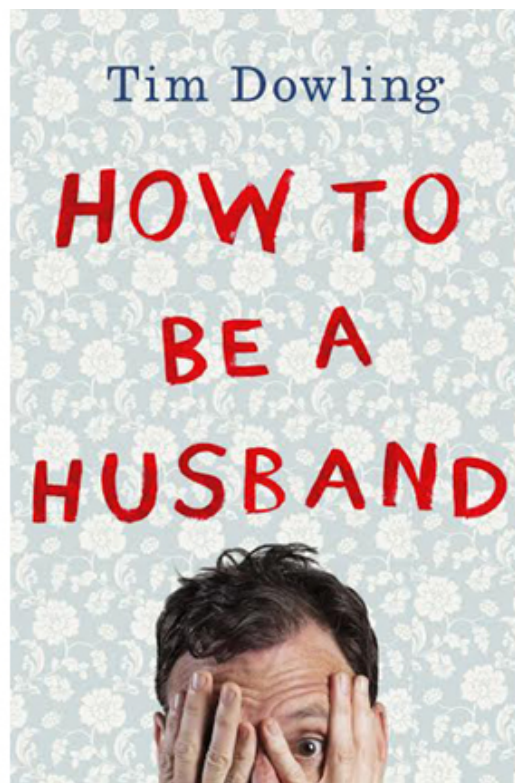


Tim Dowling's Experiences in 'How to Be a Husband' Provide Relationship Advice for All



By Emma L. Wells

Tim Dowling's latest book about love, *How to Be a Husband*, won't be found in the self-help section of the bookstore, but that doesn't mean there isn't plenty of relationship advice to be learned from it! The author has written a brilliantly funny yet poignant memoir recounting his relationship and love over the last ten years. He's included everything from being a bachelor in New York to getting married and becoming a father of three in London. He has been disclosing the hilarious exploits of his family in his weekly column at *The Guardian* for years, and now, his newest book digs even deeper into his

marriage and what the role of “husband” is like in the 21st century.

Tim Dowling Discusses New Book About Love

Can you tell us a bit about why you decided to share your experiences as a husband and father in your new book about love?

“Husband” is one of the few official titles I possess. I have all the paperwork for it. You’re correct in saying it’s really a collection of experiences – mistakes mostly – rather than a book of love advice. It’s not called *How to Be a Good Husband* or *How to Be a Better Husband*. It’s basically about hanging in there.

How do you think the role of husband has changed in recent years? What do you think this evolution will look like in the next ten years?

I think it requires a lot more flexibility than it used to. Marriage roles these days – like who works and who stays home – are driven by economic imperatives. You might be a househusband one year, the sole breadwinner the next, and then back to a stay-at-home dad again.

I don’t know what will happen in the next ten years. I’m just going to try and stay married myself!

Does your wife ever play the role of editor and give you feedback on your writing? How does she feel about you being so open about your family life?

My wife is my first and most important editor. If she doesn’t think something works, I go back and rewrite. She can be fairly blunt, but she’s always right. She’s always been

sanguine about being written about, but the book was an intrusion of a different order, as delving back into the past is a bit sensitive. It's also amazing how differently two people can remember a significant romantic event from 20 years ago. She did approve the manuscript...eventually.

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What chapter was the most fun to write? Similarly, what chapter was the hardest to share?

I enjoyed putting together the chapter called "The Forty Guiding Principles of Gross Marital Happiness," which was meant to be everything I'd learned about marriage in 40 digestible bullet points. Originally, I'd wanted 50. After two weeks, I'd only come up with three. Eventually, I hit upon another, then another; it took a long time, but it was very satisfying.

I dreaded writing the chapter about sex, but it seemed an unavoidable topic. I got through it.

Relationship Advice in *How to Be a Husband*

What tips do you have for our readers who are trying to keep the passion alive in their long-term relationships and love?

The basic strategies for maintaining a healthy sex life are not, in themselves, sexy. It has a lot more to do with unloading the dishwasher without being asked than you might think. No one is sorrier about this than I am.

Given the title, it sounds like the book is geared more towards men. However, what can female readers learn from *How to be a Husband*?

They can learn what being married to me is like. It will

almost certainly make them appreciate what they've got.

What love advice do you have for our male readers who are ready to take the next step and propose to their significant others? Any tips you can share when it comes to preparing for the role of husband?

Marriage is great, but getting married is a nightmare. Just try to look beyond the whole wedding part of it. Do as you're told and keep your eyes on the prize.

Even though your book isn't a self-help book, are there any lessons readers can gain from reading about your experiences?

Two things: First, go to bed angry if you want to. They say you're not supposed to let the sun set on an argument, but this is nonsense. Faced with a choice between a sense of closure and a night's sleep, you're almost always better off with the latter.

And two, being handy is still high on the list of "Things Women Want In A Man." Sensitivity is also good, but you can get away with being pretty emotionally stunted as long as you know how to put up a curtain rail.

Related Link: [Date Idea: Redecorate](#)

What is the best relationship advice you have ever received?

I once rang up a relationship counselor to get some tips for winning marital arguments, and he said, "Do you want to be right, or do you want to have sex tonight?" He had a point: If you're going to succeed in marriage, you've got to learn to be wrong.

Lastly, do you have any upcoming projects you'd like to share with our readers?

I'm currently writing a book about fatherhood. Actually, I'm staring at the backs of my hands, but that's what I'm meant to

be doing.

Don't forget to pick up your copy of How to Be a Husband!