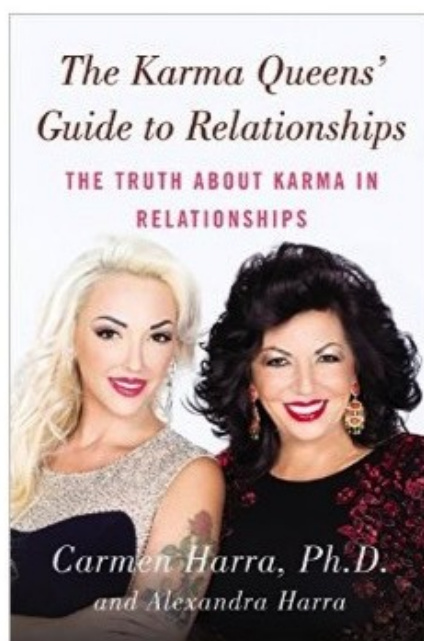


# Relationship Author Carmen Harra Reveals 'The Truth About Karma in Relationships'



By Meranda Yslas

Licensed psychologist, relationship expert, and spiritual teacher Carmen Harra recently released a new love advice book that she co-wrote with her daughter, Alexandra Harra. *The Karma Queens' Guide to Relationships: The Truth About Karma in Relationships* explores how karma affects our everyday life. From romantic relationships to the parent-child relationship, the [relationship author](#) stresses the importance of having strong and clean karma.

# Relationship Expert Explains The Importance of Karma

**Your book focuses on how karma plays a role in relationships and love. Can you explain karma to our readers?**

The concept of karma is considered to be the number one law of spirituality. As human beings, we are defined by our actions, our thoughts, and our intentions that translate into reality. We have individual karma, and we have family karma, meaning your intentions reflect in your family and in the people closest to you. I think karma is the foundation of the human bond, the foundation of human laws, the foundation of relationships.

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

**How do you work on karma to make sure it's strong and healthy?**

Karma is something you can reverse, something you can work on. Karma is something that requires work. The more you are aware and the sooner you work on it, the better. The more you clean the karmic blockages, the sooner you can move your life in the right direction. If you feel that you have a block somewhere, you have to go and revisit your karmic pattern and understand where that blockage is.

**How does karma affect our relationships and love?**

All of our romantic relationships are karmically affected. Let's say you're raised in a dysfunctional family. You will have a very hard time creating your own family because all of those imprints will be stored in the subconscious mind. If you don't work on that and you don't acknowledge what has happened in your youth, then you will have a harder time creating a good family and a good foundation of your love life.

When you think of the word “karma,” it is something that gets repeated. It’s like a memory that stays in your mind. Sometimes, it goes dormant, and all of a sudden it wake up, and it hits you. In psychology, it’s called dissociative amnesia. People tend to forget; people tend not to remember what has been done to them, but when you wake up that karmic pattern, you have an ability to erase it. So it’s good to revisit memories; it’s good to bring memories to the conscious level so that you can take them away and not let them hurt you anymore. If the mind has too much information and too many bad memories, it gets clogged. Every single relationship should be pure and should be unclouded of the negative karmic information.

**Related Link:** [Author Vicki Reece Offers Love Advice for Moms: “I’m All For Family Date Night”](#)

## **Relationship Advice For Getting Out of Toxic Relationships**

**One of sections *The Karma Queens’ Guide to Relationships* is about toxic relationships. How are you able to get out of a relationship that is more harmful than good?**

You need to uncloud any information that has existed, and in order to do so, you need to revisit all of your issues and make sure things are as simple as possible. One of the key things for relationships to function well is simplicity. That’s why my new article is about ways to detoxify dysfunctional relationships – we live with them, and we’re not aware of how toxic they can be. A toxic relationship doesn’t allow you to trust people; a toxic relationship doesn’t allow you to function at the best level of yourself – it’s like your soul is broken in pieces. You have to work on yourself to empower yourself.

Sometimes, dysfunction can be an obsession and can create an

obsessive pattern. What you need to do is replace your obsessions. A lot of dysfunctional relationships are based on an obsession. How many people are obsessed with the people they can't be with? How you work with changing that obsession is the work of the mind. You need to reprogram, to rewire the brain. It's an entire technique of rewiring the brain by eliminating all those obsessive behavior problems.

You have to practice what is called self-care. It's the fact that people ignore themselves; that's why they become self-destructive. You attack yourself, and that has a lot to do with not being able to take care of yourself. There is something wrong with you, so the moment you practice that self-care, you have a chance of healing from something like that.

You have to work on it on a daily basis. The neurons in the brain need to be creating new patterns of thinking. People go to the gym. What about working on the neurons in the brain to create the new paths of thinking? Relationships that are dysfunctional damage your well-being. If you don't clean the toxicity and if you continue to live in the poor relationship, you will never be balanced enough or you will never be well enough at any level of your being, not even physically.

**Is there anything else you would like to share with our readers?**

They should be aware of the power of their own mind, the power of their own soul, the power of their own words, both written and spoken. If you start saying, "I'm not good; I'm not beautiful," then you're not empowering yourself. People should be aware that is part of the self-care and the self-empowerment. I feel like my book, personally, is kind of a manual. It gives you wisdom, and wisdom erases karma. I wrote all my wisdom throughout the years and then combined it with my daughter's perception of the younger generation. We asked, "How can we make this right? How can we start having those

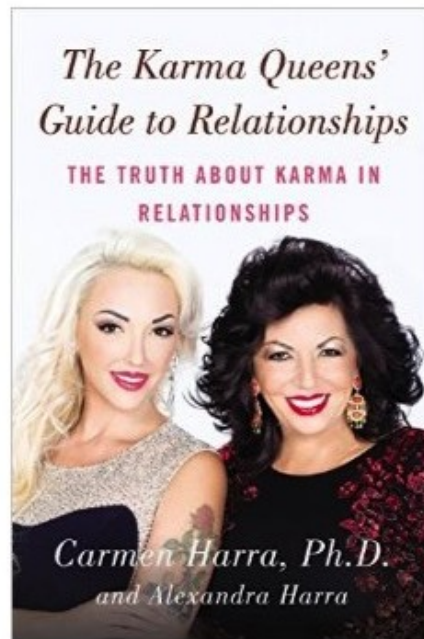
wonderful relationships in which we celebrate the other people in your life? Is it possible?" Absolutely! With the right mindset, you finally can live in peace and joy and celebrate every aspect of your life. A book on relationships and love is about celebrating life!

*You can purchase The Karma Queens' Guide to Relationships: The Truth About Karma in Relationships on Amazon.*

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**Author Ellen McCarthy  
Discusses 'The Real Thing'  
About Relationships and Love:  
Find "Someone Who Appreciates  
Your Whole, Quirky,  
Imperfect, Wonderful Self"**





By [Sarah Batcheller](#)

The day a bride walks down the aisle is magical not only for the lovebirds but for all those in attendance. Family and friends gather to gaze upon this unforgettable event. Weddings make us all ponder the intricate weaving of a lasting relationship and love and what it takes to create one. Having covered over 200 ceremonies as a wedding reporter for *The Washington Post*, relationship author Ellen McCarthy has crafted a warm, insightful book based on the couples she has had the privilege of interviewing. In her new book about love, titled *The Real Thing: Lessons on Love and Life From a Wedding Reporter's Notebook*, she shares her findings on what it takes to reach this ever-magical day and make it last forever and always.

## Love Advice From Wedding Reporter and Relationship Author

What did you want to capture in this book about love that you couldn't have in an article?

The articles I wrote during my time on *The Washington Post* weddings beat were really about each couple's story – how they met, fell in love, and decided to walk down the aisle. But during so many interviews, I came away with little gems of relationship wisdom that didn't seem to fit into the story. These were the things I found myself thinking about later and relating to my friends over drinks. I wanted to collect all of those insights into a single book so that they could be passed on to others.

**Related Link:** [Celebrity Interview: Event Producer Cheryl Cecchetto Says, "Nothing is Traditional Anymore" at Weddings](#)

**How did your break-up on the day you began as the wedding reporter for *The Washington Post* impact your views on relationships and love? How did it affect your work?**

Ha! I wasn't sure how that was going to work out – interviewing happy couples who were about to walk down the aisle as I was licking my wounds from a break-up. In the beginning, it was just surreal. But as I did interview after interview, I found that the reporting gave me a great deal of hope. It was a reminder that people find love all the time, in all kinds of ways. So in that regard, it had a really positive effect on my life.

I'm not sure that being newly single affected my work, but it did create some awkward moments when couples would ask about my relationship status after I'd learned everything about theirs. Then, the nice ones would usually try to set me up!

**What would you say is the most powerful piece of love advice you learned by reporting on weddings?**

The most important thing I learned is that you actually *can* learn to be good at love. You can give yourself tools and skills and perspectives that will increase your chances of finding and maintaining a successful relationship. A lot of people don't want to hear this because they think it takes

away from the magic of love. But you know what really takes away the magic of love? Divorce.

**In your story about Lynne and Jud, you discuss how meaningful it is to find someone who is “wholly and transparently good.” What do you think makes it so difficult for women to separate the good guys from the not-so-good?**

All of life is a learning experience. I’m not looking forward to it, but someday, my 14-month-old daughter will touch something hot – a stove, a curling iron, a heater – and she will learn what it feels like to get burned. Hopefully, she won’t do it again. I think the same thing can happen in relationships. It takes getting burned before we realize we don’t want to go through that again. And we learn to protect ourselves. The trick is being willing to honestly look at what happened in the past and ingest the lesson from that experience, so we don’t just repeat it again.

## **Ellen McCarthy Dishes on Relationships and Love in New Book**

**Do you think that, because of the daunting divorce statistics, people are believing in marriage less and less?**

I realize that the statistics show that marriage is on the decline, and I know there are some people who choose not to marry, but I think, as a society, we believe in it as much as ever. There’s a reason people have fought so hard for same-sex marriage. Civil unions don’t quite cut it. We still think of marriage as the ideal. And if anything, we expect more from it than ever before. I think that’s why people are waiting longer to get married today. They want to have all their ducks in a row – a career, finances, a road-tested relationship and love – *before* they walk down the aisle.

**Related Link:** [Single in Stilettos Show: What Makes a Man See](#)



## [You as Marriage Material](#)

**Finally, what is your best dating advice for a first date with a longtime crush?**

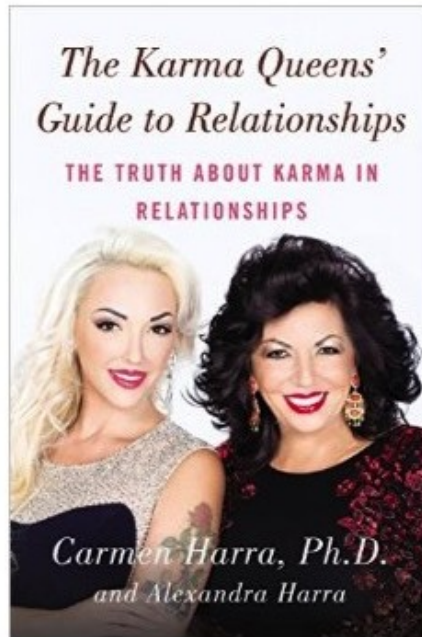
Be yourself. Be yourself. Be yourself. It can be tempting to put on a façade with a crush or any first date, but it's not worth it. If this person isn't into the real you, then it's not worth pursuing. Order another drink; enjoy the conversation; and then go forth in search of someone who appreciates your whole, quirky, imperfect, wonderful self.

