



Authentic Dating 101 by Arlen Keith Leight, Ph.D.

Two middle aged men looking for a long term committed relationship chat on Match.com and decide to meet for coffee. Tom and Roger are both good looking, intelligent and personable. They have a very nice conversation. Roger is very interested in Tom, but Tom seems less than excited. Of course, Roger is hoping Tom would like to meet for a second date.

Roger should...

- A. Directly ask Tom if there is any potential and interest in further dating.
- B. Ask Tom out for dinner on Saturday night.
- C. Do not discuss the future and wait for Tom to call to ask him out again.
- D. Wait 2 days and if Tom hasn't called then call Tom to feel him out

Tom should...

- A. Directly let Roger know that he is not interested in further dating.
- B. Tell Roger he wouldn't mind seeing him again
- C. Do not discuss his lack of interest and hope he never hears from Roger again
- D. Agree to another date only if Roger calls him

How many times have we heard folks say they are tired of the "games" that we play when dating? But then again, how often have we been as much the cause of the games as the other player? How often have you chosen "A" when you're in the situation described above? Isn't it always easier to skirt the expression of your true feelings to avoid being rejected or avoid hurting the other person?

Authentic dating is about being honest. First, that requires being true to yourself about what you are looking for, i.e. what is/are your goal(s) for dating? Are you looking for a life partner? Are you looking for casual sex? Is stability more important than passion? Do you want a monogamous relationship or an open relationship? Are you currently in a positive life space and available for an exclusive sort of dating relationship or not?

Next, you must be honest with yourself about how you feel about the person you are meeting or dating. It has been scientifically proven that we know within minutes if not seconds of meeting someone if there is potential for passion. If there's nothing there you need to ask yourself if and/or why you wish to pursue the connection. This requires introspection and an evaluation of your self-esteem.

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Finally, you want to be totally honest with your date. If there is nothing there but you want to see if something will develop (unlikely, by the way) say so. If you want to be dating a whole host of people and not ready to be with one individual, say so. If you are only interested in this person for sex, say so. If you are looking for exclusivity in dating, say so. If you have no interest in another date, say so. If you see potential in this person, say so.

The logical argument against such a straight forward approach is that you might scare someone off. This approach is not for everyone...only for those who want an honest, open, and sincere relationship with another person who has similar objectives. I can state unequivocally, if there is a mutual passionate connection (i.e., chemistry or “click”) and both are looking for the same thing, the other person will not be turned off by stating your feelings. Your date will be thrilled to know you feel likewise. If there is no passion or if the two of you have different objectives, what difference does it make if you scare the other person away? Remember, the first date is about potential for passion. If there is none, move on. Subsequent dates are about exploring values, compatibility, mutual interests and, yes, sex.

If you are interested in learning more about this new way of dating and relating, Dr. Leight offers a weekend intensive for gay men in which these topics are fully explored.

Having challenges with dating? Consider [Dating for Intimacy](#)