

A guide for men



The time has come to get down to brass tax and provide all potential grooms, and men in general out there, with advice on how to find the perfect ring for that special woman in your life.

Of course, the debate among certain cynical, though some may say wise, men will always ensue: Why the heck do we have to buy a ring? Why do we have to drop that kind of coin on a trinket?

The short answer for some of us is simple: Because we want to. Some men recognize the inherent symbolism an engagement ring has as a mark of decisive [commitment](#), promise of ultimate love, devotion and so on. This is neither right nor wrong. This just is .

Past experience with women and family history can have much to do with your opinion on the subject. A man who has undergone three divorces without the protection of a prenuptial agreement or decent lawyer may not look so well on the expense, or significance, of an engagement ring. Heck, even some men about to marry their high-school sweetheart feel an uncomfortable pressure to buy the perfect ring and question the entire process to begin with. But when push comes to shove, most of you who marry will do the ring thing, like it or not.

I like engagement rings

I actually like it to be quite honest. I do not think you have to spend a fortune to ice her finger and blind everyone she meets with a rock the size of Gibraltar, but I appreciate the tradition of the engagement ring. I never have been the cynical sort who thought it was part of a vast conspiracy by the diamond industry to make more moolah off the masses.

There seems to be near universal agreement after all, on the historical origin of engagement rings, or diamond engagement rings to be more precise. Many sources, and yes the Diamond Trading Company, the world's leading diamond sales and marketing company, is one of them, concur that the tradition began in 1477 when Archduke Maximilian of Austria bought his future wife Mary of Burgundy enough carats for [Snoop Dogg](#) to remark, "bling bling !" Since that momentous event, the tradition has spread throughout the Judeo-Christian ethos and men have spent an inordinate amount of effort, time and money in an attempt to find the perfect ring for their soon-to-be spouses.

Here's some bonus information, free of charge, that you can use to [romance](#) your lady as you slip the ring on: In ancient Egypt, it was common belief that the vena amoris (love vein) ran from the fourth finger of the left hand to the heart. So if you want to point the blame at anyone, fault the Hapsburg Empire of Austria, Ancient Egypt, as well as the global diamond consortiums, for our modern obsession with engagement rings.

women are to blame

I say this in jest, of course, because as we all know, women are to blame for bank account liquidation in the name of the ideal finger bauble. Okay, so maybe I do not believe that either, but I can say with confidence that many men do. But when you think about it, society fuels unrealistic expectations for not just the perfect engagement ring, but also the perfect everything : Sex life, marriage, children, body, career, and life in general.

So try to separate yourself from every other couple, diamond engagement ring and lofty expectation set before you as you strive to kick-start your personal path to nuptial bliss with not the perfect ring, but the perfect ring for your woman and your circumstance.

That said, here are some factors to consider: Continued next page

The engagement watch, A modern Idea for a society where gender Equality is highly regarded, just like the engagement ring it should be quality something special that will be a family heirloom

The cost of the ring

Jewellery is expensive. Good jewelry is even more expensive. Good jewelry with diamonds is... you get the point here, men. When you start to devise a budget for your ring and solicit advice on the matter, the two-month rule will come up. That is, your salary over a two, or even three-month period, is a common benchmark to judge how much to spend. Take that to mean whatever you want it to. Some men spend more because they may have other disposable income from another source and some men spend less and find a more than acceptable ring to bestow on their significant other. The choice is yours. I suggest you shop around, talk to jewellers, surf the Web for resources on the subject and of course, talk to other men who have done the deed.



The five C's

To determine the best price for your ring, you need to familiarize yourself with the four C's, unless of course, you don't plan to buy her a diamond engagement ring. But if, like the vast majority of the population, you opt to, do recognize that more than any other factors, carat, clarity, color, and cut determine the cost of a diamond.

Carat

The concept here is simple: Carat refers to the weight of a diamond. The more carats, the more your bank balance falls. But remember that bigger is not always better. It all depends on the blend of the other diamond characteristics and also, the size of her finger. If your honey has a slender frame and small hands, a 1-carat stone is enough to make a statement.

Clarity

Evaluators of diamonds base part of the price on luster and sheen. These relate to the clarity of the stone. You can spend less on a very large but cloudy diamond for example, than on a small but transparent and shiny one. Diamonds are the most durable compounds on earth and the amount of pressure it takes to cut one is immense. Inclusions (an industry term) form and as a result, there are grades to rate specific diamonds for clarity. The important thing to bear in mind, however, is that the less flaws visible to the naked eye, the more expensive the stone. Keep that in mind as you shop around.