*Check out The Real Thing on Amazon! For more from Ellen, follow her on Twitter @EllenMcCarthy and be on the lookout for her feature in The Washington Post titled This Life.*

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# **Author Vicki Reece Offers Love Advice for Moms: “I’m All for Family Date Night”**





By [Sarah Batcheller](#)

When we think of motherhood there is one word that comes to mind: joy. Vicki Reece, author of *The Joy of Mom: Celebrating a Mother's Love*, has beautifully depicted the blessings of motherhood in her [book about love](#). She not only believes that childhood should be filled with positivity and inspiring messages, but she has committed much of her life to creating healthy products for children to enjoy, such as an interactive dance and exercise videos. In this exclusive interview, we spoke with Reece about her book, her best love advice, and all things motherhood.

## New Book About Love Helps Readers Understand Raising Children

**You've done a lot of work to better the lives of children and parents alike. What is the most important message you want readers to take from this book?**

Being a mother is the most sacred honor, gift, privilege, and

blessing. We are shaping and influencing our children's spirit, growth, soul, and experiences as they navigate through life – even as busy as we are. I've always been a working mom, so I know there's a lot we've got to balance and juggle. Unfortunately, all the multi-tasking can get in the way of being present in the moment. It sounds corny, but it's so important that we are present. When I was younger, I had two miscarriages and thought I couldn't get pregnant, and now, I've got kids in college. When we look back, there are so many things we "shoulda, coulda, woulda." So really be present in the moment because it will pass way too quickly.

**Related Link:** [Solo Parenting: Divorce with Children](#)

**We love that you continually strive to empower women, both with your blog and your new book. What do you think is particularly empowering about being a mother?**

Once you become a mom, something inside shifts forever. It's not about us anymore; it's about our babies. The greatest challenge is that we wear our hearts outside of our bodies – from the moment that we know we conceived to our last breath. It's a really tough balancing act!

**When is a time that you have been able to let your children shine?**

My daughter is in Germany now for five weeks by herself, staying in this tiny hotel. It was a dream of hers, and it took four years for her to save up and be able to go. The quote that I like about this gift and possibility is by Dorothy Fisher: "A mother is not a person to lean on, but a person to make leaning unnecessary."

**To shift gears a bit, what was your inspiration for your interactive children's dance and exercise video?**

It was the height of negative products, messages, and marketing to children. There were so many violent, silly

things, especially television shows. There was nothing inspiring, and if there were, they weren't that entertaining; they were really dry. Then, there were two incidences of children acting violently in the news, and I was just horrified. Back then, we didn't hear about those things much; nowadays, unfortunately, we do. So I couldn't sit on the sidelines and do nothing. I turned my life upside down – that started 23 years ago. I had no resources, so I learned how to make the software. After that, I went and knocked on doors to see if moms could resonate with my idea. Then, those moms told their friends who told their friends, and I sold about 500,000 copies.

**Related Link:** [10 Celebrity Moms Over 40](#)

**What is your best tip for mothers who are striving to teach their children positive messages?**

Our words are so powerful that we need to use them lovingly and wisely. They can be our greatest source of inspiration or – I hate to say this – something that could haunt our kids forever. But positivity is food for the soul. When your kids do wonderful things, highlight and talk about them.

## **Author Provides Expert Love Advice for Mothers**

**We'd like to get your love advice as well! How can couples balance romance and parenting in their everyday lives?**

Actually, my husband and I hardly do date nights! Every now and then, we'll go to the movies, but I just always want to be with our kids. It's important to have them be part of the special things you do. What may be right for people who get babysitters and go out on the weekend may not be right for other people – just listen to your gut! I'm all for family date night and other family activities. If you and your hubby

want to do something special, think of something that's fun for the kids as well.

**In what ways do you think the parents' relationship and love influences their children's notions about marriage?**

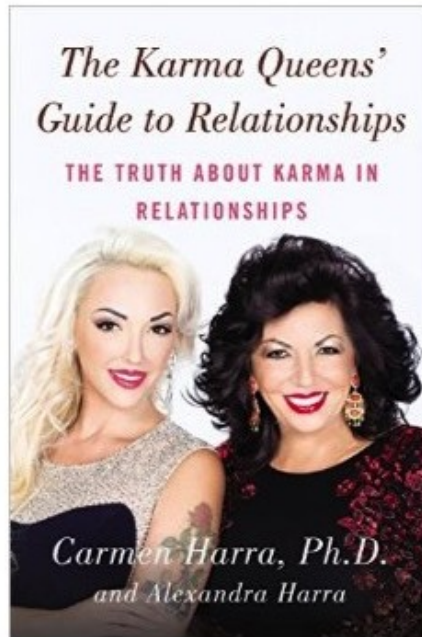
I think it completely impacts it. What our kids see, they will look for – it will be comfortable. As moms, we should only be in the type of relationships that we want our children to be in because they will follow in our footsteps.

*For more expert love advice from Vicki, visit [JoyofMom.com](http://JoyofMom.com). Don't forget to pick up a copy of The Joy of Mom: Celebrating a Mother's Love!*

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## **Relationship Author Daisy Buchanan Shares Her Dating Advice For 'Meeting Your Match' Online**





By Jenna Bagcal

Daisy Buchanan knows that online dating can be overwhelming for some people, but she wants to show readers that love *can* be found on the Internet. In her new book about love, *Meeting Your Match: Navigating the Minefield of Online Dating*, the relationship author teaches people how to get the best results when venturing into the virtual world to find a mate. She provides a comprehensive guide of [love advice](#) that includes how to find the best site for you based on the website's "personality," how to make your profile appealing to potential partners, and even how online dating should be approached by first-time users. In this exclusive interview, Buchanan, who met her fiancé online, shares her firsthand dating advice with readers interested in finding a relationship and love in the age of the Internet.

**Relationship Author Discusses  
Dating Advice In Her New Book About**

# Love

**First, what inspired you to write *Meeting Your Match*?**

I've been online dating, on and off, since 2009, and I've been amazed to see how the technology evolved but humans basically stayed the same! I love to laugh, and I think that, if your date isn't a romantic adventure, it will probably turn into a funny story. Whenever a group of single women are gathered together, the bad date tales will flow! I wanted to make daters laugh and show them that, even though the process can feel a bit lonely, you're not alone.

**Related Link:** [10 Tips to Being Successful With Online Dating](#)

**Do you have any love advice for someone trying online dating for the first time? How should they approach it?**

This makes me sound like an especially nerdy teacher, but just have fun! I think this is especially important for people in their twenties and thirties who think it's time to settle down. If you focus on finding the person with the great job and savings who wants kids in the next five years, you might miss your actual match.

Also, remember that it's a two-way process. Prepare yourself for some rejection but know that you'll have to do the rejecting too. Make sure a helpful friend is there for back-up and screening – ideally one who has done it before and knows when the messages are too good to be true or when there might be more to a profile than you initially think.

**You describe the “personalities” of different dating sites in order for people to choose which one is best for them. Why is it important for people to use the right site when looking for a relationship and love?**

The Internet is overwhelming, whether you're looking for love or pizza. If you're new to online dating and want a lot of

choices, the bigger sites might be better for you, but there's something to be said for narrowing the field. Think of it as searching a smaller haystack. Also, if you're just out of a relationship and you're fairly sure you're not ready for something serious, a casual, free site or app will suit. If you're sure you want to meet The One, you're more likely to find someone with similar intentions on eHarmony than Tinder.

**Let's talk a bit about online dating profiles. If there was one piece of information you'd recommend that online daters always include in their profiles, what would it be?**

Always use a picture. Various studies confirm this idea; no one will click or look at anything if there's a big blank space where your face should be. Other than that, you should name the one, super specific thing you're really passionate about. It doesn't have to be niche – it can be a kind of wine or a particular movie – but “For a great night in, I need a bottle of Margaux and *Anchorman* on DVD” is much more exciting than “I like watching films with a glass of red!”

## **Daisy Buchanan Talks About Staying Safe During Online Dating**

**To shift gears a bit, this book is aimed at young women who are online dating today, and safety is always a concern when strangers are involved. What are some tips for staying safe when meeting someone new for the first time?**

I think that a big thing is not to mix your social networks. If you met them on Match, don't add them on Facebook yet. Obviously, this doesn't apply if Facebook is where you've been communicating, but we give out so much information online without realizing it. Also, if you swap e-mail addresses, set up a separate dating one instead of giving out your personal one. Hopefully, it's an unnecessary precaution, but safety first! Remember that it's easy to feel like you've known



someone forever when you've been talking online a lot, but they're still a stranger, even though they don't seem like one.

**I had never heard of apps like "Grouper" before, where groups of friends can connect with other groups of friends of the opposite sex. I'm sure this really helps people feel safer! What date spots would you recommend as being ideal for group dates?**

It is great for safety.

I think it depends on the group! If you're all quite confident, I say go to a karaoke bar. Going bowling or planning a picnic might be fun too. A lively bar may make you all feel at ease, but if it's too lively, you won't be able to hear each other.

**Related Link:** [5 Red Flags in Online Dating Profiles](#)

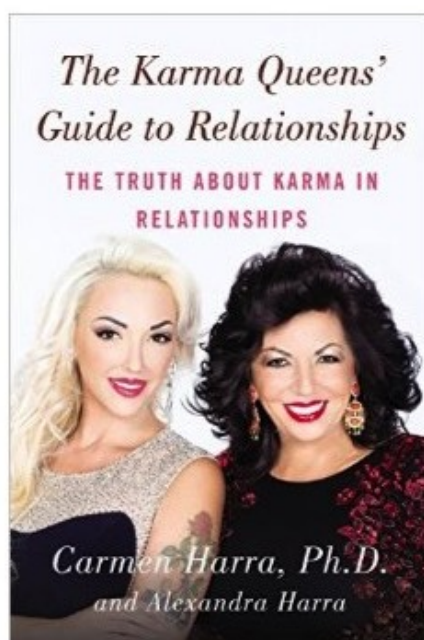
**Is there anything else you'd like to share with our readers?**

Ultimately, online dating is just like traditional dating. The technology exists to make it easier and more fun and to give us more choices. But it's only as good as the people doing it. I think it's incredibly effective as long as you're patient, open-minded, and willing to see the funny side of any situation!

*To read more online dating advice, get your copy of Meeting Your Match on Amazon. Follow Daisy on Twitter @NotRollergirl.*

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# Rachel Brathen Shares Love Advice in New Book 'Yoga Girl': "Each Moment is New and So Full of Potential!"



By [Sarah Batcheller](#) and [Whitney Johnson](#)

In Rachel Brathen's new book *Yoga Girl*, you'll not only find the key to a successful harmony of body, mind, and spirit, but you'll also discover how to utilize this balance to achieve a fulfilling relationship and love life. The book is about more than just twisting on a mat; in it, Brathen shares her own life journey and how the physical and emotional healing process of yoga led her to understand the importance of living in the moment and appreciating all the good that surrounds

us. *Yoga Girl* takes readers on an unforgettable journey from a place of uncertainty and insecurity to one of wholeness and happiness. In our exclusive author interview, we uncovered the mysteries of all the gifts that yoga has to offer.

## **Rachel Brathen Shares Inspiration for *Yoga Girl***

**What inspired you to put your experiences and your yoga teachings into one book?**

I have been writing for as long as I can remember, and I'm lucky to have an audience that's excited to listen to what I have to say right now! I wanted to share my journey in-depth – not just the life I have today, but the obstacles and hardships that brought me here.

