

Upgrade Program Relationships Plan

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Introduction

This document is part of a series of upgrade plans for every [area](#) of your life. It's broadly designed for a single, middle-class, 30-something living in a major city in a developed country.

Many people think that finding “the one” or great romantic partners just happens. This is rarely true. And when it does, often it involves sacrificing higher quality partners for what's easily available. For shorter-term partners relying on luck might be appropriate, but for long-term partners it usually makes sense to be more systematic. And keep in mind that if advances in human lifespan come quickly, long-term relationships might take on new meaning—imagine 100 or 1,000 year long relationships.

That said, it's also important to remember that finding and maintaining romantic relationships is often really messy and complicated. This plan may make it seem simple and straightforward, but that's also rarely the case in practice. Take diligent action toward your objectives, but also be open to the random and unexpected throughout the process.

Please go to “File” > “Make a copy” and make a copy of it for yourself. Then fill it out section by section according to your particular needs and circumstances. Perhaps add sections or items, delete them, change the order, and so on.

Your aim should be to make the plan as applicable and useful to you as possible. You should not follow the plan blindly—think it through for yourself.

Note that this process might be challenging. You might need to teach yourself things you aren't very knowledgeable about yet. You might feel like you need to do preliminary work in a different life area first. That's okay. Figure out broadly what makes sense for you, operationalize that understanding as specific actions in the [Actions](#) section, and then do them.

If it feels overwhelming, just start with the parts you find most valuable and do what you can. Tackle the rest over time. It may also help to set aside a dedicated [day](#) to work exclusively on this by yourself or with friends. Or you may choose to enlist an [UP Coach](#) to co-design and execute this plan alongside you.

Epistemic Status

This is an overview of how confident the principal [author](#) is in this plan.

- Generally very high confidence in plan
- Based on 15+ years of relationship coaching across dozens of individuals and couples (including through multiple breakups and divorces), 20+ years of dating many partners across six countries and 15+ cities, having 100% “success” rate in relationships (according

to all relationship partners), 15+ years of online dating across 10+ apps, co-hosting multiple dating events, and playing informal matchmaker multiple times (with at least one confirmed marriage)

Objectives

Decide what objectives you have with this plan and rank them in order of importance. Below are some sample objectives.

1. Define ideal romantic partner or partners
2. Define type(s) of ideal relationship or relationships
3. Create and maintain ideal relationship with ideal romantic partner or partners

Metrics

Decide what metrics you will use to evaluate the effectiveness of this plan. Also include the frequency in which you'll evaluate those metrics. For example, ad hoc, once, hourly, daily, weekly, monthly, quarterly, annually or per decade. Below are some sample metrics.

- Relationships Rating: How would you rate your romantic relationships, on a 1-10 scale?
- Number of Romantic Relationships
- Average Quality of Romantic Relationships
- Average Duration of Romantic Relationships
- [Satisfaction With Love Life Scale \(SWLLS\)](#)

Values

List all of your relevant values and rank them in order of importance. Below are some sample values.

1. Connection
2. Interdependence
3. Independence
4. Pleasure
5. Stability

Value Analysis

List and then analyze all of the costs and benefits of this plan. Potentially also estimate expected value, cost-benefit, return on investment, and/or net present value.

- Time costs: 1 - 2,000 hours

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- Financial costs: \$0 - \$100,000 dollars (e.g., dates, coaches, psychotherapists, matchmaking services, dating apps, weddings, divorces, etc.)
- Benefits: \$X in potentially extremely large objective and subjective benefits (e.g., love, happiness, stability, wealth, fame, etc.)

Strategies

Decide on your high-level strategies for achieving your objectives. Below are some sample strategies.

Key People

- Do the work on your own
- Outsource some of the work to experts (e.g., matchmakers, dating coaches, etc.)
- Outsource some of the work to assistants (e.g., date planning, dating app swiping, etc.)

Key Timings

- Make incremental progress every day until you reach your objectives
- Make as much progress as you can over a set period (e.g., one month, six months or one year)
- Intensively invest resources until you reach your objectives

Sources

- Extensively use online dating apps to find partner(s)
- Extensively date from offline sources

Approaches

- Be assertive and actively pursue potential partners
- Be primarily passive, but encourage potential partners to pursue you

Actions

List the specific actions you will take to achieve your objectives. You should add these tasks to your project management system unless you are choosing to do them now. Below is a sample sequence of actions you might take.

