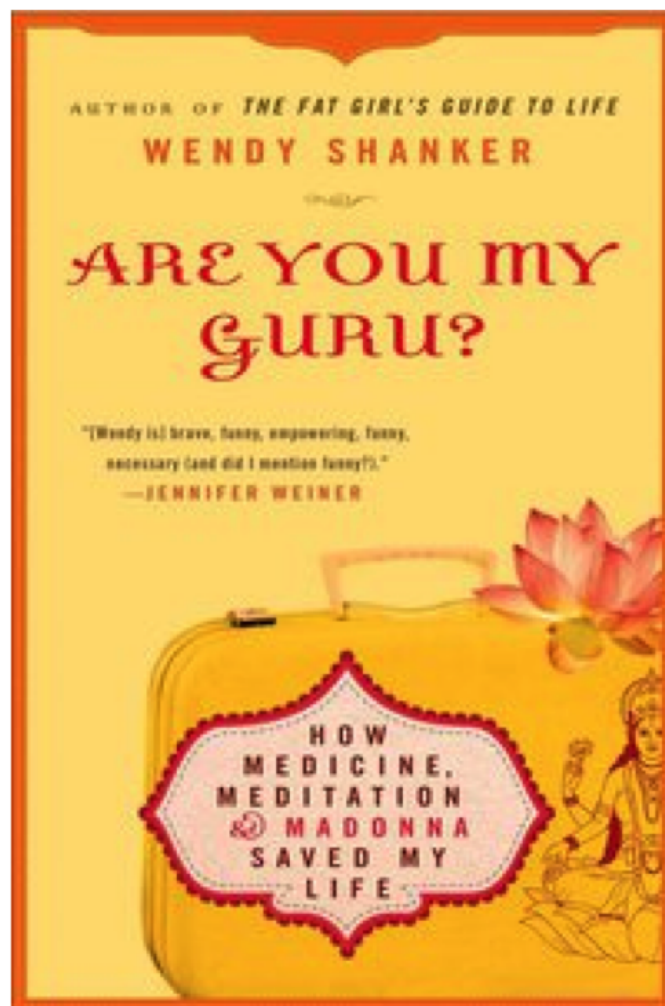


Wendy Shaker Talks 'Are You My Guru?'



By Veronica LaRoque

What do medicine, meditation and Madonna all have in common?

For author [Wendy Shanker](#), they were all supposed to be cures for a rare autoimmune disease that struck her right when she was at the top of her game. Shanker, who had given advice to thousands of women in her hugely successful first book [The Fat Girl's Guide to Life](#), was now searching for someone to help her with the difficulties of dealing with a chronic illness.

In her new book, [Are You My Guru? How Medicine, Meditation and Madonna Saved My Life](#), Shanker tells the story of her disease.

With humor and hope, she chronicles her search to find one person who has all the answers not knowing if that person even exists.

What can you do when life takes a turn for the worse?

Cupid's Advice:

We all know what it's like to be on top of the world one evening, and under mountains of stress the next morning. But Cupid got tons of advice on how to deal with life's letdowns from Wendy Shanker. Check out the author's thoughts on taking life's lemons and turning them into one hilarious and good-for-you lemonade.

How would you describe your journey, and how does it compare to "The Fat Girl's Guide to Life?"

The journey in *Are You My Guru?* is much different than the story of the first book. "The Fat Girl's Guide" was almost a manifesto – a way to fight back against the pressure to lose weight and look a certain way. I really thought I had it all figured out – I could be fit, fat and healthy, and still feel good about myself! Just as that book was published, the "healthy" part got knocked out of the equation. I got so sick with this rare autoimmune disease, Wegener's granulomatosis.

I'd actually been diagnosed years before, but it wasn't until "The Fat Girl's Guide" was published that it really invaded my life – actually pulled me out of my life. That was in 2004.

So the story of "Guru" is about being in this happy place,

feeling secure in my body, looking forward to whatever was next in work, love, life...and then...buh-bye. A whole new body battle to fight.

How have you maintained a sense of humor and a universality throughout both of these books?

I don't know any other way to do it. I couldn't help but find the funny, even in the worst of it. You know, I'd gotten bad news from doctors who unfortunately had limited resources to treat me. So I started exploring alternative methods of treatment...and I'm like, "Someone is dripping oil on my forehead and rolling me in chickpea flour like an enchilada! Someone is shining colored lights on my body and poking needles all over me! Someone is telling me to dialogue with my liver!" How could I not find it hilarious? That's just my coping mechanism, but I find that it's a really good way to help other people relate to my situation. Even if you don't have my problems, or haven't tried this particular treatment, there's sort of a universality feeling exposed in these ways.

Over the course of writing both these books, what have you discovered about romantic relationships?

In the first book, I spent so much time feeling insecure about my body that I really held myself back from relationships. There were some good ones, some bad ones, but I didn't feel like I could handle real intimacy until I figured out how to love and respect myself. So voila, I'm ready! And that's right when I got sick. Bad timing, because it meant going through the worst of the worst on my own. I'm really lucky that I have a lot of amazing friends and family, and there was no shortage of people around when I wanted them there (I'm one of those people who tends to shoo everyone away when I don't feel well). But during those long dark nights, there are these moments of "Where the f#*k is he? The guy who is supposed to be stroking my hair right now?" Um, well, he wasn't there. In a way, it's kind of empowering to go through

a challenge like that as a single person. It makes you realize you can get through anything as long as you have some support in your life; it doesn't have to be romantic love.

There's no reason to settle. But now that I'm feeling strong and healthy again, I'm excited to meet someone special.

How has your illness affected your body image and your idea of yourself

Aside from the physical, that's the biggest challenge I faced.

This disease, and the treatment of this disease (chemo, steroids), dramatically changed my body. Weight gain, weight loss, hair loss, skin damage, scars from procedures and surgeries. I lost all the cartilage in my nose and had to have surgical reconstruction. This amazing surgeon took a rib out of my ribcage (just like Cher!) and used it to create a new nose for me. You'd never even know by looking. That's a helluva lot for a body to go through, and there are plenty of people who've gone through a lot worse. I have to give my body a lot of respect. Literally think about it, organ by organ, and say, "Hey, skin, it's amazing the way you regenerated. Thank you. Hey kidneys, it takes a lot of effort to filter all that, but you're doing a great job. Much appreciated." You have to offer lots of props to your body when it takes a licking and keeps on kicking.

What do you feel is the most important thing you learned on your journey?

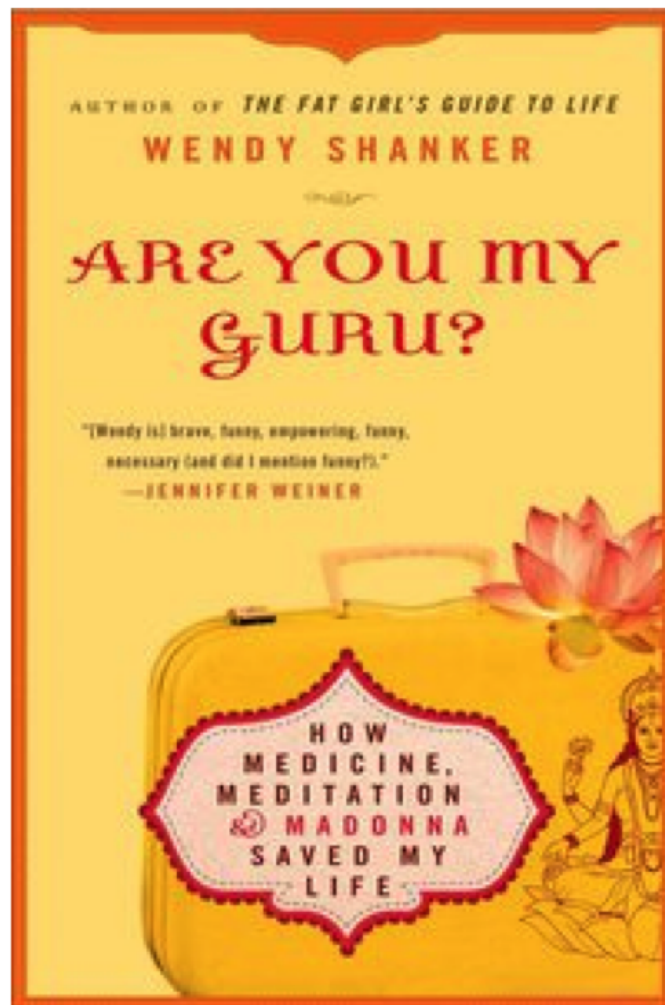
I was so sure that I was going to find the The Guy who was going to fix me. The guru with the treatment or doctor with a trick up his sleeve who would say, "Take this pill and see you never." Not the case. I learned that there is no one person with all the answers. If anything, the closest person who fits that bill is you. You are the expert on you. No one knows your body better than you do. Your job is to find the collaborators who are willing to pool their expertise with yours to help you feel better. In other words, you are your

own guru.

Cupid sincerely thanks [Wendy Shanker](#) for her time! To purchase *Are You My Guru?*, follow Cupid to [Amazon.com](#).

