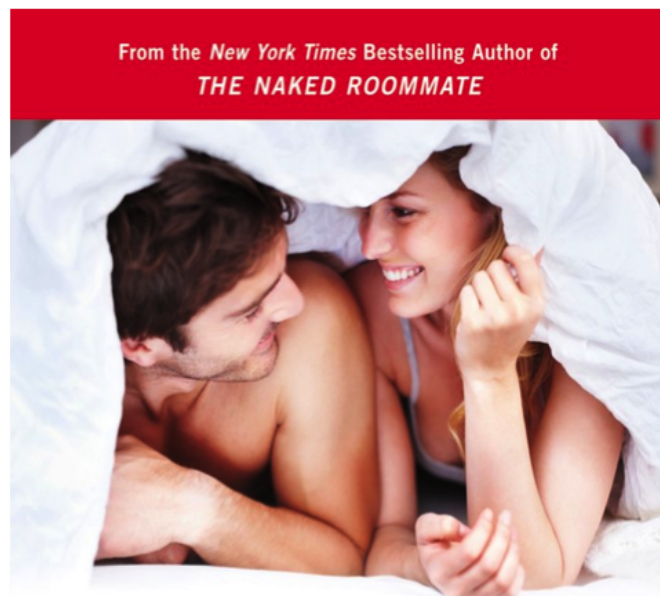


Harlan Cohen Shares Why 'Getting Naked' Will Help Us Find Love



From the *New York Times* Bestselling Author of
THE NAKED ROOMMATE

Getting Naked

**FIVE STEPS TO FINDING THE
LOVE OF YOUR LIFE**
(While Fully Clothed & Totally Sober)

HARLAN COHEN

By [Whitney Baker](#)

Harlan Cohen, a nationally-syndicated advice columnist for over 17 years, knows what he's talking about. The author of *The Naked Roommate: And 107 Other Issues You Might Run Into In College* has already helped thousands of people survive dorm life. Now, with his recently-released *Getting Naked: Five Steps to Finding the Love of Your Life (While Fully Clothed & Totally Sober)*, he's taking his advice a step further. With his simple approach, Cohen offers a candid guide to falling in love and finding happiness.

"I think that what you'll see over the coming months and years is that the more people who read this book and live these ideas, the more this movement will grow," the author explains. "The idea is pretty simple. It's don't bullshit yourself and don't let people bullshit you."

Cohen discussed with us his motivation for writing *Getting Naked* and his philosophy behind the book as well as how this approach helped him meet the love of his life.

1. What inspired you to write *Getting Naked*?

Well, I have the world's greatest secret, and I wanted to share it. I figured out how to find a date while totally sober. And, as an advice columnist, I am fortunate enough to be in the position to share this secret. I've helped myself, and now, I want to share it with the rest of the world. I know that they can find what they want – I guarantee it's out there.

2. Can you walk our readers through your five-step approach to tackling the dating scene?

Before you start, it's so important to take a step back and just look at your informal relationship education. In school, we learn so much about feeding our professional passions, but we learn virtually nothing formally when it comes to our romantic relationships.

So that brings me to the five steps.

1. Embrace the universal rejection truth of relationships.

Thousands of people will want you, and millions will not. We tend to focus on all the people who don't want us, and as a result, we miss out on all of the people who do. Give the world permission to either want you or not want you.

2. Train in your thong underwear. Taking risks is uncomfortable. If we aren't comfortable in our physical thong, we're always going to think we aren't attractive enough. If we aren't comfortable in our emotional thong, we're always going to think we aren't good enough. And if we aren't comfortable in our spiritual thong – meaning we have a full life outside of our relationships – we're going to become too dependent on someone else to give us something we should already have.

3. No excuses. After you embrace the universal rejection truth and train in your thong, you see excuses as things we create to cover up our insecurities. Excuses are a waste of time and a symptom of something that scares us.

4. Take the risk. Just say it or do it. In the book, I share stories about people who followed their heart and made the move.

5. Celebrate, reflect and repeat. The beautiful thing about this *Getting Naked* approach and philosophy is that even if you take a risk and don't get what you want, you still have a success. Celebrate that you've done something and have answers – know you now. Reflect if it goes as planned, and reflect if it doesn't. And the last part of step five is repeat steps one through four until you get the results you desire.

Related: [Why We're Wired to Sabotage Our Relationships](#)

3. People who follow these principles often end up lucky in love. Why do these five steps work so well?

This way of approaching relationships is so powerful. There are two questions that you need to ask yourself. First, what have you done to find love today? If the answer is nothing, that's the reason you aren't finding it. And second, when you do find someone, if you know that you have thousands of people who love and respect you, would you ever put up with someone who treated you like crap? No. So then you have to ask: why do we? Because we learn that dating is more about accidents than it is about options. *Getting Naked* undoes this damage and helps people to see the world in a brand new light.

4. Why do you think it's so difficult for women to grow "big ovaries" and approach men?

Women tend to hide behind an old-fashioned idea that "I'm a woman, and I should be approached." Even though, in all other aspects of women's lives, they expect to be treated equally. I think it's because women don't want to be rejected, but here's the thing: men don't want to be rejected either. If a woman is clear about what she wants, she is going to have a lot of interesting and confident men who are comfortable approaching her.

Related: [How To Communicate to Get What You Need](#)

5. And finally, have you applied your advice to your own love life? Any stories you can share with our readers?

Yes, I met my wife by applying these principles. I met her at Mail Boxes Etc. on a random day in Chicago. And the irony is that she had rejected me via an online dating service several months before. I'm certainly someone who has benefited from this approach. And everyone who has read the book and applied these principles? Their lives have been impacted in a profound and positive way as well.

In the fall, Cohen will be going on a Getting Naked speaking tour, visiting over 30 colleges across the country. There is also an online Getting Naked experiment for readers to visit.

Additionally, you can keep up with Cohen through his Twitter handle and Facebook page.

The Gaggle: Jessica Massa and Rebecca Wiegand Discuss 'The Gaggle' of Guys in Every Woman's Life



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HARLAN COHEN

By Bernadette McCadden

Three years ago, Jessica Massa's best friend and now business partner, Rebecca Wiegand, was complaining about her love life – or lack thereof. As Wiegand was telling Massa about her dating dilemma, she was subconsciously resurrecting the different (platonic) men she had in her life. It was that very evening that Massa realized that her best friend actually had a gaggle of men around her and like most women, these men made up her list of non-dating romantic prospects. It was then that "The Gaggle" was born.

In Massa's new book, *The Gaggle: How the Guys You Know Will Help You Find the Love You Want*, Massa discusses what she calls the post-dating world. This is the place she says that the rules of traditional dating no longer apply. The gaggle of men in a woman's life can range from "the career booster" to "the boyfriend prospect," and this gaggle of guys can help you on your path to find love. 'The Gaggle' encourages women to stop worrying if every guy they meet is "the one" and, instead, to start wondering if he is a potential gaggle member.

CupidsPulse.com recently spoke with Massa and Wiegand and learned more about gaggles, non-dates and dating in the post-dating world.

What is so great about having a gaggle?

Massa: The beauty of the gaggle is that it really caters to the individual because finding love is such a personal journey. That's the difference between this method and other dating ideas that have so many rules, forcing you to conform to certain beliefs about why men fall for you and why they don't. This concept gives structure to your search for love and helps you think about it without telling you what to do.

Each woman's gaggle journey is different: the guys who populate your gaggle are different, how you deal with them is different and what you want out of them is different. No two gaggles are alike.

Related: [Do Fairytale Relationships Only Exist in Hollywood?](#)

In 'The Gaggle,' you talk about non-dates. Can you tell us about this concept?

Massa: Everything can feel like a non-date because, these days, everything and nothing is a date. Basically, it's any interaction you have with a guy, usually in person but

sometimes online, to see if you have a spark. Maybe you're at a work conference, and all of a sudden, you're talking to the guy next to you about a recent vacation; then, you decide to grab coffee together. That's a non-date.

Wiegand: These non-dates happen in your love life without you even noticing. I followed up on a non-date with a guy I met at work who was also a theater performer. I went to one of his shows and talked to him afterwards; later that night, he sent me a friend request on Facebook.

What do you think is the biggest mistake women are making today?

Massa: Women often spend their days wondering if every guy they meet is Mr. Right. It makes them judge men too harshly, and it makes the dating world seem too stressful. Instead, look at every guy in your life – old friends and new crushes alike – and think, “I feel a connection here. Is he in my gaggle?” Noting that you have a gaggle of guys, rather than focusing on one guy who could be your future boyfriend, will get you excited about interacting with men and dealing with the ambiguity that comes with it. Once I realized that I had a gaggle, I started viewing men as potential gaggle members instead of potential husbands. I was able to enjoy my love life and not worry about what anyone else thought.

Related: [Is that you, Mr. Right?](#)

Why is it important for women to understand and consider these ideas of a gaggle and non-date?

Massa: It's important because it will impact the way you interact with men. It takes the stress out of the situation. You can just say, “Hey, there's a guy in my life who wasn't there before. I wonder where things will go with him.” Your energy completely changes when you approach dating this way rather than constantly wondering if you're going to fall in love. Not to mention, your relationships with men will be more

enriching and much healthier.

How does technology play into the post-dating world?

Massa: We have found that technology is the number one way to follow-up on a non-date. It allows you to be not too forward but still let a guy know that you had a great time, whether it's by liking his Facebook status or replying on Twitter. People love to talk about technology as the death of romance, but we really feel that it allows you to cultivate these connections. It creates a middle ground, somewhere between "I'm going to ask you on another date" and "I'm never going to talk to you again." Technology will never be a replacement for face-to-face time, but you can chat throughout the day, explore each other's interests and get to know one another in a more casual way.

You talk about keeping your gaggle around even after you're in a relationship. Why is this step necessary?

Massa: What really impresses me are couples who understand that there is no way to fulfill each other's needs completely and 100 percent of the time. To expect your partner to be your perfect match will lead to disappointment.

Wiegand: Our cultural discourse around relationships and marriage really feeds into this idea that once you find 'the one,' it's happily ever after. But you still need a life outside of love.

I'm in a new relationship, and while I'm not keeping my "hot sex prospect" around, I still go out to dinner with other guys in my gaggle. Similarly, my boyfriend still texts his female friends. We recognize that the other person has their own gaggle, and we're not threatened by it. This understanding allows us to be ourselves and feel comfortable with each other. That being said, there definitely has to be a greater level of trust and communication in relationships today than there has been in the past.

The Gaggle is truly inspiring for women and can change the way they have thought about dating (or non-dating) in the past.

If you're interested in reading 'The Gaggle: How the Guys You Know Will Help You Find the Love You Want,' you can purchase it on Amazon. You can also keep up with Massa and Wiegand on WTF Is Up With My Love Life?! and through Twitter @jessmassa and @electra526.

Dr. Ian Smith Reveals 'The Truth About Men'



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HARLAN COHEN

By Nisha Ramirez

Dr. Ian Smith is known for helping people succeed in weight loss with his books, 'The Fat Smash Diet' and 'The 4 Day Detox.' But, now the author is determined to help you succeed in your relationship too. From the importance of looking good on the first date to waiting until the right time to label yourself as a girlfriend, *The Truth About Men: The Secret Side of the Opposite Sex* is a tell-it-like-it-is guide to understanding the male gender. We had the chance to talk to Smith about the inspiration for his book as well as his

secrets to a successful marriage.

America knows you for your expertise in health. Why did you choose to write a book about relationships and how men think?

The inspiration behind this book came from the women I have helped over the years who would randomly ask me about men. When you help people with their weight loss journey, you often find yourself giving advice on things other than nutrition and exercise. I would get a lot of questions from women about the men in their lives and what their behavior meant. They were confused by what their partners were saying or not saying and why they were doing what they were doing. A couple of the women said that the answers I gave them were not only correct but would be greatly appreciated by others. They recommended that I write a book to make the information accessible and direct, even if some of it might be tough to read.

I decided to do that and thus named it 'The Truth About Men.' It's not about whether men are right or wrong. It simply tells women what men want them to know – even if they won't share these things themselves.

Do men prefer au natural women or women who have had work done?

The answer is plain and simple. Men much prefer a natural body with flaws vs. one that has been surgically-enhanced. Women are making a questionable decision when they go under the knife thinking that they'll be more physically-appealing to men. Men realize that our bodies change as we age. That's a fact of life, but there's a way to look your best without having surgery. So natural is always better.

Also, men should not demand of women more than we demand of ourselves. It's totally hypocrisy for a man to want the perfect physical specimen when his gut is hanging over his belt.

You wrote that a woman will lose her man if she loses her body. How can a woman or man avoid the “boyfriend 15”?

I didn't mean that literally, of course. Men love women for more than just their body. I exaggerated to emphasize the point that maintaining your body is not just important to you but to your partner as well. Men, regardless of their age, are visual and physical creatures. I also believe that men should be held accountable to maintain their bodies; it works both ways.

As for avoiding the “boyfriend 15”? Check out the *Fat Smash Diet* – it's all in there.

Related: [How to Keep Weight Gain from Ruining Your Love Life](#)

What is the number one myth that women believe about men?

The number one myth that women believe about men is that men don't want to commit. It's not that men are afraid of commitment; they are afraid of committing to the wrong person.

There's a way to talk to men about settling down without causing fear to develop. I reveal many studies and surveys in the book that dispel a lot of myths about men. In one survey, men were asked about their opinion of the greatest male status symbol, and the number one answer was not a fancy car or beautiful women. The answer was to start a family. Men *do* want to settle down and move to that next phase, but they want to do it on their own time and on their terms. I talk about how to have this conversation without chasing him away.

Should a woman ask her boyfriend for a key to his apartment or wait for him to give her a copy?

A woman should almost never ask for a key to her boyfriend's apartment, unless there's a strong undeniable indication that he wants her to have it. A lot of men feel a need for their own space – not because something sinister is happening there

but because he wants his privacy. It has nothing to do with how much he cares about you. A man's home is his retreat, and he'll give you a key once he's ready. It's better for both of you that way.

Related: [How to Communicate to Get What What You Need](#)

What do you want women to take away from this book?

Finding Mr. Right is not as difficult as you might think. He's probably right in front of you, and you don't even see him. Understanding what men are and aren't saying is key. Having some knowledge of their inner most thoughts and motivations can make a big difference. For those who have been in long-term relationships, this book shows them that there are many ways to keep their romance fresh and exciting. The sizzle should never go flat, regardless of how long you've been together.

To learn more about how men think, you can purchase 'The Truth About Men: The Secret Side of the Opposite Sex' at Amazon. Be sure to follow Smith on Twitter and Facebook.

