



Dating prenups prevent hassle

BY ANNE REBAR
Columnist

When first dating someone, everything seems bright and rosy. Nothing can go wrong and you are almost certain that this time you've found him (or her): your Prince Charming, the Clyde to your Bonnie, the "One." You move in together, get a dog, and after a while, you start to realize your prince looks a whole lot more like a frog. So what happens when your fairy tale ends with a happily never after? And more importantly, who gets the dog?

With high divorce rates and ideas about marriage and couplehood evolving, many couples are becoming more realistic (or, some may say, cynical) about the possibility of a not-so-happy ending to their relationships. Many couples, who either feel they are not ready to be married or choose to forego the marriage route entirely, are split about what to do.

The number of couples living together without saying "I do" rose by 88 percent between 1990 and 2007, according to the US Census Bureau. Without a marriage license, these couples do not have many legal rights to property and money. This new trend — call it a "pre" prenup or a dating prenup — helps to ensure that a messy future breakup won't leave one of you high and dry, undoubtedly leading to unnecessary bad blood and some possible dog-napping.

Arlene Dubin, matrimonial

attorney in New York City and author of "Prenups for Lovers," said in a February article in the New York Post that the dating prenup was becoming an "explosive trend." She said when drafting a dating prenup, legal assistance was not even necessary, as informal, signed contracts or even mutually acknowledged e-mails could serve as a binding contract.

Drawing up a who-gets-what contract with your significant other may seem both awkward and unromantic when the relationship is going well, but when big expenses like rent, real estate or educational expenses come into play, it's good to have some sort of

protection. You don't want to be left alone paying rent you can't afford.

In the same article, Dr. Joseph Ciona, relationship psychologist, said communicating about these questions early on can even be good for a relationship. He said that drawing up a dating prenup can result in communication that clarifies questions about your significant others' values, beliefs and trust issues.

"They can help identify and reveal potentially big disparities early on, before each person is invested very deeply emotionally," Ciona said.

You might think, "Hey, we are both rational people, if we decide to break up we will be able to split things up just fine." But they say hell hath no fury like a woman scorned, and you should

never underestimate the pettiness that can occur between two people when they can't stand each other anymore. Her Prada sandals might miraculously get up and walk away and his vintage Gibson guitar might somehow end up having a deadly meeting with the business end of a hammer.

Thomas Plante, couples counselor and psychologist, said in an article on NB-Cbayarea.com that talking about possible issues early on can save a lot of money and property later on.

"It can be open warfare and that means they're arguing about everything," Plante said. "There's anger, resentment and bitterness. People argue and fight about the smallest things."

To draw up a dating prenup as a couple, you should discuss whether you think it is necessary and important to you both. Family law attorney Philip Greenberg told the New York Post that if you have valuable possessions, the best thing to do is consult a lawyer to help you draw up the agreement. However, if it's more the sentimental value of your possessions, such as who gets the dog, Greenberg said you can draft your own agreement and put it in writing with signatures and witnesses.

It is important to revisit the agreement when significant events or changes occur, such as if one of you buys a house or decides to go back to school. The more things you own together and the more expensive those things are increases the possibility that one person might get an unfair deal if the relationship ends.

Wait to wear summer clothes

Waiting to tan is the best option for skimpy clothing

BY ANNA MEIER
Columnist

Ah, springtime. Classes are outside, the flowers are in bloom, Frisbees are flying and the sun is shining, and — oh, no — the butt-thigh hanging out from three of your classmates' too tight, too light denim shorts from last summer.

I'll be honest. I'm all for a great pair of booty shorts. On those mid-July days, sometimes you just can't go short enough. By that time the backs of your legs are tanned from days spent oiled up and

horizontal on a lawn chair in the glorious sunshine, disguising all sorts of imperfections and indecencies. On those days, by all means, whip out those bad boys, slip your feet into some floppy floppies and your top into that little sleeveless number you think makes your arms look like Kelly Ripa's and be on your way.

