

Southern Weddings
FRUITFUL SUMMER

LETTING GO OF PERFECT

dating well matters!

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TO OUR DEAR DATING READERS

You may think that as a wedding magazine, our top priority is getting a ring on your finger, our issue in your hands, and your pretty self down the aisle ASAP. Maybe you even keep it a secret from your boyfriend that you've flipped through a copy or two of SW so that he doesn't jump to conclusions. But here's the thing, and for the love of sweet tea, please hear us loud and clear: **DATING WELL MATTERS**. Your relationship is not a race. **YOUR STORY BEGINS NOW** — not when you get married, or even when you get engaged. Right now.

This week, you'll hear from the two gals in our office who are in dating relationships. Especially working at a wedding magazine, they've heard it all, but they do a great job navigating those pressures and embracing the stage they're in with their respective beaus. You'll also learn how to identify your "couple superpower," start a new conversation, and create a list of adventures to go on together. Last but not least, we pulled together 20 date ideas that we hope will bring out imperfections (really y'all, who's perfect at mini golf?) and give you the opportunity to face them head on and make sweeter memories because of them.

We're so glad you're reading! Your story has already begun, and we can't wait to hear all about it.

Love,

Je *emily* *nicole* *Marissa*
Kristin *Lisa* *Amber* *Jess*



Got your Perfectly Peachy Tea ready? Make a glass and sip along with us as we chat about letting go of perfect while dating!

**FIND THE
RECIPE HERE!**

STAY AWHILE! Chat with us on any of our accounts.



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how to

LET GO OF PERFECT AND

DATE WELL



Hey y'all! We're so excited to weigh in on this week's Fruitful Summer Guide to dating imperfectly. We're both passionate about dating well and living life richly, whether you know a wedding is in your future or not!

xo, Nicole and Jess

LET GO OF THE "PERFECT BOYFRIEND"

Remember that list of "50 qualities I want in my future husband" that you made in the eighth grade? Ditch it! Once you let go of the ideas you had about what your significant other should act or be like, you get to fall in love with the features and traits you never knew you wanted or needed in a person. You'd be surprised what qualities fall off your "must have" list, and what qualities your partner has that will get added on.

The list you should follow? The one below, consisting of three essential questions you should ask yourself in a relationship. There's no one thing that makes a relationship successful or a boyfriend a perfect match, but if you feel as safe, valued, and happy as you should, you should be able to answer yes to all the questions below.



**DOES MY SIGNIFICANT OTHER
RESPECT ME? DO I RESPECT THEM?**

**DO I HAVE FUN WITH MY
SIGNIFICANT OTHER? DO I ENJOY
SPENDING TIME WITH THEM?**

**DOES MY SIGNIFICANT OTHER
MAKE ME FEEL CONFIDENT AND
COMFORTABLE BEING MYSELF?**

FIND YOUR COUPLE SUPERPOWER

The most genuine and honest relationships are built off a foundation based on two unique people. That means no two relationships are going to be alike—and they shouldn't be! We've often felt the most insecure about our relationships when we've mistakenly compared ourselves to other couples' Instagram selfies, Facebook statuses, and declarations of love. But those social artifacts from other couples' lives don't hold a match next to what makes your relationship special!

Whether it's an uncanny ability to say the same joke at the same time, a kick-butt brunch you make together, or anything else that makes you feel like you're two peas in a pod, name that and embrace it!

The next time you find yourself comparing your relationship to someone else's remember—no one's got y'all beat in your superpower!



ENGAGED OR MARRIED?

Even if you know you're with the right person, or have been for years, celebrate those things that make your relationship special! Use the next page to write down your superpower.

SAY IT PROUD, Y'ALL!

Once you decide on your superpower, declare it on this fancy certificate below. Cut it out and stick on your fridge for extra encouragement to keep being the amazing couple you are!



ARE REALLY, REALLY, REALLY GOOD AT

.....

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A "happy happy" in Logan's family is a just-because gift to "make you happy because you make me happy!" Since being introduced to the concept, Logan and I have exercised our superpower by sending unexpected gifts to celebrate life's less noticed efforts.



Taylor and I are both food lovers, and he thinks our superpower is having the same craving at the same time, and having eerily similar thoughts on what ingredients should be in our next concoction. It makes our time cooking together really fun, and our date nights exciting!

START A CONVERSATION!

Great relationships start with great conversations! Try cutting these questions into strips and pulling them out during date nights to learn more about each other.

WHAT IS SOMETHING YOU ADMIRE MOST
ABOUT YOUR PARENTS' RELATIONSHIP?

WHAT WAS A CHILDHOOD DREAM OF YOURS?

WHAT IS YOUR FAVORITE THING TO ORDER
FROM THE ICE CREAM TRUCK?

WHAT IS SOMETHING YOU'D LIKE TO ACCOMPLISH IN FIVE YEARS?

WHAT DOES YOUR IDEAL DATE NIGHT LOOK LIKE?

WHAT IS YOUR FAVORITE THING ABOUT THE CITY YOU LIVE IN?

MAKE YOUR OWN TIMELINE

CAN WE JUST SAY IT? Feeling pressured to "take the next step" makes us feel as sour as a lemon.

Dating well means that your time has value. It means that you believe that what you do in your relationship today matters—the habits you develop, the traditions you start, and the principles you keep will all inform and inspire you as your relationship progresses. We firmly believe this time is precious, and dating is not a race down the aisle!

Taking time to get to know yourself, your significant other, and both of your needs is incredibly important. Dating well means that even before you're engaged or married, you're both living your lives in a way that most enriches it—giving you a deep well to draw from when you do start creating a life with your significant other.

It's easier said than done, but we encourage you to fight the urge to compare where you are to where your friends are. The more you embrace the timing that is right for you specifically, the stronger your relationship will be...and the more prepared and equipped you'll be for marriage someday, should you choose to move forward in that way.

WHAT'S NEXT FOR YOU TWO?




Use the following page to determine your own goals and things you want to do as a couple. Who says getting engaged has to be the next big thing you'll do? Put anything on this list, like new adventures and new experiences.

ENGAGED OR MARRIED?

You can do this, too! Use the printable on the next page to write down new things you'd like to do together.



things we
want to do
together





20 FUN DATE IDEAS

GO MINI
GOLFING

TRY YOUR
HAND AT A
NEW RECIPE
TOGETHER

GO TO A
DANCE
CLASS

GO TO AN
ARCADE

GO TO A
RESTAURANT
WITH A CUISINE
YOU'VE NEVER
TRIED BEFORE

GATHER SOME
FRIENDS FOR
A GAME OF
KICKBALL

DO A
YOGA DVD
TOGETHER

PLAY A NEW
BOARD
GAME

HEAD TO THE
BEACH OR AN
OVERLOOK FOR
THE SUNRISE,
NO MAKEUP
ALLOWED

TACKLE A HOME
IMPROVEMENT
PROJECT

VOLUNTEER
TOGETHER

RUN A 5K
TOGETHER

HAVE A
DANCE
PARTY

TRY A REALLY
MESSY
FOOD (RIBS,
ANYONE?)

TRY YOUR
LUCK AT A
CHURCH OR
VFW BINGO
NIGHT

SING KARAOKE
(OR OUR
FAVORITE,
TRY CARPOOL
KARAOKE!)

SING ALONG
TO YOUR
FAVORITES
ON LIP DUB

INVITE A
COUPLE YOU'RE
JUST GETTING
TO KNOW OVER
FOR DINNER

DRAW WITH
CHALK

MAKE
PIZZA

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next week:

EMBRACING AWKWARD WHILE

**PLANNING
YOUR
WEDDING**

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