Michele Cove Discusses Film and Book, 'Seeking Happily Ever After'





By Veronica LaRoque

From reality dating shows to speed dating events to eHarmony commercials, it seems like everyone is in a race to the altar.

Today's society might make it seem like being single is not an option and that it's just a phase until you find "the one." [Michelle Cove](#) documented people on their journeys to find love in her new film, *Seeking Happily Ever After*, and inadvertently found gourds of proud singles out there.

In her companion book *Seeking Happily Ever After: How to navigate the ups and downs of being single without losing your*

mind (and finding lasting love along the way), Cove explores why there have been more single women than ever lately, while allowing single women to reclaim their own stories. With wit, humor and sage advice, Cove uses others' stories to answer questions raised during filming and creates a self-help book expressly for women who are single and loving it.

What are the advantages of being single?

Cupid's Advice:

Cupid learned all about why women are single and what they can do to make themselves happy by finding true love – if they're looking for it. See what Michelle Cove had to say about her movie and book:

How did filming *Seeking Happily Ever After* lead you to writing this book?

The film poses questions about this phenomenon and allows viewers to come to their own conclusions. When the film was completed, I wanted to go a step further and try to answer some of women's pressing questions that came up during filming—and to create a self-help book that didn't lump single women into one giant category of "desperately looking for a husband," like so many other books out there.

Before filming *Seeking Happily Ever After*, you had written a book called *I'm Not Mad, I Just Hate You* about mother-daughter relationships. How does that book compare to your first?

I'm Not Mad, I Just Hate You was a book that helped mom teach their teen daughters how to handle conflict. It was a book meant to empower women by giving them concrete strategies that they could then pass on to their daughters. *Seeking Happily Ever After* is a book that strives to empower single women by helping them tune into their own needs and block out all the "noise" and pressure to get married. I think most of my projects, in one way or another, challenge women to explore

their choices with thoughtful intention.

What kind of problems do you address in the book?

I give women the tools they need to figure out what they want for themselves in a relationship, which isn't easy in a culture obsessed with weddings. I also give them scripts to use to deal with family members, friends, colleagues and so on who treat their single status like a problem to fix. Also, I answer practical questions like, "I worry about being alone and getting sick. What can I do?" and "What do I need to know about traveling on my own?"

In the book, what is your view on being single?

The book is divided into 12 types of singlehood, such as "The Organic," who wants to meet a guy the old-fashioned way (by chance), but friends and family insist she'll end up alone; "The Late Bloomer" is the single who refuses to live life to the fullest now, but rather is waiting because she wants to enjoy her dreams with a husband. Then there is a chapter on "The Trailblazer," and this is the woman who has no interest in marriage and is sick of having to defend her decision. She has the challenge of carving out her own path, and I give women in this category tips for being able to create a new path even as others tell them their choice is wrong.

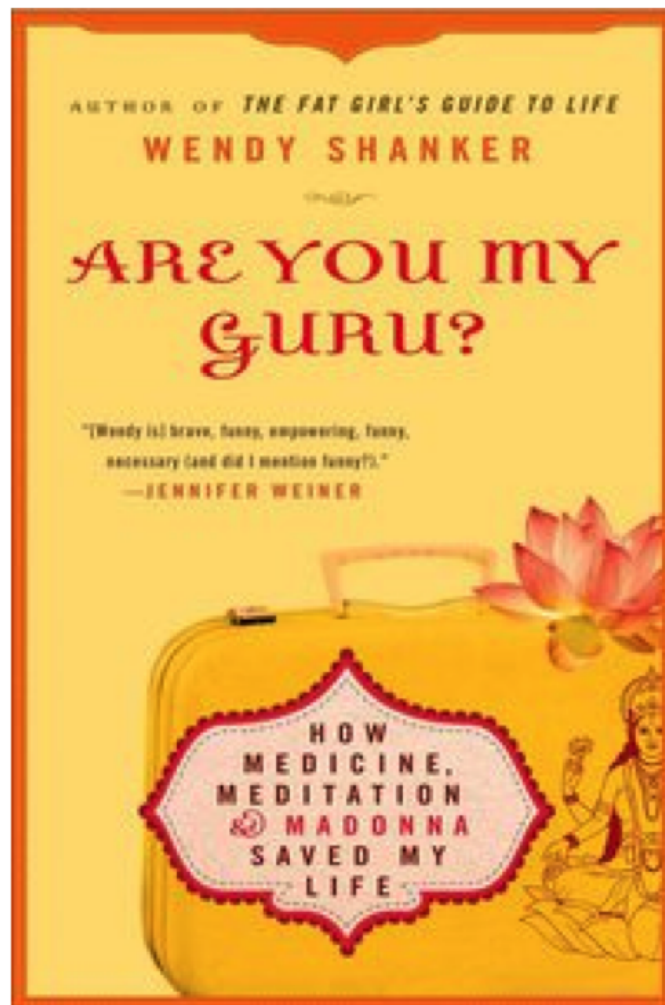
What advice do you have for single women out there?

We are taught pretty early that happiness is "married with two kids and the white picket fence," and many of us buy into this "happily ever after," whether it fits us or not. I think women need to learn how to tune into their own voice and figure out what their own happily ever after looks like right now, whether it's the conventional route or not, and how to get it. I also think we need to appreciate that our "happily ever after" notion will change over time, and it should. Our needs change over time, so we need to tune into these needs and explore them consistently.

Cupid thanks Michelle Cove for her time! For more information on the author, visit www.seekinghappilyeverafter.com.

Julie Metz Talks Her Latest Work, 'Perfection'





By Stacey Small

Every one of us has felt the pain of betrayal at some point, but Julie Metz's came in the wake of her husband's sudden and untimely death. Just as she was beginning to heal and return to a normal life months after she was widowed, Metz learns her marriage wasn't what she thought it was. Through letters and correspondence, Metz's memoir recreates her most difficult moments as she struggles to bring her life back to perfection.

How do you deal with the shortcomings of your spouse?

Cupid's Advice:

At the beginning of a relationship, it's easy to think that life is perfect. You're blown away by all of the positive qualities your new partner possesses, and you simply can't imagine that anything could go wrong. The thought that your mate has qualities you might not find attractive never crosses your mind. Sure, you may be a great match. No one is disputing that fact. But perfection in a relationship simply doesn't exist. You have to learn to deal with the things you view as your spouse's shortcomings – his less positive qualities. The best way to do that is to remind yourself of the strong points in your relationship, so that the negatives seem minuscule in comparison.

You've mentioned in an interview that you have a wonderful therapist who has helped you greatly in the past. Do you find that people who've read your work now reach out to you for guidance in their own personal lives?

What a good therapist does is help you do the work of rethinking your life by guiding you through your own process.

I do receive e-mails from readers who ask me for advice. While I do not in any way consider myself a professional advisor, I have learned some useful lessons in rebuilding my own life in the aftermath of betrayal that may be useful for others. Envisioning your future life, making a plan, doing something every day to get you closer to that vision, persevering in the face of what might feel like failure—I offer this advice to readers because it feels universal...and I try to follow it myself!

You say that *Perfection* began as a series of letters. At what point did you realize this gripping story needed to become a full book?

In the first weeks and months after my husband's sudden death, friends who lived far away called and wrote to me to see how I

was doing. It was too difficult to call everyone, so I wrote a daily e-mail and sent it to whoever had contacted me that day. The correspondence was deeply comforting and helped me feel connected to the world at a time when I felt myself retreating. When I found out about my husband's affairs, I took another giant step backwards and began again. The correspondence with friends became even more comforting.

Two writers suggested that I think about writing a book about my experiences. At first I dismissed the idea. I wasn't a professional writer and I wasn't sure how to begin. One of the writers was insistent that I try, and she sent me home with directions: go home, sit for twenty minutes a day, write.

As the writing process became more a part of my life, I found myself engaged. I was certain that there were other women and men who had been through something like my experience, and I hoped that my story might bring them comfort.

Of the women who were involved with your husband that you confronted, did any of them react in unexpected or surprising ways? What did it take for you to truly accept their apologies?

The whole experience of contacting my husband's lovers was surprising for me. Most of the women didn't seem too surprised to hear from me. In fact, in a few cases they seemed to be expecting my call. The fact that they spoke to me in an open way about their relationships with my husband helped me find forgiveness more quickly than I might have imagined.

It was harder to find forgiveness for Cathy, the woman in my town. She had not only engaged in a long-term affair over several years, but had used our daughters' friendship to gain access to my home. She was not open with me once the affair came to light and seemed to be in complete denial about the emotional consequences of the affair, eager to cover it all up so that life could continue as it had before. It took a long

time for me to make sense of this so that I could move on.

Other women I have talked to who have discovered long-term affairs have told me that it took a few years before they could wake up in the morning without thinking about the betrayal first thing. That was my experience as well. It takes time to rebuild trust in yourself and in others.

In the FAQ section of your book's website, you state, "I hope that my daughter and other young women can learn something from my painful experience." Now that she is a teen, has your daughter read any of this book, and if so, how has it helped you and/or her grow?

