



FROM CASUAL TO COMMITTED

IN 4 POWERFUL STEPS

IN CONJUNCTION WITH



**Pre-Dating
Speed Dating**



W O R K B O O K

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ABOUT DANNI

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Danni started her career as a journalist before she ventured into all things love and relationships. She is an active member of the Family Therapy Association and has a Post Graduate degree in Relationship Counselling, a Diploma in Family Therapies and holds a Masters in Training and Development.

STEP 1

KNOW YOURSELF WELL



1. KNOW YOURSELF WELL

Always be true to you! You want someone to like you for who you are and not who they want you to be. Don't pretend you are someone you're not just to impress anyone. Eventually, you will have to revert back to your "real" self and that will definitely work against you.

So who are you? What are your interests and things you're passionate about?

EXERCISE

WHO ARE YOU?

free flow 20 things that you're really passionate about. You might passionately love something or passionately dislike something.

- | | |
|-----|-----|
| 1. | 11. |
| 2. | 12. |
| 3. | 13. |
| 4. | 14. |
| 5. | 15. |
| 6. | 16. |
| 7. | 17. |
| 8. | 18. |
| 9. | 19. |
| 10. | 20. |

2. FOCUS ON YOUR STRENGTHS

Boiled down to its simplicity, self-esteem simply means appreciating yourself for who you are – faults, and all. The difference between someone with a healthy or good self-esteem and someone who doesn't isn't ability, per se. It's simply acknowledgement of your strengths and weaknesses, and moving through the world safe in that knowledge.

Which brings me to the question I'm often asked – how can I increase my self-esteem? Here's how.

People with a good and healthy self-esteem are able to feel good about themselves for who they are, appreciate their own worth, and take pride in their abilities and accomplishments. They also acknowledge that while they're not perfect and have faults, those faults don't play an overwhelming or irrationally large role in their lives or their own self-image (how you see yourself). You really need to know your strengths.

EXERCISE

MAKE A STRENGTHS LIST

Write what you consider to be your top 10 strengths.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.
- 7.
- 8.
- 9.
- 10.

a. If you're having difficulty coming up with a whole 10, think about what others have said to you over the years. "You're an awesome listener!" "You're such an awesome mum." "You are so loyal, always there for people." "You have a great eye for detail." Even if you think the strength is too small to list, list it anyway. You may be surprised at how easy it is to come up with all 10 when you approach it from this perspective.

b. This is your Self-Esteem Inventory. And this is what I suggest becoming very familiar with. So you know your strengths VERY VERY well. Now circle your top 3 strengths and write down what they are and what's behind those.

TOP 3 STRENGTHS

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

3. HEALTHY SELF-TALK

What we say to ourselves on a regular basis becomes who we are and what we do.

So we need to change up anything self-destructive right now! It takes time to change negative self-talk but once we become aware of it, we can change it and then eventually we'll believe the positive self-talk and our whole disposition will change. So we need to start by changing our environment and what we say to ourselves.

I'm fat - becomes I'm curvy and gorgeous

I'm useless becomes I have great skills and I'm useful.

I challenge you to be able to look in the mirror and say to yourself on a daily basis:

♥ "I like you."

♥ "I respect you."

♥ "I support you."

You can change how you feel about yourself based on what goes on in your head.

So start becoming aware of any critical self-talk.

Change what's being said into something kind, as if you're helping a good friend.

EXERCISE

BETTER SELF-TALK

This exercise has to do with better self-talk. In order to change the direction of your self-talk, there are three powerful changes you can make right now.

1. What is one thing that you say to yourself on a daily basis that you're aware of, which is negative and often gets you down?

2. What can you change this to, every time you say it. For example, 'I'm fat and unattractive' NEEDS to be change to 'I have great curves and am gorgeous!'

Monitor your self-talk. Is it more positive or negative? Start questioning your self-talk by asking questions like:

- ♥ Is there actual evidence for what I'm thinking?
- ♥ Is there a more positive way of looking at this situation?
- ♥ Replace your negative thoughts with positive ones.

For example, if you think, "I always screw up," instead say to yourself, "I learn from every failure and become stronger." Say it a few times.

Note: changing your self-talk doesn't happen overnight. If you were to consistently monitor and counter your self-talk for three weeks, you would be well and truly on your way to changing your relationship with yourself.

Here is an example of how to challenge that critical inner voice:

"I'm aware of my critical voice and speak to myself kindly. I support myself like I'm supporting a friend."

