



*by*  
CHUCK MILIAN

“WE’RE JUST FRIENDS”  
*and* OTHER DATING LIES

..... PRACTICAL WISDOM FOR HEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS .....



# **“We’re Just Friends” and Other Dating Lies**

*Practical Wisdom for Healthy Relationships*

**Chuck Milian**



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## Foreword

Whenever I offer dating advice to my 30-year-old daughter, she reminds me that it's been a long time since I was "out there." She's right, of course. But while dating patterns and expectations have changed, some things remain the same. Dating is still a process through which young people in our culture select their mates. And dating still is an experience that leaves many wounded and confused.

Pastor Chuck Milian doesn't want to rob dating of romance or mystery. But he does want to protect dating couples from unnecessary hurt and tragic choices. Our society puts tremendous dating pressure on both men and women—pressures that are intensified by unrealistic expectations and what Chuck calls "dating lies." So in this book Pastor Chuck presents a framework for dating that relieves many of the pressures, and encourages the development of truly healthy Christian relationships.

The framework for dating that Milian presents is rooted in a profound understanding of Scripture, cross-cultural research in male/female relationships, and many years of counseling individuals and couples. Within the framework of what the author calls dating "levels," Chuck deals with issue after issue, from appropriate physical contact to how to end a relationship

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without hurting the other person. With insight and sensitivity Pastor Chuck looks at some of the “lies” (false expectations) that make dating a minefield, and he shows dating couples how to keep on the same page with their feelings and expectations.

Chuck rightly emphasizes the importance of a supportive community as a relational safety net. While he shows how an individual can share the principles imbedded in this book with his or her date, the greatest value of the book is as a guide to those ministering to youth and young adults. Teaching his strategy for dating so that it is understood and practiced by a community of teens or adults can make dating a positive adventure, free of the wounds and embarrassment that so often are a part of dating today.

I heartily recommend this book to individuals, and especially to those in ministry. What a wonderful tool for teaching a thoroughly Christian and healthy way to date!

Larry Richards, Ph.D.

# Acknowledgments

First and foremost, I want to give thanks and glory to my Lord and Savior Jesus Christ who saved me by his loving and gracious sacrifice on the cross of Calvary. He pursued me even in my rebellion, revealed himself to me, received me, washed me, filled me, guided me, and has continued to bless me even up to this very moment. Anything good in this book is because of him.

A big thank you is also in order for several special people who have walked through this book-writing journey with me. I am deeply grateful for their love, support, feedback, and encouragement.

To my wife Kim who, besides Jesus, is the best thing that ever happened to me. Thank you, Honey, for helping me to press on with this and for patiently helping me begin to understand things from a woman's perspective. I love you!

To my two sons, Josh and Caleb, who continually encouraged me along the way. I'm so proud of you both and know God has great things in store for you.

To the wonderful people at Crossroads Fellowship, I am so thankful to be your pastor and to share life's journey with you as we seek to reach our city for Christ.

To everyone on the team at New Growth Press, without whom this book would not have happened.





# Introduction

Tell me if this sounds familiar. You're at a social gathering with the person you have been dating for the past six months. Someone asks you, "Are you two getting serious?" and your partner quickly responds, "Oh, we're just friends." *Just friends?! Six months of multiple dates each week, talking on the phone several times a day, sharing personal struggles and dreams, kissing (and perhaps more), and we're just friends?! Or maybe you have found yourself on the other side of the expectations gap. You've been on a few dates with a person. Things are going fine, but it's nothing serious. At least you thought it was nothing serious until you hear from a friend who heard from a friend who heard from your "partner" that you might be "the one."*

Of all human relationships, dating relationships are some of the hardest to navigate. An already difficult endeavor is made even worse by ever-changing social norms, unruly physical desires, and unrealistic images of what relationships should look like. But perhaps the greatest challenge is conflicting expectations. We just don't know what to expect when it comes to dating.

In earlier times and in other parts of the world, the path toward marriage was and is more clearly marked out than it is today in Western culture. Whether or not we approve of

arranged marriages or old-fashioned courtship rituals, we have to give them this: they make it a lot easier to manage expectations and help ensure that everybody is on the same page. But you don’t have to ascribe to these systems to realize that managing your expectations, as well as those of the people you date, would make dating much better. Being able to line up your relationship expectations with your commitments will help you to better understand how to think, feel, and act in the context of a dating relationship.

