

The Altar Chase

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good hunting!

If Only...

Dating is very simple. You go somewhere and scope out those available. You select from them and make contact. You hold a 15 minute conversation with them and get phone numbers. You set up dates and go on dates. Sex is up to her but he is always prepared. You enjoy doing the rounds until one says "stand and deliver". Then you marry that person. What's so hard about that?

What is hard is they tell you that you are kind and wonderful and yet, somehow, they married the next person they dated and not you.

This book will try to remedy that situation.

There are many dating books out on the market for both men, ex. Double Your Dating, and women, ex. The Rules. Some tell you to be a challenge, be cute, be cocky, be this, that, or the other. They tell you how to manipulate others to get what you want. Whatever your situation, there is an 'infallible' dating system out there for you.

I won't tell you any of that.

This book will tell you as it really is. Both genders can use this book. Men and women share responsibility in this dating and relationship process.

No one gets off easy here. This is because the dating process can be terribly hurtful. Better you hear it from me than from someone you have your eye on.

Contrary to most people's notion, nice guys/girls do *not* finish last. The idea that a bad boy/girl can be turned into a good man/woman by love is also nonsense. No one changes anyone. They are as they are and you must accept them as they are. The problem begins with the word 'nice'. Nice means good, not weak. Nice is precisely what you want. Remember this as you go forward.

I wish you the best of luck!

Introduction

Healthy relationships enrich your life, bring comfort to both parties, and are founded upon a base of sincerity, honesty, and trust. You have to like as well as love your partner. There is a mutual support system in place that balances the give and take where your weaknesses are offset by your partner's strengths.

What you do not want is a relationship where you have to come up behind him/her and apologize or make excuses for your partner's misbehavior, or get involved in a pandering quid pro quo situation where love/care/help is only given for a price. Abusive relationships are definitely out. The first slur, the first blow, the first bit of torment is the last one. Marriage is not meant to be a prison nor should a husband or wife be an emotional hostage to their spouse.

Dating is the process of learning about each other's character. The initial physical attraction should endure, of course, but it is the compatibility of characters that will make or break a relationship. When it comes to marriage, only *character* counts. If you wish to marry the right person, the first time, for *all* time, this is the book for you.

I say this because this is precisely what I did. I married the right person, the first time, for all time. We remain happily married and crazy about each other despite the various hazards of married life, the “slings and arrows of outrageous fortune”, and 30 years. When asked how long we have been married, we both answer “Not nearly long enough!” What’s more, we *mean* it! The following is how we did it.

Preparation

Dating involves presenting yourself as a desirable partner. You do this by recognizing your best and worst attributes. Then you move one step beyond a simple cataloging to the recognition of any “discontinuities” in your life. These “discontinuities” are what will ruin your chances of ever finding a life-long mate. Some examples include the 40 year old virgin, the 'failed to launch' person, the Master-degreed who flips burgers for a marginal living, and the public person who privately lives the exact opposite of what they publicly support.

**You have to be a whole person
with an independent, satisfying life
of your own *before* you can ask anyone
else to share that life with you.**

If you are not a whole person - fix it. If you require medications, take them and get on with your life. If your life is not what you want it to be - fix it. Yes, I know it may be almost impossible to do but if you think about your options, you may just come up with an effective plan. If the process of discovery requires cost-benefit analysis, do it. *Rule one is 'no lying', not even to yourself.*

Face up; 'fess up; fix up.

Your spouse is *not* here to complete, rescue, or fix you. Your spouse is *not* here to provide purpose, meaning or direction to your life. You have to build that for yourself. No one else can tell you what your purpose in life is. Your reason for living is your own and it doesn't have to be something grand and glorious. Just being your best self the best way you know how is enough.

Next, check your baggage and your attitude. You are a decent person planning on meeting decent people. There is no need to tell others everything right away. You have only just met this person. You do not know enough about him/her yet. Burdening potential partners with your life's story immediately can make them uncomfortable.

Nor is there any reason to make this woman/man pay for what any other women/men may have or may not have done earlier. He/she was not there. Each person is unique and just because person A did this does not mean that person B will do the same thing. Deal with each potential partner as an individual. While your past has played a part in making you who you are today, it is not necessary nor is it desirable for you to permit your past to exert undue influence over your future by being bitter, resentful, or timid.

You are not a Prince/Princess and you are not Mr. or Ms. No Good so civility is expected. If in doubt about the quality of your or your potential partner's manners, kindly read Miss Manners for guidance. The best advice is to treat others as you wish they would treat you.

Please be aware that 'full disclosure' does not happen until marriage is being discussed. Before then, keep it to yourself. When fully disclosing, do not attempt to gloss over anything. This is when the truth, all of it, is the only thing that will work. No one wants to be surprised and remember that you want to be accepted for all of you and not just for the good bits. Few things are worse than getting married and only then finding out that you have made a dreadful mistake.

Your sexual history is only pertinent if you are planning to have sex with this person in the immediate future. You must be totally honest and prepared to provide proof of your current sexual health status. If you lie about this, the relationship is over not because you are whatever you are but because you lied.

Preparation is about the major issues in your life that would kill any chance of you having the relationship you desire. The aim is to make as it easy

and as enjoyable as possible for your life-mate to join with you. See what you can do to make that possible.

If you are in denial and cannot see what is wrong with your life or answer why you cannot find a life-mate, you might have to ask someone. Consult a professional if need be. There is an answer, you have only to find it and then rectify the error.

This is not meant to ruin your confidence. To rush head-long out into the dating world before *you* are ready to seriously date would be disastrous! The resulting rejection *would* ruin your confidence. Or worse, you could end up with exactly the wrong person simply because you were lonely and felt that *any* spouse would be better than no spouse at all. You do not have to become another person, you only have to become the mature, adult, and thoroughly decent person you were always meant to be with a happy and satisfying life. This requires fearless and objective self-analysis. You then fix the errors.

There is a certain sequence to life. Employment comes first. Then you acquire a suitable home. This does not necessarily mean buying a house. An apartment will do. Next, you begin building for your financial future. Finally and *only* after you have all the others in place and on-going, do you then go out in search of your life-mate.

If you handle the process correctly and with the right attitude, dating can be delightful fun! If you do not, dating can be hell.

