

Crowdsourced relationship perspectives

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1. Foreword

Over the past couple of years I have asked my Facebook pals their views on relationship questions I have thought about at the time. I have valued their thoughts and opinions so much and found that many of my other friends appreciated reading the responses as well. I believe it is helpful to listen and **be curious of others' perspectives as it helps us understand our own and why**. It made me feel less **alone and less concerned about having it all "figured out"**.

Here are a collection of the questions I have asked and the responses.

Participants have all agreed to have their responses included and those that did not have been omitted from the document. Names are shortened to an initial or two letters when another person in the thread before them has a name with the same starting letter. One participant wished to keep his name in full. The Author has the initial L in every question. Some responses have been removed or shortened to display only the argument or point the participant has put forward- for example, posts agreeing with the previous point have largely been omitted. Some spelling and grammar errors have been fixed.

2. Enjoying your own company

Do you enjoy your own company? Why? How often do you make time to be with yourself? What do you do in that time for yourself? (Excluding hand parties k?)

N - I prefer my own company, but will often reach a point where I will need to be social. It's harder to achieve for me being married, but that has its advantages too.

L - What do you do when you "hang out" in your own company?

N - It depends. Some times I'll catch up on music I've been wanting to listen to or watch something I've been wanting to watch. If I'm tired I'll nap. I might play music or work on an electronics project. Like I said, it depends.

A - I read books 😊 love my own little world from time to time

L - Awesome! What do you like to read? How often do you do this?

A - Fantasy, paranormal mostly. I try to at least once a week for a couple hours. In which time [my partner] usually has his own time to do what he wants to do

T - I stay up after hubby and kids are in bed, it's really the only time I have to myself. Sometimes I read or draw or watch TV etc. but lately I've gotten interested in watercolour painting so I do that a bit. Or I just lay there and enjoy silence.

L - That sounds very relaxing. Do you think you enjoy it so much because it's juxtapositioned with a lot of group activity? I guess you spend a lot of time with your kids, since you say that's the only time you have to yourself?

T - Mmm I am really social so I prefer spending time with people instead of alone, only time I like alone time is when I'm tired. I enjoy catching up one on one with friends at nighttime, say for coffee etc. but that doesn't happen often. I so enjoy my time alone at nights as my whole day is filled with so much busy activity (which is good!) but to sit in silence, eat a biscuit without sharing, drinking hot chocolate without having to make 3 more and even having the odd chocolate here and there whilst watching chick flicks or romance movies is a real treat.

L - Do you think you get enough of both the social stuff you prefer and enough alone time to make you feel content? Or would you prefer another level of each?

T - I think so. I've learnt to be content with the circumstances I am in now. In a few years, I will be able to have a lot more time to do the things I love, I think right now life is very busy and no time for self because of the particular stage we are in. So yes, I think at the moment I am content for the most part. Some extra couple time would be beneficial but that's always hard to organise!

D - Does staying up to 2am playing video games count as my own company? If so, that.

L - Absolutely it does. I mean, that's kind of a hand party but whatever. What do you play? Do you feel like you get enough alone time and enough social time? How do you manage getting enough of both?

D - I just follow my dreams and call friends to hang out if I feel like it or be a recluse if I'm down. Super natural to me.

L - So being alone is like default for you?

D - Probably but it all depends on my mood on the given day

Am - Looove my own company! Feels enriching and it helps me recharge. Reading, cooking, googling and falling into wormholes of curious questions, running...and just walking in nature- my favourite things.

L - those things are amazing! Do you get enough of it? Too much?

Am - I don't get enough! On the flipside, I also love activities and find I always pack in my weekends which can sometimes leave me feeling exhausted during the week. I find it hard to balance that out in Sydney. Too much to do, which is a good thing!

I - I enjoy my own company a lot when it's balanced with having opportunities to spend time with quality people I'm close to. And when I'm having alone time I like to make myself a cocoon in bed of Netflix, music and comfy clothes

L - it seems like you have the balance now that you've wanted for a while 😊

I - Yeah, I think so

K - When I find myself out and about running errands on my own, I really enjoy it. It doesn't happen often lol but when it does, I take the opportunity to have a coffee and relax, or go into that one shop the other half or kids never want to go in. Buy something for myself for once lol After a couple of hours I look forward to going home to them and find that I've missed them.

L - That's so sweet! I think that's lovely when you have some alone time and then miss whoever you've been away from. That's love 😊 Sounds like you get just what you need in terms of time alone and time together!

K - We don't spend much time apart 😞 lol. Although we do need to remind ourselves sometimes that we need time together as a couple after our own hobbies and time. It usually happens when the kids go to bed most nights, either a movie or game or just sit and talk shit over dessert. Or any opportunity we find ourselves in kid free lol can be a tough balance at times and if we don't find the right balance normally someone ends up grumpy lol

C - I love when my partners on nightshift. I like being able to potter through the house during the day, and then chill out with a wine at night. Gives me time to make the calls to girlfriends I don't see often, catch up on the shows he doesn't like, and just be alone, really. As for making time - because he does shift work, I rarely will organise a catch up on weekends that don't involve him. Sometimes I do, but that gives him a chance to catch up with the boys without me there. But those catch ups/girls nights are usually only once every few months.

L - This is really interesting. Sounds like you get quite a few hours to yourself when he is at work - does he get as much time to himself when you are at work? Is that how you manage your time together/apart?

C - He does. Because I work an hour away from where we live, on weekdays if he's on nights I stay at my mums because it's only 10 minutes away from my work. And I'll usually do one or two nights a week at mums to break the drive up, and I let him have his first night off shift to get his bearings together and have a drink with the boys. When he's off shift, he has all day (I leave home just after 5am, get home just after 6pm) while I'm at work to himself. He has days where he catches up with mates, days where he does house/yard stuff, and days where he just chills and catches up on his own shows. It works well for us. We're a partnership but still have pretty equal "me time".

L - Wow! What a great setup you've both worked out for yourselves!

C - Can I ask the reason for your questions? Curiosity or for research?

L - It's for curiosity. I love hearing about how relationships work for other people and what they look like and feel like. I only know how my own relationships feel/ look like, so I find it really interesting/important to hear about others'. I'm super grateful for everyone's perspectives and experiences. Thank you for sharing yours 😊

C - You're welcome. I enjoy reading your questions and other's answers. It gives good reflection for us wondering about everyone else and if we're doing it right!

L - Exactly 😊 I'm glad that my friends feel the same!

E - I do enjoy my own company. I spend the weekdays alone and in the evenings and on weekends everyone is home so it's a perfect balance. I spend a lot of my time reading, writing and going to the library. I'm outdoors working in the garden or just lounging in the grass contemplating the unsolved mysteries of the universe. I spend time at the Rec centre getting my exercise on. It's a lot but it really just depends on the day and my mood. I also have to get my work done so I take breaks and do those things sporadically throughout the day.

L - Do you think the amount of time you get to yourself is the ideal amount for you? Compared to your previous career (where I assume you spent a lot of time around other people and then came home to people?), do you think this amount of alone time is more you? Sounds like such a great lifestyle.

E - I do enjoy the alone time. I think it's an ideal amount. I can tell because I look forward to 4 pm when [my child] comes home from school and the oddest thing about [my partner] is, sometimes I look forward to him leaving just so I have personal space and then I miss him when he's gone, but I suppose that's a good thing since we're bound to each other until death. ha. I had zero alone time before. I desperately need this career change.

L - What do you think is the reason you like so much alone time?

E - That's a good question. I'd like to answer with because I'm introverted but I've always been so I don't think that's really it. I've worked and lived in chaos for 20+ years and have been raising a family for over 20 years so maybe it's time to give back to myself and enjoy where I'm at in life right now.

L - Did you have this urge for most of your life, or does now just feel like the right time to do it?

E - Actually, I didn't even realize it until we moved out to the middle of nowhere. I catastrophized about the change. I thought it would be more of a culture shock than it was. Once we were moved I settled quite comfortably into the change of pace.

L - Wow. Sometimes we just really don't know how we'll feel about a change until we do it.

Tr - Alone quite a lot these days, hahaha. Anyone want to join me crossing a continent on foot?
Warning: it's hard. To better answer your question, I LOVE my own company. Hence the penchant for long distance solo adventures!!

L - What is it about your alone time that is so satisfying for you? I have always found you quite a social person - you seem comfortable in both alone and group situations.