Until then, wake up, smell the coffee and put on some pants.

As the sun peeked its weary little head around the clouds in the beginning of April, it seemed to be a signal to everyone in the Midwest. A signal that apparently sends the message, "Quick! Take your clothes off and run around town without a second thought. What, you say? Your legs have been hiding under layers of cotton for five straight months and without a glimpse of natural light or a good, long sit-down with a razor? Nevermind that, it's spring, and

you've got to flaunt it if you've got it."

I actually can't be sure whether it's the sun sending this message or the voices in people's heads, because seeing what some people started wearing during the fourth month of 2010, I could have been sure they were downright clinically insane.

A part of me starts to feel bad, thinking maybe some of these people have the unfortunate situation of living in a home without a full-length mirror, or maybe one of their friends was getting revenge for the disappearance of the last three Tagalongs back in January. I can see the conversation now: "Do these shorts look OK? It

took me about half an hour to get into them, but I still think they're cute, don't you?" "Yeah, those look great. They actually look better a little tighter and shorter after they shrunk in the washing machine last August."

Deep down they've cursed the whole campus with the burden of having to watch this lamentable specimen walk across the Quad and (heaven forbid) up stairs in front of us, with their Jansport tugging at the bottom of their shorts, suggesting they climb just a little bit higher still.

This scenario gets even worse when it's a skirt that's being donned inappropriately.

I'm not saying I don't enjoy feeling the warm sun on my pale skin, because I certainly do, but I tend to do it for the first few weeks exclusively from the comfort of my own lawn. Lying down. Stationary. With no backpack playing tug of war with my waistband.

Even being tan doesn't always remedy the situation, though. As many of you have surely noticed, there seems to be a nationwide demographic that believes being tan automatically makes you skinnier. Well, news flash — I don't care how much your skin looks like my dad's worn leather jacket from 1974, a love handle is a love handle. It knows no distinction of color. If you look like a cupcake from behind when your skin is pale, you still will after a few days in Cancun.

I'm not about to leave guys out of this lashing because it's one more excuse for guys to not bother with the agonizing process of zipping and buttoning. The minute the thermometer reads 60 degrees, most males go instantly for that drawer that's been so devastatingly dormant all winter long containing their color wheel of athletic shorts. Then they're everywhere. I dare you to go to one class and not spot at least three guys sporting these. Even worse, they've made their way into the local watering holes. Yes, these shorts have gone from being appropriate attire for running a lap or doing bicep curls to being the item of choice for a night on the town. Please, men, if going to the bars, I don't care how uninterested you are in "impressing" anyone, you're certainly not going to catch the eye of any girl worth her salt wearing your hunter-green Adidas shorts. It's just not going to happen unless she has the same penchant for elastic waistbands that you do, in which case you might have cause to wonder what exactly that's all about.

Bottom line is, it's still spring. Give your legs a little time to warm up before you jump right into a pair of ill-fitting shorts, and if you absolutely must wear them, please don't allow an epic battle to rage between them and your backpack in the general vicinity of Baldwin Hall. And, guys, I promise, the button and the zipper really aren't that difficult. Take the extra 30 seconds. You'll be happy you did.



Levels of desires in humans create diverse personalities

BY ELIZABETH NECKA
Columnist

While helping out with visit day last weekend, I was asked to name all of the campus organizations I am involved with. I am an active member of so many that I inevitably forgot one.

If you were to call me a workaholic, it wouldn't be the first time I had heard the accusation. I'm not even sure that I know how to relax — when I don't have something I need to do, I get fidgety.

Last week, my days were chalked full from morning to night. Some days I didn't even have time to eat lunch between meetings, classes and extracurriculars. People might scorn my lifestyle, but it's my choice to keep this busy.

I was recently asked if I had the ability to say "no." Well, yes, I do. It turns out I'm just motivated by a different set of desires than many of my peers.