Setting Standards

When you're dating, you have no business to demand anything. Only husbands and wives can make demands; not boyfriends, not girlfriends. Boy/girlfriends have only those rights you give them and nothing more. Those rights have to be earned and not asked for. All too often, people demand what is not rightfully theirs and if their demands are not met, they ditch the relationship claiming anything but the truth.

For example, you cannot rightfully demand that your boy/girlfriend stop seeing his/her friends. You cannot tell your boy/girlfriend who he/she can have in their home. You cannot tell your boy/girlfriend how he/she must spend his/her time or how he/she should live his/her life. You also cannot demand that he/she dates you and only you exclusively.

When you are dating, your image should be one of being an adult. You are full grown, mature, sensible, capable of humor, and fun but also a person of substance.

If you begin making demands such as those above, you ruin this image. You move from adult to petulant child in one step. This is true regardless of

which person is making the demands. Contrary to popular opinion, the person making demands is not saying "I'm worth this." They are saying "I'm needy and insecure without this." What appears to be a position of strength is really a show of weakness.

Having standards means having self-respect. You behave in such a way that you do not end up disgusted with yourself the day after the night before. This self-respect is most clearly shown in how you behave toward others. People treat others the way they want those others to treat them. How you dress, speak and behave, they all tell others how worthy you think you are and then they treat you accordingly. Going out to a party with a group of people you do not know well in a public place and then lifting your skirt and having those people sign your now naked ass with a black marker does not tell people that your standards are at all high.

When dating, you have no competition. Others are not a threat. Others do not even exist. You do not ignore their presence; you merely do not take their presence seriously. His or her ex hanging about doesn't matter. Rivals do not matter. Your focus is only upon what is between you and the person you're dating. Is there a bond developing between you or is there not? There won't be if you go about making demands and ultimatums. Not if they're a person worth having there won't be.

Your mate for life comes to you under their own power and in their own time. They do not come because you told them to come. He or she has to come to you because they want you; all of you, the good, the bad, and the indifferent; as you are right here and right now. This is not something you can rightfully demand. The drive toward you has to come from within your partner.

Nothing less will do.

Now for the warning signs; please tell me *you* don't have/do any of these and stay well away from those who do.

Bitterness - everything is someone else's fault but somehow he/she is always the one who pays.; everything right here and right now doesn't somehow measure up to his/her expectations; everyone always lets him/her down or screws him/her over. All everyone ever hears from him/her is the dripping venom of complaint after complaint after complaint. It sucks all the joy out of life of anyone within earshot.

Jealousy - yes, I know people say that if "he/she is not jealous, they really don't love you" but that's utter rot! Being jealous or possessive is a huge red flag signaling weakness. The jealous person does not trust you, does not trust him or herself, and certainly does

not trust the strength of the love between you. If you cannot trust, you cannot love. That's all there is too it. Being with a jealous/possessive person is like being in prison constantly watching your own back because your nearest and dearest always has that knife ready.

Leeching - This goes beyond being needy, clingy, and desperate. Leeching is literally not having any mind or life of your own so you have to get your existence through another person. These people are looking for a meal ticket and so much more. They are never satisfied. As each box is checked, there's always another one. There's also a quid pro quo variation where if you want x then you have to give y to get it.

Now, people will not come right out and say "I'm a bitter, jealous, leech.". You have to watch for the red flags and be prepared to walk away should a red flag fly.

Red Flags =

The Quiz. Where did you go? Who did you see? What did they say? What did you say? Question upon question not from a sincere wish to know but because they're searching for any hint of infidelity.

Bait & Switch. A bit of sex "you'll get more when we get there." You get there and then instead of

the sex, you get a lecture about your fear of commitment. Sound familiar?

Being Off Their Meds. It doesn't really matter what the meds are for because this is truly scary. In this case, trust your instinct that something's *not* right and run away.

Avoidance. Always answering a question with a question, or not answering it at all, or just brushing questions off as being not important are examples of avoidance. Also under this heading come those who are never there when you need them and those who avoid accepting any responsibility.

Complaints. That is all you get from them. They have a view of the world that begins and ends with themselves.

Bullying. Then there are those who constantly push you to do something you do *not* want to do proving they do not listen to you and do not consider you or your wishes to be important.

If you are inflicted - please run. If you are he/she who inflicts - stop it! How would you feel if someone did that to you? Think carefully about your behavior and stop making unwarranted demands.

By their actions, you will know them.

It is an unfortunate fact that the majority of women have suffered some kind of abuse at the hands of men at one time or another. There are also those men who have also suffered mistreatment. While it is true that one person cannot know everything about another person, there are some things you can guess at with fair accuracy. If someone doesn't seem quite right, chances are that he/she isn't 'quite right'.

It is sometimes possible to predict the likelihood of the person you are currently or are about to become involved with being abusive. Below are a list of behaviors and traits which are common in abusive personalities. These are commonly known as Warning Signs.

While not all abusive people show the same signs, or display the tendencies to the same extent, if several behavioral traits are present, there is a strong tendency toward abusiveness. Generally, the more signs are present, the greater the likelihood of violence. In some cases, an abuser may have only a couple of behavioral traits that can be recognized, but they are very exaggerated (e.g. extreme jealousy over ridiculous things).

Often the abuser will initially try to explain his/her behaviour as signs of his/her love and

concern, and the victim may be flattered at first; as time goes on, the behaviors become more severe and serve to dominate, control and manipulate the victim.

Jealousy

At the beginning of a relationship, an abuser will always say the jealousy is a sign of love. He/she may question you about whom you have spoken to or seen during the day, may accuse you of flirting, or be jealous of time you spend with family, friends, children or hobbies which do not include him/her. As the jealousy progresses, he/she may call you frequently during the day or drop by unexpectedly. He may be unhappy about or refuse to let you work for fear you'll meet someone else, check the car mileage or ask friends to keep an eye on you. Jealousy is not proof of love, it is a sign of insecurity and possessiveness.

Controlling Behaviour

Controlling behaviour is often disguised or excused as concern. Concern for your safety, your emotional or mental health, the need to use your time well, or to make sensible decisions. Your abuser may be angry or upset if you are 'late' coming back from work, shopping, visiting friends, etc., even if you told him/her you would be later back than usual. Your abuser may question you closely about where you were, whom you spoke to, the content of every conversation you held, or why you did something

he/she was not involved in. As this behaviour gets worse, you may not be allowed to make personal decisions about the house, clothing, going to church or how you spend your time or money or even make you ask for permission to leave the house or room. Alternately, he/she may theoretically allow you your own decisions, but penalize you for making the wrong ones. Concern for our loved ones to a certain extent is normal - trying to control their every move is not.

