

New Study Debunks 'Friends-With-Benefits' Relationships

Since the Sexual Revolution of the 1970s—well, probably since before then, but especially since then—humans have been trying to figure out how to separate sex from commitment. It's an idea that's captivated many, especially men, and has been explored in film (*Friends with Benefits*, *No Strings Attached*, *When Harry Met Sally*) and television (*How I Met Your Mother*, *Friends*, *Seinfeld*), inspiring many to try to achieve Erica Jong's fabled "[zipless f**k](#)," which, in non-second wave feminist terms, basically means sex without meaning.

Despite the attention the idea receives, it still hasn't caught on quite as much as the whole "boyfriend" "girlfriend" thing—probably because most people actually find committed relationships fulfilling—and is typically seen as a difficult, if not impossible, achievement. Feelings, it seems, always get in the way. But no longer! All the sex-loving commitmentphobes out there have reason to rejoice! Because a group of academics have discovered the secret to fun, no strings attached, commitment free, relationship free sex. It's so simple I can't believe nobody had thought of it in the past. Are you ready? Well, here it is...

Be a couple.

The key to friends-with-benefits bliss was published earlier this month in an academic journal called [Archives of Sexual Behavior](#). The paper has been met with little public attention thus far—perhaps because of its findings?—and I only happened to come across it through a [Vice article](#) featured on Snapchat this week. The paper relayed the findings of a study involving 171 people, 118 of whom were women, who'd had casual sex in the past year. They were asked about the dynamics of their relationships with their more-than-just-a-friend, with

questions that were meant to determine how sexually satisfying participants found their casual sex relationships and if the relationship was a healthy one. The results were, well, interesting, to say the least. The happiest men and women were those who were having the least-casual casual sex. Those who acted as though they were a couple reported higher levels of satisfaction, both from the relationship and sexually. These happier couples made sacrifices for each other to better their relationship and spent less time in the dating pool looking for other partners.

That the most fulfilling friends-with-benefits relationships were the closest to being actual couples won't come as a surprise to sociologists or social conservatives, who recognize the importance of traditional attitudes toward sex. While the free love attitude of hippies may have seemed appealing, science and history have only proved that the traditional sexual mores the Sexual Revolution upended are necessary to cultivating and maintaining healthy relationships. As a result of the social changes brought about by the Sexual Revolution, [sixty-five million Americans](#) have a sexually transmitted disease, and more and more children are being [born out of wedlock](#) and missing out on the [benefits](#) of being raised in a two-parent household. Loosening sexual rules too much has led to a host of unintended problems—proving, it would seem, the conservative approach to slow and thoughtful change is always proper—all because people wanted to have sex without the hassle of committed relationships. It simply doesn't work.

Consider all of those films and television shows that showcased friends-with-benefits arrangements; in almost every case, the relationships always failed to stay platonic. The sex always became meaningful. That's because sex shouldn't be an end in itself, it should be a means to an end, namely, [a way for couples to bond](#) and express intimacy. It cannot, by definition, be without meaning. Disagree with that all you

want, but, in the eternal words of Ron Burgundy, “[it's science](#).”

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