Please look at this area and write down one step you can take toward speaking kindly to yourself. Write your action step into your action plan. Once completed, please use this action step daily.

4. HOW HEALTHY ARE YOUR BOUNDARIES?

If you have difficulty saying no, are bothered or pushed around by someone who's demanding, controlling, critical, pushy, or even smothering, it's your responsibility to speak up. People with healthy boundaries have developed a separate identity from others, while knowing how to be part of a relationship. This means they're not dependent upon others to nurture their personal and spiritual growth.

There are three different types of boundaries.

HEALTHY BOUNDARIES

These people are independent beings, yet they're close enough to be connected and have an impact on the lives of loved ones. In healthy relationships boundaries are flexible. They grow and change. They can be lowered to promote intimacy or extended to promote safety.

The characteristics of someone with healthy boundaries:

- ♥ You can say no or yes and you are okay if the answer is no.
- ♥ You have a strong sense of identity. You respect yourself.
- ♥ You know your own wants, needs, and feelings. You communicate them clearly in your relationship.
- ♥ You're responsible for your own happiness and fulfilment.
- ♥ You value your opinions and feelings as much as you do others.
- ♥ You know when the problem is yours and when it belongs to someone else.
- ♥ You don't tolerate abuse or disrespect.
- ♥ You're able to ask for help when you need it.

SOFT BOUNDARIES

A person with soft boundaries tries to merge with others in order to avoid the emptiness they feel when they're alone. They either get lost in their partner or expect their partner to become lost in them.

The characteristics of someone with soft boundaries:

- 📍 You can't say no, because you're afraid of rejection or abandonment.
- 📍 Your identity consists of who you think others want you to be. You're a chameleon.
- 📍 You tend to be either overly responsible and controlling or passive and dependent.
- 📍 You take on other's problems as your own.
- 📍 You share personal information too soon, before establishing mutual trust/sharing.
- 📍 You have a high tolerance for being mistreated.
- 📍 Your wants, needs, and feelings are secondary to those of others and are sometimes determined by others.

RIGID BOUNDARIES

This person is completely self-contained and rarely reaches out for an emotional connection. I like to call this person The Island, because they exist by themselves in a sea of emotion. What's important to note is this person can often feel emotional, but they might not know how to express how they feel, because they've learnt to be self-reliant.

Characteristics of someone with rigid boundaries:

- 📍 You tend to be less trusting.
- 📍 You don't reveal much about yourself.
- 📍 You don't let people in easily.
- 📍 Tend to have pretty specific rules about how people should act.
- 📍 If you think someone in your circle offends or violates you in some way, you're likely to cut them off complete.

EXERCISE

KNOW YOUR BOUNDARIES

The best way to state your boundaries is to state what you need.

For example; 'I can't right now because I have other things to take care of. However I might have time free in a month.'

Write 2 ways you can form better boundaries. Use specific examples from your life.

1.

2.



STEP 2

THE ATTACHMENT AHA!

THE ATTACHMENT AHA!

When we are little we often rely on a primary carer like a mum or dad to take care of us and make our world feel like a safe place. We cry and hopefully our needs are met, whereby our mum or day or primary carer comforts us. And then we feel safe to venture out into the world once again. However, if someone isn't there to make us feel safe, the world becomes a different place. We become anxious or closed off emotionally.

Everyone, whether he or she has never dated before or been married for 50 years, falls into one of three attachment styles: secure, anxious or avoidant.

About 56 percent of people in the world are secure. Around 20 percent are anxious. Twenty-three percent are avoidant, and the remaining 1 percent are a rare combination of anxious and avoidant.

Each of these attachment styles exists for a reason. This means you act the way you do in your romantic relationships for a specific reason.

None of these attachment styles are labelled "healthy" or "unhealthy." They're simply descriptions of the way you act in romantic relationships. They're not forms of judgment.

1. SECURE ATTACHMENT

Ok I'm going to take you through this. People with secure attachment styles typically feel comfortable with intimacy, and they are usually warm and loving. If you're secure, you're pretty straightforward. You don't play games, and you're not overly dramatic.

Securely attached adults tend to be more satisfied in their relationships. Children with a secure attachment see their parent as a secure base from which they can venture out and independently explore the world. A secure adult has a similar relationship with their romantic partner, feeling secure and connected, while allowing themselves and their partner to move freely.

