

# Author Interview: Tonia DeCosimo Discusses Book 'Single & Not Settling!: A Journey of Surviving the Dating World'

By [Jessica Gomez](#)

Entrepreneur, author, and columnist Tonia DeCosimo pours out her heart in her new book [Single & Not Settling!: A Journey of Surviving the Dating World](#). This memoir and self-help book gives readers a look into the life of being a single forty-something searching for love in the 21st century. DeCosimo has experienced both serious heartache and blissful love, which motivated her to write her book for other women. Her memoir will speak to those who have been searching for love and to those who thought they found it but had to let it go. DeCosimo draws from experiences she has gone through and incorporates her professional background as a bi-weekly [love advice](#) columnist for *The Date Mix*, the web magazine hosted by *Zoosk.com*, one of the largest dating sites in the United States. *Single & Not Settling!: A Journey of Surviving the Dating World* is a wonderful summer read this year.

Check out our exclusive [author interview](#) with Tonia DeCosimo:

What makes the personal stories you chose to highlight in your book relatable to other women?

After talking with friends and interviewing multiple women, and even some men, who are single in the 21st century, common threads developed. They all felt that finding the right person has become very difficult and the ways to date have become very complicated (especially for those of us who are over the age of 40). Even though everyone's story is unique, I found many similarities to what I experienced in my dating journey. The particular details of my stories, however, are different which allows the reader to discover new hilarious and bad dating stories while still being able to relate to them. It also allows them to keep the faith and realize that there is a light at the end of the tunnel.

**Which relationship do you discuss in your book that you feel taught you your biggest lesson? What was that lesson?**

My high school first love, that I was with for 9 years, taught me the biggest lesson. Even though you think you really know someone, trust them and are planning on marrying them, you may not know them at all! When he asked me to marry him and wanted me to pick out the ring, that very same day I found out that he was cheating on me. I was 23 years old, devastated, and realized from that point on, trust became something I could not take lightly and had to be earned. When we say we trust someone, do we really? And how do you know who you could ever trust? From then on, I learned to listen to my gut intuition, keep my eyes wide open, and be realistic when it comes to relationships.

**What do you say to women who just cannot find "the one" to settle down with like you did?**

No one ever knows who, when, or where they are going to meet "the one." Some people's lives follow their plan, while others take many turns and follow other paths. Keep an open mind, be realistic, and go about your life – while still making an effort to meet new people. Keep the faith and whatever is meant to be will be.

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**No partner is perfect, so how should a woman decide whether she is settling or just compromising?**

Settling is basically giving up and giving in, even though your needs are not being met. Compromising is meeting in the middle and understanding that not everything is going to go your way. When two people are in love, compromise is an everyday occurrence which for the most part, occurs naturally. Settling would be compromising your true self.

**What are the top 3 deal breakers in a relationship? Is there ever a time a woman should adjust her deal-breakers when in a long-term committed relationship?**

For the most part, deal breakers are different for everyone. There are certain ones, however, that are universal. The top three, in my opinion, are verbal and physical abuse, addiction, and chronic cheating. These three deal breakers should never be adjusted. While people have worked through a one-time affair, numerous affairs should never be tolerated. Only you can decide if one of your personal deal breakers is negotiable, given the circumstances of your current long-term relationship.

**What do you hope women will do after they read your book?**

I want women to take a realistic look at themselves and their relationship history. Look for patterns that have not been working and try and learn from your past experiences. Understand that no one is perfect, and you can't always judge a book by its cover. However, listen to your gut feelings and don't try to fight it. You should never have to settle, but sometimes you have to compromise. We are all on a journey and what makes your journey unique is by you staying true to yourself.

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**If there was only one piece of advice you could give about relationships and dating, what would it be?**

There is so much advice that I can give, as outlined in my book, "Single and Not Settling," but for me, the key is to not fight your own intuition. That gut feeling is God-given, and fighting it will always lead to disaster.

*You can purchase [Single & Not Settling!](#): A Journey of Surviving the Dating World on [Amazon.com](#) and at [Barnes and Nobles](#). For more information on Tonia DeCosimo, check out her [website](#).*

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## **Author Interview: Ashley Papa Shares Relationship Advice & Discusses New Book, 'Vixen Investigations: The Mayoral Affairs'**



 By [Melissa Lee](#)

As a journalist and expert on all things romance, Ashley Papa is a relationship columnist that writes about sex, love, dating, and marriage. She is the author of a news blog, *SEXTRA! SEXTRA!*, which covers love and sex headlines. In addition to writing articles about the current dating scene, Papa has recently published her first book, *Vixen*

*Investigations: The Mayoral Affairs*. The fiction novel is about a young woman that has launched her own business with the purpose of solving infidelity crimes. As a victim of cheating herself, Paige Turner is hired to take on a case surrounding the mayor and his wife that gets intense when she finds enough evidence to take down the entire administration. Paige eventually finds herself falling in love with a man while she's undercover, resulting in the challenge of revealing who she really is.

## **Ashley Papa Spills Details on *Vixen Investigations: The Mayoral Affairs***

The novel, which focuses on bringing justice to the broken-hearted, was completely inspired by the writer's own experiences. She frequently interviews relationship experts, so she used their expertise and translated it both to the book and the main character. "I created Paige as a heroine that encompasses this CIA-type coolness," Papa shares in our [author interview](#). "I still wanted to make her relatable though." The relatable aspect of Paige is certainly not missing: Though described as a headstrong woman, Papa made sure to include Paige's experiences with unhealthy relationships and infidelities as well.

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Although Paige is this incredibly strong-willed character, her downfall in the novel is when she finds herself falling in love. Papa explains that she wanted there to be an intense conflict in the book, especially since Paige's business is something that she typically keeps low-key. The author lends a bit of [relationship advice](#) when she touches on the importance of honesty, something that Paige struggles with when she doesn't want her identity to be found. "When you're not

truthful from the start, it can start to snowball,” Papa advises.

## Author Dishes Important Relationship Advice That Everyone Should Hear

Papa’s novel begins when Paige decides that she’s had enough of being taken advantage of in the dating world. With such a powerful backstory, it almost seems criminal not to ask the journalist about her tips for getting over a tough relationship. “We all have different ways of coping, but you need to identify what you deserve,” she explains, placing a heavy emphasis on self-worth. “We all deserve good relationships and respect, but if we’re not finding that, it might be best to take a step back from dating and be by yourself until you realize what you need.”

**Related Link:** [Celebrity Interview: ‘Famously Single’ Dating Coach Dr. Darcy Sterling on Relationships, Communication & Her Own Marriage](#)

In terms of trust issues, Papa is no stranger to learning to put your faith in someone again, especially after writing an entire novel on it. “Focus on yourself,” she explains in our author interview. “It comes with taking things slow – you don’t want to jump right into a relationship despite how confident you may feel.” She also takes a cue from *Vixen Investigations: The Mayoral Affairs* by encouraging troubled individuals to be their own investigators, though she urges those to trust their instincts at the end of the day.

And if you’re in a similar position as Paige, it’s important to understand that although you are the victim of cheating, it won’t be impossible to trust again. “Identify the fact that you deserve better, and make sure you fully understand that,”

the author says. “You don’t want to get stuck feeling like everyone you date is going to cheat on you.”

## Journalist Reveals Personal Details & What She’s Learned in Author Interview

The main message of her book, Papa discloses, comes from a caring place and completely depends on one’s self-worth: “Everyone deserves a good relationship and to be loved. You don’t need to put up with cheating just for the sake of being in a relationship.”

**Related Link:** [Relationship Advice: From Cheater to Keeper – How to Make Amends](#)

She further opens up about the learning process she experienced when writing *The Vixen Investigations: The Mayoral Affairs*. When pulling inspiration from real life occurrences, it seems like it would be necessary to go through a great deal of self-reflecting. “Looking back at past relationships, I saw I didn’t require the guys to respect me and be very truthful,” Papa reveals. Right after she finished writing the first draft, she swore she was done dating dishonest and untrustworthy men – and shortly after, she ended up meeting her current boyfriend, whom she has been dating for the past two years.

To keep up with Ashley, check out her [website](#). You can buy her book [here](#)!

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# Author Interview: Christina Hobbs & Lauren Billings Dish on Relationship Advice & Their Newest Book 'Dating You / Hating You'



By [Noelle Downey](#)

Best friends and *New York Times* bestselling authors Christina Hobbs and Lauren Billings (who collaborate under the shared pen name Christina Lauren) have quite literally written the book on romance! Their newest novel *Dating You / Hating You* (DYHY) follows the story of two star-crossed lovers, Evie and Carter, who find themselves locked in a heated battle of the sexes after their Hollywood agencies combine and force them to compete for the same job. With the glamorous backdrop of Hollywood life and celebrity style, these squabbling love birds must finesse the tricky situation of chasing their dreams without chasing each other away. Recently, Hobbs and Billings spoke with CupidsPulse.com on their excitement over this new project, which hits shelves today, June 6th, their best [relationship advice](#), and how they found success as BFFs. Check out our exclusive [author interview](#) below!

## Exclusive Author Interview with Christina Hobbs and Lauren Billings

In *DYHY*, Hollywood culture plays a huge role since your main characters are both agents. How did you research the celebrity lifestyle? Did you get the chance to meet any celebrities



## **while you were writing this book?**

We have had interactions with various Hollywood folks, including celebrities and industry people, but our focus on the research was on the agent side. We had a lot of fun talking to agents and managers about things they had seen and experienced. Interestingly (at least to us!), a lot of the shenanigans that Carter and Evie stoop to in the book are based on true stories.

**Speaking of Carter and Evie, they vie for the same job in *DYHY*, which obviously disrupts their flirtation. What are your tips to our readers who may also be struggling to handle the demands of work life and romance? How would you advise them to find a healthy balance between the two?**

Beyond the premise of this book, it can be really hard to find that balance—whether you're single, in a relationship, or have kids. When we were first writing, we were working full-time jobs and raising small kids and trying to fit the writing into every crack of time we had. What we found is that nothing in our life was getting 100 percent of our attention. We ended up leaving our jobs to write full-time, and it allowed us to have much more energy for the relationships at home.

It's okay to set priorities and—this is especially important for young women to hear—it really is okay to make your career your priority if you're doing something you love. That said, it's also okay to feel like the rat race isn't for you. Bottom line is, only you know how things rank in your emotional heart. No one else can tell you how you should be balancing your career with your love life, not even a couple of romance authors.

**Related Link:** [Relationship Advice: 6 Ways to Keep Work & Life Demands in Balance](#)

**In your opinion, do you think that men and women are often pitted against one another in the workplace? How did your own**

**professional experiences in the past influence your writing of this book?**

It may not be the case that men and women are necessarily “pitted” against each other, but sexual politics are alive and well in the workplace. We’ve seen this ourselves in various ways, from the women being more visible in assistant roles to egregious pay disparity to casual sexism in the form of “sweetie,” “hon,” and “kiddo” spoken from men to women, even sometimes to women who are their superiors in the reporting structure.

Luckily, we’ve both worked with very progressive people—both men and women—who made a point to address any overt workplace disparity. But, for better or for worse, given that it’s hard to miss it even in this day and age, it made that aspect of writing this book very easy because we didn’t have to dig very deep to find the thread of that subplot.

**Do you have any tips for our readers on how to foster the kind of amazing and collaborative relationship that the two of you have found in your friendship, especially if demands like school, work, or kids tend to keep them apart?**

There are a million reasons why this collaboration is so enduring—and still so happy—but at the end of the day, the most important component is our chemistry. Lo is the neurotic, spreadsheet-loving, deadline-driven one. Christina brings the levity. As our editor has said on multiple occasions, “The world needs Laurens, but it also needs Christinas.” It’s true. If we were all Laurens, we’d be wrestling for control until it turned into a bloodbath. If we were all Christinas, we’d drown in a pool of boy bands and glitter. Having both makes this possible.

The other thing is, when we began writing together back in 2009, we said at the very outset that *the books will not become more important than the friendship*. That has been a

very, very important motto and one we have treated reverently. To maintain a deep friendship, it has to be put front and center.

## **Christina Lauren Shares Best Relationship Advice and Favorite Date Nights**

**Shifting gears, since you're both clearly romance experts, I have to ask: How would you advise our readers to keep things sexy and fun with a partner, even after years have gone by and kids and other commitments come into the picture?**

Communication, communication, communication. The more open we are, the better our marriages are in all respects—in and out of the bedroom. We find that when things are more distant in our marriages, it's because we aren't speaking to our spouses as lovers and partners; we are only interacting as parents.

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**Do either of you have a favorite date night? Do you ever double date?**

We can't routinely double date because we live in separate states (!!), but when we are together, we have a lot of fun, just the four of us. Our husbands get along really well, and when we travel, they often take off and do their own thing together—sometimes stumbling back tipsy and hilarious.

Favorite [date nights](#) are usually spent discovering new restaurants in the area, catching a movie we couldn't see with the kids, or—probably most common—going to a concert together!

**As two people who have written so much great romance, I'm sure you get asked all the time what your best relationship advice**

**is. I'm curious, though: What's the best piece of advice you've ever been given?**

If you're in a relationship, the best love advice we've ever received was what someone said at Lo's wedding, "Always assume good intentions." That means, if you're in a loving, stable relationship, the basic assumption should be that your partner has your best interests in mind. If you see the relationship through that lens, you are less likely to see strife or hurt where there is none.

**Related Link:** [5 Communication Keys Every Relationship Needs](#)

**Lastly, do you have any other upcoming projects or anything else you'd like to share with our readers?**

Other than *DYHY*, we have two more books out this year. *Autoboyography* is out September 12th; it's the story of Tanner Scott, a bisexual teen who moves from the Bay Area in California to Provo, Utah and falls in love with the son of the local Mormon bishop. We love how this book came out; it's been something we've been working on for many years, and we are so proud of the finished product!

Then, in December (formerly October), we have *Roomies*, which is a little bit Greencard-meets-Once. It's the story of Holland Bakker, a twenty-something woman in NYC who is watching her MFA gather dust in the corner while she works front-of-the-house for the hottest musical on Broadway. Holland has an infatuation with an Irish guitar-playing busker at the subway near her house and offers to marry him to help him stay in the country...and land him a position in the ensemble for the show. It's a strangers-to-married story that has been *the most fun* to write!

2018 holds LOTS MORE for us, but we haven't announced those projects yet, so for now we'll just have to say: we.cannot.wait.for.2018.

You can purchase *Dating You / Hating You* on [Amazon](#). For more from Christina and Lauren, visit their [website](#) or follow them on Twitter [@ChristinaLauren](#).

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## Relationship Advice: Author A.R. Bernard Reveals 4 Things Women Want From Men



 By [Mary DeMaio](#)

It can be difficult navigating the dating circuit and everyone runs into relationship problems. While women need to understand the characteristics they are looking for in a man, men need to learn how to deal with women. The new self-help book by the certified counselor, teacher, and preacher A.R. Bernard dives into the qualities that make for a happy and satisfying relationship. His book, *Four Things Women Want From A Man* gives readers [relationship advice](#) on how to identify and develop the traits of maturity, decisiveness, consistency, and strength, to help couples relate to each other and enrich their connection. In this exclusive author interview, Bernard talks about his observations and the secrets to developing closeness and honesty between a man and woman.