**Related Link:** [Gaiam Product Review: Learn Yoga and the Art of Self-Love with Rachel Brathen](#)

**In the introduction, you write that “we do not love ourselves enough.” How can yoga help someone find the self-love that's missing from their lives?**

Aside from the physical benefits we get from the practice, one of the most important things that yoga teaches us is how to listen to the body. Body awareness – learning how to feel the body and be grateful for what it does for us every day as opposed to judging ourselves – is a huge step when it comes to finding love for ourselves. Yoga brings us moments of complete presence and a break from the constant labeling and drama that's created by the ego on the daily.

**Can you talk a bit about acting instead of reacting? How does this behavior relate directly to relationships and love?**

Whenever we find ourselves in a tricky situation, we often

react to it right away, which usually means judging the situation from similar experiences we might have had in the past. Reacting with fear from past experiences is what causes us to become aggressive or insecure. It brings out jealousy and other qualities that might not correctly represent who we actually are. Looking at the situation with fresh eyes of the present moment – acting instead of reacting – allows us to take things for what they really are without tainting our experience with emotions from the past.

In terms of romantic relationships, it's important to know that just because a past love hurt you doesn't mean a new one will. There is no need to play games or be afraid of commitment. Let go of whatever patterns you may have that separate you from love, and remember that each moment is new and so full of potential!

**We loved the chapter titled “Love Over Fear.” What’s your best tip for someone struggling with choosing love and overcoming their fears?**

Most of the time, we are the ones standing in our own way. The mind tends to look for worst-case scenarios, and before each big step in life, we automatically see all of the things that could go wrong. By focusing on the negative, we hold ourselves back and try to create in a space of fear. Instead, focus on all the things that could go right! There are infinite amazing experiences waiting for you. Manifest those by living in a space of possibility and love!

**You moved to a tiny island with a man you only knew for five days...who eventually became your husband! How’d you know that he was The One?**

I just knew right away. I can't explain it... He made me nervous, and I'm never nervous! That's how I knew the first time I met him that there was something special there – he stirred something in me that I couldn't pinpoint. When I got

to know him, I felt so comfortable and at home that five days may as well have been five months! Moving in was easy.

## **Newly-Minted Author Gives Love Advice**

**Now, we'd love to get some love advice from you! How do you believe that yoga can improve our relationships with our self and our loved ones?**

We need to make peace with who we are and feel whole on our own before we can commit to another person. Yoga can help us get there by teaching us how to become present in the moment so that we let go of a lot of the judgment that keeps us from living a life we truly desire.

**Related Link:** [How to Be Mindful When It Comes to Relationships and Love](#)

**What can couples gain from practicing yoga together?**

So much! A yoga practice is a very intimate thing, and it gives us a routine to stick to as couples. Watching each other grow, learn, and have breakthroughs on the mat is very rewarding. Also, have you ever held hands with your partner in Savasana? Best. Thing. Ever.

**Finally, can yoga help someone heal after a break-up?**

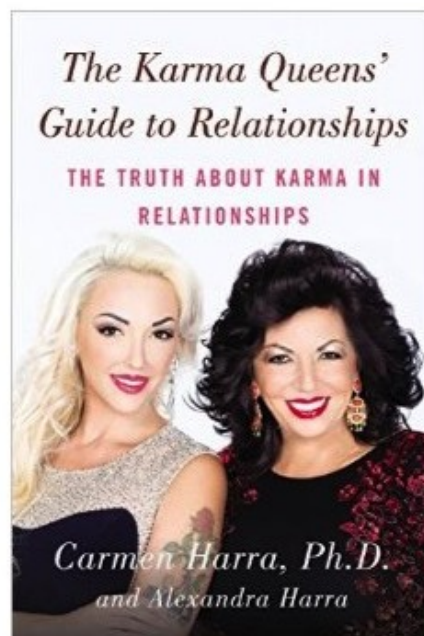
I think so. If we do it right, we can create lots of emotional release on the mat. Much of the tension we hold in the physical body is created from our inability to truly let ourselves feel and experience pain. By not expressing and releasing pain, it gets stuck. If it has nowhere to go, that tense, negative energy goes into the body. That's why the older we get and the more we experience emotionally, the tighter and stiffer our bodies become. By moving into poses with long holds and focusing on releasing tension, we can open

up emotionally.

*You can purchase Rachel's book Yoga Girl on Amazon. You can also check out her new yoga programs on Gaia.com!*

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



By Emma L. Wells

Tim Dowling's latest book about love, *How to Be a Husband*, won't be found in the self-help section of the bookstore, but

that doesn't mean there isn't plenty of relationship advice to be learned from it! The author has written a brilliantly funny yet poignant memoir recounting his relationship and love over the last ten years. He's included everything from being a bachelor in New York to getting married and becoming a father of three in London. He has been disclosing the hilarious exploits of his family in his weekly column at *The Guardian* for years, and now, his newest book digs even deeper into his marriage and what the role of "husband" is like in the 21st century.

## Tim Dowling Discusses New Book About Love

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

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

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

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

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

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

My wife is my first and most important editor. If she doesn't think something works, I go back and rewrite. She can be fairly blunt, but she's always right. She's always been sanguine about being written about, but the book was an intrusion of a different order, as delving back into the past is a bit sensitive. It's also amazing how differently two people can remember a significant romantic event from 20 years ago. She did approve the manuscript...eventually.

**Related Link:** [Balance Work and Love Like a Celebrity](#)

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

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

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

## **Relationship Advice in *How to Be a Husband***

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

The basic strategies for maintaining a healthy sex life are not, in themselves, sexy. It has a lot more to do with unloading the dishwasher without being asked than you might



think. No one is sorrier about this than I am.

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

They can learn what being married to me is like. It will almost certainly make them appreciate what they've got.

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

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

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

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

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

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

**What is the best relationship advice you have ever received?**

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

wrong.

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

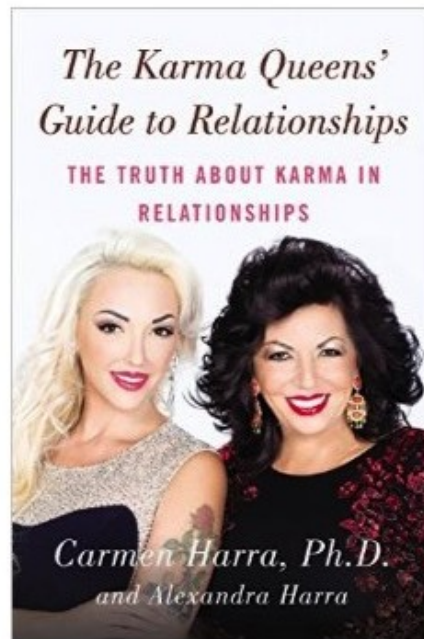
I'm currently writing a book about fatherhood. Actually, I'm staring at the backs of my hands, but that's what I'm meant to be doing.

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

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## **Relationship Author Susan Anderson Explains Common Patterns in 'Taming Your Outer Child'**





By [Sarah Batcheller](#)

If you've ever spent a day using retail therapy to calm what's upsetting you, then the [self-help relationship book](#) *Taming Your Outer Child: Overcoming Self-Sabotage & Healing Your Life* is for you. Relationship author Susan Anderson uses her expertise in psychotherapy to pinpoint the cause of behavior she's named the Outer Child, and she attributes these actions to our fear of abandonment. In relationships especially, fear of being left causes us to act out irrationally and push our partners away, even when we don't mean to. Analyzing our Outer Child allows us to prevent such behavior in the future. Read on for more of Anderson's fascinating love advice on how to tame the Outer Child!

## Love      Advice      From      Expert Relationship Author

We love the concept of the Outer Child, the counterpart to the all-too-familiar Inner Child. What inspired you to explore this idea in your new self-help relationship book?

My primary area of expertise is abandonment, and I've developed a program to help people heal from the primal wound. The biggest problem that many people have is that they develop patterns out of abandonment that affect their next relationships. It also impacts how they eat, drink, and shop; it gives rise to a whole host of bad behaviors. The Inner Child is about healing, but the Outer Child is about acting out. It's the part that shows on the outside, like a wart or a mole. Therefore, one of the most important parts of helping people overcome the Outer Child is helping them overcome self-sabotage.

**Would you say that every person has an Outer Child and the degree in which it acts out varies or that some people have no Outer Child at all?**

Everyone has an Outer Child because everyone has a way of looking for fulfillment. Not everybody can have deep personal fulfillment at every level, so everybody has little guilty secrets. For instance, they may pop a piece of candy in their mouth when they're feeling a moment of emptiness. We're all imperfectly human in that way.

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

**Is there a correlation between having experienced abandonment and the intensity of Outer Child behavior?**

Yes. Abandonment is primal, so it's really the root of everything – it's that first fear we have. If you have a more fresh experience with abandonment, something that still throbs, then you will have lots of Outer Child behavior.

A very common pattern is the tendency to be attracted only to the unavailable, and when someone comes along who is available, you have no chemistry and you don't feel a connection. This is particularly common pattern among celebrities; they have a very difficult time because they're very eligible and everybody wants to be with them. They

struggle to feel connected with someone who is actually available.

The way this connects to abandonment is complicated but interesting. First of all, there's the fear of abandonment. If you get attached to someone, you risk losing them. So if you're going after people who are unavailable, you're constantly trying to have a relationship, but you're never really having one. You're trying to avoid the pain of really losing someone. The only problem is that, while you're pursuing someone like this, it's usually a very emotional and difficult experience.

Secondly, when you go through abandonment, the feelings are so horrible that you can't wait to get better, so you try to find ways to get rid of those feelings, maybe by meeting a new person or tackling a big project. Since abandonment is a wound and scar tissue forms over the wound, that area becomes numb, so you can't feel love unless it's in the form of insecurity. If you're with somebody who's totally available, you can't even feel that. The only thing you can feel is when somebody makes you feel like they're going to leave you any minute or that you're not good enough. Then, you *think* you're attracted to that person.

## **Susan Anderson Presents Compelling Dating Advice in Self-Help Relationship Book**

**How does the Outer Child play into compatibility or incompatibility in a relationship? For example, if two people have similar Outer Child tendencies, could that make them more or less compatible?**

In the ideal relationship, two people's adult selves would be very sweet to each other's Inner Children. The Inner Child is

the vulnerable part of a person, so in a relationship, we should be very sensitive, kind, caring, and understanding towards each other. But what happens in a lot of relationships is that the Outer Children get into a power struggle because the Outer Child is always trying to create problems and has control issues.

**Related Link:** [Ways to Remain Confident in Your Long-Term Relationship](#)

**In your book, you mention the Emotional Pendulum: Fear of Abandonment versus Fear of Engulfment. Can you give us some examples of how the Outer Child acts out as a result of these two opposing feelings?**

It's a very natural to have those two opposing feelings. The Outer Child has a tendency to act them out, so when you feel the fear of abandonment, the Outer Child aims your emotional suction cup at your partner and scares them away, or it gets stiff and angry. On the other hand, when your partner is available, you now feel the engulfment. The Outer Child acts that out by leaving, being cold, being critical, or shutting down. The pendulum swings between the two.