Color

People, rather women, prize the sparkle or refraction of light from a white diamond above all else. The more color one has, the less sparkle there is. Hence, the price rises. There are color grades for diamonds, from D-E-F (clear) to V-W-X (yellow tint), that you must balance with the clarity grade to determine what stone is best for your lady and budget.

A final note about color: The standards above refer to white diamonds. "Fancy" color diamonds, such as the pink one Ben gave to J-Lo, are very rare and out of reach for most.

Cut

Cut may be the most elusive C to understand. A good cut predisposes the amount of light that can enter into the stone, refract and emit that brilliant quality that people love in a diamond. Rather than go into the specifics of this C ([trust](#) me, this is heady stuff), I suggest you read up on it yourself (you'll find a link at the end of the article in the Resources).

Confidence That you are getting what you expect & post sales service

Certification of diamond

There are some shady characters out there that claim they can sell you a 2-carat diamond for a crazy price. Do not believe the hype. That diamond is bound to be low quality treated, cubic zirconia or more to the point, glass. Hey, maybe you want glass. Be my guest. But if it's a diamond you seek, buy from a reputable jeweller who can certify the stone. That is, when you purchase the ring, you will receive a certificate of authenticity that is, in essence, a blueprint of the diamond. The document will outline the characteristics of the stone, but not the price. Make sure the issuer is a well regarded laboratory, which there are a few, including the GIA or ADGL

"Look for a jeweller you know you can trust. One that has a good reputation in the community and one that has been in business for many years."

"Does the quality of the merchandise adhere to the highest standards? Look at the workmanship -- the inside of the diamond ring should be as beautifully finished as the outside. Make sure the setting work is done with the utmost perfection, as you would not want to risk losing a stone you cherish."



HEARTS & ARROWS OPTICAL PHENOMENA



HEARTS
(bottom view)



ARROWS
(top view)



The ring's band

The amount of importance you place on the band of the ring is up to you. Because the vast majority of the cost is for the diamond, you may choose not to consider it much at all. In terms of precious metals, you have silver, gold, white gold, and platinum, with the latter being the most expensive. However "the best settings are in platinum, for it is the most resistant metal."

Try to find out her taste and style, and go from there. You have to consider the width and thickness of the band, her hand type and skin color, not to mention her present jewelry stash. If she wears a lot of white gold, then bingo, you have your candidate. How the diamond is set within the band is very important as well. Some men like jewelers to raise the rock high on the band in order to show it off to the world, but that may make the ring look gaudy. Go for modesty and class for a timeless look.

Make sure it's just her size

Her ring size

You may have to pull a fast one to find out her ring size. Some common tricks are to take a ring she wears now and press it into a bar of soap or trace the outline onto a piece of paper. Or better yet, push it down as far as you can on your ring finger and mark the spot where it stops. A jeweller can then determine her size. If worst comes to worst, you can always ask her mother or best friend for guidance.

on.

To customize or not?

That is often the question. If you want to buy her the perfect ring, common wisdom dictates that the ring be unique, and therefore custom-made. It is not necessarily more expensive but does require more work and research on your part. Anyone can choose a ring from a display case, right? But hey, some of those rings are great.

Just try to gauge the personal preferences of your woman beforehand, whether you do so in a clandestine manner or not. No need to assume that the proposal is going to be a surprise since it seems that more and more today, couples make the decision together and even pick out the ring together. If the latter is the case for you, then you are off the hook and do not have to go out on a limb and choose the perfect ring on your own. Yet for me, there is something nice about the risk inherent in that endeavor, if only because the ultimate reward is so much sweeter.

You have a lot more to brag about when you do it yourself and make her squeal with delight at your choice (especially if you do it under budget). Again, it boils down to your personal situation and just how high maintenance your woman is. I have female friends who swear that a plastic ring from a box of Cracker Jack is enough to make their hearts melt if the proposal were sincere. I have my suspicions about that claim but hey, you never know where some people place importance

know your woman

The bottom line is that if you want to buy her the perfect [engagement](#) ring, you have to know your woman well. Observe her demeanor, her [body language](#), her dress, and any allusions she makes about jewellery, fashion and style. Small pieces of information can help, write them down make a list of specific points that you think are required this can help prevent you getting side tracked it will help you & your chosen jewellery store help you find the right ring. Heck, even her personal belief system can play a decisive role in what type of ring you invest in.