The Single Love-Guru: Author Devan Sipher Discusses Relationships and 'The Wedding Beat'



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HARLAN COHEN

By Joseph Weissgold

Dating and searching for “the one” is an imperfect art. Gavin Green, the protagonist from Devan Sipher’s debut novel *The Wedding Beat* (New American Library), knows this better than anyone. As a sentimental, neurotic, middle-aged, Jewish man, he tries to use his profession as a wedding columnist to find a strategy to fix his own miserable love life.

The author, Devan Sipher, is also a single, Jewish wedding-columnist at the *New York Times*. But thanks to his years of romantic journalism, this book can be read as a dating guide

for sensitive men as well as for its witty prose and fast-paced story.

We had a chance to speak with Sipher, and he revealed some of the conclusions he's drawn about love, relationships and marriage based on the many interviews he's done with happy couples on their road to tying the knot.

Why are some singles so anxious to get married?

I could say it's cheaper to be married, but that's not a very romantic response. Really, most people crave love. As a journalist who focuses on weddings, I learned how true that is for both sexes. On the other hand, people also aspire to show that their relationship is real, and somehow, marriage, that ceremony, the license, the certificate, it's proof that it's not illusory. It's not easy to be in a relationship, but making the vow in front of a community means there are people supporting you and ultimately supporting your relationship.

Have you ever been hired to cover a wedding where people ended up asking you advice?

Yes, people ask me, but I try not to give it. I would never give someone advice in terms of whether they should or should not get married. Usually, that's just jitters, and I have to reassure them that it isn't unusual to get scared. I let people talk, and I listen to what they have to say. By asking questions about their relationship, I get what I need for the story, but it also gives them what they need. When they focus on the relationship rather than the big wedding or even the marriage, everything becomes a little less frightening.

Related: [4 Steps to a Long Term Relationship](#)

In *The Wedding Beat*, your protagonist Gavin struggles with a lot of advice that he receives. Is the problem the formulaic advice or just the way Gavin applies it?

Gavin's biggest issue is that he has problems making choices, which I may or may not have in common with him. My favorite line of my book is, "Everything in life is a choice, and I'm choosing to be happy." The dating-guru in the book tells Gavin to "be the bee," referring to the idea that a woman is a flower and a man is a bee. The bee goes to the flower; the flower doesn't go to the bee. It sounds cliché and somewhat ridiculous, and yet, there's a certain logic there. And actually, there are women I've talked to who agree. You can analyze entire relationships with that one sentence. Things become cliché for a reason.

Having heard so many successful love stories, are there any common themes that you've come to recognize?

Yes. Love is not something that hits you over the head with a choir singing in the background. What you get is a spark, and then it's up to you to decide what to do with that. That spark can happen at any time. I've done stories of people who met just passing each other on the street. I've done stories where they met when they were six years old. I did a story about a woman, who was an MIT professor; she fell in love for the first time when she was like sixty years old. It really is different times for different people. Another true saying is love is blind. People often describe their [partner](#) as very good looking or incredibly funny; sometimes they're right, and sometimes they're wrong, but it's beautiful because in each other's eyes, they really are that way.

Related: [How To Master Being in a Relationship](#)

Are there any red flags, that you've seen, that can determine if a marriage is doomed before it even begins?

Putting people on a pedestal is the biggest danger. If they can't say anything specific about what they like about the person or they just say that they like the way they are treated, well, that doesn't seem like enough to sustain itself

for a long-term relationship. A lot of times, it has to do with falling in love with the *idea* of the person instead of who they really are.

What's the final verdict: love comes when you give 110 percent or love comes when you stop trying?

The spark comes when you're open to the experience. It can be a focused openness, but more often than not, the challenge is to not become obsessed. Instead, choose to relax, and just let things happen. On the other hand, when it does happen, it does take effort. So to say, "I'm just going to count on fate to make it happen" – I don't think that works either. Like in my book, Gavin meets Melinda, but then she gets away. The trick is to not let that person slip away. In short, relationships require effort, but feelings should not.

Visit Amazon to pick up your copy of Devan Sipher's new novel The Wedding Beat. You can also meet Devan at the Writing About Love & Passion Panel on June 20th from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. EST at the NYU Bookstore. To keep up with him, follow him on Twitter or Facebook.

**Christelyn D. Karazin
Discusses How 'Swirling' Can
Help those in Interracial
Relationships**

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HARLAN COHEN

By Daniela Agurcia

These days, maintaining a healthy and long term relationship is tough work. Not only is it hard to stay committed for a long time, but it's also difficult to overcome the criticisms from the world around you. Now, imagine being in a relationship with someone of a different race. Even though we'd like to think our society is wholeheartedly accepting of

interracial relationships – we know it isn't always that simple. We had the chance to interview one of the authors, Christelyn D. Karazin, of *Swirling*, a book about interracial relationships and what to expect once you are in one. *Swirling* isn't only insightful, but it is a guidebook on how to approach various situations you will find yourself in when involved with someone of a different race. *Swirling* is an honest book that many people can find comfort in.

What triggered you to write 'Swirling' ?

It really boiled down to the experiences that I had in my life. I didn't think that they could be so unique that other women weren't going through this too. I wondered if other people were also worried about meeting their partner's parents for the first time in an interracial relationship or even being stared at. There was just nothing out there about this, and I've always wanted to be the type of person to share my experiences. I wanted it to be the 'what to expect when expecting' but for "swirling" couples, people who were engaging in interracial relationships for the first time. I wanted them to have a guidebook, something they could go back to and reference about certain things as well as to read other people's stories. Sometimes when you're in a relationship where the person is from a different culture, race, or religion you can feel isolated. I think it's natural to look for resources that will shed light on what other people have gone through in a similar situation.

Related: [5 Don't Tips For Interracial Dating](#)

Do you think that 'Swirling' is just what society needs in this day in age?

Yes, I do. Just look at the data. Interracial relationships are the highest they've been in American history. The world is changing. While studies are showing that people are more amenable to interracial relationships, it's still rather new.

You have people who have been raised in the 60's, 70's and 80's who would've never dreamed of dating outside their race. And now you have the situation with social networking where you're able to connect with someone from the UK, and you can fall in love with them and get married. You have these situations, which make the world smaller and facilitate those connections that may never have been there before.

My mother-in-law had never associated with a black person before. She grew up in Manhattan in the late 1940s. There's a funny story in the book of how her and my father-in-law went to the south for a little while and she had to wash her clothes at the laundry mat. Outside it said, "colors only." And she asked, "Where do I wash my colored clothes?" And they told her, "lady that's for colored folks." She didn't know. She was raised completely colorblind. It was a new experience. She had always been around a very homogenous society, so when her son brought me home, it was something that she had to get used to. But, she went out and bought books on interracial relationships. She was really worried for her son. She thought that it would make his life super hard.

What would you say is the most important advice that your book offers for those who are struggling in this type of relationship?

The first and main thing is that you have to choose character above color. Once you do that, you're able to field out a whole bunch of people who wouldn't be good for you. Second thing is, don't let race be the complete center of every conversation that you have. Race shouldn't be something you concentrate on the first or second date. You need to get to know each other. You need to leave your racial baggage at the door. Unless your date is 150 years old, they have nothing to do with racial issues of the past. Third thing is, that you have to be prepared. People are going to scrutinize your relationship, be curious, fascinated, or envious. They're going to ask questions, and you have to be prepared for it.

You have to sort of look at it with humor, not necessarily that they're trying to be malicious. If you're always looking for negativity, you will find it. The key is to always focus on you and your mate and not to focus on other people. You have to let it be about you guys. Because people read your body language. If they feel that you are insecure about the other person, they'll sense that something isn't right.

How do you feel about celebrities in interracial relationships?

They're very validating. If you see it on TV, you think that it must exist because it's on TV. It also gives people exposure to something they might not necessarily see in their neighborhoods. You can see how things have changed through commercials and interracial families. Marketers and people who pitch TV shows are looking at the data like we are. They know the world is changing and that these partnerships exist. They have money, so they need to cater to them too. It's kind of like a perpetual thing: life imitates art, and art imitates life.

What would you say is the number one mistake people make when they enter an interracial relationship?

The number one mistake is when they get into an interracial relationship simply because of their skin color. Preferences are fine, but it's when you have a disdain for people in your own race. If you're dating interracially for some sort of revenge, then that's a problem. That's the number one reason why it won't work in the long term. You're not seeing that person as a human being, but as a tool. You're using them.

Related: [How to Master Being in a Relationship](#)

How do you think the approach 'Swirling' takes is different then other books on interracial relationships?

There are a bunch of books out there on navel gazing. You have

books that present the fact that black women should start looking into their options, but there's nothing on what happens after you've made that decision. I'm not in the business of convincing anybody of anything. A person who reads this book has opened their minds and their options already, and they want to know what to expect. Such as specific tips on how to react in certain situations once you have already been in an interracial relationship. It's an actively engaging book, where people can keep going back and forth. We've organized it in 16 chapters, including the single perspective, from my co-author Janice Rhoshalle Littlejohn. She supplied the research and background and I gave the "what to expect" information. It covers pretty much everything.

How has your blog, BeyondBlackandWhite.com, helped you with the insight you provide for the readers in 'Swirling'?

It has been priceless. I started this blog to just write my thoughts on the book as it came along, but it has become this haven for people who are in these relationships. It became a safe place to discuss all of these things. The richness of the comments of the people changed the outline of the book, because I realized where I needed to channel my focus based on the feedback. It's blown up, we get 7 to 10 thousand visits a day.

Do you believe in online dating, and if so how do you think men and women can benefit from this?

I do! I met my husband online. He was just really funny and cute, so I knew he couldn't be a bad person, and it worked out for us. People have had mixed experiences. But I could say that a huge percentage of specifically black women who have found non-black mates have done so through online dating sites. It's possibly because they're exposed to people they otherwise wouldn't have met. You can get to know the person through the inside out, rather than the outside in. There are a lot of people who feel more comfortable expressing

themselves through their writing than they do outloud.

To get more detailed and insightful advice on interracial relationships, purchase *Swirling* at Amazon. Also, visit Karazin's blog, www.BeyondBlackWhite.com.

Dr. Steven Craig Explains How Change Is Essential in 'The Six Husbands Every Wife Should Have'



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By Creshawna Parker

Okay, so you and your husband dated, fell in [love](#), got married, had a few kids and now you realize that he's no longer the person he was when you first married him. Sound familiar? What happened to the man you once knew? Don't fret; change is very common among couples. Things you once desired out of the relationship are no longer the things you need as your relationship progresses. It's healthy for couples to grow as individuals, but sometimes it's hard to adjust to the change, and the person we once married becomes a stranger

sleeping in our bed, walking around our house and kissing us “hello and good-bye” every morning. Therapist and author Dr. Steven Craig speaks more about this in his new book, *The Six Husbands Every Wife Should Have* advocating that successful relationships should be viewed as fluid entities that are made by continually maturing people. In his practice and in the book, he teaches couples who are at various stages in their relationship to learn how to adapt to every stage they experience together. Here are some points we discussed with him:

In the introduction of your book, you said the things that your wife initially loved about you, she no longer liked at one point. How can a man appreciate and adjust to change instead of resenting it?

Many men are socialized to believe that change is bad. But these same men complain endlessly about their friends who tell the same old boring stories and do the same stupid things they did twenty years ago. Men need to recognize that the most successful people in life are those who are out in front of the curve – changing before everyone else does. Those are the trendsetters, not the same tired old guy who says the same things over and over again.

Related: [Three Tips to Enjoy Marriage Despite the Battles](#)

You mentioned that it’s important to reinvent yourself. How can a husband reinvent himself to please both him and his spouse?

I believe we should look at the process of changing like a tree that is continually growing. As a tree grows it gets more branches and becomes more full and more well rounded. It doesn’t become something entirely different. It only grows bigger, stronger and more complete. Husbands need to look at themselves in the same way. Changing doesn’t make one weak or different, it only makes one more well rounded and more

capable. In the book I also outline many very specific myths men (and women) hold about how changing is bad and explain how these beliefs only hold people back in life.

If every wife should have six husbands, do you believe it's necessary for every husband to have six wives?

Absolutely. In each stage of marriage I outline both the ideal husband and the ideal wife. After all, success in relationships is about finding ways for couples to grow and change together. That requires both spouses to change and mature through the years.

Can your book work for couples who are at various stages in their relationships?

This book can be read by anyone at any stage of marriage and many people do just that. I recommend that people read the entire book or just the parts that pertain to them. I have a bias against self help books that require one to read the entire thing in order to find one thing that pertains to them. I wrote this with that in mind. I want people to be able to read just the parts they want to and get something from that. When they start heading into a new stage they can pick up the book again and learn about what is to come.

Some couples believe that the reason for a breakup is when someone in the relationship changes. However, you state that a marriage fails when people don't change. What is the difference between the two and how can a couple recognize when change is for the better?

I like to view myself (and all of us) as a stock on the stock market. When my wife [married](#) me she wasn't just buying me, she was buying my potential. She was hoping that I would grow and mature through the years. If a stock doesn't yield it's potential, we sell it. The key is to realize that mature people change and mature couples figure out how to change together. If both people haven't changed over the course of

10 years then something is terribly wrong.

Still , recognizing when change is for the better is a difficult process. Sometimes it feels wrong, but is still the best thing. In short, anything that allows the couple to grow rather than stagnate is a good thing. Anything that encourages them to resist change is not good for them. In my book I outline many ways to identify healthy changes versus unhealthy ones depending upon the stage of marriage you are in.

Related: [How to Master Being in Relationship](#)

From your experience, what would you say is the most difficult/rewarding stage a couple may face?

I believe the most difficult stage is also the most rewarding one. It is the Baby Years. However, the reason this stage is so difficult is misunderstood. People often blame the baby, saying that infants mess up relationships. In reality, they are just a lot of work. What makes marriages so difficult at this stage is that the parents aren't prepared for how much they are each going to change. At this stage of marriage, intimacy changes, communication changes, our needs change, our expectations of each other change among other things. Couples eventually figure out how to deal with the new baby, but its learning how to deal with their "new" spouse that makes things so difficult.

Related: [Relationship Advice: 5 Questions To Ask Yourself Before Saying "I Do"](#)

What is the most important message you would like for readers to understand in your book?

I always tell people to embrace change with the same enthusiasm they embrace each other. A life long love affair is about falling in love over and over again with the same person. If that is what you are looking for then changing makes it all possible.

Do you have any additional advice for our visitors?

Start off on the right foot. Begin your [marriage](#) with the promise that you will each commit to growing and changing together. I believe we should use the following vows when getting married. Try these and see how that changes things:

I promise to share my life with you for as long as I live. To accomplish that, I promise to change when my marriage needs me to change and to grow when my marriage needs me to grow. I promise to be more than the husband you need me to be today. I promise to be the husband you need me to be today, tomorrow, and in the future. Life is about change, and I promise to change.