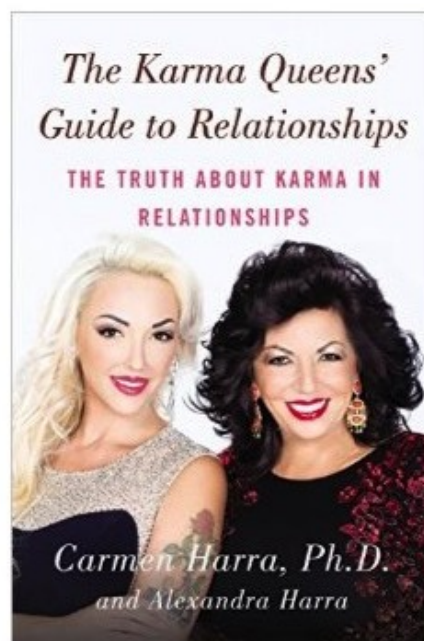
**Finally, we'd love to ask you for some dating advice! How can acknowledging the Outer Child help someone find love?**

When you realize how much your Outer Child has been interfering, you realize that you need to do some healing. This involves developing a relationship between your adult self and your Inner Child. When these two are in alignment and there's a caring, nurturing relationship going on, that sets the tone for you to be able to relate well to someone else. It also keeps the Outer Child out of the picture.

*For more information on Susan, visit [www.outerchild.net](http://www.outerchild.net) and [www.abandonment.net](http://www.abandonment.net). Don't forget to pick up a copy of Taming Your Outer Child!*

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# Relationship Author Sophia Dembling Says, “Extroverts Sparkle and Introverts Glow”



By [Sarah Batcheller](#)

Sophia Dembling is the most outgoing introvert you may ever meet, and she has got a lot to teach her readers who are looking for love. The relationship author previously penned *100 Places in the U.S.A. Every Woman Should Go*, and recently, the Dallas resident released *Introverts in Love: The Quiet Way to Happily Ever After*. In her new book about love, introverts and extroverts alike can learn the true definition

of introversion as well as how this personality type functions in a relationship. CupidsPulse.com recently had the chance to speak with the writer and editor about *Introverts in Love* as well as her best dating advice.

## **Relationship Author Discusses New Book About Love**

**What do you think is the most important thing introverts need to know about themselves?**

That there's nothing wrong with it. The more at ease you are with your own introversion, the easier it is to navigate the world. You start respecting your motivation. The difference between shyness and introversion is that shyness is fear; it's wanting to be in social situations but being fearful and anxious. Introversion is a measure of how much you need interaction. So when you start respecting that you don't need as much and start giving yourself permission to say "no" or to leave parties when you've had enough, then it makes it a lot easier to go out in the first place. The more you respect your introversion, the easier life is.

**Related Link:** [Single in Stilettos Show: Why Self-Confidence is So Important in Dating](#)

**In your book, you mention that half of couples are introvert-introvert, while the other half are introvert-extrovert. Can you explain why both kinds of relationships may or may not work?**

One of the most common questions I get is, "Do I look for an introvert, or do I look for an extrovert?" The introverts who are with extroverts really like the fact that this person brings a more active social life to the relationship. They drag them out instead of letting them sit at home stewing in their own juices, and the introvert really needs and



appreciates that. The challenges of that relationship are getting the extrovert to appreciate your lifestyle and stay home sometimes. You want to make sure that the extrovert is okay with bringing the social aspect and doesn't feel used. You have to understand the parameters of this interaction.

As far as introvert-introvert relationships, I spoke with one woman for the book who was married to an extrovert, and it ultimately wore her out. They eventually got divorced, and when she met her current husband, who is also an introvert, it was a huge relief to have somebody who was happy to stay home and didn't have to go out every weekend. That's what some introverts really need. The peril there is that they sort of encourage your own worst habits when it comes to being isolated. If something were to end the marriage, you've made your world so small that you don't have many other people. I was also talking to a psychologist who mentioned that, because introverts tend to not express their feelings, the introvert-introvert relationship can flat line – there's just not a lot of passion or interaction going on.

## **Dating Advice for Introverts**

**The dating game can be tough for introverts because it involves putting yourself out there. How can an introvert overcome the daunting aspects of a first date?**

The hardest part of a first date is small talk – and introverts hate small talk because we put too much pressure on ourselves to be interesting and deep. Small talk is so shallow. But it's important to remember that a first date is just a first date. Don't go in thinking you have to make this intense impression and that it's happily ever after or nothing at all. Instead, tell yourself, "Okay, it's an evening. Maybe it'll be fun, or maybe it won't."

When it comes down to what you wear, wear something that makes you comfortable. If you do yourself up all fabulous, then you

won't feel like yourself. It's just like the old advice your mother gives you: You have to be yourself. I'm reading another book right now, and the relationship author talks about finding what your core person is. If you discover and respect that person, then the person you end up with will be somebody who appreciates that. Don't pretend to be an extrovert; just go and see what happens.

**Related Link:** [Cupid's Weekly Round-Up: Building a Strong Bond](#)

**What do introverts bring to the table that extroverts may not?**

We're really good listeners. We're deep listeners that like to take something into our heads, chew it up, and analyze it. We tend to be very loyal because we are very selective in our relationships. We don't need a thousand friends, and we know that, if we have five friends, we have to take care of our friendships because losing one friend would be a great loss.

What I say is that extroverts sparkle and introverts glow. We have our own quiet glow. We think we're being overlooked, but if we stop being threatened by the extrovert, then we'll realize we have our own quiet, respectful energy that people will be attracted to.

**Do you think that introverts suffer from rejection more harshly than extroverts do?**

Not many introverts are pursuers. They tend to let themselves be pursued. One person in particular who I spoke to for the book said that, once you've been rejected a couple of times, it makes it harder. I will say that if you've always been pursued, then there's a risk that you will end up with people simply because they pursued you *without* actually making the choice that that is the person you want. If you're always pursued, you may not be thinking very much about what you want from your relationships.

**And finally, does online dating help or hurt an introvert?**

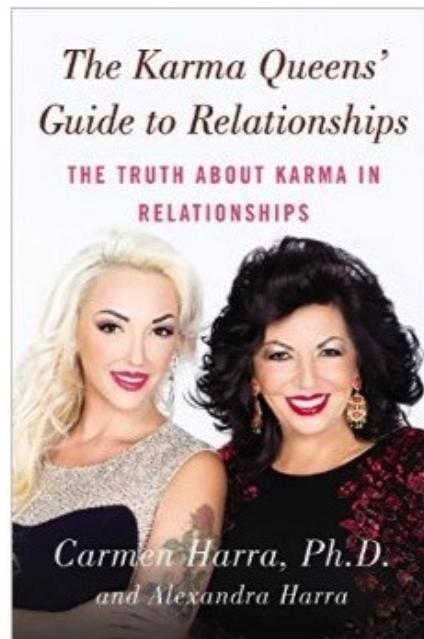
I think it's great, and quite a few of the introverts I spoke to in my book met their partner online. It's good because introverts express themselves really well in writing. It also gives you that time to think things through. It takes introverts a while to warm up to people, so it gives us that time before we meet face-to-face. There is that risk, though, that we'll get stuck in e-mailing. Ultimately, it is very low-risk, and it helps us find someone we have a lot in common with.

*For more from Sophia Dembling, check out her blog on [PsychologyToday.com](http://PsychologyToday.com), find her on [www.facebook.com/SophiaDemblingWriter](http://www.facebook.com/SophiaDemblingWriter), and follow her on Twitter @SophiaDembling. Purchase her latest book about love on Amazon!*

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## **Dr. Karl Pillemer Interviews Hundreds of Americans for '30 Lessons on Loving'**





By [Sarah Batcheller](#)

Dr. Karl Pillemer is a professor in the Department of Human Development at Cornell University and an internationally-renowned gerontologist. Being so familiar with the biological and social aspects of aging, he set out to answer some of our society's biggest questions about what it takes to create a long-lasting love. What makes long-term relationships so successful? How do older married couples' feelings change over time? In his book, *30 Lessons for Loving: Advice from the Wisest Americans on Love, Relationships, and Marriage*, Dr. Pillemer interviews elder Americans all across the country in order to convey their messages to our country's young lovers who hope to enjoy long, happy relationships as well.

**What thoughts kept running through your mind when you first set out on your journey to interview couples?**

I'm a little bit of a self-help junkie myself, but looking at marriage and relationship advice books, it really hit me that many of them weren't based on any hard information. They're either written by a top psychologist, a celebrity, or

a motivational speaker, but none of it seemed to be based on anything concrete. So the idea occurred to me: Why not talk to people who have actually done what young people are hoping to do?

That led me to collect the data for this study, which does include the largest sample of long-time married people ever done. I essentially wanted to find out if there's something older people know about having a healthy, happy marriage that younger people don't and if I could I distill it to young people by sharing these practical lessons.

**Related Link:** [Cupid's Weekly Round-Up: Date While You're Married](#)

**How did you narrow down 700 interviews into just 30 lessons?**

That was the most difficult part of writing the book. There were thousands of pages of transcripts. There were two ways I did it. First, I used social science methods to code the data, meaning I went through and assigned codes to the lessons people provided, which allowed me to narrow it down more easily. In addition to this, I read, and re-read and re-re-read all of these interviews. Even though it was very difficult, these lessons emerge very clearly from the data.

**When it comes to dealing with obstacles in relationships, what do older generations have in common with Generation Y?**

I think that young people often forget that a lot of the things that cause stress in marriage were experienced by older generations but worse. People are now trying to start lifelong relationships during the second worst economic downturn in American history, but a lot of the people interviewed were starting relationships in *the* worst economic downturn. Let's put it this way: Our bad jobs would seem like great jobs to those who were starting families during the Depression.

Another example is that people were much more tied to their

spouse's family back then, so they had in-law problems, much like people do today. These examples are relevant because they show that older people have been through every kind of problem that keep young people awake at night nowadays. Because these people have experienced the same problems, but perhaps more intensely, that, to me, makes for incredible experts.

**Is there one particular lesson that you think is most valuable? Or one that was most surprising or eye-opening?**

I found all the little lessons to be the most surprising. A number of the elders identified one particular thing that contributes to solving arguments and fights, and that's asking, "Are you hungry?" Often, they describe arguments as going out of range or becoming much worse if one partner hasn't eaten. So, interestingly, one of their solutions to fights is making a sandwich.

Other small insights that never really occurred to me is the small act of being polite and to lighten up. If we use "please" and "thank you" in our relationships, it really helps. You should also always ask yourself, "Is this thing we're fighting about really going to make a difference when we're both 70 or 80?" People tend to forget to have fun. We get stuck in the midst of work, career, and children, and life goes by in a blur.

One personal example I can give is a time that my wife and I were going on a trip, and she left her I.D. in the car and we had to run all the way back and get it and almost missed our plane. So I had to ask myself what's more important: the quality of our time together and our overall relationship or my being mad about this? That's what older people want younger people to know about their relationships.

**Related Link:** [4 Questions to Ask Yourself Before Getting Married](#)

**Finally, what do you think is the most difficult part about**

## learning these lessons?

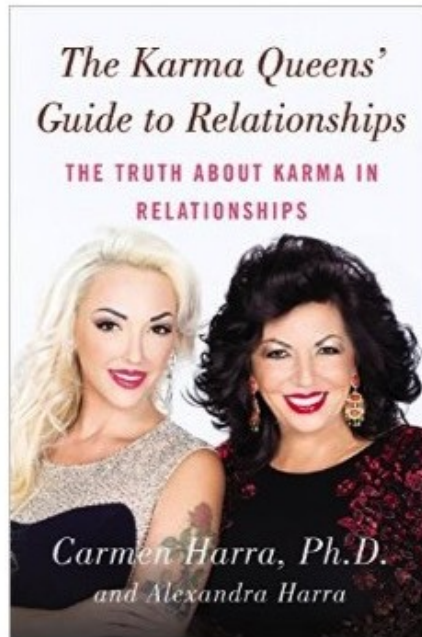
One problem is that people don't know where to go for advice about their relationships. Another problem, which research proves, is that often times, in your 20s and 30s, you have an impossible level of perfectionism about how the relationship has to be. One of the lessons from older people that we have to learn is that marriage and long-term relationships are hard. So people have this image of a trouble-free perfection in a relationship when really it's a mixture of incredibly joyous, exhilarating experiences and very difficult ones. We are treated to a lot of false ideals in our society, but the nuts-and-bolts, nitty-gritty of a relationship is to try and try every day.

