



GUIDELINES FOR CHOOSING A MATE FOR A LIFE LONG RELATIONSHIP

When asked, Clarissa Pinkola Estes imparted these guidelines for choosing a mate to her three grown daughters, ages 22, 26, and 28.

1. Choose someone as though you are blind. Close your eyes and see what you can feel of that person, of their kindness, loyalty, insight, devotion, their ability to be concerned with you, their ability to care for themselves as an independent being. It is more important what we “see” with our eyes closed when it comes to the object of our love.
2. Choose a person who has the ability to learn. Those who are unable to learn are intolerant. Choose a person who is curious about the world and how people work, a person who is gradually learning and evolving.
3. Choose someone who is willing to be both strong and sensitive. Choose a person who has the strength of a tree which is flexible in the wind and does not break when blasted with powerful, gale force winds. Choose a person who has the ability to see and be alert to things around him or her.
4. Choose someone who when you hurt them, they feel pain, and they are willing to show it, and vice versa, when they hurt you, they see your pain, and they feel sorry.
5. Choose a person who has an inner life: woodworking, drawing, writing, meditation....something that they love. Choose someone who is on their own journey and sees you as a partner and fellow traveler on that journey. Choose a person who is capable of being merged AND separate with a bond between you which can stretch over distance and time without breaking.
6. Choose someone who has similar passions in life to your own. A relationship is for making memories together.
7. Choose someone who has similar values about having children, about childbearing, about family members, about roots and roles for women and men and kinds of marriage and money and religion. This is about the pragmatics of decreasing the friction in the relationship, and if there are differences, they should be worked out before there is a long term commitment to the relationship.
8. Choose someone who is compassionate, who is able to listen, someone who gives equal time.



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9. Choose someone who can laugh at themselves and who knows how to stop an argument in mid-sentence.
10. Choose someone who is able to overlook certain faults or characteristics and know what you can live with. This is important because the things that are so cute and charming in the beginning, symbiotic stage of a relationship will drive you insane later.

Several things that are intolerable and unacceptable in a lifelong relationship:

Alcoholism
Substance abuse
Gambling
Criminal activity
Anything that takes a person away from their true soul life
A person who cannot tell the truth
A person who cannot give
A person who cannot face you after they have made a mistake and who tries to cover it over in a dramatic and large way instead

Accepting any of these would be like starting a relationship on swamp ground.

11. Choose someone with whom you can be friends, not just lovers. Are you willing to do for your partner what you are willing to do for your girlfriend or your guy friend? Are you willing to sit and listen in minute detail to how that person thinks, and to do what they would like to do? Is that person able and willing to do the same for you?
12. This is the most important. Make sure that when you choose, you are choosing someone who makes your life bigger rather than smaller. That will tell you all you need to know.