To read more about how change can benefit you and your partner's relationship, purchase *The Six Husbands Every Wife Should Have* at Amazon. For information regarding Dr. Steven Craig's practices, visit drstevencraig.com.

Mira Kirshenbaum Discusses Salvaging Your Relationship in "I Love You But I Don't Trust You"



From the *New York Times* Bestselling Author of
THE NAKED ROOMMATE



Getting Naked

**FIVE STEPS TO FINDING THE
LOVE OF YOUR LIFE**

(While Fully Clothed & Totally Sober)

HARLAN COHEN

By Daniela Agurcia

It's no secret that trust is the adhesive that holds a healthy relationship together. To trust in a romantic partnership is to place confidence in your lover, and to assure that you can rely on his or her character to be there for you whenever you're in need. But trust, as essential as it is to a successful relationship, is fragile in nature. Once it's broken, it's difficult to piece back together, and often times if it is repaired, the cracks of betrayal still show, and the relationship trudges on, damaged at best.

Mira Kirshenbaum, relationship expert and author of eleven books, including her latest, *I Love You But I Don't Trust You*, offers some excellent advice on trusting your partner, and how to salvage the broken bond in a relationship after it has vanished.

We had the chance to interview Mrs. Kirshenbaum about her latest book, and she shed some light on how we are affected by this trust dynamic, and what we can do about it:

Some people have trust issues. Are there any early warning signs that issues may arise later in a relationship?

Here are the most important warning signs that trust issues may arise:

1. One partner lies more frequently.
2. One partner needs, or feels that they need, to control the other.
3. One partner is unreliable.
4. One partner has much more money or power than the other.
5. One partner has a history of having been hurt.

Related: [5 Ways to Stop Sabotaging your Relationships](#)

What are some of the common mistakes that lead to mistrust in a relationship?

One very common and very destructive dynamic occurs when Person A tries to control Person B (whether for good or bad reasons). Person B resists control, usually by hiding what they do. Person A finds out some of what Person B has been doing, or just that Person B has been hiding, and attempts to gain even more control. Which leads Person B to hide all the more. In general, openness is best, even if what you are being open about is initially hard to hear.

What are some tips you have for saving a relationship that has been damaged by trust issues?

Of course, I outline a whole procedure for doing this in my new book, "I Love You but I Don't Trust You." But here are some tips that will be helpful: The sooner you both understand that you both played a role in getting where you are, the better. There are no purely innocent parties. If you go into couples therapy this will be driven home to you. So, you might as well embrace it now. If you are the one who broke trust, it's fine to be sorry, and you should certainly show how sorry you are, but the most important thing is showing that you really understand how hurtful your action was, and that you fully realize the damage you did. This means really listening to your partner, and showing you've heard, without excusing or explaining yourself. If you've been betrayed, there's a good chance you'll harbor that for quite a while. However, you need to realize that you're angry because you're scared. You don't want to be hurt again, and your anger—you hope—will seem very intimidating. Just realize that the longer your anger goes on, the more damage it will do to the relationship, because that anger will prevent the communicating the two of you will need to do to heal things.

Related: [4 Ways to Make Your Long Distance Relationship Work](#)

If a couple follows your protocol, how do they safeguard their relationship so that these issues don't arise again?

The trick is encouraging openness. We want our partners to tell us the truth, but we don't always like what we hear. This is where things get tricky. If we respond to things we don't want to hear in a way that discourages openness that will erode trust over time. The solution is to make it abundantly clear, powerfully clear, that while you may not have liked what you heard you are very grateful for your partner being open. Just ask yourself, "Am I making it as easy as possible for my partner to be open?" The wrong answer is, "Well, he should just be open."

If the relationship doesn't work out, what are some tips for

getting back in the dating game, and learning to trust again?

You can't be in a relationship without a risk of being hurt, so don't worry about perfect safety. Just try to be as safe as you can one step at a time. It's important to encourage honesty and be honest yourself. If you see something that raises your suspicion, trust yourself by asking your partner why they did what they did. You need to ask what it meant to them, and what they thought about the impact it would have on you. Ask them how they expected you to respond.

Ask these questions calmly and patiently, making it as easy as possible for them to be open with you. This is just what a good detective would do; relax the other person, and you get the best information. Remember, knowledge is power. The more you know—by asking—the more you can figure out your next move. This is crucial when there are trust issues.

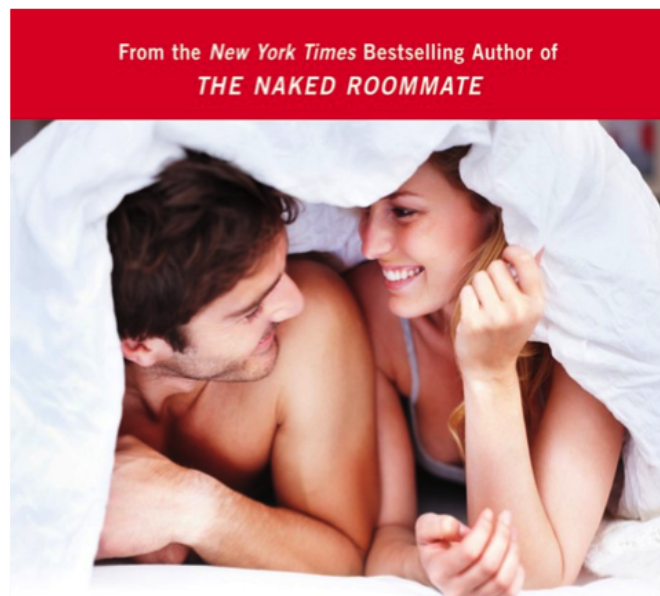
These are just some suggestions. The point is, learn everything you can about what they did and what it meant to them before you react. And then and only then will you be in a good position to respond.

What is the one piece of advice you would give to someone who wants to build back trust in their relationship?

They need to ask themselves, "What's the one thing I need most from my partner to regain trust?" Ask for it clearly, and make sure you get it.

You can purchase Mira Kirshenbaum's book "I Love You But I Don't Trust You" on Amazon.

Rachel A. Sussman Helps Us Recover After a Breakup in 'The Breakup Bible'



From the *New York Times* Bestselling Author of
THE NAKED ROOMMATE

Getting Naked

**FIVE STEPS TO FINDING THE
LOVE OF YOUR LIFE**
(While Fully Clothed & Totally Sober)

HARLAN COHEN

By Nisha Ramirez

It's easy to find a book about searching for your soulmate or discovering the rules of dating, but where do you turn to after an excruciating breakup? Have no fear, psychotherapist and breakup expert, Rachel A. Sussman, LCSW, has your guide to healing, understanding and transforming your life after a broken heart. In her new book, *The Breakup Bible: The Smart Woman's Guide to Healing From a Breakup or Divorce*, she tells her readers how to create a personal love map and take the steps needed to get over an ex. We had the chance to speak with Sussman, who has counseled women in all stages of heartache and recovery, about her work and the importance of perseverance after a failed romance.

Tell us about *The Breakup Bible: The Smart Woman's Guide to Healing From a Breakup or Divorce*.

My program lets women heal in a building-block fashion. The first section is healing, which explains why it is so important to take the time after your breakup and just settle into your emotions. I think the biggest mistake is to make plans 24/7 and start dating right away. People stop taking care of themselves. That's only going to prolong your agony and lengthen your healing time. Instead, accept that it has happened and build a support system. That's the most important thing for a woman to do: build a really big support system. Rely on family and friends and, if possible, even colleagues, professional therapists, support groups and clergy. Everyone can then use the understanding and transformation sections to create their love map.

Related: [How Decoding Your Love Map Can Heal a Broken Heart](#)

Why did you write this book?

I wrote this book because, in addition to being someone's best friend or wake-up call, I wanted to give validation to my readers. They are not alone. There are millions of break-ups and divorces every year in this country, and there is a

sisterhood of women out there who have experienced a similar suffering. If you're in a relationship and that relationship ends – your significant other cheats on you, lies to you or tells you that he or she doesn't love you anymore – it's like sticking a knife through your heart. It feels like you're going to die, and it feels like you're never going to recover.

Is it okay to be angry with your ex after a break-up?

Absolutely! I always say that anger is very important, and it is perfectly legitimate to feel that way. You just don't want to share that anger with your ex; it's important to contain your feelings. Make sure it isn't spilling out on too many people.

One of the hardest parts about breaking up is suddenly realizing how alone you feel. How do you get over that loss of companionship?

You have to learn to be alone to navigate. It's hard, but there's a difference between being alone and being lonely. I think that it's a good exercise for every woman out there to learn how to be alone. If you schedule yourself non-stop, you're going to be exhausted. It's an adjustment, but everything in life is an adjustment. You have to say to yourself, "I know it is hard right now, but it's going to make me stronger." If you can learn to be your own best friend, it's the greatest gift in the world.

Related: [How to Deal With Life After Divorce](#)

Why is it hard for us to see the bad in our ex after a breakup?

All of the time, people come talk to me, and they're complaining, complaining, complaining about their significant other. And then the relationship ends, and it's like the problems never existed and the relationship seems perfect. I think that it's easier to see the truth as you become older

and more mature. If you understand your love map and do the necessary recovery work, then you can say, “Okay, this is really a bad relationship, and I need to get out of it.” It helps to write down a list of all the reasons why you broke up with him.

When an ex says, “Let’s just be friends,” should we?

It never works. The only time people can be friends is if it was a really dispassionate relationship and it ended very amicably. In that situation, maybe you can be friends, but it usually doesn’t work out that way. How can you be friends with someone who really hurt you? And if the relationship had any elements of dysfunction, everything that played out in your romance is going to play out in your friendship as well.

Related: [Is Dating Your Ex Off Limits?](#)

Are rebound relationships healthy?

A rebound relationship is never healthy, but a transitional relationship can be okay. Here is the thing: even if you follow my formula – you experience healing and understanding – and then you think it’s okay to start dating, you’re probably not ready for a full-on relationship. People get their confidence back and start saying to themselves that there are some good guys out there. So that can be a transitional relationship, but a rebound relationship is a terrible thing because you’re still not healed and you don’t feel good about yourself. You’re probably going to attract the wrong guys, and there is a very good chance that you’re going to have another breakup.

When do you know that you have successfully fulfilled healing, understanding and transformation?

You’ve completed the program when you start feeling great about your life, when you start having so many more good days than bad days, when you have a circle of friends. You’re not

lonely; you're not depressed; and you're not obsessing about your ex. Maybe you begin to make new friends, to go out more. Then it's like, "Yes, I've made it! I'm here!"

To start Rachel A. Sussman's three-phase healing process, you can purchase The Breakup Bible: The Smart Woman's Guide to Healing From a Breakup or Divorce at Amazon. Be sure to read Sussman's blog at www.rachelasussman.com for even more tips.

David Wygant's Book 'Naked' Teaches Us How to Reveal Ourselves When Dating



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Getting Naked

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(While Fully Clothed & Totally Sober)

HARLAN COHEN

By Daniela Agurcia

The “rules” of dating can be complicated, and most of the time, we can’t figure out what we’re doing wrong. Dating expert, David Wygant, wrote *Naked* to get rid of those “rules,” hoping that we could finally learn to love ourselves and be ourselves when entering the dating world. He successfully coaches both men and women in dating by analyzing their situations and helping them figure out what they’ve been doing wrong, so they can move forward and have a happier and more successful dating life. We had a chance to interview David about his book, and here’s what he had to say:

How would you say your book *Naked* is different from anything else you've written?

Most of the time, I write about how to meet someone and ways to be more aggressive in your dating life. This book is a lot different because I really strip people down from the inside out. Most women date like resume shoppers. They miss finding their needs, wants and desires because they're constantly looking for the perfect picture or that romantic comedy instead of really just embracing the beauty of how you feel in the presence of somebody. I decided to take it from the inside out so that you're able to have those checks and balances.

Related: [5 Ways Playing Hard to Get Can Damage Your Love Life](#)

What are some exercises or techniques you find most important that are mentioned in your book?

One is stripping yourself down to 100 percent naked to figure out what you want. Write down what you want and how you want to feel when you meet that special person. That way, when you do meet someone, you will immediately know if they're the right person because you're in tune with what you need to feel.

Another thing that is really important is get rid of the past, something I think a lot of people focus on when they're dating. A lot of women will meet a guy, and if he's confident, it'll remind them so much of a player they once dated. Because of these assumptions, they end up feeling like they're going to be used sexually or cheated on because they were cheated on in the past. I call these people past-ers.

If you're a past-er, you need to accept your past and embrace it. All of your lessons from the past are lessons that you needed to learn. If you didn't *learn* them, then you're just going to go repeat them with different men. That's the reason why you haven't been satisfied in a relationship. So it's

about accepting the past and realizing the beauty of what's ahead of you.

Related: [5 Ways to Stop Sabotaging Your Relationships](#)

On your website, it says that you have discovered secrets from the universal human nature. Can you tell us what that means and what are some of those secrets?

Human nature is that we repeat the same things that we're programmed to repeat. My relationships have all been wrong because of the programming I had as a kid. While I was growing up, my mother was not happy with my dad. She was pretty much miserable the whole marriage. So as a little kid, she used to tell me all the time, "You're going to have a beautiful relationship one day. I love you. You're going to meet your soul mate." When I was 17, I was broken up with by my high school sweetheart, and my mom looked at me and told me, "That's not your soul mate." Afterwards, every time a beautiful woman mentioned "soul mate" to me, it would trigger off my programming that told me, "This is my soul mate, this is a sign." All because my mother used to tell me to look for that sign. There are so many "signs" that we give meaning to, and I finally realized after a couple of bad marriages that this is my trigger point. I actually don't want to be with these women who present the sign. I actually want to be with a woman that I'm most current with. Once we recognize the pattern and learn to understand those things that have been programmed in us since birth, we're able to get real and grow.

What are the top three tips you can give single men and women when looking for a partner?

1) Be 100 percent present. Go out every single day, and people shop. Get off your Blackberrys and iPhones. Smile at someone you're attracted to, and push yourself out of your comfort zone. Look at some guy in the elevator instead of looking at the ground and say, "Hello." If you're at a café,

sit down next to someone, and make yourself available.

2) When you go out on a date, stop going for the repeat cycle. If you went out on a date, and the guy didn't call you back, screw it! If he didn't call you back, he's not interested. Stop overanalyzing it with your friends. I don't want you beating yourself up to that point; it's ridiculous.

3) Accept where you are right now. Not in six months when you lose twenty pounds. Not in seven months when you get a better job or get your hair done. You're a beautiful, evolved, amazing person right now. You're a work in progress, but it doesn't mean you can't be loved right now. That's what's important.

What is the number one mistake people make when starting to date someone?