In a study of more than 6,000 individuals, psychologist Steven

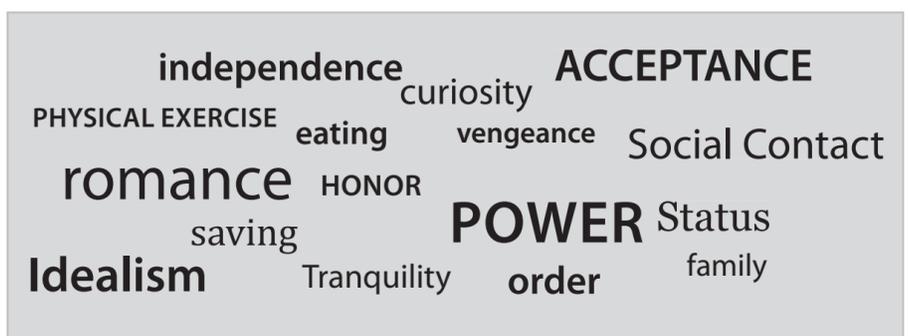
The Truman Experiment:

Desires determine individuality

Reiss stumbled upon the 16 desires that may unite us as humans but divide us as individuals. Reiss asked subjects to rate more than 300 statements on the degree to which they agreed or disagreed with them. The statements pertained to individual desires, such as "I would rather lose my life than lose my honor" (the desire for honor) or "I love learning new skills" (the desire to learn). In a factor analysis of their scores, Reiss was able to group responses to the statements and find that 16 main desires emerged — the desire for power, curiosity, independence, status, social contact, vengeance, honor, idealism, physical exercise, romance, family, order, eating, acceptance, tranquility and saving.

Each of the desires, Reiss argues, has an evolutionary foundation. Behaviors illustrating these desires can be found in animals as well. For example, the desire for power might have evolved from dominance being an indicator of the amount of food one might eat. The desire for order promotes cleanliness, which would have promoted health and led to survival.

Although each human exhibits all of these desires, we present them to varying degrees, which separates us as individuals. Although most of us want each of



our desires to a moderate degree — called our set point — some have higher set points than others. This explains why a friend might visit home more often than you or vice versa, based on your different levels of the desire for family.

When our set points are exceeded, we tend to do things to reduce our satisfaction of desires to their set points. For this reason, someone high in desire for one trait does not always have to be pursuing it. Although I would consider myself high in the desire for social contact, I still enjoyed my evening alone last weekend. Someone high in desire for acceptance may not be bothered if one person doesn't like them, as long as they have satisfied their desire with enough acceptance from other people.

Our desires don't only moderate our behavior. Our unique individual combinations of desires influence what we pay attention to, how we process information and how we feel about things

— creating a cohesive, whole individual. Reiss goes as far as to say that compatibility in a relationship is based on how well-aligned each person's 16 desires are to the other person's.

The reason my peers cannot possibly understand why I function the way I do, and hence why I might actually enjoy being a workaholic, is because we all engage in a behavior called self-hugging. Self-hugging is the tendency to assume that one's own values, belief systems and desires make all people the happiest, disregarding individual differences and assuming that our own values are universal. But, we're individuals with our own aspirations and we function differently in our actions to fulfill them.

Psychologists have been searching for years for an explanation to human behaviors. Some suppose that we are motivated by our drive for pleasure, while others argue that we are motivated by our basic physical needs.

Reiss might not have a definitive answer, but his system is much more embracing of the individual than other personality systems that attempt to identify a specific pattern common to all humans.

My highest desires are probably curiosity, power, independence, social contact and family. For me, satisfying these desires leads to the greatest fulfillment in life. Taking my personality and behaviors into consideration, I suddenly understand myself a little better. I understand that my desire for independence propelled me to a school seven hours away from home, and that it conflicted with my mother's desire for the tranquility which would have come to her with having me close to home. I know why I am a double major with a minor and am still anxious to squeeze more classes into my undergraduate career (my desire to satisfy my curiosity).

And I also understand that, although I do have the ability to say no, I almost never exercise it.