



Our future KING AND QUEEN laughed in the face of conventional COURTSHIP and did their OWN THING. So what can we learn from their ANTI-LOVE LESSONS? BY JO USMAR

This time last year, Kate Middleton achieved every little girl's dream (well, most grown women's dreams, to be fair): marrying her prince, and becoming a proper, tiara-wearing, bona fide princess. A nation sighed, a McQueen dress was worn, and now she's living the happily ever after.

While Kate was admittedly pretty well off and posh before the actual achieving the crown bit, she has no noble lineage, wears her mum's old clothes, and has even been spotted shopping in Tesco. Yep, she properly proved that everyday "commoners" can nab a real-life Prince Charming, too. And she did it by breaking nearly every "love rule" in the book, no less.

"Kate and William's romance wasn't conventional," says psychologist Dr Jessamy Hibberd. They were friends first, dated for nearly a decade and even broke up in between. "By going against tradition, they created a new set of rules from the start," says Jessamy. And you lot can learn a few romantic lessons from the royal pair...

Break up & MAKE UP

Kate and William split for three months in 2007 when their long-distance relationship became too stressful. Wills was completing his army training in Dorset and Kate was in London, working as a buyer for Jigsaw. Just before he gave her the shove, she'd endured pics of him dancing with girls at nightclubs with his army buddies. Ouch. Yet a make up was around the corner.

ROYAL RULING

"At the time I don't think I was very happy about it," Kate said during her engagement interview. "But actually it made me a stronger person." Breaking up was the best thing for the poshies, as it gave them a chance to work out if they actually wanted to be together, rather than drifting into marriage.

THE COMMON TOUCH Splitting up is far better than "going on a break" Ross-and-Rachel-stylee, which always leaves one person feeling as if they're being kept around just in case. If you feel in need of some official breathing space, make a date to meet two months on to have that second-chance conversation.

BE THE BLOKE... and ask him out. A recent survey found that one-third of men found it refreshing to be asked out by a woman*.

Wait IT OUT

K-Wills were a couple for eight whole years before they got engaged. In fact, at 29, "Waity Katie" was the oldest woman ever to marry a future King. **ROYAL RULING** When the proposal finally happened, Wills explained it was a mutual decision to wait. "I wanted her to have the chance to back out if she needed to before it all got too much," he said. "I've learned from the past, and wanted to give her the best chance to settle in, and see what happens on the other side." It seems he was alluding to Diana's struggle to adapt to royal life.

THE COMMON TOUCH Fast-track relationships are romantic, but playing the patience game is more likely to end up in long-term love. And although your relationship is unlikely to be front-page news and suffer the scrutiny of the entire nation, you may have your own issues to navigate – children, religious differences, family troubles, to name a few. So take your time, ticking off pre-marriage milestones before you commit forever. Have you met and successfully hung out with his family? Survived a big deal or event together? Discussed marriage? And kids? Dealt with any issues that stem from being a couple? If the answer is yes to some or all of them then you guys are headed in the right direction. If not, start asking sharpish.

Less AIN'T MORE

In March 2002, Kate famously stripped off for a student fashion show. And who was there wearing his ogling goggles? Her "mate" Wills. Traditionally, strutting your stuff in front of hundreds of people in your pants wouldn't be recommended in *The How To Nab A Man* guide, as holding back is generally encouraged. **ROYAL RULING** "Sometimes doing something dramatic makes someone see you in a different light," says Jessamy. Maybe it was that moment when Wills saw Kate as more fit than friend. Or spying other people fancying her might have given him a kick in his love handles.

THE COMMON TOUCH It could have been her confidence he was eyeing up. A study found that most men thought women with this trait were attractive, and would compete for her attention**. Kate had a killer figure, so if you do too, find a local fashion show and copy her – doing it for charity cuts out the arrogance. Not so body confident? Find another way to showcase your skills (and confidence), be it running, singing, or making mojitos – then invite him along.

Live IN SIN

It would have been unthinkable for Charles and Di to shack up before they'd gone down the aisle back in the '80s. But in these more modern times, the royal lovebirds tried before they, er, bought into the forever thing, in their cosy Anglesey cottage. **ROYAL RULING** While co-habiting pre "I do" is big news for the royals, more than three-quarters of us plebs live together before marriage. **THE COMMON TOUCH** "It's a great way to take the pressure off and really get to know each other," says Jessamy. And even if you don't have any Crown Jewels to argue over, it's a good idea to get a cohabitation agreement, which is basically a pre-nup without the nuptials. Saves arguing over the shower curtain if things don't work out for the best.

Friends with FUTURE BENEFITS

Being mates is great, but he may never see you as The One. Especially if you live together and he sees you in your PJs. Yet the golden couple were friends and housemates at uni. **ROYAL RULING** "Trust had to be an important part of a relationship for William," says Jessamy. "Kate had already proved he could trust her by the time they got together." **THE COMMON TOUCH** Got your eye on a mate? Offer to make dinner and casually enquire if he fancies anyone. If he launches into a list, forget it. If he describes you, it's game on! f



The royal lovebirds

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