Someone once said, “If you don’t know where you are going, you might wind up someplace else.” Do you ever feel like you don’t know where you’re going in your dating relationships? Or perhaps you know where you want to be going, but you can’t see how to get there. For many singles in our culture, dating is a vast, uncharted wilderness that they get dropped off in sometime after puberty—good luck finding the trail!

I have good news for you. You are currently standing at the trailhead, and there is a clearly marked trail in front of you. There is a way of dating that I call the Five Dating Levels, and it actually works. The goal of this system is to allow you to have fun, develop good relationships, avoid unnecessary hurts, know “where you are” each step of the way, and know when and if you should move forward. Ultimately, I hope to show you a clear, easy, and relatively safe way to date, which will work for you and anyone else who is willing to embrace God’s design for relationships.

## CHAPTER ONE

# The Five Dating Levels

*Dating Lie #1: Love just happens; you can't control it.*

Christians spend a lot of time and energy trying to understand how to be more like Christ. Why is it then that the way we date looks so much like the way the world dates? I'm not just talking about sexual matters. Hopefully single Christians know better than to take at face value the sex advice offered in magazines such as *Cosmopolitan* and *Esquire*. But even if you do show more sexual restraint than the couple in the most recent romantic comedy, do you also resist the world's idea of what dating is for? Do you look at dating mostly as a means of getting what you want for yourself? Are you expecting a romantic partner to define who you are? Does "failure" in the dating arena make you feel like there is something wrong with you?

The fact that the divorce rate among professing Christians is the same as the divorce rate for everybody else (about 50 percent) suggests that our view of male-female relationships hasn't been transformed

Even if you do show more sexual restraint than the couple in the most recent romantic comedy, do you also resist the world's idea of what dating is for?

as fully as it needs to be. That's a problem. Our culture is out of sync with the reality of how healthy relationships actually develop. The result is broken hearts, ruined friendships, bitterness, and a lack of commitment. We have abandoned or forgotten some universal truths that are not only wise but extremely practical. In essence, we have taken an off-ramp from the highway of healthy relational development. This off-ramp is a wrong exit; it cannot lead us to our desired destination.

Let me tell a story about a Christian friend of mine who, for all his great qualities, still dated according to the world's standards. He was a good-looking guy, had a great personality, owned his own business, came from a good family, was on fire for the Lord, was active in serving others, and had leadership gifts. By all typical definitions, he was a "great catch" for any of the hundreds of single women in our singles ministry. As a result, he dated many of these women, but he quickly developed a reputation as an unpredictable and confusing heartbreaker. Women began to avoid him, his relationships suffered, and his witness was damaged.

The women complained that he confused them with his words and actions. For example, he would say very flattering things, which he believed, but were really not appropriate for where they were in the relationship. He often would stay up late with them talking about topics that were too emotional for their level of commitment. He also would arrange an excessive number of activities during the first month of dating, which didn't allow any time to gain perspective on the relationship. Kissing and lots of physical contact also began almost immediately, which made the women feel like he was exclusively interested in them. When they found out that he was doing the same thing with other women at the same time, or when he abruptly ended the relationship, they were deeply hurt and confused. There were even some interpersonal conflicts among

the other members of the singles ministry because of his behavior. A few women began to take sides against each other, feeling like the other women had unfairly barged in on what they thought was a unique and special relationship. Gossip began and some women even felt so embarrassed and uncomfortable that they considered no longer attending the group. Several of the men felt like this guy was trying to create a harem and was manipulatively taking multiple women out of circulation in order to eliminate competition. As this story demonstrates, without clear parameters and expectations, even the Christian community can sink to the lowest levels of humanity and suffer severe damage. Unfortunately, this story is not unique.