Secure adults offer support when their partner feels distressed. They also go to their partner for comfort when they themselves feel troubled. Their relationship tends to be honest, open and equal, with both people feeling independent, yet loving toward each other.

EXERCISE

SECURE ATTACHMENT

List 3 people you know who you think is securely attached. What traits did they display?

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

2. ANXIOUS & AVOIDANT

If you're anxious, you withdraw during conflict, get jealous and worried easily, and may act busy when you're not.

Unlike securely attached couples, people with an anxious attachment tend to be desperate to form a fantasy bond. Instead of feeling real love or trust toward their partner, they often feel emotional hunger. They're frequently looking to their partner to rescue or complete them. Although they're seeking a sense of safety and security by clinging to their partner, they take actions that push their partner away.

AVOIDANT ATTACHMENT

If you're avoidant, you might feel like you're not ready to commit. You focus on small imperfections in your partner, and you notice when people try to infringe upon your independence.

People with avoidant attachment styles tend to think being in a relationship will "tie them down" while they pursue their goals. Even though each of these three attachment styles exist for a reason, they can still negatively affect your happiness if you're not able to identify them. They equate intimacy with loss of independence, and they constantly try to minimize closeness.

People with avoidant attachment have the tendency to emotionally distance themselves from their partner. They may seek isolation and feel "pseudo-independent," taking on the role of parenting themselves. They often come off as focused on themselves and may be overly attending to their creature comforts.

FEARFUL AVOIDANT ATTACHMENT

There is another form of attachment which is for a small minority of people. It's called fearful avoidant attachment. A person with a fearful avoidant attachment lives in an ambivalent state, in which they are afraid of being both too close to or too distant from others. They attempt to keep their feelings at bay but are unable to. They can't just avoid their anxiety or run away from their feelings. Instead, they are overwhelmed by their reactions and often experience emotional storms. They tend to be mixed up or unpredictable in their moods. They see their relationships from the working model that you need to go toward others to get your needs met, but if you get close to others, they will hurt you. In other words, the person they want to go to for safety is the same person they are frightened to be close to. As a result, they have no organized strategy for getting their needs met by others.

As adults, these individuals tend to find themselves in rocky or dramatic relationships, with many highs and lows. They often have fears of being abandoned but also struggle with being intimate. They may cling to their partner when they feel rejected, then feel trapped when they are close. Oftentimes, the timing seems to be off between them and their partner.

EXERCISE

ANXIOUS & AVOIDANT ATTACHMENT

List 2 celebrities with each style. What traits do they display?

- ---

- ---

3. WHAT'S YOUR STYLE?

The attachment style you developed as a child based on your relationship with a parent or early caretaker doesn't have to define your ways of relating to those you love in your adult life.

You can challenge your defences by choosing a partner with a secure attachment style, and work on developing yourself in that relationship. Therapy can also be helpful for changing maladaptive attachment patterns. By becoming aware of your attachment style, both you and your partner can challenge the insecurities and fears supported by your age-old working models and develop new styles of attachment for sustaining a satisfying, loving relationship.

EXERCISE

WHAT'S YOUR ATTACHMENT STYLE?

Click on the link to take the attachment quiz to find out more about your or your partner's attachment style.

<http://www.attachedthebook.com/compatibility-quiz/?step>

4. WHAT DOES THIS MEAN WHEN DATING?

For example, the person with a working model of anxious attachment feels that, in order to get close to someone and have your needs met, you need to be with your partner all the time and get reassurance. To support this perception of reality, they choose someone who is isolated and hard to connect with. The person with a working model of dismissive/avoidant attachment has the tendency to be distant, because their model is that the way to get your needs met is to act like you don't have any. He or she then chooses someone who is more possessive or overly demanding of attention.

In a sense, we set ourselves up by finding partners that confirm our models. If we grew up with an insecure attachment pattern, we may project or seek to duplicate similar patterns of relating as adults, even when these patterns hurt us and are not in our own self-interest.



STEP 3
THE HOOK

THE HOOK

First Impressions – we all know how important they are in life, in work and in love. It is thought that the first impression will mark you for the rest of the liaison you have with someone. Whether it's someone you met on the street, a love interest, or even a job interview, you need to put your best foot forward. That's a no brainer, right? Well, not for everyone.

1. APPEARANCE

Let's face it people are judged first and foremost by their appearance, regardless of what you might want to believe. How you look REALLY does matter. It's all about putting your best foot forward.

