



Character may be manifested in great moments, but it is made in the small ones.

Lesson 3

The Sex Trap: Checking Your Speed Toward Bonded-Intimacy

God said, "It is not good for the man to be alone." Then to make sure His creatures would not live in isolation, He created a craving for intimacy within each. Each person is born with an inner emptiness that longs to be filled, but the problem is that most don't know how to fill it.

What is the first word that pops into your head when you hear the word *intimacy*? If you are like most people, you'll say . . . sex.

That's because you live in an age where sex is flaunted as the instant answer to loneliness, popularity, and happiness. If you believe sex is equated with intimacy, you have bought the devil's lie, and you're heading down the road to ultimate loneliness and heartbreak.

True intimacy is not physical—it's emotional, mental, spiritual, and physical bonding. Of course, the physical relationship is a great part of intimacy, but intimacy is too often misinterpreted by our culture to be just the physical aspect of a love relationship. The emotional, mental, spiritual, and physical components will coexist in different proportions in a relationship, and the success of a marriage depends on how well the parties can blend their differences in these areas.

- Emotional attraction creates affection, caring, and trust.
- Mental attraction creates interest and receptivity.
- Spiritual attraction opens our hearts, creating love, appreciation, and respect.
- Physical attraction creates desire and arousal.¹

Too many teens fall in love and then fall in bed . . . only to end up dreadfully disillusioned. In their race to what they thought was intimacy, they miss building the foundation of a relationship that makes lasting intimacy and commitment possible.

Sex apart from intimacy or deep bonded friendship on all four levels (emotional, mental, spiritual, and physical) is never ultimately satisfying. It may feel warm, close, and pleasurable. It may give release for sexual tension and be momentarily exhilarating to both. But sex alone will never fulfill a person's need for true intimacy. Intimacy is achieved when you bare your souls to each other, not your bodies! When you can share your mind, spirit, and emotions with another person, and be accepted and cherished, you have found true intimacy.

So where does sex fit in? The New King James Version of the Bible uses the term *to know* when talking about sex. "Now Adam knew Eve his wife, and she conceived and bore Cain" (Genesis 4:1). "To know" is not

just physical contact—it is to love, cherish, and truly understand another person intimately. Sex is the crowning act of intimacy when a couple builds on the foundation of soul sharing and close fellowship and then pledges their lifelong commitment to each other in marriage. If this openness of heart and mind has been achieved prior to marriage, then physical intimacy will cement the commitment and be the glue that helps hold it together over time. This combination of emotional, mental, spiritual, and physical oneness can be termed “bonded-intimacy”—the complete “knowing” and accepting of another person who can share the joys and sorrows that life brings.

This is the ultimate goal in every marriage. It's the mountaintop experience every young person dreams of having. It's the warm, secure feeling that happens when two people become soul-mates—become one. But bonded-intimacy can be experienced only within the security of a committed marriage relationship.

Time is the bonding material that makes this happen. It is impossible to rush it or try to make it happen. It takes an average of two years to create the kind of permanent bond that will hold through the rough times. Far too many couples race through the friendship stage of their relationship and head off on their honeymoon without experiencing the emotional oneness that is the necessary foundation for bonded-intimacy. They become married singles and wonder what went wrong.

If you don't want this to happen to you, then it is important that you don't rush

your love relationship. If you do, you'll have to backtrack to the dating stages before you can experience the intimacy that God planned for you to find in marriage. Why not do it right the first time?

Couples go through sixteen steps within four relational stages to reach sexual bonded-intimacy: friendship dating, serious dating, engagement, and marriage. There is no shortcut to intimacy.

Friendship Dating

The friendship or casual dating stage that some call “seeing each other” is the foundation for bonded-intimacy and can be experienced with anyone. There are four steps within the friendship stage:

- 1. Looking with interest at each other.** You make friends with those you're attracted to. Perhaps it's their appearance, expression, words, or demeanor that makes you want to get acquainted. Once you introduce yourself, the relationship quickly moves to step 2.
- 2. The getting-acquainted period.** Through conversation you find out about the other person: “What's your favorite sport? Where do you live?” This is the level where ideas, opinions, and interests are expressed. You learn what makes a person unique. This step ends when you get to know enough about the person to either walk away from the friendship or move forward.
- 3. Intimate talking and fellowship.** Your friendship begins to grow as you invest time with a person, sharing feel-

ings and dreams. You become vulnerably honest and risk the possibility that you may be misunderstood and rejected. But it's the vulnerability that brings psychological closeness and satisfaction.