If not for two things, this young man's life could have taken a very negative turn. He could have become discouraged, felt isolated, and wandered back into the world from which he had recently escaped. First, he was approached by a godly Christian counselor who had talked with several of the women he had hurt. The counselor lovingly confronted him about the negative impact he was having on the singles community and his own personal testimony as a believer. He patiently explained how and why the young man's dating habits were causing such pain and confusion. Second, this man had the courage to share all of this with his small group. This group of men, who were committed to helping each other become fully devoted followers of Christ, began holding their friend accountable and challenging him on his destructive dating habits. They all knew that he was ignorant of the Bible's view of healthy interactions between men and women. They also knew that transformation is a process that requires time and practice as well as support from others willing to encourage progress and speak the truth in love about failings.

This man was convicted by the Lord that he needed to go back to the women he had hurt and confess his sins, ask for

forgiveness, and then reestablish his reputation as a trustworthy man of God by dating well from that point forward. Though this was a very difficult and painful process, he had the humility to do the right thing, trusting that God would ultimately bring great blessing out of his obedience. As he grew in understanding about communication, boundaries, commitment levels, and the process of intimacy development, he not only developed a reputation as a godly man but also as a safe, fun, and desirable man to date. From that point forward any woman he dated was protected, encouraged in Christ, and treated with the utmost respect. Ultimately, God used this experience to prepare him for a relationship with a wonderful woman who would later become his wife. Nineteen years of marriage and two kids later, this couple has an enviable marriage that has been a blessing to them and to hundreds of others. True to the Lord's sense of irony, God has used this man to teach and counsel countless younger men to live, date, and marry in healthy and productive ways.

There are many points that could be taken from that story, but I want to focus on two in particular. First, we all play a part in a complicated web of relationships. It was bad enough that my friend's dysfunctional attitude toward dating hurt the women he dated, but he also hurt other people in his relational web. Just within our singles group, there were those who felt the need to take sides in the romantic dramas he started. There were the men who later dated the women he had broken up with. There was the gossip that caused any number of people to stumble. Seeing the pervasive relational fallout that can result from bad dating practices emphasizes why it is so important to seek God's wisdom as we seek intimate relationships. Second, this story demonstrates that it's never too late to change. Whatever your history, God honors your efforts to walk in a way that is pleasing to him.

## The Five Dating Levels

There is no reason why it shouldn't be possible for a dating relationship to end well if time and interaction reveal that a couple is not well suited for marriage. What does it mean to "end well"? It means you can look a person you used to date in the eye without pain or awkwardness. It means you can pray for that person—pray that his or her life will be blessed and happy without you. It means you have dated in such a way that the worst thing that can happen is that you have built a friendship that you can retain, even after one or both of you gets married to somebody else. That's not just wishful thinking.

### **An Overview of the Five Dating Levels**

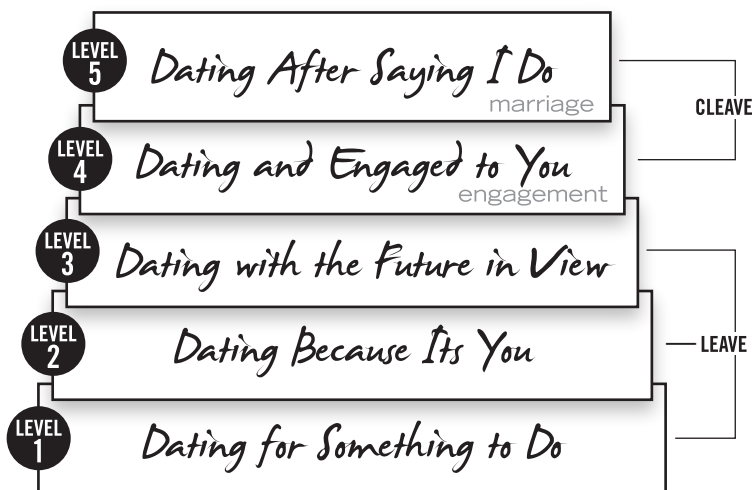
I've been in full-time ministry for more than twenty-two years, and for twenty of those years, I've been a pastor in a large church in North Carolina. I've performed over a hundred and fifty weddings and counseled countless couples about how to date well, how to move forward, when to not move forward, and how to be happily married. As I talked with people and helped them wrestle through the confusion of emotions and expectations of dating, it became apparent that we all need a clear, simple, realistic, and biblical way to navigate this thing called dating. I studied the Scripture, considered my own imperfect past, read research from Christian counselors, and even gleaned insights from the sciences of zoology and anthropology. What emerged from my study and prayer was the Five Dating Levels.

