



The real deal

► Ten moments that define a relationship

Camp commitment

1 Your first talk till sunrise

Astronomers say it takes just over eight minutes for light from the sun to reach the earth. And that's about how long it feels you've been talking, though it's been eight hours. "Jeez, look at the time!" you both say, cursing the fact you'll need several cups of instant to get through the day. But it's a good sign if all you want to do is talk for a few million more trips into space and back.

2 When he introduces you as "my girlfriend"

It's so utterly high school that the title still straightens your spine. But how can it not? You're now officially pinned, picked, branded, wanted.

3 The first morning after

Some guys you wouldn't share a salad with, let alone a whole night. "You want juice?" he asks the next morning, tossing the doona your way as he pads to the kitchen. "Please", he's saying by the ease of his actions, "stay".

4 Finding the nerve to say "I love you"

Lonely farmers are happy to do so on national TV. For the rest of us, the moment is fraught with anxiety: what if he/she stares at us blankly? What if we're saying it too soon? Or... Sorry, what was that? You love me too?! Oh, thank God.

5 The first time you write "we" in an email

And they don't write back, "We? Who the hell is we?"

6 That first trip together

What better way to gauge how you'll fare on your journey through life than to see how you survive roadworks on the highway?

7 The first time he lets you control his remote/iPod

Seriously, you don't know how hard it is for him to hand over something he worships so much. Not as much as he worships you, of course, but close. Scarily close.

8 When you're no longer primping for him

You're sitting on the couch in your time-of-the-month undies. Yet he's looking at you more lovingly than when you're all gussied up. Clearly, this is the real deal.

9 When you care for something together

It doesn't really matter if it's a tomato plant or Rufus the drooling French bulldog. But when you're both responsible for taking care of another living thing, your pairing becomes much more important. Be proud as you watch it grow.

10 When you commit – we're talking long-term here – to each other

On the one hand, it feels a bit like picking partners in the schoolyard. ("You want me on your team? Really? Me too!") On the other, it's a watershed moment, when you find yourself so profoundly lucky that someone you adore so much feels exactly the same way about you.



Bedroom antics
WITH JACQUELINE HELLYER

Comeuppance

Do you only get health benefits from sex (improved immune system) if you orgasm?
KL, Hornsby, NSW

► Benefits increase with orgasm and the bigger flush of hormones – oxytocin, endorphins, prolactin – that reduce stress. You'll still benefit with any level of enjoyable sexual activity but a dull orgasm from a brief sexual act is not as beneficial as a lengthy, highly pleasurable sexual encounter with no orgasm. Best of all: a highly arousing encounter with lengthy and incredibly satisfying orgasms!

Hit a nerve

Are there nerve endings from the bum to the clitoris? Is that why spanking feels good?
TM, Thornlie, WA

► Spanking's not for everyone; often it's less about pleasure and more about pain and humiliation. But a spanking can feel good for physiological reasons: there's sympathetic stimulation via the nerve roots to other nerve branches in the pelvic floor (the same neural circuits can be activated by painful or pleasurable stimuli) but it is definitely more about the psychological.

Easy rider

How do I master the woman-on-top position?
LM, Runaway Bay, Qld

► Straddle him on your knees and slowly lower yourself onto him. Once he's in and you're comfy slowly rock your pelvis back, forward and around. Sit upright or lean forward with your hands on his chest and move up and down the shaft of his penis. It's easier if you squat over him with your feet flat on the bed. Experiment, and when it feels good try those moves facing his feet – he'll love it!

Perverse cowgirl



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Got a minute? Fix fake tan gone bad: slap on baby oil 25 minutes before exfoliating in the bath or shower. Try a lemon wedge for streaks.