

Is He the Man of Your Dreams or the Little Boy of Your Nightmares?

A Capture His Heart 2.0 Bonus

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Is He the Man of Your Dreams or the Little Boy of Your Nightmares?

Your new Christian Louboutin pumps are so sexy and shiny they make you feel like Jennifer Lopez on a million dollar shopping spree. You left work early and spent hours getting ready for the date of the century. Fabulous hair, radiant skin, real stockings (!), a few strategic sparkles. This new guy makes your heart hammer and your pulse race, and you can't wait to see where tonight's VIP club date ends up. . .

You tried hard to overlook the empties strewn in the floorboards of his dirty car he picked you up in, because the man is dressed to the teeth and F-I-N-E fine.

But he can't untether himself from his cell phone, seems to have started drinking before he picked you up, skipped the valet parking, and didn't wait for you to get out of the car – just headed up to the club without taking into account how much your heels slowed you down.

He hasn't made a place for you in the crowd or offered to fight his way to the bar to get you a drink. And even though you're the one he's with, he's chatting up every hot girl in the club.

But he started out so awesome. . . !

He was great – not good, but great! – when the two of you connected earlier in the week. He called you when he said he would, you spent long hours talking and texting, and he didn't seem to be scared of sharing his feelings. His kisses (and that's all you've sampled so far) sent electric currents skittering across your skin, awakening all your dreams of, well, the man of your dreams. *You couldn't wait for more.*

You were sure he had potential. You thought he was a real man.

But now he's behaving like a self-focused little boy, and when you asked him to take you home, he begged and pleaded to come inside – you know exactly why – and when you refused, he made you feel like a mommy telling her ten-year-old he couldn't have any candy before dinner.

Why don't these guys come with a warning label?

Ugh. Shouldn't these guys carry a warning label? Something like, "Looks awesome in tight jeans, but can't think of anything but his own pleasure." Cue the loud buzzer, 'cause this one's NOT the Real Man you're looking for.

How many times have YOU been there: out on a date with a man who made your heart pound and your wanna-need-a-man engine shift into high speed so fast you nearly stripped the gears, only to find that he wasn't exactly what you'd hoped he'd be.

Have you ever felt like you were crawling on your hands and knees (ruining those super-hot thigh-highs you splurged on in Victoria's Secret) through a burning desert with no water. . .

Squinting against the glare to see the man of your dreams racing toward you with a look of profound love and anguished concern on his face. . .

You hoped he would scoop you up and hold you against his chest, letting nothing stop him from getting you to that beautiful oasis of safety, rest, and lifelong love.

Yeah. That was a mirage, all right.

In fact, you probably found far more little boys in the world than real men. Guys with the demands and behaviors of an adolescent teenager, even though they are somehow pulling off the illusion of being a real, live, responsible, and sexy man.

They have the outward show without the inward maturity.

What happens when you bring a "little boy" home. . .

And they may be just fine, so long as they are swimming around in the single guy universe. . .

But when YOU get sucked in by the illusion and unknowingly take a little boy home, he expects you to:

- Read his mind
- Pick up his socks
- Never expect anything of him

- Lovingly make over all his tiny injuries
- Listen endlessly while he drones on
- Understand his unacceptable lapses in judgement/honesty/faithfulness

That last one's the worst, isn't it?

It's enough to make you want to drag your brand new gel set manicure down a cinderblock wall. Because at least THAT would show results, whereas bringing home a boy and hoping for a man is useless, fruitless, and will drive you crazy in a skinny minute.

And it relentlessly devours time *you just don't have* to waste.

But that doesn't mean the man of your dreams doesn't exist. . .

You need an early warning system

You just need a fast, simple, and highly effective way to tell the real men from the little boys.

You need a warning label, a sticker with big writing on it that lets you know (before you invest your heart!) that THIS one is safe, THIS one will love you forever, THIS one is a keeper.

Guess what? You're not the only one.

There are thousands of other reasonable, responsible, beautiful, and desperately-thirsty-for-a-Real-Man women out there who are ready for change, NOW. Because it's emotionally exhausting meeting or dating one little boy after another.