### Author Shares Best Relationship Advice On What Women Want From Men

Can you tell us briefly, what are the four things women want

**from a man? Is any one of the four qualities you mention more important than the other? Or are they equally significant?**

I have been married to the same woman for 44 years. My wife is the one I give a lot of credit to for teaching me over the years. This book is really my journey coming to understand these four qualities and living them out. The four things begin with maturity. Maturity does not come with age; it begins with the acceptance of responsibilities. When a man is willing to accept responsibility for his words, thoughts, motives, actions, and attitudes is when that man begins to mature and depart from the insecurities that keep him adolescent. Maturity is the foundation to the next three things.

The next is decisiveness. Men need to be decisive. It is a women's prerogative to change her mind. He needs to be able to make decisions quickly and constantly. In order to do that, he has to have a set of values and principles to guide his thinking and decision-making process. In the book, I talk about what values are, what they mean and why they are so important. Women look for decisiveness in a man, they respect that.

Next is consistency. Doing the same thing continuously. Doing the right thing, as well as being consistent in actions and words. It is important to make sure that values and actions are in agreement and line up. This gives women stability and a sense of security and safety.

Strength is the last one. Quite often this is misunderstood. By strength, I don't mean this macho attitude, illustrated by the caveman dragging the women by her hair with the club over his shoulder. When a man is strong, it means he is secure in himself and has the courage to live out his convictions. His strength allows him to be gentle and kind. Scripture says a man's kindness is what makes him attractive.

These four qualities are an integrated system. You can't have one without the other, but I will stress that maturity is the foundation upon which they are built. Maturity has to do with integrity. Integrity is the cornerstone of character. Honesty is the core of integrity and every relationship is built on trust.

**Related Link:** [Relationship Advice: Authors of 'Marriage Boot Camp' Reveal How To Build A Rock Solid Relationship and Love](#)

**We know our readers will be curious, why didn't you develop the four qualities that men want in a woman? If you did, what would they be?**

I have to start with the women first. Like I said, it is a book written to women for men. It is getting to the men indirectly. There will be a follow-up book that talks about what men want in women. When it comes to women, men have two critical concerns. Number one: They don't want to feel controlled by a woman. It is a woman's nature to be supportive and assist the man. The second thing is men are concerned about being inadequate or incompetent in any way in that relationship. If I am going to talk about what men look for in a woman it would be around those two concerns that men have in their relationship with a woman.

**Our visitors are always looking for advice on how to make the most of their personal lives. What advice would you give to a woman who can't find someone with all of these four qualities?**

Once she reads the book, it is more than just four words. It is really giving her an understanding not only about men but about herself. How she is wired as a woman and why she looks for the things that she looks for. I think in understanding herself it will empower her to better relate to a man.

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**How would you guide someone who is having a difficult time finding a partner? What is the best way to confirm compatibility?**

I would say that there is hope presented in this book. There is no one size fits all in relationships, but these principles are universal, eternal and they work. Once she understands this relationship advice she can know how to apply them to the relationship that she chooses to get involved with. I don't talk about it in this book, but there is a process to relationships and we are in a world where we want instant gratification, microwave relationships, and microwave spirituality. True valuable things require a process and we must move through that process to protect ourselves and to strengthen what we are looking to build or establish.

Relationships begin with an introduction. That is where we are introduced, but then we must spend time getting acquainted. So it moves from introduction to acquaintanceship. During the acquaintanceship process, we get to know each other, our values, what's compatible with each other, what the differences are, what our views are on relationships, family and money and all the other things that come into play. The next step, if we choose to move forward with the relationship, is to build a friendship that is about trust, transparency, and vulnerability. This all has to happen before we even think about moving to the next level called intimacy. Process is critical and too often we want to move from introduction to intimacy and that is why relationships fail.

Four Things Women Want From A Man is available now on [Amazon](#). For more on A.R. Bernard visit his [website](#) and check out his twitter [@ARBernard](#).

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# Author Interview: Linda & Charlie Bloom Talk Relationship Advice, Debunk Myths About Love



By [Michelle Foti](#)

Growing up, kids watch movies like *Cinderella*, *Snow White*, and *Sleeping Beauty*, which promote an ideal that “happily ever after” exists. In fact, many people get their beliefs about love from movies and pop culture. In their third self-help book, *Happily Ever After...and 39 Other Myths About Love: Breaking Through to the Relationship of Your Dreams* authors Linda and Charlie Bloom prove that accepting common myths such as “couples with great relationships don’t fight” can prevent you from building the strong relationship you hope for. In our author interview, the married couple offers some [relationship advice](#) on how to get over those myths that may be causing you relationship problems. Prepare to have your belief system turned upside down, for the sake of a thriving relationship in your future.

## Married Couple & Author Duo Offer Relationship Advice On Getting Over Myths About Love

To start, we know your first two published books were very successful! What are your hopes for your newest release *Happily Ever After*?

**Linda:** We hope that we can get into the heads of many couples

who are motivated to take a deep look at their belief systems. We want them to see whether the beliefs they are basing their relationships out of are really serving them or maybe inhibiting them in some way. We're all about going for the gold. If we're in a relationship, we might as well have the greatest relationship we can have. And we think really looking at some of the ideas we have and the myths that are popular in our culture is a direct avenue to having a finer, more fulfilling relationship.

**Was it something in your mutual experience as psychotherapists and counselors, your personal lives, or another inspiration that led you to choose the angle of relationship myths?**

**Charlie:** We've been doing the work for quite a while. It just seems in the last few years we've come upon a lot of people who are making decisions about their future in terms of relationships and marriage that are based on assumptions that we have found aren't always necessarily true. It seems to be an increasingly large number of people who are buying into certain cultural assumptions and beliefs about relationships without really checking them out. We decided to collect what we came to believe are some of the more prevalent, popular beliefs and myths. Our hope is really that people will just begin to be a little bit more open to questioning the possibility that this isn't necessarily always true.

**What is the biggest relationship myth that people often believe? Why is it so often thought to be true?**

**Linda:** We call the book *Happily Ever After* because we all grow up with these fairy tales. The prince and princess stories, the Cinderella stories, where you finally find true love and walk off into the sunset together. It's such a romantic myth and it sets up people for so much disappointment. It's not realistic to think that you're going to be happy all the time. Even the happiest people get the blues. Even the happiest couples sometimes have an argument and every couple, if

they're together long enough, is going to hit a rough patch. Maybe a big rough patch. This is the one we lead with because we want to introduce the reality right away. Especially to the young starry-eyed couples who expect to always be so starry-eyed. That fading effect is going to happen and you have to be more purposeful about keeping the relationship cleaned up. Our marriage advice is to have apologies and forgiveness ready if you have an argument. There is some work that needs to be done periodically for the relationship to be a great one.

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**One myth that you disprove in your book is, "Love can heal all wounds." Why isn't this idea true? How can believing it hurt your relationship?**

**Linda:** Love is an extremely powerful force. It can take us quite a long way, but this is another one of those leaps that can set us up for an expectation that's going to be bashed because even if the person that we're with loves us a great deal, we may have experiences where we lose something and it's a deep, grievous loss. Losses can be very horribly painful and our partner can certainly be there for us. Certainly they can listen to us, they can let us cry on their shoulder, but we have to do some of the work by ourselves. Just because they love us doesn't mean that heals it. We have to be proactive about learning from those downfalls, about learning how to repair after there's been a nasty argument when we said things that we didn't really mean. So it takes some skill in addition to the love and it takes a lot of love to get people motivated to get their skill level up.

**What expectations, if any, should individuals enter a marriage with? What crosses the line as being too high of an expectation?**

**Charlie:** I don't think there's anything wrong with having

expectations as long as you're willing to take a certain amount of responsibility for having them come about. So for instance, if you have the expectation that you're going to be taken care of by your partner in every way after you get married, I think you're probably going to be disappointed when that doesn't happen because one of the myths in the book is that my partner should be able to fulfill all of my needs. Some people do go into a committed partnership with that expectation and that is inevitably going to lead to disappointment because there is no one person, no matter how much they love you, who is capable of providing for all of your needs. So, expectations themselves are not the problem. What I would say can be a problem, and this is related to expectations, but is a little bit different, is entitlement. Entitlement means that I have a right to expect you to provide this for me. That's my inherent right. I can do that, I'm entitled to it. That is something that is doomed to disappoint.

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**“Once a cheater, always a cheater.” How do you justify this idea as being a myth? If a partner cheats on their significant other, how is the relationship supposed to return to its former state? Is this even possible?**

**Linda:** We have met many people over the years who in their sub-consciousness, or their immaturity, or in their self-indulgence broke their fidelity vow and they cheated on their partner. They may have lied about it and covered it up, but eventually they did come clean. It's always easier if they volunteer the information and confess rather than being sought out. But couples can learn from their downfall because this is one of the really painful things that some couples have to go through. It's actually rather common, that at some point in the decades of the marriage that one or both of the people are going to stray and break their fidelity vow. It's the belief

that the damage could never be repaired that really finishes a relationship off. We want people to take a look at this and see if this belief is in them, whether there's any openness to possibility. If you can avoid it, do that. But if it happens, at least be open to the possibility that a full recovery can take place and then some.

**Did your relationship inspire the inclusion of any particular myths in *Happily Ever After*? If so, what one?**

**Charlie:** There's a lot of the myths in the book that I think one or both of us have bought into to some degree. It's pretty hard to live in this culture and not absorb some of the beliefs that are prevalent, particularly when they are reinforced by a lot of other people. Some of them are used in popular culture, in movies, in songs.

**Linda:** I thought that telling the truth meant I wanted to have an honest relationship. I didn't want secrets and lies, so I was committed to an honest relationship. But the way I went about speaking some of my truths was not very skillful. I was run by the belief that I had to express my anger as if holding that anger in was going to explode like a pressure cooker. I was unkind, unpleasant, and rude. Sometimes I cursed and threatened and did things that caused harm to the relationship under the guise of 'I'm just being honest.' It took me a while to get past this belief because I didn't want to repress myself and be inauthentic. I realized this belief was making a mess of my life and damaging my relationship. People were afraid of me. But there is a way to be honest and it's not a lack of genuineness; you can be genuine, you can be authentic, you can be honest, and you don't have to cause harm with your truth telling.

**Now for some love advice! In your 44 years of marriage, what's the best piece of relationship advice you've received?**

**Charlie:** Three words: Hang in there. Because an awful lot of

people, when the going gets rough they tend to bail out before they really give it their best shot. I'm not saying that every single relationship can or should work. There are some that are just plain mismatches and they're really not meant to be. If you're giving it your best shot, you do hang in there, things don't change, and it really starts to erode your well-being then it is time to take a step back and take a look at whether this really is something that you need to reconsider. But more often than not, people don't hang in there long enough to really turn things around. Sometimes they may quit just before the potential turning point comes up because sometimes we have to sink down. So what we often encourage people to do is to see if you can just hang in there a little longer to see if things can turn around. Hang in there. That's a piece of relationship advice that I think can serve a lot of people.

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**What would you consider the greatest adversity that couples experience today? How can they overcome it?**

**Charlie:** We live in a culture that doesn't really support relationships as much as they need support. There's a saying that it takes a village to raise a child. It also takes a village to raise a partnership. I think it's a great adversity to many of us that there isn't enough necessary support for people who are really trying to create a healthy, successful, fulfilling relationship. We seem to put more value on the material side of life and that is very unfortunate. When you don't have a fulfilling inner life and you don't have a fulfilling interpersonal life then you're going to be much more inclined to seek out material success and money and ego. We need to recognize and accept the natural human tendency to seek and need deep connection with other people and not get pulled into the cultural myth that material, financial success is going to lead to greater happiness.

For more on Linda and Charlie Bloom visit [Bloomwork.com](http://Bloomwork.com). Happily Ever After...And 39 Other Myths About Love: Breaking Through to the Relationship Of Your Dreams is now available on [Amazon](http://Amazon).

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# Relationship Advice: Master Your Mean Girl With This Self-Love Advice from Author Melissa Ambrosini



 By [Whitney Johnson](#)

Sure, you know that you *should* ignore that little voice in your head that tells you you're not skinny enough, smart enough, or funny enough. But sometimes, that's easier said than done. Luckily, author and self-love teacher Melissa Ambrosini is here to help you quiet *your* Mean Girl for good. In her new book *Mastering Your Mean Girl: The No-BS Guide to Silencing Your Inner Critic and Becoming Wildly Wealthy, Fabulously Healthy, and Bursting with Love*, she shares an easy-to-follow plan to help you create and achieve your dream life. If you're ready to overcome your fears – in your job, in your love life, in your everyday world – check out our exclusive author interview, filled to the brim with honesty, positivity, and [relationship advice](#) that will change your outlook for good.

# Melissa Ambrosini Shares Relationship Advice in Author Interview

**To start, can you give us some background on what inspired you to write this book?**

I wanted to write the book that I wish I had back when I hit rock-bottom six years ago! Basically, I was in a really bad place: My health was awful; my relationships were destructive; and I was constantly unhappy and anxious. When my health issues spiraled out of control, I ended up in the hospital. I honestly thought my life was over – everything was falling apart! But after taking a really hard, honest look at myself and my life, I realized that all the miserable circumstances that were manifesting around me were actually a reflection of how I was feeling and treating myself on the inside. That's when I first became aware of my Mean Girl and began the journey of mastering her.

From that moment forward, my life changed dramatically. I started a blog, got well, found inner peace and happiness, started my dream business, made new friends, met my soul mate...My life these days couldn't look more different than the unhappy, unfulfilled soul I was back then. I wrote this book as the ultimate road map for other women who want to go on this kind of inner and outer journey and live an epic, love-filled life.

**Related Link:** [Dating Advice: Create the Person You Want to Be](#)

**What are your top tips for someone who just can't master her Mean Girl?**

First, everyone *can* master their inner Mean Girl, even if they don't believe it just yet. The best way to get started is by following this self-love advice and doing my three-step



Mastering Your Mean Girl process, which goes like this...

- **Practice awareness:** Become aware of when your Mean Girl shows up and tells you that you're not good enough. For most people, these sorts of fear-based beliefs pop up the nanosecond they decide to chase after an important goal. Yet we're usually so unconscious and not present that we aren't even aware of this internal dialogue, so we can't do anything about it. That's why bringing your awareness to her words is the first step.
- **Gently close the door on her:** Once you're aware that she has popped up, you can now choose to gently close the door on her. It's not about fighting her or waging an inner battle – that'll just cause more pain and suffering. Instead, it's a gentle, grateful act that comes from a place of peace.
- **Choose love instead:** Once you have gently closed the door on her, come back to your heart and choose love instead of fear. It's so much more fulfilling when you do.

**Does the prevalence of social media impact someone's Mean Girl? How so?**

Heck yes, social media plays a role! It's like a highlight reel of the *best* parts of people's lives, so when you're looking at all those shiny, glossy images, it can be a feeding frenzy for your Mean Girl. But comparison is the thief of joy, so getting caught in this trap is a recipe for unhappiness. I talk about comparison-it is a lot in the book; it's a massive problem in our modern world. Luckily, there are plenty of ways to climb out of this trap, and once you learn how to master your Mean Girl, you'll notice you no longer compare yourself to others.

