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Life Coaching, Dating  
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Consulting

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## Heartmind Connections

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**This month's feature article:** *When You Are Marriage-Minded and in an Exclusive Relationship, Technically you are Still Single!*

One of my female clients, who desires to get married and have a family, has been dating her current boyfriend for at least six months. She is 37 and he is 42. Both have never been married before. In our last coaching session she said, "When I was single...." as if she were referring to a life long past. That phrase made the hair in the back of my neck stand up! What I had to remind her was that, "technically, you are still single!" According to her tax returns she is single and especially according to her parents and family members she is still single!

It is dangerous to lull yourself into thinking once you are in an exclusive relationship as a couple, that you are no longer single. My client is in a very fragile tenuous situation – really, she's in no wo-man's land!

The question is how long do you keep yourself off the market? (Or, *on the hold rack* from my retail days). At 37, how long are you willing to wait before finding out if this man will want to move towards the engagement stage? Each person has to make that decision that feels right to herself. (This goes for men too!)

There is a fine line between being too pushy and setting an ultimatum – and standing your ground with your boyfriend (or girlfriend) about how serious you really are about getting married. Honestly, if he were really serious about marriage with you, he would act as if he wanted it more than you.

He'd be counting the minutes to asking you for an engagement. I have seen this so many times with my clients and friends!

Sometimes taking a hard stand is what it takes to make a guy (or gal) realize he really would miss out without you in his life. That's what Sandra did at 38 with Gerry who was 43. Both had never been married. After two years of dating, she felt she was ready to get married and start a family. She wasn't willing to wait any longer and just keep floating along in this relationship. As it turned out, Gerry was indecisive. Sandra broke up with him and started actively dating other men. That was the kick Gerry needed to realize what he would lose by not marrying Sandra. They did get back together, and are now happily married with two kids.

The moral of this story is you have to know what you want and to be bold about it. If the guy runs away, he is not a keeper. If he steps up to the "marriage" platform, then it shows he respects you, wants to be with you and couldn't imagine life without you.

When I met my husband at 41, we dated for six months before he popped the question. We did work with a coach to flush out some issues and deal with the nasty saboteurs infiltrating our relationship based upon our past experiences. After we ironed out the major issues, our coach said to my husband, "So what's stopping you from going out and buying a ring next week?" I was horrified he asked that bold question because the last thing I wanted was to push Alan into anything. However, Alan's answer was, "nothing, really". This bold question was the jumpstart my husband needed to get him into action! Of course, it could have turned out differently and he could have reacted negatively to that question, but he didn't. For me, it is better to know the truth, rather than hide from it. That way, I could move on if need be.

Think of the alternative – perhaps three years from now, at the age of 40, you are still exclusive with this person and finally take the bold stand only to find out your partner doesn't want the "marriage-family" package with you. Then you are still single, 40 and no further along on your personal goals as you were at 37.

For those who are in an exclusive relationship, I recommend you ask yourself these two questions:

1. Do I love this person and want to make a life with him/her?
2. If yes, then how long are you willing to wait for this person to commit to you?

Set a timeframe that makes sense for you and stick with it! You will be glad you did. Either way, you will be closer to your goal of marriage because you are only sticking with marriage-minded partners, including yourself! As my father used to say, "Life is not a dress rehearsal!" Unfortunately, our time is not limitless. In the long run, when you take the bold action to find out where your partner stands on how committed to marriage he or she is with you, it's really for the best to know his or her true feelings!

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