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Information

Dating when we older

You don't have to be dating in midlife to know that dating in your 20s was a whole lot easier and more fun. We all know people who are divorced, widowed or never married and we've all heard their common lament: It's hard to find an interesting date when you are no longer young.

There are many reasons, it could be 'baggage', the range of experiences both good and bad that accumulate over the course of a person's lifetime which affect a person's reactions to people and circumstances. The things you have experienced in relationships and in your life.

It is even difficult to make new friends as we get old never mind a serious relationship. This is true in life, and in science, where relationship research tends to focus on couples and families.

Friendships are unique relationships because unlike family relationships, we choose to enter into them. And unlike other voluntary bonds, like marriages and romantic relationships, they lack a formal structure. You wouldn't go months without speaking to or seeing your significant other (hopefully), but you might go that long without contacting a friend.

As people enter middle age, they tend to have more demands on their time, many of them more pressing than friendship. After all, it's easier to put off catching up with a friend than it is to skip a family event or an important business trip.

As they move through life, people make and keep friends in different ways. Some are independent, they make friends wherever they go, and may have more friendly acquaintances than deep friendships. Others are discerning, meaning they have a few best friends they stay close with over the years, but the deep investment means that the loss of one of those friends would be devastating. The most flexible are the acquisitive—people who stay in touch with old friends, but continue to make new ones as they move through the world.



What we appreciate—and need—in a potential mate changes as we get older.



You begin to have a much greater appreciation of someone's depth. In your late teens and early 20's, there is a lot of emphasis on going out and having a good time. University - focus on is getting through their week and having some fun along the way.

As we get older we begin to realize the importance of having someone who complements us accordingly. Someone who we can build a real, deep, emotional connection with. The desire to find someone we can go out and have a good time with

You have a much lower tolerance for nonsense.

Mind games, drama, whatever you want to call it—when we are in our earlier 20's I think a lot of us have a much greater tolerance for this kind of instability. Maybe it comes along with being a little less serious about life in general—which of course is replaced by real goals and ambitions as we get older. Goals and ambitions that we do not want side-tracked by somebody who will drag us down. We begin to recognize red flags much earlier on and know when to cut ties.

You are generally more comfortable being single.

When we are younger, everyone around us is hooking up with someone or dating someone or spending time with someone and there is some more pressure to be doing the same. I think as we get older, our focus shifts to building our own lives—working towards personal and professional accomplishments, and understanding the importance of being fulfilled *while we are single*. This allows us to raise our standards and only accept someone into our lives who will enhance it, not complicate it.

You are much more focused on what you want.

As an extension of the previous point, when you have a better grasp on who you are and what you want out of your life, you have a clearer focus on *who* you want to share it with. This, usually, only comes along with working on defining your own path first. This also makes it more and more difficult to find someone you are compatible with.

Someone's looks get moved down your priorities list.

Of course physical attraction will always be important in a relationship—but as we get older we realize it's not *the* most important thing. Far from it. This, obviously, is part of the deal when looking for a more serious relationship because we understand that a great smile and gym-fueled body will only hold your attention for so long. Now, you need the substance to go with the packaging.

You will begin to understand your own value.

Recognizing your own value is the first step to having a happy, healthy relationship. The most powerful relationship you will ever have is with yourself. If that one isn't healthy, none of your others will be.

As we get older, we start to understand what we deserve from a teammate and should stop making excuses for them when they don't hold up their end of the bargain. You are now strong and independent—so if they are not

going to bring value to your life or treat you as you deserve, you are in a much more secure position to walk away.

As we get older, our tolerance for games decreases in proportion to our desire to find something real, but what also increases is our comfort and happiness with ourselves even if we stay single for a while. We understand that a significant other is someone who fits into and enhances our life as we fit into and enhance theirs—they are not someone who we should revolve our days around or sacrifice our self-worth or independence for.

Perhaps the most important lesson we learn on our journey, though, is that it is always better to remain single and only accept the love we deserve, than it is to settle for negative relationships along the way.



**The most
important
relationship
in your life
is with
yourself.**

This newsletter has been issued by:

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Play Therapy * Counselling * Trauma Counselling

Please note that this information must not be used for diagnostic purposes. Please visit a medical professional for a correct diagnosis.