And worse, it's actually *keeping you* from the man who is eager to find you, hold you in his arms, and love you forever. The man of your dreams.

Shred your Perfect Man Checklist (then burn the shreds)

This is my "Is He The ONE" checklist, and it's designed to save you months and years of misery and heartbreak. It's also designed to REPLACE that old Perfect Man checklist you've been adding to since you were fourteen and in love with that swoon-worthy celebrity teen heartthrob.

That teen dream really WAS a little boy, and if your Perfect Man Checklist (PMC) started there, that may be part of the problem you've been having.

It was for me, anyhow.

I had a PMC that any teenage girl would trade her best lipgloss and a push-up bra for; it used the word “dreamy” and got worse from there. Nicholas Sparks would have loved my PMC. But the only thing it was good for was making me miserable, because real love had little to do with all the strawberry-scented Prince Charming rainbows and unicorns my list enshrined.

Girlfriend, get rid of your Perfect Man Checklist (if you still have one floating around somewhere), because this is so much better!

This checklist is all grown up and ready to set off a flashing strobe light over every hot-and-ready real man, while mentally stamping a giant “X” over every little boy (no matter how adorable he might seem).

All you need to know is how to use the list. . . And I promise, it’s easy!

How to KNOW if he’s “The One”

A great relationship is built, not delivered magically via fairy godmother. But! The way to ensure that your man is The One is to begin by looking to see if he has the *foundational* layers that are critical to your success as a couple.

You deserve someone responsible and trustworthy; someone who will treat you like a lady, be willing to communicate appropriately with you, and who expects to be a mature partner in a grown-up relationship. Those are part of the foundational layers in your relationship cake.

Sure, a romantic sensibility, washboard abs, and a sexy smile that’s exclusively for YOU are good to have, too – but guess what? Those things are actually the icing on your cake.

You need some good foundational layers to start with, and you can build from there. (You’d be amazed at what you can build, too!)

Start with the cake (the big, delicious layers)

This list is set up to give you the foundational building blocks for finding a real man who has the raw, delicious potential to become the man of your dreams – while still allowing the two of you to customize your relationship for your deep pleasure and heart’s content.

Believe me, “customization” – i.e., FROSTING! – is the most fun part. But it can’t happen unless the foundation is in place.

There are four big layers

The biggest pieces of this puzzle fall into four main categories.

- A. His willingness to grow and mature
- B. His attraction to a strong, confident woman
- C. His willingness to prove himself trustworthy
- D. His willingness to show respect

Of course, there’s much more than just these things to consider as you determine whether or not your man is The One, but when you have these, you have a lot of good stuff to build on.

There are 11 questions for you to score him on

You’ll be giving yourself and your man a score from 1 (terrible) to 5 (awesome) on each section.

Are you surprised that there are only 11 questions? Most *Cosmo* quizzes have 50 or more! Yep, but just because it’s simple doesn’t mean these particular questions aren’t very powerful. They are ONLY asking about the essential foundational layers, remember.

Be sure to be as honest as you possibly can as you consider your answers.

How the scoring works

Here’s your scale again:

- 1. Terrible
- 2. Unimpressive
- 3. Hmm, getting there
- 4. Pretty damn good
- 5. Awesome

What you're looking for is POTENTIAL, not perfection.

So anything under a 3 is a good warning that there's work to be done in a critical area.

How much of that are YOU willing to help him grow? It's a good question, and one only you can answer. And in the end, he gets to choose whether or not he even WANTS to grow in that area.

Don't worry, just because he doesn't score straight 5s doesn't mean it will never work. This just gives you a way to start thinking about whether or not your man really does have the potential to be the man of your dreams.

And in that same vein: even if the man you're currently considering doesn't have ALL the big pieces (you just had a dirty thought, didn't you? This just may be more fun than you realized!) you're looking for, a real man will continue to grow and mature throughout your relationship.

In fact, that very capability – a willingness to grow – is part of the very first item on the list!

Final thought before you begin: How do you score yourself?

