

# Four Reasons Why People Settle for Bad Relationships

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Why do people settle for the wrong relationship partner?

It's proven. People do settle. In fact, in [one survey](#) of 6,000 men, 31% of them openly admitted that they would settle for someone they didn't love. And 21% even claimed they'd partner up with someone they found unattractive.

How many additional people settle, but would never admit it? How many people knew they were with the wrong person, even as they walked down the aisle?

Diving into this question takes us straight down the path toward the deeper issues in life, so let's get to it. Here are four reasons why people settle, according to experience and research.

## **1. People settle due to fear of being alone.**

A [recently published study](#) in the *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* has found that fear of being single is a major predictor of settling for bad relationships. According to lead author Stephanie Spielmann, people who have stronger fears about being single tend to be willing to settle for less in their relationships.

This may lead them to stay in relationships that they aren't happy in, and sometimes they may choose to date people who are not good for them. In fact, people's anxiety about being single plays a key role in these and other types of unhealthy relationship behaviors.

The researchers from the University of Toronto's Department of Psychology surveyed samples of adults from across Canada and the U.S., including University of Toronto undergraduates. The samples covered both men and women across a wide range of ages.

The study found that both men and women experienced the same concern and anxieties about being single, and that these feelings create similar behaviors. This directly contradicts the popular stereotype that only women experience a fear of being single.

Loneliness is a painful experience regardless of gender; and according to Professor Geoff MacDonald of the University of Toronto's Department of Psychology, fear of being single does not discriminate on basis of gender.

## 2. People settle because they don't know how to create solid relationships.

Psychotherapist Jake Eagle, co-author of the [Dating, Relating and Mating](#) online educational program, claims that most people get the dating, relating and mating process all wrong.

### **In essence, we:**

- Don't date enough people before committing to one.
- Share intimate information too readily early in the dating process (missing the chance to just have fun together and establish a friendship).
- Have sex too soon.
- Get married first, then attempt to solve problems in the relationship.
- Don't measure compatibility in terms of values, life dreams, communication styles and often chemistry.
- Are unwilling to end a relationship that clearly doesn't work because they are driven by unresolved psychological issues.

When you don't date around, become intimate before you know the character of the person you are with, get married before you've had adequate time to learn to solve problems, then you are set up for failure.

Given that so few people fully understand the rigors of creating a relationship *intentionally*, many may settle because – well – they simply give up trying to figure out how it is supposed to work.

## 3. People settle due to external pressures.

- Mom and dad expect you to marry and have their grandchildren. They approve of the person you are with now, so....you just do it.
- Mom and dad HATE the person you are with and this appeals to your rebelliousness, so you just do it!
- You need a way to support yourself and your partner makes good money.
- All your friends are getting married and you want to attend the barbecues.
- And so on.

#### 4. People settle due to the compelling nature of self-sabotage.

Self-sabotage is rarely discussed in relation to choosing a romantic partner. However, once you understand self-sabotage, this is a hard one to ignore.

It's safe to say that people regularly engage in relationships with others in which they feel chronically rejected, controlled or deprived of their needs. It is also safe to say (in many cases) that people experience the rejection, control and deprivation *before* they show up at the altar.

Why would someone marry another person that dishes out such psychological angst? According to psychiatrist Edmund Bergler, MD, a colleague of Freud's, it is because we learned long ago to find familiarity or even pleasure (unconsciously) in these painful experiences.

The psychological community was shocked that Bergler would suggest that at some level we are *seeking* a familiar pain when making ill-fated decisions, but Freud agreed with Bergler and began to write about psychic masochism prior to his death.

Seeking an old, familiar pain that you can't seem to shake, regardless of how consciously frustrating and depressing it is? A bad relationship fits the bill perfectly.