*Be sure to pick up a copy of 30 Lessons for Loving today!*

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## Dating Coach Laurel House on Her New Book: "I'm Pretty Nervous For My Ex-Boyfriends to Read It!"





By [Sarah Batcheller](#)

You know her, and you love her. She's Laurel House, and she's the queen of all things "powerfully feminine," as she encourages women to be in her new book *Screwing the Rules: The No-Games Guide to Love*. This California cutie is an international dating coach with clients ranging in age from 16 to 82. She was also featured on MTV's *Made* as an "It Girl" mentor. Listening to House's advice is like talking to your best friend but with more expertise, or maybe a therapist but with a better sense of humor. If you want to learn to embrace your true self and subsequently find your true love, then *Screwing the Rules* is for you. Here at CupidsPulse.com, we had the chance to interview the love expert on all things flirty, fun, and for-real.

**First, what inspired you to write *Screwing the Rules*?**

I have been a prolific dater for a very long time. I was first married at the age of 21, and that lasted for six months. I was married again at the age of 23; he proposed after three months, and we were married for three-and-a-half years. Since



then, I've been engaged a third time and proposed to nine times.

From those experiences, I have made a lot of mistakes. I used to "follow the rules." I had an idea of what you're "supposed to do" in order to play the dating game, which meant keeping my information close to my chest, not being vulnerable at the beginning, being picture perfect, and putting on the facade of what I *thought* the guy would want. I got a lot of guys to fall in love with me, but I wasn't being true to myself, and therefore, I wasn't being true to them. I ended up hurting people because they were in love with "perfect Laurel" and I didn't love them back.

I started to analyze my mistakes and people's responses to them, and I realized there was a pattern, so I came up with a strategy to change it. I started coaching...and people started taking my advice and having different results for the first time. That led me to write *Screwing the Rules*.

**Related Link:** ['The Bachelorette' Way to Date Lots of Guys](#)

**How would you say your personal experiences and past loves influenced your writing?**

The publishers basically wanted me to reveal my vulnerabilities, insecurities, mistakes, and shame in this book, and I realized, "I'm asking my readers to reveal the same things to me, or at least to themselves, so I need to set the expectation." I wrote the whole thing, and then afterward, I injected my personal stories. I'm actually pretty nervous for some of my ex-boyfriends to read it!

While writing it, I felt like Diane Keaton in the movie *Something's Gotta Give*, where at the end she's sitting at her beach house typing and sobbing. It was hard to go back and remember the bad relationships, the hurt, the things I've been called, and all of the things I went through in order to get here.

## **What are some commonalities you've noticed as a dating coach?**

First, women consistently struggle with voicing their needs. In the beginning of a relationship, even the women who are super successful, strong, entrepreneur types don't voice their needs in a way that is pointed, direct, and authentic but simultaneously loving. Often times, we don't have our needs met because we set the precedent early in the relationship: "Where do you want to go to dinner?" "I don't know. Where do you want to go to dinner?"

Even when it comes to making online dating profiles, we don't focus on our needs; we focus on our wants, like "I want him to be hot; I want him to be rich; I want him to be funny; I want him to like hiking." Well, what do you *need*? "I need him to respect me; I need to respect him; I need him to admire me; I need to admire him; I need him to show up when he says he's going to." The problem with not voicing your needs is that it causes resentment.

Second, we're afraid of our vulnerability. We believe it's weakness, but it's not. Look at the people you're closest with and most connected with. Do you love them because they're pretty, rich, or funny? Probably not. You love them because you have a mutual connection and understanding, often due to hardships. You love them because of their quirks that they often see as weakness. So what you're doing by not being vulnerable is withholding that.

Women often say, "He hasn't proven himself yet." Okay, how much more time are you willing to waste? In the book, I talk about the "U Strategy," which refers to this idea of "up, down, up." On a date, you talk about the good things (up), then the depth and vulnerability (down), and then how you came out of it a better person (up).

**Related Link:** [How to Make a Guy Fall in Love with You](#)

**We love that you encourage your readers to be "powerfully**

feminine.” Why do you feel that this idea is so important for women as they date? How can women channel this sort of femininity?

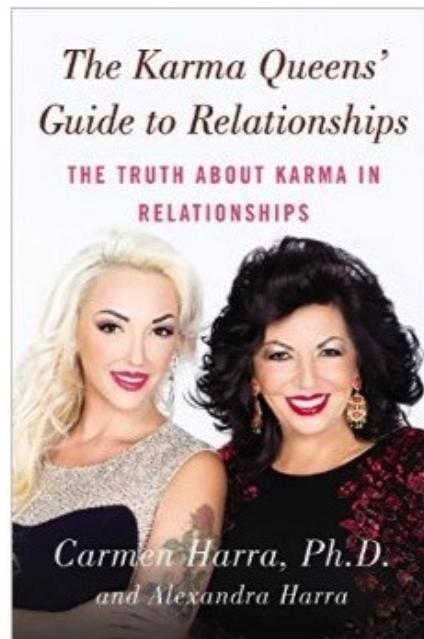
There are three types of femininity: the needy feminine, the masculine feminine, and the power feminine. The power feminine is the most powerful because you’re being true to your core values, your needs, and your femininity. You can be a woman and be soft and nurturing but also say exactly how you feel. We tend to couch things because we’re trying not to hurt other’s feelings, but when we do that, it comes off as manipulative. Instead, just be you. Be your beautiful, feminine self. Allow him to take care of you. As much as I am a feminist, I also believe in gender roles.

*You can learn more about Laurel on her website [screwingtherules.com](http://screwingtherules.com) and keep up with her on Twitter: @QuickieChick and @NoGamesLove. Don’t forget to pick up a copy of [Screwing the Rules: The No-Games Guide to Love](#), out today!*

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## **Dr. Paul Coleman Talks About Love and Loss in ‘Finding Peace When Your Heart Is in Pieces’**





Interview by [Sarah Batcheller](#). Written by [Shannon Seibert](#).

It's only natural to go through periods of loss or grief in the course of your lifetime, and Dr. Paul Coleman is the perfect person to guide you back to inner peace. The Central Michigan University graduate has authored 12 books and has accumulated over 25 years of experience in his psychology practice. In his new book *Finding Peace When Your Heart Is in Pieces*, Coleman encourages his readers to utilize the Four Paths of Transformation – acceptance, inspiration, release, and compassion – to move past suffering after a heartbreak. His words provide his readers with support and encouragement during their journey of recovery. Continue reading for our exclusive interview with Coleman and his personal thoughts on finding inner peace.

**How did you come up with the Four Paths of Transformation that you mention in your book?**

In life, we have lower and higher sets of emotions based on fear, desire, anger, worry, anxiety, and yearning for things that affect how we register life events and react to them. The

lower set of emotions are what gets strongly activated when we're going through some kind of emotional turmoil, life upheaval, or major loss. It's natural for that to happen; however, you want to get to a place where, in spite of the loss, you can feel some degree of inner peace.

**Can you give us a brief explanation of what each path entails?**

The first pathway is the Pathway of Acceptance. Acceptance doesn't mean that you like the situation or that it's desirable; it simply means that we're not going to emotionally resist reality. When you're able to get to a place that says, "I may not like what happened, but I accept the reality," then you have a bridge between lower emotions and higher emotions.

The second pathway is the Path of Inspiration, where you allow yourself to be inspired or guided by insights or intuitions that ordinarily wouldn't be coming your way.

This transitions to the third step, the Pathway of Release. In order to help yourself transform, you have to go from a place of pain and suffering to a place where you are able to start integrating the loss with a new life.

The final pathway is the Pathway of Compassion. Up until now, you have been focusing on yourself, but now, you have to extend yourself for others and discover that the meaning of your life is only going to occur in relation to others.

**Related Link:** [Learn the 20 Steps to Heal a Broken Heart in Lesley Robins' New Book 'The Breakup Book'](#)

**Which path do you think is the easiest to follow? Which is the hardest?**

I think the path that is the easiest to follow is the Path of Compassion. You still have the capacity to care for others. It's not that difficult, even when you're in pain, to give a little of yourself to someone else. It doesn't even have to be

a great deal; it just has to be a little bit to get going.

I think the hardest one is the Path of Release. This usually occurs at the phase where you've already accepted what has happened; you're not denying it anymore. In this period of time, people feel very alone, but if you get the answers right away, you won't learn the lessons that you really have to learn.

**Is there a particular path that is most important to complete following heartbreak?**

The Path of Acceptance – I call it the “foundational pathway” because, if you're not accepting the loss or the transition, then you are emotionally resisting it. You're basically saying, “This should not be happening,” when it *is* happening. You're stuck on questions that you really can't answer, and all of this keeps you from really moving forward. The beginning steps that people have to take are emotionally accepting their loss. It takes a while for your psyche to adjust to the loss.

When going to your family and friends, you need to find out what it is that you really need from them. A lot of times loved ones try to be helpful, but they give advice that isn't what you need to hear. If you just want people to understand your fears or your pain, it's better to let them know upfront.

**In your opinion, is there one form of loss that is more traumatic than another?**

The unexpected loss of a child seems to be the most devastating. Many parents believe that it is their job to protect their children. Parents feel that sense of “What did I do wrong?” and “Could I have done something else that might have kept them alive?” If it was an accident, the parents often feel guilty.

**Related Link:** [Author Christine Hassler Teaches Us How to Deal with an 'Expectation Hangover'](#)

### **How does intuition play into navigating the Four Paths?**

Intuition is very important because you're entering a new world, and the old ways don't quite look the same anymore. In order to have intuition, you have to have a calmer mind. The way I describe it is your mind has to be like a lake where you can detect the ripple of a single leaf falling on that lake. If your mind is full of chatter and questions, that's like rain drops on the lake. You'll never be able to detect the ripple of the leaf.

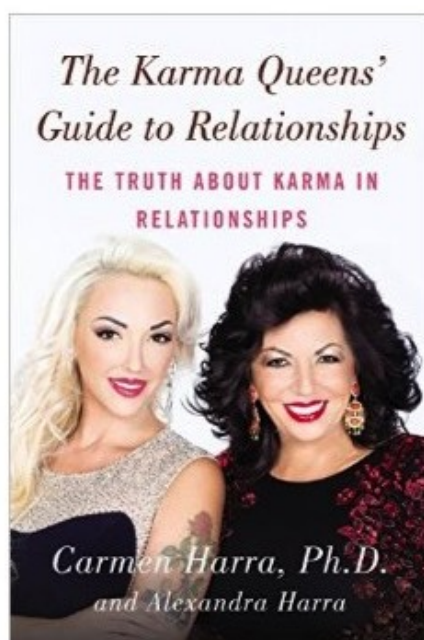
**In your book, you mention the concept of self-love. This can be a difficult mindset to achieve when faced with loss and grief. What do you think is the most significant step in taking to loving yourself?**

When we think of loving ourselves, we compare it to how someone else loves us, and we often don't have that same level of passion for ourselves. The first step is accepting yourself because you are not perfect and you never will be. So if you can accept that you have flaws and strong points and if you can accept that you are someone who is trying to do better, then you are on that pathway to self-acceptance. You can't have self-love without self-acceptance; it's an ongoing process that never ends.