**Of course, we have to ask: How does someone's Mean Girl play a role in her romantic relationships?**

Where do I start? In my Goddess Groups and live events, when I'm talking about relationships, I always like to point out that if you haven't mastered your Mean Girl (and if your partner hasn't mastered their inner critic), there are actually four of you in your relationship! So while you and your partner are trying to have a genuine, intimate connection, your Mean Girl will be talking up a storm: *Suck your tummy in! Stop sounding so needy! Why isn't he holding your hand? He must think you're so stupid! Did you see the way he smiled at that waitress? It's because your dress is so ugly – I told you that you should have worn the other one!* And on and on it goes... (It's exhausting just reading that, right?!)

Everyone always says, "You've got to love yourself first before you can invite someone else into the equation." While this is excellent relationship advice and 100 percent true, nobody tells you *how* to learn to love yourself. They just expect you to flip a switch or something, and everything will be fine! The truth is, learning how to make peace with your Mean Girl and gently close the door on all the negative things she's saying (like all that stuff I listed out above!) is the first step for falling in love with yourself. It's also an essential prerequisite if you want to have a relationship based on genuine connection and truth. So all of this stuff plays a massive role when it comes to relationships.

**Related Link:** [Relationship Advice: Are You Ready for Storybook Love?](#)

**If learning to love yourself is such an important step to take before you enter a relationship, what is your best self-love advice?**

A divine relationship with your soul mate is when two whole and complete people come together. Your soul mate helps to awaken you and love all components of yourself. As Dr. John Demartini says, your soul-mate is actually your full complement. So we must make sure we are bursting with love

within *ourselves* first before we invite anyone else into our world. Flexing your self-love muscle is the best way to start, and it's just like working any other muscle: In order for it to get stronger, it must be flexed daily. Start by writing down the 10 things that light you up, and then commit to doing them daily. For me, it's yoga meditation, getting out into Mother Nature, watching a sunrise, swimming in the ocean, and taking a bath. In my book, I teach you how to create a self-love menu and how to flex your self-love muscle daily.

**Lastly, do you have any other upcoming projects or anything else you'd like to share with our readers?**

I have created the [Mastering Your Mean Girl 10-Week Activation Program](#) and guided [meditations](#) to really help amplify the lessons in the book, so if you're wanting to cultivate some stellar self-love so you can attract your ideal partner, this is an excellent way to make it happen. I also have loads of [live events](#) in New York, Los Angeles, and Australia that you can check out. They're going to be epic!

*You can buy Mastering Your Mean Girl on [Amazon](#). To keep up with Melissa, visit her [website](#) or follow her on Twitter [@Mel\\_Ambrosini](#).*

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## **Author Dan Ribacoff Talks Relationship Advice & 'Pretty Little Liars'**



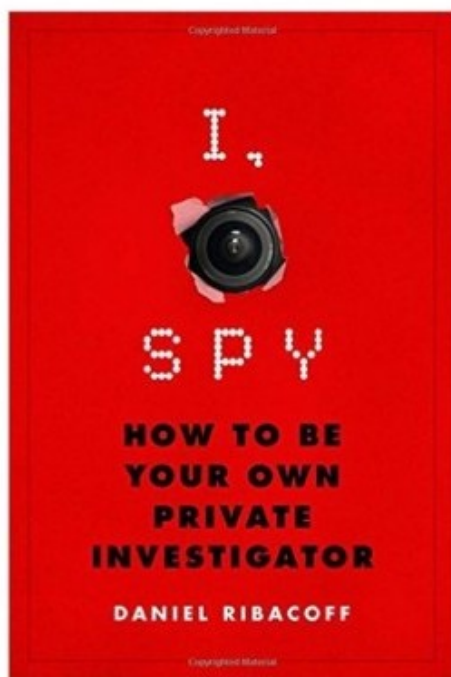
By [Michelle Foti](#)

When eyebrows are raised and suspicion arises, men and women stop what they're doing and transform into investigators. If her man did something wrong, you know she is going to find it; she's unstoppable, even relentless. Yet, should this be the way she pursues the truth? Is it healthy? We talked to polygraph expert and private investigator Dan Ribacoff in our exclusive author interview where he lays out some [relationship advice](#) on seeking the truth from his book *I, Spy: How to be Your Own Private Investigator*. Ribacoff also put the *Pretty Little Liars* to the test – the lie detector test, that is.

## **Author Shares Relationship Advice For Seeking Truth In Your Relationships**

**To start, what was the inspiration for your book *I, Spy: How to be Your Own Private Investigator*? Why do you think knowing how to be your own “private I” is an important skill?**

I wanted to help people who are concerned and looking for simplicity. I feel bad for charging people. They don't have money and I don't want to leave people out there. It's an important skill everyday, with everyone. In everyday life you have to think like a Private Investigator.



**Let's get into some specifics. What's the first step someone should take if they suspect that their significant other is cheating?**

The book gives people investigative skills to go through step by step:

1. Don't confront them. It will tick them off and make them think "they're on to me."
2. Look out for changes of habit such as dress, health, and intimacy.

These are signs to look for. You need probable cause and you can get that through surveillance.

**Of course, we have to ask: What are three easy ways to tell if your partner is lying?**

My dating tips include steps of detecting lies:

1. Repeating Deception. Guilty people have a hard time saying no. If they over explain that is a significant sign of

deception.

2. Visual Cues. If someone crosses their arms that's a sign of defense, protecting themselves. Shifting in their seat, touching their nose: it is a physiological response that something doesn't seem right.

3. Grooming. If your partner comes onto you, acts a little bit seductive, uses physical attributes, if they're flirtatious, that means they want you to like them and go easier on them.

**Related Link:** [Celebrity Interview: Blake Cooper Griffin Gives Relationship Advice & Says, "Don't Be Reckless With Other People's Hearts"](#)

**After a surprising break-up, what is the best strategy for people to employ to get the closure they need?**

It depends on how the breakup occurs. If it doesn't make sense, people are curious and that's when they start an investigation. If the partners are willing to take a polygraph test for fidelity, that's the way to go. Some people become obsessed, they have to know. People can't move on.

**Shifting gears, you have a long resume of appearing on popular shows and working with celebrities, most recently the cast of *Pretty Little Liars*. What would you say has been your most exciting celebrity polygraph experience?**

*Pretty Little Liars* (as seen in the video above) and *Impractical Jokers*. We embarrassed Murr on stage at his old school.

**Related Link:** [Celebrity Wedding: 'Pretty Little Liars' Star Sasha Pieterse is Engaged](#)

**As a polygraph expert, what relationship situations are you most often called into?**

When there are relationship problems and situations of

cheating and infidelity. It's emotional. I'd much rather do a criminal investigation. Relationship investigations get volatile. A woman had called me and said I had ruined her relationship, but it was the results. The brain cannot lie, the mouth does.

**What are these situations like? What are you thinking/feeling as relationships crumble before you?**

It's not a great feeling. I try to broker a deal and offer relationship advice. I try to chat with the wife, encourage a marriage counselor. It's better to be the referee than to see them fail the polygraph test. If they fail, they go to therapy and periodic testing for monitoring. With no one writing speeding tickets, everyone is going to speed.

**Related Link:** [13 Most Shocking Celebrity Couple Affairs](#)

**What would you say is the key to a happy, successful relationship?**

Be best friends. Be open. Be honest. It's a two way street. If you ignore the needs and the love of your partner, they'll find someone to fill that role. Take care of one another.

**Lastly, do you have any other upcoming projects or anything else you'd like to share with our readers?**

I recently signed a contract to host my own show in the United Kingdom in Great Britain about exes and current couples delving into their relationships. It will be on channel 4 in England. So far I've committed to 10 episodes. We begin filming in May and the show is to air in September.

*I, Spy: How to be Your Own Private Investigator is available now on [Amazon](#). To learn more about Dan Ribacoff, visit his [Twitter](#).*

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# Relationship Advice: Author Deborah K. Heisz Talks Choosing Joy In Life and Love



 By [Michelle Foti](#)

You can't see it, hear it, smell it, or touch it, but when you have it, you feel as if you are in its embrace. When you lose it, you want to fold up inside yourself and remain closed off everyone. Marked by smiles, laughter, or a loving look into your partner's eyes, happiness can be simply attained, but can also be effortlessly lost. Grasping for happiness once again can be arduous, even painful. Deborah K. Heisz's self-help book, [Live Happy: Ten Practices for Choosing Joy](#) and self-help magazine, *Live Happy* provide the path for choosing happiness in your life, illuminated by the stories of celebrities and ordinary people along the way. In our exclusive author interview, Heisz talks love advice, [relationship advice](#), and career advice. Take it from her and take it boldly as you act on your choice of joy in all entities of your life.

## Author Opens Up On Best Relationship Advice to Find Happiness

To start, since our site focuses on dating and relationships, I'd love to ask you some questions on that topic. What relationship advice do you have for longtime couples who have



## **relationship problems and are struggling to keep their marriage thriving?**

Positivity gets positivity. Be present with each other and put the device away. When you share time with one another, be engaged. Positive communication is everything; 80% of your communication should be positive. When the majority is negative, you drift away from one another. Pay each other compliments and be sure to say I love you every day.

## **How can someone find joy after a tough breakup?**

There are great stories in the book about this. Building resilience, finding little things to be grateful for. Also, find something that engages you and devote time to yourself. That will remove you from the pain.

## **Any tips for coming across as confident when you feel anything but after a breakup?**

When you feel good about yourself you are more attractive to other people. You want to build yourself up to be a whole person before a relationship. You can't be a half looking for your other half.

**Related Link:** [Celebrity News: Lea Michele Splits From Matthew Paetz After Two Years of Dating](#)

## **What is the best piece of love advice you've ever been given?**

Passion comes and goes, friendship persists.

## **Shifting gears, your book includes stories from many celebrities, including Jason Mraz, Alanis Morissette, and Niki Taylor. Did you get to interview these celebrities, or did you gather research on them?**

All direct interviews. The editors went out and got the stories. The best experience was with Hota. She believes in living happily and projecting positivity through the world.

Also, Alanis Morissette. She was all about mindfulness, meditation, and graciousness.

**Why did you pick these celebrities to cover in your book about happiness?**

The standard diva impression is true, but we make sure those aren't people we're working with. We want to work with celebrities who are real, who are interested in more than themselves, and people who want a more positive world.

**Related Link:** [Celebrity News: Rob Kardashian Deletes Instagram Photos & Blac Chyna Hints at Break-Up](#)

**We have to ask: Do you have any theories on why celebrity relationships so often fail?**

They are high powered relationships with two people in the spotlight, who are ambitious and competitive. They spend time apart and it's very hard to keep in contact for the relationship. They have commitments to long term projects. They get distracted by opportunity and have difficulty setting boundaries.

**Related Link:** [Celebrity Couple Gwen Stefani & Blake Shelton Expected to Release Duet Together](#)

**Lastly, do you have any other upcoming projects or anything else you'd like to share with our readers?**

Every March 1, it's international day of happiness. It's an online campaign at HappyActs.org, where we try to get people to perform happy acts throughout March. We want to make the world a better place. On March 20th, there will be 72 large walls around the country that are meant to show that you can spread and choose happiness.

*For more from Live Happy Magazine and self-help author Deborah K. Heisz visit [livehappy.com](http://livehappy.com) and check out her Twitter at <https://twitter.com/dheisz>.*

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# Relationship Advice: Author Dave Kerpen Talks 11 People Skills and Dating Tips



 [By Mary DeMaio](#)

Being able to build strong relationships and treat people with respect will establish understanding and trust, some of the most substantial components in any relationship. The way we communicate and the connections we develop, set the foundation for creating more meaningful relationships. Dave Kerpen's new self-help book offers 53 simple tips to help master the 11 people skills that will get you more of what you wish for at work, at home, and in life. His book, *The Art of People: 11 Simple People Skills That Will Get You Everything You Want* discusses what it takes to win success and influence in today's competitive world. In this exclusive author interview, Kerpen shares his best [relationship advice](#) revealing some dating tips to improve your romantic life.

## Author Opens Up on Best Relationship Advice to Incorporate People Skills

To start, we are so excited for your book to come out! Can you give us some background on what inspired you to write this book?

The inspiration for *The Art of People* was, well, people. All

of the amazing people I have been fortunate enough to meet along the way have had a huge impact on me – most of all, my wife Carrie. In fact, my mother-in-law called the book “a giant love letter.” Plus, as I wrote and talked about my first 2 books, *Likeable Social Media* and *Likeable Business*, I realized that the people skills I was writing about didn't just apply to social media or business- they applied to all relationships, in and out of work.

**Related Link:** [5 Top People Tools for Relationships and Love](#)

**If romantic relationships are based on trust and sincerity, how can you apply the 11 people skills you discuss to your romantic life?**

There are countless ways to apply the 11 people skills and 53 strategies I wrote about to your romantic life. It's about sincerely listening and seeking to understand, mirroring and validating your partner, following the conflict resolution process I discuss when things go wrong, and remaining authentic and grateful.

**Which skills do you feel can be applied to both a romantic and professional relationship? How are they used in the same way?**

All of the skills presented can be applied to any kind of relationship. If you have any relationship problems, a few that stand out as being particularly applicable to both professional and romantic relationships are understanding others, reading others, and being able to resolve conflict. Being able to effectively understand and read others on a deep level is crucial whether you share a house with someone or just a meeting room.

**Our visitors are always looking for advice on how to make the most of their personal lives, what people skills do you feel are most important in a romantic relationship?**

My relationship advice is to listen, listen, and then listen

some more. Try to get out of your own perspective for a little while and try to truly listen and understand your significant other. The key to a successful relationship is the platinum rule: Instead of doing unto others as you'd like done to yourself, understand your partner well enough to do unto him as you know he would like done!

**Related Link:** [How to Campaign for a Better Relationship](#)

**How can these 11 people skills sustain a relationship over a long period of time?**

The best way to answer this question is to look at a relationship as an extended series of small day-to-day interactions. If you don't make a conscious effort to improve your people skills today, you likely won't notice any immediate difference. However, making numerous small improvements now will have a big impact on your relationship down the road. And when in doubt, remember the basics: listening, understanding, and gratitude. One more, that my wife has taught me well: It's better to be happy than right.

**What is the most important message readers should walk away with after reading this book?**

I want readers to know that people skills are something that can be learned! I truly believe that it's possible to create more meaningful relationships in life by trying to better understand yourself and the people around you, listen better, help them get what they want, and guide them to help you get what you want.

The Art of People: 11 Simple People Skills That Will Get You Everything You Want *can be ordered now on [Amazon](#). For more Dave Kerpen visit <http://davekerpen.ceo/> and <http://www.likeablelocal.com/>.*

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# Relationship Advice: Author Kira Asatryan Talks Loneliness and Relationship Problems



✖ Interview by [Emma Malefakis](#). Written by [Mary DeMaio](#)

Everyone experiences loneliness at some point in their life. Loneliness isn't just something that happens when we are physically separated, but can also arise in the presence of others when we fail to build strong connections. The new self-help book by certified relationship coach Kira Asatryan, gives readers [relationship advice](#) on how to create closeness to fulfill human interaction. Her book, *Stop Being Lonely: Three Simple Steps to Developing Close Friendships and Deep Relationships* suggests many helpful approaches for satisfying long-term relationships, as well as casual companionship's through knowing and caring for others. In this exclusive author interview, Asatryan talks about how closeness is established on a deeper level to understand people from their own perspective.

