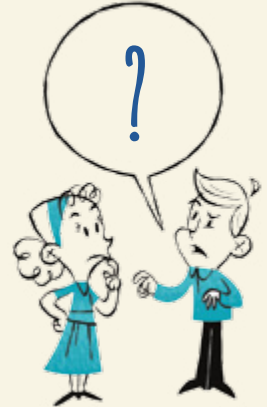


# SAVE THE DATE!

Date going poorly? Don't wave the white flag of surrender just yet.



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Church Magazines

Few sounds are quite so painful to the ears as awkward silence on a date. All can be laughter and relaxation only a few moments earlier, then . . . WHAM! The cone of silence drops down from nowhere. Even with two or three couples in the group date, it's still all too easy for conversation to dry up like a drop of water on a hot sidewalk.

And that's only one of a thousand ways a date can start to head downhill. What if the food is gross or costs more than you expected? What if your awesome picnic and three-legged race gets rained out? What if you accidentally say something really dumb?

Nine times out of 10, you can still turn things around. You can save the date! Because, really, who wants to bail out at the first obstacle when you're out there to have fun and get to know each other better? (See *For the Strength of Youth* [2011], 4.)

Here are a few tips on how to get your date back on track.

PROBLEM:

HELP!  
WE'VE RUN  
OUT OF STUFF  
TO SAY!



POSSIBLE  
FIX:

One of the first and best solutions here is to make sure you're thinking more about the other person than about yourself. Ask about the person's interests because you really want to know, and show genuine interest in their responses. Show you're paying attention by asking questions using a detail from a previous answer.

Even so, it can be easy to ultimately hit a brick wall and run out of stuff you can think to say. When that happens, here are three words to remember: *the question game*.

The question game is simple. Everybody takes a turn asking a question for the group to answer one at a time. The key is to make them interesting questions. Favorite ice cream flavors need not apply.

Instead, try something like, "If you had a time machine and could spend one day anywhere/anytime, where and when would you go?" Or, "If you could instantly pass one law that the whole world would have to follow for a year, what would it be?" The more creative and interesting the questions, the more memorable and intriguing the answers.

PROBLEM:

"UGH. EVERYBODY IS BORED."

OR

"GREAT, THE EVENT WE WERE GOING TO IS SOLD OUT."

OR

"GO AWAY, LITTLE BLACK RAIN CLOUD! IT WAS SUPPOSED TO BE SUNNY!"

POSSIBLE FIX:



On dates, as in life, things don't always go as planned. Solution? Try something else. Preparation beforehand is key. You can prepare potential backup plans, or better yet, bring a backup backpack. People cart first-aid kits all over the place. Why not come prepared for a dating setback as well?

### SOME STUFF YOU MIGHT CONSIDER PUTTING IN A BACKUP BACKPACK:

- A couple of small board games or other games you can pack.
- A flying disc (aka Frisbee). For maximum awesome, consider investing in a 175-gram disc. They fly SO much better than dollar-store, lightweight varieties.
- A choose-your-own-adventure book.
- A bunch of words on cards for charades written by somebody else and sealed in



- an envelope (so you don't know them ahead of time). A fun twist is to have one person be the guesser while the rest of his/her team gives the clues.
- A small bag of hard candy for a treat. They last a long time and are general crowd-pleasers.
- A sealed-in-an-envelope list of random items for a photo scavenger hunt (again, a list somebody else

created) that your group has to collect in under an hour.



PROBLEM:

THE  
MOVIE  
ISN'T AS CLEAN AS  
WE'D BEEN TOLD.



POSSIBLE  
FIX:

Time to switch gears again. As explained in *For the Strength of Youth*, “Have the courage to walk out of a movie, change your music, or turn off a computer, television, or mobile device if what you see or hear drives away the Spirit” ([2011], 11).

You don't have to be afraid of ruining a date by leaving a theater or turning off a movie or music that is inappropriate. The fix is simple, even if it takes a bit of courage: do something else. Head to a park for games or pull something out of the backup backpack. The whole group will feel happier and have a better experience if there's nothing driving away the Spirit.

And just for the record, you may not even want to start with a movie in the first place. As Elder Richard G. Scott of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles (1928–2015) said, “I think it is a stupid idea for two people trying to get to know each other” because you can't talk during a movie.<sup>1</sup>



PROBLEM:

WE WERE  
ATTACKED  
BY A SWARM OF  
ILL-TEMPERED  
WASPS!



POSSIBLE  
FIX:

Um . . . find some ice packs? Seriously, you never know what kind of bumps in the road you'll encounter. Flat tires, tripping in mud puddles, an on-the-date discovery of a food allergy, and other misadventures can show up unannounced and larger than life. Obviously, first do all you can to address the problem. But after that, consider adding the following step when appropriate.

Elder Joseph B. Wirthlin of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles (1917–2008) taught: “Over the years I have learned a few things that have helped me through times of testing and trial. . . . The first thing we can do is learn to laugh. . . . The next time you're tempted to groan, you might try to laugh instead. It will extend your life and make the lives of all those around you more enjoyable.”<sup>2</sup>

You might be surprised how many lemons are turned to lemonade through simple laughter.

PROBLEM:

I SAID  
SOMETHING REALLY  
DUMB. IT WAS  
AN ACCIDENT, I  
PROMISE . . .

POSSIBLE  
FIX:

Call your date the wrong name? Accidentally insult a favorite sports team or dis on a cherished childhood toy? Let's face it, it's easy to feel antsy and jittery on a date and end up saying something dumb. When that happens, apologize sincerely and try to laugh at yourself and your blunder if you can do so in a way that doesn't make things worse. You might even volunteer a goofy/embarrassing story of your own to try and balance the scales a little.



PROBLEM:

"MY DATE IS  
JUST PLAIN  
MEAN."

OR

"MY DATE  
WANTS TO BE  
PHYSICAL."

OR

"MY DATE  
WANTS ME TO  
BREAK  
MY STANDARDS."



SOLUTION:

While it's true that 9 times out of 10 a date can be turned around, there are indeed exceptions. If you find yourself in the company of somebody who disrespects you or who tries to get you to break gospel standards, be kind but end the date. Get out and get home. (This is a situation less likely in a group, by the way.)

There's a difference between patiently bearing with annoying behaviors (such as your date texting) and accepting unacceptable behavior. Elder Jeffrey R. Holland of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles has taught, "In a dating and courtship relationship, I would not have you spend five minutes with someone who belittles you, who is constantly critical of you, who is cruel at your expense and may even call it humor."<sup>3</sup>

Though it shouldn't happen often, you'll need to know when a date is not worth saving. When that happens you should be respectful, but you don't have to feel bad about choosing to leave. The adventures of dating come with ups and downs aplenty. Yet once you're prepared with a few key strategies, most of the not-so-great dates can still be saved and ready to rock. **NE**



NOTES

1. Richard G. Scott, "To Have Peace and Happiness" (Church Educational System fireside for young adults, Sept. 12, 2010), 4, [speeches.byu.edu](http://speeches.byu.edu).
2. Joseph B. Wirthlin, "Come What May, and Love It," *Ensign*, Nov. 2008, 26–27.
3. Jeffrey R. Holland, "How Do I Love Thee?" *New Era*, Oct. 2003, 6.