Tr - Haha I think you're right, I definitely love them both in almost equal measure (depending on the company, of course). I think if you are mindful and calm then every situation can be a positive one 😊 Alone time for me is satisfying because it gives me an ideal environment to cultivate those qualities, which then come in handy in other situations.

Em - "Dinner with myself...I CAN'T cancel that again!" ~ the grinch 😂

L - haha, you should never cancel on dates with yourself!

S - Sing or dance around the house. Draw and paint. Look at the things in my house and move them around

3. Point of no return

What moment (and what/why) made you realize you wanted to be with your partner(s) in a romantic way?

A - Well it kinda really is "Love at first sight" i guess. Until you talk to somebody and get to know them all you have is visual attraction. Unless some of you can read minds, that is my take on it.

M - First, we had physical chemistry. That was the initial romance. I wanted to marry her after she tried to kick someone's ass for me. A guy! No one has ever had my back like that before.

A - I like that. Well done.

M - She's scrappy

J - He was my friend and confidant first and then we grew closer. The exact moment was actually a drunken weekend a long time ago but he is still my best friend and I hope it stays that way till the day I die. Love him to bits!

L - I've always wondered how friendships become relationships. Did the feelings just grow and during the drunken moment you just thought "I'd like this to be more than friends now"?

J - We were both with different people when we first met so it was friends first. Feelings had been growing for a while but being drunk your inhibitions are lowered and it felt right. We haven't looked back since. 😊

Li - It was a hot summer night and I had too many beers than I could handle at the time. I knew I had a keeper when after I passed out, he carried me up the stairs with his **friend**, held my hair up while I threw up in a bucket and then put me to bed. 8 years later he still is caring and kind and looks after me when I need it and I love him to bits!

L - Awww! Such a gentleman. Was it the day after that that you were like "what a guy! I want to date him"?

Li- it made me realise that rather than dating him, that this was proper relationship material 😊

L - That's awesome!

Jo - #foreveralone

L - ♡♡ what about previous relationships?

Jo - Then it's usually the way our hands fit, & definitely their smell. Scent is a big one.

L - So specific and poetic.

Jo - Have you watched Hector & the search for happiness?

L - No! What is?

Jo - Watch it. ❤️ <https://youtu.be/iWFVAblkS4>

Ja - I told him about my tough year the previous year and he said he felt that he should do his best to make my next year the best he could 😊

L - Sounds like he knew that you were someone he wanted to be with already and he was just waiting for you to decide? 😊

Ja - We had the same feeling about each other I think. This was shortly after meeting. It was very much a recognition we had in each other 😊

K - When the sneaky bugger kissed me unexpectedly & I ran away.... Couldn't stop thinking about that kiss tho. So I went back ❤️ now I can kiss him whenever I want.

L - Haha, so you hadn't thought of him in that way until he kissed you?

K - Nah not at all

Me - We had a ONS, and the next morning went to get coffee together. While we waited, I just instinctively held his hand, and he didn't pull away, and it was just really nice.

L - And the rest was history. You just started hanging out more? You felt comfortable to hold hands with him and that was what spurred it on do you think?

Me - Yeah, I just felt really safe and comfortable so I just lent on him and held his hand. Then we started hanging out heaps, and it gradually became more intimate, until he sent me a text saying 'Fuck it, let's give it a go'. A year later, and we're searching for a house together and discussing our future together. It's lovely.

C - When he brought me food which he cooked himself and it was delicious!

L - Partner material!! The way to a woman's heart is in her stomach apparently 😊

C - I think its more important than sex really lol

L - Haha! I reckon there's probably a load of people who agree with you. I'm not one of them though haha

B - We spent 15 hours in a Kmart together as a challenge, and didn't get sick of each other. (We decided to do this because we are both fans of Hank Green <https://youtu.be/pSffsb5ztRo>)

L - Haha that was great to Watch! I think if you can spend fifteen hours with anyone in a store, maybe you should get married 😊

Kr - That butterfly feeling and as soon as our first "date" finished, I wanted more ❤️

L - Awww! So you weren't sure what "it" was, just that you wanted more of it?

Kr - I didn't think it was necessarily "love" but I knew it felt good. I had recently gotten through a really bad break-up from a long-term relationship and hadn't felt anything like that

for so long that it excited me, it was like an adrenaline rush of wanting to go straight back and do it again, hard to put into words. I still get the butterflies!

L - awwww 

Kr - Is this for work?? It's so interesting to read everyone's comments... All them feels 
haha

L - It's just for me. I am often very confused about relationships/what makes people fall in love/what they find great about partners/being in a relationship, so I like to crowdsource how others see it  It's also super lovely to hear everyone's love stories.

Kr - Such a good idea, thanks for doing it. Made me smile :]

L - I'm glad! It makes me smile too  Love is great.

CI - Got surprised with a kiss and suddenly he wasn't 'just a friend' to me anymore! I knew he liked me but was convinced I wasn't interested - then BOOM! Kiss! Momentary confusion followed by romance feelings!

L - Courage pays off! Sneaky kisses sound like a good plan for romance.

CI - Indeed! Confidence is king 

Am - We are one of those love at first sight couples, but there were two points: when a gay friend cracked onto him and stroked his leg at a party, his cool and confident reaction told me I met someone special. A week later when I told him I was ambitious and couldn't commit to anything long term, he said "Maybe you just need to be with someone who understands you." He likes to be proven right 

Je - For me, it's hard to pinpoint an exact moment because it happened so fast, but I think it would have been us playing drunken footsies while being wingmen to our two friends who were trying to get together lol. And then our first real date (two days later) just solidified everything. It was really natural and I immediately felt comfortable and myself with him. Never fell so hard so quickly/easily  ... Didn't at all understand the "when you know, you know" until then.

L - Wow. Amazing. Sounds so much like it's not something you can ever pinpoint - "when you know, you know" is kind of magic.

Ti - I'm almost 30 and realised time was ticking and I had to stop being picky.

L - Haha oh Ti. What were you picky about in the past, that you think you've eased up on now?

Ti - Everything. I just liked the freedom of being able to play the field. But then you get to 30 and nobody wants to know you because you're not 19 anymore. 

L - they only want you when you're seventeen... when you're twenty one...you're no fun!

4. Getting Closer

When you felt some sort of rumbling in your heart for your significant other(s - now or past), what did you do to get to know them better? Did you know them well enough and make your intentions known outright (or maybe you didn't know them and still went for gold!?) or did you slowly, slowly include them in your life so feelings would mutually develop?

E - I know I wish I'd used the pizza approach. <https://youtu.be/RWOBFu2uNXA>

L - Amazing! I think I'm probably a bit too aggressive sometimes so i try to ease up on the whole "i think ur cute let's date" stuff these days. What actual approach did you use if not pizza?

E - I've usually dated people I was already friends with, so mostly it was slowly growing closer to that person. I don't know if I have a particular approach though. I haven't had that many relationships.

L - Do you think that's because you've waited until you've been sure about there being feelings rather than taking a risk? Or more that they've made the moves?

E - I think in the past I definitely have waited to find out if the other person likes me before putting myself out there. But for this relationship, it was both of us getting closer together and realising we had feelings for each other. Although we still took it pretty slow. My attitude now does actually line up pretty well with that video. I think I wasted so much time thinking about some people and never really did anything about it.

L - Yeah. I can't help but love her idea but also think "sometimes there are just reasons we tell ourselves it wouldn't work"? Probably just scared excuses 😊

E - Probably haha. There's definitely reasons why some relationships might be difficult, but if you've got chemistry with someone and they seem really decent, then why not go for it? Besides, if you want to have some good stories for when you're old, you have to be brave sometimes. 😊

L - You are right! What about people reading chemistry from the other person that is in fact just kindness?

E - Definitely possible to read into someone being nice as something more, but I dunno. I feel like there's usually a more flirty air to things, just a hint that they're keen on you. Worse case scenario, maybe you end up on a date with someone who is just really nice? I suppose it's possible it could make things uncomfortable if they were just being nice and didn't mean anything by it. But if you're laid-back about it, I wouldn't think that it would ruin anything.

L - Yeah i guess that just feeds into that "gotta put yourself out there and you might not win after all".

E - Yeah. I guess it's like anything though. You might miss out on so much if you're not willing to make that first move. Maybe the perfect person for you is shy, or distracted, or whatever and if you don't get their attention your best partner in crime never gets to know you or realise how great you'd be together.

N - The married guy says: friends first. I married my best friend. 12 years together. Married 8 years. Plenty of ups and downs, but strong AF.

