

It Is Written

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5 Warning Signs in a Dating Relationship

by Rhodes Davis

Car manufacturers install warning lights to alert us when sensors are picking up unusual or dangerous signals from the car that indicate mechanical problems, failure, or potential danger. When dating there are also indicators that signal potential problems in relationships that the wise young person will look out for. You certainly do not want to marry someone who is demonstrating behaviors that will be worse in a lifetime committed relationship.

No/Little respect for others. The comedian Jerry Seinfeld wisely noted, “A person who is nice to you but not to the waiter is not a nice person.” A person who does not show respect for his family, your friends, or people that he perceives as inferior to himself, is displaying insecurity or arrogance. Neither of these characteristics is desirable in a long term relationship. Watch for this because the person is nice to you because they are trying to make a good impression. When they no longer feel the need to impress you, and especially if you accomplish something that makes them feel insecure, they will start disrespecting you in their speech and conduct. Until this person can build a confidence and contentment with who they are, they will belittle or criticize you, your family, your friends, and others in order to feel good about themselves. This does not lead to a happy life and strong relationship.

Irresponsible with money. If the person you are dating is living on credit and wastes money it will not get better when you are married. In fact, you will have to share the responsibility for the debt when you get married. This type of person, like the wasteful son of Luke 15, is fun to be with when they are spending the money. They are eating at great restaurants, going to fun places, have nice TVs and other electronic treasures, and are always well dressed. They have all the nice things until, like the wasteful son, the money runs out and hard times come leaving them struggling and depressed. On the other side, a person who is so cheap that they can't enjoy spending money responsibly can create problems in a marriage. Don't get trapped in enjoying the material pleasures with the person you date. You will be happier in the long run with someone who manages their money responsibly and spends wisely.

Anger Problems. *Poor temper control* is very important to discover while dating and manifests itself early. A person who is short-tempered or often angry has trouble controlling their emotions and often has deep seated problems dealing with difficulties of life. If you marry this person and things really get difficult, they will have a hard time responding properly and you will both suffer as a result. Ecclesiastes 7:9, Proverbs 19:19, and 22:24-25 teach us that anger is associated with foolishness—a lack of understanding about what life is really all about. Eventually, you may take the blame for everything going wrong in their life and you will become the target of their wrath.

Passive anger is harder to detect but often more damaging. This person will not tell you that they disagree with you but they will try to undermine you. They don't have the courage or self-esteem to voice their opinion so it appears that they will go along with your request; however, they will not do what they said they would and will often make excuses for why they didn't. They avoid confrontation but try to get their way by stalling, ignoring, complaining, begging, or whining. You will have a happier life with someone who will be honest about their feelings and desires than someone who seems to be agreeable but is hiding their anger.

Emphasizes the physical part of the relationship. A person who does not respect your “no” is not concerned about what is good for you but is focused on what they want. A person who is concerned about what you can do for them physically is viewing you as a service, not a person. Remember that if Jesus condemned “looking on someone to lust” (Matthew 5) as well as sexual immorality, sexual activities short of “going all the way” are still wrong outside of marriage. Often these physical activities become a substitute for true intimacy. If a couple are not developing as friends they will sometimes continue the physical pleasures but it ultimately

confuses and disrupts the relationship. God gave the physical pleasures of the relationship to the married couple to help draw them closer together when combined with the lifelong commitment and friendship. In any relationship, overemphasis on the physical generally indicates a problem in the emotional part of the relationship that is not being addressed.

If they are overly concerned about your appearance, they will become critical about any perceived thoughts. They will never be satisfied, since none of us are imperfect (and become less so as we age), they will become more critical about your appearance. Someone subject to such foolish criticism generally develops a poor self-image and may develop eating disorders or develop an inordinate amount of time on their appearance. A person who does not accept you as you are does not deserve to be in a relationship with you.

Little/No interest in spiritual things. If the person has little or no interest in spiritual things, it is not likely to change once you get married. My experience has been that the person may show enough interest (attend worship services, not complain about someone attending classes) before marriage but then will eventually quit acting interested. Sometimes, it is just an act to win the person, much like someone may act as if they like certain kind of movies or music to interest the person but then reverts back to their true likes and dislikes when they tire of pretending. Does the person respect holy things or do they make fun of them? Whatever you do, do not tell the person that you cannot marry them until they become a Christian. They might take the outward actions to convince you of their interest but, after you marry, will likely quit pretending. You want someone who is genuinely committed to God and wants to go to heaven so you can grow together spiritually. Having someone to study, pray, worship, and serve with is one of the greatest treasures one can have.

Dating provides a great opportunity to learn about another person. Use the time to develop the friendship and understanding of the person. Pray to God for wisdom and discernment in your relationship so that you find the person who will help you go to heaven. Don't rush the relationship and watch for the signs of strength and weakness that you will have to live with if you marry the person.

Post-Truth

by Doy Moyer

Oxford has chosen "post-truth" as the word of the year. It's a term that "describes a situation in which feelings trump facts," and indicates "relating to or denoting circumstances in which objective facts are less influential in shaping public opinion than appeals to emotion and personal belief." (Time). There is probably little difference between this and "postmodernism," which has the same effect. They also say that this word may be the "defining word of our time." I have little doubt this is... the truth.

In contrast, Christians are striving to live the truth in a post-truth era, recognizing that feelings need to be kept in check by truth. We need to realize how destructive the feeling-based decision-making process really is. When feelings win the day, trouble will follow.

Does this deny feelings? Not in the least. Feelings are part of who we are. But there is a difference between recognizing feelings for what they are and using those feelings to determine the reality for everything else.

Why? Because here is what we get when feelings rule the day in contrast to the wisdom of truth: "A fool's anger is known at once, But a prudent man conceals dishonor. He who speaks truth tells what is right, But a false witness, deceit. There is one who speaks rashly like the thrusts of a sword, But the tongue of the wise brings healing." (Prov. 12:16-18)