and foremost, if it started as a summer romance, state what you are looking for. Put it all out there from the beginning. If you are looking for more, and they want a fling, then move on.

It's all about...you

It starts with you. Most of us gloss over this all-important step. You have to know yourself before you get involved with someone. What do you want out of this relationship? What are your requirements, needs or bottom lines?

The more you know yourself, the more you are going to be available in a relationship and you will better know who the right fit is for you.

Most of us don't know who our right fit is, because we don't take the time for self-evaluation. Oftentimes, we end up compromising those needs and bottom lines.

How do you determine your bottom line? Start by examining your past relationships. What was unacceptable to you in those relationships? What worked? Begin to make a list. Are the same patterns repeating in this relationship?

Now look at your current situation.

A FEW EXAMPLES OF BOTTOM LINES INCLUDE:

- I require my partner to be responsible with finances.
- My partner must be supportive of my career.
- We need to share a love for travel.
- My partner is willing to pursue personal growth.
- Trust is a must.
- We partner in raising children.
- My partner must lead a healthy lifestyle.

Are you wavering on any of your bottom lines? Which do you need to correct and which are you willing to make compromises on or negotiate? For instance, if you know going in that you want children and your boyfriend or girlfriend absolutely does not, it will not work. If they are a smoker with no plans to quit and you can't stand smoking, it likely will not work.

On the other hand, if being financially responsible is one of your bottom lines and your partner is currently out of a job, that doesn't necessarily mean it can't work. Look at their past, and if they've just hit a rough patch but are working towards finding a job, this might be an instance where you would negotiate your bottom line. Together you have a plan of action and neither is

compromising the foundation of your bottom lines—just making a temporary adjustment.

Negotiating the bottom line

It's rare to find someone who exactly matches all of your bottom lines. This is where the negotiations come into play. If your bottom lines are in conflict with your partner's, you will need to negotiate a solution without losing sight of who you are and what you want. They will need to do the same.

Find out what their requirements are. Is it important to them to have a partner who is adventurous and spontaneous, but you know you are a devout planner? Unless you are both willing to negotiate a plan in which you meet in the middle, this may become the source of a lot of tension between you.

Have you ever been in a relationship in which you were reluctant to negotiate, and instead you pushed aside your needs and ended up losing yourself in the relationship because you didn't want to let the person go? This approach eventually leads to an extremely draining relationship—one where you usually wish you would have gotten out of earlier.

On the other side of the coin, some stay in the relationship, refusing to negotiate and wanting to be "right." This produces a battlefield of negativity and both of you wish you'd have left sooner.

If the other person is unwilling to negotiate an amicable solution to meet your needs or meet you in the middle, that is one indication that it's time to let it go. Unmet bottom lines will eventually become the primary source of many arguments.

Figure out what you want in a relationship, and be true to who you are. Continually check in. Are you happy? If not, you are probably going against one of your bottom lines.

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