They're in fantasy land. They don't look at what's really going on. They don't trust their gut instinct because they date from a need instead of dating from power. I look at it this way: I'm an incredible, amazing man, and if I'm not with somebody who feels the same way, then I'm with the wrong person. That's okay, because I believe there's an abundance of great people out there. Most people come up with excuses. For example, people who are in their forties say, "No man my own age will want to meet me." Well, if you think negatively and have that belief in the world, then you're 100 percent right. It's all in your belief system, and that's what I want to help people change. I mean, you have to be realistic; not everyone is going to want to date you. If some guy doesn't call you back, it's their choice, just like it's *your* choice to call someone back. Be realistic, and you're going to be fine.

To get more insight on dating, you can purchase David Wygant's new book Naked at Amazon. For more information on his practices, visit his website at www.DavidWygant.com.

Amy Leigh Mercree Reveals the Secret to Finding Your Soul Mate in 'The Spiritual Girl's Guide to Dating'



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Getting Naked

**FIVE STEPS TO FINDING THE
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HARLAN COHEN

By Nisha Ramirez

Everyone wants to find their soul mate but it can be extremely stressful. From worrying about first impressions to deciding if your partner is “the one,” the process of finding love can be daunting. Author Amy Leigh Mercree reveals how to make dating bearable with a bit of spiritual self-love. Mercree teaches all genders of all ages how to attract the right dates with positive energy, while remaining emotionally safe in her book, *The Spiritual Girl's Guide to Dating: Your Enlightened Path to Love, Sex, and Soul Mates*.

We got a chance to ask the spiritual dating coach and medical intuitive about spiritual dating and finding the perfect partner.

What is Spiritual Dating?

Spiritual Dating is dating as if all people are sacred and worthy of respect and kindness. It's your answer to how to feel satisfied and enthusiastic about dating. Date on YOUR terms. You can have fun and enjoy dating while feeling emotionally safe.

Related: [Using Numerology: Does Your Relationship Add Up?](#)

Do you believe that there is a soul mate for everyone?

I think there is. In fact, I think there is more than just one. Soul mates, twin flames, and divine complements are real. You can find yours by sifting through your past dating patterns to become your most emotionally healthy self. Soul mates are *supposed* to find each other. You can tap into that universal, cosmic truth and attract yours.

I define soul mates as people who are from the same "soul family." That means that these beings know one another on a mystical, spiritual level. Soul mates can be friends, family members, and romantic partners. They are our soul deep relationships.

With loads of case stories about soul mates finding each other, and first hand experience finding my own, I can attest that soul mates are real. Learn the difference between soul mates, soul family, twin flames, and divine complements. We are all part of a fascinating and interconnected web of souls.

Related: [Focus on Friendship for a Peaceful Dating Experience](#)

If soul mates are real, why shouldn't we just sit around and wait for the universe to bring him/her to us and forget about

dating?

Don't discount the importance of practice dating. You have to get out and experience dating and relationships to know who is a compatible partner for you. You can find a soul mate, and if you aren't compatible as people, you may be disappointed in the how the relationship turns out.

Dating can be emotionally draining. How does your guide help individuals cope with the process of finding their soul mate?

First and foremost by helping you foster self love. Self love is the key to a satisfying love life. Strengthen yourself to attract the best dates and have the most fun. Choose you. It is always all about you – even when it is about your relationship. SELF LOVE IS THE KEY.

Magnetic people are confident. They are real and authentic. They love themselves and feel comfortable in their skin. *The Spiritual Girl's Guide To Dating* teaches you how to authentically love yourself, and shows you how your life will get better because of it, so will your dates.

Related: [How to Define Your Aura to Find True Love](#)

What is magnetism and how do we attract our future soul mates with it?

Some people are dazzling, charismatic, and attractive. They pull you in; they're magnetic. That's the kind of person you want to be when you're searching for the perfect guy. Now don't misunderstand the idea here. You don't have to become someone different just to land a guy; you just have to be the best you possibly can. Not sure how to put your best foot forward? Well, in their highest expression these dazzling people have the following five traits that you should strive to exude:

1. They love themselves and they know who they are.

2. They are confident.
3. They are authentic—they are just themselves.
4. They own their sexuality and consciously direct their sexual energy.
5. They are magnetic.

You may not realize it now, but you already hold the key to becoming one of these dazzling people. All you have to do is embrace your inner strength and learn to love yourself for who you really are.

You talk about potential vs. reality. Are we wasting our time if we look for a partner who has the potential to be what we want?

Yes. Look for a partner who is already, in reality, today, what you want. Waiting for a person to reach what you perceive as their potential is an unsatisfying way to be in a relationship. Most of the time you are setting yourself up to be disappointed and settle for the wrong person.

What would you say is the #1 do and #1 don't from your Spiritual Dating list?

#1 Do: Trust your instincts.

#1 Don't: Don't go against your gut feelings.

It is crucial to listen to your intuition and inner voice. You already know what is best for you. You just need to listen.

Ready to start Spiritual Dating? Get *The Spiritual Girl's Guide to Dating: Your Enlightened Path to Love, Sex, and Soul Mates* at Amazon and check out Amy's blog at www.SpiritualGirlsGuide.com

Dr. Jean Cirillo Discusses Her New Book 'The Soul Mate Myth: A 3-Step Plan for Finding REAL Love'



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HARLAN COHEN

By [Whitney Baker](#)

Thanks to the fairy tales that we heard as little girls, many women are searching for their Prince Charming, their perfect match. In our hearts, we believe that there is one man for each of us – our soul mate. Well, ladies, listen up! In her book, *The Soul Mate Myth*, Jean Cirillo, PhD, offers a new perspective on finding love, one filled with realistic expectations and attainable possibilities. Through her three-step program, she teaches women how to overcome their fears and fantasies so they can see love with fresh eyes and an open

heart.

We had the chance to interview Dr. Cirillo about her book and she shared many words of wisdom along the way:

Can you tell us about your program and how it works?

My program involves three basic steps. The first step focuses on examining your present situation to see where your fantasy expectations have gotten you. The next step is grieving for the mythic man that never existed, much as you would grieve the loss of a real relationship. And the final step involves reprogramming your brain and emotions to pursue a healthy, realistic relationship.

Why do you feel that finding “your perfect match” is a lie?

The idea that you can find your perfect match is a lie because, even if there was such a thing as your “twin flame,” where is the evidence that you could meet him in this lifetime? Why should he live in the same country, speak the same language or even be in a position to meet you? And even if the two of you *did* meet and hit it off, where is the evidence that you would continue to grow together, in the same direction, at the same rate? Clearly, there is none.

Related: [How to Master Being In a Relationship](#)

How and why do you think that fairy tales progressed from imaginary stories for little kids to something that grown-up women believe in?

Fairy tales would never be so popular if they only addressed the fantasies of little kids. Remember, they are written for children *by* adults, created from universal fantasies of a perfect life, ideal love and happily ever after.

How would someone rid themselves of unreasonable expectations that may prevent them from finding love? And which ones are most likely to get in the way?

The book takes one gently through the stages from ridding one's self of unrealistic expectations toward replacing them with realistic ones. For example, a common unrealistic expectation is that one's partner should enjoy many or all of the same activities. In truth, his need for sports and her need for shopping can easily be satisfied by other friends or family members.

As far as more difficult expectations, which usually center around characteristics such as financial status, physical traits or ethnic background, the book explores the gains and losses associated with holding onto these demands. Often, we find that they represent personal needs that have little to do with our partner and can be satisfied in other ways.

What are the top three things a person should look for when considering a man who is worth loving for a lifetime?

First, you should look for similar values and long-term goals.

Do you and your partner share similar attitudes about family, children, religion, friends, fidelity, work, money, and so on?

These basic attitudes need to be discussed, and any differences should be resolved before making a long-term commitment.

Next, you should consider how difficult times effect your romance. Have you been together when one of you was going through a crisis such as a job loss or illness? It is important to determine if he will be helpful in a bad situation or simply add more stress.

And finally, does your relationship have the capacity for forgiveness? Can you still love and respect one another even when you are angry?

Women can easily be blinded by their desperate desire for love. How can they ensure that they love and are loved for the right reasons?

Through years of clinical practice and life experience, I've found that if a man comes out positive on the above three questions, he is someone who loves you for who you really are and not because you fulfill some momentary need or fantasy.

It means you have chosen wisely, from a clear mind and not a blurred fantasy.

Related: [How to Dignify Your Relationship](#)

In your experience, what is the hardest part of finding real love?

I am often asked why it is so hard to find real love. People seem so mystified by the issue when it pertains to love. Few of us ask why it's so hard to find real money or a real house or a fulfilling career, for that matter. The obvious answer is that it takes time, effort and commitment to find anything highly desirable. Unfortunately, the fantasy Soul Mate Myth has caused people to believe that real love "just happens."

Do you have any additional tips for our visitors?

First, just as real love requires work to get, it requires work to keep. Just as you work to advance your career or maintain your house, you must work to keep the love alive.

Second, other than yourself, your partner should be the most important person in your life. If you really feel this way, doing things for him should be pleasurable. After all, an investment in your partner is an investment in yourself.

Lastly, the romantic phase of your relationship – obsessive thoughts, constant sexual desire and so on – will naturally die down in about 18 months. We would all be exhausted if that didn't happen! That does not mean you have fallen out of love. It is the deeper form of attachment that indicates that this man has gone from being Mr. Right Now to Mr. Right. And this Mr. Right exists in reality once you overcome The Soul Mate Myth.

To improve your love life and learn more about The Soul Mate Myth, visit [Amazon](#) to purchase The Soul Mate Myth. For more information on Cirillo, visit her [website](#).

“Get Married This Year: 365 Days to ‘I Do’”



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HARLAN COHEN

By [Whitney Baker](#)

Sure, we all want to find “the right guy,” but how do we successfully approach such a task? In her new book *Get Married This Year: 365 Days to “I Do,”* relationship expert, professor and psychotherapist Dr. Janet Blair Page shares her easy-to-follow 12-month plan to help readers not only get married this year but to build a loving and long-lasting relationship with the man of their dreams. We had the chance to interview Dr. Page, during which she shared her personal story of true love. She also expanded on the steps of her program and discussed why her plan really works.

Can you tell us about your book and why you wrote it?

In 1984, I began teaching a course at Emory University called “Before a Year Is Over, I’ll Be Married.” The way people meet and [date](#) has changed over the last three decades, but the problems haven’t changed: they feel like they’re not meeting enough eligible people, or if they are, they keep facing the same relationship love blocks over and over again. As a psychotherapist – divorced and remarried myself – I was not only able to empathize with many of the women, but I have personally been on the same path and have my own backlog of bloopers. I’ve also experienced the joys of a good marriage, and it’s the most wonderful way I can think to spend your life. This book offers the experience I have gathered.

Your first bit of advice is to get to know yourself. What does a woman need to do to truly know herself?

To truly know herself a woman has to be scrupulously honest about whom she is and has been. A positive realism toward herself and all others in her life is the definition of mental health. She also needs to be aware of her effect on others – life is a team sport – be open to caring and competent critique from people with low to no agendas. If she has personal pain, she needs to have the courage to heal; and if change in her behavior or attitude would be advisable, she needs to be willing to make it happen.

Related: [Valentine’s Day Advice: How Successful Women Can Ditch Dating Duds](#)

Before a woman can “find the right guy” (month 6), she must figure out what that means to her. What advice do you have for someone at this stage in her journey to love?

“The right guy” is not only the best possible man for you but also one with whom you are absolutely willing to put in whatever it takes to make your relationship succeed. You trust and respect each other, have shared your goals and

desires, enjoy the comfort of being honest with each other, and love each other unconditionally. You crave being together but are able to be apart without having to worry about the other person's behavior. You both understand mutuality and are capable of truth telling. (The truth – as inconvenient as it can sometimes be – usually comes out one way or another. Wouldn't you rather it be on your terms?). You feel even better about yourself being with him and loving him with your brain as well as your whole heart.

Do you believe that this timeline works for all women? If not, whom wouldn't it work for?

It depends on your starting point. For women who have already accomplished some of the tasks – they knew what they wanted in a man and how to spot a keeper but not how to date or create a close relationship, for example – a year works. But realistically, many women won't be able to become self-aware or good at self-marketing and dating, de-cluttering their lives, communicating, and connecting beautifully with a man in 365 days. Succeeding at every stage in the 12-month program is much more important than meeting the timeline.

I'm not worried about the women who aren't married in 365 days as long as they have fixed their old, ineffective behaviors and are in a place to go out and find their soul mate. The ones I worry about (and who I'd especially like to help) are the ones who continue to drag an ineligible man behind them for years. Keeping my game plan in mind can help them transition to a more effective dating strategies.

Wouldn't some relationships benefit from dating for longer than 365 days?

There's a difference between a couple who both know that they want to be married to each other and just haven't set a date yet and a relationship where one party is simply a placeholder while the other party figures out what s/he wants. After 365

days, he should know if he is interested in marrying you and will have let you know by thought, words, and actions. That said, keep in mind that men like to control the when and how, and unless you think he will never get around to it, bide your time and let him be the conquering hero.

Do you think your program can benefit a man in the same way it benefits a woman? Why or why not?

Yes! I know it can. Many men took my class, and all seem to like the “pull no punches but have a sense of humor” approach. Also, most of my clients are men, and while they are less likely to buy a book or take a class, they experience the same pain, if not more, in love. They are very welcoming of any rules that can alleviate hurt and promote success. Marriage and being in love is of tremendous benefit to men, and they know it. I’ve spent a great deal of time in my practice learning how men feel and interact in relationships. My program is not only effective for men, but I’ve developed it to help women be effective in dating them by using my experience with men in therapy.

Related: [Reduce Stress and Maximize Romance This Winter](#)

Can you share your favorite success story with Cupid’s Pulse? Having helped over 1,000 couples, I’m sure it’s hard to narrow it down to just one.

My favorite success story is my older daughter’s. When Tasha got serious about getting married, she flew down from New York and took my course. She listened to the lecture audio and kept the workbook with her at all times. When she went back home, we scheduled regular consults about where she was going and whom she was dating. Tasha religiously stuck to the big three: going out three times a week somewhere, anywhere it was possible to meet someone to date or someone who could be a conduit to someone to date; keeping an open mind about her type of man; and only dating qualified males. She told me

about a guy she met in a bar while shooting pool. Eric was younger, a writer and an intellectual. He seemed shy, and he wasn't her type, she said. I encouraged her to pursue it anyway.