L - So what moved it from friends to romance?

N - Well when we met I was living in Townsville and she was in Hobart so we talked on the phone for months before we saw one another first. The key element is chemistry. You can sort of just tell. It is a question of chemistry though.

L - Wow! Long distance romantic chemistry! I'm actually fascinated by this idea of "chemistry" for others. Was it just a feeling you had or can you describe what you mean further about "you can sort of tell"? That's so amazing that you got to know each other by phone to begin with.

N - It's certainly a feeling. However, it's intangible and difficult to describe. The times I've felt it most strongly with people it has felt like a sense of recognition, as if I've known them for a

very long time, but we have in fact never met. It doesn't necessarily need to be romantic. It can be with friends too. Ira and I met on bus randomly and have been best friends ever since.

L - Yeah. I've felt that too and could describe it that way exactly.

N - You may also find this interesting. I've never been on a "date". Not in the sense that it is traditionally thought of, anyway.

L - Wow cool! I really do see dating as just hanging out to get to know each other -whether that's going out for dinner or whatever is all dating in my mind 😊

B - I lean towards going slowly; even though that's really difficult sometimes. It can be tempting to want to speed things up when you're giddy with emotions and excitement, but in my experience, doing that is usually detrimental. Because when you don't know someone very well yet, the source of those giddy feelings isn't the person themselves, but the idea of them that you have internally constructed. As for how to get to know a person better - this is hard. I prefer to just do this naturally. If I tried to optimise it too much, dating would start to feel boring and repetitive, even though it would save a lot of time. That being said, two general things I try to do are opt for phone calls over texting where possible, and do things together that will bring out their personality (and yours). I recommend the book Modern Romance, for an entertaining and informative explanation of these sort of struggles.

L - Thank you B. I've often downplayed my feelings for people because I've known I had a constructed idea of them in my head but I've never articulated that. It's caused me to not pursue them in the past and maybe it's a bit because I've decided I'm not right for them. Which is silly, because only the other person should decide that, right? I totally agree with you on dating being repetitive and boring if it's treated like a means to an end like that. It sounds like you've got a very healthy sense of self worth - I think that's the trick to letting things happen naturally. It sounds like you've got a perspective on dating that reads a little like it being about compatibility rather than a "chemistry" that N mentions above. What do you think? I've always thought there could be two prevailing ideas about romance in my mind: a) there are many people who are compatible but relationships that work come down to two people wanting it to work + compatibility between the two (this seems to be the logical/pragmatic lover in me that sees relationships as work) or b) there's a little magical something that's hard to describe and relationships work between two people who have the magical something ("connection"?) And a desire to make it work. I like this idea better because it makes me feel like i did my best in "failed relationships" and they ended because the special something just wasn't there. I've always thought the two were mutually exclusive. I'll check out the book- thank you 😊

M - I suck at taking things slow. [My partner] and I slept together within 3 hours of our first date, dropped the 'Love' bomb about two weeks in, and it's been just over a year and we're engaged. We met on OkCupid, so we both knew we were looking for something, and as soon as we started talking, we just dived in 100%. Its such a cliché, but I just knew that I wanted this person around me all the time. In terms of other relationships, I just flat out say 'I think you're interesting, I want to know you more'. I'm blunt, and it generally works.

L - I really love that you're so full of love and so passionate about giving it without worrying about what other people might think. It's so self assured and admirable. Don't ever change M.

A - 'I think you're interesting, I want to know you more'. Should be mandatory and universal.

L - It's a good one!

J - Me https://youtu.be/xa-4IAR_9Yw

L - Amazing. "Maybe she's from Canada and she's just being polite"

Em – I think sometimes men are too shy to make the first move so letting them know you're interested helps them along. – He was good with computers so I pretended my pc was broken so I could get his number from a friend and get him over to my house 😊. We started "hanging out" and I could tell he liked me a lot more than other bullshitters I'd been with in the past. When I started getting that feeling I just went for it and said "I love you". I figured that if he freaked out, he wasn't the right one...10 years later and we're expecting our second kid together 😊

L - Wow! The old damsel in distress trick! This made me smile so much! 10 years!!! Congratulations! Looks like your bravery paid off. What happened when you said you loved him?

Em - haha...it wasn't bravery, it was more about self preservation. I had fallen into the trap of having feelings for game players and commitment-phobes. I was tired of getting hurt and being a booty call so I decided the ball was going to be in my court this time and I had nothing to lose. BEFORE I started to get feelings I made my intentions known. I said straight up that I was looking for love and I wanted babies in the future. He didn't even flinch. In fact, it made him like me even more. Most guys would have freaked out at that, especially so early on so I knew this guy was different. When I said I love you he did freak out a bit but not because he didn't like it but because he was scared I didn't really mean it (he had been hurt before too)..when he got over the initial shock he said it too but not right away.. but now it's something I like to give him shit about every now and then hahaha

L - What made you think/know he was different do you think? You just got a feeling?

Em - there was no game playing...there was no "i'll call you later"..he was always making an effort and doing little things to surprise me and make me feel fantastic. We would talk and laugh for hours and had a chemistry beyond anything physical. He'd look at me with eyes like puss in boots from shrek LOL

L - Haha that's when you know it's true!

5. How do you choose?

When you are looking for a partner, do you look for specific things, or do you just "see what happens with whoever"?

N - My criteria are traits or qualities rather physical things. My sense of a person's physicality disappears quite quickly. That isn't to say that don't exist, but they aren't as important as the other stuff that would inform whether I become attracted to a person or not.

L – If you feel comfortable, I'd love to know what those traits are/how you came to know this about yourself. Feel free to message if you feel more comfy

N - I guess that because I have a specific kind of personality which means that I find it difficult to make friends, in turn that creates increased specificity for those whom I may wish to become romantically involved.

L - Totally! I like that you see yourself as a specific personality that needs specific personalities in response. That is a wonderful perspective.

E - personally I think selection matters, massively. Of course there's ways to do it that comes from a place of self awareness (which is most important) vs those who just go into it and end up treating relationships like slot machines and get exactly the same result - net losses over time on majority cases.

L - what are the things that you consider coming from a place of self awareness? Can you explain a little more about what you mean?

E - Self awareness in this context is knowing what you need and why, it could be that you need a certain level of intellectual or physical stimulation in a relationship to, most importantly, values - be it behavioural, spiritual, or professional too (e.g. one could be ambitious and want someone who is likewise ambitious and challenging vs someone who will support them in their ambitions) - I do believe you don't know until you've really lived and spent time with someone, but pre selection is critical to making sure both people get the most of it. Values that are shared are key to a lasting relationship.

L - Yes, I totally agree that you have to know what really turns you on or makes you happy or fulfilled before you can consider what things other people might put into your relationship that would fit the bill. When you say that other relationships that don't apply this slot machine mentality, what does that look like?

E - The thing that keeps people on slot machines or social media is a psychological phenomenon of random rewards. You may know that you lose money or time, or both, in the long run but because every now and then you actually do get something and that keeps you hoping for more of that dopamine rush, that's why people keep coming back to it. Same reason so many try playing around, every now and then they do find something with meaning but because of the bad habit of continuously seeking novelty instead of wanting to improve oneself, the relationship, or work on any challenges instead it feels easier to keep spinning again, they firstly never get the value out of whatever wins they do get, and are likely to lose more long term.

C - It's not a job interview! It's nice meeting different people in unexpected place - like when people fall in love on holiday (or after 3 texts and a tinder date)! Not sure if this approach 'lasts the distance' but it's fun.

L - Do you think those people choose things that last for now, or they rather don't know enough about the person for it to last the distance? I guess in the scenario I talk about above, we're considering what it is for a long lasting relationship. I am assuming people consider traits when considering long term partnerships more so than short ones. Assuming both of those relationship lengths have different specific desired traits...? What do you think?

C - I think dating whoever can help you get to know what you want, and what's important. You might think a certain characteristic or trait is important/unimportant but it's good to challenge your own biases. Having said that, there are fundamentals that can't be waived - usually these are values. The materialistic stuff doesn't matter. For example I often date people with impressive jobs - it's not so much that I care about the dollar value of the income, but I think having a good work ethic and wanting to contribute to society is very important. For some people the nonnegotiables might be religion, if you want kids or not, if you are politically minded or not - but it's different for everyone.