EXERCISE

APPEARANCE

When you look in the mirror, what immediate changes could you make to your appearance to emphasize your best assets?

2. BE CONFIDENT

You can only let in as much love from the outside as you feel on the inside. If you don't feel good about yourself, you will never truly believe that someone else can love you and you will constantly be on the lookout for the other shoe to drop, for the guy you care about to leave, thus validating the fact that you are unworthy of love.

Poor self-worth is what traps us in bad relationships, what sabotages new relationships, and what causes us to feel so devastated and broken when a relationship ends.

Self-esteem doesn't come from blowing kisses to your reflection in the mirror or repeating "I love myself" over and over. It takes time and it takes work and it isn't always easy. Everyone's path will be different, however, you can often fake it until you make it.

CALM YOURSELF RIGHT DOWN – AND THAT'S RIGHT DOWN

Before your date, take time out to relax and breathe deeply (remember that breathing out a fraction slower than you breathe in calms you down). Listen to your favourite music, something that centres you.

ASSUME THEY LIKE YOU

People with high self-esteem believe they are worthy of love and don't question how someone feels about them. They know that they are good, competent, and lovable and trust that the right person for them will see this. They don't attach their worth to what a guy thinks and, as a result, don't feel stressed and anxious when a guy's feelings are unclear. Instead, they assume he likes them and are able to be present in the relationship and enjoy it without being weighed down by fears and doubts.

SMILE!

It will disarm your date and relax them. And relax you too!

IF A RELATIONSHIP FALLS APART IT'S BECAUSE IT WASN'T RIGHT, NOT BECAUSE THEY DID SOMETHING WRONG.

Not everyone is a match and sometimes, two people are just incompatible. This doesn't make either of them flawed or bad – sometimes it's just not there. Confident women don't take it personally when a guy doesn't want a romantic relationship. They realize that it must not be the right match and they move on, with their sense of self firmly intact.

EXERCISE

BE CONFIDENT

What are 2 ways you can relax before meeting someone for a date?

1.

2.

What are 2 positive things you can say to yourself beforehand?

1.

2.

3. LISTEN TO UNDERSTAND

When on a first date, remember to do more listening than talking. Getting to know your date requires you to ask questions and then carefully listen to the answers. Questions such as, "What are your hobbies?" are appropriate. Questions such as, "When is the last time you had sex"? are not.

1. Stay present. The first thing you should do when someone starts talking is to put away anything that might distract you from his or her words. Stay focused. When the other person speaks, focus on what they are saying
2. Be curious (this will help you stay focussed)

4. BE PLAYFUL

You're main focus is being interested, asking loads of questions and throwing in a playful comment here and there. Then when he asks you a serious question your answer might be playful, however, then you might say 'no seriously this is what it meant to me...' and this is where you be vulnerable.

