

Bad Luck

Dear Jill,

You don't have bad luck, you're just exercising poor judgment. I get a lot of mails like yours from young women who have had successive broken relationships. These women sometimes feel there's something wrong with them; that's why their relationships don't lead to marriage. They wonder why almost immediately after break up the guy goes on to marry someone else. But if you check some of those cases the women should actually be thanking God they didn't marry those guys. They can't see that because emotions get in the way. It's natural in such moments to feel emotionally down. It rives a lot of women when a guy breaks up and just months after marries another. Creates consternation. Here's the problem in your situation: you get so excited about the prospect of having a relationship that you commit too fast. You don't get to know the guy. You really never knew any of the guys you dated – who they really are. And so the facts about them that should have informed your decision to date or not to date are hidden from you. You essentially based your commitment decision on your feelings of wanting to be in love, rather than facts. Facts that should inform your decision to commit to a guy, not just feelings. You lay yourself open to surprises committing to a guy you hardly know. And many, if not all these guys you dated were full of surprises. One or two even had live-in lovers and you never knew. And that's why one in particular never wanted you to come to his house. That should have raised a red flag. How do you date a guy and you don't know where





he lives and can't visit? Obviously he's hiding something from you, or trying to keep you from discovering certain things. You should wonder why.

There are facts you should know pre-commitment, not post facto. You ought to know the person you want to date. Don't forget he's potentially your husband. The clues and hints are always there. It's just that you choose to ignore them. Your objective over-writes them. So it's not about bad luck but hasty judgment, and poor decision-making. Hence the string of break-ups. Those relationships were bound to break anyway. If a guy is serially cheating on you how's it going to work? You want fidelity but he's the antithesis of fidelity. Such a relationship can't work. Will be full of heartache. Now, if you knew he had a fidelity challenge you wouldn't have dated him in the first place. Or at least shouldn't have. Such a relationship is bound to collapse because there's a clash of values and expectations. It's that clash of values and expectations that invariably leads to the wreck of all your relationships. Two can't walk together except they are agreed. That's an ancient saying. Why don't you find out all you can about a prospect before committing. When the next guy comes around, don't be hasty to commit. If you don't know him and he says be my girlfriend, tell him you hardly know him, that you can't commit. In other words develop friendship first. The marriage is going to be built on friendship anyway! See if friendship is even feasible before taking on the official title of girlfriend. You can't call yourself a girlfriend when there's no friendship. Girlfriend is made of two words: girl and friend.

Facts are sacrosanct. It makes sense to ask oneself certain questions before



plunging irrevocably: Do you really know the guy? Do you have certainty about his relationship status? Does he have a job? What does he do? Where does he live? Who are his parents, or did he drop from heaven? Is he the serious type, or he's just looking for sex? What are his antecedents? What does he want in life? Is he the marrying type? Is he the caring type? All these are easily verifiable from asking direct or indirect questions, and from asking around. Engaging him in free-flow conversation will give you insight. Things slip out when people talk at ease. And learn to listen, and to read in between the lines. Most facts are in between the lines. Now, I'm not saying be paranoid; but at least listen to what is being said as well as what is not being said. What is not being said is as important as what is being said. For example, if he hardly talks about his mother you may want to know why. What are the reasons? Did she abandon him? Do they have a terrible relationship? Is she difficult? Or she doesn't care? Or maybe she's late and he doesn't want to dwell on it. Or he's ashamed of her, or whatever the reason. All these facts may make him sensitive. Or may point to the fact you're going to have an interesting mother-in-law.

What is not being said is a conversation in itself. And it's full of facts. Ditto if he doesn't talk about his father, or his family at all. Of course if he hardly talks about his job you should also wonder. And what you're not sure about or need clarification on, ask directly: "Jack, I noticed you hardly talk about your mum, why?" It's a very valid question in an impending relationship. Don't forget that mum he hardly talks about is your potential mother-in-law. His dad is your potential father-in-law. In a relationship you look before you leap. You check that there are no crocodiles in the water. It's not Discovery Channel. Don't



commit to a man you hardly know. Or you'll find out what you should have found out when the relationship breaks. And each successive break has an emotional cost attached. Breakages can be emotionally expensive. There's no curse on you. There's no witch haunting your fortune. You just dated guys you shouldn't have dated. So don't be afraid you won't marry. Just date the right guy. Date a sincere and honest man. And if a guy is in a relationship and wants to date you, he should first extricate himself before coming for you. He shouldn't use you to break his relationship, or you'll get a bad name and bad rap. And you're innocent.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Lene Andersen".

Your mentor, LA

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