Quick Involvement

Many victims of abuse dated or knew their abuser for less than six months before they were engaged or living together. The abuser will often claim 'love at first sight', that you are 'made for each other', or that you are the only person whom he could ever talk to so openly, feel so at home with, could understand him so well. He/she may tell you that they have never loved anyone so much or felt so loved by anyone so much before, when you have really only known each other for a short amount of time. He/she needs someone desperately, and will pressure you to commit to him/her or make love before you feel the relationship has reached 'that stage'. He/she may also make you feel guilty for not committing yourself to him/her.

Unrealistic Expectations

The abuser may expect you to be the perfect husband, wife, mother, father, lover, and friend. He/she is very dependent on you for all his/her needs, and may tell you he/she can fulfill all your needs as lover, friend, and companion. Statements such as: 'If you love me, I'm all you need.', 'You are all I need.' are common. Your abuser may expect you to provide everything for him/her emotionally, practically, financially or spiritually, and then blame you for not being perfect or living up to expectation.

Isolation

The abuser may try to curtail your social interaction. He/she may prevent you from spending time with your friends or family and demand that you only go places 'together'. He/she may accuse you of being 'tied to your mother's apron strings', not be committed to the relationship, or view people who are your personal friends as 'causing trouble' or 'trying to put a wedge' between you. He/she may want to live in the country without a phone, not let you use the car, stop you from working or gaining further education or qualifications.

Blame-shifting for Problems

Very rarely will an abusive personality accept responsibility for any negative situation or problem. If they are unemployed, can't hold down a job, were thrown out of college or University or fall out with their family, it is always someone else's fault, be it the

boss, the government, or their mother. They may feel that someone is always doing them wrong, or out to get him. He/she may make a mistake and then blame you for upsetting him/her or preventing him/her from doing as they wished to.

Blame-shifting for Feelings

The abuser will deny feelings stem from within him/her but see them as reactions to your behaviour or attitude toward him/her. He/she may tell you that 'you make me mad', 'you're hurting me by not doing what I ask', or that he/she cannot help feeling mad, upset, etc. Feelings may be used to manipulate you, i.e. 'I would not be angry if you didn't ...' Positive emotions will often also be seen as originating outside the abuser, but are more difficult to detect. Statements such as 'You make me happy' or 'You make me feel good about myself' are also signs that the abuser feels you are responsible for his sense of well-being. Either way, you become in his/her mind the cause of good and bad feelings and are therefore responsible for his/her emotional well-being and happiness. Consequently, you are also to blame for any negative feelings such as anger, upset or depression.

Hypersensitivity

Most abusers have very low self-esteem and are therefore easily insulted or upset. They may claim their feelings are 'hurt' when they are really angry, or take unrelated comments as personal attacks. They

may perceive normal set-backs (having to work additional hours, being asked to help out, receiving a parking fine, etc.) as grave personal injustices. They may view your preference for something which differs from their own as a criticism of their taste and therefore themselves (e.g. blue wallpaper rather than pink, etc.).

Cruelty to Animals

The abuser may punish Animals brutally, be insensitive to their pain or suffering, or neglect to care for the Animals to the point of cruelty, e.g. not feeding them all day, leaving them in areas he/she knows will cause them suffering or distress. There is a strong correlation between cruelty to Animals and domestic violence which is still being researched.

Cruelty to Children

The abusers unrealistic expectations of their partner are often mirrored in their attitude toward children. He/she will think of children as 'small adults' and blame the children for not being responsible, having common sense or understanding. He/she may expect children to be capable far beyond their ability (e.g. is angry with a two-year old for wetting their pants or being sick on the carpet, waking at night or being upset by nightmares) and will often meet out punishments for 'naughtiness' the child could not be aware of. Abusers may tease children until they cry, or punish children way beyond what could be

deemed appropriate. He/she may not want children to eat at the table, expect them to stay quiet, or keep to their room all evening while he/she is at home. Since abusers want all your attention themselves, they resent your spending time with the children or any normal demands and needs the children may have. As above (cruelty to Animals), there is a very strong link between Domestic Violence and Child Abuse.

'Playful' use of Force in Sex

He/she may pressure you to agree to forceful or violent acts during sex, or want to act out fantasies where you are helpless. A male abuser may let you know that the idea of "rape" excites him. He/she may show little concern about whether you want to have intercourse and uses sulking or anger to manipulate you into compliance. Starting sex while you are sleeping, demanding sex when you are ill or tired, or refusing any form of intimacy unless you are willing to go 'all the way' can all be signs that he/she could be sexually abusive or sexually violent. Forcing you into sexual behaviors and situations with which you may be uncomfortable.

Rigid Sex Roles

Abusers usually believe in stereotypical gender roles. A man may expect a woman to serve him; stay at home, obey him in all things---even things that are criminal in nature. A male abuser will often see women as inferior to men, more stupid, unable to be a

whole person without a relationship. Female abusers may expect the man to provide for them entirely, shift the responsibility for her well-being onto him or heckle him as being 'not a real man' if he shows any weakness or emotion.

Verbal Abuse

In addition to saying things that are meant to be cruel and hurtful, either in public or in private, this can include degrading remarks or running down any accomplishments. Often the abuser will tell you that you are 'stupid', could not manage without him/her. He/she may keep you up all night to 'sort this out once and for all' or even wake you at night to continue to verbally abuse you. The abuser may even say kindly things to your face, but speak badly about you to friends and family.

Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde

Very rarely do abusers conform to the stereotypical image of a constantly harsh, nasty or violent person, either in public or in private. More frequently the abuser portrays a perfectly normal and pleasant picture to the outside world (often they have responsible jobs or are respected and important members of the local community or Church) and reserves the abuse for you in the privacy of your own home. Nor are abusers always overtly abusive or cruel, but can display apparent kindness and consideration. This Jekyll and Hyde tendency of the

abuser serves to further confuse the victim, while protecting themselves from any form of suspicion from outsiders. Many victims describe "sudden" changes in mood - one minute nice and the next explosive or hysterical, or one minute happy and the next minute sad. This does not indicate some special "mental problem" but are typical of abusive personalities, and related to other characteristics such as hypersensitivity.