## Author Opens Up On Best Relationship Advice When Feeling Lonely

To start, we love the premise of *Stop Being Lonely*. Can you

**give us some background on what inspired you to write this book?**

I have been interested in the topic of loneliness for years because I have experienced a lot of it myself over the course of my life. I found it really frustrating and confusing mainly because I have always had relationships with people and always had people in my life, so I didn't quite understand why that wasn't enough to make me not feel lonely all the time. That is why I wanted to explore the distinction between having people in your life and having a certain quality in one's relationship.

**Related Link:** [Kate Gosselin Reveals She's Lonely on Dr. Drew](#)

**What do you feel the primary cause of loneliness is in our culture?**

There are a number of things that have made it so that people are becoming lonelier. The trends say that the amount of people feeling lonely is increasing. It is up 30 percent over the last couple of years. One thing that is sort of crazy to me is that we have more and more access to each other than we ever had before through technology specifically. It is an interesting counter-intuitive thing that we have more access to people and yet loneliness is increasing.

**How would you say online dating impacts loneliness in a relationship? Can you explain if it sets a precedent for communicating only via email/text?**

Online dating is starting to be studied in depth both how people use it and how it is affecting people. At this point, the results are that online dating is just really complicated. Both men and women are struggling with how to interact with each other over these mediums. I think you are right, it does set a precedent of leading these relationships through text, email and messaging. One thing we do know is that you cannot get very close to somebody unless you interact with them in

person.

**Related Link:** [Relationship Author Daisy Buchanan Shares Her Dating Advice For 'Meeting Your Match' Online](#)

**You mention that the cure to loneliness is closeness. Can you explain how closeness would cure loneliness in a romantic relationship?**

In the social science world, people tend to typically say intimacy when they are talking about romantic relationships. To me, intimacy encompasses what I define as closeness and also the sexual component. I talk mostly about the closeness component because it applies to more relationships than just your sexual relationship. Closeness, as I define it, is direct access to another person's inner world. I say that it is the antidote to loneliness because the kind of loneliness that we are experiencing these days is not really a lack of people, it is a lack of feeling like we can really understand each other and that we are really valued by the people in our lives. So closeness kind of minimizes that internal distance that we are feeling, which creates the feeling of loneliness.

**What advice would you give to a couple who has relationship problems and is struggling with loneliness?**

Loneliness in romantic couples is challenging because if you are already in a committed relationship, say a marriage, you have to start at a different place than you would if this was a new person that you just met. In general, I say people should create closeness by knowing and caring. Knowing means getting to know the person on a deeper level and understanding them from their own perspective. Caring means showing them that you are interested and that you matter to them. For couples who are already married or in a committed relationship, I would start with the caring part because the couple that has been married for 10 years would typically say we know everything about each other. Whether or not that is



actually true, that is what they believe. Caring and showing the other person that you appreciate them or support them can really diminish quickly in a marriage, so bolstering that side of it up can make a huge difference.

**What dating advice would you give to someone who is holding out and not dating because they haven't met anyone who has all the criteria on their checklist?**

I would say that there is value to taking that step to meet someone in person if you are at all interested in them. Don't go into a date prepared that the other person might be totally terrible and you might regret doing it. My relationship advice is to view it as an opportunity to get to know the person, especially if this is an online situation. It is basically impossible to know if someone is a good fit for you on deeper level through the online stuff. So as painful as it can be, if you can get yourself out there to meet them, I think that is the right thing to do.

Stop Being Lonely: Three Simple Steps to Developing Close Friendships and Deep Relationships *is available now on [Amazon](#). For more on Kira Asatryan visit the [Stop Being Lonely website](#) and check out Kira's twitter at <https://twitter.com/kiraasatryan>.*

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**Dating Advice: Authors of 'The Marriage Test' Reveal How To Confirm Compatibility**

# Before Vows



 [By Mary DeMaio](#)

Perhaps one of the most important decisions you can make is deciding who that special someone should be waiting at the end of the aisle. In the new self-help book by Jill Andres and Brook Silva-Braga, the couple shares their best [dating advice](#) on the issues that can strengthen or terminate a relationship and love prior to their union. Their book, *The Marriage Test: Our 40 Dates Before 'I Do,'* is designed to test the depth and durability of the relationship to see if their love can survive real life scenarios through 40 simulating challenges. This book is sure to give you a few interesting date ideas! In this exclusive author interview, the duo talks about their dating advice to confirm compatibility before proclaiming any VOWS.

## Relationship Authors Open Up On Best Dating Advice Before Saying 'I Do'

**To start, we are so excited for your new book! Can you give us some background on what made you decide to open up about your dating experiences?**

**Jill:** After dating for several years, we reached a point that a lot of couples face: You really love each other, but it's hard to know if you should get married when the things that cause problems – sharing finances, raising a family – you don't typically face when you're dating. So we came up with activities to test ourselves and our relationship before making that big decision. We learned so much going through

this test that we thought other couples could benefit from hearing our story!

**Related Link:** [Relationship Advice: Authors of 'The Marriage Boot Camp' Reveal How to Build A Rock Solid Relationship and Love](#)

**What made you choose forty dating challenges, not more or less? And how did you decide what obstacles you should do together?**

**Brook:** It could have been more or less but 40 gave us a chance to try lots of different things in a lot of different categories. We started by thinking of ways to simulate some of the problems married people face—*Oh we could swap credit cards*—and then when we started telling people about the idea they all had their own suggestions for dates to try.

**In what ways do these dating challenges prove that you are compatible with someone? Can you explain which one is the most beneficial in strengthening a relationship?**

**Jill:** More than anything, they show your willingness to work through hard things because the activities are designed to cause tension. We cut our budget in half for a month and it really stressed our relationship more than we thought it would. But it also helped prove that we could get past that tension and still want to be together.

**Related Link:** [Four Dates and a Wedding](#)

**I'm sure you have some interesting stories from trying out all of these dates! Can you each describe a funny or unusual situation that you found yourself in on these dates?**

**Brook:** We did a date where we went out with each other's exes and both those afternoons were memorable. First, we went out with Jill's ex-boyfriend and he spent the whole lunch talking about how he'd never met anyone as good as Jill—I was afraid

he might try to take her back. Then, we went out with my ex-girlfriend and she spent an hour and a half explaining why her husband is better than me. I was glad when that date was over.

**Jill:** We spent a week trying to simulate having a newborn and not letting ourselves sleep for more than three hours at a time. Then we'd have to finish a chore like doing laundry or cleaning our bathroom. By the end of the week I was a walking zombie, barely able to get through the day. It wasn't so funny at the time but it's funny to think back on.

**After going on these 40 dates, we have to ask...How do you both feel these marriage tests prepared you for your own marriage?**

**Brook:** I really think they prepared us well. They forced us to discuss some awkward stuff that otherwise we would have avoided as long as we could. Instead, by the time we got married, we had worked through lots of hard stuff—like what religion we'd raise our kids and how we would change our last names—it made our first year of marriage pretty worry-free.

**Our visitors are always looking for advice on how to make the most of their personal lives. So what advice would you give to couples who are struggling to keep the spark alive in their relationship?**

**Jill:** In a word: communication—do more of it. As for the sexual spark, we did a couple fun activities people can try. For a week we dared ourselves to have a different kind of sex every day—it was a good way to get out of old bedroom habits. We also did a date called "Sex Seen," where we agreed to re-create every love scene we saw in TV and the movies.

**On the other hand, what message do you have for readers who are struggling to break up with their partner, even though they know it's the right thing to do?**

**Jill:** Be brave. Ending up with someone who isn't the right fit

isn't good for either partner. It's better for both of you to break up sooner rather than later and start moving on. Plus, imagine how painful it would feel to your partner if they found out you'd been considering breaking up with them for a while.

**What is the most important message readers should walk away with after reading this book?**

**Brook:** It's hard to be honest with yourself and your partner about the shortcomings in a relationship. Especially for a couple who are serious enough to be considering marriage. Your lives are so intertwined that the possibility of breaking up is really scary. But our love advice is that we think it's much better to honestly confront those things now than pushing them off or wishing them away.

**Lastly, do you have any other upcoming projects or anything else you'd like to share with our readers?**

**Jill:** We're inviting other couples to try some of the dates and tell us how it goes—their stories are being published on our blog. You can go to [themarriagetestbook.com/quiz](http://themarriagetestbook.com/quiz) to get some date suggestions.

The Marriage Test: Our 40 Dates Before 'I Do' *is available now on [Amazon](#). For more on Jill Andres and Brook Silva-Braga visit [The Marriage Test website](#) and check out Jill's Twitter at <https://twitter.com/jillyjill7>.*

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**'The Truth' Author Neil**

# Strauss Gives Relationship Advice – Even When It's Uncomfortable



By [Rebecca White](#) and Myesha Cobb

It's no secret that relationships and love are hard to navigate sometimes. It's easy to become unsure of ourselves and not know how to deal with questions surrounding things like monogamy and faithfulness. Fortunately, author Neil Strauss tackles these tough topics in his new book [The Truth: An Uncomfortable Book About Relationships](#). He addresses issues that couples face on a daily basis and shares his own journey along the way. In our exclusive author interview, Strauss talks about the inspiration for his autobiography, the lesson he hopes his readers learn, and his three best pieces of expert [relationship advice](#).

## Expert Relationship Advice from Author Neil Strauss

**To start, we love the premise of *The Truth: An Uncomfortable Book About Relationships*. Why did you decide to write an autobiography?**

I write my books because I want to use my personal experiences to solve a problem in my own life and to help others. So I wrote *The Truth* because I felt like I had a real issue with intimacy and connection. I found a solution for it, and I felt like what I discovered could make a difference for my readers.

**Related Link:** [Going from 'It's Complicated' to Monogamy: 5](#)

## Tips Every Woman Should Know

**After writing the book, what were your final conclusions? Is it natural to be faithful to one person for life?**

The main conclusion is that a relationship and love has almost nothing to do with the other person. It really has to do with *you* and the way that you choose to relate to them. The first thing I found was that the healthiest thing to do for your relationship is to work on yourself.

As for whether or not it's natural to be faithful to one person for life, I think the answer to that question is different for everyone. First, get healthy. Then, do what feels right, whether that be monogamy or not. Do what you like. I think that the ideas in our culture about relationships are actually counterproductive.

**Did you have any personal revelations while working on *The Truth*?**

The biggest revelation I had was about my parents. By having a needy, smothering, and anxious parent of the same sex that I was attracted to, I began to recoil anytime I was with a partner who got needy. It set a template in my heart for being distant in a relationship.

**What do you think will surprise your readers the most about your new book?**

I think a lot of these experiences, in the world of open relationships and non-monogamy, were not what I expected them to be or what other people would expect.

**You previously said that you're not the "hero in this tale" and that you are the "villain." Why do you feel that way?**

It's just true. The book begins with me cheating on my girlfriends! I tried to figure out how I could do that to someone I love. Throughout my story, I start to care about why

would I cheat, why would I hurt them, why would I betray my own value system.

**Related Link:** [Find Out If Your Partner is Undateable with 'The Cheat Sheet'](#)

**Relationships were a challenge for you, especially coming out of the "seduction community." Do you have any advice for our visitors who are also struggling to maintain a serious relationship?**

My relationship advice is to stop trying to change the other person and really start looking at yourself and your patterns. Recognize that we're often attracted to people who possess the worst traits of our parents of the same sex. Then, we try to get them to change to heal our childhood wounds through a subconscious level. If we recognize that, then we can start to do something about it.

It's also important to understand the stages of a relationship. Usually, a relationship starts with projection, where you don't truly see who the other person is; you just see who you want them to be. The next stage is disillusionment, where you see who they really are and not your fantasy. That's why people break-up in that three to nine month window – because you're seeing who they really are. Then, there's a power struggle or conflict. If you get through that, there's a relationship. If you can recognize the baggage you both bring and unpack that baggage, you get to have a relationship that's ten times better than the fantasy.

**Now, we'd like to ask some personal questions. You got married in 2013 – congratulations! What made you become a one-woman man?**

It was really the work I did on myself. I recognized if I didn't change, every relationship I had would fall apart. I really worked hard with really, *really* deep therapy, not just talk therapy. I treated my childhood wounds like cancer, so I



could have control over them. And Ingrid as well – she worked on her abandonment issues.

### **And how did you know that your wife was The One?**

You never *really* know. Asking that question can be detrimental. To me, I just asked myself over and over again, “Am I really, really happy?” And the answer was always yes. She lights up my life.

### **You also welcomed your first child earlier this year. How has it been from transitioning from seduction community to husband to father? Did becoming a parent change your marriage?**

That’s just how life works. You’re young and want to date a lot. Then, maybe you want to build something bigger and build a life with someone. Then, you think we’re happy and maybe we should have a baby. So the transitioning is very natural. All the work we did on ourselves allows me and Ingrid to be the best, healthy, and nurturing parents we can be, so our child doesn’t have the issues we had.

Becoming parents made our relationship better. Our relationship is still important; we still have that connection time. I was initially scared of marriage because of my parents, but sometimes, what you’re scared of is what you should be doing.

**Related Link:** [Relationship Advice: 5 Questions To Ask Yourself Before Saying “I Do.”](#)

### **Lastly, what’s the best relationship advice you’ve ever received?**

It’s really different than what you might read about or what you’re expecting, but I really wanted to share these with everyone. I have three pieces of love advice:

1. Unexpressed expectations are pre-meditated resentment. People build up resentment in their relationship by not

communicating.

2. A relationship is not about finding the right person; it's about *becoming* the right person. Become that person yourself, and you're bound to attract someone at your level of emotional maturity.
3. Only when your love for someone exceeds your need for them can you have a shot at a genuine relationship with them. Sometimes, you need someone more than you love them, and that shouldn't be the case.

You can learn more by purchasing *The Truth: An Uncomfortable Book About Relationships* from [Amazon](#) and also visiting his website [NeilStrauss.com](#).

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## Author Wendy Newman Shares the Relationship and Love Advice She Learned After 121(!) First Dates



Interview by [Rebecca White](#). Written by Myesha Cobb.

You feel discouraged and are tired of looking for Mr. Right. Still, you keep saying yes to guy after guy, hoping that he might be The One. You're not alone – we've been there too! But have you ever been on 121 first dates? Author and relationship expert Wendy Newman has, and she divulges the many lessons learned in her new book *121 First Dates: How to Succeed at Online Dating, Fall in Love, and Live Happily Ever After (Really!)*. Not only does she share years of

research and intimate details about her many first dates, but she makes us laugh in the process. In our exclusive interview, the author talks about the inspiration for her tell-all, her best and worst first date, and her most valuable piece of [relationship advice](#).