When I received the offer to publish *Perfection*, I spoke to my daughter about the project. She was 11 at that time, and while many people might think that is too young to discuss such adult subjects, we have always been close, and the loss of her father strengthened our bond. While I worked on the book, I left my laptop out in the open, and when I received printed copies I left those out for her to read. My goal was to depict her father with compassion, as a man who was flawed, but who loved both of us. She has always been supportive and described my book as "a real woman's story."

My daughter is now a wise 14-year old. I do think of my story as a cautionary tale, and I hope that she and other young women will think carefully about the choices they make and learn to see through the slick surfaces our culture often rewards. It's harder than ever to make good personal choices in our celebrity-driven media culture. For this younger generation, becoming media savvy—learning how to see through the artificial surface of advertising, "reality" shows, fashion magazines, websites, and social networking sites—is more difficult, and more important than ever. I am on Facebook and Twitter, I text plenty, and I love my iPhone...but I try to live with the awareness that online connections do not replace real relationships.

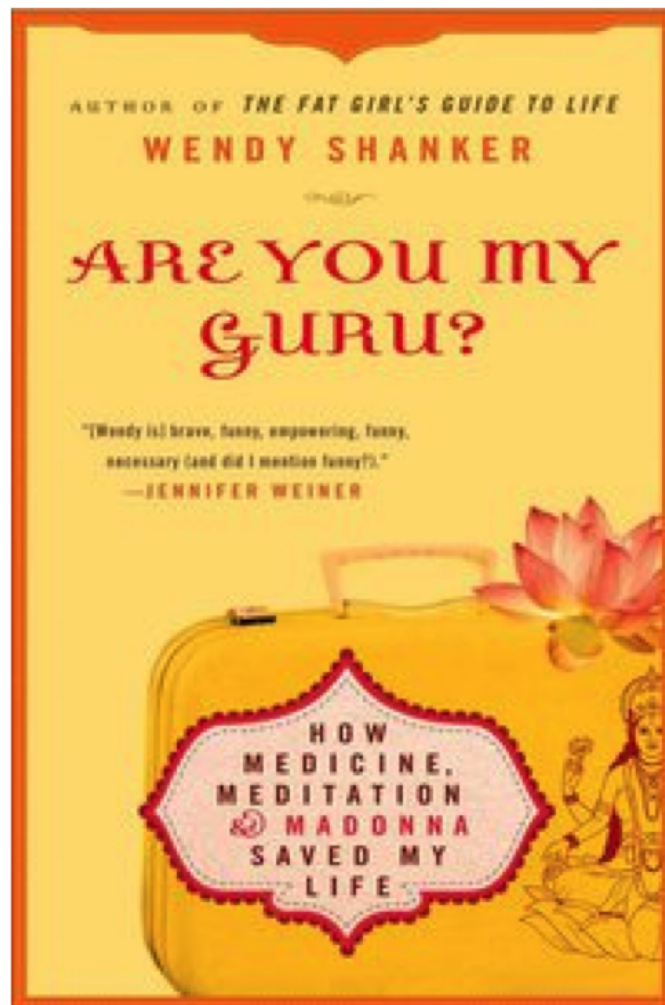
What advice would you give to those who are hiding or have hidden their infidelity from their partners?

We can see in our own lives as well as those of celebrities that even when you think you have successfully hidden your secrets, they will come out of hiding anyway. The secrets, even while they are still hidden, will cause damage to yourself and people you care about: your partner/spouse, your children, and your friends. When you are keeping big secrets, you begin to compartmentalize your life in a way that is sure to mess up your own thinking.

And eventually, because it is hard to keep secrets forever, you will be found out. Your story may not be international Tiger Woods/Sandra Bullock news, but it can still upend your life. However painful it may be, I would encourage people who are keeping secrets to come clean. If you are unhappy in your relationship, there are better and more honorable ways to resolve your issues.

Nicole Porter Discusses ‘The Break-Up Cookbook’





By Vicky Sullivan

In honor of National Singles Week, Cupid interviewed Nicole Porter, the self-published author of *The Break-Up Cookbook*. This witty collection of recipes, stories, and quotes, is a must-read for singles everywhere. Though it is said that the way to a man's heart is through his stomach, the way to a woman's broken heart seems to have always been through the same vital organ. Being from Minnesota where the temperature can hit 40 degrees below 0, comfort food is in Porter's blood. Don't be fooled, however, because this book puts the

“party” back into the phrase “pity party.” In spite of dealing with issues such as the tragedy of a broken heart, *The Break-Up Cookbook* is nothing, but funny and optimistic.

Though Porter will never lose faith in love, she celebrates singles everywhere by recognizing their many achievements. “Now is the time to recognize what you wouldn’t have done if you were busy worrying about someone else. For example, when I broke up with a guy a while back, I finally had the time to take salsa lessons. So I did. I ended up meeting the next guy there.” Porter also suggests that singles take action by never waiting around for the next person to find them. “Everyday you have four missed opportunities. Try to take at least one of them. If you see a cute guy on the subway, go for it. What do you have lose? You will probably never even see him again,” advises Porter. Be sure to pick up a copy of *The Break-Up Cookbook* as soon as possible because this is something every woman should have either on her nightstand or in her kitchen.

Cupid’s Advice:

Sometimes it’s hard to get back on your feet after a brutal break-up, but Cupid caught up with Nicole Porter to get some advice. See what the author had to say:

After a break-up, what is the best chick flick to watch while eating your fabulous recipes?

300 because you realize your boyfriend never had abs like that. So why were you with him in the first place? It’s even great with the sound off.

Why do you think the way to a woman’s broken heart is through her stomach?

Girls always want to eat and talk, but I have never had a girlfriend want to come over [after a break-up] for a salad. If it’s chocolate cake, then they will be over in 10.

What are you looking for in a man?

A guy who can make me laugh. Looks fade and money goes away, but the guy who can make me giggle is the one to look for.

What break-up occasions go best with sweet treats? What about salty?

The ones where you throw things – sweet. The ones where you cry – salty. If it's both, I recommend caramel corn.

What is your personal favorite break-up recipe?

It's a toss up between Lip Smack'n Mac n' Cheese and Flourless Chocolate Cake. I try to do just one or the other, but if it's really that kind of night, it's both. Invite friends. It's fewer calories that way.

What would you say is the secret to a successful relationship?

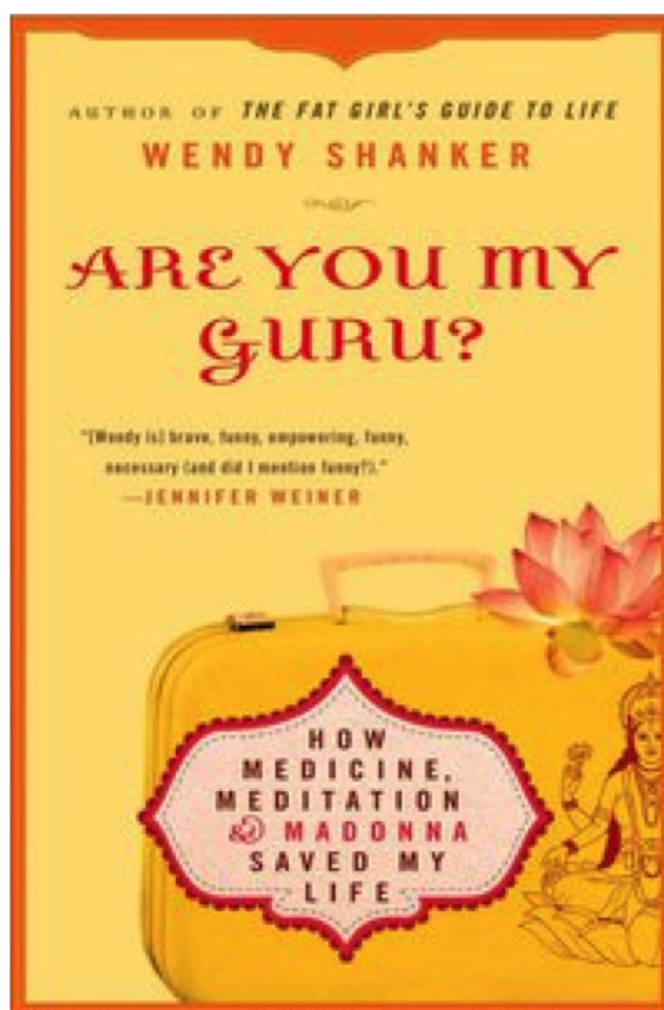
Something that is honest. You are only going to find that one person you are supposed to be with. The others just show you who you are, and it's with the last person that you can truly be yourself.

Where is the best place to meet men?

The grocery store, because there you can really tell if a guy is single or not. If he is buying meat, potatoes, and beer, he is single. If it's yogurt and chicken cutlets, he is taken.