Drink or Substance Abuse

While neither drinking or the use of drugs are signs of an abusive personality, heavy drinking or drug abuse may be a warning sign and do increase the risks of abuse, especially violence, taking place. Often an abusive person will blame the drink for his/her abuse. However, a person who, knowing there is a risk he/she could be violent when drinking or on drugs, chooses to get drunk or high, is in effect choosing to abuse. The link between substance abuse and domestic abuse is still being researched, and it is apparent that while neither alcohol nor drugs necessarily cause violence, they do increase the risk of violence.

History of Battering or Sexual Violence

Very rarely is abuse or violence a one-off event: a batterer will beat any woman he is with; a sexually abusive person will be abusive toward all his intimate partners. Situational circumstances do not make a

person an abusive personality. Sometimes friends or family may try to warn you about the abuser. Sometimes the abuser may tell you himself/herself that he/she has hit or sexually assaulted someone in the past. However, they may further go on to explain that "she made me do it by ..." or in some other way not take responsibility and shift the blame on to the victim. They may tell you that it won't happen with you because "you love them enough to prevent it" or "you won't be stupid enough to wind me up that much". Once again, this is denying their own responsibility for the abuse, and shifting the responsibility for the relationship to remain abuse-free on to you. Past violence is one of the strongest pointers that abuse will occur.

Threatening Violence

This would obviously include any threat of physical force such as "If you speak to him/her again, I'll kill you", or "If any wife of mine acted like John's did, I'd give her a right seeing to". But can also include less obvious threats, such as "If you leave me, I will kill myself". Threats are designed to manipulate and control you, to keep you in your place and prevent you making your own decisions. Most people do not threaten their mates, but an abuser will excuse this behaviour by saying "everybody talks like that.", maintaining he/she is only saying this because the relationship or you are so important to him/her, tell

you you're "over-sensitive" for being upset by such threats, or obviously want to hurt him/her.

Breaking or Striking Objects

The abusive person may break your treasured object, beat his/her fists on the table or chair or throw something at or past you. Breaking your things is often used as a punishment for some imagined misdeed on your part. Sometimes it will be justified by saying that now that you are with him/her, you don't need these items any more. Breaking your possessions also has the effect of de-personalizing you, denying you your individuality or literally trying to break links to your past. Beating items of furniture or throwing objects will often be justified by saying you wound him/her up so much they lost control, once again shifting the blame for this behaviour on to you, but is actually used to terrorize you into submission. Only very immature or abusive people beat on objects in the presence of other people in order to threaten or intimidate them.

Any Force during an Argument

An abuser may physically restrain you from leaving the room, lash out at you with his/her hand or another object, pin you against a wall or shout 'right in your face'. Basically any form of force used during

an argument can be a sign that actual violence is a strong possibility.¹

Regardless of which side of this equation you are on - get immediate help NOW! There is no future in this kind of relationship. You will not change him/her. So it is best just to leave. Get out of there, taking the children with you, and file a police report. Any sign of gentleness on your part will only be seen as 'weakness' by him/her and he/she will continue to press, berate, and badger you into coming back to him/her for more abuse. An abuser knows no bounds and will both threaten to harm and harm your children in order to get you back. An abuser will sue you for custody of the children and then will kill them if necessary, if he/she is vindictive enough, just to punish you for leaving him/her – do not doubt me, it has happened. This is why you MUST file police reports on EVERY incident of abuse. You have got to keep any children far away from an abusive person. Just be done with him/her. If you are the abuser – get help. There is something seriously wrong with you that only a medical professional can help you solve. Until you get such help, you will ALWAYS be an unworthy person.

¹ The preceding section detailing signs of abuse is from <http://www.hiddenhurt.co.uk/Abuser/signs.htm>

The above is why it is so important to be a whole person with a satisfying individual life of your own and to set your criteria for your suitors before you get involved with another person. Loving someone should NOT mean dying, broken bones, or dead/damaged kids. Sorry to put you through this but it does need to be said.

I cannot stress enough how important it is to date as many people simultaneously as you can. Yes, this will mean having a heavy social schedule but you cannot find the rabbit if you're sitting on your living room sofa watching television. You do actually have to go out and talk to people. If this seems like you're "playing fast and loose", you aren't. What you are doing is a concentrated hunt for your life-mate. Everyone you meet may be him/her or may know of a person who would be good for you.

In addition, by dating many you will be able to more accurately judge when your date's behavior steps over the line, see above red flags. You will also more rapidly develop your social instincts and your social poise. Always have your planner with you so you can take notes and juggle your schedule according to the demands made upon your time just in case another person catches your eye. A smart phone that will do all of this is an excellent tool. If you are not into the latest gizmo, then a pencil and a pocket calendar book will do.

Only when you are affianced do you stop playing the field; not before. This seems like a major change in concept, but actually this is how it used to be before people began “going steady” and trying for loyalty and exclusivity ‘up front’ before they were earned. Do not try to rush the dating process but remember there is a three date and a two year limit which I will explain later on.

Dating does *not* automatically include sex. Do not assume that it does. The choice is the lady’s to make. A gentleman is prepared for intimacy but does not cajole, beg, command, or force a lady into his/her bed or wherever. A lady does not need to explain or justify her decision nor her desires should a gentleman be fortunate. Most women have to at least like the man before she wants to enjoy sex with him. This liking can take some time to develop.

Always, No means No.

Please do not be a shallow person who judges potential partners solely upon their appearance. Yes, men do judge each other by the quality of woman they have on their arm but most are well aware that beauty is but skin deep and if your bit of eye-candy is vacant between the ears, or has a hot violent temper with a short fuse, those looks of envy will become looks of pity in very short order. Women too make

judgments that are equally unfair and unpleasant, usually these involve money. Stop it. You are judged by the quality of company you keep but that quality is not based upon beauty or material wealth.; it is based upon the inner worth of that person.