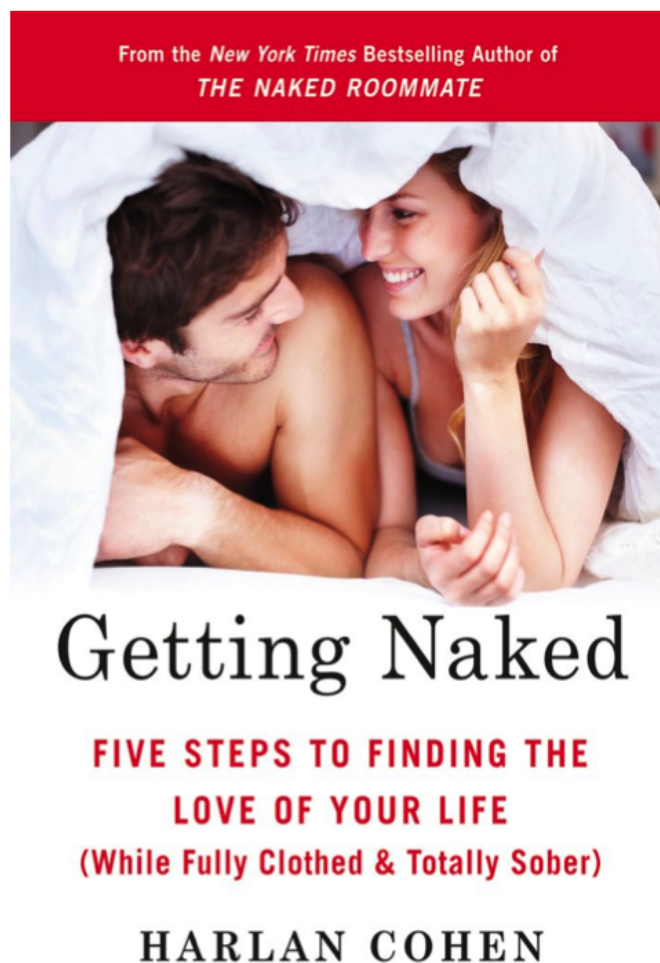
She accepted the date – nothing to lose and a possible gain.

Then she told me he suggested they do show-and-tell and wasn't that "cool." I thought, "A match!" It was the request of someone who wanted guaranteed talking points and was accepted as a smooth move. Eric brought old coins that she found intriguing, and she was also impressed by the history lesson that went with them because she had wanted someone smart. And that was it. They were and are perfect together. Although it's always a great joy to me to know that that couples I've helped get together are still happily married, it's particularly great when I get a treasure for a son-in-law.

To find your Mr. Right – and get married this year – visit Amazon to purchase Get Married This Year: 365 to "I Do." For more information on Dr. Page's book, therapy and classes, visit her website, <http://drjanetpage.com/>.

Elena Azzoni Breaks Down Gender Roles in 'A Year Straight: Confessions of a

Boy - Crazy Lesbian Beauty Queen '



By Steven Zangrillo

Whether you classify yourself as straight, gay, lesbian or bi-sexual stock, there's clearly an intrinsic value and emphasis

that our sexual orientation and relationships play in our overall identity. As our society has matured, we continue to poke and prod at these sexual boundaries, blurring the lines with each passing day. The concept of “sexual fluidity” is beginning to overtake the archaic and rigid ideals of classifiable sexual identity.

Elena Azzoni has chronicled the ever-shifting perspective on sexual roles by actually engaging in the shift herself. A lesbian for most of her life, Elena was suddenly entranced by her yoga instructor during a class. This lustful interaction drove Elena to open the doors to the hetero-dating world. We had the chance to speak to her and attain some perspective on gender roles, sexual attraction, and how our the values in our society have begun to shift from one end of the spectrum to the other.

What was it about the encounter with your Yoga Instructor that “flipped the switch?”

That is the great mystery, it’s been everyone’s biggest question. After coming out as a lesbian I never expected to be attracted to men again. I always had seen him as a very handsome, aesthetically pleasing man. I had never really saw him in a sexual way, but it was literally that moment where he was laying on top of me during pigeon pose, pressing his chest down onto me. I’m not sure what happened, but all of a sudden I went wild.

Related: [‘Project Runway’ Judge Michael Kors Gets Married](#)

It seems that sexual attraction spurred this journey. Was it about the sex or was it something more?

It wasn’t just the sex, maybe more like a “man-hunt.” I studied Gender and Sexuality Studies in college, which was all about de-constructing gender and saying “No! Women and men are actually the same! We’re just socialized to act

differently.” Once I started this man-quest, however, I realized that we are so different. There was sort of a joint fascination with that adventure in the hetero-dating world, coupled with the initial yoga lust.

Give us your perspective on the emotional advantages that both men and women bring to the table. What are the differences?

It’s funny because I find that my straight friends ask me that same question now. I’d have to generalize a little bit to answer that. In general, I’ve found my personal experiences with women to be more mutually analytic and empathetic. If there’s a problem at your job, for example, I find that women partners would want to talk it out and would generally empathize. Men, on the other hand, would drive right to the point and try to find a logical solution instead of having an emotional conversation about it. They’re very different approaches, but I’ve learned to appreciate them both.

Do you think that being gay is a choice or a genetic occurrence?

I would almost say that it’s neither for me, I don’t believe who you [fall in love](#) with is a choice. I do believe that for some people it is totally genetic. Some of my friends swear they were born gay. My place on the spectrum is definitely different, and it’s one of the reasons why I wrote this book.

There’s something to be said about the concept of sexual fluidity. There’s great research that’s been done, specifically by Lisa Diamond. It was found that most people don’t fall into these strict categories of Gay, Lesbian, and Bi-Sexual. A woman can be married to a man for 25 years, get divorced, and suddenly fall in love with a woman. You know, that doesn’t mean she was a repressed lesbian before. I would say that, for me, the best way to describe it would be “sexual freedom.”

Related: [Same Sex Marriage Legalized in New York State](#)

Given this “sexual freedom,” did you begin to place an emphasis on mutual values over the gender of your partners?

Quite honestly, it comes down to who you fall in love with. That's tied into your values, because the partner you choose is supposed to balance you. You're choosing a better half.

What would your advice be to gay, lesbian, and bi-sexual people who are looking to start dating the opposite gender, or have had interest in exploring those ideas?

Don't do it!!! ...I'm only joking! I guess it would be my hope for everyone to be true to themselves. There is equal pressure on either side because we have such strict sexual identities these days. Those roles served their purpose, but I feel that we can evolve past that. My experiences with this book and subject matter have shown me that what I've done isn't a very abstract concept. A lot of people have related to my experiences. Many lesbian women and straight women that I've spoken with have worries about being ostracized by their respective communities. It's my advice to them to not subject themselves to these social restrictions. You could be passing up a fulfilling relationship.

Do you think our sexual identities are starting to shift and change socially?

We are, as a society, a lot more open to it. There's much more conversation about it. Look at all the gay characters on television now, for example.

Of all of the experiences in your book, which situation yields the best lesson for readers?

In the book I talk about the first few months of dating Theo. I had been trying to relate to him as though he was a woman, not the best idea. He was working as a cook in Martha's Vineyard while I was down in New York. Every time he didn't call for a few days, my mind would go wild. Naturally, I

would delete his number from my phone and write him off completely. I would come up with about a million different scenarios and over-think everything. Sure enough, every time this happened he would end up calling like “Hey, babe. I was just watching the game when you called! I miss you.” It was always something so simple that I would extrapolate into something crazy. So, the lesson is that whatever scenario you’ve conjured up in your mind, take that and divide it by 1500. It’s probably even less than that.

Visit Amazon to pick up your copy of Elena Azzoni’s new novel, *A Year Straight: Confessions of a Boy-Crazy Lesbian Beauty Queen*. You can also follow her on Twitter and Facebook.

“Should I Stay or Should I Go?: A Guide to Knowing if Your Relationship Can – and Should – be Saved”



From the *New York Times* Bestselling Author of
THE NAKED ROOMMATE



Getting Naked

**FIVE STEPS TO FINDING THE
LOVE OF YOUR LIFE**

(While Fully Clothed & Totally Sober)

HARLAN COHEN

By Tanni Deb

When you're struggling in an unfulfilling partnership with someone you love, you may not know whether it's best to move on or stay together as a couple. Communications specialist and author, JAC Patrissi helps support women who are uncertain of their current relationship or are healing from a destructive love life with your partner. Her latest book – co-written with author Lundy Bancroft – *Should I Stay or Should I Go?: A Guide to Knowing if Your Relationship Can – and Should – be Saved*, offers guidance to help women understand the path in which their relationship is going and

how to move on – with or without their partners.

We had a chance to interview Patrissi about her book, and this is what she had to say:

What made you choose to write about this topic?

First, let me ask you if you personally know any women who have not asked the question, “Should I stay or should I go?”

Most women find meaning through satisfying connections with others. We care about our partnerships, so we talk and read about them.

Yet, even while there is a lot of thinking and talking about relationships, there isn’t a lot of good advice about what to do if your partner is acting destructively. This book helps you figure out if you’re in a destructive relationship. If you are, then you need to know the root of the destructiveness. Most importantly, this book helps you decide what to do about it. It summarizes what I’ve learned by collaborating with other women for more than two decades.

Related: [Hollywood Portrayals of Domestic Violence](#)

What challenges did you face while writing the guide?

There is so much more to say about each area. For instance, what if you are in a same sex relationship – how are the dynamics different or the same as when you are in a heterosexual relationship? How is it different for men who are with destructive women? Are all destructive relationships abusive? We had to keep on a narrow track to help women answer essential relationship questions, but I felt the pull to address so many related issues.

What are the main pieces of advice readers can expect to find?

First, we help you sort out what’s going on with your partner. We show you what to look for so that you can come up with an

accurate picture of what you're facing. Here we ask you to believe in what you have experienced and not to be afraid to name what's happening. We also encourage women to expect *all* of the attributes of a healthy relationship – not just a few. Set your bar where it ought to be.

Next, we help you establish a firmer relationship with yourself, your goals and your identity because this is going to help you sharpen your tools of discernment. My goal is to support the creation of a throng of women who will be very hard to confuse after they work through this book.

From there, we give specifics on what to demand of your significant other who is destructive. One of the most helpful pieces is about the ongoing process of apology and making amends. We stress that it isn't over until it is over for *you*. Apologies must be made in a manner that is helpful and meaningful to the person hurt.

Related: [How to Have a Relationship with Yourself](#)

When should someone move on from a difficult relationship?

I think some of the most troubling problems women face with their partners are: immaturity, addiction, unresolved or untreated mental health issues (including the after-effects of trauma, depression and personality disorders); and abuse. Each one of these has its own warning signs.

I know you want your partner, but sometimes the partner you want doesn't come without issues. And that's the heart-breaker. But is it a deal breaker? That depends on a number of things, including where you are in your own life, where you are in your relationship, and what is safe and possible for you.

What advice would you give to those who are in an unfulfilling relationship?

Figuring out what to do with your relationship takes a lot of energy. If you want to hold on to the clarity you find, you'll need to shift back to the center of your own life.

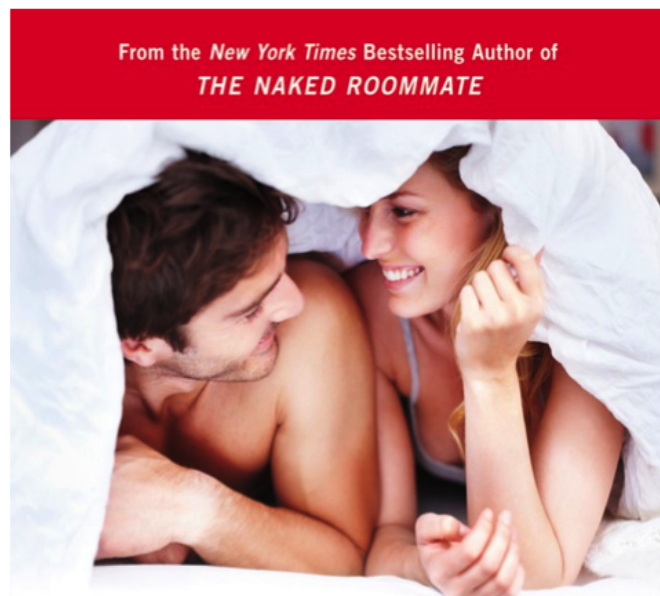
You'll need to rediscover what brings you joy, reinvest in a daily routine that will support you, rediscover some of the values you hold, create a self-nurturing plan that includes skills for regulating your emotions when you feel out of sorts and, for mothers, creating a parenting-from-your-center plan.

In order to stop spending all of your time waiting to figure out what's going to happen between you and your lover, you'll need to create your own "No-Matter-What-Happens" life goals for yourself. That is the typical kind of life-planning people do. If you're in a healthy, but sadly unfulfilling partnership, this re-direction to your dreams and beliefs will help make your process of working on the relationship or deciding to leave much less fraught. But if you're in a destructive relationship, you'll notice that it's a whole new game. Therefore, you'll need to turn your attention back to your own growth.

Our book will help you regulate your own powerful emotions, teach you to invest in your own rediscovery of joy, and create a routine that supports you, your values and spiritual beliefs. From there, you can use your new strength to invest in your life goals even if you decide to give your partner some time to work on his or her issues.

To gain greater clarity about your relationship and which path to take, visit Amazon to purchase *Should I Stay or Should I Go?: A Guide to Knowing if Your Relationship Can – and Should – be Saved*. For more information on Patrissi, visit her website, www.growinganewheart.com

Arielle Ford Shares Relationship Wisdom in Her New Book 'Wabi Sabi Love'



Getting Naked

**FIVE STEPS TO FINDING THE
LOVE OF YOUR LIFE
(While Fully Clothed & Totally Sober)**

HARLAN COHEN

By Amanda Martin

From Disney movies to romantic comedies to romance novels, most of us have grown up with the belief that a “happily-ever-after” ending is commonplace in reality. Not only are these endings not guaranteed, but anyone who finds true love will admit that sustaining a serious relationship is no easy feat. Arielle Ford, author of *Wabi Sabi Love: The Ancient Art of Finding Perfect Love in Imperfect Relationships*, talked to us about her new book and how to master being in a relationship without trying to attain perfection. Wabi Sabi is an ancient Japanese art form that honors the beauty in imperfections, and according to Mrs. Ford, it’s the key to the expected happily ever after.

We had a chance to speak to the author herself, and here’s what she had to say:

Do you believe it’s possible to sustain love without Wabi Sabi?

No, I don’t, because if you’re constantly striving for perfection, you’re constantly going to be disappointed in yourself and everybody else; it’s just not reality. If you go to wabisabilove.com/video, there’s a short YouTube video, *Imperfect Husbands*, which really demonstrates the essence of a long relationship. At the end of the day, it’s the quirky, weird, strange things that we come to love and remember about each other. It’s not the “he was so perfectly groomed and mannered 24/7” that we remember. Who wants to be with somebody like that? We want to be challenged, have interesting conversations, and, sometimes, even fight and complain. That’s just love.

Related: [Did Over-Complaining Kill Courtney Cox and David Arquette’s Marriage?](#)

What did you practice in your own relationships before you knew about Wabi Sabi and how does it compare?