I've developed a system that categorizes dating relationships based on their level of commitment, progressing from lowest to highest. In fact, the highest level is dating in the context of marriage (you did know that dating continues after marriage, didn't you?). The Five Dating Levels gives you a plan for relating to the opposite sex in a dating relationship that is based on first loving God and then others.



God says that a man is to leave his family and be united with his wife to form a new family (Genesis 2:24). As I mentioned earlier, in other cultures and times there were clearer guidelines to help this process of leaving and cleaving. While our culture treats this process as a free-for-all, the Five Dating Levels offers a way to bring wisdom and structure to this important life stage. This dating system takes Paul’s plea to consider others’ interests before our own and applies it directly to dating relationships (Philippians 2:4).

Below you’ll find a diagram of the system and a summary description of each level. We’ll get into a lot more detail later, but this should give you a good idea of where we’re headed.



### LEVEL ONE: DATING FOR SOMETHING TO DO

This can be a onetime date or one of many “getting to know you better” events. No physical contact should occur at this level. Preferably, a Level One date is a group event. Absolutely no obligation to continue dating exists afterward on either person’s part.

## The Five Dating Levels

### **LEVEL TWO: DATING BECAUSE IT'S YOU**

This is still not an exclusive relationship, but it does require one or both people to acknowledge a true interest or attraction that has grown over time. No kissing should occur at this level. Level Two dates should be mostly group events with some time spent alone. An obligation exists on each person's part to communicate honestly and clearly about how he or she is feeling along the way.

### **LEVEL THREE: DATING WITH THE FUTURE IN VIEW**

This is an exclusive relationship. Kissing can begin at this level but is to be avoided if it stirs too much passion. There should be an equal division between time alone and time with groups for accountability and perspective. As always, both the man and the woman should communicate openly and honestly along the way. The focus is on clarifying life goals and true compatibility.

### **LEVEL FOUR: DATING AND ENGAGED TO YOU**

On this level, the focus is on clarifying roles, family boundaries, premarital counseling, and planning life together. Physical limits may need extra protection as desires will increase with commitments.

### **LEVEL FIVE: DATING AFTER SAYING I DO**

After marriage, sexual intimacy brings a whole new dimension to the relationship. Weekly dates are critical to keep romance alive, maintain open communication, and mature the relationship so that it is prepared for possible children and eventual empty nest syndrome.

The Five Dating Levels are a progression toward wholeness and holiness. Each level is designed to develop an appropriate

degree of bonding, which makes it possible for the relationship to handle the weight and stress of the next level without being crushed. The limits established at each level protect the relationship from going where it shouldn’t go. But progressing to the next level is not the only purpose of this process. Hopefully, at each stage you will notice and experience the God-designed gift that is specific to that level. It is also worth noting that the “rules and regulations” of the Five Dating Levels aren’t intended to squelch intimacy. Instead they should create a safe environment where healthy dating and true intimacy can take place. People don’t date when they don’t feel safe, and safety is what fosters true intimacy. Isn’t intimacy what we’re looking for when we date?

### **Physical Boundaries**

Each dating level represents a level of commitment that should be accompanied by appropriate physical and emotional boundaries. What should you be doing? What should you be feeling? What is appropriate to devote your mental energies to? What plans should you be making? Most of this book is devoted to answering those questions.

Admittedly, there is a lot that is mysterious in attraction and love, but thankfully God’s Word, human experience, and even scientific research reveal a clear design in relational development. This design points to practical things we can do to greatly increase our chances of being happy in our relationships. It also clearly shows us what *not* to do.

Obviously, there are cultural factors that influence the way we understand the physical relationships between men and women. You don’t often see a man kissing a woman’s hand these days. In other cultures, ideas of modesty are different from

## The Five Dating Levels

ours. Nevertheless, there are universal standards that govern the way men and women relate to one another physically.