## Wendy Newman Opens Up About '121 First Dates'

**To start, we love the premise of *121 First Dates*. What inspired you to write an autobiography/guidebook that focused specifically on first dates?**

I never meant to go on 121 first dates, and I certainly never meant to write a book about it! It all started with first date 54. It was so horrendous and so miserable; it was so much worse than anything that I had ever read about in terms of a "bad" date that I had to write about it. At the time, my married girlfriends were complaining about how boring their lives were and how unromantic their husbands were. Since I didn't have a blog, I actually started writing for them, just to keep them happy and to tell them that the grass isn't always greener on the other side. So I wrote about that particular date, and it was a hit. I continued to write about my dates, just to share where they went wrong or where I went wrong, where it felt right or where we had a moment of victory and shared something really great.

**Related Link:** [Kristen McGuinness Talks About Going on 51 Dates in 50 Weeks](#)

**What's the best first date you've ever been on?**

Well, I would have to say first date 101 is the best; he's actually still a good friend of mine. I've had lots of great first dates. I've met a lot of amazing men who, while they weren't *my* man, were great.

## And the worst first date?

Like I said above, date number 54 was the worst date. See, I like older men, so I usually go for guys who are five to ten years older than me – that's my preferred age range. According to his online dating profile, this guy was about 10 years older than me, but when I got there, he was more like 35 years older than me and had a cane. He was hobbling across the street, and he was wearing this kind of beige leisure jacket with wine stains and grease and a wide 70's lapel.

I was so caught off guard, but I didn't want to be rude. So we sat down, and he grabbed the menu and encouraged me to order some food. I only planned to have drinks, but at his insistence, I ordered the house salad. He didn't talk very much, which usually only happens when a man doesn't like you; he makes you do all the entertaining and heavy lifting in the conversation. The thing was, he *did* like me, which made it even worse. I was ready for it to be over, and of course, he sticks me with the bill. I ordered a 6 dollar house salad and ended up paying the 35 dollar tab.

Then, as we were walking out, he asks, "Do you want to know what happened, why I'm using a cane?" Mistakenly, I said, "Sure." He replies, "I was in a motorcycle accident on Friday, and well, it pinched my groin area, and my Johnson has filled with blood, so it's erect. They want to do surgery, but it could do permanent damage and might mess with my erections, so we're just going to wait to see if it'll go down. I'm telling you all of this because I'm erect right now. It will be like I'm on Viagra, so you should come home with me."

That was first date 54. I've had way better, but I haven't had any worse.

**Related Link:** [Dating: First Impressions – Part I](#)

# Author Shares Best Relationship Advice

**Now, we'd love to ask you for some dating tips! What relationship advice do you have for women who want to give up on their search for love?**

Don't wait until you're ready. You want to wait until the new year, until that work project is over, or until you're done with school. You want to wait until the timing is right, or even worse, until you lose the weight. Don't wait! If I would've waited until I lost the weight, I would still be single. You're never going to feel like you're ready for this new, fun adventure. Just go for it!

**Along those lines, was there any tip that really helped you stick with it when you were feeling down about finding a relationship and love?**

I had a dating buddy, which I highly recommend. I actually had three of them, two girls and one guy. They were all single, and they all wanted to be in a relationship – two important qualities in a dating buddy. A terrible dating buddy is someone who is married or attached because they don't remember what it was like to date and don't have enough sympathy. Another terrible dating buddy is someone who loves being single. Find someone who's in a similar place in their own life and then promise each other that you'll have each other's back, that you'll be there to listen to all the horrific details of every date, and that you'll be straight with each other.

**What's the best love advice that you've ever received?**

The best relationship advice that I've ever received is to relate to your partner like they mean well and like they care about you. In the three years that Dave and I have been together, we've always treated each other like no one's

misbehaving, and by doing that, we've never been in trouble with each other.

**Related Link:** [Dating Experts Reveal How to Attract the Right Man](#)

**Lastly, do you have anything else you'd like to share with our readers?**

Well, I have a 20-city book tour happening. I'm really excited about that. I'm leaving for San Diego, and I'll be on the road until May. That's my life for the next six months!

*You can learn more by purchasing 121 First Dates: How to Succeed at Online Dating, Fall in Love, and Live Happily Ever After (Really!) from [Amazon](#) and also visiting the author's website, [Wendy Speaks](#).*

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## **Relationship Advice: Authors of 'Marriage Boot Camp' Reveal How To Build A Rock Solid Relationship and Love**



By [Rebecca White](#)

Relationships and love are not easy to maintain, especially if you've been married for years. In the new self-help book by reality TV stars Jim and Elizabeth Carroll, the couple shares their best [relationship advice](#) on defeating the top 10 marriage killers and building a rock solid relationship. Their

book, *Marriage Boot Camp: Defeat the Top 10 Marriage Killers and Build a Rock Solid Relationship*, will help you reignite the flames in your love life. In this exclusive author interview, the duo talks about their love advice to save your marriage.

## Relationship Authors Open Up On Best Relationship Advice For Married Couples

To start, we are so excited for the *Marriage Boot Camp* book to come out! How will the book be like your program and reality TV show? And how will it be different?

**Jim:** It's like the reality TV show in that it takes the reader through many of the exercises and the purposes behind them. People learn when they do things. This book makes the reader apply the tools. It's different in that this book is written so couples avoid conflict, while the TV show enhances the conflict because we have a controlled environment.

**Elizabeth:** The *Marriage Boot Camp* book takes the top 10 sources of conflict in marriage and gives you a step-by-step action plan for couples to work together. It starts with a case study of one of our couples who struggled with this particular topic. We then give you all of the background information and research needed on the topic so that you can be completely informed. Finally, we end each chapter with a do-it-yourself exercise that you can complete with or without your mate. The book is similar to the TV show in that the readers, like the celebrities, participate actively in the work. It is different from the TV show in that all of the behind-the-scenes teaching and applications are available to the reader.

**Related Link:** [Arielle Ford Gives Relationship Advice in New](#)

## [Book 'Turn Your Mate Into Your Soulmate'](#)

**Can you tell us about the top three marriage killers? What's your best tip for helping couples overcome them?**

**Jim and Elizabeth: Communication** – Learn to “mirror.” This is an active listening technique that requires the listener to close his mouth and open his ears. You use the phrase, “What I heard you say is...” and you mirror back what the speaker just said. The hard part is that you have to put your own thoughts, opinions, and feelings on hold temporarily and be open minded to your mates point of view. **Sex** – Understand the very real differences between male and female sexuality. Have a very frank conversation with your mate about what you want from your sex life and what you're willing to do to make that happen. It's also important to discuss your earliest sexual experience and understand how this makes an imprint that affects you even today. **Money** – Know that money is often just the tip of the iceberg with the “real” issue lurking below. Spouses need to spend some time digging into their own psyche and understand their own financial personalities. Money can mean love, power, control, status, or freedom. Each of us leans more toward spending or saving. And you also have a unique family culture. Each of us needs to know what money means to us and then communicate this to our partners. Then get started on a budget!

**During the writing process, did you have any profound moments or epiphanies about your own marriage?**

**Jim:** We created a new drill, called “cycles,” that we used in our own marriage.

**Elizabeth:** Jim's and my marriage is the lab for many of our Marriage Boot Camp drills. In chapter 9: Wrestling With Past, both of us had many “ah ha” moments where we came to a deeper understanding of the impact the past has on our present. We are currently working on a drill called “cycles” or “circular



conflict” because we have seen a pattern when we get gridlocked and it took quite some time to untangle. We definitely want others to learn from our mistakes.

**Related Link:** [Find Your ‘Clutch’: Relationship Advice from Author Lisa Becker](#)

**In your program, you have a lot of drills and exercises for the couples to do. Which one do you believe is the most beneficial and why?**

**Jim:** The forgiveness drill is always the most powerful. It releases people to grow and move forward.

**Elizabeth:** Every exercise in our program is important but if you could only pick two areas to focus on we would suggest chapter 1 (Communication) and chapter 10 (Forgiveness). With good communication you can solve virtually any problem, but with poor communication it’s almost impossible to solve even the smallest. Chapter 1 covers a concept that we call the Marriage Boot Camp ABC’s and Jim and I use this almost every day. A is for Action, B is for Belief, what you believe about the action and C is for the Consequence of your beliefs. We often say, “I think we have different B’s” when we’re each reacting differently to a situation, which could potentially cause conflict. Chapter 10 covers the need to forgive. As hard as we try, none of us can avoid hurting the other when you live so closely together. The only solution is to make amends and forgive anytime we fall short, but this is much deeper than you would imagine.

**To shift gears, I’d love to ask you for some relationship advice! What message do you have for readers who are struggling to keep the spark alive in their marriage?**

**Jim:** My relationship advice is to go to a marriage retreat. It is so much better than sitting around getting counseling and then fighting after every appointment.

**Elizabeth:** Nothing kills the spark like a root of bitterness. In over 20 years of Marriage Boot Camp I have never seen a spouse who said they were no longer in love with their mate who didn't carry some deep, unresolved resentment. Once you dig that out, we take couples back to the moment when they fell in love and rekindle the flame that started their journey. It works every time. It is relatively easy for people to fall in love again, but it takes discipline to constantly scrub the little viruses out.

**Related Link:** [Author Jennifer Scott Shares Timeless Lessons of Poise and Dating Advice in New Madame Chic Book](#)

**What are the top dating New Year's resolutions for 2016?**

**Jim:** Everyone always says they're going to work on their relationships and love in the next year but...why waste time making resolutions just to fail again? Better to get off your butt and get online and do something for real.

**Elizabeth:** Instead of trying to find Mr./Ms. Right, *become* Mr./Ms. Right. Chapter 5: Personality Differences is a great place to start. Find out who you are first, then you'll know the type of mate that would be a good match for you. Get involved in community. Find people with like interests and values. Get involved with a volunteer organization. This is a great way to meet people and more importantly it will make you a more interesting person. Take online dating seriously. This is a great way to be exposed to a sizable number of people. Be open, be kind and wonderful things can happen! That's how Jim and I met!

**Lastly, do you have any other upcoming projects or anything else you'd like to share with our readers?**

**Elizabeth:** We have several more seasons of *Marriage Boot Camp* ready to be filmed and the concepts and casts are unbelievably exciting! The Marriage Boot Camp seminars continue for anyone who wants to have an exciting interactive experience of growth

and healing. Co-director Ilsa Norman and I are also blogging on celebrity relationships. Finally, Ilsa Norman recently launched the Marriage Boot Camp Retreat for couples who want to keep making memories and continue to grow, while bringing fresh life into their marriages.

Marriage Boot Camp: Defeat the Top 10 Marriage Killers and Build a Rock Solid Relationship *is available now on Amazon. For more from Jim and Elizabeth Carroll, visit the Marriage Boot Camp website, [www.marriagebootcamp.com/](http://www.marriagebootcamp.com/) and read Elizabeth's blog at <http://www.mbcmotherdaughterduo.com/>.*

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## **Arielle Ford Gives Relationship Advice in New Book 'Turn Your Mate Into Your Soulmate'**



 Interview by [Rebecca White](#). Written by [Emma Malefakis](#).

One thing that can be even harder than finding “The One,” is staying with them. In her new self-help relationship book, New York Times best selling author Arielle Ford shares 16 simple yet exciting steps to reignite the flames in your relationship and love. In her new book *Turn Your Mate Into Your Soulmate*, Ford says that you can reinvigorate your love life no matter how extinct you may think it is. In this exclusive author interview Ford opens up about her own marriage, talks about her favorite celebrity relationships, and gives her best date ideas and [relationship advice](#).

# **Arielle Ford Shares Best Relationship Advice and Dating Tips**

**How would you say you became a better partner in your own relationship?**

The first thing I really had to do was learn how to communicate. I grew up in a home where everyone yelled at each other, which I didn't realize is actually a really ineffective way to get your needs met. There was so much I didn't know. I thought love was just a feeling, but love is also a behavior, decision, choice, and commitment. There will be days you are with your beloved and you don't like them very much, but that doesn't mean you don't love them. When you're not feeling the love the assumption is that something is wrong, but the better assumption to make is that this is normal. There are studies that say every couple has a minimum of 9 irreconcilable differences. So you really need to learn how to communicate. You have to realize what the issues are and be vulnerable enough to share them with each other. What I hope this book does for people is get them to see that in order to have a really healthy, happy, long lasting relationship, you need more than just chemistry.

**Why do you think people put so much pressure on themselves to find a soulmate? Do you think it's really *that* important?**

I think we're designed as human beings to share our lives with another person and I think it's possible for everyone. If you have a desire for something, that in itself is proof that it's meant to be yours. The thing that gets in the way for most people is their beliefs. They believe there is only one soulmate for everyone, which isn't true. There are hundreds of potential soulmates for everyone, but you have to open yourself up, become vulnerable, and understand that it's a process. I talked to one woman who did online dating for 3 years and said she went on 79 first dates, until she had 'the

one.' I asked her if it was all worth it and she said absolutely, she never thought she could be that happy. So many people give up when they just didn't get to the finish line yet. Maybe the timing wasn't right. Maybe the guy who is right for you is in the middle of a divorce, or a big move, or going through big business pressures – but he's out there, I know he's out there.

**Related Link:** [Most Popular Girl In New York City Shares Online Dating And Relationship Advice in New Book](#)

***Turn Your Mate Into Your Soulmate* includes 16 fun ways to reignite the passionate spark. Do you have a favorite one?**

Well when you're in love with somebody it can literally be measured by a CAT scan by which parts of your brain light up when asked about your partner. So the chemicals are always there whether or not you're feeling them. If you get to the point where you're not feeling them at all, one thing you can do is get your partner and mutually decide to do something together that you both perceive as life threatening, like skydiving, zip lining, or a scary roller coaster ride. Do something that is going to give both of you a big adrenaline rush, and that will instantly kick start your brain chemistry to make you feel more in love and more passionate again.

**What are some good date ideas that can reignite the flames of a long-term relationship?**

I would say anything that is new and different. I believe that you should have a regular standing date night that is non-negotiable. And I believe you should make dates for sex. Date night is about just the two of you getting out of the house, doing something new, and having the time to talk. Sex dates can be short. They don't have to be a big ordeal. I think you should have a sex date even if you don't necessarily want to, because it's kind of like riding a bike. You may not feel it or be in the mood to have sex, but one of you does, so for the

health benefits for your partner show up anyway, and once you get into it, you'll end up enjoying it. The other thing I would say is approach your mate with curiosity. Don't assume you already know everything about them. Ask them things you haven't asked them in years.

**What would be your best piece of relationship advice for someone struggling to find the perfect partner?**

In quantum physics there's something called the unified field. In the unified field, past, present, and future all exist at one time, and everybody and everything is already connected molecularly. There is nothing and no one to whom you're not connected. So you are already connected to your soulmate on the unseen level. You don't know their name, you don't know who they are, you don't know when you're going to meet them, but you can start the relationship right now today. That's what I did with Brian. Even though I didn't know him, I decided to start the relationship in my mind, talking to him everyday and sharing my life with him in my imagination. That's why I believe that when we met on the physical plane it was this instantaneous recognition. It's something I call love before first sight. So if you're living like it's not going to happen for you, it's not going to happen. But if you are willing to use your imagination and trust, know, and believe your soulmate is not only out there, but also looking for you too, you can pull them in much faster.