*Pick up a copy of [Finding Peace When Your Heart Is in Pieces](#) today!*

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# Author Gina Vucci Defines Consciousness and What True Intimacy Is In 'The Relationship Handbook'



By [Sarah Batcheller](#)

Gina Vucci is a “soccer mom” to three kids in the Bay Area. While her day-to-day schedule is stirring with the practical tasks of carpools and parent-teacher conferences, she has found extraordinary ways to add richness and fullness to her life. Vucci took a deeper look at her relationship as a way to better understand her true self. Her new book, *The Relationship Handbook: A Path to Consciousness, Healing, and Growth*, co-written with Shakti Gawain, uncovers the mysteries



of the subconscious in order to shed light on the parts of our selves we may want to nurture a little more. CupidsPulse.com had the pleasure of discussing life and love with the author.

**We love that, in the title of the book, consciousness, healing, and growth are grouped together in that order. Can you tell us why consciousness is so important as the first step in finding healing and growth?**

The idea of the book is that our relationships provide us with opportunities to become aware of ourselves – who we are, what motivates us, what we're attracted to, and what we reject. In the context of this book, how we describe consciousness is having awareness over all of who we are: the good, the bad, and the ugly. How do we use our relationships to navigate through our lives? How do we use the painful situations to grow from them? And how do we find balance through that consciousness and awareness? That's how consciousness got its placement.

**Related Link:** [Finding Your True Destiny After Losing Love](#)

**How can people incorporate consciousness into their daily routines?**

In the book, there are a basic set of principles that are from a body of work called the psychology of self. We draw on that, and we sort of lay the foundation for what this work looks like. The basic concept is that we grow up; we develop different aspects of our personalities; and we begin to discern what works for us, what doesn't, in which ways are our needs met, and in which ways we experience rejection.

So on a day-to-day basis, this practice would mean asking yourself, "What aspects of my personality are driving me at this moment?" I could be at a public event, and I could see that there's a part of me that's being super social and

wanting everyone to like me. That's one part of me, but there might be another part of me that's feeling shy, uncomfortable, and awkward. Recognizing that I have a more gregarious side and also a side with more vulnerability allows me to be more conscious and balanced. I can recognize how much I'm putting myself out there or how much I'm holding myself back.

Through this model, you can sort out what was driving it or what you were looking for. You can ask yourself, "What part of me was having this conversation?" and "What part of me was my shadow side?" Your shadow side is what you're not aware of. By having this awareness, I can *use* those opportunities; I don't have to get my feelings hurt, and I can change the shape of the friendship or relationship. I can actually use that to feel more comfortable with myself and with that person.

**One of the major themes in the book is the "mirror of relationships." After a breakup, how can someone use that relationship as a lens into their self?**

In mirroring, we look at both aspects, so there's admiring and attraction, and there's judgement. A lot of the time it's a lot easier to access judgement! In our workshops, we lead an exercise around judgement, and it's very helpful. It's all about looking at the other person and how you're either admiring or rejecting them. They're mirroring us; they're reflecting back information about who we are and what parts of our personality are dominant versus what we might have shadowed.

Let's say I'm in a relationship, and my partner is really self-centered and judgmental. I could use those reflections as information for me. I need to look at what value that quality in them would have for me. If I'm not very tolerant or accepting of other people's opinion because I think my way is the right way, I may need to be more open-minded about people and their roles in my process.

**Can you give an example of a common problem you've seen couples face and how you would advise them to "look in the mirror" in order to better themselves?**

Usually, there is one partner who is more outgoing and wants to be more active and social, and there's one who's more of a homebody and wants to have more quiet time. In the book, we break it down more, but in essence, when we're the outsiders, we can see the value of someone who always has a busy schedule being with a partner who prefers a lot of downtime, contemplative time. The benefit of the more outgoing one is that they can tone it down or cut it back to figure out what's driving them to keep their schedule so full. The less outgoing partner could still honor their rhythm, but they could also look at how they're holding their self back. Is there some fear or insecurity there?

**Related Link:** [How to Prevent Yourself from Rushing into a Relationship](#)

**Going off of that, another theme is balancing closeness and independence. How can someone balance these two ideas when they're in a committed relationship?**

I think that we value all of the different energies that are within us and that are expressed in relationships. We value each aspect of our personalities because each one makes us whole. So in a relationship where you're trying to balance independence/autonomy with intimacy, you would look at it more like you were holding a balance. Our conscious self has the capacity to be intimate and experience closeness while staying autonomous.

I think that intimacy and closeness means sharing in a safe way, in a safe relationship, and that makes our relationships, friendships, and family connections more rich. A huge part of that, though, is making sure you're able to be vulnerable on your own. Sometimes, what I might do is take the child that's

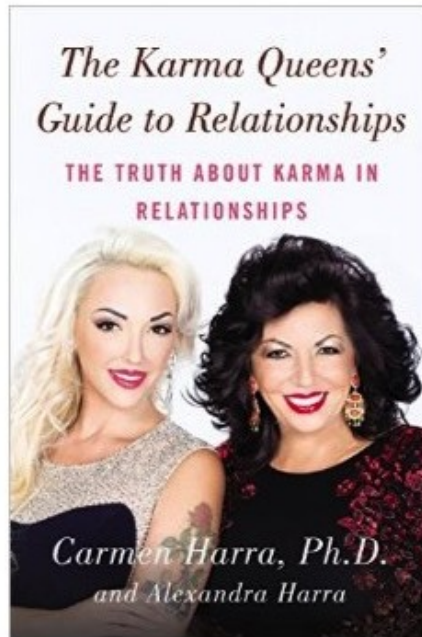
inside of me and put it on someone's lap and expect them to take care of it. True intimacy is being able to take care of myself but also being able to share those fears and that vulnerability.

*You can buy a copy of The Relationship Handbook on Amazon or at your local bookstore. To keep up with Gina, check out her website, <http://soccermomspirituality.com/>.*

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## **Learn the 20 Steps to Heal a Broken Heart in Lesley Robins' New Book 'The Breakup Book'**





*This post is sponsored by Lesley Robins.*

Interview by [Lori Bizzoco](#). Written by Emily Meyer.

When it comes to bad breakups, Lesley Robins has been through them all. In her new book, *The Breakup Book: 20 Steps to Heal a Broken Heart*, the E! News producer and Young Hollywood contributor walks her readers through a 20-step process to get over your broken heart. Executive Editor Lori Bizzoco recently chatted with the new author about how she managed to thrive after her tough split as well as her best advice for hopeless romantics who are dealing with heartache. Here's what the nationally-recognized journalist had to say:

### **Why did you organize your book with a 20-step approach?**

There is a reason why the chapters go in the order that they do. At the beginning, I'm not telling you to be grateful; I'm not telling you to travel; I'm not telling you to create a new home the day he leaves you. The first chapter just encourages you to *not* be alone. You need love – you lost love; now, go find it.



Lesley Robins talks about new book in an exclusive interview. Photo courtesy of Amanda Boyer.

### **What inspired you to write your book?**

As a journalist, I am a host, reporter, producer, and writer. I had all of these things, but I've always wanted to be an author. So in 2010, my ex and I had broken up for good. It was a few months after that, and I was still in a really dark place. I was out to dinner with my mentor's wife, and I was talking about my breakup and what I was trying to do to feel better. She turned to me and said, "That's your book." It was at that dinner that we discussed that every chapter should be a piece of advice someone gave me to get through the split. We talked about what worked and what didn't work, and I crafted

it in that moment.

**Related Link:** [10 Signs That Your Relationship Has Hit a Dead End](#)

**It seems like every woman has a story about a bad breakup. Do you think this book will be successful since everyone can relate to it?**

We all have a breakup story, yet no one wants to talk about it. We're human, which means we have flaws. The thing I stress is, when you're trying to talk about your breakup, you want a neutral party, someone who is not going to judge you. No relationship is alike, and no breakup is alike. However, at the same time, when we talk about it and we can share our story, it's comforting to know that other people are going through the same thing.

**What advice do you give to woman who want to feel confident instead of depressed after a breakup?**

You're not going to feel your best right away – and that's okay. I'm giving you permission to be sad, depressed, and pathetic for a minute. That's why the first step is to never be alone. Since you used to have someone by your side 24/7 and now that person is gone, you will need to be surrounded by love. Go find your people!

**What do you say to people who feel overwhelmed by the thought of completing 20 steps?**

The beautiful thing about these steps is that they can happen simultaneously. You're not going to start them all at the same time, but they will all eventually merge together to form the new you. It is all really about self-love. I think the main thing that I want women to grasp is the importance of being grateful. Be grateful for everything around you – your family, your friends, your career. Be in the moment and focus on what you *can* control.



**Related Link:** [How to Get Through a Breakup and Heal Your Heart](#)

Something that I think is really important for our readers to know is that you were in your 30s when this breakup happened. You were thinking about a long-term commitment, even marriage.

In my first draft of the book, I actually didn't include my age. Then, my editor told me I needed to add it. I met my ex when I was 29, and here I was, single again at 36. Any woman reading it gets it. Being single in your 20s is so different from being single in your 30s! So my life became about doing everything by myself, which was a big adjustment. I had to be okay with being on my own.

**What was the hardest chapter for you to write?**

I think the hardest chapter for me to write was "Go Cold Turkey with your Ex" because I didn't master it for a really long time. But once he got engaged, I went cold turkey. That's when I was finally done. I had no more fight left in me. I went through every emotion I could imagine – and I write about that.

**How is your love life going now?**

I'm dating, but I'm single. I'm happy and strong, and I'm still a hopeless romantic. The first few months after my breakup, I didn't want to be with anyone. But now, I am back to being the girl who loves romance and finding love. I love it!

~~**GIVEAWAY ALERT:** Two lucky readers will receive a copy of *The Breakup Book: 20 Steps to Healing a Broken Heart*. To enter our giveaway, email [cupid@cupidspulse.com](mailto:cupid@cupidspulse.com) with your full name, address, email, and daytime phone number BEFORE 5 p.m. EST on November 12th. In the subject line, please write "The Breakup Book Giveaway." You can also enter on Facebook. You can enter the contest only once. Good luck!~~

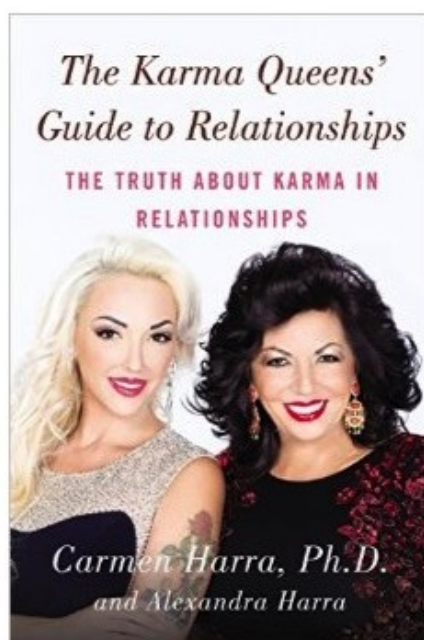


**Giveaway is now closed. Thank you to all who participated!**

*Pick up a copy of The Breakup Book: 20 Steps to Heal a Broken Heart today! You can keep up with Lesley on Twitter @LesleyMia.*

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## **Author Christine Hassler Teaches Us How to Deal with an 'Expectation Hangover'**



By Shannon Seibert

Life is a cycle of ups and downs filled with both happiness

and discontent. With this thought in mind, author Christine Hassler used her unmet expectations as a catalyst for profound transformation. In *Expectation Hangover: Overcoming Disappointment in Work, Love, and Life*, she writes about leveraging frustrations at any age. CupidsPulse.com had the pleasure of speaking with Hassler about her own expectation hangovers and her book, which was released on October 14th.