The intensity and time commitment required to continue this level of psychological intimacy makes it difficult to experience with more than a few people at a time. Usually, as the satisfaction level of one "psychologically intimate" relationship wanes, another is started, until a person establishes a relationship that's satisfying enough to move toward steady dating.

4. A friendship hug or meaningful touch. Touch—that spontaneous hug or the reaching out for another person's hand—is a natural outgrowth of close sharing and fellowship and is usually associated with the desire for a more permanent dating relationship, which includes more physical contact.

Serious Dating

Bonding is different for males and females. A female bonds with an increase in physical touch and holding. However, a male bonds through making a conscious commitment to care and nurture the woman he chooses to love. If the physical relationship advances too quickly, without the natural progression of first friendship, next commitment, and lastly sexual expression of love, it is possible for the female to become physically bonded or emotionally attached to the male, regardless of compati-

bility of personality, interest, spiritual, or cultural differences. As long as sexual relations are experienced, she "feels" bonded, and the relationship "seems right."

However, a male will not have the same feelings of "oneness" and not understand her desire for the commitment of marriage.

A female bonds with an increase in physical touch and holding. However, a male bonds through making a conscious commitment to care and nurture the woman he chooses to love.

He has not invested himself in her enough to really know her mind, heart, and spirit. He has only explored her body. If a pregnancy occurs, he is not willing to become a husband and father. She, in turn, is devastated to learn that their sexual relationship was not experienced in the context of commitment by him.

This is not God's ideal. It is a form of "emotional dependency," not bonding in the true sense that God designed. Without a foundation of friendship, the only thing in common is the physical attraction. Unless a couple goes back to step 3 and begins to build an intimate friendship, the dependency relationship eventually crumbles.

Physical intimacy will grow more meaningful and fulfilling over time, but only within the context of a selfless marriage when both husband and wife are putting the needs of the other first. So caution: don't move through the next stages unless your friendship is well established. As you begin going steady or going out, these are the steps you'll experience.

5. Desire for physical touch. The desire to touch and be touched is a natural part of a healthy relationship, but now its expression becomes more open. The next few steps are usually moved through quite quickly.

There are five questions that you should ask at this step in the bonding process that will help in putting your relationship in perspective:²

- Does my partner's vision undergird and strengthen my values, my beliefs, and my lifestyle?
- Does my life vision fit my partner's life vision?
- Are we "good" for each other, motivating for good?
- Am I comfortable with my partner's expectations about me—fulfilling my partner's vision?
- Does my partner see me having a legitimate place, other than "being there" for my partner's use?

If you answer No to any of these questions, it is time to say, "You have been good to me. I want to thank you for being a good friend. But you deserve someone who can dream your dreams with you and who can give a

whole lifetime to helping you fulfill them. I am not that person."

This draws a boundary before the more intimate physical contact of step 7.

6. Side-by-side hand holding to symbolize togetherness. Now the couple wants the world to know about their special friendship. They hold hands in public to symbolize their relationship.

7. Touch that draws together. Next comes touching that draws the couple together. Usually an arm around the shoulder comes first. Moving the hand down the body to waist level symbolizes a more intimate relationship.

8. Friendship kiss. Although a friendship kiss may have been placed on the hand, cheek, or lips of a friend during the friendship stage, kissing now becomes more frequent and more intense. Once kissing becomes an expected part of a relationship, a couple enters a dangerous relational zone. Why? Because kissing is sexually arousing and can quickly lead to other touching behavior that prepares the body for intercourse. There is nothing wrong with a simple goodnight kiss, but when couples engage in French kissing, their bodies become excited and can push them toward sexual involvement before they're emotionally prepared for a lifelong commitment.

9. Touching in ways not necessarily sexual. At this stage the couple feels comfortable touching each other by

giving back rubs, gently stroking their arm or head, or by tracing their lips or nose with a finger. This type of touching is an expression of deep desire and caring. It is satisfying to know that someone has accepted you so completely that touch can be experienced without hesitation. Being comfortable with touch is an important step toward bonded-intimacy. The next steps represent more passionate or intimate touching experiences.

Engagement

Engagement is the transition stage between dating and marriage, and most couples go through an official engagement before the wedding. The decision has now been made that the person who was once just a date is now an intended marriage partner. With this realization comes the desire for increased physical intimacy and commitment.