Which brings up a final point: Are diamonds an investment? The short answer is no. Not in the form that most purchase them in, such as an engagement ring. If you buy your diamond at a fair price, however, it is liable to hold over time.

Needless to say, there are many non-monetary investment considerations that factor into the total perception of a diamond subsequent to purchase: as a symbol of [commitment](#), love and devotion for example, a diamond ring can be priceless to some. If you let those intangibles act as your motivation in your quest for the perfect ring, your woman is bound to be happy with whatever you choose.

Possibilities

- Ready made ideal **if** you find what you want, *quick & easy*.
- Loose gemstone matched with pre made ring mount find their companion, customized & finished while you wait = hours/days. *requires some thought*
- Complete custom made - *requires effort, thought & time*, the results will be a 1 of a kind symbol of your love, your efforts will be highly appreciated



Be assured that if your choice is not correct or you don't get the answer you wanted you will not be stuck with a ring, some jewellers will in general adjust the ring to suite exchange or give you credit for the amount, conditions may apply

For a Superior white Precious metal Your first choice should be - platinum then Palladium, white gold & silver.

Value 1 larger gem of good quality will retain value better than a lot of smaller Gems, maintenance will also be less

A handful of [rituals](#), repeated time and again, have helped define the [marriage proposal](#), but they amount to neither sacrament nor formula -- at best, they present a framework. The details are up to you, and once you've decided to pop the question, you'll learn that posterity is peeking down on you, curious to see what makes your marriage proposal, if not timeless, at least memorable.

To that end, there are lots of ways to do this right and have the proposal remembered fondly, but there are many more ways to do it wrong. If you do it wrong, the proposal could become an extended family joke that you can never escape if she says "yes" -- or it might serve as a sad, cautionary tale to others if she says "no." As with most things in life, there's a big gray area between right and wrong. In this case, it's the boneyard of forgettable marriage proposals, where the bland and uninspired methods go to die.

Your marriage proposal is one of those requisite stories that she'll have to tell her friends and family. If you infuse the following protocol with your own imaginative details, you can give her a proposal story that she won't mind telling for years to come because she'll be proud of it. Plus, she'll have a dynamite proposal story to make her friends jealous and her enemies disgusted.

proposal rules and etiquette

Inform her parents beforehand

The key word here is *inform*, not ask -- and you should be cautious that your language reflects as much. You can ask for their permission, but you're not beholden to it if they don't approve. In the end, if you give [her father](#) the opportunity to say no, you deny her the basic ability to make her own choices.

On the other hand, it's good manners to involve your potential in-laws in the process, since for them it may suggest at least a token involvement in their daughter's life. While this may seem old-fashioned, give [tradition](#) the benefit of the doubt.

Naturally, there may be some exceptional circumstances that would dictate a different proposal course. If she's estranged from her parents (she hasn't spoken to them in a number of years or they are not a part of her life), informing them is not necessary. On that note, I would advise against any plans or schemes you might be harboring of using the proposal to bring them all together.

Choose the ring yourself

Involving your potential fiancée in the purchase of the [engagement ring](#) could be catastrophic to at least two of the key elements of a great proposal: surprise and romance.

If you have discussed marriage at some point prior to your proposal, then you should have ascertained what she wants in an [engagement](#) ring. If you haven't, you're left to your memory and your wits, which aren't the most reliable things in the world. Whether marriage has been discussed or not, you should consider enlisting the aid of someone you trust -- one of her siblings, another relative or a close friend.

Carefully consider your stage

This is basic: Gear the venue around her tastes and her personality. If you know she would savor an audience, make sure there is one -- the bigger the better. If that's not her style, practice some discretion and remember that the bigger the stage, the higher the stakes. While uncertainty on your part shouldn't overly [influence](#) your marriage-proposal venue choice, you're more likely to get a pressured and later retracted "yes" when you use the Jumbo Tron at a crowded stadium as a proposal gimmick.

Additionally, you want a venue that's conducive to the moment. You don't want to catch her at a stressful time of the day or at a time when she can't enjoy it.