There are some fundamental qualities that will affect people's physical attraction to others. Some of these are 'hard-wired' into our psychology and others are due to our culture. The most obvious after gender and race is physical size with larger and taller males in general being preferred over smaller and shorter males since the larger males are seen as being more capable of protecting the children, for one example. Humans are highly variable however, so one cannot take such generalities as hard and fast rules. If you know that you personally do not find larger people attractive, you should not date larger people. As long as what you find attractive is realistic, it is fine. But if you are looking for physical perfection, you are dooming your search before you have even begun. Give that mysterious "chemistry" its chance.

Marketing

You want to present a certain image of yourself. You want to be a person of worth and substance, and I am not only speaking of material things. If your religion is important to you, project the image of being a religious person. If you're a decent hard-working person who is as steady as a rock, project that by being hard-working and reliably steady. The point is to go with what is important to you and your good points. Be the partygirl if you want a partyguy.

If your friends were asked to describe you in one word, what word would that be? What is the first thing people notice about you? Can you run with that? If not, then perhaps you need to work a bit to make your good attributes more noticeable.

The image you project is not just a façade. It must be real and it must encompass your entire life.

Dressing well or driving an expensive car while living in a hovel is not going to be effective. A few good items works better than lots of not terribly good items. Keep your marketing clean, simple, and true.

Never, ever lie; not even by omission. Lying by omission is omitting to tell *all* of the truth or facts. Saying you cannot drive because you do not have a car, for example, when the truth is you lost your license because of repeated DUIs and are now never going to be driving ever again is lying by omission. If you are asked what kind of relationship you want, please tell. If you want an open marriage and your date does not, it is best to know this immediately.

Not to say that while seeking Mr./Ms. Right you cannot dally with Mr./Ms. Wrong but it does take time away from your main objective, however, never give Mr./Ms Wrong the idea that he/she may be Mr./Ms Right if you know he/she is not as that would be very unfair. Yet, time spent “just for fun” can help clear your mind if certain potential partners are confusing you. This is especially useful for men as it prevents them from falling prey to what is called, in the vernacular, testosterone poisoning.

Look at yourself, your habits, your housing, and so on, with an objective eye. Would you marry you? Pinpoint the trouble areas and fix them. Be proactive, be specific but do not be merciless. Also do not demand perfection from your dates. There are those who never find anyone who is ‘worthy’ of them, I have had them explain to me that this is why they are still single. Of course they are single with that attitude. How could it be otherwise? Absolute

perfection scares people because it is an utterly impossible standard. Perfection will lead your potential partners to decide they are not worthy. You are aiming for that point where all is nice but remains comfortable.

One point – you have to be fun. Partners must enjoy being with you or they will stop being with you. Be engaging, friendly, and pleasant. Whatever else is going on in your life, you have to be able to let it go for the time you are out on a date. This means you have to cultivate conversation beyond yourself and your current issues. Tuck those things away for later. Remember what I said earlier about those who only complain? Precisely. Do not be that person yourself.

Your image cannot change from one date to the next. It must be a consistent and coherent whole. It must be you and it must appeal to the kind of partner you want. If being yourself does not attract the kind of person you desire then you need to take another look at yourself. Someone seeking a religious person will not be impressed by a player. This is because people do not feel comfortable if the gap between them and their partner is too large. You want your potential partners to feel at ease with you right from the start.

No surprises.

Mechanics

The Three Date Rule. You have three dates to decide if there is anything possible between you two. Using the tradition form, he invites her out for two dates and she invites him out for the third. The one who invites, pays for the date. A date is a specific event at a specific date, time, and place. It is not “to hang out”. When inviting, make it to something your date would enjoy. If your date refuses to permit you to pay for the entire date be gracious about it and accept. There are those who feel that if you pay for everything you may come to have ‘expectations’.

Let us suppose he has invited her out for two dates. If she does not then invite him out for the third, he is at liberty to assume that she is not interested in pursuing the relationship. It would be adult of her to tell him so but some women have difficulty being direct and some men have problems with accepting rejection so I am leaving you an ‘easy out’.

**The point is that if he/she is
not willing to reciprocate
he/she may not be
the person for you.**

There is some controversy about this 3 Date Rule. The idea behind it is the old “if I entertain you, the next time you entertain me” social reciprocity rule

amended somewhat in light of gender differences. Instead of a one to one, I have made it a two to one date ratio. Whether you follow this rule or not is up to you. Some women however were raised to never ask a man out until a certain relationship has been reached.

Shy people have a difficult time with dating it must be admitted. Shyness can be overcome by risking small social interactions on a daily basis; saying hello here, for example, or perhaps asking for directions from that person over there. I understand not wanting to make a mistake and not wanting to embarrass yourself. But people cannot eat you after all and you do have to go out anyway so you might as well learn how to socialize with people. You might want to team up with a more socially adept person but only do this if you are sincerely willing to overcome your shyness.

The Two Year Rule. The three dates have been successful and you two have continued dating each other. You two have gradually revealed yourselves to one another and the guilt is off the lily. It has been two years. Now it is time to say yes or no. In the parlance of the highway robber, "stand and deliver!" Will you or will you not be wed? If not, please part as friends. If yes, congratulations.

This may seem too harsh or too rapid, but consider this – where can you two go from here? You cannot date forever. If marriage is not to be, you should let go and move along accepting that you have at least gained a very good friend, but not your life-mate. You can continue to see them and associate together as friends.

Potential partners are everywhere and anywhere. Look around and see if anyone is showing some interest in you. The best opening line remains “Hello.” Once again there is no need to rush. There is also no need to be shy. A confident yet friendly attitude works best. There is no need to be cute, cocky, funny, or whatever. If you have prepared well, you can just relax and be yourself. If you have not prepared, Then you’re going to have to work harder at presenting yourself – you’re going to have to indulge in chit chat and small talk which is easy. Just ask questions your partner cannot answer with either a yes or a no. What does he/she think of The Celtics? Which horse does he/she think will win The Derby? When is the next bus due? Anything at all will do.

Signs of interest include looks, winks, sparkling eyes, and smiles. Please pay attention. Women tend to be subtle. She should not have to grab you by the lapels and give you a head butt to get your attention. Your eyes meet. If you two hold the look for

20 seconds, there is some interest. When she drops her gaze that is a sign of interest but she doesn't want to seem forward. If she smiles before looking elsewhere, she's interested and not very shy. If she winks at you before moving her gaze, she is most definitely interested in meeting you. A man will smile or otherwise acknowledge that he's noticed you noticing him. Give him 10 minutes, if he's not by your side saying hello in that time, then he's not interested.