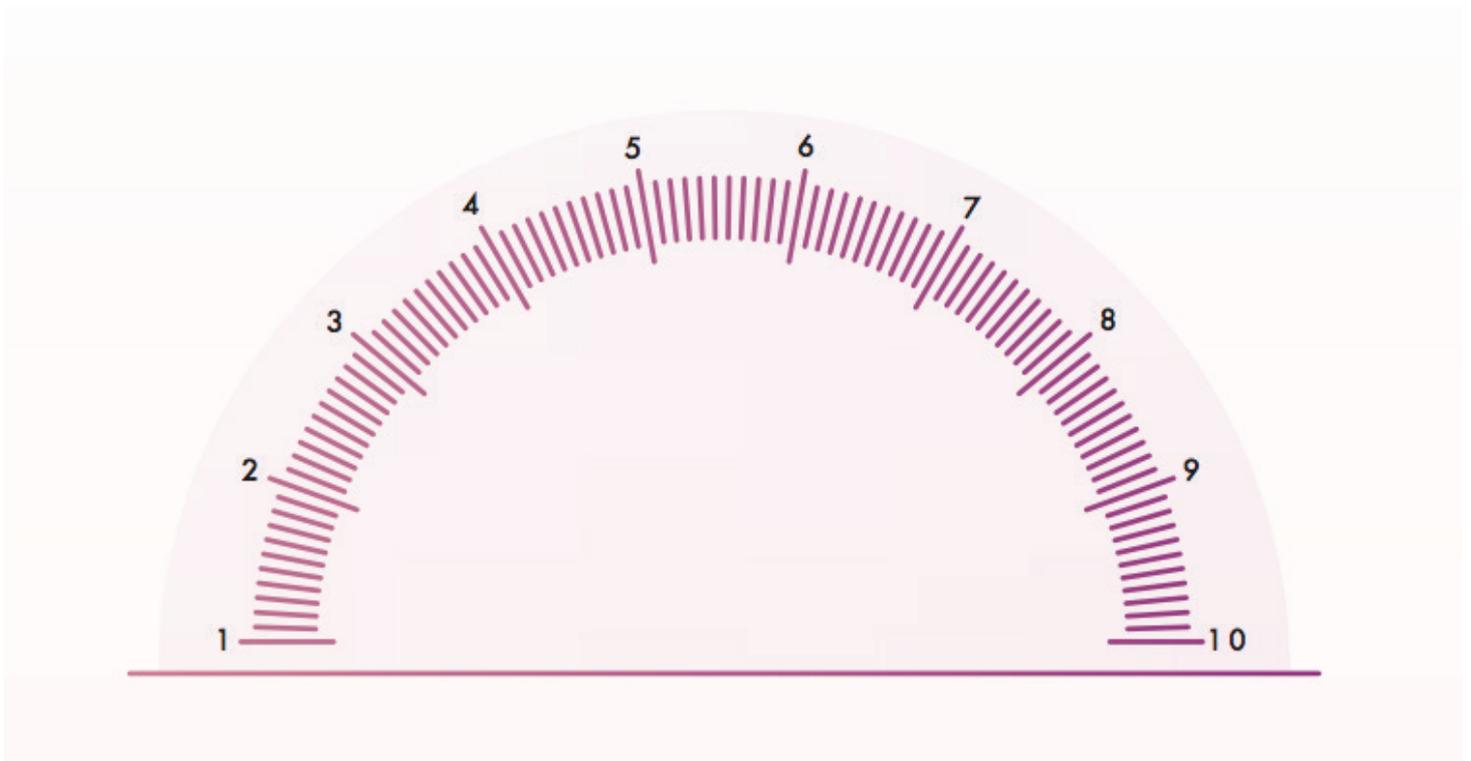
Steer the conversation away from topics like politics, work and relationships. Talk about traveling, exciting hobbies, funny stories and the like. You're not manipulating the conversation per se. You're just focusing on the happier aspects of each other's lives.

Try using a funny line you heard or tell your date a funny story. Either way, your chances of getting a laugh out of him is pretty high if he has a sense of humour. And let's face it – we all need someone who can see the lighter side of life. Because humour is something that will see you through so many challenges in a relationship. You NEED someone with a sense of humour.

EXERCISE

BE PLAYFUL

On a scale of 1 – 10, with 10 being very playful,
how playful are you?



How could you be more playful?

5. BE VULNERABLE

If you were on a job interview you wouldn't tell your prospective boss your weaknesses, but rather focus on your strengths in an open and honest way. This is the same with meeting someone. For example I told you earlier what I had learned about communicating openly as opposed to just praying about issues. Now this is an honest story where I'm being open with you and vulnerable because it's the truth. And I'm also painting myself in a good light by saying that I now communicate authentically. I'm not highlighting the lows.

This is the same with being vulnerable when you first meet someone. You need to give something of yourself that's real if you want the same in return. Then once you feel you can trust someone with your heart you might open up even further. What I'm saying is you want to be vulnerable but not Libby Loose Lips where there's no filter.

EXERCISE

4 WAYS TO BE VULNERABLE

FIRST THING IS FIRST: ACCEPT THAT YOU'RE WORTHY

In order to become okay with vulnerability, the first thing you need to do is accept the fact that you're worthy to get a positive response back. If you're opening up to someone else, believe that you're enough to warrant love and respect back. If you're reaching for a goal or dream, believe you have the skills and determination to make this work. You can't go far if you yourself believe you don't deserve positive results.

STAY IN THE CONVERSATION

When you're on the cusp of being vulnerable the need to flee can be knee jerk, but you'll begin to regret that avoidance tactic by the time you're down the street and out of harm's way. Pull in the reins on that by becoming well attuned to the way you feel right before you bolt, and train yourself little by little not to listen to your urges to get away.

SHARE YOUR HURTS WITH OTHERS

Say you did open up and got hurt in some way. If you're bad at showing vulnerability, your instinct might be to go back to your room and deal with the feelings and fall-out all on your own. But that's a mistake.