It's not at all a bad idea to go through and score *yourself* on this checklist too. No, it isn't written with a woman in mind – we have different ways of looking at the world and moving around within it. But it will give you some ideas for thinking about, won't it?

Just sayin'...!

Get ready, sister. The man of your dreams is about to be revealed to you... All YOU have to do is start checking off the list!

Checklist for the man of your dreams

A. He's willing to grow and mature

How do you know whether he's willing to keep working on himself and the relationships most important to him? Take a good look at how he's changed over time. You don't have to have known him long, either – you can simply ask the right questions.

He has one or two long-term close friends.

Little boys don't do a great job of weathering the tough times of a friendship; their friends come and go faster than the horses on the merry-go-round fly past.

But a real man has some serious friends (usually one or two) that he's had for many years; they've seen each other through good times and bad, and would do nearly anything for one another.

Invite him to tell you some of those stories about his best friends. And if you can meet those friends in person, even better. If they show character and maturity, it's a good indicator that your man has what you're looking for.

Give your man a score from 1 (terrible) to 5 (awesome) on how willing he seems to grow and mature with his friends.

_____ He seems to have one or two solid friendships that have weathered storms and grown.

Use CAUTION when looking at family relationships...

The reason you can't tell as much from looking at his family relationships is that while we choose our friends, we can't always do much about our family.

That doesn't mean the topic is off the table, though. If your man finds his family members frustrating or even poisonous – and yet he has *grown past them* and can deal with them in reasonably mature ways (i.e., he shows respect where respect is due) – you have a keeper.

Give your man a score from 1 (terrible) to 5 (awesome) on how willing he seems to show respect to his family.

_____ He seems to deal reasonably with his family, showing respect even if there are multiple problem areas.

This applies to how he speaks of his ex, too.

Most of us have a few exes floating around in our past. It doesn't necessarily mean he's not willing to change and grow – after all, a committed relationship takes TWO people agreeing to stick together.

However, you can learn something about his willingness to change and grow by how he talks about his ex. Hopefully you won't be talking about her too much, but if she does come up and your man is able to speak respectfully – no matter how nasty the breakup was – he's well worth a closer look.

Bonus points if he's able to see how he contributed to the problems the relationship had, and has built the changes in himself that those problems called for.

If applicable, give your man a score from 1 (terrible) to 5 (awesome) on how appropriately he speaks of his ex.

_____ He keeps his mouth shut, or speaks politely about his ex.

_____ He seems to be looking carefully at his role in the breakup.

He can stand on his own two feet

He may not be firmly established in a career, but he's getting there and he's not allergic to hard work. He has passions and hobbies and isn't still relying on his parents or other people to make his car payments, bail him out of the situations he gets himself into, or fix the relationships and other things he's broken.

He doesn't constantly complain about life, his landlord, his boss, his weight, etc. He knows he has control in his own life, and doesn't see everything as "happening to him."

Give your man a score from 1 (terrible) to 5 (awesome) on how independent and capable he is.

_____ He knows he's in charge of his own life.

B. He's attracted to a strong, confident woman (YOU!)

Okay, it was maybe a little sneaky to put this in here, but it's worth saying: to attract a strong, confident man, you must BE a strong, confident woman.

You're smart. You've worked to beat the demons that tell you that you're not good enough. You aren't needy or insecure. You know how to SHINE and *that* is what attracts real men.

WARNING: It attracts *lots* of men, actually, so your job isn't finished if you *only* have his attraction to you to go on. The problem shows up when you're attracted to guys who DON'T have the slightest interest in you or who are only interested in using you for some particular need they have (sex, a game, someone to clean their apartment or make their mom happy, put them through school, etc.).

But if you are a strong, confident woman, the man of your dreams will definitely be in the pack of guys who come knocking at your door. It's your job to sort the losers from the keepers, and that's why there's a whole list and not just a single item to work with here. :)

By the way, part of this one is that he makes you *feel* like a strong, confident woman, too. Not a maid, a bootie call, or a source of income for his bar tab. . .