I was fortunate enough to learn about Wabi Sabi more than 20 years ago and before that I wasn't in any serious relationships. But before I learned about it, in the early 80s, I went on this crazy fitness kick where I was determined to become perfect. I was running, lifting weights everyday, and even measuring every ounce of food that went into my body. I had this idea that when I reached a certain weight and certain measurements, I would reach perfection. When I did meet that perfect day, I couldn't tell anyone. I spent a whole year hyper-focused on attaining perfection only to discover that the day I reached it was like any other day; I wasn't any happier; life didn't change. Wabi Sabi really freed me up from the compulsion I was under. It totally set me off on another path to really discover how one becomes happy, and it's really about loving yourself, accepting life and choosing that path.

So, it seems like you use Wabi Sabi in many aspects of life, not just in your relationships...

I use Wabi Sabi everywhere. I'm a very messy eater; when I eat my food goes on me and it goes on you, but now it's just these kind of things that I accept. For me, it means that I have a strong appetite for life and I have this love of food and energy; if it gets a little sloppy then so be it.

In the introduction you talk about not accepting harmful or unhealthy behavior, but where does one draw the line?

I think the line is different for everybody, depending on what your comfort level is and what you can tolerate. Sometimes your partner will do something that genuinely requires confrontation, and there's no way to gloss over bad behavior.

For example, you can't Wabi Sabi your way out of addiction. For the less serious issues, you have to find your own level and not be afraid to talk about it. You can say "I love you to death, but what you're doing right now just grosses me out." If they say "I'm sorry, but I'm never gonna change,"

then you'll have to try to find a way to reframe it, or lobby with him by saying "tell me something I do that you don't like and let's negotiate here."

Related: [Three Tips to Enjoy Marriage Despite the Battles](#)

How can somebody convince their partner to practice Wabi Sabi with them?

I don't think your partner has to do anything. I think it's all an individual, internal change. We spend a lot of time hoping and wishing that somebody else is going to change. It's about putting on rose colored glasses for yourself and your significant other. People will rise up to your expectations of them, so if your expectation becomes 'I'm enough just the way I am and so are you (so are they)' and your expectation is that they are a good, loving person, and you hold them that way, energetically they begin to feel that and they morph into that. The expectation you hold for somebody helps them to rise up to meet it.

What advice do you have for couples who can't seem to love what their partner loves, or get used to their annoying habits? Does that mean it's the end?

You have to think of what you love most about this person and where in the relationship you are most fulfilled. Then think about what you can do to make it work for you if they're not willing to change. There are solutions, but they may require some creativity.

Do you think Wabi Sabi can be applied to an existing long term relationship or marriage?

Absolutely, I don't think it's ever too late. That's what keeps things fresh, new and interesting. If I were married for 30 years and read the book, the number one thing I'd want to know is what are the things I do that drive my partner crazy.

*For more information about Arielle Ford, visit ArielleFord.com or follow her on twitter [@arielleford](https://twitter.com/arielleford). To purchase a copy of Arielle Ford's book, *Wabi Sabi Love: The Ancient Art of Finding Perfect Love in Imperfect Relationships*, go to Amazon.com*

Author Discovers New Outlook about Love by Going on '31 Dates in 31 Days'



From the *New York Times* Bestselling Author of
THE NAKED ROOMMATE



Getting Naked

**FIVE STEPS TO FINDING THE
LOVE OF YOUR LIFE**
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HARLAN COHEN

By Erika Mionis

After several bad breakups, it can be difficult to stay positive. Long-time television producer, Tamara Duricka Johnson proves this in her new memoir, *31 Dates in 31 Days*, a heart-warming tale about Johnson's own experience with finding love. In celebration of her 31st birthday, the author decides to embark on a dating challenge to find romance by going on *31 dates in 31 days*. The last date culminates on Valentine's Day, and is marked with a second date with one of the 30 men. In this fun-filled memoir, Johnson puts her experience to paper and shares the lesson she learned along

the way: if you want love, give it away.

Cupid had a chance to speak to Johnson about her project and book:

When you started your project, did you expect to actually find love? Or were you doing it as a learning opportunity?

No, I had no intention of finding love or faith that finding love with a carefully calculated project was even realistic.

I was in an extremely cynical mode about men and was self-aware enough to realize that I needed to change. I wasn't sure exactly what I needed to change. All I knew was that I needed to change something. So I figured the project would help me get back to the basics of dating, beginning with first dates.

Related: [Fall 2011 First Date Outfits](#)

Were you surprised at how much news coverage your project received?

Having been a news producer for so long, I could see the lure in a story like mine. I was nervous when the media began showing interest because the project began as a way to improve my poor dating skills and to get over my broken heart. It was a little embarrassing and humbling. But, by that time I had seen how much other people were gaining from my experience, so I knew it was important to share my story.

You had a fantastic attitude throughout the book. How important was optimism to your project?

Optimism was essential. Around ten dates through, I had a girlfriend tell me that she wanted to hear a little more drama. I told her that this project wasn't about drama or gossip. I figured if people only wanted to hear the bad stuff about the guys I was going out with then they were missing the point.

The book is very personal. Did you have any reservations about sharing the details?

OF COURSE! This book basically feels like I've published my diary for everyone to see. It shares my vulnerabilities, my insecurities, my embarrassing stories. I had many reservations about sharing my personal details, but I figured if I were going to tell the whole story of what I learned then I needed to share the truth about where I'd been.

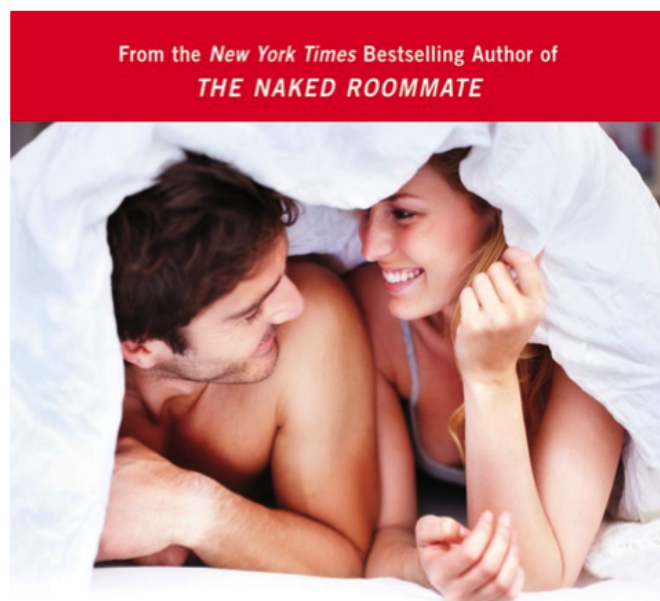
Related: [Why Amazing, Confident Women Remain Single](#)

What inspired you to share your story?

Once I started writing the blog, I received some really interesting feedback from people, and not just single women like me. I heard from men, married women, people who weren't in relationships, heterosexuals and homosexuals. I started to realize that this project was way bigger than I was – and affected more than just me and my 31 dates. As people shared their feedback, it helped me change my outlook on others and life. Not necessarily because I ended up finding love in one man, but because I ended up finding love everywhere. That's when I started to realize that this was a story that needed to be told.

Cupid would like to give a big thanks to author Tamara Duricka Johnson for her time. Check out her new book on Amazon and for more information on Johnson, be sure to visit her website at www.tamaradurickajohnson.com.

Tiffany Current Tells Us 'How to Move in with Your Boyfriend (and Not Break Up with Him)'



From the *New York Times* Bestselling Author of
THE NAKED ROOMMATE

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**FIVE STEPS TO FINDING THE
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By Amanda Martin

Many couples don't realize the pressure and work it takes to move in with a significant other. Lack of communication, romance, bad habits and finances can all take a toll when two people shack up for the first time. "Will you move in with me?" seems like a benign question for so many couples who've been together and are ready for the next step before marriage. However, you may never make it to the alter if you don't set boundaries and expectations.

Tiffany Current, dating guru and author of the new book *How to Move in with Your Boyfriend (and Not Break Up with Him)*, gives us her personal experience and advice about sharing a home with that special someone in order to make a live-in relationship last:

What inspired you to write "How to Move in with Your Boyfriend?"

It's basically from my own experience. I moved in with my boyfriend and after a month I was ready to call it quits, break up with him and go back to being single. Then I went out to a women's luncheon and that was actually what inspired me to write the book. I was complaining about my live-in relationship and everybody went around the table and said "I've been there" or "I know somebody who has been there," and they were naming the same problems I was going through. As I was listening I was thinking, "Why didn't someone key me in to all these problems we would hit, all these things I should've talked about?" Nobody had talked to these ladies; nobody had given them advice, so that was the reason I decided to write the book.

Related: [Jennifer Aniston and Justin Theroux Move In Together](#)

What advice do you have for those who don't feel comfortable moving in with their partner before marriage?

I would definitely recommend sitting down and talking about everything. If you're not living with the person, you won't know if one of their bad habits could be one of your biggest deal breakers. You want to have a conversation before it becomes a legal situation. It's a lot harder to leave once you're married, so I would definitely say discuss your deal breakers. Everybody handles their finances differently; some people are good with their money, some people are bad with it. You don't want to get married and discover that your partner is \$30,000 in debt.

How soon is too soon to move in together?

Anything before three months is probably too soon. In the first few months of a relationship, you're on your tiptoes. You're on your best behavior, putting on this great front, acting really romantic, and being the best that you could possibly be. Your partner has not seen you at your worst. I would definitely wait six months before moving in. I was with my boyfriend, now husband, for a couple of years before we lived together. Still, once we were moved in, I was like "Wow, I had no idea you were like this." I had no clue.

Related: [How to Communicate to Get What You Need](#)

What would you say are the most important chapters of your book?

I'm a big fan of my "Reality Bites" chapter because it talks about communication. For me, to be able to talk openly with my partner is the most important part of a live-in relationship. You constantly have to discuss what is and isn't working, and how you can fix your problems, whether it's chores or finances.

The other chapter couples should read is "Some Like it Hot."

Romance is a huge deal when you're living together. Your partner can easily become your roommate instead of your lover.

If you remember to keep the romance alive and do all the

little things you used to do in the beginning, your live-in relationship will be a success.

Want to find out more about how to make the big move? Buy Tiffany Current's book, *How to Move in with Your Boyfriend (and Not Break Up with Him)* on Amazon.com.

Author Linda Yellin Chronicles Her Search for Lasting Love in 'The Last Blind Date'



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HARLAN COHEN

By [Jessica DeRubbo](#)

You may think that you'll never find lasting love if you've been part of one failed relationship after another but Linda Yellin, author of *The Last Blind Date*, is here to tell you that there is hope for a happily ever after. In her new book, she chronicles with wit and hilarious detail, the lead-up to her current marriage to Randy Arthur and her subsequent move to New York City. She lets it be known that although there are no steadfast rules to a lasting relationship there are things you can do to keep a healthy and happy outlook on life with your partner.

We had a chance to interview Linda Yellin about her book, and this is what she had to say:

What inspired you to write a book about your experience with love?

Now that's a good question. I'd written a book eons ago called *Such A Lovely Couple*. That book was about my first marriage. Interestingly, all my husbands get books written about them, whether they need one or not. (This might be the appropriate time to note that there have only been two husbands and two books. And that I'm currently not planning any sequels.)

I loved my first book, but it was totally unread. (Second note: I said *unread*. Not *unreadable*.) By the time anyone in the bookstore got to the "Y" section, they'd already bought two other books and gone home. So I figured if I wrote a new book, maybe people would like it enough to go read the first book...which Mr. Simon and Mr. Schuster have thoughtfully just re-released.

Of course, I still have that end-of-the-alphabet problem, which just goes to show I'm an idiot, since I'm now married to Randy *Arthur* and could have moved up to the A's.

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

How would you explain the book's title, *The Last Blind Date*?

I went through 8,000 titles. If I'd strung them all together, they would have added up to another book. But my Editor-in-Chief picked *The Last Blind Date* out of the "short list." I think the short list only had 500 titles on it. Randy's the last blind date. At least I thought he was, until I moved to New York from Chicago to marry him and found myself "dating" for friends. That was one thing I hadn't considered before moving – that I'd be starting all over without any

girlfriends. So really, Randy's my last *guy* blind date.

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

Many reviews focus on the way in which you use humor to tell your story. Was this a conscious decision during the writing process?

No. I'm not that self-aware. If I could make a conscious decision to add things into my writing process, I'd be Aristotle or Plato. Or at least Jim Patterson.

What advice would you give our readers when it comes to finding lasting love?

Well, you won't know if something was lasting love until you're at your own funeral. And if Randy outlives me (and boy do I hope he does; it scares me silly to imagine myself as The Widow Linda, without him – to say nothing of having to come up with all those corned beef platters for his relatives) – even if yes indeed, we've had as great of a relationship as I think we're having, there's no doubt that before my casket's halfway into the ground, women will be throwing tuna casseroles at him and offering him tickets for a night out at the theater.

So assuming everything is hunky dory until then, one of the most romantic things Randy ever said to me was that he didn't want to change me, and that if he tried, he'd just mess it up.

(I'm wondering... maybe that wasn't romantic... maybe that was seduction; but it worked at the time.) Regardless, I make a point to remind myself that I'm his lover, not his mother. If I was his mom, by now he'd know to put the toilet seat down.

So we don't *pick* at each other, which is a little thing, but maybe a big thing, too. And we're always saying, *I love you*. Sometimes I'm saying it to a black and white cookie, but most of the time I'm saying it to Randy, and he's saying it to me.

When I first told him that I loved him (yes, I said it first – so sue me!) he gave me this whole big speech about how he

didn't like saying all that love stuff because if one person says it then the other person feels obligated to say it, and then the first person... blah, blah blah... Basically, it was the biggest dodge in the history of [romance](#). So I stopped saying *I love you* until he started saying *I love you* (took another two months), but now we tell each other *I love you* all the time, which I like. Plus, it fills in the gaps when we run out of conversation.

So there you have it! For more information about Linda Yellin and her book, visit LindaYellin.com. To purchase your own copy of the book, check out Amazon.

Happiness Expert Sophie Keller Gives Us Some Tips about Having a Happy Love Life



From the *New York Times* Bestselling Author of
THE NAKED ROOMMATE



Getting Naked

**FIVE STEPS TO FINDING THE
LOVE OF YOUR LIFE**
(While Fully Clothed & Totally Sober)

HARLAN COHEN

By Linda Guma

Are you looking for a happier love life? Happiness expert, author, life coach and TV personality Sophie Keller gives us 50 key ideas for improving your relationship in her upcoming book, *How Happy Is Your Love Life?: 50 Great Tips to Help You Attract and Keep Your Perfect Partner*.

