

ROMANTIC RELATIONSHIPS

How do I know if I'm ready to date?

KEY WORDS

emotions | compatibility | commitment | red flags



It's normal to feel curious about finding a boyfriend or girlfriend, especially when you see stories about young love on TV or notice that your friends have started dating. Let's go over two factors you should consider when deciding if you're ready for romance:

- emotional readiness, and
- practical considerations

You will know that you possess **emotional readiness** if you can relate to the following mottos:

"I love myself and feel whole without another person."

Embracing yourself is the first step to attracting a partner you'll also be comfortable with. Healthy relationships require two people looking for someone to deepen their life, not complete it. If you feel like you need a partner to feel whole, you are not ready for a relationship.

“I enjoy spending time with myself.”

Joy can be multiplied when shared with someone else, but a partner is not meant to take the place of hobbies, interests, friends, family and alone time. No matter your relationship status, do not neglect developing your skills, passions, and happiness. Your confidence and independence will be seen as attractive qualities to others and a sign of emotional maturity.

“I don’t have unrealistic expectations about a future boyfriend or girlfriend.”

Having expectations in a relationship can help you identify ‘red flags’ and save yourself the time and heartache from entering into unhealthy relationships. Yet, knowing which qualities to prioritise and which to be more flexible about is equally important. Keep a balance and let the journey unfold naturally!

Now, when it comes to **practical considerations**, how many of the following mottos do you relate to?

“I can dedicate enough time to dating.”

Before starting to date, consider how much free time you have for it. If you believe you can achieve a balance between your school or work life, social life and possible romantic life, you're more likely to give a relationship the attention and care it deserves.

“I am compatible with this person.”

Compatibility between two people is like finding the right puzzle pieces to a puzzle! This doesn't mean that you've found the 'ideal' partner (this is a fairytale!), but you are similar in the ways most important to you, such as having shared interests, similar values, and comfortable communication.

“I have someone to talk to about my dating life.”

Being able to discuss dating with your parent(s) or an older peer can provide you with support and advice about communication, consent and compromise, all of which you may experience in your first relationship.

Take your time, trust your instincts, and when you feel a connection that adds joy to your life, you'll know you're ready to begin this new chapter. And if you need some more advice on how to have a great first date, check out our infographic [here](#)!

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