10. Intimate kissing. Kissing is like a bombshell in a dating relationship. Once it explodes, it is very difficult to decrease the speed toward more physical involvement. When awakened to the intense feelings of passion, your body desires more. That's the way God designed a man and a woman. The only way to slow down a relationship is to decrease your physical involvement. Without control in this area, a couple can quickly be swept through the other courtship steps.

11. Extended embracing. Words of love and endearment usually accompany

extended holding, kissing, and stroking. Now you feel comfortable just being in someone else's arms, and you long to be held for long periods of time. At last you feel like you belong to someone.

12. Talking about sexual expectations within marriage. Talking about sexually explicit acts, making comments about your own or your partner's sexual arousal, and discussing what makes you both feel pleased or what turns you on is private talk. It's like psychologically undressing in front of someone. **It has a bonding effect on the female and an arousing effect on the male.** Once certain things have been said, you will never again be truly private. Through words, you have given up a part of yourself that you can never get back. That's why this type of intimate talk should be reserved for the last few months before marriage.

Marriage

Sexual stimulation beyond intimate kissing and stroking of nonsexual body parts should be reserved for marriage. If it is, the next four steps toward bonded-intimacy will be celebrated on your honeymoon and, hopefully, as often as possible throughout the years of your marriage. The result should be a blending—a mix—a marriage of two separate individuals into an intimate relationship that is bonded by good communication, shared experiences, and satisfying sex.

Many couples today think that unless they have had genital-to-genital intercourse, they have not had "sex." This means that they engage in intimate touching of breasts and genitals with and without clothes on and still consider themselves virgins, because they have saved the sex act for their wedding night. These individuals are only fooling themselves. This type of foreplay, including oral sex and mutual masturbation to orgasm, often is even more exciting than penile-vaginal intercourse, which then turns out to be a profound disappointment on their wedding night.

13. Prolonged French kissing, kissing of the neck, giving "hickey," and touching clothed parts of the body, including thighs, buttocks, breasts, and genitals.

14. Foreplay. Looking at or fondling the entire body without clothes.

15. Fondling sexual organs—genitals and breasts.

16. Sexual intercourse.

"Let every step toward a marriage alliance be characterized by modesty, simplicity, sincerity, and an earnest purpose to please and honor God. Marriage affects the afterlife both in this world and in the world to come. A sincere Christian will make no plans that God cannot approve."³

Is dating dated?

Most people agree that dating isn't always what it's cracked up to be. In fact, it may be

downright painful at times. When I was a teen I cried for days when my boyfriend broke up with me, and I still regret the bitter words I gave him in return. I remember Saturday nights sitting alone in my room feeling sorry for myself because I didn't have a date! And even though three decades have passed, I still have an occasional nightmare where the fellow I'm chasing ends up in the arms of another girl. Most guys dread getting turned down for a date or sitting across the table and not being able to think of anything to say. That's why I'm glad the trend is now toward more group activities where young people can just get together or hang out with friends, not worrying about pairing up or putting on an act to impress someone. This is how friendships are built, and, in time, single dating will be the natural process of a growing love relationship. Just don't rush it!

Dr. Tony Campolo, university professor, author, and speaker, takes a strong stand against traditional dating. I remember him telling about saving his money so he could take this girl out to eat at a fancy restaurant. She was so nervous she hardly touched her food, and all Tony could think about was all the money he was wasting on her. Later, when someone else tried to date her, Tony made a scene and said something like, "You can't go out with anyone else. I spent \$25.87 on you. I own you!"

Don't laugh. Many young people—especially guys—think that way. When someone spends a lot of money on you, it's natural to feel that you owe him or her something in return. Take the stereotype date: guy takes

girl out to a sporting event or a concert and spends a lot of money on her. Later in the evening he becomes physical . . . and too often, she responds because she knows that's what he wants, and she feels obligated. To avoid any of that feeling of obligation, many Christian women insist on paying for their share of the cost of activities!

If the purpose of dating is to get to know someone better, then why is it that so many teens think a great date is to watch a movie together? How much do you really learn about the other as you sit there with your eyes glued to the screen? If you really want to get to know the person, fix sandwiches together at the homeless shelter, babysit a couple of preschoolers in the park, wash your parents' car together, or pop popcorn and put together a 1000-piece puzzle. Ride mountain bikes, backpack with a church group, or play tennis. Or go on a mission trip and see how the person handles hard labor, sweat, cold showers, and sunburns.