The book is part of a four-book series coming out November 27. Keller notes her goal for the 'How Happy Is' brand is that [her] practical, easy to use advice will help you discard outdated attitudes, habits and beliefs in order to make more

positive choices in your life.

We had the pleasure of interviewing Keller to find out just how she does it.

What motivated you to become a happiness expert?

When I was young I didn't feel particularly understood. But I knew I was meant to be happy, so when I searched for how, I found it inside. I realized that when you drop the masks, armors and pretenses, you will find who you are. The person you should be with will magnetize to you. Otherwise, you will magnetize people who have the same armor. That's why relationships don't work. Someone's armor must come off.

What is happiness?

Happiness is about feeling complete within yourself, feeling like you're making a difference in your life and the lives of others. It's about expressing yourself fully and completely.

It's interesting that on a worldwide scale, happiness and wealth don't correlate with each other. Happiness is about focusing on the moment. For example, those in third world countries focus on feeding themselves and their children. They value their relationships above material things. I always say we're human *beings*, not human *having* or human *doings*. The more "human being" we are, the happier we'll be.

What sets this book apart from other love advice books on the market?

Everything is actionable. Also, it teaches you how to focus and work on yourself. Most of all, this book teaches you to break down defense mechanisms that have been holding you back.

What would you say is the most important tip you have for those who strive to be happy in their love lives?

Be yourself to the fullest and be really positive. Relax, have fun and have faith. There is someone out there for you. You also have to work on your self development. Clear out your insecurities. You need to shift how you think about yourself and any past issues that keep resurfacing.

How do you know when it's right to tie the knot?

Every cell in your body says "yes," with no doubt. You never know what it's going to feel like but when it happens you'll know. The person you end up marrying could surprise you.

Sophie Keller is the creator of [Howhappyis.com](http://www.howhappyis.com). She has been a featured life coach for Martha Stewart's *Whole Living* magazine, a contributing expert for Sirius radio and she appears frequently on *KTLA 5 Morning News*. She also appears on *FOX*, *NBC*, *ABC*, and *CBS* where she gives happiness tips and lifestyle advice. She was recently appointed the 'Good News' Ambassador for LG Electronics. She lives in Santa Monica, California.

To order a copy of her book, visit <http://www.howhappyis.com/books/love-life/>.

The Secret to Staying Married



From the *New York Times* Bestselling Author of
THE NAKED ROOMMATE



Getting Naked

**FIVE STEPS TO FINDING THE
LOVE OF YOUR LIFE**

(While Fully Clothed & Totally Sober)

HARLAN COHEN

By Marianne Beach, GalTime.com

Ever wonder the secret to staying happily married? Why some people make it look so easy, while you're feeling like you're in a struggle for your life? A new book, *The Secret Lives of Wives: Women Share What it Really Takes to Stay Married*, rounds up a diverse cast of happily married characters who have the tenacity and audacity to make their marriages work.

We interviewed the author, Iris Krasnow, who calls her book "an antidote for divorce", and asked her to spill her own secrets of wedded bliss.

What made you decide to write on this particular topic?

Marriage can be hell, we need to know that truth, and not be fooled by the gauzy myth portrayed throughout much of modern history – that a wedding is a ticket to perpetual bliss. After reading this book, every young woman will know that there's no happily-ever-after, there's happy, there's sad, there's heaven, there's hell.

You do throw a dish once in a while and hope it misses your husband's head. You do storm out the door in your bathrobe some mornings and perhaps call a divorce lawyer on your cell phone while driving around the block. You may loathe your in-laws. It can be disgusting to share a bathroom. Alas, then there's the peace and the contentment that comes with knowing you don't have to date anymore, that you can count on someone, that you have found a partner to be by your side while you navigate child-rearing, your parents' illnesses and the woes of the world.

I love my 23-year imperfect marriage that has produced four perfect sons – that's when I don't detest it!

You call the book an antidote for divorce – tell us what that means.

The Secret Lives of Wives is THE book to pick up if you feel like you're on the brink of divorce. You'll read stories in here of cheating and lying and frustration and even emotional abuse. Still, many of these wives in those situations have weathered the storms with guts and tenacity and come away with better marriages than ever.

One of the big problems with the myth of happily-ever-after in marriage that has prevailed for decades is that brides and grooms go into the institution believing that getting hitched is going to fix their lives. They believe there's a gold standard marriage in which the man and the woman become soul mates, that they become twined as one. My book delivers the

raw and real truth: There's no gold standard marriage toward which we all should aspire. Couples who seem blissful and hold hands all the time and call each other "sweetie" may be flinging pots at each other at home. No one knows what goes on in a marriage except the two people in it.

And that's good news! That means you get to write your own rules, create a marriage that's based on individual needs and desires and not feel like you have to surrender to pack mentality. I interviewed a wife of 30 years who swings with other couples! Do I want her marriage? No. Does it work for her and her husband? Yes. Who are we to judge? You'll hear plenty of other juicy strategies and secrets that are hardly status quo, but they have helped wives stay in long marriages and have it both ways: A committed marriage and adventures in uncharted territory. People get divorced often because they're bored or frustrated with a perfectly good spouse. Lower your expectations: Don't expect someone else to make you happy, you must do that for yourself, and this book shows you the way!

Talk a little bit about the women you interviewed for this book.

They're an awesome and assorted cast. They were rich, poor, black, white, Muslim, Jewish, evangelical and old hippies. They were diverse in backgrounds and experiences, yet they share this common and significant trait. All the women in *The Secret Lives of Wives* are determined to make their marriages last, and some of them are sustaining their relationships in conventional ways and some of them need to be naughty once in a while.

I'll tell you about one of favorite stories in this book that really speak to the resilience displayed on these pages. Beth's husband routinely told her she was fat and ugly and when they argued in the car, he would pull over to the side of the road, open the door and push her out. This went on for

years. She was beholden to him with three small children and no job of her own so she stuck it out. That's until one day, when her kids were older, she got really smart, really angry and decided she had enough. She started losing weight, got a job, started to stash her money away and began to hatch a getaway plan. Then one night when he was belligerent, she fired back. Beth told her husband that she and the children were leaving and if he kept acting like an ass, he'd be a sad and lonely old man without any family ties. She spewed all the pain and anger she'd stored up during the entire course of their marriage. And, well, he crumbled. He cried. They talked. Over time he realized he didn't know how to give or receive love because of the cold family he was raised in.

Beth and her husband on that day were re-born. They spent evenings together, talking and drinking wine. They started to have great sex again; hot, hot lovemaking. They even texted during the day about sex. "My kids would die if they knew what their parents are doing at night!," she said. She's one of the heroes of this book.

If you could only give one vital piece of advice to a wife – what would it be?

At every stage of your marriage, make sure you have your own work and projects that are yours alone. Stay engaged in YOUR life. The happiest wives I've interviewed over a 30-plus year journalism career have their own sense of purpose and passion and adventure outside of the home. It's a cliché, but true: Get a life! The first question I ask every woman who writes me about her dissatisfaction with her spouse, is this: "What are YOU doing to make your life better, richer, more exciting?" No one can make you happy in the long run, that must spring from within.

There are a lot of women struggling with their marriages right now. Is there hope for them?

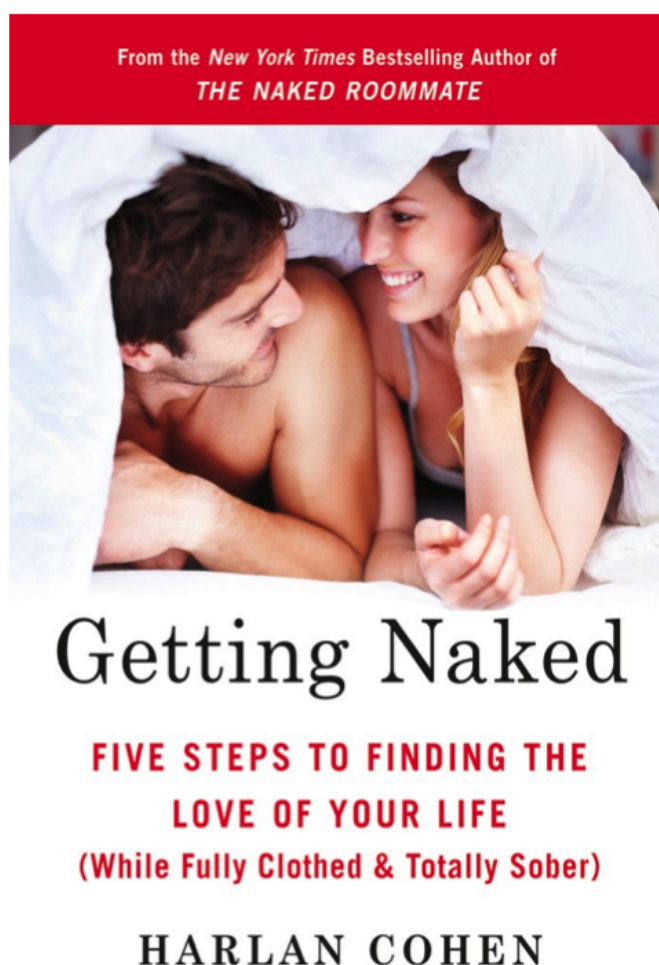
If Beth can turn an ass into a prince and turn a lousy marriage into a steamy love affair at midlife, most women can make their marriages succeed. We all hit periods of malaise in long-term love relationships. Often there's an eggshell-thin line that separates love from hate; there's even a very fine line that separates staying married from initiating divorce.

After reading this book, I believe that most wives will find strength and wisdom from the stories about older women who have pushed through waves of sadness and rage and are now deeply grateful that they have loyal mates at their sides. Life is tough. Our parents die. Our children grow up and leave home. I love knowing that my husband, Chuck, who watches too much hockey and doesn't talk enough, is loyal, predictable and wants nothing else than to keep our family intact. For better or for worse, and yes I've thrown a dish or two, we've been able to stay married and create a safe harbor for ourselves, for our children, for their children.

The book is available Monday 10/3! Connect with Iris on: www.iriskrasnow.com

Dr. John Townsend Helps Deal with Painful Unions in his New Book, 'Beyond Boundaries: Learning to Trust Again in

Relationships '



By Tanni Deb

After a relationship ends, it's sometimes difficult to have hope again when it comes to finding love. Insecurity can get the best of you, and you may not know how to heal from your previous experience. In his new book, *Beyond Boundaries:*

Learning to Trust Again in Relationships, clinical psychologist, Dr. John Townsend, helps people to open up. *Beyond Boundaries* provides steps and skills to assist those who are battling honesty issues and are trying to regain confidence, either in a new union, or an old one.

Cupid had a chance to interview Dr. Townsend about his book, and this is what he had to say:

What inspired you to write this book?

As a psychologist and an executive coach, I've worked with many people who have struggled with their partners. Over and over, I see people who have had to set limits or leave a bad pairing, and then they don't know how to open up and accept someone else into their lives. They're sort of stuck knowing they need to be connected in some way romantically, or at least with a family member or friendship, but at the same time, they're afraid to try. So, I wanted to give them a book to help them to have the skills to re-enter a trusting relationship.

What challenges did you face while writing about how to trust again in a relationship?

There were several challenges. One is that people often give up and settle for less. They get busy with their work or their activities, and they tend to abandon any type of closeness. So the challenge was to help them see again that they can really have a great friendship, family, marriage, or dating situation, and they don't have to settle for less. I had to sort of set a fire inside them to try again, to get them to experience a vision for a better future.

At what point in a relationship should you move on if honesty is an issue?

I believe it's generally when you see three factors from the person who has been dishonest.

First, they show no awareness of the problem, even if they've lied, or if they've been unfaithful. That's a bad sign.

Second, they aren't concerned about how deeply that impacts their partner. If they minimize that or make it no big deal – or say that you are overreacting – that's not a good sign.

Third, if they do say they know how deeply what they did impacts you, and they're going to work on changing, but instead of working on it, they go back to their old patterns. Now, it doesn't always mean you need to break up, but it does mean you have to put strict limits on your partner until they become a safe person.

How do you regain faith in a partnership after it's been broken?

There are three parts to this as well.

First, you have to know when you're ready; that your mind and heart have been healed, so you've learned that not everyone is untrustworthy, and that some people can change. There are lots of skills in the book about becoming ready to trust.

The second part is how do you know the other person is ready? Have they changed, have they seen what they've done, or have you seen patterns change? There are skills in the book for that too.

The third part is how do we act towards each other in a safe way? How do we both take risks towards each other to establish closeness so that nobody gets hurt? What I want people to see in the book, is that this isn't just about whether or not the other person has changed. We can have trust issues from an old relationship that get in the way of trusting again in a new one. Whether it's issues with someone you're trying to be with again, or a fresh start in which you don't want to make the same mistakes, that's what the skills in the book are about.

Have you had personal experience with the issues you touch on in your book? If so, how did you overcome these obstacles?

I've learned and grown from my experiences in business and with friends and family. Also, it's helped me to be more of a trustworthy person myself, because the sword cuts both directions. My expertise came from my training as a psychologist, and thousands of hours of working with clients and in executive coaching, where people unburden their lives, and I help them find solutions.

What piece of advice would you give to someone who can't help transferring their old issues into their current circumstance?

The first piece of advice is that you can't do this in a vacuum. You've got to be around two or three other people who are safe, and that you can talk about your fears with. When we have trust issues, we're not sure if we can ever trust. So be around people who are going to be a good feedback system for you, and who will support and help you make good decisions.

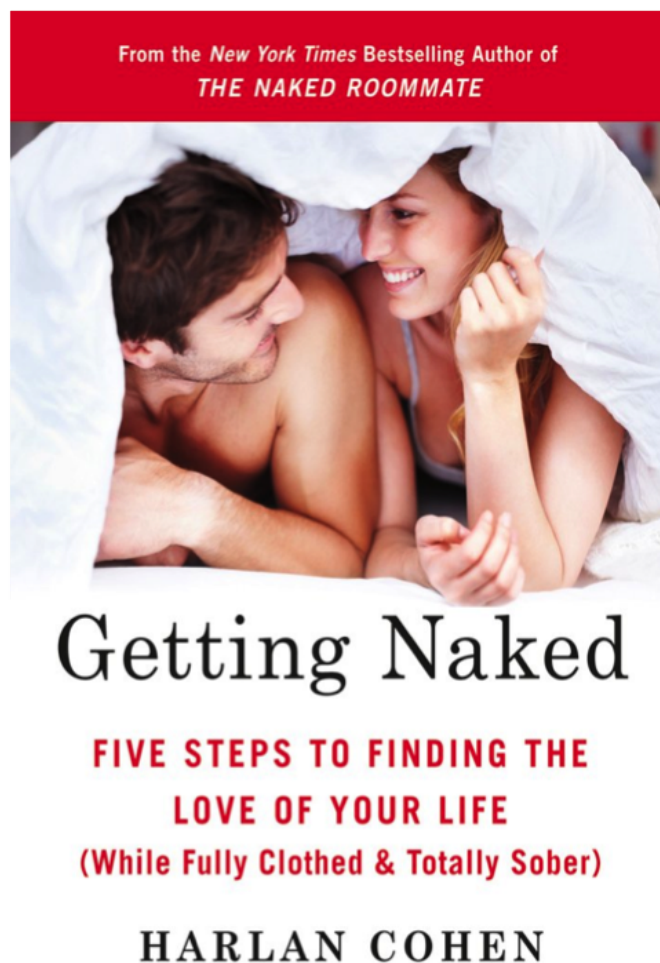
What is the most important lesson you hope readers will learn from your book?

