

# Building Lasting Relationships in Recovery

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Creating romantic attachments can be difficult for anyone. It is particularly complicated for someone walking in sobriety. Sometimes, using starts out as a social tool so many recovering addicts simply miss the stages and social growth that others go through. Shyness is a very real and often crippling struggle which is compounded when the “normal avenues of dating” are bars and nightclubs. This makes things particularly difficult for a now-sober individual to “find love” or even just romantic companionship.



Here are some pointers for Sober Romance:

1. Lay off the romance for at least the **first year** of sobriety. This gives you a chance to get to know yourself again and get comfortable with your shiny new identity.
2. Take a good hard look at yourself. Do you like what you see? If you can't love yourself, how can you ask anyone else to? Actively work to improve your own self-image
3. The self-absorption of the addict is detrimental to romance. So carefully examine this side of yourself and take steps to consciously correct this behavior.
4. Think about getting a plant, or a pet first. It won't cure any hankering for love but it might give you a good view into your ability to share attention and care for something.
5. Bars are out of the question. Try finding like-minded people in classes, clubs, the gym or religious fellowship functions.
6. Ask your family, your sponsor and your friends if they think you are ready to start dating again. Loved ones don't always actually know what's best for us, but at least you can get some perspective from someone who cares about you.
7. Sex is never a good reason to date. I know, I know, that's a little counter intuitive isn't it? But hear me out. When you are using, you become anaesthetized to physical joys. **Sobriety** corrects that issue so newly sober individuals often have extremely high sex drives. Unfortunately, the important points of self-respect, self-image and selfishness are not solved so easily. Be fair. Fix yourself first, then seek to share your life with someone afterwards.

8. Even after the first year, in fact, it never ends- sobriety, mental and emotional health are priorities. If the relationship you are trying to build threatens your sobriety, your mental or emotional health, you need to reconsider its importance.

Remember that relationships come with a whole host of complications. Jealousy, neglect and hurt feelings are just a few of the issues that you have to be ready to face head-on when you decide to take on a relationship. These issues cause stress and stress can lead to relapse. It's extremely important that you wait until you are ready before taking on these challenges.