Giulia Melucci Talks 'I

Loved, I Lost, I Made Spaghetti'



By Stacey Small

Lovers, losers, and a whole lot of linguine are at the

forefront of Giulia Melucci's new memoir, *I Loved, I Lost, I Made Spaghetti*. Whether a kindhearted alcoholic, a novelist with a Peter Pan Complex (there were two!), or the classic commitment-fearing Manhattanite, Giulia has been courted by, cried over, and has cooked for them all. But this woman's tale is far from woeful. After each romantic letdown, she recovers by indulging herself in the comforting concoction of a good cry and a bowl of pasta. Recipe—along with a heap of other delectable dishes—included. Melucci's *I Loved, I Lost, I Made Spaghetti* is a personable, at times laugh out loud adventure of a strong woman who knows the importance of nourishing her stomach, and even her soul, no matter how many times her romantic flames fizzle faster than what's cooking on the stove.

What is the number one thing you should do to attract the right partner?

Cupid's Advice:

Feel like you're looking for love in all the wrong places? Unhappy with your lack of amorous adventures? When it comes to finding that special someone, you need to begin the search closer to home: with yourself. Sure, you've heard it before, but it's true. The first step to setting yourself up for a successful relationship is learning to lead by example. Enjoy your presence, respect yourself, indulge every now and then; your confidence may very well attract someone looking to treat you in a similar fashion.

Are there similarities between your creative processes of cooking and writing? How does one influence the other?

Well, cooking is a lot easier than writing, but I suppose both of them are about making something palatable out of disparate elements. With *I Loved, I Lost, I Made Spaghetti* I tried to combine humor, sadness, and food, to bring something entertaining and nourishing to my readers. Cooking is another

way of expressing how you'd like life to taste. I try to keep it simple, because life is hard enough.

Were there ever any instances where the guy you were dating took advantage of your culinary talents?

Did you ever date someone who made you not want to cook, either for him or yourself? Every guy makes me want to cook, until he doesn't anymore. I cooked as a way to get people to love me, but also because I just really love to cook and I will do it for anyone who wants to eat with me. But yes, on occasion resentment built up around cooking in my relationships when it became clear that nothing, not even my most perfect Bolognese sauce, was going to inspire Ethan, or Lachlan, or whomever else to love me. That's my fault, not theirs. It is silly to think that cooking could change the way someone feels. I wish it could but it can't. It can't change me and it can't change them. Food is not as powerful as I hoped it would be.

You mention that your idea of comfort food never involves a pint of Häagen-Dazs. What are some of your favorite pick-me-up treats?

I don't use food to pick me up when I'm sad. Cake and ice cream are for celebrations, not pity parties. When I'm down I eat nourishing food; a bowl of pasta with broccoli and garlic or a grilled salmon fillet with a side of sauteed spinach. Just something good to keep me going.

Having spent the majority of your life in Brooklyn, what restaurants have given you the most inspiration for your cooking?

I'm inspired by Anna Klinger's wonderful cooking at Al Di La in Park Slope. Her malfatti—lovely lumps of swiss chard held together by a bit of flour and sauced with brown butter and sage—is one of the most perfect dishes I can think of. But mostly I'm inspired by the cooking my mother did for our

family when I was growing up in Bay Ridge. One of her typical dishes was a bowl of penne topped with tomatoes and fresh basil, with the delicious surprise of a few slices of fried eggplant hiding underneath. That recipe's in the book.

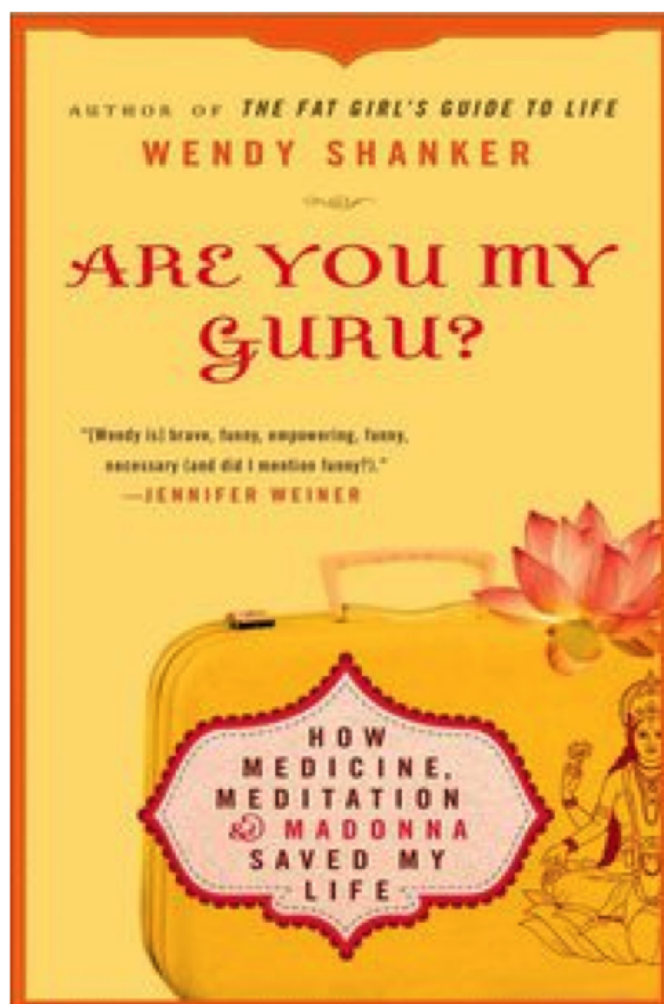
Your book is filled with charm and humor, but are there any foods or recipes you now avoid because they rekindle negative memories?

No, everything I ever cooked belongs to me and me alone. They are my creations and no bad memory can spoil that. It's one of the good things I got out of my failed relationships; I learned to be a better cook. I'm happy for every dish in my arsenal, no matter who might have been waiting at the table while I was creating it.

In your interview with The New York Times, you agree that this book is like a "Sex and the City" with wittily-titled recipes, but that it's not all about going to the hottest nightlife and dining spots. What are some 'dos and don'ts' for other single city ladies looking for romance?

Don't do anything you don't feel like doing. Don't go out if you're not in the mood just because you feel you have to because you might meet someone. Don't go on a date with someone if the idea of it makes you miserable. Do trust the universe's timing, it is spot on. Thing is, you're never going to meet the right person until you are ready to meet him. The moment you are ready, he'll be there. You may think you are ready when you're not. I know I did.

Howard J. Morris Discusses 'Women Are Crazy, Men Are Stupid'



By [Stacey Small](#)

The road to love is sometimes littered with potholes, and the bumps don't always end once you've entered a committed relationship. From the beginning stages of courtship all the way through marriage, men and women often find themselves in conflict with their lovers. [Howard J. Morris and his partner Jenny Lee](#) were no different when it came to being brandished with insulting credentials like "major nut bag" and "total dunce." But they took the age-old claim that women are crazy and men are stupid, and examined its relevance in their own love life. The result? A laugh-out-loud, he-said she-said book that chronicles personal and identifiable love troubles in a completely honest, absolutely hilarious, and very practical way. In *Women Are Crazy, Men Are Stupid*, Morris and Lee take readers on a wit-filled journey to help them figure out things like why men suck at being romantic, and why women view even the most mundane events through some emotional prism. Ultimately, they reveal ways for couples to break dysfunctional patterns and become more happily in love together.

How can you avoid coming across as stupid or crazy in your own relationship?

Cupid's Advice:

When it comes to dating and marriage, communication is key – which goes beyond voicing frustrations about your partner's bad habits and annoying flaws! Cupid got the inside scoop from Howard J. Morris himself in a recent interview. Check out what this co-author had to say about how writing the book with his partner affected their relationship, and how communication, self-awareness, and a sense of humor are crucial factors to making any romantic connection last.

This book is written in a he-said she-said format between you and your partner, Jenny. Can you describe the actual writing process, and what you think were the advantages and

disadvantages (if any) of co-authoring this project?

The writing process actually ended up benefiting our relationship tremendously. Not at first! And yes, it was difficult and brought up issues we weren't always too keen to deal with. In fact, Jenny was positive writing the book together would break us up. As she says to me in the book, "It's not like a relationship isn't hard enough when you're just in *denial* about everything. But to actually bring stuff into the open and write about it –" And there were some tense moments for sure. But once we hit on the structure of the book we were on our way. I write the first half of the chapter, unedited by her, and she writes a response to what I've written for the second half of the chapter, unedited by me. So we got to go off and read the other's pages, which had the effect of *forcing us* to hear the other person's point of view. One of the big things we learned from writing the book was how incredibly different our brains worked: How we could literally hear two different things even when the same words were spoken out loud. But when you're able to *really* see something from the other's point of view – and not just give it lip service – suddenly everything isn't as stupid and crazy as it first seemed. For instance, I finally understood the subtext to all Jenny's crazy, no-win questions like "Am I fat?" or "Which one of my friends do you find most attractive?" or "Why did you do that mean thing to me in my dream?" What she was really asking was asking me was one simple question: "Do you love me more than anyone else?" And I know how to answer *that* question (for guys reading this who may still be unclear, the answer is "YES!").

