

# Wading through the muck of relationships

Love is a pipe dream.

Let's face it, relationships are one of the most screwed up things around. The reason I bring this up is because spring is in the air, even if we are at the furthest point from the sun in Erie, and everything that's not frozen is shivering.

The amusing thing at the beginning of semesters is that your average meal turns into a meat-auction. New girls get shipped here and walk through Dobbins or The Gorge while a hundred guys indiscreetly gawk and grunt something about letting her eat crackers in their beds.

Of course, some of these guys are also the same guys who go around threatening kids for talking to their girlfriends. It's about as easy to find a possessive guy up here as it is to find a cop with nothing better to do than ticket your car three or four times a day.

Relationships are nothing but a big gamble. Looking for the perfect person to hang out with never seems to work. It always turns out that the person you decide that you actually wouldn't mind going out with more than twice happens to be the person whom you never thought to go after.

Finding a decent relationship as a guy isn't easy, but I assume it would be less of a gamble than it would be for a woman. Being in college and being female and being available is beyond the

grasp of my imagination. I'd be in constant fear that every time I went out with a guy, I'd run the risk of becoming the story behind some little fraternity brother's name.

The big gamble, I guess, is just getting respect. Some girls won't mess around much, and they are respected because of that. Some girls mess around a lot and seem to attract a good deal of attention because of it, as if it were a greatly positive quality. The gray area would probably be created by the fact that the act of sex pretty much looks the same to the casual observer whether it's a one night stand or a bonus of a relationship.

People start assuming things. I guess the probability of sex turning into a relationship is inversely proportional to the amount of alcohol consumed. This all, of course, is under the shadow of the usual fears that someday, no matter what path you travel, you'll wake up some morning with a disease that even the clinic doctor can't quite pronounce.

Finding the perfect person is as much a pipe dream as anything. It can't really happen. You can get a "perfect" car, but eventually the NSX will break down on some abandoned road. Maybe you buy a "perfect" album (Wait...sorry, I guess they don't make those anymore. I'm so nostalgic, I remember the days of \$.25 stamps, free ice water at The Gorge, and when people thought

that SPC would make Bruno's a breathtaking success.) ...anyhow, after a while you'll even get bored with that.

Strangely, it's different with friends. There's no pressure. It doesn't matter how you phrase things to a friend, or that you show up at their dorm drunk in yesterday's clothes.

Another big thing I see is whether or not you smoke. If a guy smokes and his chick doesn't, he smokes the cigarettes that he told her he quit smoking later on with his friends. If a

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chick smokes, you can bet the guy will be sucking down tar within weeks. It's all a part of being whipped, I guess.

Another thing I can't figure out is when you're hanging out with a chick who you're pretty impressed by, and the thing breaks off, what happens? Why all of the sudden can't you figure out why you ever had a conversation with that person, never mind spending a month with them?

It's strange, I mean the line between love and hate is so easy to cross. Once you cross it though, all you want from the girl are your tapes and that

sweater she borrowed. The old joke about being friends afterwards is kinda silly, and is one of the most cliched lie-promises in any relationship.

The great lie of every relationship, well not every one, is about the past. There's always some guy who gets all impressed with himself when a chick tells him he's the best she's ever been with. Let's be realistic, shall we? If you're insecure enough to even bother asking, what do you expect her to say? "Well, honestly, you're a complete failure in bed. In fact, I'm thinking of asking your best friend out tomorrow."

Honesty doesn't work in relationships. There's so much we don't have to deal with by just playing along (Somewhere there's a girl who'll read this and ask her boyfriend, "You're not like that, right?" "Of course not."). The whole love thing seems to be one person playing along with the other person until the two of them forget who's playing along ("You do love me, don't you?" "Yeah, of course.").

The room for honesty is simply not there; egos are too fragile ("Do you think I'm pretty?" "Yeah, of course."). Do you realize how angry and jealous everyone would be if we were all honest? ("Do you think that the girl you always talk to is attractive?" "Of course not, uhh...she's ugly.")

The one I never understood was why a girl would even bother

asking a guy if he's cheated on her. Why would she even expect him to be honest? Like there would be any day where a guy would really feel up to dealing with his chick finding about his infidelity. Not only that, but he'd feel like an idiot having her find through him.

All this, of course, will leave me in the doghouse if and when my girlfriend reads this. No doubt, I'll be saying, "Of course none of this applies to us. Of course I'm always honest."

For the record, I'm all for relationships and honesty (on the large scale). It's just that relationships either suck or are confusing as death or are your average American no-end-in-sight puppy-eyed dream.