In his book *Bonding*, Dr. Donald Joy discusses a remarkable anthropological study that discovered twelve “bonding stages.”<sup>1</sup> These stages mark the development of relationships between men and women—from less intimate contact to more intimate contact—across all human cultures. As diverse as human cultures are, and as different as their sexual mores can be, these stages seem to be the normal progression of physical contact throughout the world. In fact, the study didn’t find any culture where it was normal for a man to put his arm around a woman’s waist before he put his arm around her shoulder, or where it was normal for a man to touch a woman’s face if he had never touched her hand. While there are abundant examples of *individuals* who ignore or skip steps in this progression, the point is that these stages are the *norm*.

When these stages are respected and followed, Joy argues, the result is healthy relationships and a stable society. However, when these stages are ignored, skipped, or rushed through, the result is a marked increase in violent sexual behavior, dysfunctional bonds, and broken marriages. Many other social ills flow out of this type of environment as well, such as increased poverty, crime, and isolation. You only need to read the front page of any newspaper in America to see the proof of this research. If we’re going to establish physical boundaries for the Five Dating Levels, the Twelve Bonding Stages seem like a good place to start. The chart below lists the Twelve Bonding Stages and shows how they map on to the Five Dating Levels.

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<b>Dating Level</b>	<b>Physical Boundaries</b>	<b>Basic Description of Interaction</b>
<p>Level 1: Dating for Something to Do</p>	<p>1. Eye-to-Body 2. Eye-to-Eye 3. Voice-to-Voice</p>	<p>This can be a onetime date or one of many "getting to know you better" events. There is no physical contact allowed, preferably a group event, and no obligation exists afterward on either person's part. <b>The risk level is low.</b></p>
<p>Level 2: Dating Because It's You</p>	<p>4. Hand-to-Hand 5. Arm-to-Shoulder 6. Arm-to-Waist</p>	<p>This is still not an exclusive relationship but does require one or both people to acknowledge a true interest or attraction that has grown over time. There is no kissing allowed; it should be mostly group events with some time alone. An obligation exists on both persons' parts to communicate honestly and clearly about how they are feeling along the way. <b>The risk level is medium.</b></p>
<p>Level 3: Dating with the Future in View</p>	<p>7. Face-to-Face 8. Hand-to-Head 9. Hand-to-Body</p>	<p>This is an exclusive relationship. Kissing begins at this level but is to be avoided if it stirs too much passion. Equal time alone &amp; with groups for accountability and perspective. An obligation exists to communicate openly and honestly along the way. The focus is on clarifying life goals and true compatibility. <b>The risk level is high.</b></p>

## The Five Dating Levels

<p>Level 4: Dating and Engaged to You</p>	<p>No Physical Progression... "a Holy Pause"</p>	<p>Focus is on clarifying roles, family boundaries, premarital counseling, and planning life together. Physical limits may need extra protection as desires will increase with commitments.</p>
<p>Level 5: Dating After Saying I Do</p>	<p>10. Mouth-to- Breast 11. Hand-to-Genital 12. Genital-to- Genital</p>	<p>After marriage, sexual intimacy brings a whole new dimension to the relationship. Weekly dates are critical to keep romance alive, maintain open communication, and mature the relationship so that it is prepared for possible children and eventual 'empty nest syndrome'.</p>

At times my guidelines may look like a mere list of rules, but you'll miss the point if you get stuck here. The point is to set expectations that will serve as signposts that tell you (1) where you should be now; (2) what the next level should look like; (3) whether to stay where you are, move to the next level, or call it quits. When two people have kept their personal interactions and perspectives consistent with the level of their personal commitments, they can part ways without seriously wounding one another.

Remember, these are guidelines that need to be applied with wisdom and shouldn't be used legalistically. The point is to honor God by honoring his design for interaction between men and women. Using these

When two people have kept their personal interactions and perspectives consistent with the level of their personal commitments, they can part ways without seriously wounding one another.

guidelines is one way to protect against becoming emotionally and sexually intimate too soon. It’s a practical way to put the best interests of the people you date before your own selfish desires.

### **If Dating Were Like Going to the Mall**

Before moving on, let me offer a quick analogy to further clarify how the levels function. Think of the Five Dating Levels as the levels of a five-story mall. Within this very big and very complex structure it would be easy to get lost. Thankfully, wherever you are in the mall, you’re never too far from one of those kiosks with a map that says “YOU ARE HERE” to help you find your way around.