ER - If you have no selectivity you're not ruling out people that you're entirely incompatible with. What a stupid waste of time. I rule out bigots pretty much immediately. That's usually something that comes up reasonably quickly for me, it's not often that I'm blindsided by someone. I used to be less selective and I learned that lesson the hard way, now I'm far more selective with friends. And since I've only ever dated people I was friendly with/familiar with, it applies to dating as well.

X - All about gut feeling!

L - But don't you think the gut feeling is responding to something(s) that you like about the person? Looks, humour, intelligence...?

X - tough one I think, I've met girls that have been all of those things and in theory, everything I'd look for in a girl but if there's not a connection, a spark, that nervous feeling when you see

them, then to me it's a little sign. But to be honest, that feeling has really only happened with 2/3 girls so it's a very small reference area! Haha

L - I totally get you though. I have had a heap of relationships with people that looked "great on paper" to me (I'm disgusted I've used that phrase referring to people I love and care about), but that ultimately didn't have the attraction "thing" that is necessary.

So then, does that mean that there is a trait that is indescribable that we seek in another person? Something we can't categorise and put on a list? Maybe it's just magic?

X - i hate using cliches yet I roll them out continuously haha it's such a hard thing to explain and listening to your gut is easier said than done but you can be having a great time with someone but it's just missing that indescribable thing, magic maybe!!!

A - Nobody likes to have a checklist, but we all have things that we prefer. I am too confused and undecided for any such system like that. It would require more ambition and self confidence than i have.

L - So does that mean you are a bit of "whatever comes along?"

A - I guess so as i never go seeking things myself. No confidence for the most part. My lifestyle choices aren't that compatible as well.

B - I have a loose set of criteria, but not really specific things. If I really sat down and thought about it I could probably come up with a list of some description, but I prefer to just be open, and decide on a case by case basis.

L - Would you care to share what you consider your loose set of criteria? Feel free to message me if you feel comfortable sharing there instead. Has the case by case basis felt more natural/right? I assume so if that's your preferred method. Have you tried another way?

B - I honestly haven't done a lot of dating. If I could filter out people based on certain criteria I probably would, but often that's not possible unless you actually talk to them. I have done a bit of online dating, but I don't really like it. There's too many fake people on there (fake as in, they don't seem to want to reveal their true personality for whatever reason)

I - I think the answer here is affected by how you perceive free will. As someone who tends to believe we have very little to no free will I'm pretty happy just 'seeing what happens'. 😊

Am - (I'm 19 years down, 4 years married, 1 previous kid and 1 kid together) On the surface of it we have so little in common - like music, movies, books etc - it's kind of astonishing. BUT. Big picture-wise we're on the same page, neither of us takes ourselves too seriously, he laughs like mad at my gags, he's the kindest person I know, he says sorry (meaningfully) (so do I), we kind of take turns at worrying about shit and being the steady hand at the wheel. When I first met him I thought he was super handsome and earnest and honest and funny. We want the same ordinary things.

L - That's awesome Am! Do you think those traits (honesty, being able to say sorry and mean it, funny etc) were things you had in mind as essential to begin with, or did you realise you wanted those things after you saw them in him? I totally don't think shared hobbies is super important, at least for me. I think the big picture stuff/ being on the same page and wanting the same things (from a relationship at least) are the most important things.

Am - I'd worked it out by then (32) - still felt like a slow learner and learned the hard way.

L - When did you feel like you'd "worked it out"? What specifically did that feel like?

A - I had a tiny son. Such clarity of vision after that!

Li - just see where life takes you love, took me to the other side of the world and not regretting that! All I can say is follow your heart, and shit'll work itself out (and if it doesnt you still learnt heaps I'm sure) 😊

L - So "go with your gut"?

Li - Basically, yes. And then fight through whatever battles lay ahead, whether it's about visas, citizenship, principles or whatever.

L - What do you mean principles?

Li - you can't agree on everything, at least not unless you talk about things. So either you convince someone with arguments or agree to disagree (this one doesn't apply to [my partner] btw, somehow we're the same which is annoying)

Er - Okay, I'm married so this may be a bit outdated. There aren't qualities that I looked for in the traditional sense but more so does this person have a job? Are they a crack head? Do they still live with their parents? I would say if they're attending university than living with parents is okay up to a Master degree. Anything beyond that they clearly can't keep their shit together. Do they have goals, ambitions and dreams? As for my husband, we were friends before we started dating. Friends for a long time and it's always been magical. It still is and we're crazy in love with each other. We felt we really knew each other quite well before we started dating. We share the same values and morals but our personalities are completely opposite. I mean literally, other than our values and morals nothing about us is similar and we agree on nothing really. But instead of seeing that as a flaw we look at it as a learning opportunity and because of that we grow as individuals and a couple. P.S. I enjoy participating in your questions and admire that you want to learn about the experiences of others so keep the questions coming!

L - I have always found it so interesting that you and [your husband] don't agree on much. Do you think that keeps things interesting, because you challenge each other, rather than just know where the other stands on things? Or, do you both know where the other stands on things, despite disagreeing on them? I have a feeling that shared values and morals are the really important shared thing in a relationship - the rest is fluff. Has there ever been someone who you thought you matched with values-wise that shocked you as you got to know them better? Was that when you/they called it quits? And thanks! I am so curious about other people's experiences! I am glad others feel comfortable sharing!

Er - I think [my husband] and I are very aware we don't and won't agree. I have faith in his judgement and opinions and yes, I think it keeps things interesting. We never argue, not to say that we don't get annoyed or frustrated with one another but that's when we say, "time to take a break, think it over and regroup." Arguing seems senseless. We have very different personalities. I believe if we had too many similarities we would clash and it wouldn't have always worked out so well between us. There was someone long ago when I was in my 20s who I thought we were on the same page but time proved otherwise. While I feel it's immensely important to have emotions it's equally as important to have control over them. One of my strongest values is to lead by example. One night he got angry with me and smashed my Xbox. Clearly he did not share that value. I was heartbroken. I really loved my Xbox.

J - I decided after my last relationship that I had criteria: they had to be kind, and they had to be easygoing/likable. I didn't have those exact words in my mind (except maybe kind) but as soon as I met C I recognised exactly what I was looking for. I'm also unconsciously drawn to introverts, I think as a balance to my extroversion. Also I think an extroverted man would drive me nuts lol.

L - Is this what you mean Am about realising what you wanted? That decision about having the criteria and not wasting time with others that didn't meet that? J, I reckon that's so awesome! I think a lot of people can relate to seeing what they were after with people as they got involved with them. Isn't there a saying that when you meet someone new and "realise why it never worked out with anyone before"? I guess that's what they are talking about. I totally relate to the extroversion balancing out the introversion and vice versa. I think I actually work with people who are easy going, because I am not easy going AT ALL. haha.

Am - Yes!

R - Just not sexist, respectful and can make me laugh. That's pretty much it. For me anyway. I'm more attracted to women, than men these days. [my partner] is amazing, everything that I could want in a partner in crime and more. Men just no longer do anything for me.

K - Has to be honest, trustworthy, fun and have a great sense of humour. Basically we need to 'click'. That can come from any combination of things though, because everyone is different 😊

CI - I've never had a list before, but after becoming single last year I had five non-negotiable things in mind for whoever I ended up with: kindness, intelligence, great sense of humour, likes to eat interesting food, wants kids. It made it less stressful to date, I think, because you can pick up on (most of) those things pretty quickly, and know if it's worth your time to invest anything else in getting to know someone. There's the whole abstract 'attraction' thing too, but I guess I wouldn't get to the point of even going on a date if I didn't feel a bit of a zing from the start! 😊

L - yes! I think this method is great but definitely requires a level of self assurance/self worth that I think a lot of people don't have. So you only go on dates with people where you feel the "zing"?

CI - Yep, the zing is important! (Except for a blind date or two I've been on where the zing is an unknown!) That said, nearly every date I've been on in my grown up life, I've asked the guy out, and I only ask if the circumstances are zingy! 😊 Most [of my family] are blessed with quite the abundance of self assurance, haha! X

AI - I think it's not weird at all to look for certain characteristics! I think after you've been burnt/heart broken a few times you start to learn what you really can't take: eg a liar, flaky, very different basic values... So you figure out over time what really matters to you and is a non negotiable. I think as far as looks and personality I've been drawn to lots of different types of people but I think if they don't have the same basic values as me eg honesty, that was it for me!