### **How did you come up with the idea of expectation hangovers?**

I was very much a planner my whole life. I had this vision of what I wanted to do, and I just started having expectation hangovers. I came up with the term because I knew what it felt like to wake up and have my life not living up to my expectations. It was similar to or worse than a hangover from alcohol! I'd have a headache; I'd be spinning in confusion; and I'd lack motivation. It was just a miserable feeling.

I thought, "Wow, I suffer so much from my reality when my expectations don't match." When I started coaching people 10 years ago, I noticed that this mismatch is the biggest reason people suffer. This is why I am so passionate about the concept of expectation hangover because it truly is our plans and the way that we want to control things in life that not only create suffering but also create tunnel vision so we sometimes miss opportunities.

**Related Link:** [Red Flags That Mean It's Time to End Your Relationship](#)

### **Was there an expectation hangover you experienced that really changed your life?**

Getting married in my twenties and getting divorced in my thirties! That's why I'm so passionate about this idea: I have walked this walk many times. I've left a successful career; I've survived health problems; I've had strains in my family; I've had to move unexpectedly – there are so many things! Now,

I can look back on those situations, and even though they weren't what I expected, they were for the highest good. I'm still so grateful for what's happened or what hasn't happened.

**What's the best way to go into a relationship in an effort to prevent one of these hangovers?**

I think what we have to remember is that no one is your soul mate. We project so much on our partners to be our *future* partners, and that's a big burden to put on someone. To find one person to complete us, to make us happier, and to fulfill every need that we have is way too much pressure.

Instead, I encourage people to go into a relationship knowing your non-negotiables. Do you want someone with family values? Someone that isn't a cheater? What kind of religion or spiritual passions matter to you? That's more important and healthier than having a bunch of expectations. Any time we have expectations, we set ourselves up for disappointment. People are clinging so hard to those things, so it's better to go into any type of dating situation with a clear vision of what you want and what you value. Really allow that person to show up how they are.

**Similarly, how can you avoid these hangovers if you're already in a committed partnership?**

The most important thing is communication. Women don't really hear what men are saying, but men are really clear. When men say they're not looking for a serious relationship, they mean it.

In terms of communication, we need to be asking for what we need or for what is important to us. We really set ourselves up for an expectation hangover when we assume that people will read our minds and know what we like and how we like to be communicated with. Really explaining our needs, our desires, and our wishes is what we need to do.

**On the other end of the spectrum, how can you help a partner who is experiencing an expectation hangover?**

You just need to listen. When someone is in an expectation hangover, the first thing they need to do is feel their feelings about it. You shouldn't try to problem solve with them or give them pep talks or advice. Just say, "I'm here for you. Anything you want to say, anything you want to share, I'm here." Vulnerability is a big part of treating the expectation hangover, so really allow them to share their feelings about it rather than trying to fix it right away.

Then ask them, "How can I support you? What would help?" And really let them tell you rather than thinking that you know. Try not to be their coach. A lot of couples get in trouble when one partner starts coaching or being the therapist. Instead, you just want to be there for them.

**Related Link:** [Sharing May Not Always Be Caring](#)

**Lastly, are there any words of advice you'd like to leave our readers with?**

I hope people read my work and use the tools and spread the information. I'm really on a mission! The most important relationship that you have is the one you have with yourself. The degree in which we have self-honor, self-love, self-care is the degree in which we are able to retract any pain in relationships that we suffer. The more we love ourselves, aren't mean to ourselves, and are proud of ourselves, the more we are able to show up with less expectations of a partner and more of an open heart.

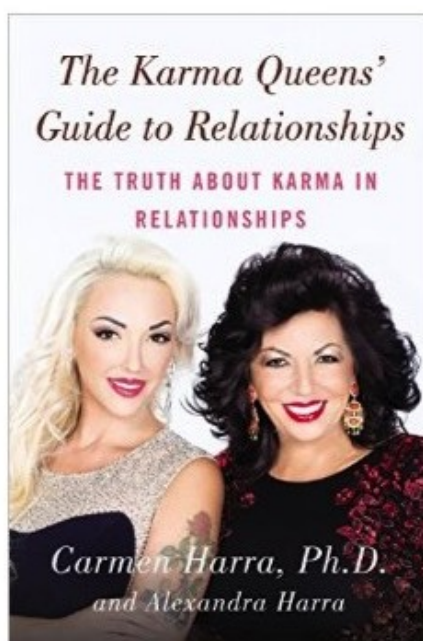
I know we all heard the news of Robin Williams, and it really cuts deep because so many people suffer from pain, from feelings of loneliness. When you're in an expectation hangover, you're feeling this pain, this loneliness, and I think we need to help each other not feel alone. The biggest thing to remember is that we're not alone. When you feel

alone, reach out for help. It's always important to remember that there are people around us.

*Pick up a copy of Expectation Hangover: Overcoming Disappointment in Work, Love, and Life today! You can also visit Christine's website [ChristineHassler.com](http://ChristineHassler.com) and follow her on Twitter @ChristinHassler.*

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## **'Messy Beautiful Love' Author Darlene Schacht: "True Love Doesn't Happen By Accident"**



By Shannon Seibert

It's important to be prepared for the best and worst of what marriage has to offer. In her new memoir *Messy Beautiful Love: Hope and Redemption for Real-Life Marriages*, Darlene Schacht gets in depth about the trials that couples face in their marriage, including issues like financial struggles, sickness, aging parents, and a chronically unhappy husband. This book explores the idea that, no matter how strong the bond, the mess has to be dealt with at one point or another to keep the marriage alive. *Messy Beautiful Love* is an invitation to readers to open their hearts to the possibility of a strong and healthy marriage with proper communication and team work.

**When people get married, there are certain expectations that each partner has of one another. Over time, these expectations change due to circumstance, and sometimes, people have issues adjusting. Why do you think it's important for people to go into marriage with an open mind?**

I went into marriage with a long list of expectations of who my husband Michael should be and what our future should look like. Things took a different road when Michael started running his own company. I was home with four kids, and he worked long hours. Rather than exercising patience and kindness, I let bitterness creep in, and it grew over time to the point where it took over my thoughts.

The thing is that we all change. We grow up; we face hardships; we enjoy good times; and we mature from experience. Love is beautiful, but it can be messy when you're facing something you never expected.

**Related:** ['Love Sick: A Memoir of Searching for Mr. Good Enough' Recalls the Humorous and Insightful Journey of Looking For Love](#)

**Why do you think your message is important for women**

**especially?**

I think that the message is important for men and women alike. My story stems from a place of grace, which is something we all need in our lives. Since I'm a woman, however, I can identify with other women in a way that I can't with men. I can't tell you the number of times that women have confided in me about the struggles they're facing online. It can mess with your mind when a seemingly perfect man (and I do mean seemingly) is paying attention to you or wanting to chat.

**You write about humility being essential to a successful marriage. Why do you think several women struggle with giving that trust to their partners? And why is it that women have issues giving away their hearts fully?**

I believe that we all want strong partners—people who are willing to stand up for themselves and do the right thing. Humility is often confused with weakness when in fact it's a sign of strength and confidence. It takes strength to admit that you're wrong. It also takes strength when we choose to *do* right instead of having to *be* right. When we are confident in ourselves, we aren't as concerned about fighting for a position of authority as we are about fighting together for love.

**What do you believe is the largest contributor to today's increasing divorce rates?**

People often say that they're unhappy because they've grown apart. I believe that couples will grow apart if they do not love each other daily and deliberately. True love doesn't happen by accident. It's deliberate; it's intentional; it's purposeful; and in the end, it's always worth it. Some days love is messy, and all we want to do is give up, but those who work through love together reap the benefits of beautiful long-lasting love.

**Related:** [He Texted' Authors Lisa Winning and Carrie Henderson](#)

[McDermott, Discuss Dating in the Digital Age](#)

**This book contains a lot of your deep and personal thoughts. When you're in love, do you believe it's harder to share these thoughts with the person you love, or do you think people shy away in fear of what their partner will think of them?**

One of the most wonderful things about Michael is that I feel safe in his arms. I always have. He's a shelter that I know I can run to in the midst of a storm. I'm sure that, in the beginning, I was probably hesitant at times to share my deepest thoughts with him, but after 25 years, I'm comfortable enough to share anything. We've learned to communicate. But more importantly, we've practiced the art of communication by harnessing our emotions and listening well for the good of our marriage.

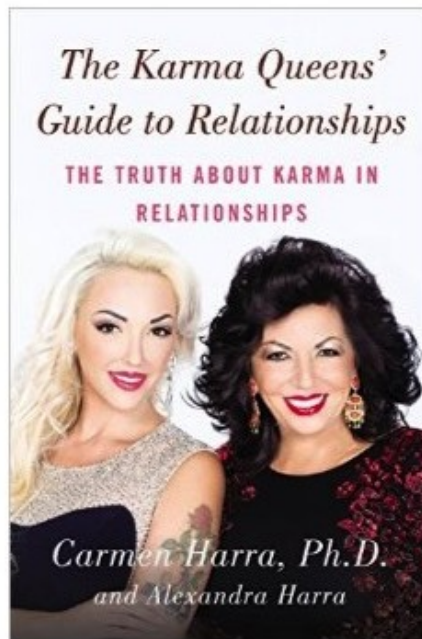
Messy Beautiful Love: Hope and Redemption for Real-Life Marriage was released on September 16th. Readers can also find out more about Darlene Schacht by visiting her blog, <http://timewarpwife.com/>.

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## **Delve Into a Modern Day Marriage With 'The New I Do'**







By Lisa Nardone

In the United States, over fifty percent of marriages end in divorce. It's no surprise then that what it means to be married has been redefined through the catalyst that is modern society. These days, it seems as if everlasting love is no longer a reliable factor in the equation for a long-lasting marriage. Luckily, CupidsPulse.com had the opportunity to interview two marriage experts in order to shed light on how to have a successful relationship in today's world.

*The New I Do: Reshaping Marriage for Skeptics, Realists and Rebels* is a book that looks underneath the surface of modern day marriage in order to save couples from the increasing divorce rate. Therapist Susan Pease Gadoua and journalist Vicki Larson join together to not only bring insight to what it means to get married more consciously but also to offer specific models of non-traditional marriages, such as marrying for financial stability. With personal experience in the field of broken relationships, the authors are the perfect pair to help guide others to a successful marriage.

**Is there a specific message that you would like readers to take away from *The New I Do*?**

**Vicki and Susan:** Yes – that they have the power and the freedom to have the marriage they want. In reality, marriage doesn't look one certain way; there is no right or wrong relationship. A marriage license doesn't tell couples how they should structure their daily lives; it doesn't require them to live together, be monogamous, be madly in love, or have kids. Couples get to decide the rules for themselves. We believe more people will have happier, successful marriages if they understand that they have that freedom. We hope they open their minds to the possibilities.

**What do you believe to be the biggest factor of a healthy relationship?**

**V and S:** Having two emotionally healthy, self-aware people who have realistic expectations of each other and of the relationship. Many people come to relationships thinking their partner will be their other half or that, if they're with the "right" person, they will stay in a high state of romantic love and things will be easy.