Find out why an e-mail proposal is just wrong

Give the proposal a formal tone

In other words, don't be casual. This is a [formal](#) marriage proposal and it requires a degree of formality on your part, beginning with how you ask. You'll be nervous, but that won't excuse throw offs like "wanna get married?" or "I ain't getting on one knee." Stick to "Will you marry me?"

Formality applies to the traditional [gesture](#) of the bended knee as well, although there's a bit of flexibility here. If the occasion suits it -- meaning you're in a place that physically allows for it -- bend down onto your left knee and say your piece. The gesture is old-fashioned (some might even call it cheesy), but it has a [romantic flair](#) and at the very least you should give it proper consideration. She'll appreciate it and might even be expecting it.

Be prepared for any answer

Meaning both "yes," "no" and "I need to think about it."

This may not seem fair, but this process has afforded you plenty of time to make the decision to propose. Consequently, she deserves equal time if she needs it. Every man wants a resounding "yes," but not every man will get it -- no matter how well-prepared the proposal is.

Be present for her reaction

Some of the more extreme or elaborate proposal ideas floating around the internet will ultimately result in your lady being asked by billboards, computers and blimps. No matter what the plan is, when the question is popped you need to be with her. Period.

Take a unique approach

Finally, tailor your approach to her and to your relationship. Give it a context. In other words, throwing on 100 pounds of armor and riding in on a white horse is only romantic if there's some greater relevance to it. Don't be unimaginative and stereotypical. Spending hundreds of dollars on an elaborate proposal with "the works" makes little sense if a well-written [poem](#) would better contextualize your relationship.

decent proposal

A proposal of marriage is a serious matter, but the proposal itself doesn't need to be so serious -- it can be fun, romantic, wild, or all three. Even if your proposal features little beyond a ring and a question, you can still give her a story to tell and earn a "yes." And you needn't fear simplicity. In fact, the more elaborate the proposal, the more things can go wrong, which may lead to a detour from your fundamental goal: asking the woman you love for her hand in marriage and to spend the rest of her life with you.



An engaging story

Falling in love is a blessing that many of us have savoured at least once in our lifetime and how beautiful the world seems when we look through rose-tinted glasses. As the song goes, 'first comes love, then comes marriage', most of us dream of what our engagement ring would look like, but do you actually know the history behind this symbol of true love?

The ring is synonymous with weddings and in most cultures, is a public symbol of matrimony and romantically, the ultimate symbol of love, devotion and commitment. Today, the diamond engagement ring is common practice but historically, this tradition is fairly recent, beginning only in 1939, when De Beers launched a giant advertising campaign featuring diamonds as the engagement ring.

Although the exact origin of the engagement ring is unknown, it was believed that it all began in the caveman days. A woven cord of rushes was tied around the hands and feet of his mate so that she would not escape. Once he thought she would stay, he tied just her hands and finally when he was assured of her commitment, the cord was only tied around her finger.

The ancient Greeks probably started the tradition as we know it today. Known as their betrothal ring, it was derived from the word 'troweth' meaning 'truth'. More of a promise ring, it meant giving a truth or pledge and an engagement ring became an outward indication to everyone that a woman had pledged her love to one man alone.

It was the Romans, however, who were thought to have started the tradition of wearing the engagement ring on the third finger of the left hand. This was believed to be the 'vena amoris', which translates to 'vein of love'. This 'vein' was thought to lead directly to the heart, and the theory itself is generally attributed to the Egyptians.

The Egyptians believed that a circular shape represented eternity, with no beginning or end. Circles were long considered mystical shapes, emulating the form of the sun and moon. Rings of gold were held in high regard by the upper class and this trend was soon adopted by the Romans.

However, it was the Archduke Maximilian of Hamburg who made the diamond engagement ring popular. The first ever recorded diamond engagement ring was given to his love, Mary of Burgundy in 1477. We can all thank him for coming up with that brilliant idea of a huge rock as an engagement ring!

What surely is true is that the wedding and engagement rings are symbols of one's love for the other, so their purchase ought to be one that is given due attention and consideration. The circle has always had significance in ancient cultures as a symbol of wholeness and of perfection. Its endlessness is the perfect symbol of oneness and eternal unity that has no beginning or end. It is the concrete sealing of a marriage pact—true love personified eloquently.



*Some time tested
Proposal & wedding tips*