Single and Ready to Mingle? 5 ways to ensure you’re ready for love.

Ah, the holiday twinkle is in the air. But snow is not the only thing falling. If you are thinking of making a new years resolution to fall in love, turns out you’re not the only one. According to tons of online dating sites, the peak dating season is December and January with millions of messages sent and dates taking place. Just in time for cuffing season. The time during fall and winter where all we want to do is snuggle up next to Bae and binge watch our favorite Netflix movies. Don’t tell me I’m the only one that wants to find a dark chocolate adonis underneath my Christmas tree? Blame it on the cold weather and being stuck indoors, either way, I’m ready for love.

But before I let my fingers do the swiping, I sat down with Jennifer Wiggins a counselor with over 20 years of experience helping young adults navigate the hardships of relationships. Talking with Jennifer was like going to church, she read my entire life and got me all the way together. Hopefully, what she shared will speak to you too.
1. Ask yourself why you want to be in a relationship.

Our motives matter. Being able to name why you want to be in a relationship and why you think now is a good time will allow you to assess where you are mentally and emotionally. “Some people are in relationships because of loneliness,” Jennifer said. “They think that being in a relationship will change the way they feel, and that’s just not true.” The reality is that you can be in a relationship and still be lonely. Ask yourself, am I mentally ready? Am I emotionally ready? Jennifer said she sees a lot of young adults jump from relationship to relationship in order to sustain being with someone without doing the hard work of working on themselves. Just remember, you bring all that you are to your relationship, the good, the bad and the ugly. The hope is that we are working on the bad and the ugly.

2. Ask yourself what do you need from a partner.

Before you reference your list that includes everything from how tall he should be, how much money she should make or how many degrees they should have, ask yourself, what’s realistic? As Jennifer reminded me, lists can be dangerous because you’re essentially creating a person that doesn’t exist. Instead, ask yourself is what I included on my list something that I need for my own mental, emotional and spiritual well-being or am I just trying to impress my Insta followers? (Yes, finances are an important part of a relationship and may very well be on your list of needs - just make sure you’re bringing to the table what you’re asking to eat).

3. Ensure you can effectively communicate your needs, wants and boundaries.

There is nothing worse than dating someone who just doesn’t get you. But Jennifer questions, did you tell them how to get you? Knowing what you need, your values, and wants are just half the battle, the other half is effectively communicating those to your partner. Talk out with yourself or a friend what you need and want in a relationship that way when it’s time for you to actually do it with your partner, you’ve had practice. Another important factor to consider are your boundaries. What are your red flags and yellow flags? It’s important that you have boundaries in any relationship. In addition to naming your flags for yourself, be prepared to communicate them to your partner. It’s hard to expect someone’s actions to change when we haven’t told them how their actions make us feel. Provide context to your partner as to why those are flags for you can help them remember. According to Jennifer, the best time to let your partner know about your red and yellow flags is at the beginning of your relationship.

4. Know what a healthy relationship looks like to you.

In romantic relationships we don’t want to take the ‘I’ll know it when I see it’ approach. It’s important to have some idea of what a healthy relationship looks like to you because you could be carrying some unhealthy expectations. The challenge is being able to answer this without thinking about all of the #goals you’ve created because of social media. Knowing what a healthy relationship looks like helps you to also name what an unhealthy relationship looks like to you. In order to create a full picture, Jennifer encourages us to think about all of the adult romantic relationships you saw growing up and that are around you right now. Perhaps it’s our parents marriage or someone else you knew growing up, think about how those relationships impacted how you see love and marriage. “Sometimes we push so hard to avoid unhealthy relationships that we’ve seen growing up that we end up creating some of the same unhealthy patterns in our own relationship,” Jennifer said.

5. Be prepared to center yourself in your relationship.
Jennifer describes centering yourself as bringing all of who you are and what you need to a relationship. For some of us, that can be difficult to do. How many times have we seen someone get into a relationship and give up their job, stop hanging out with their friends, or completely move to another state just to meet the needs of their partner. Centering yourself in the relationship requires that decisions that are made and conversations that are had also include what you need to flourish and grow. Having a list of your needs and wants will remind you of what’s important to you and help ground conversations you have with your partner.

**Whitney Maddox** 2 days ago · 0 Likes

What check-ins have you had with yourself to ensure you’re ready to date or marry? Let’s talk!