

FROM THE CREATORS OF FACING THE GIANTS

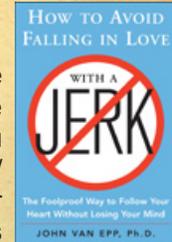
FIREPROOF

HERE ARE SOME PRACTICAL SUGGESTIONS DRAWN FROM THE PRINCIPLES OF “JERK”

Suggestion #1

GET OFF THAT DIVING BOARD!

That's right. Don't dive in just yet. Don't commit your heart to someone before you know the whole story. The passion is there – all the pistons are firing, the e-mails are sweet, and the kisses are sweeter. But ask yourself some big-time questions: Are you the only one? Are you sure? Have you met your partner's friends – girls and guys? How are they treated? Does s/ he have a job? Are you allowed to call him there? Have you seen your partner angry? Is your partner forgiving? With you? With her family? With the waiter? Find out if this person deserves your commitment, or if he/she is just another broken heart waiting to happen.



Suggestion #2

YOU BETTER FEEL GOOD ABOUT IT.

The other person absolutely has to make you feel wonderful about what you put into, and get out of, the relationship. Are you investing too much time making everything come together? Doing all the work? Making the plans, doing all the calling, talking, cooking, spending? Are you afraid to ask him to pick up the check? Are you afraid to ask her for anything? Is it all about what she wants, or what you both want? Does he make you feel like he'd go to the ends of the earth for you, or do you feel like the end of the world? Don't even temporarily commit to someone who makes you feel lousy about yourself.

Number #3

THE GOOD DOESN'T ALWAYS LAST. BUT THE BAD USUALLY GETS WORSE.

If he cheated out at the movies last night, will he cheap out on the mortgage after 10 years of marriage? If you can't talk to her now, how much worse will you two be communicating six months from now? If he looks at other girls now, how will you honestly be able to exchange vows with this guy at all? Look closely at positives and negatives – and count on the good staying good, and the bad driving you crazy. The positive aspects of your relationship should far outweigh the negative. Otherwise you're not going to be feeling good about this and you'll realize you jumped off that diving board way too soon.

Number #4

REVEAL THE HIDDEN CODE

What's your partner's personal code, and what's yours? It takes a bit of digging to determine someone's conscience and how consistently he/she follows it. Maybe she tells little white lies, but does she think it's okay to tell big ones? Is he dependable? Will he call when he says he will? Does he bring you flowers when you deserve celebrating, and chicken soup when you feel lousy? Is she consistently inconsistent about her moods, her needs, her relationship to you? Will he put you first and himself second? Figure this out and you'll know if you can take the plunge.



John Van Epp, PhD, is the founder and director of the Marriage LINKS and PICK a Partner programs, commonly referred to as How To Avoid Marrying A Jerk (ette). Known for his humor and insight, he conducts numerous presentations and workshops, and has trained over fifteen hundred instructors in his programs in the last two years. His twenty years of clinical experience and extensive research in premarital, marital and family relations, being enriched by his previous experience as a minister, have paved the way for his programs to be taught in thousands of churches, singles organizations, educational settings and social agencies in 45 states, ten countries and by more than 1,000 chaplains. He has been happily married for twenty-eight years and is the proud father of two daughters. www.nojerks.com



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