

Find Out Why You're Single



By Dr. Karin Anderson, Ph.D.

The Question

You're single. You'd like to be in a relationship. So, what's the problem?

The Myth

Well, if you ask around, you'll get plenty of input as to what you're doing wrong. Your friends insist you need to "get out there" more. Your mother complains that you're too picky. Your coworker swears that if you just get online, you'll meet "The One" in no time.

Or in some cases, your family and friends take it a step further. While conducting a little arm chair psychoanalysis,

they determine that the core issue keeping you lonely on Saturday nights is YOU. You're flawed, damaged—a dating disaster zone. They say you're alone because you keep messing up your relationships. You're too controlling or too passive; too intimidating or too low-key. Too opinionated or too boring.

And even if your friends and family hold their tongues, the rest of society doesn't. Bookstores' self-help sections preach the same rhetoric with titles like, *Getting Married After 30: You Won't Unless You Change* and *Ten Things to Fix Today to Meet "The One" Tomorrow*. Clearly, single people need to shape up or expect to live alone forever.

Really?

The Break Down

Let's dig deeper. If I'm single and un-datable due to annoying personality traits and relationship-destroying habits, then how is it that plenty of annoying people with relationship-destroying habits are happily coupled-up? Of course many single people have issues they need to address, too, and working through these concerns might help them cultivate healthier, more functional connections. But what about married people? Just because they've got a partner doesn't mean they have it all together. In fact, the very reason they got married in the first place may reveal their dysfunction. Where's the self-help for them? Books with titles like, *Why Did You Settle for That Loser?* and *You Were Too Much of a Wimp to Live Solo so You Married the First Person Who Came Your Way* are potential titles.

The Reality

Here's how it works. Despite what most self-help authors claim, there is no formula for the perfect match. Every happy couple consists of two flawed individuals with a unique union

that works for them. All guys aren't out there looking for the same type of woman and all women aren't searching for the exact same kind of guys. Forget all of the nonsense about figuring out what you need to change about yourself, because somebody out there wants exactly what you have to offer.

It Just Hasn't Happened Yet

So, if you're too "controlling", then great. Someone wants you to tell them what needs to be done so they can do it. If you're too "boring", then fantastic. Your perfect match has just sworn off drama queens and is praying for a low key partner. If you're too "opinionated", then wonderful. You'll find someone who can't take a stance on anything and is happy to have someone else make decisions about where to eat and where to go on vacation. It's really as simple as that. Hang in there. Be yourself. It just hasn't happened yet!

Dr. Karin Anderson is an associate professor of psychology and counselor education at Concordia University Chicago. She has a doctorate in developmental psychology, a track record of well-received presentations at national and international psychology conferences, and a speaking platform focusing on women's identity construction and cultivation. She's also the author of the book, It Just Hasn't Happened Yet.