

Lover VS Provider: How to Pick Your Best Strategy

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[Lovers and providers](#)“, together with “friends”, are popular roles in the seduction and pick-up literature.

In simple terms, the provider provides women with the full package, including financial resources, emotional intimacy, and a committed relationship. The lover instead only provides her with sex.

These are two different dating strategies, and each can be successful.

In this post, we will delve deeper into the advantages and disadvantages of being a lover or provider.

lovers VS providers

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Lovers VS Providers in The Dating Literature

The mainstream dating advice recommends men to date as providers, and doesn't even realize there can be different dating strategies.

Let's immediately scratch that.

PUA and [red pill communities](#) do realize there are different dating strategies. They scoff at the idea of the provider and advise on the lover role as the only proper way of dating.

If you run a search for “lovers VS providers”, aside from the first result with a more balanced view - joking here, since the first result is from this website :-)- these are two of the top results you will get:

- Be a lover, not a provider (from “MasculinePrinciple”)
- Alpha male lovers VS [beta male providers](#) (as if the all lovers were alphas and all providers were betas)

Of course, this dichotomy is simplistic and, if not fleshed out better, it's also plainly wrong.

The lover and provider strategies can *both* be valid and effective strategies. It all depends, among other things, on your strengths and weaknesses, your environment, other men's strategies, your goals, and the type of girls you like.

This post will clarify when each strategy is best.

Lover Strategy

First of all, let's define a lover strategy:

A man dating with a lover strategy seeks sexual intercourse with a woman while providing little or no financial support, emotional support, or commitment.

These are the characteristics of a lover strategy:

- Heightened focus on the physical and sexual aspects of seduction
- Actively seeking the quickest path to sex
- Avoidance and rejection of long courtships
- Actively avoiding big investments of time and resources
- Potentially active disqualification of himself as a long-term potential (ie.: presenting himself as a traveler, a player, or saying he doesn't do relationships)
- Potentially playing down any indicators of commitment
- Potentially, but not necessarily, keeping the relationship to sex only

For short-term and casual sex, the lover role tends to be superior.

It's quicker, more efficient in screening women who are down to sex, and it requires less investment.

The major caveat, of course, is that for the man to successfully use a lover strategy, he must be at least somewhat attractive to the woman she wants.

But how about getting into a relationship?

Both can work for a relationship.

And the lover strategy can help men get quicker access to sex.

Why so?

Because women are not screening lovers for resources and are not trying to look like good girls

(Madonnas in the [Madonna-whore dichotomy](#)).

The theory is that since women are not auditioning lovers for a long-term role in their lives, they only need "attractive enough" or "fun enough" to enjoy the sex or the adventure.

There is also one more important advance of dating as a lover: **entering the relationship as a lover can also confer more power and leverage in a possible future relationship.**

Why?

First, because she will compare him with other men she's been with. And subconsciously, she will rationalize that if the lover was faster, than he must be more successful with other women (and women like sexually successful men).

And second, because entering a relationship as a non-providing lover adds a "double-bind" attraction.

First, she picked him for his sexiness. And now she even gets the resources?

Wow, what a win!

But of course, there is no "all-season perfect strategy", and the lover role comes with its risks and shortcomings.

The Risks of Being a Lover

The lover strategy riskier especially for more average men -but I'm sure most of the readers think of

themselves above average :-).

Some of the risks include:

1. **It might not be her type of sexy**

If he doesn't pull off "sexy enough" for quick sex, then he has no value to her. Or he might be an attractive man, but still not the type she fancies.

2. **If sex doesn't happen quickly, he's out**

If the seduction doesn't quickly lead to sex, she will turn cold and completely write him off.

Why?

Because sexy lovers are supposed to make things happen quickly, and if he doesn't, then he is no real lover (no sexy, no provider... Next!).

Of course, it's not always his fault that sex didn't happen, but [women don't think that way](#). Women are risk-averse, and if sex didn't happen quick, she will subconsciously decide that maybe he's not such a great lover.

It's his fault and he has lost his chance.

3. **Flawless seduction is expected**

Mucking an escalation to sex is a big sin for a lover.

A lover is expected to be smooth. A small blunder and he's out because he's not much of a lover if he mucks it up.

4. **You might trigger anti-slut defenses and she will turn cold and disappear**

"Anti-slut defenses" refers to women's tendency of not wanting to feel too "easy".

And when you go full-on lover, there is always that risk that she will reject you because you make her feel slutty and too easy.

And it's possible that, had you gone in a bit more conservatively, she would have liked you.

Here is a good texting example:

The lover frame was set, she was digging it, we moved to discussing logistics and we agreed for the date... And then she suddenly unmatched me.

She likely felt she was being too easy, too slutty... And she cut the interaction.

The lover strategy is generally riskier with women low in sexual drive, simply because you have less sexual drive to leverage. And it's riskier with more women and with more hang-ups about sex.