Give your man a score from 1 (terrible) to 5 (awesome) on how much he appreciates you and makes you FEEL like a strong, confident woman.

_____ He appreciates me and makes me feel capable, strong, and confident.

C. He's willing to prove himself trustworthy

The man of your dreams must be willing to prove that he can be trusted. This means he's not cleared straight out of the gate. He must be willing to earn your trust by consistently proving himself to be the kind of man who calls when he says he will call, shows up where he's expected, owns up to his screw-ups, (we all make mistakes) and does his best to make things right whenever possible.

How can you know? There are several big indicators to work with. . .

Will he go out of his way for you for no return benefit?

The single biggest way to determine a man's trustworthiness is if he will go out of his way to do things for you or for others when he stands to get nothing out of the deal for himself.

Let me say that again.

Is he willing to extend himself or go out of his way for you **EVEN THOUGH** there is no direct, obvious, or immediate benefit to him?

This one is important, because a man who can't do for others unless he gets paid in coin, attention, fame, sex, or whatever is a man who is primarily self-focused, which doesn't bode well for your relationship with him.

This characteristic can be grown, but unless you're willing to take on a major fixer-upper or mommy project, don't continue a relationship with a guy who is consistently unable to do something for someone else unless he gets a direct benefit.

Give your man a score from 1 (terrible) to 5 (awesome) on his selflessness.

_____ I've seen or experienced him going out of his way for me or others without expecting anything in return.

Does he keep your confidences and trust you with his own secrets?

If you've been with him for a little while, you've probably shared some of your own embarrassing past. A trustworthy man listens to what others have to say (even if he doesn't necessarily like it) and keeps the confidence.

Even more, he also is willing to risk his *own* secrets into your keeping.

I don't mean secrets like the fact that he has the dead Mrs. Bates mummified in his cellar.

Probably his secrets are more like tiny admissions (verbal or non-verbal) that he's scared, nervous, or uncertain about a particular situation. Those are big manly no-no's, and if he's willing to let some of that show with you, he's probably willing to let you see some of the real (not public) him.

And that's a good sign.

Give your man a score from 1 (terrible) to 5 (awesome) on how well he keeps and shares confidences.

_____ He lets me see glimpses of his secret side.

_____ He keeps the secrets I've told him.

Does he bail at the first sign of trouble?

Can he successfully navigate troubles when they arrive? Is he willing to work to solve problems as they arise, or will he bail out as soon as the going gets rough?

Unfortunately, the only way to really know is to carefully observe as he goes through a rough spot. You wouldn't wish that on someone, but let's face it: that's life, right? And the truth is you're going to learn a LOT by watching or even being a part of it.

This is NOT to say that the man of your dreams will always handle problems with grace and style, while never pulling his hair out, raising his voice (although verbal or physical abuse is absolutely a deal breaker), or getting a furrow in his sexy, manly brow.

Trouble sucks. It ain't pretty. But if he's willing to slog through the mud to solve it, it's a very good indicator that you can trust him when your relationship is in the toilet and there's work to be done to get it out.

This isn't the kind of thing you are likely to learn over the course of a couple of dates, but it IS something you'll have a sense of over a few months, especially if your relationship (or his life) goes through some big changes during that period.

Give your man a score from 1 (terrible) to 5 (awesome) on his ability to work problems out.

_____ He is willing to stick around when problems arise.

D. Respect

Aretha sang it like she saw it, girlfriend, and your man should live by her rule. If he doesn't respect you, there's no hope for your relationship. But how can you tell for sure? Don't worry, there are several key indicators you can go by.

Does he treat you like a lady?

Of course he opens the door for you, carries in heavy packages, and walks you to your door. But treating you like a lady goes far beyond that...

Treating you like a lady means he likes that you are a strong, opinionated, confident woman with a good head on her shoulders. He knows you are in charge of your own life (and body), you have an active social life, and are an independent person with ambitions and passions that may or may not intersect with his own.

Treating you like a lady means he isn't trying to control you or turn you into something you're not.

