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Dr. Dabney's
GUIDE TO

PRECISION DATING

(for men)

Choose the right woman from the start, and what to do when you don't

Dr. Laura Dabney —*the Intimacy MD*

Dr. Dabney's Guide to Precision Dating (for Men)

Choose the right woman from the start, and what to do when you don't

by Dr. Laura Dabney, the Intimacy MD

Men, hear me on this: Quit cheating yourselves of a great relationship before you even get started. I've seen hundreds of men make the same mistakes—choosing the wrong women and staying with them for too long and through too much. So trust me when I tell you that a small change in your approach today can save you thousands in divorce and therapy fees down the road. I call it, Precision Dating.

Precision Dating comes down to making crucial and informed decisions at three points in your relationship. Skip any of these decisions and you may find yourself deep in the muck with a woman who drains you of your time, your energy and your money. The truth is that *every troubled relationship has its warning signals from the very beginning*—but men, being conditioned to be problem solvers and fixers—tend to ignore the warnings. And when you ignore the warnings, you do so at your own peril.

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Phase one: Casual dating

The first key to precision dating is to cast a wide net when dating. Contrary to the popular belief that men love to “play the field,” a significant portion of men actually settle down as quickly as possible. They find a woman, commit quickly, and spend the next few years of their life trying to make the relationship work. Men with this tendency pride themselves on being loyal. But what they've really done is *invested everything in an untested and unproven concept*—a decision they'd likely never make with business or financial investments.

Instead, think of dating like shopping for a new car. Not only do you have to like the way it looks, but you have to trust its reliability (you wouldn't ignore the rattle under the hood during a test drive), it has to fit your needs (you wouldn't rely on a

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sports car for weekend ski trips), and it has to fit you, both physically and emotionally (tall men don't buy Ford Fiestas and successful salesmen with large territories don't buy gas guzzling Hummers, no matter how much they like the other features).

While I am in *no way* comparing a woman to a purchase, the expectations you take with you while dating should be similar to the expectations you hold when selecting a new car. You are expected to test drive as many cars as you can, you are expected to do your research, you are expected to believe in every aspect of your decision before you sign the dotted line and drive away.

Dating is about the experience, not the destination. Your objective isn't just to find a woman, it's to find a woman who meets your needs, who matches your goals and builds your confidence. Finding her may require you to try new things and immerse yourself in new situations, but the result will be worth the effort.

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Phase Two: Committing

Your second and equally crucial decision comes at the point at which you're considering commitment. This is the point at which your critical judgement—your ability to make wise decisions based on the information available to you—will be tested, and for good reason. The men I work with often feel harangued for not being able to commit. The trouble as I see it, however, is not that they can't commit, it's that they're committing to the wrong women. *They're ignoring their critical judgement.*

Let's go back to our analogy of car shopping. Say you looked for months to find just the right car. You love everything about it and it seems to have everything you want. Plus, it just makes you feel great when you're in it. This car is incredible.

Just one problem: the guy selling it can't find the paperwork to prove he actually owns the car. Don't worry, he assures you, he owns it free and clear. He just needs to file the right documents with the state. Give him a down payment today and he'll take care of it all next week. *No problem.*

No problem, really? I hope the alarm bells are going off in your head because you'd be at significant risk of losing thousands of dollars. You simply wouldn't pay money for a car with unresolved issues.

The same is true in relationships. ***If you start a relationship with a serious problem, you are in for a lifetime of serious problems.*** Yes, women make unfortunate mistakes and come from tough childhoods the same as men do. But until those mistakes and emotional traumas are resolved, these women aren't ready to be in a committed

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relationship. Trustworthy women do not come with unresolved financial, drug or legal issues. They do not ask you to fix problems for them. They do not come with dramatic emotional swings or unresolved mental health issues. *These problems take years of professional help to fix. Just because you want to help a woman overcome them, does not mean that you can or should.*

Before you commit, ask yourself, is this relationship free and clear of major warning signs? If not, you owe it to yourself and to her to let go and move on.

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Phase Three: The first months

Sometimes, relationship trouble doesn't show itself right away. Sometimes you're several months committed before you discover a larger issue—substance abuse, a lack of empathy, an unwillingness to share the give-and-take of daily life. That's okay; the early stages of a relationship provide you excellent an excellent opportunity to **pivot**.

If you get into the third month (or any month) and discover a serious issue, **leave the relationship**. Don't wait it out, expecting the issue to resolve itself. Don't try to fix it. Don't blame yourself. *Exercise your right to pivot, and do it quickly.*

Some men feel too guilty to leave at this point. They think they owe it to the woman, to the relationship, to themselves, to stick it out and see it through. But let me remind you: dating is not a contractual commitment, and you don't owe anyone the burden of this difficult problem. *It was not yours to begin with and it is not yours to resolve now.*

In fact, men who stay often become enablers to the issue. Or, they stick it out hoping to help her change, and the relationship becomes more parent-child than man-woman. Sometimes, they try to exit the romance, but stay "friends," hoping to help see her through. The truth, though, is that none of these examples represent intimacy; they're toxic, and they aren't doing anyone any good. As sad as it may be, you must act to protect yourself and her from further harm—and go.

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Precision Dating is about helping you move *only the right relationships* from the casual to intimate. It requires you to trust your critical judgement and it may require some difficult, yet crucial decisions. But in the end, you will establish a foundation for trustworthy and worthwhile relationships that last.

Want to learn more?

Call now for your free, 15-minute consultation with a member of Dr. Dabney's team. Geography is never a problem and your access to one of the nation's top relationship experts is unparalleled, thanks to our *Live & Online* therapy options.

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About Dr. Laura Dabney, the Intimacy MD

Relationship stress is no match for Dr. Dabney. Every week, she works with patients in dozens of cities across the United States, helping them break the patterns of past relationships and beat a path to a happier, healthier future. She owns a leading clinical practice in Virginia Beach and has been Board Certified in Psychiatry. Download her latest articles, read real-life case studies and learn more about her offerings at www.DrLDabney.com.