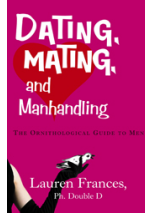


(Excerpted from my book, *Dating, Mating, & Manhandling*)



# Etiquette in the Aviary

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*First Date Dos and Don'ts*



First dates are full of hopeful expectations and rife with potential pitfalls. If you adhere to some smart fliting practices, you'll skirt them without snagging your stocking.

**1. *Don't get drunk!*** Always maintain enough sobriety to assess your date's character. If you start doing Jell-O shots, you may accidentally wind up in the backseat of his Explorer with your skirt around your head. Practice restraint, and don't have more than a drink or two when you're out on a first date. Otherwise, how in the world can you possibly observe your bird and discover if he's remotely right for you?

**MANHANDLING MANEUVER:** *Always stay sober enough to remember how naughty you were the night before!*

**2. *Don't talk about your personal problems.*** Therapists get butterflies inside when you talk about alcoholic relatives or how traumatized you are by the number of germs thriving in public restrooms. The typical male, however, will be horrified. You'll have violated the sacred airspace of "romantic quality time," and these little monologues of strange pain will be as off-putting as sorting unwashed laundry in the restaurant. If you're prone to making this manhandling

mistake, you need a therapist, not a boyfriend. Or a boyfriend who's a therapist.

**MANHANDLING MANEUVER:** *You already know all about you. Keep your problems to yourself and get to know him.*

**3. Don't be negative about dating.** Why should a man pursue someone who isn't happy? It's ineffective manhandling to dump your dating disappointments on Bachelor Number 3. Complaining about how awful dating is just begs the question "Are you in therapy?"

**MANHANDLING MANEUVER:** *Be a romantic challenge, not a mental-health challenge.*

**4. Don't spook your suitor.** Don't point out your physical flaws to your lover. Only bring these complaints to people who can actually do something about them, and not to people who are sleeping with you, and who will now be forced to lie to you. Waxers, trainers, manicurists, hairdressers, plastic surgeons, and lingerie salesgirls are among the army of specialists who'll relish discussions about your "problem areas" and dysmorphic-body self-image. But beware: Once you draw your lover's attention to the little mole that you secretly despise, he'll find it impossible to overlook it, too, forever. And forever is a very long time.

**INTERESTING FACT:** Elle McPherson was once asked if there was anything about her physique that she would ever change. "I wish I had better nail beds!" she replied. I've never forgotten it, much to my chagrin. I don't want to think about Elle's nail beds, but there it is . . . lodged in my brain *forever*, and now in yours, too. Remember: Confidence is sexy!

**MANHANDLING MANEUVER:** *Sometimes, thoughts are for the inside.*

5. ***Don't talk badly about your exes.*** I don't care if he cheated on you with your sister at your bat mitzvah, never recite a laundry list of grievances about your exes. This will only make you sound unavailable at best, or worse, *wounded*. Reveal your secrets when you're both on a beach in Hawaii, or better yet, engaged. By then, he'll want to tend to your sniffles. And then you can blow him.

**MANHANDLING MANEUVER:** *We all have baggage. Keep it in the closet on first dates.*

6. ***Don't cock the gun.*** If you're a recovering nymphomaniac or if you've sworn off playing the slots, keep it to yourself for now. Based on my research, anyone who's any fun usually has one or two skeletons in their closet. It's unwise, however, to reveal your Achilles' heel to men too soon. When you alert a man about what behaviors won't fly with you, he may sweep a nasty habit or even an addiction right under the rug. If he doesn't run, he'll put on a game face to get you to shag him or, worse, marry him. You'll be stunned when he drains the minibar on your honeymoon and comes home as drunk as a Loon.

**MAN FACT:** *Men loathe being rejected. It makes them feel bad. Instead, they'd much rather hide any nasty habits that they know you'll disapprove of, so that they can seduce you, and reject you, instead.*

Remember: It's easier breaking things off on date three than year three! Always let your date reveal his sticky wickets without your interference, to quickly gauge his character.

**MANHANDLING MANEUVER:** *When you reveal your Achilles' heel too soon, you'll just wind up shooting yourself in the foot.*

7. ***Don't chase your bird.*** Never deprive a man of the thrill of the chase. Besides, it's *so much fun* being caught! A woman can always initiate a first tea date, but after that, it's up to a man to decide whether

he really wants to nest. Entice men, play with them, and then release them. Allow men to initiate their forward assault (i.e., moving your relationship forward). When you allow them to pursue *you*, they'll often wind up chasing you right around the bed and straight up the altar!

*A romance is like an egg.  
When you hold on  
too tightly, it cracks.*

—Lauren Frances, Ph. DD

**MANHANDLING MANEUVER:** *When you lure men in, they're less likely to fly away.*

**8. Don't keep squawking.** Don't feel pressured to fill up every second with meaningless chatter. If the conversation falls silent for a moment, don't panic, just let it happen. Natural pauses are very sexy, and body language can be so much more powerful than words. Slowly smile at him and breathe. You may be surprised when he blurts out in the middle of a deliciously pregnant pause, "Come here and kiss me!"

**MANHANDLING MANEUVER:** *Sometimes less conversation is more.*

**9. Don't lower the tone.** It's easy to be pleasant when we're enjoying ourselves, but the true test of character is how we behave when we're terribly bored or, worse, treated shabbily. There's nothing to be gained by suffering through a terrible date, so if you're having a gawdawful time, depart quickly and gracefully, without being rude. When you're itching to leave the aviary, say: "Thank you so much for meeting me, Jerome. I think it's time for me to go on home." Then smile and add, "Take care."

Extend your hand for a quick shake, swiftly turn on your heel, and depart.

**MANHANDLING MANEUVER:** *If you're on date number one and aren't having fun, set him free immediately!*

And you can get ALL of my best dating advice in *Dating, Mating, & Manhandling*, today!