**Related Link:** [Relationship Author Dr. Tara Fields' Love Advice: "The Happiest Couples Don't Necessarily Have More Or Less Conflict"](#)

**What is your best dating tip to help your readers establish healthy romantic relationships?**

Practice kindness. Be as loving, generous, kind, and compassionate to your partner as you can possibly be. We are all doing the best we can. Kindness goes so much further. If

you're angry and upset, it's impossible for your partner to be happy, especially if he is a masculine male. Happiness is an inside job. It's about personal responsibility. Your soulmate can add happiness to your life, but they can't make you happy. Only you can make you happy. To be a great partner you have to take care of yourself first.

**Can you tell us which famous couple you think demonstrates a good example of a healthy partnership and why?**

Michelle and Barack Obama definitely, politics aside. They have tremendous love for each other. All you have to do is look at pictures of them together, and it is evident that they love, respect and support each other. I think they are terrific role models. In the Hollywood scene, the celebrity couple I really admire is Tom Hanks and Rita Wilson. I think they are the real deal as well. Celebrities have a hard time because you can only have one rock star per couple, so with two big egos in the same relationship there is a give and take dynamic, and only one really gets nurtured.

**Are there any upcoming projects that you'd like to share with our readers?**

I'm starting my book tour in a couple of weeks so I'll be in New York at the Open Center January 12th doing a workshop. I've also got a ton of free bonuses for people who buy the book. There are also some videos on the [MateToSoulMate.com](http://MateToSoulMate.com) from other experts on the topic, so check it out!

*You can purchase [Turn Your Mate Into Your Soulmate](#) on Amazon. For more about author Arielle Ford, visit her website [ArielleFord.com](http://ArielleFord.com)*

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# Relationship Advice From ‘The Best Party of Our Lives’ Author Sarah Galvin: “Love is the Same for Everybody”



☒ Interview by [Rebecca White](#). Written by [Emma Malefakis](#).

Same-sex marriage was legalized in June, marking 2015 as a big year for the LGBT community. *The Three Einstein's* author and writer for *The Stranger* newspaper, Sarah Galvin, just finished her latest book *The Best Part of Our Lives: Stories of Gay Weddings and True Love to Inspire Us All* which was released on Dec. 15. The book is a collection of true stories about gay weddings and relationships and love, which demonstrates how LGBT couples have overcome cultural, societal, and personal obstacles. Each chapter follows a different couple's journey from engagements, to tying the knot, to honeymoons, and more. The book offers a different perspective of marriage, offering insight on different wedding traditions the gay community has made on their own, and reminds readers about the significance of such public celebrations of love. In our exclusive interview with the author, Galvin doesn't only share her [relationship advice](#), but also talks about her experience of figuring out her own sexuality and gender identity.

## Author Shares Relationship Advice



## and Experience with Love

**What inspired you to write *The Best Party of Our Lives*, and what messages do you hope readers take from it?**

I had been writing this wedding column for *The Stranger* newspaper and it gave me a different look at weddings that I've never had before. I really got inspired from that. I hope what really resonates with readers is the celebration of same-sex marriage becoming legal and what a huge moment that was in history. Also, it doesn't matter who you are, love is the same for everybody.

**Related Link:** [Lena Dunham Puts Off Celebrity Wedding in Support of Marriage Equality](#)

**Which love story really stood out to you or was your favorite to explore and why?**

There was a couple Jim and Sterling who had been together for 50 years before they got married. They were both middle school teachers and taught at the same school for about 20 years. They had a lot of crazy stories. At one point they decided to breed Arabian horses together, but nobody would buy them, so they just lived on a farm with horses and a bunch of chickens. In my eyes they have the ideal relationship. They have been through so much together. They had been together in the 60's, but during that time they had to hide so much. The story of their wedding, having all these people to come together to finally celebrate something they had to hide for so long, I just thought was very moving.

**What was your biggest struggle in figuring out your own sexuality/gender identity/coming out?**

I guess just the fact that I turned out to be very complicated. It wasn't just that I was gay, I'm also gender-queer as well. At first I was just like a lot of other kids

and thought “oh I’m just gay.” But then I found out my gender was much more complicated. Honestly being gay is one of the least interesting aspects of sexuality. It turns out to not be very vanilla, so that’s a whole other thing to figure out.

**What relationship advice would you give someone confused about his or her sexuality or gender?**

Well everyone is, so try not to feel too stressed about it. Gender is not a binary. I think that’s something that people really tend to get stressed out over because they realize they don’t fit into one of those two categories and the truth is most people don’t fit into them. Trying to figure out who you are is something that takes your whole life. As far as sexuality is concerned, I think that is cumulatively evolving for most people. I would say don’t think you have to figure out everything at once. Just live your life and try to focus on what makes you comfortable and what makes you happy.

**Related Link:** [Matt Bomer Reveals He Married Partner Simon Halls 3 Years Ago](#)

**Your unique style and confidence is your staple. How have you become so comfortable in your own skin and what advice would you give someone struggling with that?**

I have my parents to thank for that to some degree. They have been very accepting and cultivated confidence in me. They’re very non-judgmental people. You also need to have a certain degree of confidence to be a good artist. You have to have conviction to invest a certain amount of energy in what you’re doing. Like stage presence for example, no one wants to see a performer stumbling around on stage afraid of who they are and afraid of the audience. If you’re performing and you screw up, just keep dancing. You look better failing spectacularly than making it obvious that you’re afraid of what you’re doing.

**Being confident in yourself is an important part of any relationship. What else would you say is an important aspect**

## in a romantic relationship?

Confidence helps for a variety of reasons, but I'd say the most important dating advice is that you make sure you treat yourself conditionally. You could pretty much tell by a person's behavior towards other people the way they treat themselves. My love advice is that you have to learn how to be a good partner to yourself before you could be one to other people.

## Do you have any upcoming projects that you'd like to share with our readers?

I am working on a new poetry book. I started writing it over the summer. It's going to be a mixture of different types of poems. That's one of the reasons I like poetry so much, when I sit down to start to write, I never know what I'm going to write about, it's a series of surprises.

*You can learn more about purchasing Sarah Galvin's new book The Best Party Of Our Lives from Amazon. If you're looking for more on Sarah Galvin, check out her articles for The Stranger.*

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# Find Your 'Clutch': Relationship Advice from Author Lisa Becker



 By Samantha Vlahos

Being a single gal gets difficult from time to time. There are only so many failed date ideas one can endure before wanting

to give up on the idea of finding the one. Lisa Becker's hit new romance chick lit, titled *clutch: a novel*, follows protagonist Caroline Johnson as she endures many dating misadventures. The single purse designer compares her unsuccessful relationships and love to different styles of handbags, and with her best friend by her side, she wears her heart on her sleeve and continues to search for her "clutch," that special someone that she wants to hang onto.

In our exclusive author interview, the dating expert gives us a glimpse behind the evolution of *clutch* and reveals her best [relationship advice](#) about online dating and having the courage to find true love. And the best part? If you're still searching for the perfect gift this holiday season, the Takashi bag by Harper Avenue is a must-have holiday item. Use the discount code below for 20 percent off!



The Takashi bag by Harper Avenue.

# Relationship Advice to Help You Find Your Clutch

We're so excited to read your fourth book *clutch: a novel!* What inspired you to write about Caroline and her dating misadventures?

I'm a sucker for a good love story and enjoy creating fun and engaging tales that are filled with lots of heart and humor.

**Why did you decide to compare men to handbags?**

When I was writing the *Click* trilogy, (*Click: An Online Love Story*, *Double Click*, and *Right Click*), I was obsessed with *NCIS* re-runs and would have the show on in the background as I wrote. There was an episode when one of the characters mentioned that men were like purses: something useless to hang on a woman's arm. I started thinking about that, and the idea grew from there. I believe that everyone deserves a happily ever after and would like to think there's a "clutch," or someone worth holding onto, out there for everyone.

**Related Link:** [Clicking to Find Love](#)

**What surprising revelations about love does Caroline learn throughout the novel?**

Throughout her handbag-themed journey to find her "clutch," Caroline learns a few important lessons. Most notably, she realizes that being able to talk honestly with your partner is the cornerstone of a solid relationship. Also, there's never anything wrong with being with someone that makes you happy.

**What is the main message that you hope readers take away from your book?**

Sometimes, the love you want, deserve, and need is right there in front of you all along. You just need to be open to it.

**You've been married for over 10 years. How does that influence or help shape your writing?**

I never thought I would get married, so some days, I still pinch myself that I've got a loving, hilarious, and intelligent husband. Writing these books reminds me of how lucky I am to have met him.

**What suggestions do you have for women who repeatedly find themselves on unsuccessful dates or are searching for the courage to find love?**

In the modern classic film, *The Shawshank Redemption*, Tim Robbins' character, Andy Dufresne, says, "Get busy living or get busy dying." That quote comes to mind when I think about searching for the "clutch." If you feel like it's not going to happen, then my relationship advice is to just give up. You heard me. GIVE UP! Surrender to that notion that you'll end up alone. If that's truly the case, do you want to spend the next 30, 40, or even 50-plus years wallowing in misery? Sitting around and lamenting your singleness? Or are you going to get busy living? Buy your own home. Travel to all of the places you want to visit. Adopt a child. Write that novel. Engage in hobbies and activities that bring you joy.

Chances are, when you start focusing on *what* will make you happy – not *who* will make you happy – you *WILL* be happy. Happiness is evident and infectious. Happiness makes you more interesting and more attractive to someone else. And when that happens, you're more likely to meet the right person who's going to complement the amazing life you've created for yourself.

**Related Link:** [Four Dates and a Wedding](#)

**You met your husband through an online dating site. What is your best tip for our readers who are struggling to get past the creeps and find a genuine guy?**

Connecting with the right person online starts with you. When writing your online profile, be honest. Don't say you're an exercise junkie if you're really a couch potato. Don't post a photo from 10 years earlier. Don't downplay your intelligence or success because you think men will be intimidated by the real you. While you might garner a lot of interest early on, the truth will eventually come out. Nothing stunts a budding relationship and love more than deception and lies.

Also, my love advice is to let your personality shine through and be specific about the things that make you special, including hobbies and interests. It's your chance to make a positive first impression while being in complete control of the messages you are delivering.

The main character in my novel, *Click: An Online Love Story*, writes in her profile: "I cry at Hallmark commercials, sing (sometimes off key) with the radio while driving, own more pairs of black shoes than should be legal, and my fear of flying is rivaled only by my love for chocolate." My relationship advice is to tell someone who you *really* are, including your sense of humor, interests and confidence level. Be creative!

**You balance working and writing with being a full-time mom – not an easy task! Any advice for other working moms?**

Organization is key! I have a master to-do list that I update weekly to keep track of school projects, sports practices and games, and after-school activities as well as all of my personal deadlines and appointments. I also use a spreadsheet to map out meals for the week along with groceries needed so that I never have to worry about what to make for dinner or spend time making multiple trips per week to the store. Shopping online is also a big time saver. If I'm writing and enduring a bit of writer's block, I can quickly click over to Amazon and order things I need.

**What would we find if we looked in your handbag right now?**

Aside from the standard wallet, keys, sunglasses, and hand sanitizer, you'll always find snacks for the kids. Never (ever!) leave home without snacks for the kids.

**Related Link:** [Looking for Love is Like a Job Search](#)

**If you were given an offer to turn *clutch* into a movie, who would you want to see playing the roles of Caroline and Mike?**

I think Eloise Mumford, who played Kate in *Fifty Shades of Grey*, would make an outstanding Caroline. She has the right mixture of warmth, gumption, vulnerability, and beauty to bring this character to life. I still can't decide on who would play Mike, although I know I'd love to sit in on those casting sessions.

**Do you have any other upcoming projects or anything else you'd like to share with our readers?**

*clutch* actually started out as a screenplay that was under option at a major studio, but it fell out of development. I turned it into a short novel so I could share this charming and hilarious tale. I'm eager to see if there's interest from someone else on bringing this fun and quirky story to the big screen. So if you happen to be a well-to-do movie producer looking to make a new romantic comedy, please get in touch!

*Purchase *clutch*: a novel on Amazon. You can use the discount code **cupidandclutch** for 20% off of your total purchase at Harper Avenue and free shipping through December 24th. For more on Lisa Becker, visit her site and check her out on [Twitter](#) @lisawbecker, [www.facebook.com/ClickAnOnlineLoveStory/?ref=hland](http://www.facebook.com/ClickAnOnlineLoveStory/?ref=hland) and [www.pinterest.com/lisawbecker/](http://www.pinterest.com/lisawbecker/).*



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# Author Jennifer Scott Shares Timeless Lessons of Poise and Dating Advice in New Madame Chic Book



☒ Interview by [Whitney Johnson](#). Written by Mackenzie Scibetta.

Watching a grown woman yank on another woman's hair while wearing a skin-tight dress and holding a cocktail is the opposite of what it means to have poise, but as we know from the latest celebrity news, it is neither surprising nor uncharacteristic in our society. In fact, it is almost commonplace for women these days to have a lack of grace and dignity. Lucky for us, relationship author and blogger Jennifer Scott recently released her third book in her Madame Chic series dedicated to this topic. In *Polish Your Poise with Madame Chic*, she serves us a guide to a classy and elegant lifestyle and also sprinkles in some [dating advice](#).

## Relationship Author Shares Her Tips for Having Poise

**First, can you define poise for our readers?**

There are five main characteristics that make up poise: confidence, composure, compassion, presentation, and being present. Confidence is really just about feeling comfortable in your own skin and owning who you are. Composure is so

important and hard, especially in a difficult situation where someone is pushing your buttons. There are so many encounters where we could use composure to our benefit. As for compassion, that asks us to think about someone other than ourselves, which is a major part of having poise, especially in our narcissistic society. Also, how you present yourself – not just your clothes but how you behave – can say a lot about you. Making eye contact, speaking clearly, and dressing in your own true style will help. Lastly, being present means not getting stuck in your own head and worrying about the future. Instead, seize every moment you have.

**Related Link:** [Most Popular Girl in New York City Shares Online Dating and Relationship Advice in New Book](#)

**What celebrities come to mind when you think about poise?**

I love Rachel Bilson because she doesn't have a big presence on social media, which says a lot about her. Other celebrities that I love are Natalie Portman, Michelle Williams, and Kirsten Dunst because they all possess a lot of grace. And of course, Audrey Hepburn is still an icon even so many years after her death.

An obvious choice for someone who needs to work on their poise would be [Miley Cyrus](#). She's trying too hard to shock people, and that's not going to last long-term.

**What was your favorite chapter to write in *Polish Your Poise with Madame Chic*?**

I loved the presentation and style part because it is so valuable. People assume style is superficial, but it's not! It's simply about presenting yourself well with dignity and respect. I always encourage my readers to find their own style. You see people on the streets wearing black yoga pants everyday with an old t-shirt, and it's rancid.

**In what aspect of their life do you find young women need to**

**work on their poise most?**

I think they struggle most with finding their place in the world and learning how to carry themselves. It's hard in our society, especially with celebrities focusing on the wow factor; young women start to think they should behave like that too. They're acting anti-establishment because it's the popular trend right now. Instead, young women should really think about how they present themselves and what their choices say about who they are.