After learning about the stages of intimate bonding, it is clear to see why single dating, where the couple spends a lot of time together when no one else is around, may hasten their journey toward physical involvement rather than the emotional intimacy they crave.

Because dating has the hazards mentioned above, some parents take a strong stand against it—or have certain requirements as safeguards for their sons and daughters. If your parents fall into this category, it's for your own good, even though at this moment you probably resent their position.

Here are some family dating policies. Examine them and consider the following questions: Why might they be good? What's the down side of each?

1. No dating strangers. The dating policy at the Rogers' home is that none of the teens can date strangers to the family. That means, as a girl, you may know the fellow well because you have classes together each day, but if your folks don't know him—he's a stranger. So if he asks you out, you would need to say, "I'd love to go with you, but my family policy is that I can't date someone my folks don't know. Let me ask my folks when a good time would be for you to come over and get acquainted." Are you thinking that he will say, "Forget it"? He might, but then again, he might just respect you and your folks enough to really be interested! (And if he does say, "Forget it," is he really the type who would make a great date or potential mate? If his intentions are honorable, why shouldn't he want to meet the folks? If they're not, once he meets the folks, he'll think twice about taking advantage of their daughter.)

How did this policy affect the son in the family? If he wanted to date someone, he needed to say, "I'd really love to ask you out, but my folks like to meet the girls I date, so when would be a good time to come over and meet my folks, or would you like to go on the picnic we're having after church?"

2. Ask parents first. The Halls have a little stiffer policy. Boys wanting to date the Halls' daughters have to ask Mr. Hall for permission and be willing to follow some

healthy guidelines, like letting the folks know where they'll be going, whom they're going with, who will be driving, and when they'll return. Does that sound old fashioned? It might be, but if you really don't want to date the person, having your parents say No may be less stressful. Before you say this idea is archaic, you need to know that the Halls give their children much more freedom in areas where other parents have strict rules, because they have built a relationship with the persons dating their daughters and, therefore, feel they can trust them.

3. No single dating until . . . Some say 15, others 16, and some 18. Hopefully, the parents who have this policy also provide a wide variety of group activities for the young people, with their homes the centers for weekend fun. The younger the age that dating is allowed, the more protective parents should be about whom their children date. You may think you can handle anything, but the sad fact is that young people are often intimidated by older, experienced dates.

4. No single dating until you show you're mature and responsible. Parents define *mature* or *responsible* differently, but in general, if I were a teen today and I wanted to date but my folks were reluctant to let me, this is what I'd do! I'd invite my friend or friends home and introduce them to my folks. I'd ask my folks if they could take us places, and I'd include my folks in our activities. (Parents should trust their own children only as much as they can trust their children's friends. And if they don't

know your friends, it's no wonder they make rules that make you feel you're not trusted!)

Before a young man came over to my house to see me, I'd prep him on the importance of spending some time talking with my dad. I'd encourage him to use good manners! Perhaps he could offer to help my mom. And I'd tell him it would be just fine if he showed some interest in my little brother! (Parents tend to like people who show an interest in them, are helpful and considerate, and are good to the younger siblings.)

Then I'd make sure I kept all the family rules. I'd leave my folks with a phone number of the place where I was going to be, and if plans changed, I'd let them know. I'd get home before curfew, and I'd tell my folks about some of the interesting things that happened. In other words, I'd be 100 percent open and honest. (I've discovered that the parents with the most rules had some bad experiences when they were dating and want to protect their children, or they have kids who are doing things that make it hard for their folks to trust them!)

Our culture has glamorized single dating, that's true. But some of your best memories will be made during your dating years, if you throw away the single dating stereotypes that encourage physical involvement and plan fun "dates" where good friendships can grow.

How to Break Up and Remain Friends

Human relationships are not held together with epoxy glue that guarantees lifelong bonding. They need regular rebond-

ing experiences that are found in the friendship stage: noticing the attractive qualities of the other, taking time to be together, and sharing ideas and opinions.

Bonds can be broken. A breakup can occur anywhere along this bonded-intimacy continuum. But just as it takes time to become bonded, it also takes time to become unbonded. The further along this continuum you have advanced when a breakup occurs, the more painful the breakup will be, and the longer it will take you to become free from the bonds you have established.

Will getting involved in another relationship help? Not necessarily. You can be double-bonded, or in love with two people at the same time. So do yourself a favor—bury the old before getting seriously involved with the new.

A breakup of a dating relationship, however, doesn't have to mean the end of a friendship. It all depends on your physical involvement. Physically intimate memories make a continued friendship painful!