1. Describe your [mental model](#) of romantic relationships
 - a. Create a visual representation from memory without referencing this plan or outside sources of information

- b. Create a new visual representation after thoroughly studying this plan and any relevant sources of information
 - c. Pay special attention to the improvements in the second version as incorporating those new insights may be crucial to the success of your plan
 2. Finish every section of this plan, including the [assessments](#), [tools](#), and [resources](#) below
 3. Create a Relationship Compatibility Model
 - a. Write out exactly what you do and don't want in a romantic partner or partners and determine the weight for each criterion^{1 2}
 - i. Think through each criterion and the full set of criteria as a whole
 - ii. Think through how these criteria may or may not change over time
 - iii. Think through how realistic these criteria are given your own mate value and willingness to invest in dating
 - b. Write out exactly what you do and don't want in a romantic relationship and determine the weight for each criterion^{3 4}
 - i. Think through each criterion and the full set of criteria as a whole
 1. Consider pragmatic concerns and romantic love (e.g., attachment (love), attraction (romance), and lust (sex))
 - ii. Think through how these criteria may or may not change over time (e.g., perhaps when you're younger you're okay with casual relationships but when you're older you're less open to this, or the other way around)
 - iii. Think through how realistic these criteria are given your own mate value and willingness to invest in dating
 4. Create a standard [Relationship Agreement](#)
 5. Decide how you will pursue your ideal partner or partners
 - a. Consider offline options (e.g., affinity groups, "on the street", school or work, etc.)
 - b. Consider online options (e.g., dating apps, social networks, etc.)
 - i. Consider creating a ["Date Me" document](#) and sharing it publicly on your social networks
 - c. Consider matchmakers and especially technology-assisted matchmakers (e.g., [Keeper AI](#))
 - d. Decide how many total hours or length of time you wish to invest in finding your (a) first potential partner (e.g., perhaps one month) and (b) securing your best partner or partners (e.g., perhaps six months)
 - i. If you exceed these time lengths when you begin pursuing your partner or partners and notice, you will likely need to (a) improve your skill at dating, (b) adjust your dating strategies, (c) adjust your selection criteria, and/or (d) extend the amount of time you are willing to invest in the process

¹ [Machine learning uncovers the most robust self-report predictors of relationship quality across 43 longitudinal couples studies](#)

² [A Review of the Factors Associated with Marital Satisfaction](#)

³ [Machine learning uncovers the most robust self-report predictors of relationship quality across 43 longitudinal couples studies](#)

⁴ [A Review of the Factors Associated with Marital Satisfaction](#)

6. Begin pursuing your ideal partner or partners
7. Communicate clearly with potential partners
 - a. Be as explicit as you can with what you want and don't want as early as possible, usually within the first 1-30 minutes of communicating with someone (although in many cases you may need to defer this)
 - b. Generally hold an informal videocall before agreeing to a date, unless an in person date is extremely low investment, you really enjoy dating or you believe this will hurt your ability to advance to a date with someone you highly value
8. Use your Relationship Compatibility Model to assess potential partners
 - a. Adjust your investment time in assessing these potential partners by a factor of how strict your criteria are (more strict = less time since they either clearly fit or not) and how plausible they are a fit (more plausible = more time since you might really want to invest more in those potential partners)
9. Begin a relationship or relationships with a highly compatible partner or partners
10. Invest heavily into your relationship
 - a. Empathize with your partner every day
 - i. Respond to as many emotional bids as possible
 - ii. Say 5+ nice things to your partner every day
 - b. Manage your own emotions
 - c. Plausibly maintain your positive illusions of your partner
 - d. Have a lot of sex with your partner, insofar as you both desire
 - e. Touch your partner every day, insofar as you both desire
 - f. Incorporate a healthy dose of novelty into your relationship
11. Customize your [Relationship Agreement](#) to your current partner or partners
12. Honor the commitments in your [Relationship Agreement](#) with your partner or partners
13. Intentionally and fluidly adapt the relationship or relationships as needed
 - a. Specifically decide how the relationship or relationships should change (e.g., consciously choose to move in together versus unconsciously opting to do so out of convenience)
 - b. For relationships leading toward lifelong partnerships or marriage, consider dating for at least two years before making that commitment
 - c. Be mindful of the "X-year itch" where separation rates may increase⁵
14. Fully enjoy the relationship or relationships you've built
15. Develop your sense of [self](#)
16. Improve your [appearance](#)
17. Improve your [personality](#)
18. Improve your [finances](#)
19. Improve your [career](#)
20. Improve your [brand](#)
21. Improve your [communication skills](#)

⁵ The research is mixed on this, with 4, 5, and 7 years often claimed. See [Marriage duration and divorce: the seven-year itch or a lifelong itch?](#)

22. Improve your [leisure experiences](#)
23. Improve your [social life](#)
24. Improve your [sex life](#)

Schedule

Decide on which days you will take which actions. You should add these dates to your calendar now.

- [Date]: Finalize plan
- [Dates]: Execute plan
- [Dates]: Review plan's outcomes

Predictions

Predict how well you will do in achieving your objectives.

- [Name]: I predict with [X]% confidence that I will [Y] by [Z].
- [Team Member's Name]: I predict with [X]% confidence that [Name] will [Y] by [Z].
- [Team Member's Name]: I predict with [X]% confidence that [Name] will [Y] by [Z].

- Combined: We predict with an average [X]% confidence that [Name] will [Y] by [Z].

Outcomes

Objectively record how well you achieved your objectives.