## **Jennifer Scott Provides Dating Advice For Those Lacking Grace**

**Now for some dating advice! What suggestions do you have for women going on a first date?**

First, I think that dating should be taken seriously. You shouldn't just accept any invitation! Next, dress beautifully and in a respectful way because you want to attract the right kind of person. There's no need to be overly sexual to try and get the guy interested in you. Also, when you're in conversation with him, don't spill your life story. Instead, show that you're well-read and discuss current events or books and movies that you enjoy. Make him see that you're an interesting person.

**Any tips for someone meeting their partner's family for the first time over the holidays?**

This is where poise can be your secret weapon. Make sure to dress respectfully, make good eye contact, shake hands, and bring a gift for the host. Show them what a dignified young lady you are by really being present and engaged. And no matter what, do not play on your cell phone the whole time!

**Related Link:** [Relationship Author Dr. Tara Fields' Love Advice: "The Happiest Couples Don't Necessarily Have More or](#)

## [Less Conflict](#)

### **How can a woman maintain her poise post-breakup?**

It's really easy to maintain poise in the good times, but it's even more important to maintain it in the bad times. Always pause when you're agitated and do not jump on social media. Keep things private, both good and bad. Additionally, don't let yourself go into a funk of wearing only sweatpants. Pull yourself together to help keep that positive attitude.

### **Lastly, as a working mom, do you have any tips for our readers who are struggling to balance their family life with their career?**


Set your priorities. Family is the main focus for most women, so when you come home from a long day of work, make sure to spend time with your spouse and kids. Whatever precious time you have with them, be present and make it count.

*Polish Your Poise with Madame Chic is available on Amazon. If you're looking for more from Jennifer Scott, check out her blog Daily Connoisseur!*

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# **Most Popular Girl in New York City Shares Online Dating and Relationship Advice in New Book**



 By Mackenzie Scibetta

Lauren Urasek is your average, dark-haired, tattooed, mid-twenty-year-old make-up artist from Brooklyn. She lives a modest life, yet somehow, this ordinary girl is regarded as the most popular girl in New York City. With over eight million people in the Big Apple, how did she manage to claim such a grand title? The answer is through an online dating site called OKCupid. According to the co-founder of the site, Urasek is the most messaged woman, receiving an astonishing 245 messages each week. After garnering a lot of attention for this feat, she decided to write a [self-help relationship book](#) that includes the comical dating horror stories she has saved up and also offers up online dating and [relationship advice](#). We recently talked with Urasek about *Popular: The Ups and Downs of Online Dating from the Most Popular Girl in New York City*, and in our exclusive interview, the queen of online dating gives us a glimpse into her own personal experiences.

## Self-Help Relationship Book Gives Inside Look at Online Dating World

**Can you give us some background on what made you decide to open up about your dating experiences?**

It all started with a *New York Magazine* article that was written about me almost two years ago. From there, I was inspired to launch my blog, which talks about all of the crazy guys who I meet online. I got a lot of questions from readers on these unusual experiences, so I decided to open up about it in a more in-depth way. It seemed natural to talk about my dating life to hopefully inspire, or at least entertain, other people. The book also touches on the brief fame I received from the *New York Magazine* article, which was really fun to reflect on.

**Related Link:** [Relationship Author Dr. Brandy Engler Breaks Down 'The Women on My Couch'](#)

**What do you think will surprise readers most about this book?**

I live in one of the busiest cities in the world, so although New Yorkers won't be surprised, I think other people will be shocked at the obnoxiousness of dating in such a large city. Guys can get away with a lot more here because they know there's a good chance they'll never see you again. Guys in a small town or suburb are different because everyone is connected somehow and you have to worry about that gossip aspect. Some of the things I find to be normal might be pretty crazy to my readers.

**You talk about some of your online dating horror stories in the book. What was the weirdest interaction you had online?**

One time, I went out with a guy, and everything seemed great until, at the very end, he wound up randomly storming out on me. He demanded I pay for everything and even brought his weird, out-of-place cousin along. Before he demanded that I pay, he was telling everyone around us I was his fiancée. He had a million different personalities, so you really don't know who someone is until you meet them in person. I normally won't talk to a guy online too much before I meet him; that way, we aren't overly relying on technology.

## **Lauren Urasek Gives Love Advice Based on Her Unique Personal Experiences**

**Switching gears a little, I'd love to get your online dating and relationship advice. What do you consider are some of the major *don'ts* with online dating?**

Don't try to be anyone who you're not. I would approach everyone you're talking to as a real person. You have to remember that they're not just a photo behind a screen; they have a real life and real feelings. Basically, don't do

anything online that you wouldn't do in real life.

### **How do you avoid and get past the “creeps” on dating sites to find a genuine guy?**

It's just about following your gut. If someone sends something weird or creepy in a message, don't feel obligated to talk to them. Your gut isn't always right, so you might go on a bad first date, but usually, it will lead you down the right path. If they're normal and respectful, then you're taking a good chance.

**Related Link:** [Dating Headshots](#)

### **Our visitors are always looking for tips on how to find the right guy. What love advice would you give to singles who just can't seem to find The One?**

I'm in the same boat right now, so the dating advice I follow is just making myself happy as a single person. If you're constantly looking for a guy, then you're putting too much pressure on people, and it won't be a natural relationship. I would also say you can go online to meet people, but keep doing your own thing and stay busy with your friends. Don't let yourself become too dependent on online dating.

### **Lastly, do you have any tips for singles who want to increase the amount of matches they're receiving online?**

First, have good pictures. That means take a variety of them at different angles, including face pictures, full-length pictures, and profile pictures. Make sure they're all high quality and up to date too. Then, write a good profile that actually shows who you are outside of “I like long walks on the beach.” Everyone online writes “I like to travel” and “I'm outgoing,” so don't write something every guy has seen a hundred times. Just write something that gives him a true sense of who you really are.

*You can purchase Popular: The Ups and Downs of Online Dating from the Most Popular Girl in New York City on Amazon. For more on Lauren Urasek, check out her Twitter @loandthecosmos or her blog, <http://theyreallysaidthis.com/>.*

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## **Relationship Author Jamye Waxman Shares Love Advice in New Book ‘How To Break Up With Anyone’**



By Mackenzie Scibetta

Breaking up is hard to do. Jamye Waxman’s latest [self-help relationship book](#) puts a unique spin on ending a partnership, whether it be with your significant other, a family member, or even your hairdresser. The book provides the tools, encouragement, and wisdom needed to get through rough patches in your relationships and allows you to handle a split in an honest way. In our exclusive interview, the relationship author tells us why it’s okay to throw yourself a pity party and shares more [expert love advice](#).

## **Relationship Author Opens Up About ‘How To Break Up With Anyone’**

**Can you give us some background on why you decided to focus on the end of relationships in your new book?**



I had this idea years and years ago when my relationship with my high school best friend came to an end. I was really distraught over the fact that it ended, and I thought something was wrong because I was so torn up over a non-romantic relationship. The friendship mattered so much to me, and now, it was over. I wanted to write the book because I felt like there were a lot of books that focused just on romantic relationships and not on other types of break-ups.

There's a lot of information in the book on being broken up with as well. Over time, we experience both sides of the break-up process, so it's important that you accept and understand why and how relationships end. You also need to know that it's *okay* that they end – it's a common experience.

**Related Link:** [Relationship Author Dr. Brandy Engler Breaks Down 'The Women on My Couch'](#)

**Why did you include both romantic and non-romantic relationships in your writing?**

We tend to have a lot more non-romantic relationships in our lives, and when those relationships end, we aren't taught culturally that it's okay to have the same break-up experience that you feel in a romantic relationship or that it may even hurt *more* than a romantic relationship. I felt that, if I didn't talk about relationships that weren't sexual and also about the relationship you have with yourself, then it was a disservice to my readers. I wanted to give the full picture. So much of the time, it's relationships with our family, friends, or community that we're questioning, and we don't have permission to question them the same way we would a romantic relationship. I wanted to explore the idea with a broad scope.

**You talk about breaking up versus taking a break, so I have to ask: What *is* the difference?**

I like to tell people that, when you're going into a break-up,

it's hard to think of it as taking a break because then the break-up doesn't usually happen. When it comes to romantic relationships, 50 percent of adolescents get back with someone or give it another go. Breaking up doesn't mean you won't have a relationship down the road; it just means the relationship will be different.

Breaking up means you never want to see them again. Taking a break is not seeing them for a while and then, in your head, reassessing and deciding if there's something you can fix down the road. Taking a break is a thought process that happens after the break-up that shows you may not be completely done, that you may have ended it for the wrong reasons.

**During the writing process, did you have any profound moments or epiphanies about your own life that really shook you?**

I learned that I don't do break-ups well most of the time. Sitting face-to-face with someone and saying, "Here's what's not working, and I want to walk away from it" is difficult. It's so much easier to text them and never answer or even just disappear. For me, just being aware that I don't do break-ups well is the first step to reevaluating how to end a relationship better.

I also learned that there are a lot of easy break-ups to have without having a real break-up – and they're not always good. We end things with negative ideas in our heads, but if we can turn it around and end on a positive moment, we would be more okay with the idea of it being over.

## **Jamye Waxman Gives Expert Love Advice**

**What message do you have for readers who are struggling to break up with their partner, even though they know it's the right thing to do?**

For starters, you need to follow your gut. If you're feeling in your gut that it's over, then you need to find the best way to take care of yourself and get out of the relationship. This might mean you need to take your time. It's not a bad idea to find support through a therapist or a third party who's not involved. It's okay to seek outside help because hearing back what you're thinking is a good way to make it become more real.

**Related Link:** [Relationship Author Dr. Tara Fields' Love Advice: "The Happiest Couples Don't Necessarily Have More or Less Conflict"](#)

**Any tips for coming across as confident when you feel anything but after a break-up?**

It's okay to not feel confident! One piece of love advice I share in the book is to throw yourself an actual pity party. Invite people over and have a sign-in book where they can write empowering ideas or activities you can do together. That way, you have this book to look back on and laugh at when you feel sad. Allow yourself to cry and be angry. However, once the party is done, start the moving on process. If you're having a hard time, set aside five minutes per hour where you can be upset and distracted. Then, when the five minutes are up, stop and focus on something else for the remaining 55 minutes. I think setting aside the time to not feel confident is going to help you have that space that is acceptable.

**What advice would you give to couples who are struggling to make time for romance and their booming careers?**

Have a schedule for sex. We're at computers so much of the day, so set-up separate emails for each other to check when you get to work and leave work. This way, you can communicate openly, sexually, and privately in a way that no one else can see. You can create ideas that you couldn't do elsewhere.

I'd also say be open to trying new workshops. Whether it be a

sex workshop or spiritual workshop, find something new to do for both of you.

*You can buy How To Break Up With Anyone on Amazon. To learn more about Jamye Waxman or to read more relationship advice, you can check her out on her website, <http://gasm.org/>, [Twitter](#) @jamyewax, or [www.facebook.com/jamyewax/?ref=ts](http://www.facebook.com/jamyewax/?ref=ts).*

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## **Relationship Author Dr. Tara Fields' Love Advice: "The Happiest Couples Don't Necessarily Have More or Less Conflict"**



 By [Sarah Batcheller](#)

Unwanted conflict patterns in relationships are just that: unwanted. Often times, couples feel helpless and like their arguments are a curse instead of something they can navigate. Dr. Tara Fields, a licensed psychotherapist who specializes in relationships and love and the author of the upcoming [self-help relationship book](#) *The Love Fix: Repair and Restore Your Relationship Right Now*, teaches her readers how to grab the reins of their negative habits and bring their love to a better place. Knowing that no relationship is perfect, Dr. Fields provides more than just love advice; she also shares usable actions to help couples weather any storm

together. In this exclusive author interview, she reveals her proven techniques for lovebirds in all stages of romance.

**In the book, you discuss the ways that couples can manage their relationships. What are some benefits of the HEARTwork exercises and self-assessment quizzes?**

Change comes with awareness, so until an individual or a couple can take ownership of things, they can't change. What you can do is look at your part in the conflict. I see miracles happen when even just one person starts looking at their part in the loop. One of the reasons that I created the assessment is for people to self-diagnose and start becoming aware. The second reason is for people to say, "What can I do *now*?" So I came up with the three-minute fixes – people want help now, and they also want *hope* now.

Even if things don't change immediately, it will make you feel better because, when you act in a loving way, it increases your sense of self and also makes you feel empowered. What happens with couples is that they start to feel powerless: "They're never going to change," or "They're never going to forgive me for that thing that happened five years ago." But this book lets people know there's something they can do to change things, and from there, things just keep progressing.

One of the biggest pitfalls I've seen is people wondering whether they can get their partner on board. Just be hopeful. Many people think they need to refrain from conflict, but here's something most people don't know: The happiest couples don't necessarily have more or less conflict. Instead, it's about how you handle the conflict. That's a big piece of the book – it teaches you to say, "We have an opportunity here."

**What is the most important thing that keeps a relationship healthy?**

Outside forces like friends, in-laws, or money can be a big

problem in relationships. What's crucial, and what successful couples have, is that they're a team. The beautiful thing about a loving relationship is that you're better together. You should be able to surrender and trust and know that your partner has your back.

**Related Link:** [Love Advice: How to Make Your Partner Happy in 5 Minutes a Day](#)

## Proven Love Advice For Couples in Budding Relationships

**Can you tell us your most crucial love advice for new couples?**

In the media, and especially on reality TV, we see this attitude of, "Yay, I found it!" The biggest misconception is that your partner will guarantee that you're always going to be happy. It's so important for couples to realize that you're dealing with hormones and chemicals and the newness of romance.

In the book, I discuss coming together and growing apart, which happens when you start facing real-life issues. So many couples have a plan, but then, *life* happens. For example, all of a sudden you're laid off from that secure job, and the house can't be sold. I always say to couples that, even if you've already dealt with these issues, it's a good idea to do pre-marital counseling and make sure you're on the same page. Lots of people say things like, "We never really talked about finances" or "He's saying he doesn't want to have children, but that will change once we're married." It's so important for couples to articulate their expectations.

There's an erroneous belief that, "We're different from everybody else. The divorce rate is almost 50 percent, but nobody loves each other like we do. *We're* different." That's what almost everybody thinks. The crazy thing is that people

put so much planning and money into this one day, this one big party, but they don't plan for the rest of their lives.

**What was one of the biggest issues you have had in a relationship, and how did you resolve it?**

Well, I've been with my husband for seventeen years, and we've dealt with many challenges in terms of finance and health. Our marriage and our relationship is so much stronger because we stuck together. I've surrendered a lot of things that I thought only I was able to do and therefore have seen what a champion my husband is. Because we both know that we're all in, we're able to overcome everything.

Furthermore, lots of couples ask if the passion is going to fade, and they're absolutely right that those things will go away. But when you build a history as a couple and go through things together, that kind of intimacy creates a passion that can only come with time.