If you do get emotional once in a while, he politely accepts this (even though it actually scares the hell out of him), does his best to offer comfort, and simply hangs out with you until the storm passes.

And most of all, treating you like a lady means he doesn't try to overpower your authority with his; he's your partner, not your god.

Give your man a score from 1 (terrible) to 5 (awesome) on his ability to treat you like a lady.

_____ He treats me like a lady without being condescending or controlling.

Is yelling (or a cold, impenetrable silence) his "go to" tactic?

This one is a natural extension of the one above, being willing to stick around when problems arise. But this takes it a step further to get at his willingness to deal with those problems in a healthy fashion.

Most of us raise our voices when we're upset. But is screaming and yelling always his first line of defense or attack when things don't go

like he wants? Is that, or a cold, punishing silence his single tactic for dealing with problems?

Naturally, he's going to be on his best behavior when you are new to each other, but this characteristic will often show itself as soon as the first real cracks in the relationship start to show up. And every relationship has those cracks (which is why you won't find "never ever experiences conflict" on this list), so all you have to do is wait.

But even before you have your own relationship stresses, after you've gone out a time or three you should be in the clear to ask him to share some stories with you about how he's made it through some of the scuffles and scraps with his friends or family members.

But the real test will be that even if he can't talk something through (and not every problem has to be talked through), he doesn't resort to yelling or a hard, cold silence the minute things get messy. The man of your dreams has more control than that, and he respects you too much to let things get very far out of hand.

Give your man a score from 1 (terrible) to 5 (awesome) on his ability to use something other yelling or impenetrable silence to solve problems.

_____ He might sometimes raise his voice, and he doesn't necessarily want to talk about EVERYthing, but he has other tools for problem-solving that he regularly brings into use.

Can he (eventually) accept the blame when something is his fault?

It's a rare human who can humbly accept that they've screwed up the very instant a problem makes itself known. Usually it takes an awkward, ugly little dance for us to finally figure out that we're to blame and now we need to fix it if it can be fixed.

Take a look at the small things first. Is he quick to shift blame, lie, or yell (see above) if he's exposed as having messed up? Is he utterly unable to say "I'm sorry"? Does he insist on remaking the world or re-writing the script of events so that he never, ever comes off as having been at fault?

I know, we all do it sometimes, but is this is *primary* tactic? Like all things, a sense of honesty, humility, and accountability are grown over time, but if he's over the age of 21 and isn't showing any signs of willingness to ever be shown wrong, you may be in for a rough ride.

Give your man a score from 1 (terrible) to 5 (awesome) on his willingness to accept blame.

_____ He can admit it when he's wrong.

That wasn't so hard, was it?

The thing you're looking for is a good start, here. Not the finished product – you'll have years to grow into that – but the basic ingredients for the man-cake layers that will make your house smell awesome and your mouth water. Heh.

If your man scored at least a 3 on all of the above, you have lit your stove and are ready to start cooking, baby.

If he was consistently less than a 3, you may have troubles. And it's good to know that, because the last thing you want to do is waste years of your time on someone who simply isn't worth your while, and who will just prevent you from finding and connecting with the man you DO want to spend the rest of your life with!

“X” list for the little boy of your nightmares

Now. Ready to take a look at another, much simpler list? Good. Below I've compiled a list of some of the things you DON'T want to see a lot of in your man. These are early warning indicators that the man you're with is most likely going to be a waste of your time. . .

WARNING: Just because your man shows a *few* of the characteristics below doesn't mean he's an automatic nightmare. But if he seems to have several of these – even 5 or 10 – you should know that the two of you will have a LOT of work to do together if your relationship is going to survive. . .

Additionally, some of these are bigger fouls than others.

Some may be straight-up relationship deal breakers for you. Definitely make a note of those, because it's good for you to know exactly what your own boundaries are so that you don't let anyone trespass and muck up your life, no matter how sexy or adorable or charismatic or ANYthing they are.

Okay. Let's do this.

