

Road To Romance

Five Tips To Steer Clear Of Relationship Roadblocks

(NAPSA)—New research confirms couples are on the move. Whether heading across town or across the country, road trip romance is at an all-time high, with couples spending more time together in the car. But are hearts on fire, or is travel tension causing passion to take a backseat?

According to a new survey from MarketFacts Research, 75 percent of drivers said they routinely spend time behind the wheel with their significant other. Unfortunately, more time in the car has a majority of couples putting the brakes on love. Couples reported top sources of auto arguments as: driving directions (75 percent), topic of discussion (74 percent), control of the stereo (61 percent) and eating in the car (60 percent).

The survey also confirms once and for all, several key stereotypes of male and female drivers:

- Nearly 80 percent of male drivers and half of female drivers think they have a better sense of direction than their significant other;

- One in 35 female drivers admit to getting lost often, as compared to less than one percent of male drivers;

- 80 percent of females say they will consult a map when lost, while half of males say when lost, they'll just keep driving until they find their way; and

- Nearly half of all respondents (male and female) said they get frustrated with driving directions from Internet map sites.

Whether on four wheels or just two feet, the road to romance can be a rocky one. Relationship ex-



With proper planning, road trips can be a fun way for couples to spend time together.

pert, author and public speaker David Coleman, known nationwide as The Dating Doctor, offers five tips to help you steer clear of relationship roadblocks:

- **Share the Responsibility, Double the Fun.** Share road trip responsibilities and you're destined to double the fun. Be sure to divide the planning and packing, trip navigation, driving time and take turns at the gas pump. Splitting road trip responsibilities down the center lane will ensure you reach your destination in good spirits.

- **Know Where You're Going.** Know where your trip is headed and your relationship will follow. Planning your trip ahead of time and building in stops for meals, bathroom breaks, gas and fun points of interest such as landmarks or museums will decrease in-car tension and give you both things to look forward to along the way. A comprehensive mapping software package such as Microsoft

Streets & Trips is an easy way to customize highly detailed driving directions, add points of interest such as tourist attractions or restaurants, plan multiple stops and make the most of any road trip. (\$39.95 before a \$10 mail-in rebate—visit www.microsoft.com/streets for details.)

- **Appreciate Your Mate.** Try an in-car game where everyone wins. It never hurts to let someone know how much you appreciate them. Think of five things the other person does that you appreciate and take turns sharing back and forth. Start with "I've never told you how much I appreciate..." The time will fly and so will a few sparks.

- **Create Your Memory Lane.** Hit the road with a camera and create your own memory lane. Stop at landmarks and roadside attractions, if even for a few minutes, and take pictures of you and your significant other in a consistent pose—hug it up or ham it up. It's guaranteed to ease in-car tension, and when the trip is over, you'll have an album of pit stops to remember the trip.

- **Find Your Inner Child.** The couple that plays together, stays together—especially on a road trip. Incorporate stops at playgrounds, arcades, or parks and let loose. A few minutes of childhood abandon will rejuvenate your energy and ignite a little passion along the way.

"With some up-front planning and a small investment in great mapping software like Microsoft Streets & Trips, it's easy to plot a course for a smooth ride on the road to romance," Coleman said.