If you open up about your feelings, failures, and thoughts to someone you trust, you not only get help on the soothing forefront, but you get another shot at practicing vulnerability. Seltzer offered, "it's important to keep in mind that depending on others to soothe us can actually increase feelings of vulnerability." You're opening yourself up to another person, which is great practice.

BY NOT BEING VULNERABLE, YOU'RE GIVING AWAY THE POWER TO HURT YOU

When you open up yourself to be vulnerable, you make the conscious decision that what you're showing and offering other people is worthy. You believe that when you extend yourself, they'll accept and that you're worth that acceptance. So in reality, allowing yourself to become vulnerable makes you safe from harm because you already know on the inside that you're good enough. If things don't work out that's not a reflection on you but the circumstance or situation.



STEP 4

DATING ETIQUETTE

DATING ETIQUETTE

WHO APPROACHES WHO?

What we have to remember here is there is no one set rule. I really believe that. I would personally love a guy to come up to me and I'm sure many women would, however, it doesn't always happen. For example, I might be approached by an intoxicated guy with Dutch courage BUT I would rather be approached by a guy who isn't drunk and has courage. But its nerve wracking! Terribly nerve wracking to approach a woman. And that's what we need to remember.

So I'm all for either party approaching the other. Personally I'd be more inclined to offer a signal to invite them over.

WHO ASKS FOR THE NUMBER?

Definitely the male here. If you've given out the signals that you're interested and a guy doesn't ask for your number, he not interested. You just need to make sure you've said you've had a great time. This is usually a signal for the guy to get out his phone. And then if you're interested give him your number. That way he does the pursuing and you'll know what kind of dater he is.

TEXTING RULES

Once again this is just my opinion. Hopefully you'll have a guy who calls. That's what I love. However, that's usually fantasy land as I know more people text. In the beginning stages, a woman only needs to respond to messages. Once you receive a text, then reply. So what'd I'd be doing is being responsive rather than proactive here. Give the guy the chance to use his phone.

If he doesn't make contact, then he's not interested. Simple. No ifs or buts or he could have lost your number. If he wanted to call you he would. Even if you really really liked him, if you're going to follow up with a text and can't help yourself, wait at least a week and then say hi. The problem is though, if he has your number, he's still showing that he's not really interested. You were more of a backup and that's not much fun.

WHO PAYS?

Who pays for a date? It's not as clear as it once was. It really comes down to how someone was raised and what feels right for them.

However, I have an opinion on this. Whoever asks for the date in the beginning should pay. If a guy asks you out and he doesn't offer to pay, he wasn't raised right. If at the end of a date a woman doesn't offer to pay, she wasn't raised right.

However, even if the man asked you out by offering to pay for your dinner, I'd bring enough money to pay. The man may forget his wallet, or be unable to fully cover the bill. Perhaps he intended to split the bill from the beginning. Or maybe the date just doesn't go well, and he no longer wants to pay for your share. Shock horror!

EXERCISE

WHO DOES WHAT

What were the 3 best ideas from the Dating Etiquette talk that you might apply?

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

1. MIND BEFORE BODY

Ever feel like a man is trying to get you into bed before you've had time to develop a relationship? You want to keep them interested, but you'd like to delay having sex for at least a little while longer. Remember, good guys will not push for sex and then disappear if you don't give it to them. If he cannot respect that desire, he isn't worth your time and effort. Sex isn't something that should be taken lightly. Once others know your standards, only men who have similar values as you have will want to be with you.

The main reason I think you need to hold off is because you need to get a guy to know your mind before your body. That way he has the opportunity of becoming emotionally hooked. If you don't give him this opportunity he is only hooked on your body... and there are a lot of bodies around!

Now here's the thing. Many guys feel intimacy through having sex. But in the initial stages, don't confuse physical intimacy and emotional intimacy. A guy needs to be emotionally hooked before he will sign up for a relationship.

So here are some one liners I used to hear:

I believe in living in the present. If it feels good just do it. (Key for I'm horny and want to have sex OR I'm committed already and want to have sex with you)

We've had such a connection. I don't want to split up. Can I just sleep on your couch? (Key for I'm a very good salesman and will be sleeping with you tonight)

I've had such a rough time lately and just need a cuddle. (Key for I want sex)

So as you can see they're all excuses for 'I want sex'. Which is great, but if you want a guy to stick around, he will respect you a whole lot more knowing that you have strong boundaries.