***Women Are Crazy, Men Are Stupid* is a great read for couples in committed relationships. Would you say that there are also lessons to be learned for those involved in rocky romances or casual flings?**

Absolutely. Understanding that men are idiots and women are insane (when it comes to each other!) helps in any kind of

male/female interaction. Especially when trying to figure out on a first date if you're sitting across from an "Irredeemable idiot" or just a "normal numbskull": Or in a man's case, whether his date is "wonderfully nutty" or a "Total Whack Job." We have a whole chapter in the book about "signs" and how women see them in everything (crazy!) and men never see them in anything, even when they're staring them right in the face (stupid!). Being able to pick up on signs on a first date is crucial. But again, your ability to see from the other's perspective helps immensely. And this general rule for men never hurt in any relationship: "Don't get between a woman and her crazy." *Crazy will burn itself out.* I wish I had known this when I first started dating...

Were there any eye-opening revelations about your own romantic partnership that materialized in the process of writing this book?

Romance has always been one of our toughest issues. Jenny's a die-hard romantic and I'm no Richard Gere (in "Pretty Woman," "Officer And A Gentleman," "Runaway Bride"...). No man in America has done more to make regular guys look bad than Richard Gere. But one eye opening thing that we learned about this subject as we were writing the book is that I believed that love and romance were basically the same thing. I kept saying, "You know I love you! Why do you need all that carriage through the park and horses running on a sandy beach stuff?" I thought showing her I loved her was being romantic. Turns out it's not. Romance is a whole other thing that involves suspense, panache and possibly chocolate or flowers. Guys don't really understand because we never really wanted romance. At least not in the same way. When I mentioned that our minds are wired differently this is one of the things I'm talking about. A woman will often have romantic fantasies about, say, her wedding day, from a very young age. But most guys have never thought about the actual wedding part until they pop the question. And even then not so much. But

again, if you look at it from her point of view, it shouldn't matter that a guy doesn't need romance. In fact, isn't that one of the points of romance? That it's something you do unselfishly for someone else and not yourself? In fact, it's even more romantic when it comes at a cost to you! Why am I sitting here talking to you? I need to go plan something romantic! (Actually, I have something planned for August 14. Jenny doesn't know so don't tell her! But we had kind of a disappointing Valentine's day this year so I decided we're going to celebrate "Half Valentine's Day" on August 14. We're going to lunch at her favorite restaurant, then seeing a show and ending up at a hotel for the night. Shhhhh. It's a surprise!)

You have written for a variety of television sitcoms; did those on-screen prototypes of the dumb husband and nutty wife influence you to write this book?

What's interesting about your question is that on most sitcoms (certainly the ones I've written on), it's usually just the dumb husband and the woman plays the finger wagging, "I told you so" role. I've always felt that the crazy wife gets short shrift in these shows. Jenny and I sold a sitcom based on our book to ABC and promised to give equal time to the crazy. I think most sitcoms are written by men, who are stupid, yes, and more importantly terrified of their wives, so maybe that's the reason. But if our show ends up moving forward, we guarantee equal crazy opportunity. Crazy can be funny. It's an untapped market.

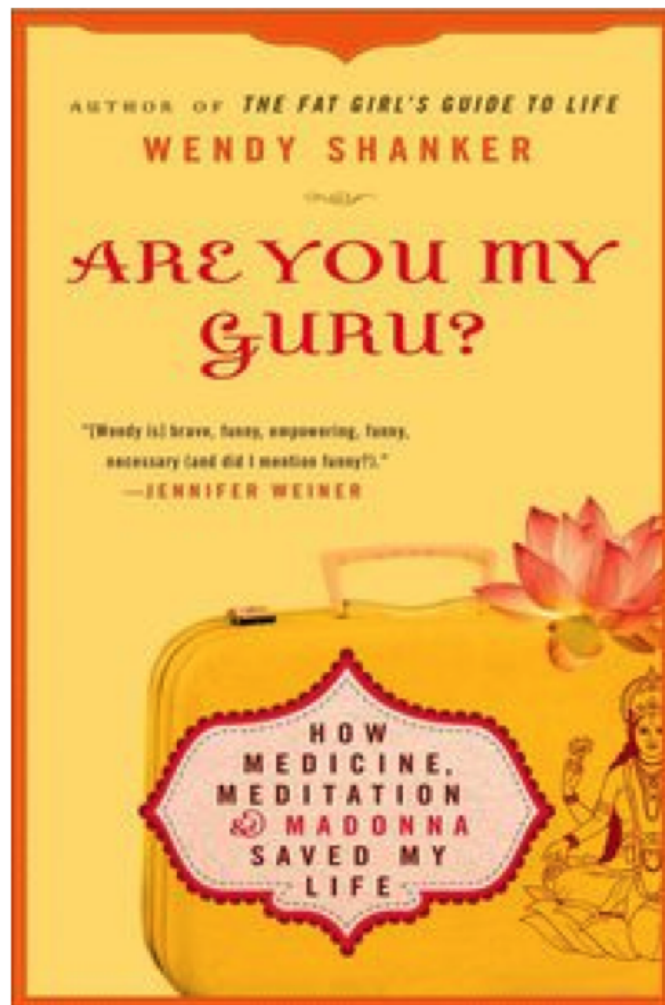
Have you received any opposition to the book or title, and what advice would you give to a reluctant reader?

Most people, with senses of humor at least, love the title and understand we're not saying women are crazy about everything, or men are stupid about everything, just each other. But some women, and initially Jenny too, were concerned about blatantly calling women crazy. Jenny still insists she's "situationally

crazy” not “blank check crazy” whatever *that* means... And I’ve noticed that none of these women who object to being called crazy are at all offended that we call men stupid! To anyone who is offended by the title, I would respond, “Lighten up! Read this and you’ll get some great laughs and maybe even learn something!”

Sherry Amatenstein Dishes on ‘The Complete Marriage Counselor’





By Krissy Dolor

Everyone's seen the row of marriage self-help books on the shelves of the local bookstore. With so many to choose from, how can you pick just one? That's where Sherry Amatenstein comes in. This license master social worker decided to take the guesswork out of picking just one expert, and combined the country's best marriage counselors into one place. *The Complete Marriage Counselor: Relationship Saving Advice from America's Top 50+ Couples Therapists* offers a one-stop shop for all things marriage-related, tackling 101 of couples'

most-asked questions, getting to what America's couples are really thinking.

What should you do if you're unhappy in your marriage?

Cupid's Advice:

Before committing to a counselor, check out Amatenstein's book. With her comprehensive research and knowledge in the field, her guide is as inclusive as you can get in less than 300 pages!

Cupid chatted with Amatenstein on the phone last month. Take a look at what the author had to say:

Your third book, *The Complete Marriage Counselor*, came out in January. How did you come up with the idea?

I do couples' therapy myself, and just sort of thought about it. When you have a medical concern, you go to a second doctor for another opinion. With couples, I thought it would be really great to pull together from the best in the business. Each chapter highlights a different issue – sex, money, goals, infidelity, and so on. I asked the therapists what their most popular questions were. Then for each question, I went to two different therapists, and asked their opinions for each question. I was sure to ask therapists who practiced different techniques. Then I gave my own take.

How did you determine who would contribute to the book?

I knew people from doing couples' therapy. With my background as a journalist, I sort of knew who people were, and went for my dream team. I was happy with everyone I got.

What were some of the most common themes in the questions that were selected?

The book is separated by issues, including marriage, house

work, work, communication, handling rough patches, money, second marriage. What my book does is take a lot of typical patterns and issues that come up with couples. I took issues that hit home the most for couples. Also, parenting issues.

What is the number one relationship issue facing today's couple?

Trust. It's very hard to be vulnerable and really communicate what you're feeling. One of my sayings is, "underneath the anger is fear." When you can come to a place of empathy, and really understand the other person's point of view, it can really be a magical thing. According to a study, couples only hear only 30 percent of what the other person says. We often get caught up in ourselves. People forget a relationship should be a partnership, putting each other first, being open, and being vulnerable.

What's the most important concept you think your readers should take after reading this book?

I think, is it more important to be right, or is it more important to be happy? Instead of it being all about me, me, me, recall that John Kennedy quote – "ask not what your country can do for you – ask what you can do for your country," can be: "Ask not what your spouse can do for you, but what you can do for your spouse."