Breaking Up Without Getting Broken to Pieces

If you want out of a relationship, here's how to do it as pain-free as possible:

1. Don't lead a friend on when you want out. Not every relationship is meant to advance. If the person you're dating has a negative effect on you, puts you down, treats you disrespectfully, or is verbally or

physically abusive, break up. The sooner, the better! But what if your date is really a great person—but for some reason, nothing clicks? Don't play games just because you don't want to hurt someone. Attraction needs to be a two-way street.

2. Be sensitive as to the timing of the breakup. Break the bad news gently at the best possible time, hopefully when the other

person has a support network of friends to encourage and wipe away the tears.

3. Don't say too much. Be truthful—but not brutally truthful. Say why you want to date around without blaming the other. If abuse is the reason for the breakup, however, you owe it to the other person

to be frank. You must let the person know that people cannot be treated this way. Encourage the person to get professional help so this will not happen in the future.

4. Give "I-messages," not "you-messages." An "I-message" means the sender is taking responsibility for the breakup, while a "you-message" casts blame on the other. Say, "I want to broaden my base of friends and date around." Don't say, "You put me down and are critical."

5. Break up face-to-face. Avoid "Dear John" letters, and don't ask someone else to do your dirty work.

6. Be thoughtful. If you want to keep a friend, but end a dating relationship, be considerate and cushion the blow as much as possible. Remember the Golden Rule to treat others as you would want to be treated.

**Just as it takes time
to become bonded,
it also takes time to
become unbonded.**

7. After breaking up, don't spread gossip and cast blame in order to justify yourself. Vindictive behavior is too often like a boomerang. It comes back and hurts.

8. When you and your "ex" meet, try to be natural.

9. Pray that the other person will continue to know God's love.

What if you don't want this relationship to end? If you want to save face, heal quickly, and save a friend for the future, here are some important things NOT to do.

1. Don't fall apart. Instead, take a deep breath. Smile, even though faintly; calmly say, "I'm sorry you feel this way. I hope we can remain friends, but I know God can lead both of us to the right person, and the most important thing is to allow Him to guide." You may have discovered that those who have learned to trust in Jesus as the only one who will never let them down are not as devastated as those who focused their hopes and dreams on one person.

2. Don't do something foolish. Regardless of how you feel, it's not the end of the world. Foolish actions are a message to the other that you are an unstable person and that the breakup was probably a good idea.

3. Don't turn bitter and try to get back at the person who has rejected you. Impulsive words at the time of a breakup can be deadly. After tempers have cooled, the person almost always wishes the words would have never been said.

4. Don't beg. "Oh, John, I just can't live without you. Please. . . ." You may be so in love that you don't think you can go on without the person—but you can! Begging

only pushes the other person farther away.

5. Don't isolate yourself after a breakup. You need friends who will support you during this painful time. As soon as possible, get yourself back into the social scene. Get involved in helping others. Healing will come much more quickly if you use this time to begin a new activity with friends.

6. Don't be ashamed to grieve over your loss.

7. Don't jump immediately into another relationship.

8. Don't punish yourself. Learn from this experience, but don't engage in negative, guilt-producing thinking. Instead, use positive self-talk.

9. Don't react by treating the person spitefully because you feel wronged. Instead, turn the tables and say something kind.

Bonding doesn't happen by suddenly falling in love. Bonding is a process—a series of steps that two people go through as they become more emotionally, mentally, spiritually, and physically involved with each other's lives. The result is a growing sense of shared closeness that in marriage has the potential of becoming bonded-intimacy—the mountaintop experience every couple dreams of but very few take the time to sustain.

Today, 50 to 60 percent of marriages end in divorce. Only 12 percent are mutually enhancing. Throughout your dating experience, remember your goal for a deeply satisfying marriage. It takes an average of eighteen months to get past the initial infatuation phase. Check your speed. Give your relationship the chance to stand the test of time.

"Great care should be taken by Christian youth in the formation of friendships and in the choice of companions. Take heed, lest what you now think to be pure gold turns out to be base metal. . . . Too often the unconverted heart follows its own desires, and marriages unsanctioned by God are formed."⁴



Anchor Text

"Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make your paths straight" (Proverbs 3:5, 6).



Bible Search

1. When you're about to crack up over a breakup

When you're the victim of a breakup, you can find comfort in the Scriptures. Read the following psalms and write a summary of the basic message of each.