It would be great if dating was a little more like that—if both you and the person you were dating always knew exactly where you were. You and a member of the opposite sex enter the mall at the ground level, stop at the directory, and get your bearings. You casually stroll along and enjoy the activity of seeing what comes your way. The topics of conversation are at first determined by the people you pass or the things you see in the windows. Together you enter stores that appeal to one or the other of you, stores displaying items of personal interest. This enables you to learn about each other by discovering what the other is interested in. You see which magazines your date leafs through in the bookstore. Your date sees which section of the sporting goods store catches your eye.

After a while—if you both agree you’re ready—the two of you go up the escalator to the second level, where the items on display are a little more personal and allow for deeper levels of sharing. Over the course of time, you return to the mall week after week, month after month, eventually daring to go up escalator after escalator until you reach the fourth level of the mall where you enter the jewelry store! As you pick out an

## The Five Dating Levels

engagement ring, you gaze up to the fifth and final level into the maternity shop, and you wonder how much longer before that store will be your destination.

That's what the Five Dating Levels looks like. It keeps things casual at first, ensuring that nobody feels any pressure to make any commitment, and that nobody is doing or saying anything that implies a commitment that isn't there. Just as importantly, the Five Dating Levels provides a dating couple with the signposts to know when it is time to go to the next level, where the commitments are greater and intimacy increases both emotionally and physically. But how do you navigate that process? How do you know when it's time to "go up the escalator"? To answer these questions you must maintain a healthy Truth Triangle, which is the topic of the next chapter.



## CHAPTER TWO

# Introducing the Truth Triangle

*Dating Lie #2: If it feels like love, it must be love.*

As I mentioned, rules are a part of the Five Dating Levels, but that's not essentially what they are about. The guidelines I offer are about keeping your thoughts, feelings, and behaviors in balance and are based on the foundation of your commitment to the person (or persons) you're dating. I like to illustrate that balance with a diagram I call the Truth Triangle.

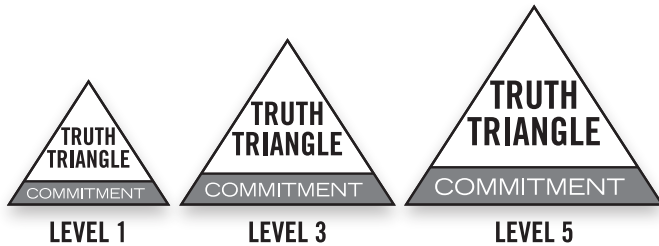


A healthy Truth Triangle is an equilateral triangle, which means it's balanced. One of the main reasons people have problems in their dating relationships is because what they *say* and *do* (behavior) doesn't match what they have been allowing

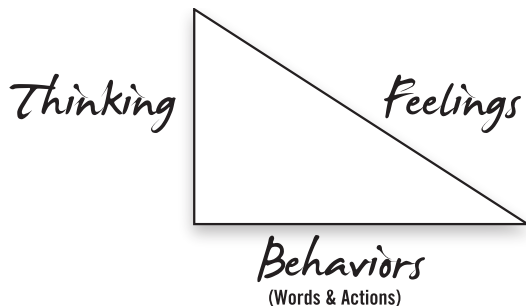
## Introducing the Truth Triangle

themselves to *think* and *feel*. A healthy Truth Triangle is also the appropriate size. What determines how long each side of the triangle should be is your commitment level. As your level of commitment grows, the sides of your Truth Triangle grow. You can let yourself think more seriously, feel more deeply, and behave more intimately (within well-defined limits) as you and the person you date agree to be more committed.

One of the main reasons people have problems in their dating relationships is because what they **say** and **do** (behavior) doesn't match what they have been allowing themselves to **think** and **feel**.