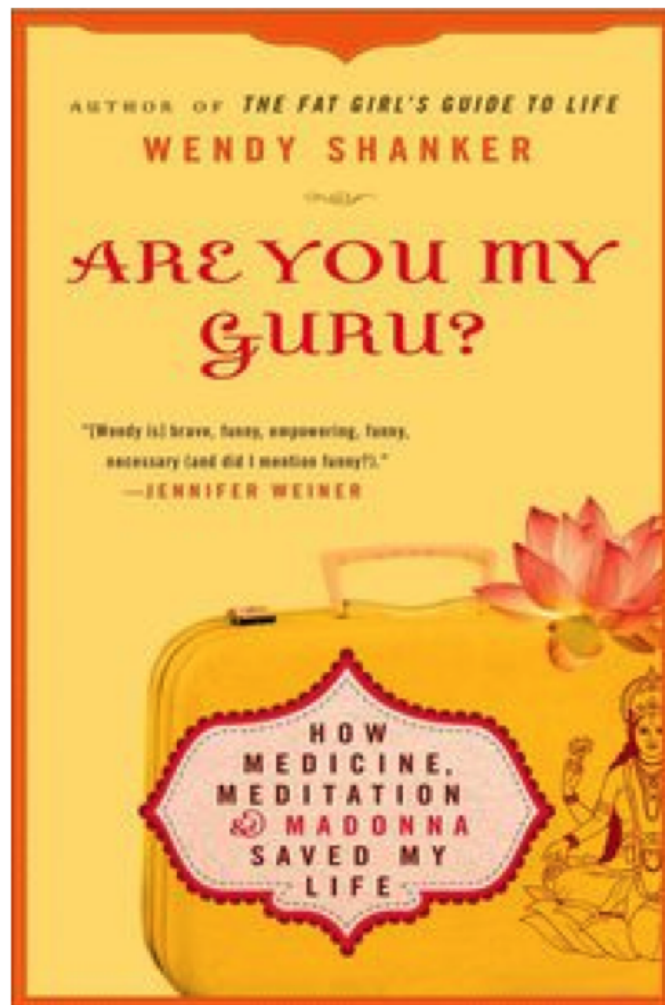
One exercise I use for when a couple is roadblocked is to walk a mile in the other person's moccasins. By seeing how others have to deal with you can really be eye opening. You are really seeing each other's point of view.

I think the book is helpful for any couples in any stage of the marriage. I am happy when couples come to me even before they marry. A lot of people have this fantasy about the idea of marriage. If you think about the issues of marriage that will come up *before* getting married, you can build skills on working through them together, and stop getting into patterns

– even if this leads the couple to realize, ‘we shouldn’t be together.’

Dr. Diana Kirshner Talks ‘Love in 90 Days’





By Krissy Dolor

A deadline for love? According to Dr. Diana Kirschner, it's possible! This love expert, media psychologist, and author has helped both singles and couples on their road to love. Based on clinical research and personal experience, *Love in 90 Days* guides you along your journey to self-discovery with good advice, and of course, tough love. The author also addresses common mistaken beliefs about relationships and dating, and shares stories from women who have been successful in their own 90-day path to a great relationship.

How can *you* find love in 90 days?

Cupid's Advice:

Love in 90 Days has step-by-step instructions, checklists, and homework assignments to aid those needing a little help in the romance department, as well as tips from women who have done it themselves. Cupid caught up with Dr. Kirschner via email last month to talk about the book. Take a look at what she had to say:

How did you come up with the 'deadline,' so to speak, of finding love in 90 days?

Because over the years, as I was helping more and more women find true love, they were able to do it faster and faster! Ninety days to change your love life became a real, doable possibility, and a reality for many women.

Are people skeptical of your claim that anyone can find love in 90 days?

Yes. But once I start outlining all the different steps you can use in the book to handle any dead-end-dating patterns and find lots of terrific men, they are convinced that it is possible!

There are exercises to use to stop yourself from being a "hermit," or getting involved with guys too fast (the "Flame-Out") so that it blows up in your face, and many more. I describe 13 of these Deadly Dating Patterns and what to do about them. And then we have dozens of ways to meet great guys, including ways to optimize your profile so that it comes up first on online dating sites when men search! Also, places to go that are loaded with great guys where there is very little competition – and much more.

I have had women go from zero guys to having 200 to choose from!

Here's one secret: skyrocket the number of people you meet online by simply changing your profile a bit every day – you'll go to the top of the search engine on the site, and hundreds more will see you.

While writing your book, what was the most surprising piece of research you came across that you wanted to share with your readers?

That if you don't recover from the depression of a break up by 16 weeks there is decreased brain activity in regions associated with emotion, motivation, and attention.

The paperback now has a chapter entitled 'Dating Games Men Play.' What made you decide to include a new chapter – and a chapter on this topic in particular?

So often women choose the wrong guy to give everything to! And then when the relationship explodes, they suffer and tend to analyze what they did wrong to make it go south, and it wasn't necessarily anything they did. I wanted to give a clear road map to women to help them see who they are dealing with when they are dating.

Half the people in who are in relationships shouldn't be in them. There are 16 different sabotaging games men play in relationships. Three are completely unworkable, and call for an immediate dump! The other 13 are more workable. So if you're unhappy in a relationship, what you'll learn in the *Love in 90 Days* paperback is how to figure out what the guy's dead-end patterns are, and whether to keep him or dump him.

Best news of all – if you leave him, I can help you find someone new in 90 Days.

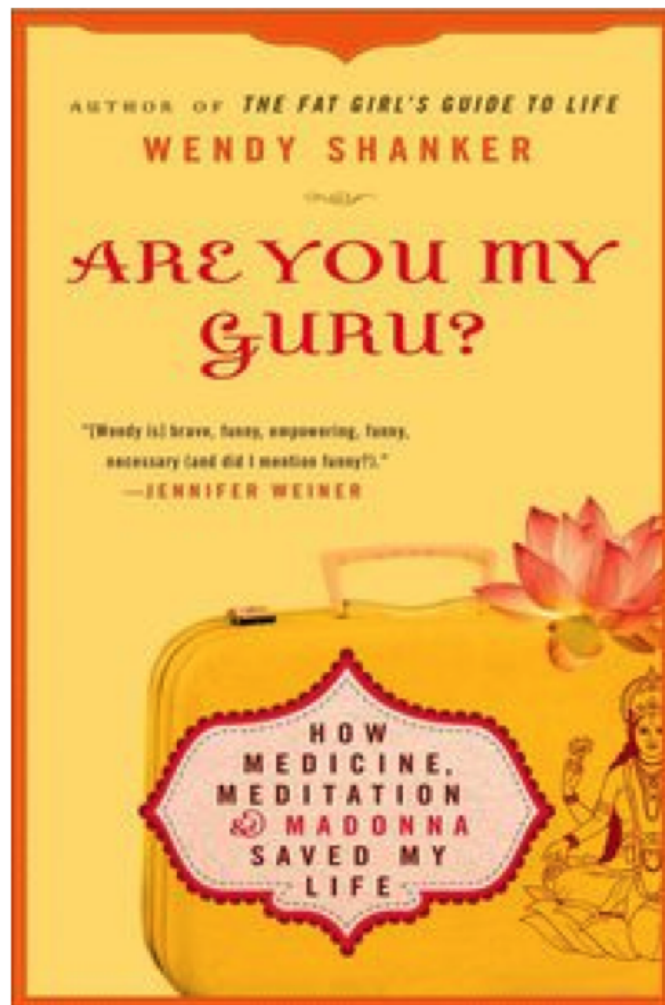
What's the one piece of advice you want your readers to come away with after reading your book?

Know that you can find true love no matter what your age,

size, or baggage from the past is! You just need to learn how to do it.

Susan Shapiro Is 'Overexposed'





By [Krissy Dolor](#)

Rachel Solomon is a young Manhattan photographer who wanted out from her Jewish Midwestern roots. Enter Elizabeth Mann: WASP friend, career mentor, and future sister-in-law, who's about to marry Rachel's brother, and fully integrate herself into the Solomon family – complete with four babies all named after Rachel's dead Yiddish-speaking relatives.

What's a girl to do when she realizes that the domesticated life she has shunned is suddenly the one she wants to live?

Cupid's Advice:

In [Susan Shapiro's](#) latest foray into fiction, you'll see how Rachel deals with Elizabeth being the daughter her mother always wanted, and now, envying the life she has tried to escape from. Based on a true story, the *Speed Shrinker* author and *Five Guys Who Broke My Heart* memoirist, Shapiro's dramedy, [Overexposed](#), shows the bonds of female friendship, and confirms the idea of finding love when you least expect it.

Cupid spoke with Shapiro via email last week. Take a look at what the author had to say:

You're known for your memoirs, but this book is listed under fiction. What was hard (or easy) about this transition?

When I first tried to sell OVEREXPOSED in the 90's, a critic told me, "You have an imagination, stop trying fiction." So I switched to memoirs, had a breakthrough with FIVE MEN WHO BROKE MY HEART, and sold four more books in a row. When SPEED SHRINKING, the last book I tried as nonfiction didn't sell, I turned it into fiction, got a two-book deal, and 15 years later I'm an overnight success.

You've done a lot about love and relationships. What about this topic draws you to continue writing about it?

Sex sells! And that same critic told me, "You write best about people you love." And I always tell my students to write about their obsessions, so I'm taking my own advice. Though my husband hates being written about.

OVEREXPOSED is based on a true story. How much of the book mimics real life?

I still don't have a great imagination. It's based on a true story about me and my sister-in-law switching lives. It's about 80 percent true now; instead of two writers, the main heroines are now two photographers, instead of Michigan (where

I grew up) it's Chicago, and I switched the time frame. I joke that it took me until age 48 to write a happy successful 26-year-old character that my 26-year-old editor liked.

Also, it took a long time for *OVEREXPOSED* to come to fruition. What about the story kept you pushing for it?