Include any special phrases that would be helpful at the time of a heartbreak.

- A. Psalm 18
- B. Psalm 23
- C. Psalm 27
- D. Psalm 121

2. God's promises

Many people testify that when they felt rejected, such as after a breakup, the only thing that got them through was their relationship with the Lord. Now is the time to learn to lean on Him. Start by searching for Bible promises. Then when the devil tempts you to become discour-

aged, fall back on one of God's promises.

Look up these texts and copy the two messages you find most meaningful. You may wish to memorize the references so you can recall them when you need them.

- A. Psalm 30:5
- B. Psalm 34:18
- C. Psalm 37:4
- D. Romans 8:28

3. How to respond when jilted

- A. How should you treat the person who breaks up with you? There is good counsel in Proverbs 25:21, 22. Paraphrase the message.
- B. You are probably thinking you could never react to a breakup in such an understanding and calm manner. You won't be able to if you allow your feelings to dictate your actions. Instead, recognize when emotions of guilt, alienation, rejection, and revenge hit you, and then make a rational choice to respond God's way.

The apostle Paul gives excellent advice in Ephesians 5:15-17. Write down the message. You will find it is especially meaningful in *The Living Bible*.

Endnotes

1. John Gray, *Mars and Venus on a Date: A Guide for Navigating the 5 Stages of Dating to Create a Loving and Lasting Relationship* (New York, N.Y.: Harper Collins Publishers, Inc., 1997), 90.
2. Donald M. Joy, *Bonding: Relationships in the Image of God* (Waco, Texas: Word Publishing, 1985), 48.
3. Ellen G. White, *The Adventist Home* (Hagerstown, Md.: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1952), 49.
4. Ellen G. White, *Fundamentals of Christian Education* (Hagerstown, Md.: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1923), 500.

Reaction

Discussion Questions

1. Should your parents be more involved or less involved in your dating relationships?
2. Commitment is the type of love that holds marriages together. How does dating help or hinder the development of this kind of commitment?
3. In the past, "courting" began when a young man stated his interest in a young woman by asking her father for permission to court, woo, or date her. If the fellow was not the type of person that Dad felt would be good for his daughter, Dad refused. What would be the pros and cons of this system today?
4. Should parents trust their teens only as far as they can trust their teens' friends?
5. Should kissing be an expected part of a date?
6. What can dating couples do to focus on friendship rather than on sexual desire?
7. Is it possible to break up and still remain friends?
8. What does a couple do when they've "gone too far" physically?
9. Who should be the one to "hold the line" when it comes to establishing physical boundaries in the relationship, the male or the female?
10. Who is hurt more, the male or the female, when the physical boundary is crossed in a dating relationship?
11. What are some strategies to help a couple move through the friendship to commitment stages of their relationship and avoid the trap of premature physical involvement?
12. What would be your advice to a friend who has "slept with" the person he or she is dating?

Personal Response

Make a pledge to God about how you want to act in future dating situations. Complete the following with one or two sentences. Then sign and date it. Take time to read it frequently to renew your resolve.

Dear God:

I pledge that on future dates, I will . . .

I realize this can only happen as I surrender my life day-by-day to You.

Practical Application

1. Plan a creative date that focuses on friendship.

Plan a creative date you'd like to have with someone. Make sure it focuses on building friendships and would be representative of Christian standards. Include five interesting questions that you could discuss with each other. Be prepared to share your ideas and discussion questions in class. Here are some ideas to get you started:

- A. Take your date to an orphanage or to visit some lonely person in an assisted-living center.
- B. Get involved in a soup-kitchen or Meals on Wheels.
- C. Volunteer for community projects.
- D. Go on a fun-run together for some community benefit.
- E. Volunteer to baby-sit a child or two.
- F. Together, go mountain biking, horseback riding, or to the park.

2. What about school policies and dating?

Divide into groups to discuss how your school could offer more friendship, getting together, or casual dating opportunities without the pressure of going steady. Each group should prepare an oral presentation and a written outline to be handed in, which includes all the names of those in your group. Here are some questions to consider:

- A. How could everybody (regardless of popularity) be included in making more meaningful friendships? (Example: inclusive lunch-room.)
- B. What could be done so no one feels left out at school banquets or other "dating" functions?
- C. What group activities do you wish the school sponsored or would offer more often?

Class discussion:

- Discuss the policies presented by all the groups.
- Choose three policies that you feel would be worthwhile taking to the student association.