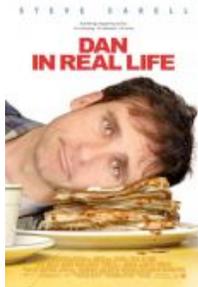


## Film Reviews

## Dan in Real Life - PG-13

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Love hurts in cute (if predictable) rom com.

**Rating:** PG-13 for some innuendo. **Studio:** [Focus Features](#) **Directed By:** [Peter Hedges](#) **Cast:** [Steve Carell](#), [Juliette Binoche](#), [Dane Cook](#) **Running Time:** 110 minutes **Release Date:** 10/25/2007 **Genre:** [Comedy](#)

## Common Sense Note

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Parents need to know that although this Steve Carell comedy is fairly tame overall, it does include some violence, innuendo, and other iffy behavior (Dan and Marie share a shower, they lie to Dan's family, and Dan flirts with Marie inappropriately in front of his whole family). Dan also gets a black eye and a broken nose and is in a minor car accident. A mother's death is mentioned, and a teenager lies to her father about dating a boy (he sneaks up to make out with her on the family vacation). One character makes jokes about "self-love" and "unclogging the pipes," which may lead tweens to ask about sex and masturbation. Language includes one use of "f--k."

Families can talk about the difference between how love is portrayed in movies and how it is in real life. Why do you think so many movies pair depression and misery with love? Is it funny to watch romantic movies like that? Why or why not? How fun do you think it would be to actually be in a relationship like that? In this movie, Dan and Marie lie about their attraction and end up hurting a lot of people. Remind kids that anyone you have to hide or lie to your family about probably isn't the right person for you.

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## Common Sense Review

Reviewed By: [Heather Boerner](#)

DAN IN REAL LIFE is kind of like *8 Simple Rules ... for Dating My Teenage Daughter* on vacation. There's the same father-daughter dynamic and the same hapless-but-loving dad. And, overall, the film is just as family-friendly and cute as the [John Ritter](#) TV show -- with a few notable exceptions.

Four years after his beloved wife's death, newspaper columnist Dan ([Steve Carell](#)) is devoted to their three daughters. But the teen girls are quickly moving out of his control. Cara (played with the perfect amount of melodramatic hyperbole by Brittany Robertson) is in love for the first time and lies to her father about it, sneaking off to smooch her new fella. Parent-ified Jane (the stoic Alison Pill) is 17 and ready to drive, and Lilly (Marlene Lawston) is sick of being coddled. As Dan's father (the fabulous [John Mahone](#)) aptly remarks when Dan says his children hate him, "You must be doing *something* right."

It's after arriving at his parents' home for a mythically happy family reunion -- complete with football and a talent show --

that Dan meets Marie ([Juliette Binoche](#)) at a bookstore and falls for her. The problem? She's already spoken for -- by Dan's hyper, self-involved brother, Mitch (a well-cast [Dane Cook](#)). Will he be able to keep his feelings to himself?

You'll know the answer in the first 15 minutes, since *Dan in Real Life* is a romantic comedy convinced that misery and self-abdication are the true signs of love. Contentment? Joy? Communication? Respect? Nah, those are too boring. Instead, viewers are treated to the thesis that people never really grow beyond the puppy-love stage, where they gnash their teeth, aren't responsible for their behavior, and generally suffer. It's a typical movie message, but maybe not a good one for teens who already make a habit of dramatic suffering.

So it's a good thing the movie is well-done and warm-hearted. Yes, it's predictable and unrealistic -- what family doesn't have a mean-spirited snipe at a reunion? -- but it aims for a kind of "human comedy," as Marie announces on first meeting Dan. In describing the kind of book she wants to buy, she says, "Not laugh-out-loud funny, and certainly not making-fun-of-other-people funny ... more human funny."

But the film does have both of the other types of funny as well. A sing-along mocks a grade-school acquaintance called "Pig Face," and Cara later says something is "so queer." And there are some guffaw-worthy moments as well -- most surrounding some great lines your kids may end up repeating back to you ("You are a murderer of LOVE!" and "I thought I just died because there's an angel in the room," to which someone replies, "This corn is like an angel!").

Director [Peter Hedges](#) (who also helmed the similarly sweet but more adult [Pieces of April](#)) uses his cast to great effect: Cook stays occupied with outlandish songs and aerobics routines, and Carell hams it up dancing and gets in a few fun one-liners, too. The young actors all pull their own weight, and Mahoney and the renowned [Dianne Wiest](#) provide the perfect backdrop to the film as Dan's content parents.

It may not exactly be real life, but *Dan in Real Life* is ultimately a fun way to spend two hours with your family.

Fans may also like [Home for the Holidays](#) and [The Family Stone](#).

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Content	CS	adults	kids
<b>Sexual Content</b> Cara makes out with her boyfriend. Marie undresses and gets in the shower with a (clothed) Dan (only her bare shoulders are visible). Clay makes veiled references to masturbation. Dan and Marie kiss.			
<b>Violence</b> Some comic pratfalls, including Dan falling out a second-story window and getting hit in the face with a football. Mitch punches Dan. Dan backs into a police car.			
<b>Language</b> One use each of "damn" and "f-k." Cara says something is "so queer."			
<b>Message</b>			
<b>Social Behavior</b> Dan gets several tickets and has his license revoked for poor driving. He flirts with his brother's girlfriend. Dan and Marie lie about their attraction. The family makes up a song making fun of how a woman looked in grade school. Cara uses an anti-gay slur in passing. Eventually, Dan learns to be honest and trustworthy.			
<b>Commercialism</b> Dan mentions the TV show <i>Bonanza</i> .			
<b>Drug/Alcohol/Tobacco</b> Some wine drinking by adults, but no one gets drunk.			

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