My sister-in-law has been such a headache for so long – I thought I deserved to make some money, and get a book deal out of it.

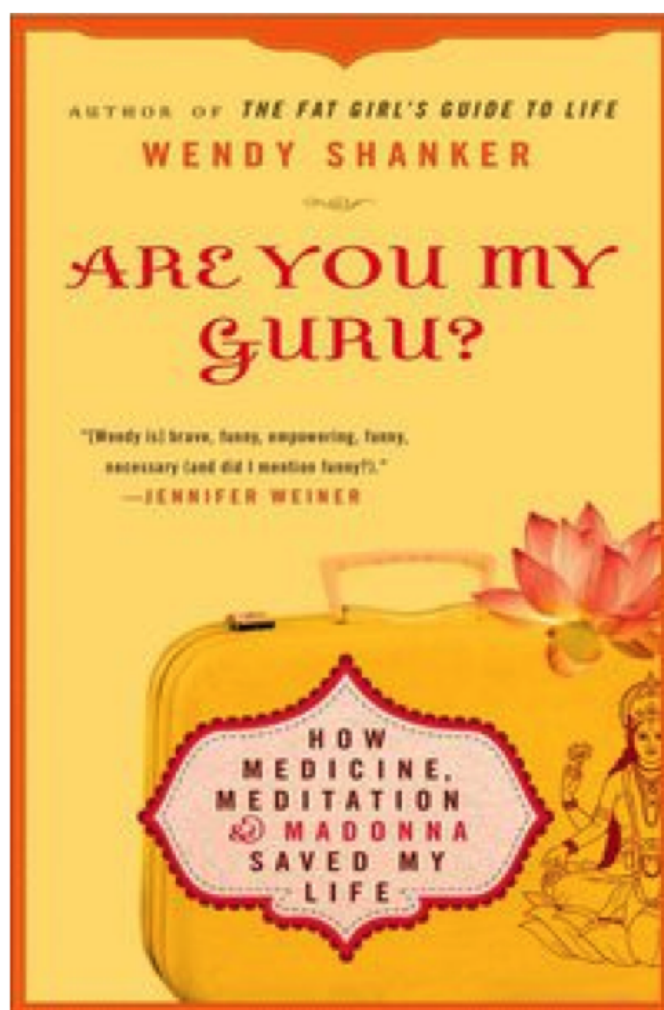
What's the one thing you'd like readers to take away after reading your book?

The heroine Rachel is single and finally stops chasing men. She obsesses over her photography career instead. Of course, the minute she gives up chasing guys, they all come back. That happened to me in real life. Here's great advice from my shrink that I quoted in my first relationship memoir, *FIVE MEN WHO BROKE MY HEART*: "Love doesn't make you happy, make yourself happy." (Then you get love).

Cupid thanks Shapiro for her time! In addition to promoting [Overexposed](#), which hits the shelves on August 3, she is busy working on the screenplay for [Five Men Who Broke My Heart](#), her memoir on sex and relationships. For more information about the author, visit her [website](#). Can't wait to read the book? Pre-order it from [Amazon](#)!

Andrea Syrtash Says 'He's Just Not Your Type (And

That's a Good Thing)'



By Krissy Dolor

Relationship expert and dating columnist Andrea Syrtash dishes out some non-traditional advice to singles trying to find a perfect match: simply date your “non-type.” After playing the

dating game for several years, she says women tend to fall into a relationship rut, attracting the same type of guy that never seems to work out. Syrtash says that it's not that she's not into them – the guy is just not their type. In *He's Just Not Your Type (And That's a Good Thing)*, Syrtash entices readers to date outside their norm, discard their dating rules, and start fresh. With stories from real women who found happiness with their non-types (NTs) and a practical approach to dating, Syrtash shows that true love can be found.

Cupid's Advice:

Sometimes it's hard to think about dating someone outside your own visual dating box, but Cupid caught up with Syrtash last week. See what the author had to say:

The advice you give goes against the norm of dating rules. What did people say when you told them the premise of your book?

My advice seems counter-intuitive at first but then many people have admitted that it's really logical! I'm asking the reader to break her dating pattern. Einstein said the definition of insanity is doing the same thing and expecting different results...so I'm trying to inspire the reader to date – and do – differently.

How hard is it for people to look outside the box and stay away from their "type"?

Most of us are creatures of habit and we do what we know. We think we know what kind of person is best suited for us, even if relationships with that 'type' have never worked.

To find success in love and in life, a certain amount of (smart) risks have to be taken. If you want to find new results, you have to be open to venturing outside your comfort zone.

What are the best ways to break that cycle?

The first key to breaking a cycle that's not working for you is to identify your pattern. In the book, I ask the reader to consider: If your dating life were a movie, what would it be called? How would it begin or end? What character would you play? You'll likely see themes pop up, some of which you may not even be aware of.

A big pattern many women have is dating the potential – not the person. In this case, you may want to make a commitment ahead to pay attention to what the man is doing TODAY (not what he promises he'll do ahead). Also, more women need to put emphasis on a man's actions more than his words.

What will the reader learn about 'types' when she/he reads your book?

The point of **'He's Just Not Your Type'** is to stop typecasting and to start being open to possibilities! Each person is an individual, and it's important not to decide what someone is like before you know him. One woman who shared her 'nontype' story in the book swore she'd never date a guy in finance, and realizes now that she was assigning qualities to a person whom she had not even met yet! Her husband (a Wall Street broker) is philanthropic, artistic and thoughtful. She never imagined that those characteristics could come in a Wall Street package.

If you keep dating the same type of guy over and over again, your real 'type' may be the one you haven't dated yet! Another woman in the book thought she hated introverted guys so she often dated guys who were very gregarious and outgoing. When she fell in love with her nontype, a quiet cerebral guy, she realized that it worked better for her because parts of her personality that had never been expressed with other men were coming out in the new relationship. I'm a big believer that when you're with the right match, you rise

to your best potential and are fully expressed...

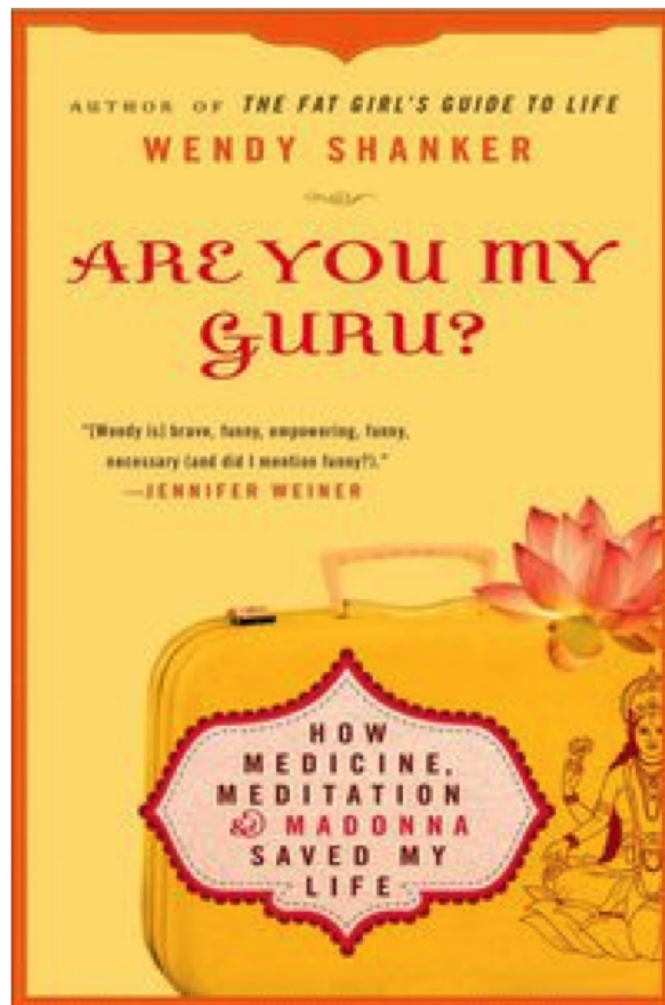
What's the most important piece of advice you want your readers to come away with?

Stop 'shoulding' all over yourself! Replace the word 'should' with the word 'want,' and you'll make more authentic choices in life and in love. I want readers to consider who they would date if nobody else was looking. I also hope the book inspires the reader to think differently about who will make her happy over the long-term (I've provided exercises so she can get clearer on that).

When you're with a good match you won't only consider who the guy is – you will look at who you are *with* him. It doesn't matter how great a guy is on paper if you're not the best version of yourself. Don't settle for less than that.

Julie Spira Discusses 'The Perils of Cyber-Dating'





By [Krissy Dolor](#)

More than 40 million singles are dating online. With around 2,500 online dating sites to choose from, how can you navigate your way safely and find love on the Internet? Julie Spira's tell-all memoir, [The Perils of Cyber-Dating: Confessions of a Hopeful Romantic Looking for Love Online](#), can help. You'll follow her on her 15-year journey – which included 250 online dates – as she navigated the web in hopes to find an Internet mate to replace someone she thought was the love of her life. Through her romances, heartbreaks, and personal rules of

“netiquette,” Spira shares invaluable first-hand knowledge on the best ways to date online.