L - Yeah definitely. It's pretty bizarre how often people don't value honesty? Or at least, there can be very different levels of honesty for people. I actually have so much material and have been thinking about that for a long time... I also have a few chats recorded with friends talking about this stuff. I wonder whether anyone would like to listen to those. I find them fascinating. I think at the very least I am going to compile all these perspectives and have them available to read, if people are happy with that. Thank you for sharing your thoughts ❤️

S - IMO both groups are similarly selective, the real difference is just how consciously aware of it they are. I'm more in the "if it feels right" group, but if I sat down and analysed things I'm sure I could pick a ton of positively selected characteristics.

6. Get over it

How do you get over someone?

E – Time (and not having them on Facebook)

L – Can time hurry the hell up?

C – **Stay away from any romantic movie, song...commercial. Exercise a ton and balance that with wine but not too much to cause the shame of a drunk dial.**

L – I am really bad at staying away from the tragic romance stuff. REALLY BAD.

E – Then embrace it: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mEu8DrO9PbY>

R – **Fight a crocodile. If you survive, you'll be too pumped from fighting a crocodile to be hung up on anything else.**

L – brb going to Karajini

K – Write all the feelings out in a journal and/or write a letter to **them but don't send it (just burn it or rip it up)**. Great for closure!

K - Also helps to include a few things I'm grateful for & lessons learned. Sometimes I think about what was good that I want in a future relationship, and what was crappy that I don't want in a future relationship

L - Good golly I've been writing about it a lot but I feel really embarrassed about it. I don't think they were really cut up at all so it feels like such wank to be pining for them one sided. Focusing on those positive things you mention sounds like a really good idea. You are always so helpful and positive girl xx

K - nothing wrong with having feelings about it 😊 if you've been writing a lot maybe some physical would help? I took up pole dancing classes and danced along to outrageous amounts of Beyoncé DVDs for a while before I felt better! Worked in the end though 😊 hope you find something that helps you heal xx

A - I like the grateful list... I did that in a break up - things I'd learnt, the honest reasons why it didn't/wouldn't work. Took emotional out and reminded me think rationally xx

M - I used to get on edating and have a go at it

Me - Jump on tinder for a casual shag!

L - I totally read this as "get on eating", which yes. Step one. I'm not really into the casual stuff.

M - I'm sorry, I didn't mean it had to lead to sex. I mean put yourself out there.

Me - No the casual was at me. Which is totally fine, it isn't for everyone.

M - (it's for me)

Aa - Whiskey, Tom Waits, Michael Mann films.

L - Fuck that's a depressing night

Aa - Tom Waits often sings about bad men and losers, so there is always someone worse off than. Mann often portrays his male leads as intelligent and tough, so it's inspiring.

S - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=S0qrinhNnOM>

AI - It sounds terrible and dumb, but this book reallllly helped me get over my big bad break up pre [Husband]. https://www.goodreads.com/book/show/33353.It_s_Called_a_Breakup_Because_It_s_Broken

L - I've actually totally read this book!

AI - I just found it helpful to have "someone" tell me over and over again NO! Do not contact! NO! *slaps hand* 😊 I hope you can find some good strategies to help. As lame as it sounds, maybe a new hobby? Just to keep you busy 😊 all the best!! X

L - Thanks AI! I'm busy as shit and it's always when trying to go to sleep or listening to music, or seeing something they like that brings it all up again. Erg x

X - Delete them on every form of social media, keep busy and exercise 🧘 Crying yourself to sleep seems to help too. Apparently.

Me - I got dumped in a brutal fashion the other week by someone I really cared about. I'm an expert. Delete them from EVERYTHING. Insta, Facebook, their phone number. Otherwise you'll get drunk and message them saying you miss them. Which I did. Cuddle up with your friends, pets, or stuffed animals. Cry as much as possible. Take bubble baths, eat delicious food, exercise. Read a lot of feminist literature. Remember how strong you are.

M - You'll be ok. As lame as it sounds, its just time. Its been a month for me and I barely think about them now.

B - I still haven't. I just tell Myself over and over again, the children were suffering and he was no good for me. It's not something that you can compare with, because each situation is different. I've moved on with someone else which has been the best outcome for all of us. I'm just waiting for that one day he just rocks up and starts begging. Bringing feelings up again etc etc. theres no time limit, you heal at your pace x

Ay - I still haven't gotten over it. And it's killing me. Casual intoxication and sex is keeping my head above water. People will tell you that time is all it takes. Keep busy, don't think about it. It's bullshit. Time doesn't make you feel better. I've found that after 10 months, I'm not getting better, I'm getting used to it. The sad reality is that you probably won't, you'll just find a way to live with it. It's like someone has died. How do you get over someone when they meant that much to you?

L - Thank you, Dark Side of the Moon, for saying exactly as my heart feared. God damn.

Ay - I just found myself waiting for it to get better. Throwing myself into things and people to distract myself. Taking everyone's advice and getting nowhere. The best you can work towards is that it doesn't consume you like it has me.

L - Surely you have some hope things will get better?

Ay - I did, for a long time, but not so much any more. But I don't know how much your situation differs from mine.

Me – **Don't listen to Ay!** I love you dude, but I'm not letting L turn into cynical bastards like us. THINGS GET BETTER. A IS AN ANOMALY. (Once again, soz dude).

Mi - To add a bit of hope I had 2 years (probably somewhat longer) very similar to what Ay described and I actively tried to get 'out of the rut' but failed many times... I'd already given up that I'd ever heal or love again and then met my now husband. I didn't really want him or anything like a relationship at the start and the trust slowly began to grow as did the love. Long life Love works in mysterious ways and isn't always that close to infatuation at all or logical. Hold in there guys... Yes it's hard but yes it can get easier with a lot of work and not completely shutting all your heart facets.

L - HEART FACETS REMAIN OPEN!

N - Do things that make you happy. Hang out with friends, join a class, cook a fancy dinner for yourself, exercise. Reengage with all the things you haven't had time with.. happiness will follow in time, its natural to grieve but don't let it dictate your actions.

G - Beyoncé and lots of it <https://m.youtube.com/watch?v=ZIszesDaK9U>

K - Yass!! I wholeheartedly second this!!!

Sa - When my last relationship failed, I relied on plenty of things to make me forget about the situation. Namely, it was exercise and songwriting that were key things.

J - Change your sheets and go for a swim in the ocean. And I also up my therapist sessions. Meditate and be kind to your self. Sit in the sun and read a lot. Xxx know that you are loved

Si - Everything that has a beginning has an ending, when you make your peace with that all will work out well. I just smile because it happened. Its just another chance for me to practice gratitude and be

thankful for all the good and all the bad because at the end of the day, all things must pass, a lot of the time it's to make room for something better

Er - The biggest problem is the fact you defined yourself and your identity, and gained a core part of self esteem, by being with the ex or in a relationship. Took a couple of previous relationships before I caught on that this was happening. Cliché as it may sound, one needs to fall in love with oneself, genuinely. Define yourself from the moment of death backwards, the eulogy that you'd like to be yours, it's not that specific person with whom it ended that matters there, but that you had someone to love and, depending on your inclinations, having had a family with and so on. But you don't just necessarily care about that alone, there's the love from friends and family that matters too, perhaps you want to be remembered for a major contribution to society, or simply as someone who lived by certain principles (a la Frank Sinatra's 'I did it my way')... thinking about this gives you perspective, and in the noise and whirlwind of life gives you a deeper sense of purpose, knowing your "why". That, and meditating on your insignificance in the context of the universe, tends to give perspective 😊 I find before sleeping to have a winding down "ritual" / routine helps too, usually a meditative practice focusing on gratitude for what I am now, will become (direction in life) and have / appreciate in life is really grounding. Hope this helps you, wishing you love and joy in life

R - Time heals all wounds. You will always be able to remember what you went through, but the pain, like any other pain, fades to a point where it will no longer affect your future process. Xxx

Sa - Friends, hobbies, helping others, meeting new people. IMO life is a lot easier if you derive a good chunk of happiness and validation from the things *you* do, not all from another person. That's what Er is getting at too I think.