5. **Buyer's remorse risk (post-sex anti-slut defenses)**

The risk of anti slut defenses doesn't disappear after a successful seduction.

The risk after sex is that she will feel slutty later, or that she was "too easy".

The risk is especially high with conservative women, or if you pushed for sex.

If you pushed for sex, she might feel used, or like you are too overpowering.

She might also feel like you "won" with your push for sex, and she might resent it (that's why I recommend collaborative frames during LMR).

Check out [Dating Power Dynamics](#) for the concrete steps to address this risk.

But the gist is that, to increase the chances of a relationship (long-term) after you get together with a lover frame (short-term), you want to show more provider qualities, such as caring and kindness.

As Miller says in "[What Women Want](#)":

Even a woman who is really just cruising for some hot sex will enjoy you more and feel less vulnerable to slut-shaming if she can fantasize about you being a great boyfriend.

This happened several times to me. Here is one example:

How do you go from all over and “miss you” to ghosting? With a lover’s frame that makes her feel like a slut on the day after

6. Risk of being branded as “not relationship material”

Some women will slot lovers as the “guy for fun” or “the guy with whom to fool around but who’s not to be taken too seriously”.

The risk is present even if she likes you a lot, and sometimes *especially* if she likes you a lot.

One of my biggest heartbreaks was the woman who disappeared on me saying she “needed to protect herself”.

That was the equivalent of saying “you’re not the kind of guy I can trust, you will not form any pair bonding”.

And that’s one of the reasons why I’m not too sold on the advice of never telling women you like them (see [AMS](#)). That’s low-level, fearful game.

7. You misdiagnose her personality (and fall for the bait and switch)

The lover strategy can be dangerous for the same reason why it can be a great strategy.

What do I mean by this?

Well, up until the power is all on your side, her focus is to lock you down and present the best version of herself.

But things will change as the relationship develops and she accrues more power. For example, after marriage, or after kids.

Then the lovers really get to see the “real” her, and it can be a big surprise.

8. You’re dating below your full potential

This is potentially the biggest drawback of the lover dating strategy.

When you date purely as a lover, you are taking important assets off the negotiation table.

You are removing your resources, the availability of your resources, your commitment, your emotional support, and the possibility of true love and romance.

No matter how sexy you are, a sexy man who *also* adds those traits is inherently higher value.

Keep this in mind: **at parity of [sexual market value](#), the boyfriend candidate is superior to the lover candidate**, because the boyfriend candidate, who is most often a provider, is the full package.

That means that **by dating with the lover role you might lose the chance of dating [higher quality women](#)**. Women who might have otherwise dated you, had you chosen the provider route.

9. You might not get the type of girl you like

Some women you will rarely get with a lover's strategy.

It might be a minority, but women who never wanted sex outside of a relationship do exist.

Women looking for a relationship might also be more closed off to men dating with a lover strategy.

Overall, the lover strategy tends to work less well with certain types of women, and better with different types of women. These latter are libertine, unrestricted, high-sex drive, closeted high sex drive, sexually curious, etc.

Provider Strategy

Let's define a provider strategy:

A provider is a man who seeks long-term sexual access to a woman as part of a package which might include mutual commitment, emotional support, and financial support.

Some men are providers at heart, and most men date as providers most of the times. And most so-called "serious" relationships often see the man in a provider role.

Presenting oneself as a provider with less sexual edge is slower but, on average and for most people, safer.

As PUA Richard La Ruina says in "[Soulmate Sequence](#)":

To proceed at a slow burning pace is just playing easier.
Going immediately from strangers to lover is a pretty hard challenge.

Wining and dining might be in the cards, but he is allowed more room for mistakes.

Part of the reason might not be very encouraging, and in part it's because most providers are held to a lower sexual standard than lovers.

However, most is *not* all, and if you're reading here, chances are that you're not "most" guys.

And a sexy man can also date as a provider.

Indeed, there are different layers of being a provider.

The low-quality way is to pitch one's resources and commitment in exchange for sexual access.

A step above that is to use this frame:

Here is me, here are my qualities, here are my resources, and if we get along I might join forces with you and commit them or a part of them to you

Some ways in which men show their willingness to provide include:

- Picking her up
- Taking her to dinner
- Paying for her
- Showing up well dressed and clean for her
- Caring about her
- Defending her and taking her side

The advantages of Adding Provider Traits

Good reasons to for the provider role include:

- **It works best for most men** (by definition most men are not super sexy)
- **Has a higher batting average for most men** (at parity of SMV, at least)
- **Some women seek to avoid pure lovers** (especially the ones looking for a relationship)
- **Relationships with a provider tend to be stronger**
- **Many men tend to feel more “whole” and happier when they are also providers:** as [Bruce Bryan](#) says: the right woman will make you *want* to be a provider.
- **It allows men to get higher quality women who wouldn't otherwise sleep with him right away**

The last one is the most crucial, as we've seen.

