

OBSERVATION—X-ray Vision

Earlier I mentioned the dangers of being emotionally blind. If you are to make an informed decision about committing your life to someone, you must open your eyes along with all your senses to see the other person. Justice may be blind but make sure your love has contacts on! You want to see what he or she is saying beyond their words. You want to develop x-ray vision so that you can learn to read their motives through their mannerisms.

As the other person responds to your interrogation, keep in mind that their answers are formed by more than their words. Ascertaining their real motives and the extent of their intentions requires paying close attention. It doesn't always mean that your intended is deceitful. Many times we are not good at talking about our deepest self. We spend all of our lives having to be guarded. It isn't always easy to disrobe emotionally or mentally with someone we are trying to impress.

Ladies, you must be deductive as you piece together the clues that he gives you about who he really is and what he's really after. Men, you must add up the information she gives you through her body language and what she leaves unsaid in order to know her character and not just her beautiful appearance. I recommend that every conversation be enjoyed and then mentally reviewed again with an option to revisit areas where you still have some uncertainty. That's right, when in doubt, bring it up again!

This area of scrutiny should not be difficult if you are naturally fascinated by the other person. Simply pay attention—observe everything and not just what you want to see or what you want to hear. Observe how he treats people that he doesn't need in his life, the casual encounters with waitresses, doormen, cab drivers, and ushers at the concert. Consider how loyal she is to her friends, how cruel she is to her enemies, and how familiar with her former boyfriends. Remember, getting to know a person is a lot more than knowing how they treat you. You may not always be on her "A" list. How would you be treated if you were demoted? This shows the real character of the person you are interested in knowing better.

Surprises

As your relationship grows you will likely have some surprises. We all put our best foot forward when we begin to date, but as we grow comfortable, we are less defensive and apt to be more of our true selves. Honest, trustworthy people, who are ready for a committed relationship, understand that they have nothing to hide. When asking questions of your date, pay careful attention to their body language and how they respond. Giving defensive and evasive answers, sitting cross armed and failing to make eye contact are all signs that someone isn't being 100% truthful. If you notice this behavior during discussions, take note and proceed with caution.

Transparency between partners while dating saves you from major surprises and upsets after marriage. But, it is important that when doing research on a potential mate, to always consider the source of your information. Of course, if the information appears in a major newspaper it is likely to be true, but if the information is coming from an angry or vindictive ex, take what you learn with a grain of salt, go back to your partner for verification and look for signals of truth or fallacy.

How committed is the other person to keeping their word? Do they make promises and then don't follow through? Are they quick to make excuses rather than simply take responsibility for a mistake, misunderstanding, or misperception? Notice the patterns that tend to form the longer we get to know someone. If he can't be trusted to meet you on time consistently, then how can he be trusted to be at home on time later? If she tells you that she purchases items that she can't afford, are you listening to her priorities?

Real observation feeds your intuition, providing you with the data that will naturally be processed and interpreted in light of everything else you know about the person. You must watch and not merely pray about your sweetie. If you're going to mix your genes with this person, sharing the most intimate, vulnerable parts of yourself, both literally and figuratively, then don't you think you should pay attention? Stop. Look. Listen. It's not just the children's mantra about how to cross the street. It's the formula for a wise decision about how to proceed across the heart highway to your next decision about a life's partner.