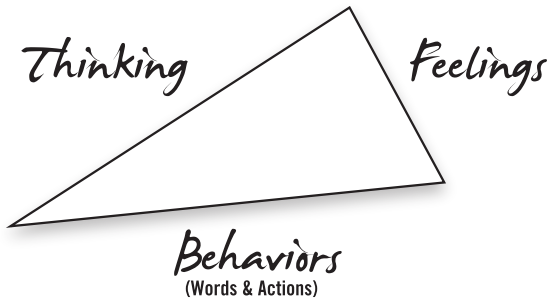
When one or more elements of the Truth Triangle are out of alignment, it won't be long before confusion, misunderstandings, and broken hearts abound. For example, if your feelings run ahead of your thinking and behaviors, your Truth Triangle will look like this:



## "We're Just Friends" and Other Dating Lies

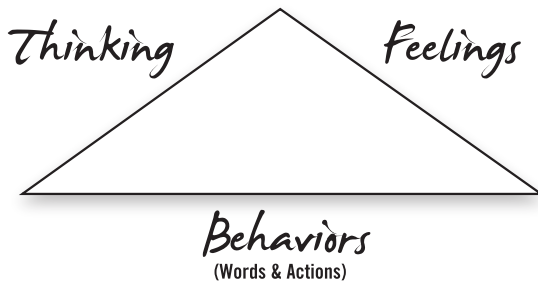
Allowing feelings of love and passion to flow before they have been proven accurate by months of time spent interacting is extremely unwise. Notice that when your feelings get out of whack, your behaviors get out of whack too. When you are swept away by your feelings, you're in danger of doing and saying things that don't line up with your commitments. These untested feelings cannot be trusted!

If your thinking is not consistent with your feelings and behaviors, your Truth Triangle will look like this:



Spending your time thinking about "a future together" or imagining what it would be like to be married before the relationship has been proven over time is equally unwise. Again, behaviors get out of whack as your thinking gets out of whack. Just as you can be swept away by your feelings, you can also rationalize behaviors that are inappropriate. These unsubstantiated thoughts cannot be trusted!

If your behavior is not consistent with your feelings and thinking, your Truth Triangle will look like this:



## Introducing the Truth Triangle

Behaviors such as kissing (before Level Three), spending too much time together too soon, and saying I love you before the relationship has had enough time to properly form are also unwise. Just as unsubstantiated thoughts and untested feelings can lead you to inappropriate behaviors, inappropriate behaviors can affect the things you (and the person you're dating) think and feel. It works both ways. These unacceptable and selfish behaviors cannot be allowed to go unchecked!

When your feelings get out of whack, your behaviors get out of whack too. When you are swept away by your feelings, you're in danger of doing and saying things that don't line up with your commitments. These untested feelings cannot be trusted!

### **Rebalancing Your Truth Triangle**

God has the same expectations for holiness for men as he has for women, which makes the Truth Triangle equally relevant for both. But, in most cases, men and women struggle differently with keeping the Truth Triangle balanced. Typically, men don't keep their behaviors in check, while women tend to let their feelings get out of control.

When it comes to living in the world of feelings, women are much more at home than men. They naturally feel their feelings in a way that men simply don't. That's not to say that men don't have feelings, but that they aren't usually in touch with their feelings like women are. For a woman, even if her feelings have led her down the wrong path, they can still be the key to getting her back on track. Feelings don't come out of nowhere. The following is a helpful tool to discover where they come from:

What you *feel* is based on what you *think*.

What you *think* is based on what you *believe*.

What you *believe* is either *true* or *false*.

What is the significance of that feelings-thoughts-beliefs pathway? For one thing, it gives you a way of evaluating what you

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feel. All feelings are real: you feel what you feel. But not all feelings are based on reality.

When a woman is trying to get her Truth Triangle in balance, she has to ask, “What am I feeling?” This is valuable because it is the best way for her to discover what she is thinking. And once she understands

what she is thinking, she can compare those thoughts to what she knows to be the truth. Do your thoughts and feelings and behaviors line up with the truth? Do they line up with your level of commitment?

Men usually have to take a slightly different approach. Because men typically don’t know what they’re feeling, trying to pinpoint thought patterns this way is usually ineffective. I advise men to start with their behaviors. That’s where men live: not in the world of emotions, but the world of actions. I urge men to focus on their behaviors while they wrestle with God. If they can get their behaviors under control—if they can line up the things they say and the commitments they have made—they can begin to get their thoughts and feelings under control.