This first meeting should last only 15 minutes and should be enough to exchange names, and share a bit about who you are. "Hi, I'm K. Allen. I write books.", for example. You exchange a modest amount of contact information and then you move on. The general formula for this conversation is

He introduces himself "Hello. I'm X" and waits. She replies "Hello, X. I'm Y" and offers him her hand to shake. He shakes her hand. Then he mentions something currently occurring. For example, if you're watching a horse race say something along the lines of "Number 3's doing well. Who is riding it?" Never ask questions that can be answered yes or no. The conversation proceeds from there. She then says "It was nice meeting you, X." and offers her hand for him to shake. He replies "I enjoyed meeting you Y. May I have your number?" while shaking her hand. She

has the option of saying “It is a bit early for me. Will you be here next week?” or something similar given the situation, while smiling, or she can give him her number. He then gives her his number. Either way, he repeats that it was very nice meeting her and he hopes to see her again. Goodbye.

I am aware that many feel good manners are outdated and that the above seems stilted. But I assure you that having good manners works very well indeed. Please also note several things.

1. If she does not offer you her hand in the beginning, she is not interested in meeting you. Please take the hint.
2. She ends the conversation. Again, take the hint.
3. He only offers her his number after she gives him hers. To offer her his before this would be presumptuous.
4. Women remain the social superiors even in this day and age.

The reason why is because having good manners dispels feminine fears. Security of her person is a woman’s main fear. She wants to remain safe and sound. Being non-threatening is the first thing a man must do when meeting a woman. If you are a larger man, having good manners becomes mandatory. You want the woman to consider you in a similar light as

she would her teddy bear at home and not as some predatory ogre. Maintain a decent distance and do not loom over her. Women, if you feel uneasy you are within your rights to ask, even tell if need be, him to move back a bit.

**If she does not feel safe,
she is also free to leave.
She does not have
to justify herself.**

Wait one day and then invite her out for coffee. The point of this meeting is to discover what her interests are so you can arrange a suitable first date. This meeting is meant to be small, friendly, and convenient. You will be asking questions about the things she likes. She will be doing the same thing. You may ask if there is anything she'd like to do. Do not ask about her schedule. It is unnecessary. If she likes you, she will make room in her schedule for you. If it is the lady who is doing the pursuing, feel free to reverse the genders in all of this.

Based upon the information received, arrange a date and then call her. You must invite her out to a specific event at a specific date, time, and place.

Date Rule 1 – if you accept, you MUST show up.

One “no show” means you are out depending upon the seriousness of the reason for your absence. Only death and/or disease excuses you from keeping a date. Work does not count. The babysitter not showing up does not count. Why not? *Because if you are seeking marriage you must have your life in order first.* Having your life in order means having made arrangements including contingency plans. This rule applies to both men and women.

Waiting for your date to show up is limited to 30 minutes. You are then permitted to call if he/she has not already called you. Your date may be running late, having transportation difficulties, or may be lost. If she/he is on his/her way, you give him/her another 30 minutes. After that, you are free to leave or whatever you choose to do.

The reason you wait is to allow for human frailty. The reason you call is in case of emergency. You may offer to help. The reason you decline to see that person again is because your life mate needs to be reliable. If you cannot rely on him/her to show for a date designed to please him/her, how can you rely upon him/her for anything serious?

If the first date went well, and both of you enjoyed yourselves, ask right then and there for a second date. Do not say something vague. Do not call her later or sometime next week. No, because by then

she will have decided that your interest in her is tepid at best. Say "I would like to take you out to ____." Yes, this means that he has to have a second date prepared before the first date is over. A wise man does not give a woman the chance to forget his name nor does he assume he's her only suitor.

The woman has the obligation to return dates on a two to one ratio. See the 3 Date Rule above. Say "I understand you like ____." "Would you care to go with me to ____?" She should do this at the end of the second date. If she does not, her reputation will suffer damage.

Enjoying yourself at a man's expense repeatedly and only at his expense is not something a lady ever does.

If you do not care to see him again, be adult enough to say just that. Do not try to be subtle or to preserve his feelings but do not be brutal either. Something along the lines of "We're not very well suited" should be enough. Be sure to thank him for the time he has spent with you.

These dates do not have to be expensive. They merely have to be suitable. Avid readers, for example, would be delighted to browse through an undiscovered used bookstore. Whether a book is

actually purchased is immaterial. It is the time spent that matters. The care with which you select the activity shows your interest. You listened and arranged to do something you knew he/she would enjoy.

Never exceed your capabilities. Do not pretend to be something or someone you are not. That would be lying. Do not go over budget. Do not take your date bungee-jumping if he's/she's afraid of heights. Do not agree to go skiing with him/her if you cannot ski. You should know better. Refrain from competing with your date. Keep any games you two play friendly. Each date does not need to be different from all others or better than all others.

During the date itself, no one other than your date matters. Do not accept calls. Do not invite others to join in. This is your time with your date. Emergencies should have been arranged for beforehand. If you are on call, do not set up a date for that time period. Focus upon your date and only upon your date.

In the beginning, at the end of the event, that is also the end of the date. You say goodbye. The lady will give you a cue at this point. An up-turned face and a slight lean toward you means a kiss. Something light, sensuous and erotic – leaving her wanting more – is what is called for here. If she holds out her hand,

back of the hand upwards, you can either kiss her hand or draw her into your arms for a light hug, keeping your hands and arms above her waist. If she holds out her hand normally, just hold it. Do not shake her hand. Do not squeeze her hand. Just hold it. Lingering after the event is for later on.

Ladies, how you choose to say goodnight, signals your level of interest in him. Read the above and make your decision. Offering a normal handshake is being friendly but noncommittal. Extending your hand to him with the back of your hand upwards signals a playful level of interest. Moving closer and accepting a kiss, even if just on the cheek, signals you would like to see more of him. Give the man his cue.

After the first several round of dates, you two may begin to hang out together and socialize as a couple if you choose to do so, but I do not recommend this until you two are affianced. Seeing how your date interacts with your friends is important but do this only occasionally. Remember that until you two are engaged to be wed, you are not dating exclusively. The idea that one only dates 'one at a time' is terribly wasteful and limiting. The need to be exclusive is also a mark of insecurity. Do not ask it. Do not agree to it. If your partner disagrees, then he/she is not the person for you. If he/she wants exclusivity, then he/she has to agree to marry you.

