

The 5 Stages of Dating and Creating a Relationship

- 1. Stage One—Attraction:** In this stage, we experience our initial attraction to a potential partner. The challenge of this first stage is to make sure you get the opportunity to express that attraction and get to know a potential partner. It is important to have a clear understanding of how men and women approach dating differently.
- 2. Stage Two—Uncertainty:** In this stage, we experience a shift from feeling attraction to feeling uncertain that our partner is right for us. The challenge in this stage is to recognize this uncertainty as normal and not be swayed by it. To become uncertain doesn't mean that someone is not right for you. When you are dating someone who seems really special to you, it is quite normal suddenly to wonder whether you wish to continue dating that person. Without an understanding of this stage, it is too easy for a man to drift from one partner to another and for a woman to make the mistake of pursuing a man more than he is pursuing her.
- 3. Stage Three—Exclusivity:** In stage three we feel a desire to date a person exclusively. We want the opportunity to give and receive love in a special relationship without competition. We want to relax and have more time to share with our partner. All of the energy that went into looking for the right person can now go into creating a mutually loving and romantic relationship. The danger in this stage is that we become too comfortable and stop doing the little things that make our partners feel special.
- 4. Stage Four—Intimacy:** In this stage, we begin to experience real intimacy. We feel relaxed enough to let down our guard and share ourselves more deeply than before. The opportunity of this stage is to experience the best in ourselves and our partner, while the challenge to deal with our less-than-best sides. Without an understanding of how men and women react differently to intimacy, it is easy to conclude mistakenly that we are just too different to proceed.
- 5. Stage Five—Engagement:** In this stage, with the certainty that we are with the person we want to marry, we become engaged. In this stage we have the opportunity to celebrate our love. This is the time to experience our relationship joyfully, happily, peacefully, and lovingly. This is a time of great excitement and promise.