That learning to trust again is one of the greatest things you can do in your life. You don't have to give up and settle.

Learn the steps in building a healthy relationship by registering for Dr. John Townsend's free Facebook webcast on **Tuesday, October 4, at 8 p.m. EDT**. Or visit Amazon to purchase *Beyond Boundaries: Learning to Trust Again in Relationships*.

For more information on Dr. Townsend, check out his Facebook and website at www.DrTownsend.com.

Relationship Expert, Andrea Syrtash, Teaches You How to “Cheat on Your Husband (with Your Husband)”



By Diamon Hall

To outsiders looking in, marriage is a sign that your life is complete, and both people are still “head-over-heels” in love. Privately, however, the husband may be thinking, ‘my has she changed,’ while the wife is often silently wondering, ‘is this really what I signed up for? ’ Andrea Syrtash is a dating and relationship expert, on-air personality and author. With her new book, *Cheat on Your Husband (with Your Husband)* ready to hit the stands in September, she gives women solutions and advice that will help their marriage prosper for years to come.

Although she is married herself, Syrtash says the book isn’t only from personal experience (although there are some personal lessons shared), but also from interviews she conducted with other women and by citing the latest research on marriage, giving her readers a wide variety of opinions. Syrtash didn’t want the book to come off as a desperate attempt to save your relationship, but rather as a source of tips and advice to rekindle the romance. This book is ideal for anyone who feels they’ve lost track of why they’re married and don’t know where to go from here.

Recently, Cupid had a chance to chat with Ms. Syrtash, and here’s what she had to say:

How did you come up with the title of your new book?

The original title was *How to Date Your Husband* and that became the subtitle to *Cheat On Your Husband (With Your Husband)*. I chose the word ‘cheat’ because too often we feel guilty when we focus on ourselves and our marriage when we have so many other competing demands; but cheating in this case is a good thing! I wanted a title that was fun, playful, and a little provocative. I didn’t want it to be a relationship rescue book, but rather a relationship renewal book.

What made you choose this career field?

I actually went into it undecided, but I knew I loved journalism and connecting with people about their experiences. I was always the advice-giver amongst friends and family, but didn't know that I would eventually do that professionally. After journalism school, I earned a certificate in life coaching. Over the last decade, I've interviewed hundreds of people and spent thousands of hours focused on relationship research. I love it.

Is the book more so you speaking from experience, or is it mostly advice?

The book opens by telling the readers that I'm not just interested in lecturing them, but I do want to inspire them into action. It's not a memoir, but I do share my marriage experience so that I can have a little more intimacy with my readers. My advice is driven by my journalism and coaching background. I know the best advice I can share comes from interviewing real women in different situations.

What is the best piece of advice you give to couples in the book?

Marriage is a choice that you have to make every day. People need to realize they can't just be complacent because that's the easiest option. Another theme in the book came from an 80-year-old woman I interviewed. She said, "The most important thing you can offer in a relationship is your presence." One of the big elements of my book is "Small steps will create big changes."

How does being a dating and relationship expert come into play in your own life?

The irony is that sometimes I'm not taking my own advice! As I'm writing about a topic and researching it, sometimes I get a wake-up call, because I'm immersed in the material. In my

last book *He's Just Not Your Type (And That's a Good Thing)*, I talked about how I was writing advice columns to follow your heart, and I discovered I wasn't. I don't wanna be a hypocrite. I definitely want to practice what I preach.

I know you interviewed our founder, [Lori Bizzoco](#). What type of advice did she give, and what was it about her story that interested you?

I love that Lori is a mother of two and has her own business. She strikes me as a person who's loyal to her passion. She models advice in my book very well: You can't be passionate in your marriage if you're not passionate in your own life, and I saw that in Lori. She's featured in my "Sweat the Small Stuff" chapter, and that's because I see her and her husband doing small things for each other all the time, just to show their appreciation. I dedicated the book to jugglers (women who are juggling a lot of different responsibilities). Lori is definitely a juggler.

Do you think women need a book like this, and why?

I hope that people see my brand of advice as upbeat and inspiring. My advice isn't driven from a place of fear or scarcity. I try to focus on what is there already – and how to make it better. This is intentional because I want to inspire my readers to try new things....not because things will be doomed if she doesn't, but because her life will be great if she does.

In addition to the release of the upcoming book, Syrtash has also been a regular advice columnist and contributor to numerous popular sites, including Yahoo, The Huffington Post, and Oprah.com, as well as being the on-air host of 'On Dating', produced by NBC Digital Studios. She has shared advice in various media outlets across the country, including *The Today Show*, *USA Today*, VH1 and NPR, among others. Syrtash also speaks regularly about effective relationships at

conferences and workshops across the country. For her upcoming schedule, refer to www.andreasyrtash.com.

Syrtash feels the book will give readers' marriages a boost! She stresses the fact that this isn't heavy relationship self-help; but a positive, encouraging tool full of keys to a successful (and fun!) marriage.

Cupid wants to give a big thanks to author, Andrea Syrtash for giving us some of her time. Be sure to check out her new book *Cheat on Your Husband (with Your Husband)* at Amazon..

'TORN' Author Samantha Walravens Addresses Career and Motherhood: Can Women Do it All?



From the *New York Times* Bestselling Author of
THE NAKED ROOMMATE



Getting Naked

**FIVE STEPS TO FINDING THE
LOVE OF YOUR LIFE**

(While Fully Clothed & Totally Sober)

HARLAN COHEN

By Melissa Tierney

In the world of modern motherhood, it's believed that powerful professional women should be able to "have it all" without a problem. By watching celebrity moms like Angelina Jolie and Reese Witherspoon who are able to maintain loving relationships with their beaus, amazing careers and happy and healthy family lives, it inspires the rest of us to think, 'Hey, why can't I have that, too?'. Samantha Walravens, author of the new book *TORN: True Stories of Kids, Career and the Conflict of Modern Motherhood*, shared with us her wisdom and

insight on what it actually means to “have it all” and just how normal a little bit of chaos can be.

In addition to her take on modern motherhood, she also shared her personal take on how to maintain a healthy and loving relationship with your spouse, a successful career and a great family life, something she happens to know quite a bit about.

Walravens is an accomplished writer, wife and mother of four, giving her enough life experience to navigate the everyday conflicts even the most organized moms are facing today.

If you feel like you are about to have a meltdown because you just can't manage it all, worry no more! Our interview with Walravens will reassure you that you're doing just fine. Here's what she had to say:

How do you manage it all (successful career, family and a healthy loving relationship)?

Honestly? I don't. One of the key messages of my book, *TORN* is that women today are admitting—and learning to accept—the fact that nobody can “do it all.” Trying to be the perfect mother, the perfect wife AND the perfect professional—all at the same time— is a recipe for a nervous breakdown. And I'm only stretching the truth a bit when I say “nervous breakdown.” What I have learned— with age, wisdom, and each successive child (I now have 4)— is that by trying to do it all, I am not doing anything at a level of 100 percent effort or enjoyment. There is simply too much to accomplish to feel 100 percent about anything other than my stress level.

What made you go back to writing after having children?

One of the keys to being happy—as a mother, worker and wife—is to find a vocation or hobby that brings you joy. Writing is, and always has been, my joy. From childhood on, I've kept journals and written stories and poems. I'm one of the lucky few that have been able to combine my passion with my work. If

you can't combine the two, you just need to look outside your job to find your passion—be it gardening, tennis, reading, or just enjoying time with friends.

How do you keep the “spark” alive with your husband? Do you have date nights?

We've been married for 15 years and together for 20, and we actually still like being with each other. Imagine that! I agree with Michelle Obama when she said of her marriage to the President: “I think in our house we don't take ourselves too seriously, and laughter is the best form of unity in a marriage.” My husband and I work hard on our relationship—we've done a weekly date night since we started having kids 13 years ago, and we've had our share of marriage counseling. But we try to remember to have fun together and to laugh often. At night, we like to watch a funny show in bed together—30 Rock or Modern Family. It's nice to go to sleep with a smile on your face.

In your opinion, what are the 3 most important things to maintaining a healthy, loving relationship?

Managing conflict in a healthy manner. Recognizing that conflict is not the end, but a situation awaiting resolution. This has been an essential component in helping my husband and I deal with arguments and conflict. Early on in our relationship, I used to think that if we had a serious difference of views on something, it meant that he didn't love me anymore and would possibly leave me. Over time I learned that it was safe to disagree and that we could talk our way through problems.

Feeling appreciated and letting your partner know that s/he is appreciated. With four kids, my husband and I feel like we are both “on” at all times. Coming home from work isn't a break—it's just more work, but with the kids and the household. We have learned to tell each other frequently how

much we appreciate the other person's efforts and to say "thank you" even for the little things, like putting the garbage out. Since we are both working, we are in murky territory when it comes to who does what—with the kids, the house, etc. And we have learned to take turns doing things: One night I will be in charge of dinner; another night, he will be. One night, I will put the baby to sleep; another night, he will. Gratitude is one of the key things that keeps our romantic relationship alive. The old complaint, "My husband doesn't appreciate me" or "My wife takes me for granted" points to what happens when gratitude is not expressed often enough.

Keeping your sex life alive! Let's call a spade a spade. If you are not having sex with your partner, then there's a good chance your partner will seek sex elsewhere. Don't fall into the trap. If you are having problems in your marriage that make you NOT want to be intimate with your spouse, seek help. The money spent on a marriage counselor is well worth it—and it's a lot less expensive than what it costs to get a divorce these days. Sex can definitely get better with time as you feel more comfortable communicating your desires with your partner.

Are there any celebrity couples that you feel are doing a good job at "having it all"?

One celebrity couple I feel is doing it really well is John Travolta & Kelly Preston. John and Kelly have been married now for 29 years. Believe it or not, lists are John and Kelly's secret to marital bliss. The couple uses lists to make sure they make enough time for each other, and for sex, among other things. According to John, "We make lists of what we need and want from each other and check them regularly, we list everything, from how much sex to what kind of food we want". This may seem like a chore but according to them, it helps them find out what the other person needs and reminds them that they are going the right direction. Sounds a little un-

romantic but hey, if it works!

Cupid wants to give a big thanks to author, Samantha Walravens for giving us some of her time. Be sure to check out her new book *TORN: True Stories of Modern Motherhood* at Amazon and for more information on Samantha, check out her website at www.SamanthaWalravens.com.

Marla Martenson Talks 'Diary of a Beverly Hills Matchmaker'



From the *New York Times* Bestselling Author of
THE NAKED ROOMMATE



Getting Naked

**FIVE STEPS TO FINDING THE
LOVE OF YOUR LIFE**
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HARLAN COHEN

By Tanni Deb

Finding love doesn't come easy, especially when you have unrealistic expectations of your partner. If you don't believe me, just ask professional matchmaker **Marla Martenson**, the author of ***Diary of a Beverly Hills Matchmaker***. Martenson gives readers an inside scoop of what really goes on behind the scenes when it comes to matchmaking. Featuring real letters from clients where elite men search for supermodel look-alikes and women are on a quest to find a wealthy soul mate in one of the richest cities in California, the book is

sure to shock and entertain readers.

Cupid had a chance to interview Martenson via phone about her book. Take a look at what she had to say:

Why did you become a matchmaker?

It was really a fluke that turned into a career. I got a job as a videographer at a video dating company back in 2001. I had been an actress and a waitress for 20 years in Los Angeles and Chicago, and I didn't want to be in the restaurant business anymore. I was still acting, but I never could make a living out of it. When I was offered the position at the video dating company, I jumped at the chance. I loved it and felt like I was the director doing these videos for the people. While working there, I thought about writing a dating book from talking to all these people. After that job, I moved over to an upscale matchmaking service in Beverly Hills where I became the vice president of matchmaking. I was there for seven years.

What challenges do you face as a matchmaker?

The challenges would be the people who are so picky. They're very selective here in Southern California. The guys want the girls to look like models and the girls hope the guys are super wealthy. So I think the initial challenge is that everybody has on their wish list their prince charming. It's really about what you want in a partner and getting them to see that it's not always about that first superficial wish that they might think they want.

Your book review in Amazon said that you've had clients who were very unrealistic. For example, "old, nerdy, overweight, and balding man" who is searching for a "supermodel look-alike who has to have an Ivy League education but prefers to be a 1950's housewife." How do you handle people with unrealistic expectations?

A lot of times I will do some coaching. A woman has come to me recently for some coaching, but sometimes people are not open to changing; they want what they want. I try to deliver and if I can't, I can't. But I tell them that I'm a matchmaker, not a magician.

Is it possible to find them someone who matches their criteria?

I have to say I really love my clients; they're great people. But a lot of them have unrealistic expectations. Luckily, in Los Angeles there are a lot of beautiful women so I'm able to match the guys. And there are a lot of guys who are doing very well and are successful. It's understandable that a woman wants a man with something going on. She wants to get married and have a family. She wants somebody who has a good career and who can take care of her. I can see where some of it comes from.

Have you had clients who return continuously because they aren't satisfied with who they were matched with?

I do show them photos, so they'll see the pictures first. Now when they get on a date, there might not be any chemistry or their personalities might not match. But, generally, they won't say that the person didn't look good at all because they've seen the photo. So they're not too disappointed that way.

What do most men and women search for in a significant other?

It's interesting because women's top desires that they tell me in a man is sense of humor, honesty, loyalty, looks and healthy lifestyle. The men want what they see first. They say they want a woman who is attractive, they love a great sense of humor and someone who is easy going.

What advice do you have for those who have been single for quite some time now because they have unrealistic expectations

of the opposite sex?

Be a little more open-minded and try dating someone who maybe doesn't fit the exact picture in your mind. If you go out with somebody, it doesn't mean you have to marry him or you're going to spend your life with him. It's just a cup of coffee or lunch or dinner. So give the guy a try if he has a lot of great qualities you're looking for.

Cupid thanks Marla Martenson for her time! To get a look into the world of matchmaking, visit **Amazon** to purchase *Diary of a Beverly Hills Matchmaker*.