

Dating Meaning: The Definition of Dating and What It Really Means (It Means There is a 60%+ Chance of Having Sex With The Person Asking You On A Date)

by [Colleen Healy](#)

[Dating Tips](#), [Single Life](#)

“So I’m dating this guy...”

The phrase is extremely common, and so is the grey area that tends to follow it around. The trend of not defining a relationship is growing more and more common, and in the wake of this trend, “dating” has come to be a catchall term for everything from hooking up to being in an exclusive relationship, and that can make it a difficult world to navigate.

“Dating” is a word that gets hugely complicated once you unpack it, and what the term means to any given person is largely an issue of semantics, much like what a person actually means when they say they’re “seeing someone” or “hanging out” or “having a thing.”

So what does it mean to be *dating somebody*?

The definition of dating shows us that there’s a difference between dating someone and just dating. “Dating” means you’re going on dates. You are actively getting out there and meeting people and spending time with them. “Dating someone” means you’re seeing somebody specific, with purpose and on a regular basis.

With the understanding that the personal definition varies for everyone, I’ve laid out some pretty universal parameters.

If you can check these off your list, you are, in fact, dating someone:

1. You like someone and you’re trying to get to know them better.
2. You’re spending time with a person (or persons) in hopes of finding a committed relationship.
3. You can see yourself settling down (or at least entertain the idea) with the person or persons you see regularly.

Here are some examples of situations in which you are NOT dating someone:

1. You don't want a relationship at all, and you've been clear about that to everyone you get to know/hook up with.
2. The person you're getting to know/hooks up with has been clear that they don't want a relationship at all.
3. You don't usually see the same person more than once or twice before you move on.

Basically, dating comes down to intention. If you intend to get to know someone because you're interested in seeing if there's a future there, even if it's not a down-the-aisle, Grandmother's-wedding-band future, you're dating them.

Here's what "dating" isn't—it's not exclusivity. Not guaranteed exclusivity, anyway. Even as things grow more serious, exclusivity is something that always requires a frank conversation about what each party wants, and without that conversation, it's not safe to assume the two of you are on the same page. Regardless of how much time has passed, how often you see each other, etc., two people being committed to each other, always requires that awful, painful, awkward conversation. Always.

So let's recap—Just because you're "dating" doesn't necessarily mean you're "dating someone," however, if you are "dating someone," you're absolutely "dating." All squares are rectangles, but not all rectangles are squares. I think that's an accurate analogy...

The difference between "dating" and "hooking up" or "having fun" or "hanging out" is intention. If you want to find someone to have a relationship with, you're dating.

It's not to say that something not-so-serious cannot turn into dating, but you most definitely can't assume it will. You also can't assume that dating will turn into an exclusive and committed relationship. If you're foggy about what you're doing with someone, it's always best to have a terribly awkward chat with them. I give you permission to have a glass or three of wine first if you'd like. It tends to make things easier. But just like most issues in the world of relationships, communication is almost always guaranteed to clear up any confusion.