The point here is that as you two grow closer together over time, you will find yourself becoming increasingly exclusive of others. It should be happening as a normal gradual process. You two spend more and more time together and therefore do not have time or the desire to see others. If this is how it happens, fine. If he/she demands it at the outset, that is being presumptuous and weak. Just because you are dating does not mean you own him/her. Review what I said about making demands. I am aware that women are especially wary of *not* being exclusive once they begin enjoying sex with a particular man and they rationalize this for reasons of sexual health. This wariness is unnecessary. Yes, condoms can break but they do so very rarely and usually if improperly used. My point is that if she has chosen her men wisely, she need have few fears.

If during your courtship, your date reveals a trait or a habit you do *not* care for, let's say a terrible temper over which he/she has little control, you may ask him/her about it. Only you can determine if this trait or habit is a 'deal breaker' or not. Should you decide that you do not care to continue dating this person, tell him/her that and you may say why, if you care to. In some cases, it may be better to not say precisely why you decided against continuing.

Violence is never acceptable. Abuse is never acceptable, regardless of what kind. Illegal activity is never acceptable. You are a decent person seeking another decent person to be your life-mate. Do not ever rationalize away bad behavior. There is no excuse and your forgiveness will only encourage further misbehavior. Poor impulse control is the mark of a child. Your date is an adult and you expect him/her to behave as an adult. Do not settle for anyone less.

No reclamation projects.

During this two year period, it is advisable to enjoy sex with your potential partner before becoming affianced. Sexual incompatibility should be a 'deal breaker'. Consider how your life will be if you do not have sex again for the next 20, 30, or 40 years of your married life. Poor skills can be dealt with but using sex as a weapon, a reward, or a tool is the hallmark of a manipulator.

Marrying a virgin is not a good idea if sex is something you enjoy, as he/she has become very good at saying no. You may ask him/her why they have chosen that route but I recommend not dating/marrying him/her unless you have the patience of a saint that a virgin will require. Also be aware that he/she may have the belief that sex is only for procreation. Once her childbearing years are over,

she or her spouse may decide there will be no more sexual intercourse. This does happen. There are several reasons why it does apart from attitudes about sex. There are hormonal and physical changes that occur with age. Certain medications, diseases, and injuries can have a disastrous effect. Effective ongoing communication and a willingness to work together to solve the problem is the key in these situations.

Women take care of birth control. Men wear condoms. There is no debate on this subject. There is no negotiation either. Men wear condoms – period. Condoms are always demanded because it is his responsibility to ensure there is no transmission of disease. Both partners should be sharing equally the burden of safe sex. It is distinctly unfair to ask that a woman fill her body with hormones that put her at risk while expecting to be permitted condom free access to her person. Any man who does this should be immediately dropped from a woman's list of possible mates because he is showing no concern for her safety.

If he has had a vasectomy, or she is beyond childbearing a condom is still required if the couple are not being sexually exclusive. Condoms are not always a bad thing. For example, if he is afflicted with premature ejaculation, the loss of sensitivity a condom provides can help him maintain control.

Condoms can also be used to prevent mess and to provide a bit of additional play as in when she puts it on him.

Sex, Love & Infatuation

Love is *not* blind. Love does not put the beloved up upon a pedestal. Actually the idea of the beloved being up there is hilarious to one who truly loves him/her. Love sees the flaws and understands that in many ways, the beloved would be an entirely different and much less loved person without those flaws. In many ways, our flaws make us who we are. Love is secure, calm, and comforting. Love was always there. You just didn't notice it before now. This is the love you marry when you marry *for keeps*.

Anything else is infatuation.

You do not have to love those with whom you enjoy sex and you do not have to enjoy sex with all of those you love. In specific case, you had better not! Sex and love are two separate things that should intertwine when you find your spouse. Sex is the *physical* expression of desire while love is the *emotional* bond between persons. Sex is fun, lust, games, and pheromones. Your blood sings! But love is when your *heart* rejoices. Never confuse the two and never give up love to get sex or vice versa. You are capable of loving more than one – your heart just expands to encompass them all.

Strong marriages are built upon sincerity. If you don't feel it, believe it, or want it – *don't* say it.

Whatever the topic or point being discussed is, be sincere about it. If at any time, you question your date's sincerity, ask him/her about it. Question the point. But only ask once. Constant questioning and constant evasion is a reason to dissolve the relationship. If you distrust his/her sincerity, it is time to say goodbye. Notice that I did *not* say honesty, rather, I said sincerity. There are some things you should keep to yourself. Lies are never tolerated. Be honest or be gone. But be careful that your attitude toward something is not pushing your date to lie.

**Forcing someone to lie,
because you would find
the truth painful and
they do not wish to hurt
you, is almost as bad as
lying itself.**

If you yourself cannot face the truth and accept it, then it is you who have the problem, not your date. Say goodbye and go talk to someone about these fears of yours.

Communication is of the utmost importance. Fighting is counter-productive. If you two find yourself arguing, take a step back and reconsider the relationship. A need to always be right, and therefore a predilection for argument, is a warning sign of

something wrong either in the relationship or in the characters of the people involved.

When communicating, you have to understand the other person. If you cannot because of too wide a variance in culture, experience, education, or intelligence you may want to rethink your relationship. Your partner's brilliance may dazzle you now but a life spent being corrected and explained to in words of one syllable does get wearing after a time.

Part of marriage is the question of children. Do you want children? Does your partner want children? How are the genetics? How healthy are you two? Becoming a parent and therefore responsible for another life is very frightening to some people. If you two cannot agree on this point, the relationship is over. You two do not have similar goals and it is best that you part.

Should you have children, do not rush into anything. Not every suitor has to meet your children. But your suitors should know that you are a 'package deal'. Your suitors do not have to meet with your children's approval, per se. They should like and respect him/her and think of him/her as worthy of becoming their step-parent. Being a step-parent is not easy – ever. It is much like a non-swimmer being thrown into the deep end of the pool. Investigating how he/she was raised, asking for stories of his/her

childhood are all legitimate lines of inquiry because, generally, people will parent as his/her parents parented him/her.