Ka - Buy a puppy. Or like, steal someone's and smother it with love

Ad - The short and easy answer is time. The longer more complicated answer: You won't completely. If the relationship is big enough to be important in the moment, it's not going to stop being important when it's over. I think everyone, happy or sad, single or coupled, will always have relationships and friendships and family situations that they look back on with regret or wistfulness or a very particular kind of sadness. What can change though, is your perspective. You can view the presence/absence of this person, or your relationship with them, as being the defining factor in your life. "I can only be happy with them." "I can never be complete without them. Or you can focus your time and energy on the other relationships you have. Or on the things you like about yourself. Or on building new things in your life to bring you joy and happiness. You can focus on creating and traveling and learning and giving and being around people you appreciate. And eventually, with a full enough life - and I mean a full one, not a busy one, very important distinction - with a full life, it's impossible for that person, or that relationship to be the defining factor. Which is why people say "give it time". Cause it takes time to do the things you need to do. And because time will naturally bring some of the things that fill the gap. But you can also spend that time hiding away or dwelling on the past or replaying what happened or fighting the progress, accidentally or intentionally. Because moving forward can feel like giving up when the relationship was so important. But it isn't. You have to give it time. And you have to use that time well. It sucks, it's hard, but it's not impossible. And it's not more than you can handle. Especially if you keeping leaning on friends like you are right now.

L - I think you hit the nail on the head with the comment about feeling like giving up as if the relationship isn't important. I guess the tricky thing is that I do think the relationship was important, but I know it wasn't to this other person and that hurts. It seems even more obvious that moving on is needed, so that's what I am trying to do, but time she is a slow one. Thanks for your thoughts and perspective APS xx

C - ^ I know exactly what you mean L about the - mismatch? - in feelings about the relationship, and I think that's a big part of it. When G and I broke up the first time I was a total wreck for ages, because I felt like I was so sad, and he just moved on like nothing had happened. That, and I didn't really understand why the whole thing had gone down like it did. It's so damn hard to try to move on from something when you can't make peace with why it all happened in the first place, AND when that feeling creeps in of worrying that you completely misunderstood

things. Eventually how I got past it last time was *time* (gah! stupid time!), doing things I liked with people I loved (eventually, when I stopped being a zombie person), and one day I realised it actually didn't matter if I didn't know why it happened - it just had, and it was much kinder to me to just let it go than to try to process or figure it out anymore. But that feeling takes a while to sneak up on you! This time, G and I have worked so damn hard to fix things, and articulated it so clearly, that it kind of makes sense that it ended, and it's much easier to pick myself up and move on, even though the relationship itself was much 'bigger' and more important this time around. Being a grown up, and dealing with love-stuff, is hard and weird 🤔

L - So hard and weird! I don't want to adult. Please don't make me. Also: "didn't matter why it ended, it just did" yes! This is so important to remember every day. Hope that you are healing too. Thank you for the thoughts and love! Right back at you! Xxx

H - Travel 🤪 nothing kicks reality in the butt better than taking yourself out of your comfort zone, going somewhere foreign and making the most amazing friends xx

Ri – Something I've noticed in breakups is that you're often left grieving for your lost future together. The imagined dates, conversations & life that has suddenly been torn away. If you try to look through that fantasy, you can better see the reality. The imagined loss is probably greater than the real one, however hard it seems. Also the time thing. It does wonders 😊

Sf - In my experience, I've only ever had the room to move on from someone once I have cut all contact and gone cold turkey from messaging, talking and even stopping myself each time I thought about them. It's extremely hard, but I've had relationships in the past that were like an addiction, and pining just prolonged the pain. I was miserable for a long time, before one day I found I had moved on quite far.

L - I know that you are right, that cutting all ties is the way to move on, but I feel bad about doing that. As if, somehow I'm being petty "letting my feelings" get in the way...of something? I know that you have to look after yourself and that often means just thinking about your feelings first etc.

Bo - It's looking after them too. If you explain it's for 6 months or a time period you can touch base again then and they know it's just a coping strategy.

Sf – L, yeah I know. I just found that after a period of time, keeping the contact going wasn't serving me any more. It was costing me more than I was getting back from it. But every situation is different. X

L – Thanks for your perspectives and thoughts everyone. It means a lot. Not only does it help me, but several friends have messaged saying it's helped them. It's bizarre how we all go through this and somehow just keep on keeping on. That's hopeful. Thanks. Also, how good are friends? The fucking best, that's how good. ❤️

Bo - A friend of mine upset about their breakup said, until you find the person it works with your 'failure' rate in relationships is 100% kind of depressing, but nailed how I felt at one point. But each one is completely different and how you cope will be too. The only thing I would recommend would be cutting them off completely. Don't try to be friends or keep in touch. It's too soon. If you're able to be friends you'll reconnect on much better terms. If not that's ok too. There's no rules for this stuff.

Bo - Also let yourself feel all the sadness. Don't feel like you have to 'put on a brace face', be honest with people who ask 'how are you' - not every conversation has to be a heart to heart but sometimes saying 'not great, but that's ok' will give you a spark of genuine understanding from someone. Emotional wounds need to heal, just like physical ones, sometimes they get worse before they get better - or need dedicated care. If it's big one you'll be left with a scar or be reminded in some form of it forever.

L - It is helpful to be told that you don't have to be friends but I always think that to be a good person, I should put my feelings aside to be friends. I'm sure that's pretty damaging in some situations.

Bo - Yeah I guess I'm coming from the angle that a friend does what's best for the other person too, and keeping contact with someone can bring up a lot of feelings unexpectedly for them (not just you).

So the option of least risk is no contact. Not forever, just for a time.

But it really depends on the two people. X

T - https://youtu.be/Wvt_K4LW29c watch this video and cry.

7. Showing our love

When you care about someone and want to show them that you love them and care for them, what are some things you do to show that? Tell me your lovely ideas! It doesn't need to be a romantic love.

M – Baking and Cooking for them

L - Awesome! I am terrible at cooking, so it would be a terrible showing of my love and care... "here is a cake i burnt for you! It's the thought that counts!"

N - Yes! Cooking for people you care about is the best. Sharing food rules. Also mixed tapes!

A - I have done that for you, C, and J. I am the romance king.

B - Letter in the mail

X - I'm a huge fan of writing letters to them. Although I do end them with "please don't mention this to me or I'll roll into a ball of awkward emotion"

X - happy to write nice stuff, not so comfortable to say them haha

L – That's fair enough 😊

D - Be totally and completely uninhibited... ask them to dance, sing, scream and cry with you at the top of a mountain

L - There are many mountains here so I will get right onto it (them!)

D – Metaphorical mountain... easily substituted for living room 😊

L - "Local woman is arrested for screaming in her lounge room for hours every Monday"

A - If you are interested, check out the languages of love - people give and receive love in different way. ... and on the non-romance, it resonated more with my family who I could see speak a very different love language, and that helped xx

L – A, yes I love the love languages!

Le – I'm a love language advocate because I also use them to help managers have better relationships with their direct reports! But what's also interesting is that I started to realise people don't always give and receive in the same way even as individuals! Some people like to receive love one way but give it another way so you can't even assume that because they do "acts of service" to show love, they may still prefer to receive love as "physical touch"... some people thought they could figure out what the other person wanted by watching what

they did or the language they "spoke" and then surprising the other person by doing the same language and being sorely disappointed when it didn't have the intended effect. I always ask people what I can do or what they need, or sneak it into conversations like "what's the one thing that would make you happiest right now" and build a mental dossier to draw on later. #spotthepsychologist 😁 I also use trickery and deception! For example, about a month before her birthday I was looking in a window of a jewellery shop with my mum and I was pointing at things and going, "ooh I like those" (not "do you like those") and waiting to see her responses... result was my mum getting a pair of earrings that she had said "oh yeah those are lovely! I like those too!" She was super surprised but has now cottoned on to my methods

L - Haha such a psychologist. Mind tricks.

E - "You're a good egg"

S - Doing the shit jobs around the house so they don't have to. If I am honest it is usually [my husband] doing this for me than me doing it for him. But I do try!

Da - I let them play my games, even if I'm not close to a save point.

Sa - Send them stupid gifs on messenger that you know they will enjoy. Make them various jams, spreads etc and give it to them in cute jars with bows around the top. For women this is great coz we love sweets. Offer to give a hand or foot massage. Both genders love this.

So - The greatest gift we can give to people in our lives is our full attention.

L - But but like how do I wrap that?

Dm - Bit general - show gratitude. So many ways, I think, but yes words and actions - in person, on the phone, a message of some kind. I like the full attention idea above as well, a lot. It made me think some other on-topic ideas such as noticing / greeting them when they walk into a room - either with direct eye contact and a smile, and a greeting if appropriate, or even just a smile to yourself if you are occupied / in conversation already, because they've brightened your day.