- [Date #1]: [Outcomes]
- [Date #2]: [Outcomes]
- [Date #3]: [Outcomes]
- [Date #4]: [Outcomes]
- [Date #5]: [Outcomes]
- [Date #6]: [Outcomes]
- [Date #7]: [Outcomes]
- [Date #8]: [Outcomes]
- [Date #9]: [Outcomes]
- [Date #10]: [Outcomes]

Assessments

List all of the assessments you might take to understand how you're doing compared to your objectives. Below are some sample assessments.

- [5 Love Languages](#): an assessment of an individual's emotional communication preference (UP Top Pick)
- [Attachment Styles and Close Relationships](#): two surveys that measure your attachment style, or the way you relate to others in the context of close relationships
- [Close Relationships Questionnaire](#): a measure of attachment style
- [Helen Fisher's Love Test](#): a test to reveal ten different aspects of love and romance: emotional arousal, anxiety, closeness, positive illusions, motivation, obsession, sex, belief that falling in love is involuntary, romantic interest in others, and frustration attraction
- [Love Attitudes Scale \(LAS\) – Short Form](#): a standardized measure of Lee's (1973) love styles
- [Passionate Love Scale](#): a questionnaire to find out what parts of the brain might be involved if an individual is in love
- [Positive and Negative Semantic Differential \(PN–SMD\)](#): a two-dimensional measurement of relationship satisfaction
- [Relationship Compatibility Match](#): a tool to accurately match the relationship compatibility between two persons, revealing both good and bad qualities, strengths and weaknesses
- [Relationship Scales Questionnaire \(RSQ\)](#): a 30-item questionnaire for measuring feelings about close relationships
- [Relationship Survey](#): a survey to assess a person's "style" of relating in romantic/love relationships and morality
- [Satisfaction With Love Life Scale \(SWLLS\)](#): a scale that assesses a person's global evaluation of love satisfaction
- [Self-Expansion Quiz for Love](#): a quiz revealing the health and depth of a relationship
- [Short-Form Multidimensional Jealousy Scale \(SF-MJS\)](#): a self-report questionnaire consisting of 17 items that assesses romantic jealousy
- [Trust in Close Relationships Scale](#): a 17-item measure designed to gauge levels of trust in one's partner
- [Trust Metric](#): a brief quiz of the trust in a relationship
- [When to Bail](#): an online quiz to help a person get a sense of whether to stay in a relationship or consider moving on

Tools

List all of the tools you might use to achieve your objectives. Below are some sample tools.

- [36 Questions](#)
- [A Map of the Lands of Human Sexuality](#)
- [Agape](#)
- [Badoo](#)
- [Bloom Community](#)
- [Bumble](#)
- [Coffee Meets Bagel](#)

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- [Dateworking](#)
- [Feeld](#)
- [Female Delusion Calculator](#)
- [FilterOff](#)
- [Gottman Card Decks](#)
- [Gottman Connect](#)
- [Grindr](#)
- [Happy Couple](#)
- [Hinge](#)
- [Imago Relationship Therapy \(IRT\)](#)
- [Inner Circle](#)
- [Introverted Alpha](#)
- [Keeper AI](#)
- [Lasting](#)
- [Luxy](#)
- [Maclynn International](#)
- [Male Reality Calculator](#)
- [Nanaya](#)
- [OkCupid](#)
- [Paired](#)
- [Personal Dating Assistants](#)
- [ReGain](#)
- [Relationship Hero](#)
- [Roast Dating](#)
- [Tantan](#)
- [The League](#)
- [Tinder](#)
- [United States Singles Map](#)
- [UP Actions](#)
- [UP Appearance Plan](#)
- [UP Assessments](#)
- [UP Brand Plan](#)
- [UP Career Plan](#)
- [UP Communication Plan](#)
- [UP Curriculum](#)
- [UP Emotional Plan](#)
- [UP Fitness Plan](#)
- [UP Health Plan](#)
- [UP Leisure Plan](#)
- [UP Nutrition Plan](#)
- [UP Relationship Agreement](#)
- [UP Sex Plan](#)
- [UP Social Plan](#)

- [UP Tools](#)
- [Vida Select](#)
- [WebWed](#)

Resources

List all of the resources you might use to achieve your objectives. Below are some sample resources.

- [Anatomy of a Dating Document](#)
- [Effective Dating Facebook Group](#)
- [Eight Dates: Essential Conversations for a Lifetime of Love](#)
- [Getting the Love You Want: A Guide for Couples](#)
- [Gottman Couples Retreats](#)
- [Healthy Framework](#)
- [Landmark Forum](#)
- [Mate](#)
- [More Than Two](#)
- [Principles of Social Psychology- 1st International Edition](#)
- [The All-or-Nothing Marriage: How the Best Marriages Work](#)
- [The Oxford Handbook of Close Relationships](#)
- [The Seven Principles for Making Marriage Work](#)
- [The Top 10 Best and Worst US Cities for Dating for Each Generation](#)
- [What Makes Love Last?](#)

Notes

Add any random thoughts, questions, uncertainties, etc.

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