Everyone gets hung up in relationships sooner or later. A lot of times we lose friends to "marriage" or the next best thing. It's kinda sad when I think of my brother; just out of PSU, good job, but also a wife. It seems like his life is over, he's reached the dreaded adulthood. It's not that we should waste our lives in a fantasy that we never grow up and stay in college forever, but something like marriage is too bizarre to conceive. Forget it, we're way too young to worry about that.

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# War? The real one hasn't started yet

by Mike Royko

It was a puzzling question. The acquaintance asked: "How could you be on vacation when this country has gone to war?"

The answer was that I'm not a general, a think-tank analyst, or even a heroic anchorman proudly waving a gas mask, all of whom are essential to the war effort.

Like most Americans, my patriotic duty is limited to watching TV at all hours of the day and night and expressing pride in our obviously superior microchips.

But because of the genius of mankind, it no longer matters where you are. You can be in a motel in Nashville or an oyster bar in Sarasota and see missiles and bombs splattering people as clearly as if you were right there.

Which proves again that we live in wonderful times. I remember World War II, when we had to go to a movie theater and wait for the newsreel segments before we could see anyone die. And even then, the primitive, grainy film might be several weeks old, and with no instant replay.

Finally, I told my acquaintance, what's the big rush? The real war hasn't started yet. What we're getting is something like the pre-game show before the kickoff.

True, bombs are being dropped and missiles triggered, but as any football coach would say (coaches are combat generals at heart): "You've got to establish the ground game."

That's when the real war will begin. And if you don't believe that, you haven't been listening to the countless retired generals, former White House aides and the think-tank experts who seem to be sleeping on cots in the TV studios.

Most of them say the same thing, in one way or another. The air war makes for colorful film footage, but we can't win just by dropping bombs and firing missiles. At some point our many foot soldiers must go in and try to kill Saddam's many foot soldiers. And his foot soldiers will, of course, try to kill our foot soldiers. As the retired generals have pointed out, it's gory and messy, but that's the way wars are fought.

And it can be a slow process, especially if Saddam's huge army is dug in and his many tanks and fighter planes are well concealed, as they appear to be.

So there's no point in sitting glued to the TV and euphorically gasping "wow" every time a Scud missile is destroyed by a heroic Patriot missile, or grinding our teeth in rage when we see and unfortunate glop-covered duck

caught in Saddam's oil slick. As they say in the Army: "We're in for the duration."



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How long the duration will be, nobody knows. But our leaders are now saying that it could be months. How many months, nobody knows, either. I suppose it depends on what we decide is our final objective.

Is our objective only to get Saddam out of Kuwait and declare that we've won? At one time, that seemed to be our goal, but now would it be enough? Remember, if that's all we accomplish, Saddam will still be running Iraq.

He'll probably have most of

his army and air force. He'll be able to resume pumping and selling oil and making money that he can spend on new missiles and other nasty doo-dads.

If he has the bucks, somebody will have the products. He might even try to sneak in the makings of a nuclear bomb. Is this nation prepared to have every future Super Bowl crowd frisked from head to toe and denied umbrellas and hip flasks?

If not, then our objective has to be more than freeing Kuwait. We must fight our way into Iraq and capture or kill the Great Eye-Plucker himself. That's a mighty chore, but we don't have much choice. Remember, we've been told that Saddam is another Hitler. We didn't stop at the Rhine and cut any deals with Germany. So how can we just walk away and let this new Hitler menace the free world's life, liberty and the pursuit of a stress-free Super Bowl Sunday?

No, he must be brought down. You believe it and I believe it. I know that to be true because the latest scientific polls of 900 Americans tells us that the vast majority of 250 million Americans wants us to get in there and really win.

That's why we must learn to control our euphoria and develop patience, a stiff upper lip and a non-trembling lower lip.

Achieving our objectives, as the military briefers say, and accomplishing our mission, as they also say, will take a while. In a ground war, as in the ground game, you have to grind it out a chunk at a time. And if you look at a map, there are an awful lot of chunks over there.

But as the infallible polls show, Americans are willing to face this challenge, no matter how many months it takes. The yellow ribbon industry is reporting a brisk business, and flag sales are rising. So it's clear that we're up to the task.

And once the real war begins, life will return to something approaching normalcy. As during past wars, days will pass with nothing much happening except a few deaths there. Before long, we'll be able to keep up with events by catching the evening news or glancing at the front page. And some night Ted Koppel will come on with a show about what's going on in Lithuania.

I just hope the polls don't change now that we know what we think. That could be too confusing.

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