- _____ 1. He rarely calls when he says he will.
- _____ 2. He shuts down immediately every time you are upset.
- _____ 3. He's quick to point the finger at other people when things go wrong.
- _____ 4. He's not a leader in any aspect of his own life.

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- _____ 5. He's completely unable to prioritize. He has no sense of what's really important in life.
- _____ 6. He doesn't understand that you have a schedule of your own.
- _____ 7. He always wants you to cancel your plans for his.
- _____ 8. He's looking for someone to take care of him, not be an equal partner with him.
- _____ 9. He makes the exact same mistakes, over and over and over again. He doesn't seem to realize that he needs to change anything.
- _____ 10. He puts his hand up, or hangs up the phone, or disappears whenever there's an issue to be dealt with.
- _____ 11. He doesn't do things for others unless he KNOWS he will get something out of it for himself.
- _____ 12. He never lets you say your piece; he always interrupts or talks over you.
- _____ 13. It doesn't seem to be his priority to prove himself trustworthy.
- _____ 14. He is very self-focused and rarely asks about what you're doing or thinking.
- _____ 15. He doesn't like to accept blame, and in fact you've never seen him do it.
- _____ 16. He sleeps with multiple women every week/month.
- _____ 17. He never seems to want to make YOU feel good.
- _____ 18. When you're with him, you don't feel very good.
- _____ 19. He always seems to be unwilling to take the time to put something important into words.
- _____ 20. It feels like he agrees with you just to get you to shut up.
- _____ 21. He seeks to be popular whether he deserves it or not.
- _____ 22. He yells a lot.
- _____ 23. He rarely or never does things to help other people.
- _____ 24. He does very little to keep a relationship going. People and relationships are disposable in his eyes. There are always more when these go bad.
- _____ 25. He thinks his job sucks because his boss is mean and his coworkers don't understand him, etc.

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- _____ 26. He thinks everything that happens is being done to him, and that he has no control.
- _____ 27. He's content to watch the world pass him by.
- _____ 28. He likes to "play house" but he isn't willing to build a home.
- _____ 29. Except for sex, he treats you and thinks of you like a mommy.
- _____ 30. He makes babies but won't raise children.
- _____ 31. He supports his kids when and if it's convenient for him.
- _____ 32. Confident, opinionated women scare him.
- _____ 33. You can't depend on him. No one can.
- _____ 34. He's threatened by your social life.
- _____ 35. He doesn't like that you're level-headed, whip-smart and pretty damn badass.
- _____ 36. He only ever wants sex. If not from you, from someone else.
- _____ 37. Foreplay absolutely **MUST** end in sex, or he accuses you of leading him on.
- _____ 38. He talks nasty about you in front of his friends. Or your friends. Or anyone.
- _____ 39. He calls you ugly names when he's angry.
- _____ 40. He's ruled by his fears, and makes decisions based on what would take the least amount of effort and make him the most comfortable.
- _____ 41. He whines and complains a LOT.
- _____ 42. He regularly pretends to be helpless and cute in order to manipulate you into doing things for him.
- _____ 43. He thinks he's doing you a favor by dating you.
- _____ 44. He doesn't really want a career. He's barely willing to keep a job.
- _____ 45. He lives at home, or sponges off people.
- _____ 46. He doesn't have any ambition to be more than he already is.
- _____ 47. When there's domestic work to be done, he mostly trails after you, rather than actually forging ahead helping with the work.
- _____ 48. He often performs tasks extremely poorly in order to get you to take over the work.

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- _____49. He's happiest when he is successfully able to take advantage of others. He even brags about it.
- _____50. He never pushes himself. He's exact same person he was 3 years ago.
- _____51. He invents excuses for his failures.

So how did your man fare?

I hope you got good news about the man you're currently considering. But even if you didn't, you are in a position to make a decision about whether or not you want to continue your relationship or cut him loose and focus on someone else.

Best to you as you continue looking for – or building a luscious, fragrant relationship cake with – the Man of Your Dreams!

If you'd like to chat more, ask a question, or share your story, be sure to head over to my Facebook page! I'll look forward to the conversation.

Stay strong, Beautiful!

Claire Casey