J - Getting up well before sunrise to make them breakfast and a coffee before they go to work so they aren't so rushed in the morning. Then going back to sleep cause it's too early to be up and functioning at that time of day! Friends - baby sitting so they can go for a night out with their partner kid free.

8. Why did you choose this one?

What things do you (romantically) love about your partners or past partners that just does not exist in other people you could have partnered with? What is it about them that made you fall in love with them? What is it about them that separates them from others?

C – [my partner] is the most generous person I know. He is truly the most amazing human being to everyone. He treats people the way he wants to be treated and would give you his last dollar. I have always found that very attractive about him, he is his own person and he does what he thinks is right regardless of other opinions. A truly brave way to live your life. I always welcome the chance to talk about [my partner], it reminds me how lucky I am to be loved by him! I had a huge day at work today and even though he had a pretty crappy day also when I got home he was only thinking of me. He had lit every candle in the house, poured me a glass of red and his first words were "welcome home is there anything you need help with?" I often think being as selfless as him would be exhausting but doing stuff for others brings him genuine joy. He's pretty rare.

N – [my partner] is the most supportive man I've ever met. He calls me on my bullshit, takes care of me when I'm in need and spoils me just a bit to show me how much I mean to him. The fact that we

talk openly and honestly about everything has changed how I understand relationships!
Open/honestly is sexy, attractive and comforting and has led to really knowing someone !

K - Sense of humour for sure. Just a wicked sense of humour haha love her.

Ca - Finding someone as independent and busy as i am. No jealousy, no needy-ness, no sulking when im busy. Someone who is complete with out me but still feels i enrich their life.

L - So his independence is attractive to you?

Ca - Yeah i guess, someone who doesn't worry if you hit a busy point at work. He is there at the end of it asking if i want to go to dinner or watch a movie with some hair stroking. He doesn't get jelous of male friends and he never made me feel bad about disappearing to japan for nearly a month (most of which i shared a bed with another guy). Heaps of trust and heaps of independence. He is so comfortable with who he is, our relationship never suffers from him pushing insecurities on me or vice versa.

L - Cool. Sounds like a lot of trust and independence and self assuredness is the stuff of dreams for you! I'm glad you're happy 😊 sounds great ♡

Ca - He has never once told me what I can and can't do either. Or judged me for decisions I have made. Doesn't matter what I wear, eat, buy, do dream about, he just says he loves me or I look pretty or he likes my creativity

B - Smoking weed with him and then getting into a deep and meaning for conversation about eg politics, space time continuum. Just deep talks. being able to laugh with him and just be myself. Not having to pretend to be something else. Not having the fear that I'm an embarrassment, to be taken out in public with.

L - sounds like you feel very safe and accepted!

B - It took me awhile to find this kind of relationship. With trust and respect. But we have to try before we buy...

A- There's no point idealising your partner too much pressure. I can say that we share the same sick sense of humour that can be only apparent in finding the irony in suffering?

L - haha! But there are surely things that separate from others - ie. I guess you have found that you share the same sense of humour that you hadn't found in others before?

A - indeed, I stand by my rantage

E - You know, it comes down to the intention to love and be loved, that choice. That's all it is. I love how it was expressed in Chaos Theory: <https://youtu.be/yXVB2XPWqjw> - nuff said right there

L - I haven't watched the vid yet but will do! You have always had such a "love is simple" perspective that I've never understood.

E - Things are simple, or simply complex but nonetheless understandable. It's emotions and the way some people are that complicates it.

Cl - Feeling at ease, being able to be silly and laugh, working as a team (the last one seems to be the hardest, but when it happens it's amazing).

L - you felt these things over time and it became clear to you that you wanted those things in a romantic sense?

Cl - The ease and the laughs are essential asap from an eligible partner. Add some attraction and team work and it's magic

Em - not having to shave and open door poos. LOL

9. Why do they choose you?

What do you think makes you a good partner to your current or past special loves? Feel free to message me directly if you don't want to scream to the facebookiverse how great you are. Ps. We'll just assume you're all brilliant lovers so leave out how great you are in bed k?

Le - Share your food. And give good hugs.

L - So being generous and considerate and not selfish? Sounds good!

Anthony Brain - Understanding that the other person is completely free and not a possession to be controlled in any way.

S - Honesty, compromise, laughter, never going to bed angry, being weird, respecting difference of opinions and hobbies etc, supporting each other, being there even if theres nothing you can say 😞, not trying to 'fix' anything, sharing the load and saying when you feel somethings unfair! Fencing in your undies in summer, coffee at midday on sunday, laying in hammocks or waking up at 5am to feed a baby lamb before he goes to work and i go to uni. The little tiny moments that make it awesome and stressful and dumb but hilarious. 7 years together this year. Still no kids. Still no house. Just a coupla cats and a goat and a whole world of weird shit but its our weird shit!

C - I am (mostly) equal parts massively independent and massively thoughtful... Guess that boils down to my choices are to do things that are excellent for me but that never disregard his feelings or what he wants. I bring up problems when they happen (no surprises months down the track). I'm optimistic and affectionate and silly.

A - Subject I fail at almost completely, but I think communication is the key.

Sa - Being able to say "oh, I'd never thought of it that way before". Being able to listen and change your mind!

L - A scientific approach! Do you feel you can have that with most people or a select few? I feel like I'm good at that most of the time but there are some people I'm very stubborn with.

Sa - I'm a bit of a people pleaser, so I tend to have fuzzy views on most topics until I know that I can disagree with them, you know? With a partner, I've found its more important to be able to think about things from their point of view, even if I don't agree. But it tends to be more real for me when I've built trust with someone over a long period.

T - **"The pleasure of your lover must become your own. But at the same time, you must also remain... selfish, because wanting someone so much that it feels the same as the need... to eat... or to breathe... this is where desire becomes love, I guess."**

L - This is wonderful! I've always wondered what others see as the difference between love/desire/friendship. Who said this?

T - Hernando on Netflix's hit original series Sense8. Lol

E - a bit of passion, creativity and silliness stirred with a love based on loyalty, reliability, trust and empathy.

A - Simple. Easy to follow instructions then.

L - Love is never simple but values to live by are! Sounds like you've got things going on E!

E - No it ain't easy... but these are just what i feel are good bits of me mixed with the values I think are key to a long-lasting relationship 😊

D - Listening. Without immediately jumping in with a response trying to solve the problem.

L - So important! I think it's hard to do this when we really don't want our loved ones to hurt. We think that we should just try and take away the cause of the hurt when really the loved ones just want to be heard and understood. So good!

Sm - As a general thing, you're in a good relationship when you're comfortable to completely be yourself in the presence of your partner and feel totally at ease with this

L - So does that mean that you're good at helping the other person feel at ease?

Sm - Depends entirely on the person

Cr – Consideration and compromise 😊

10. Holding onto old love

Do you keep old love letters? (from lovers past?) How do you feel about your decision to keep them or discard them?

A – I have kept mine. I feel too bad to throw them away, and it's kind of a nice reminder of better times - I think when you are older it will be a good way to remember your life! And some people never get love letters 😊

L - Yeah, it does feel weird to throw them away but it also feels weird to me to keep them if you're in another relationship. It is lovely to hold onto words that remind you how much you love you've had.

K - I think it makes current relationships stronger if we can share parts of our past that we both want to keep, and don't. To know where we came from, what has shaped us into the person we have become... it's just another little part of getting to know each other. It can be an opportunity to build trust, understanding and closeness. The key thing is being clear about context and time frames, where and why certain bits were/are important or made an impact. Clarifying the current situation and intents, and any relevant thoughts. Issues arise only if we feel we need to hide or otherwise control/manipulate others, and then not deal with the base motivations behind wanting to act without integrity. I have kept old emails... but I think I'd mostly feel ashamed if I read them again. I read through a few of them some years ago and have only just remembered that they were there after reading this post. I would never discard something I've kept to appease another person's ego or fears. I am however, open to discarding remnants of the past that I've outgrown (after loving, supportive discussion). Follow what you feel. If the love letters empower you and make you feel warm, I would fully support keeping them. I would hope your current lover(s) can understand and support this too, and choose to be a good friend to you.

Aa – At least you got some. Forever alone 😞

L - Thanks K. I think I am of the opinion that they are worth holding onto because they are lovely. I don't think I would discard something if someone told me to either as you can't erase someone's past - like you say, it has shaped who you are. I wondered what other people feel about it. Aww, Aa have you distributed any in your past or present? Maybe you could write some to yourself? Maybe you could ask for some from people 😊

Aa - Haha can't just contract people to do that haha, and i'm not writing them to myself. I don't love myself enough.

