

The Timeline Map

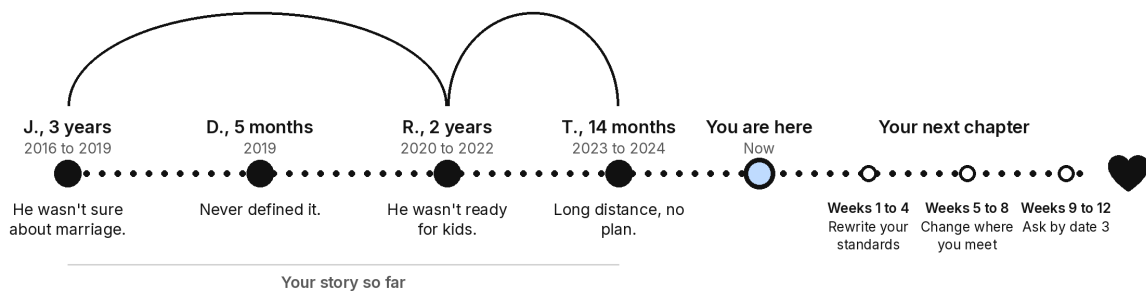
Prepared for Maya, 34 · Austin · October 2026

You told me *everything*. Here's what it means, and where it goes next.

The Timeline Map

Maya, 34, Austin. Wants to be married by 36.

The pattern: you stay 12+ months after he first says he isn't sure.



What you've done right

You always know what you want. Every ending was you telling the truth.

Your fix

Ask the kids and marriage questions by date 3, and leave within 30 days of "I'm not sure."

How to read your Map: the filled dots are your story so far. The arcs connect the relationships that ended the same way. The open circle is where you are today. Everything to the right of it is your next chapter.

1. Where you are

You're 34, you know exactly what you want, and you've known it the whole time. That's the first thing I want you to hear, because what you wrote was full of the fear that you're the problem. You're not. You have one pattern, it's specific, and it's fixable.

Right now you have something live: M., 36, second date Saturday. Everything in this Map is written so you can use it on Saturday, not someday.

2. Your story so far

J. · 3 years	Said marriage was "someday." At 18 months said he wasn't sure he'd ever marry. You stayed 18 more months.
D. · 5 months	Never defined. Ended the day you asked what you were.
R. · 2 years	At 10 months, "not sure about kids right now." You heard "not yet." You stayed 14 more months.
T. · 14 months	Long distance. Every question about a plan got pushed to after the holidays. You kept booking flights.

The pattern

You stay 12 or more months after he first tells you he isn't sure.

Look at the numbers. With J., R., and T., the answer arrived early: 18 months, 10 months, and roughly the first few visits. The relationships lasted years anyway. You didn't lose time because you picked wrong. You lost it in the stretch after he told you, while you waited for a different answer.

Two smaller patterns feed the big one

You wait instead of asking. When things slow down after dates two through four, you wait it out so you won't seem intense. Waiting feels safe, but it hands him the timeline.

You choose men you have to win over. You named this yourself, and it's the root. If he's hard to win, winning him feels like proof. So "I'm not sure" doesn't read as a no to you. It reads as a challenge.

3. What you've been doing right

More than you think

You've always known what you want. Marriage, kids, faith, Austin. None of your endings came from you being unclear.

You tell the truth when it counts. You ended three of four relationships yourself, honestly. That takes more courage than staying.

You're warm and you show up. Your exes called you fun and patient. Those are strengths. They just need a deadline attached.

You have a real support system. Close family and great friends are your best source of introductions, and you're not using them yet.

4. Your standards, rewritten

Your old list mixed a dealbreaker (kids) with a preference (tall) and then broke the dealbreaker. Here's the list, sorted by what your history says actually matters.

Musts	Says out loud, by date three, that he wants marriage and kids. Lives in Austin or has a concrete plan to. Shares enough of your faith to raise kids in it.
Wants	Stable, ambitious career. Kind. Close to his own family. Taller than you.
Dealbreakers	"I'm not sure" about marriage or kids after date three. No plan to close a distance. A pattern of getting "busy" instead of being direct.

5. Your red-flag decoder

Built from your own history. When you hear the words on the left, read the meaning on the right.

"Someday"	There's no date. J. said this for three years.
"Not right now"	It means no. R. said this, and it was a no.
"Let's get through the holidays"	There's no plan, and he isn't making one. T. said this for 14 months.
"Let's keep it easy"	He's telling you exactly what he wants. D. meant it.
He gets busy after date three	His interest dropped. It isn't about his job.
"You want everything figured out"	He doesn't. That's his information, not your flaw.

6. Your next chapter

Twelve weeks. One focus per month. Start Saturday.

Weeks 1 to 4 Rewrite your standards	Put the new list in your notes app. Update one Hinge prompt so it says what you're looking for, plainly. On Saturday with M., ask the question (script below) by the end of the date.
Weeks 5 to 8 Change where you meet	Cut app time to 20 minutes a day. Add one in-person place you'd go anyway: a young-adults group at church, a run club, a class. Ask three friends or family members, by name, who they'd set you up with.
Weeks 9 to 12 Ask by date 3	Every new person gets the question by the third date. If you hear "I'm not sure," you have 30 days to hear a real answer, then you go. Check yourself against this Map on the first of each month.

The question, word for word

"I'm having a really good time with you. I'm dating with marriage and kids in mind, in the next couple of years. Is that where you are too?"

Then stop talking. His answer is information, not a verdict on you. A man who wants what you want will say so. It won't scare him off.

You're not behind, Maya. You've been waiting for other people to decide. The next chapter is the one where you decide.

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This Map offers personal opinion and strategy, not therapy or counseling.