If you two do not share the same views on raising children, the relationship is over. Yes, it is just that important.

Should you suitor also have children, it is a very good idea to see how they interact. You also have to be willing to show how you and your children interact. This is only to be done if you two are contemplating becoming affianced – never before. You should not subject your children to constantly meeting new potential mates. No child needs the knowledge that Mom/Dad has a toll-booth for a bedroom door.

Please refrain from using your children as a means to ‘seal the deal’. You have to win your life-mate on your own merits, not by using anyone else’s. To do otherwise is to make yourself unworthy. Please refrain from making your children the reason you give for breaking up with a suitor. You are the adult so you make the decisions and bear the consequences. That is your job as a parent. Should your date do either, the relationship is over.

Courage is what is required when building a relationship. You have to have the courage to be sincere, the courage to be honest, and the courage to trust your partner. By all means 'fall in love' since love is not in short supply. But do not permit love to lead to your downfall. You are your own person, even when married, and you remain responsible for yourself and for your part in any dramatics/outcomes that befall you. Should you two not prove able to form a loving team working together for common goals, it is best that you part. There is no need to blame anyone. These things just happen.

Never "settle" for what you can get.

This not "settling" is the true "challenge". Being independent is the key. You do not have to play games, manipulate, tease, and torment and so on. All you have to be is you without apology or pretence.

Gentlemen do not ever leave a woman alone with a violent person. Regardless of whether you love her or not, what kind of a man are you that you would risk her well-being in such a way? What matters is her continued good health. By their actions, you will know them. What would your abandoning her in such circumstances say about you? If the situation continues then you may have to reconsider the relationship but that comes later when she's safe. Not even the most well-mannered gentleman is

required to save those women who are bent upon self-destruction.

I use the terms ladies and gentlemen because that is what you are supposed to be. You already know how you are supposed to behave in any given situation. It is only when you forget your adulthood and your manners that you act in inappropriate ways and get yourself in trouble. So control your emotions and take the time to think clearly before acting.

Do not enter into marriage without expecting to have to work to keep your spouse. People will change with time and experience. The trick is to grow together and not to grow apart. Keep talking, sharing, and working together. Your marriage should be more than just a comfortable habit. The two do not become one, but they work as one.

Marriage is not just for the young, and it is not just for procreation. The *only* reason to marry is to spend the rest of your lives together come what may. There is no such thing as a 'starter marriage' or a 'marriage of convenience'. Either you're in this 'for keeps' or you're not getting married.

There are those who do not want to get married but who want the love and companionship of a good person for an extended period of time. Usually these people have been married before. This is their

choice and they are quite at liberty to choose this sort of life. If that is fine with you, okay then, but if you are after marriage then you two have to decide whether to continue or not. Remember that waiting for someone to change their mind or trying to change someone's mind is not permitted.

Hunting versus Hoping

Hope is all well and good. Sometimes one cannot get through life without hope. But just hoping for the right person to show up at your door is not going to get you married. You have to give serious thought to what sort of person you want to marry else how will you know when you have found him/her?

When it comes to seriously seeking your mate for life, hoping will not do. You simply must get serious if you want your dating to be effective.

Not sitting down and giving serious thought to who you need for your life-mate is also 'hoping'. Yes, this planning requires some honest introspection on your part. You are going to have to face up to yourself – flaws and all. You are also going to have to do some hard labor and fix what must be fixed so you can become the best you can be – that whole person with a satisfying life I talked about earlier.

If you are not willing to do this, then you are not serious about marrying the right person. Perhaps after you have been run over by life enough, you will realize the value of proper prior planning. After so many years of dating the wrong people, perhaps you will come to see the value of thinking this through

before you go out there and hook up with the next warm body that says yes.

You have simply got to know yourself through and through before you can decide what sort of person would be right for you. You also have to do this repeatedly because you will change over time as you gain experience both good and bad. And don't say "it was or was not meant to be". That does you no good at all. If he/she is simply not "into you", do not let it affect your self-image but please review your selection process. What actions on your part and his/her part led to this consequence? How could you have handled this or that differently? If you had, how would those consequences have changed? How can you prevent the bad consequences from happening again in the future?

All too often people get into bad habits. They consistently date the wrong people and then wonder why they are still alone and no nearer to their goal. Think it through before you go off and repeat the same disastrous sequence of events with the next unworthy suitor. Did you make mistakes (wrong action) or was it just an unwise choice (wrong judgment)?

If all you can find are unworthy suitors, you should review your entire presentation. Are you not presenting yourself as a worthy person? Are you

hunting in the wrong area? Have you overlooked something about yourself or your behavior that is sending out the wrong signals to the worthy suitors and the right signals to the unworthy ones?

Anything that indicates a lack of sound judgment and that your heart and mind are not in the right place will result in the worthy staying well away from you. Make a small change and see if that has a positive effect.

I do not advocate changing who you are beyond fixing serious flaws because if you pretend to be someone you aren't, you are not only lying but you will also have to maintain the pretence for the rest of your life. This denial of your true character is simply not possible. Your true self will not be denied, will return with a vengeance, and this could ruin your marriage. It may take many years or it may take mere moments but it will happen. This will result in a double betrayal, not only of your spouse but also of yourself. Divorce is never pretty. Healing the damage could also take years.

Being yourself is the best way to find the right person for you. For example, I am a notoriously independent woman with a strong confident personality. The man I would marry would have to be 'man enough' to think me cute, fluffy, and just the right girl for him. The only fitting mate for a tigress is a tiger. By *not* hiding my 'stripes', I attracted the right

man and repelled the wrong men. You are polite and friendly, of course but you do not necessarily have to be meek, mild, giving, sensitive, and compliant unless that is who you really and truly are. For men, the only fit mate for a tiger is a tigress who happens to think you're the best tiger on earth; like calling to like, as it often does. Just be sure to not fall for a lamb in tiger's/tigress's clothing.

Conclusion

By being a whole person with an independent and satisfying life of your own, formulating an effective plan, dating widely and having an extensive social network of suitable people, being selective, adult, and sincere you should be able to find the right person to marry *–for keeps*.

While I cannot guarantee success, even with my method, I do sincerely hope that each of you will find your happiness within a good marriage to just exactly the right person for you and that your marriage will be at least as joyous and lasting as mine.

Good hunting!