That's the main reason why I would not advise most men to date as lovers unless I knew their goals and preferences beforehand. For men looking for a relationship, I would definitely advise a high-quality provider.

The Risks of Being a Provider

The risks of being a provider include:

- If they get into a relationship, he might start the relationship with less power
- He needs to share his resources
- He might end up moving too slow and attraction might dissipate
- If he's boring and showing off too much wealth, it might seem more like a transaction
- If he's not good at truly making people open up, she might present him with the mask of what he *wishes* to see

As you can see, there are risks associated with being a provider as well.

PRO Tip: To date effectively as a provider, communicate high standards

To date effectively as a provider, you want to communicate, sometimes even directly, that you got high standards.

Your dates should be your way of assessing women.

That way, she has to conform to your standards to be elected as the queen of your castle.

The unstated deal here is that “yes, you're looking for something serious, but the woman to take that special place in your life must truly deserve it. Is she good enough for it... ?”

Up to her to prove it.

Short/Long-Term & Lover/Provider

There is an overlap between the lover/provider role and the short-term/long term strategies.

However, the two are two separate concepts.

A man pursuing a short-term strategy might still present himself as a provider, while a man presenting himself as a lover might still want -or later realize he wants- a long-term relationship.

Here is a chart, with corresponding behavior:

Short-term dating with a provider role, in red, [is the most exploitative strategy](#).

The long-term lover helps get rid of the Madonna/whore dichotomy since she will not be playing the Madonna. But if you are reading here, you will have enough [mating intelligence](#) to avoid the Madonna games even as a provider.

Overlap Between Roles

Of course, reality is rarely cut and dry and people are rarely 100% lovers, 100% providers -or 100% friends, for that matter-

And as much as it's possible for a rich provider to be sexy and move quickly, it's also possible for a more "poor but sexy" lover type to add provider's layers to the mix

Everything is in the execution.

Look at this example from "The Saint":

Van Kilmer plays the stereotypical lover.

*Yet, her attraction spikes higher when he shows he *also* has money and he's inviting her for the drinks.*

This is a good example to derive another general rule: **the truly top quality men combine qualities from both providers and lovers.**

And that's why, again, I invite you to look less at the roles, and focus more on overall quality.

Should You Date as Lover or Provider?

Each strategy is not superior to the other in general terms, and each must be assessed depending on the individual situation.

Here are a few questions to help you decide what's best suited for you:

Q.: Are you around average or handsome?

- If you're average or below, provider might be more suited
- If you're very handsome, lover will come easier to you

Q.: Are you in a conservative or libertine culture?

- If you live in a conservative culture, provider might be more suited
- If you live in a libertine culture, lovers have an easier time

Q.: Do you live in a big city or countryside?

- If you're in the countryside, the lover is much more challenging
- If you're in a big city, the environment better supports a lover strategy

Q.: What priority do you assign to women?

- If you have many competing interests, then keep in mind that the lover might suck up lots of your time
- If women are really important to you and "notches" are indispensable, then you should develop the lover's skills

Q.: What type of places do you like?

- The lover style tends to work better in bars and clubs
- The provider strategy fares comparatively better when you meet women outside of bars and clubs

Q.: What age bracket are you dealing with?

- The lover style tends to work better with both younger and older women
- The provider strategy fares better with women in "settling down age"

Q.: What type of relationships do *you* prefer?

- If you're more into relationships, then you don't lose anything going for provider
- If you're into casual sex, then you the lover is more effective

Many men (and women) are not sure.

If you are not sure, that can create issues within yourself, so think it through.

If you are not sure and want to find out, [here is a quiz for you to take](#) (subscribers only).

Q.: What type of girls do you prefer?

– Low sex drive, more conservative women respond better to a provider

– High sex drive and more libertine respond better to a lover, especially when they're not yet in "settle down mode"

If I had to pick one way to choose, I would recommend you to pick based on your preferences and the types of girls you like.

For all the rest, you can find ways around it.

Be Like Water, My Friend

Finally, it's always best not to constrain yourself into a role.

If you're going for casual sex and lover style, you can always slow down if one day you meet a virgin, conservative woman who just doesn't trust you yet.

And if you're going for a high-quality provider, you're not tied to any number of dates.

Think fluidly, and you will always be more successful.

Fluid minds always beat inflexible ones.

Summary

In sum: lovers seek quick sex with no strings attached, while providers seek sex within a bigger frame of mutually agreed give and take.

Lover or provider are two different dating strategies.

One is not necessarily more effective or superior to the other, and each must be assessed depending on the individual's characteristics, his goal, and the external environment.

Finally, dating success is less about being a provider or a lover, and more about [overall value](#).

For more information and examples, please read:

- [Lovers, providers, and friends](#)

This is a preview from [Dating Power Dynamics](#), chapter 7, "Dating Strategies for Men"

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