L - maybe you need to start right there then dude

E –Depends on the lover and relationship, from some exes I have discarded them, but some I have kept 😊

M - In One Way Or another they always Stay with us regardless of being Materially There Or not

C - I keep mine, you liked all your partners for one reason or another so why not treasure to good bits

Me - I always do. However, my two relationships have been amazing, and I'm still very close to them.

L - Testament to your relationship skills Me, to maintain friendships afterwards 😊

Me - One was a dude I was best friends with for years, then we dated for five years, and ended amicably because we realised we were better friends. We're still best friends. I was with the other for two years, and we split because he got offered a job in Japan. We talk at least once a week, and when he is back in Australia, he stays with me. Honestly, I'm just so lucky that they're such great people.

L - Well, I do think amazing people befriend other amazing people, so I don't think it's all luck.

11. Saying "I love you" and having it returned...or not

Friends, have you ever been the one to say "I love you" first? What happened? Have you ever been in a situation where you said it first and they weren't there yet? What happened? How did that feel? What about the opposite where they said it first and you weren't there yet?

J Usually I slipped up first. Usually went fine.

L - Did you decide that it was "safe" to say it? or was it just a matter that you felt it and it didn't matter so much if they didn't say it back at that point?

J - Felt it. Said it. Listened to myself with amusement and awe. And realised it was true.

L - You weren't sure it was true until you said it? You took a risk without knowing how it would go?

J - I said it, then evaluated. Being me is sometimes tricky.

M - I said it first. I was half asleep and just said it automatically. Then I was mortified. [my partner] kept asking me what was wrong and I refused to say, so it turns out he had assumed I'd farted. Then I was even more horrified that he'd thought I'd farted, so I had to tell him I love him.

L - haha that is amazing! I can see it on the cover of "That's Life!" magazine: "A FART BROUGHT US TOGETHER AND NOW WE'RE MARRIED"

M - Then he told me he loved me too about three weeks later when we were absolutely cooked at a party. He had ordered me an uber home, and said to the driver "drive safely with this one, I love her".

L - haha pretty indirect, but romance! How did you feel about saying it first and him saying only three weeks later? How did you feel in between those times? Did you feel comfortable being with him knowing you loved him, but that he hadn't expressed that in return?

M - It didn't phase me. It always happens at different time for everyone. I just didn't want to wait to tell him.

S - Have only been there twice - and both were mutual! Nothing too exciting/extravagant to report unfortunately!

L - Telling someone you love them is always exciting. Were you excited? Scared? Did you know they felt the same way, therefore no risk?

S – Oh yes of course! Very scared, but also I think i waited until i felt the time was right/all body language cues were there that they would say it back 😊

L – S how did you know it was right! I have been wrong in the past haha.

S - Both of mine were really strong friendships prior - so it meant that we already had a long-standing understanding of each other prior... so I suppose that made it a little easier for me to be sure

A - I don't recall when or how it happened or if I was first. It was so very long ago... I'm pretty affectionate and doting though so I think you'd know if I was super keen on you, regardless of those three little words.

L - I wear my heart on my sleeve too. I think people can tell when I am there with them, but I think saying it is a big thing most of the time.

X - Have said it first once and didn't go well! Thought it was mutual but turns out it only made her realise she didn't feel the same at that moment. As much as I said there was no rush, it did make things awkward and ultimately broke up a few weeks later

L - yeah ❤️ That's so tough. I really admire those people who are able to say that they love someone with the risk that it might not come back. Its so strong. Daring Greatly! I once said to a really great friend of mine that I was scared that someone I loved might break up with me after I told them I loved them and she said "well, that would be the most perfect thing for them to do". Which sounds weird, but I totally believe. If they aren't into you, then them expressing that, is the best (and kindest to you) thing they can do.

X - **you've** gotta be honest and if you do love them, then they deserve to know! It's a risk that doesn't always pay off!

L - How do you gauge that?

X - not entirely sure! Imagine the nerves of proposing to someone though, wow!! Not that I've done that, but just imagine haha

Si - Someone misheard me and said "I love you, too" while lazing around on maybe a 4th or 5th date. It was a nice date - bit of a dilemma whether to correct what she'd heard though. Ha To be fair English wasn't her first language, so it didn't seem like a big deal. You know how saying I love you in a different language feels less impactful? I figured it was more abstracted for her saying it in English, also with cultural differences.

L - 4th or 5th date!! Yeah, maybe the cultural differences mean that it's not actually that big a deal. I also think that it means a lot of different things to people. I like to think I love people very deeply and want to tell them a lot, but don't think that means that the word has less meaning, but I also understand what people mean when they say that people say it so much it loses it's meaning. What happened after this? Did you guys talk about it? ie. what it means to you to say "I love you"?

Si - I just corrected her with what I actually said, and moved on as if it didn't happen. So na we didn't talk about it, and it didn't seem to hinder our night. Lasted maybe a few more dates, not because of that incident though.

Le - She said it first... I was not there..AT ALL. Kinda freaked out, hugged her tightly..speechless. Took me 2months more before I said it.

L - Woah! Was she ok with you not saying it?

Le - Yeah..sort of - she didnt expect me to....but neither did she expect it to take me that long.

L - She didn't expect you to say it back at all? Or you mean not immediately after you said it?

Le - She knew it was early to say it when she said it.

And I was speechless when she did...and she knew it would take me a while before I would say it back..

Sa - Well I cried and told him I loved him and he said I'd 'never get into (his) heart'. So that sucked. But then time went on and he changed his mind and now we're married and having a baby. I've never been that embarrassed to tell people how I feel, once we've had the initial connection.

L - Whaaaaat! How did you push through that?

Sa - Well, we were housemates so I didn't have to really think about when I was going to see him next. I just sort of hung around! We didn't stop hanging out and just over time got closer and closer until he decided to make the jump, so to speak. I was casually dating other people at the time as well, even though I really felt he was the one I really wanted to be with. So I guessed that helped to keep my mind off it all.

L - omg! That's such an amazing story. So, what was the deal with him thinking initially that you'd never get his heart? He just didn't think you'd work as a couple?

Sa - I know he'd been single for a long time and (he's quite a bit older than me) had resigned himself to bachelorhood. So I think he needed time to come around to the idea of getting vulnerable again. But you know, I've never really asked him!

T - I said it first, but I know that he had wanted to say it for at least 3 weeks before I did. Me saying it was kind of letting him off that pressure.

L - ❤️ Did you know that he wanted to say it for those three weeks or did you sort of just take a risk to say it without knowing if he was on the same page? Or did you know and were just waiting for when you felt it was right? What made you feel like it was the right time for you?

T - nah he totally wanted to say it. He went from "I like you" to "I ...<pause>...really like you"

L - haha what a sweetie! And you were like "yeah, babe, I know. You like, love me and shit. Just say it"

T - I think I kinda said it in the moment. I still think I said it too early but that can't be changed now.

L - why do you think you said it too early?

T - It opened the flood gates of lovey messages and stuff. I'm not really that sort of guy. Not in a cold way, but yeah.

L - The flood gates! You must have really meant it if you don't normally say it 😊

T - lol. Like I do love him, but I don't lose myself like a 14 yo girl around Justin Bieber either

B - I said it while I thought he was asleep. He wasn't. He thought it was cute. He loves me now lol

L - haha, this seems like a very common plan! Sneaky "I love you" while you're sleeping haha. I don't think I have ever tried to do that. How long after you said it, did he say it?

B Well he didn't actually say anything then. but out of habit on the phone, at ending a phone call I said it and I freaked out internally, then he said it back and I was screaming!!!! inside, not at him. lol

I think it was like 1 month into our relationship. We'd only known each other for 2 months total. He'd already started pretty much living at mine. It moved so quickly, but it felt right so I went with it. I was terrified, because he was so young and I'd just left a relationship, so I didn't expect shitty feelings to flow in.

L - haha screaming. "I love you". "EE...""Ah, B are you OK?" "EE...""...Well, OK." "EE"

B - He's a beautiful soul, he puts up with a lot hahaha

12. What next?

I don't know man. What do you want to know? What would happen if you asked the people around you? They might be more willing to share their thoughts about it than you realise. They'll probably have some reeeeeeally interesting thoughts and experiences too.

If you're really up for it, leave me a comment [here](#) and perhaps I can interview you.