Cupid’s Advice:

Online dating has it’s own set of rules. Remember to be safe and savvy when on the web. Cupid caught up with the Spira via e-mail this week. Here’s what the author had to say:

You were one of the first people to delve into the world of online dating. Were you scared? What were other people’s reactions?

At the time I created my first online dating profile in 1994, I wasn’t scared at all. I fully embraced the Internet both personally and professionally. But, since online dating was not mainstream at that point, I told very few people that I was meeting my dates from online dating sites. I told some close friends who I thought could benefit from online dating and helped them with their online dating profiles.

What’s different about cyberdating (as compared to traditional dating), and how can people adapt to it?

The main difference between cyberdating and traditional dating is that you are meeting someone that you haven’t met before in real life and you are getting to know them from behind their computer screen. Online dating, Internet dating, and cyberdating are all terms used for those using online dating sites, chat rooms, video dating, and social dating sites. This also includes social networking sites such as Facebook and MySpace. In order to completely embrace online dating, one needs to be comfortable using their computer. It’s also important to be very organized as you may receive hundreds of emails in the first day or two. In order to be successful, if you create a system that helps keep all of the replies and emails sent, you’ll be able to communicate with your dates with their background information. If you are already using

Facebook to communicate with friends, it's the next logical step.

What have you seen change about the online dating world since you started?

When I first started dating online, Match.com hadn't been launched yet. There were very few sites to pick from. It was a much simpler process without all the Web 2.0 bells and whistles. You weren't seeing video dating and text messaging wasn't an option in the U.S.

What is your relationship to online dating now?

As an online dating coach, I help singles create their irresistible online dating profiles and work with them to search the best possible matches. I also help them decide which sites to join and teach them how to craft and email introduction and response that will grab the attention of those profiles they select.

What are your top 5 netiquette rules for cyberdating?

My Rules of Netiquette from my book, [*The Perils of Cyber-Dating: Confessions of a Hopeful Romantic Looking for Love Online*](#), include:

- 1. The Google Rule:** If you Google your date before you meet them, don't let them know on the first date. You'd be surprised how some people actually print out the Google results and start questioning their date about specific entries. It's not appropriate first date material and no one wants to feel like they are on a job interview or under the microscope.
- 2. The Food and Beverage Rule:** If you ask a date out for coffee, be prepared to order a beverage for her and yourself. I have heard stories many times where either someone arrives with their own water, or simply does not order a coffee or tea for their date. You should assume that a coffee date includes a drink, and a dinner date includes some form of food.
- 3. The Ex Rule:** Don't talk about your ex-wife or husband, ex

girlfriend or boyfriend, or spend time talking about the past. You'd be surprised that some talk about their spousal support, or a relationship that didn't work out on the first date. Keep it light and leave the baggage at home.

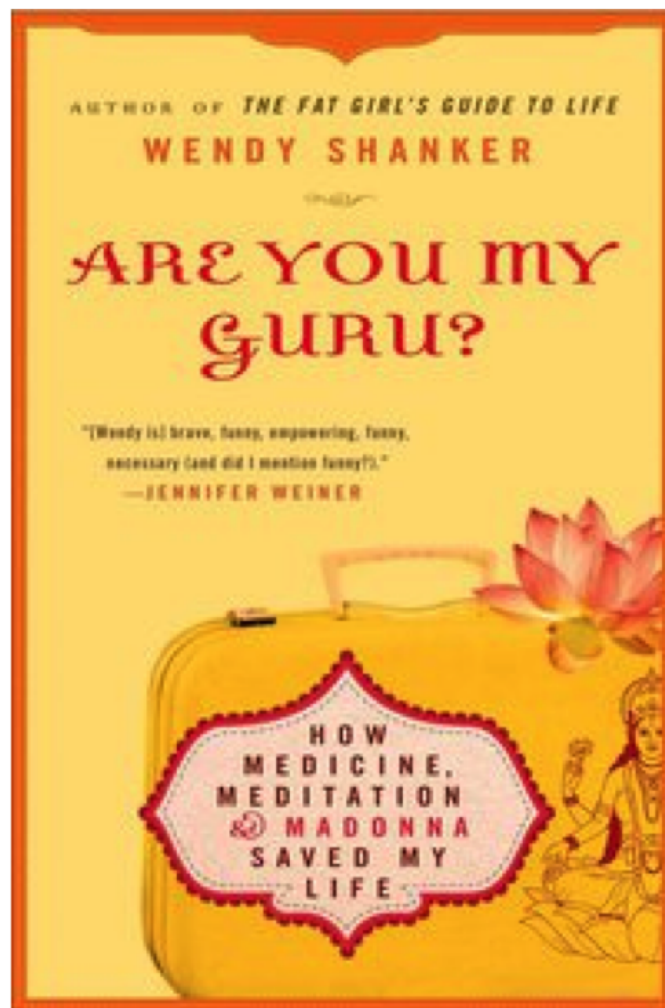
4. The Send Button Rule: My mother always says, "If you don't have anything nice to say about someone, don't say anything at all." Too often someone gets mad and drafts an email and pushes the send button. When in doubt, send it to yourself. You might feel differently in the morning. Once you push the send button, you can't take it back.

5. The Break Up Rule: Never break up with a significant other in an email or a text message. It's just common courtesy to have a conversation and preferably in person. Do you really want to go down in history as the one who frequently dumps their dates in an email or text? Sure, celebrities are ending relationships in text messages and on Twitter these days. But is it right?

Most importantly, be authentic. Authenticity is really in style now. With over 400 million members on Facebook, it's easy for someone to see if your photo on your online dating profile does not match the recent birthday or vacation pictures on Facebook. We know that many singles lie about their age in their online dating profiles to fit into a search, but the truth will come out when you meet in real life. You start out on a bad foot if you are lying about your age, weight, and height. Enjoy the process and look at cyberdating as a way to increase your social and business networks in the event it doesn't turn into a romantic relationship.

Amy Spencer Talks About

'Meeting Your Half-Orange'



By [Krissy Dolor](#)

Single? Can't seem to find your *mi media naranja*, which is Spanish for "my half-orange," a phrase used to describe your other half? Maybe a change in attitude is all you need. [Amy](#)

[Spencer's](#) new book, [Meeting Your Half-Orange: An Utterly Upbeat Guide to Using Dating Optimism to Find Your Perfect Match](#), focuses on positive thinking (aka dating optimism), which Spencer says is based on brain science and psychology.

Cupid's Advice:

A little science mixed with optimism may be just the solution singles need when looking for love. Cupid chatted with Spencer last week. Here's what the author had to say:

Your book was released after the *He's Just Not That Into You* phase – how is your book different?

I was a huge fan of the book when it came out. I was single at the time, and I found that *He's Just Not That Into You* released me, and gave me permission to cut off ties with relationships that weren't going anywhere. I believe this book was a gift to women at the time.

However, what my book does – not that it's anti-*He's Just Not That Into You* – but instead of putting the focus on him, it puts the focus on you. This puts more power and control in your hands. Rather than looking at a guy and asking, "Do we get along, does he like me?" it turns it back to you: "Do I feel I like him?" You need to know how you want to feel in your ideal relationship. People who are optimistic don't feel helpless.

Is this book targeted to women, or can men benefit from reading it?

Yes, men can benefit from this book, but it's not written from his point of view right on page one. However, the book is for everybody. I believe that everyone deserves his or her half-orange. I was writing this book for the woman who has been in that place in life where she just really wants to find a relationship and is tired of dating – and is tired of *being* tired of dating. There have been men who have written to me

and told me it has worked for them. If a guy is capable of looking past the pronouns, then it can work for everybody.

What other quirky ways are there to say “other half” in relation to love?

It's funny that you ask that, I didn't really think about that before writing. Actually, the reason the title came about is because my husband's family is Argentinean, and I met him around the time that I was writing the book. They said to him, “This is your *media naranja*,” and explained to me what it meant.

I wanted people to be able to connect to the phrase; not some spiritual quote, and not “Mr. Right” – what you're doing is you're looking for a partner, a teammate. I wanted to come up with a new phrase that reflected what I wanted in a relationship. I mean, it's perfect: if you take an orange and split it in half, you have a completed whole meeting equally in the middle.

Knowing what you know now, would you go back in time to help out your younger self and find your other half sooner?

I wouldn't change a thing. Everything happens for a reason. Everyone I've dated and met along the way was all part of my big journey. You need to have each experience to build up who you are. This makes up who you are, and makes your partner who they are. So when you finally come together with your partner, you are in the right place at the right time for it to happen. I'm grateful that this is how it happened for me.

What are three main points you want readers to take away from your story?

- 1) this book is about becoming truly determined to end up in a great relationship, and believing that it is possible.
- 2) becoming so authentically happy in your own skin that you

feel like your best self, whether you're with someone or not.

3) the idea that if you do those two things, you'll naturally draw the right person to you without working too hard at it. You don't have to drag yourself to singles events or on dates; if you do these things, your other half will land in your lap.