**Related Link:** [Expert Love Advice: How To Tackle That Nagging Seven-Year Itch](#)

**Relationship and Love Author  
Provides Readers with Quick,  
Realistic Solutions**

**What is a key thing that couples should do every day?**

If you do nothing else, even if you can't think of anything positive to say about your mate, find a minimum of three things that you can express gratitude and appreciation for. Send a little text or e-mail. At the end of the day, instead of going into your room and opening up your laptop, wrap your arms around your partner and say, "Have I ever told you what a great mother I think you are?" Or, in the morning, say something like, "Honey, have I ever told you how much I admire

that every day you go in to that job you hate?" I have every couple do this either at the beginning or the end of their counseling. Some couples say, "You've got to be kidding...I can't think of anything!" What happens is that they go from the honeymoon phase, where their partner is perfect, to only noticing what their partner does wrong – your brain gets rewired to only see the negative.

The key is to do this exercise with no expectations. If you do it just so that your mate does it back, you're not really doing it. Research shows that doing it without expectations actually makes people feel better. Again, the one thing you can always do is make a choice to act lovingly.

*The Love Fix: Repair and Restore Your Relationship Right Now is available now on Amazon. To get the most out of your relationship-repairing experience, Dr. Fields recommends each partner have their own copy. For more from Dr. Tara Fields, visit her website and read her blog at [www.tarafields.com](http://www.tarafields.com).*

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## **Relationship Author Dr. Brandy Engler Breaks Down 'The Women on My Couch'**



 By [Whitney Johnson](#)

We met sex therapist and [relationship author](#) Dr. Brandy Engler after she released her first book *The Men on My Couch: True Stories of Sex, Love and Psychotherapy*. Now, she's back with a new self-help relationship book that focuses on tales from her



female clients. In *The Women on My Couch: More Stories of Sex, Love and Psychotherapy*, Engler examines common issues that women deal with in the bedroom and beyond and hopes to help her readers tackle their own sexual insecurities. In our exclusive interview, the relationship author opens up about her marriage, life in Los Angeles, and what women really want.

**Since we last spoke, you moved to L.A. and got married – congratulations! Do you feel like becoming a wife has changed your view on marriage and work as a therapist?**

Yes, absolutely! It really tests all of the grand ideas I have about relationships and love. It forces me to put them into action and shows me how difficult it is. The guy who officiated our wedding told us that marriage is one of the greatest spiritual disciplines, and I totally get it now.

**Related Link:** [Dr. Brandy Engler Says, “‘The Men on My Couch’ Taught Me that Love is Hard and Complicated”](#)

## **Self-Help Relationship Book Focuses on Female Sexuality**

**Now, let’s discuss your book! Did you always plan to write *The Women on My Couch* as a follow-up to *The Men on My Couch*?**

It actually came first. I originally wanted to work with women and wrote my college dissertation on their libido, particularly for married women – I was trying to understand this unsolvable problem in the world of sex therapy. So I had some ideas and started writing a book, but I was still a student and didn’t really know what I was talking about.

Later, I decided to take that material and turn it into *The Women on My Couch*. The book isn’t only about libido though – that’s just one of the chapters. What I wanted to do was address the most common things women were bringing to sex

therapy rather than choose cases that were deviant. I wanted readers to see their own struggles or issues reflected in the book.

### **What is the theme of *The Women on My Couch*?**

The theme of *The Men on My Couch* was more about love, while the theme of this book is about women's sexual choices. We have a sense that we're free sexually, which presents to us an existential crisis, this vast gray area with no clear right or wrong answer. The book doesn't really tell women what to do, but it shows them how to walk through the process of making a decision when it comes to things like having a threesome or cheating on their spouse.

### **Is there a particular story that you think readers will most relate to?**

There's two of them. One of them is about a woman who was so in love with her fiancé and so excited to marry him, but she then dealt with major disappointment after they got married. In therapy, we call that the "post-marriage adjustment period." Soon after you get married, all of these differences show up, and you have to deal with them right away. How you deal with it sort of makes or breaks your relationship and sets the tone for the rest of your marriage. I have to walk the character in the book through developing realistic expectations and explain to her that she has a chance to be better at loving once she faces this challenge. I also share with her some of the lessons that I learned as a newlywed.

The other chapter deals with a woman who is married to a really hot guy but has low libido. I wanted to show that that problem doesn't just happen to older, unattractive people; young, attractive couples who still love each other deal with it too. There's nothing crazy in her background; it's just sexual shyness and a lack of erotic development. That's really one of the most pervasive things that I see. She gets

challenged to push the edges of her comfort zone and try new things. I expose some of the reasons why women get shy in the bedroom and what to do.

**On the flipside, is there a story that you think will surprise readers the most?**

There's a chapter about a woman who uses sex to pay off her college loans, and I think it'll be shocking to learn how many women actually do that. I've had a few female clients who have done it, and I've had a few young, male clients who have used a service like that. I had to read up on it – I didn't even know it was going on! It's a trend now that's popular on college campuses, especially in L.A. Super educated girls are doing it. They're taking a feminist empowerment approach, like, "College is expensive, and I'm taking it into my own hands." That whole chapter is a debate between me and my client about equating feminism and sexuality and the different ways to look at it.

**Related Link:** [The Independent Woman: Do We Need a Do-Over?](#)

## **Relationship Author Shares Love Advice**

**Lastly, do you have any love advice for someone who's afraid to open up about her struggles in the bedroom?**

I'm really hoping the book will help with that by giving a voice to what a lot of women go through. I hope it starts to normalize it and take away some of the fear or embarrassment. One of the underlying themes in the book is that women are often in a more passive, reactive sexual role. We let the men be in the charge. So it's about finding our voice in a world where everyone wants to tell us what to do.

*You can purchase The Women on My Couch on Amazon. To keep up with Brandy, follow her on her website and Twitter*

# Author Tamsen Fadal Talks New Book and Expert Love Advice: “Sometimes The Simplest Advice Is The Best Advice”



By [Rebecca White](#)

In Tamsen Fadal’s newest book about love, titled *The New Single: Finding, Fixing, and Falling Back in Love with Yourself After a Break-up or Divorce*, the relationship expert discusses how hard it is when a relationship and love ends. With a realistic and proven game plan, the relationship author gives readers a road map to radiating confidence, taking better care of yourself inside and out- from career and finances, to home, health, and fitness- and gives [expert love advice](#) on how to survive a split and start over, 90 days at a time. In our exclusive author interview, Fadal opens up about her own divorce and shares wisdom that can inspire anyone to move on from heartbreak.

## Relationship Author Discusses *The New Single*

Can you give us some background about the book and what the term “The New Single” means? How does this book differ from

## **others like it out there?**

I went through a divorce a few years ago. As I was coming out of it and trying to figure out where to start over again and who I was, I realized it's not only a new beginning for me; my divorce was a public divorce here in NYC and really all over the place. My ex-husband and I ran a matchmaking business, so it was interesting to people that the marriage didn't work out. Nevertheless, when I came out of my marriage and came into my divorce, I realized there's this whole new group of people out there that are a new version of single. It's different from days past- being single means something different because the world we live in is not the same anymore. It's fast-paced. We're dating online now. We're moving at speeds we've never moved before. And I needed different things to help me get through it. I didn't need a dating manual. I needed real life day-to-day advice.

I don't know that I've ever seen recipes and financial planning in a post-divorce or break up book. It's practical advice that I think is necessary for everybody. It's not just for somebody who feels like they're heartbroken. It is real advice for the world we live in today. We hit on a little bit of everything, because I think until you have balance and wholeness in your life, you can't do anything for anybody else.

## **What do you think will surprise readers most about it?**

I think that there was this one line that everybody keeps going back to: sometimes the simplest advice is the best advice. There was an old colleague of mine that I had run into right after my divorce became public. I was embarrassed and I didn't want to see him (of course that's the person you always run into, right?). I walked in [to a party] and I thought, "Oh, no...he's just the last person I want to see." He put out his arms to hug me so I gave him one of those half-hearted hugs and smiles and he said, "I just want you to remember

something. It's not going to be like this 365 days from now." I said, "I don't want it to be like this two hours from now, what does that mean?" But, he was right and it hasn't been like that. It takes time to start over again and to rebuild and reinvent. I think that's what this book really teaches. The thing that surprises most people is how that simple advice has really helped so many.

**Related Link:** [Author Ellen McCarthy Discusses 'The Real Thing' About Relationships and Love: Find "Someone Who Appreciates Your Whole, Quirky, Imperfect, Wonderful Self"](#)

**During the writing process did you have any profound moments or epiphanies about your own life that really shook you?**

Yeah, I did. I realized at one point, when I had started to get back out there, that I was making some of the same mistakes I had early on. I call it turning your red flags to pink, which is making everything seem like it's okay and look really pretty when it isn't. I found I was doing that all over again as I started to date someone else. So, that was difficult for me. I think that at a couple points I realized that, as I was 43 and 44 while writing this book, it doesn't matter how old we get. If we don't start to change those habits then we will keep repeating them.

## **Tamsen Fadal Gives Expert Love Advice Post-Divorce**

**What is the best piece of love advice you've ever been given?**

From my dad, he said, "It's better to be alone than lonely with someone." I didn't understand it for a long time. We're not taught to think about things like that. To me, "lonely" and "alone" were the same thing, and to a lot of people they are. When you understand the difference between those two words, I think that you have evolved. One is just population,

having someone physically with you, and one is having somebody that speaks to your heart.

### **What tips do you have for longtime couples who are struggling to keep their marriage going?**

I think that you have to step back. I've certainly been there and it's a lonely place to be. You need to evaluate where you're both coming from and who you've become. We change when we get into relationships and that can often times be difficult. You need to know the person you're dealing with, because it might not have been the person you moved in with, walked down the aisle with, or first met when you had that cup of coffee. You need to know your audience and who you're talking to. You might end up liking this person better. It's really important to be honest with yourself. I realized often times that I wasn't being honest with myself, and it's a tough revelation. You need to assess whether or not you need to bring in a third party in terms of therapy or counseling. You need to keep the lines of communication open and make that is your number one focus. If you don't fix that part, it's very difficult to do anything else, whether it be finances, career, or taking care of your children and extended family properly. Those are the three places I would begin.

**Related Link:** ['Snap Strategies for Couples' Offers Efficient Relationship Advice for Busy Pairs](#)

### **How do you radiate confidence when you truly don't feel very confident after a breakup?**

I didn't for a long time, and I really wound up doing things that seem kind of mundane and practical and not really relationship-driven to maintain that confidence. That's what a lot of the book is about, finding things that were important to me. Yoga: one yoga class that I succeeded in made me feel a little bit better. Work: one good story or changing someone's life made me feel good. Volunteering: I started doing that and

got involved in a lot more charities. That's what I started to do to radiate that confidence even though I didn't feel it. I also did a lot of to-do lists, which sounded kind of goofy to people. But that was really the only way I could stay on point and stay focused in order to really structure my life, so I wasn't thinking "woe is me." Instead I was thinking about what can I do outside to bring more inside.

*Check out The New Single on Amazon! For more from Tamsen, follow her on Twitter @TamsenFadal and be on the lookout for her on WPIX at 5 p.m., 6 p.m., and 10 p.m.*

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## **Marc Allen Gives Simple Love Advice in 'Tantra for the West: A Direct Path to Living the Life of Your Dreams'**



 By Emma L. Wells

Marc Allen spent 30 years studying and practicing Tantra. Now, he has compiled everything he has learned into his new book, *Tantra for the West: A Direct Path to Living the Life of Your Dreams*. The relationship author explains that Tantra is a set of practical tools people can use on their path to happiness. His book is interspersed with expert relationship advice and anecdotes from his own journey to provide readers with a better understanding of Tantra and how it can help in so many different aspects of life. Not only is it a [self-help relationship book](#), but it also provides solutions to problems



about work, money, aging, and so much more.

## **Marc Allen Provides Easy Love Advice in New Book**

**You say that Tantra is not the “yoga of sex,” like many people believe. Can you share a true definition of Tantra for our readers?**

If you Google “Tantra” or study Tantric Buddhism or Tantric Hinduism, like I did, it’s a much broader definition that you could call the “Yoga of Every Moment” or the “Practice of Every Moment and Everything.” It includes sex, but it includes every other moment of your life too. Don’t get hung up on the word “Tantra.” If it doesn’t resonate with you, then pick another word. You can call it the “Magical Path” or “Creative Visualization.” You can call it anything you want! The words don’t matter, but when you look at every moment of your life as opportunity for growth and practice, everything changes. *That* is a direct path to real fulfillment and peace.

**You touch on so many different aspects of life in your book: relationships and love, work, money, aging, politics, and more. Which subjects do you think are most important for people today?**

I think it totally varies with the person and where they are in life. Certainly, romance is incredibly valuable. It’s valuable to learn how to have relationships and love, and when you look at it through the lens of Tantra, you could say, “I’m on my own unique path through life, and I’m on a path that involves every moment of my life and therefore every relationship I have.” Relationships are a key to fulfillment for peace, and if you work out your relationship, you work out the rest of your life.

**Can you give specific love advice for our readers who**

**are single and wanting to improve their love life through these teachings?**

My best love advice is to learn how to work in partnership with everyone. Every relationship and love should be a win-win. So in intimate relationships, don't look for a lover. Instead, look for a partner; look for someone you can really support in realizing their dreams. That's what our intimate relationships are for. We're supporting each other in realizing our dreams, whatever they may be. The game in relationships is to embrace everyone you meet but especially your intimate partners, saying "I want to support you in doing what you love – how can I do that?"

You'll find when you do that, you get that back from them. If you're in a relationship where your significant other is not understanding what effective partnership is all about or if you're in a relationship with a person who's trying to control you or, God forbid, abuse you in any way, those are the relationships to leave. If your partner doesn't get that, then I would say you deserve someone better!

## **Relationship Author Teaches Readers Through His Own Experiences**

**You seem to draw a lot on your own experience when you are writing. Is it hard for you to put your own journey into the story, or does it just come naturally?**

I sometimes think maybe I talk too much about my personal life, but people really seem to like it. My story is the path I know best. You observe other people, but by seeing them from the outside, you never really see the inner work that they're doing. On the other hand, you know your own inner work – and it's the inner work that's important.

Once I did the inner work – by creating the life that I wanted

and the company that I wanted and by becoming a writer, a composer, and a publisher – the outer work was simple and obvious. I often think at least 99 percent of the important work that I did was all internal.

**If you had to sum up your book and what your trying to do with your work in just a few sentences, what would you say?**

This book is filled with simple tools that lazy people, like me, can use. They don't require discipline or getting up early. They don't require anything daily. I've found that any practice that people have to do everyday never worked for me. I gave up New Years' resolutions years ago – they never worked for me.

I spent four years at various Buddhist centers. At the Zen Center, we got up at 5:30 a.m., and at the Tibetan Center, we got up at 6:30 a.m. I left because they weren't working for me; I'm not a morning person. I need a lifestyle that recognizes who I am. The path to Tantra is all about looking at every moment and saying, "Every moment is my path." You could say, "Every moment is my spiritual path," or you could say, "Every moment is my analysis." The world is offering me all this wonderful free analysis if I just open myself up to it and see what is. You could call that the path to Tantra.

*You can keep up with Marc on his website, <http://www.marcallen.com/>. Don't forget to pick up your copy of Tantra for the West: A Direct Path to Living the Life of Your Dreams!*