Coming into a romantic relationship expecting your partner to complete you or be perfect puts an undue burden on (and gives unrealistic power to) the other person. Ideally, couples support and encourage growth and freedom in each other and themselves and are able to openly, lovingly, and honestly communicate.

**Related Link:** [Creating A Healthy Lifestyle With Your Partner](#)

**What advice do you have for women who are facing the challenges of being a single mother post-divorce?**

**V:** I would hope that rather than being "single divorced mothers," they would be co-parenting divorced mothers. I strongly believe children need both parents in their lives,

and I encourage couples to share physical custody when possible.

Divorce per se isn't bad for kids, but conflict is. As hard as being divorced may be emotionally, avoid fighting with your former spouse. Be a good co-parent and encourage and support your former spouse in their co-parenting too. Your kids will thrive if you are able to do that for them – that's doing our job as a parent.

**What advice can you give to women who feel that their relationship is beginning to emotionally disconnect? What can they do to save their marriage?**

**S:** The best thing a woman can do if she sees a gap developing between her and her partner is to name it early on and then invite her partner to get reconnected. Don't wait until things are really strained and stay away from blaming the other person for the troubles. Most people wait six years after problems arise to seek professional help. By then, there are layers of hurt feelings and resentments to the point that the relationship may not be salvageable.

**Related Link:** [Couples Therapy: A Way to Rebuild a Struggling Relationship](#)

**What would like to see accomplished due to your book? Any changes you hope to see in future marriages?**

**V and S:** We'd like to see people stop clinging to an outdated image of marriage. Our biggest hope is that couples wed more consciously; getting married is among one of the biggest decisions a person can make, so exploring why you want to marry, what you can bring to the marital table, and the kind of marriage you want are important questions to ask yourself.

And we would like the shame, blame, and failure surrounding marriages that don't last forever or that are outside the norm to disappear. We hope people become more open to and accepting

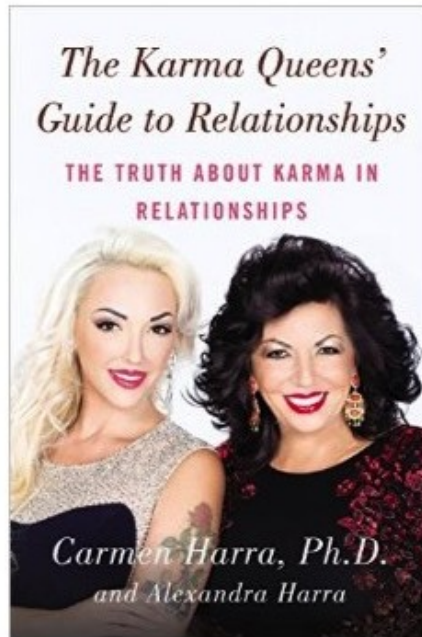
of non-traditional marriages. We believe that, if couples understand that they have the freedom to create marriages by their definition of success, we will see happier, healthier unions and more stability for those who wish to have children.

*Check out the authors' website, <http://thenewidobook.com/> and pick up your own copy of The New I Do today!*

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## **Psychologist Breaks Down Relationship Fears in New Book, 'Love Me, Don't Leave Me'**





Interview by [Whitney Johnson](#). Written by [Sarah Batcheller](#).

It's safe to say that psychologist and author Michelle Skeen is an expert when it comes to addressing fears. In her new book, *Love Me, Don't Leave Me: Overcoming Fear of Abandonment and Building Lasting, Loving Relationships*, she provides readers with powerful, enticing tools to handle a multitude of relationship fears, specifically that of abandonment, and details the ways in which these fears stem from early experiences. Thought-provoking and inspiring, Skeen encourages readers to realize what's holding them back in order to reach their full potential as a partner.

**Why did you focus on the fear of abandonment?**

I chose to focus on the fear of abandonment because it's a primary fear that affects a lot of relationships. I think it exists in multiple scenarios: women stay in relationships that aren't healthy for them because they're afraid of being alone, they avoid getting into relationships because they fear being abandoned, or they behave in ways that cause them to be abandoned.

**Related Link:** [Are You Dating Someone with Narcissistic Personality Disorder?](#)

**Do you think that every individual carries a little bit of this fear with them in some way?**

Absolutely – we're born with it! If we're abandoned when we're babies, we die. I think it's hardwired in us, and I think that it can get reinforced with early childhood or adolescent experiences or trauma, like the death of a parent, a traumatic divorce, or the death of a sibling or a friend. I think that the groundwork is laid in the beginning of our lives for our fear to either be increased or maintained at a lower level. One of the primary purposes of the book is to develop the awareness of what's going on. With awareness you can make change, so it's about identifying the problem.

You know, we all have a story, and most of the time, when people are having difficulties in relationships, it's related to them being stuck in their story, their story being their past experiences. If they're not in the moment and evaluating their present experience based on what's going on in the now, they are making predictions based on their story. So part of it is identifying your story and then distancing yourself from it.

**How should someone react if their partner begins to push them away out of fear?**

Well, I think that a lot of times what's happening when we push people away is that we've already predicted what's going to happen, so we're taking control of it. We're having a difficult time dealing with the uncertainty and ambiguity of whatever is going on in the relationship at the time, so rather than sitting with that and feeling really uncomfortable, we would rather take control and reject it before we can be rejected.

As a partner, if you have the ability to identify the

reasoning behind your significant other's behavior – for example, “You're doing this because you're afraid that I'm going to do it to you” – then I would suggest you make the effort to move *toward* the person. Try to bring them into the present moment, what is truly happening between the two people and not the memory of something that's happened before that's getting in the way.

Something we all need to work on is mindfulness. Mindfulness is such a game changer. It allows us to recognize, “I'm having these painful thoughts and emotions, and I need to get rid of them because this feels horrible.”

### **How can our readers work on mindfulness?**

Well, there are so many great mindfulness resources. What I found is a lot of people are intimidated by the idea of mindfulness. They think they need to sit with their legs crossed and keep their mind completely clear. That's not what you need to do at all.

Mindfulness is about recognizing that every experience, thought, and emotion you're having is a temporary state. It's going to pass through you. You just need to *be* and think, “Oh, I'm having this thought that I'm going to be left, and I'm letting that go.” You've got to accept all of your thoughts, whether they're helpful or unhelpful. There are a lot of great mindfulness exercises which I introduce in my book, like a mindful walk or adding this mindfulness piece to your morning cup of coffee or tea.

**Related Link:** [Top 3 Mistakes Women Make in Relationships](#)

**What are some long-lasting skills and insights that people are left with once they discover and address their fear?**

Well, I think it's important to identify the behavior that isn't working. Behavior is one thing we do have control over. In a world where we're constantly looking for control, we

can't really control our thoughts or minds; they just happen. We can control our behavior. We can't control anyone else's behavior, but if you're engaged in helpful behavior, it will result in the other person adjusting their behavior.

So I think identifying unhelpful behavior, recognizing what situations trigger these thoughts of abandonment and fear, and looking at your typical reaction to that fear is where you have to start. Then, you have to stop reacting that way and look at ways that *will* be helpful in getting you closer to what you want.

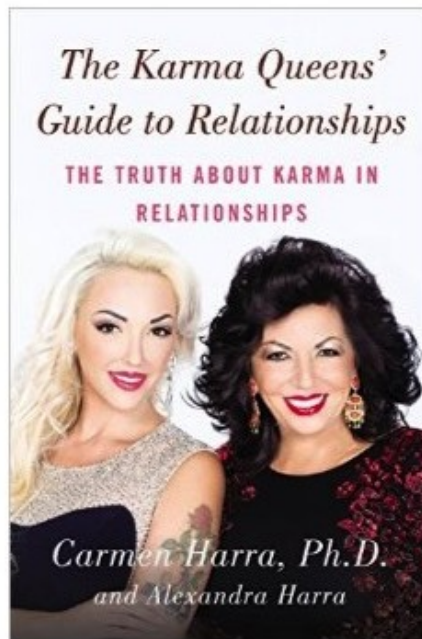
Pick up a copy of *Love Me, Don't Leave Me: Overcoming Fear of Abandonment and Building Lasting, Loving Relationships* today!

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## Learn the Stages of Lasting Love in Linda Carroll's New Book 'Love Cycles'







By [Sarah Batcheller](#) and Shannon Seibert

Linda Carroll has accumulated an abundance of knowledge when it comes to the meaning of true love and how to find it. The Oregon native has utilized her Masters of Counseling in therapy and group settings throughout New Zealand. She now travels with her veterinarian husband around the world to counsel couples and offer her advice through retreats and seminars. She teaches people how to effectively communicate with one another so a complaint doesn't mature into a criticism or a misunderstanding doesn't deter the relationship. In her third book, *Love Cycles: The Five Essential Stages of Lasting Love*, she depicts love as a process with many everlasting cycles. CupidsPulse.com was able to catch up with the author about her recent release!

**We love your idea that love is a cycle and not a straight and narrow path with one destination. Can you describe to us one of the most important stages?**

The first stage is when we fall in love; I call it Merge. In our culture, this is what we think of as romance. We are

struck by a love drug that is so powerful that we ignore everything that could be a warning sign or red flag. We get this high that knocks out the 911 center of our brain. Your heart is totally open. You don't necessarily make good decisions because you're under a spell and you only see the best.

**What's the second stage Doubt and Denial like? How is this considered a normal part of love?**

You start to feel like something is wrong. You are more conditional. Women fear disconnection, and men fear being incompetent and criticism – and for good reason. Typically, men become more disconnected and women become more critical. The things we fell in love with start to annoy us, because you finally see the other side of things.

**Now, let's get more specific. What are some silver linings of Doubt and Denial?**

You get to learn about your own senses. To get to real love, I need to find myself, see my own defense, learn my own triggers, and discover empathy. It's easy to be generous in the Merge but hard in Doubt and Denial. It requires you to work with yourself and to become more wholehearted as a human being. You have to balance yourself.

**Related Link:** [Couples Therapy: A Way to Rebuild a Struggling Relationship](#)

**Continuing on, tell us about the third stage. How is this different from the first two stages of love?**

Stage three is Disillusionment and is much like stage one but a different trance. Everything had been perfect in the first stage, and now, everything is imperfect and wrong. You're quick to jump to conclusions and are critical. At this point, there is a gridlock, and this is usually where people have affairs and get depressed. There are a lot of exits, not where

you necessarily leave the relationship but where you create distractions to escape all of the time.

### **How do you leave this stage and move forward?**

This point brings one of four decisions. The first decision is no decision; you just sweep everything under the rug. The second option is to split. Or three, you become different; you stay together but run on parallel lines and give up intimacy. Or the fourth decision is you commit to doing the work, which is to identify what is going on.

### **Tell us about the ultimate goal, the final stage of Wholehearted Love.**

This happens when you've gone through a whole lot together, and you're resilient as a couple. You know yourself; you know how to manage the trouble; you have more empathy; and you are less into being right. Humor comes back into the relationship, and you know that it isn't going to stay perfect. You're able to discover the seasons in a relationship and weather them out. You can find a way back to each other after tough times.

**Related Link:** [10 Signs That You're in Love](#)

### **What are some ways couples can intensify the positive parts of the love cycle?**

How couples manage conflicts is the number one indicator of good relationships. Acts of generosity are another part of strong partnerships.

My husband is not my other half; he is his own person. Together, we make a third person where we overlap. We can have a good time away from each other, but we stay connected. We are two whole people together, which is better than half and half. Even on the days we don't like each other, he brews me a latte, which is an act of generosity.

### **In what ways does our society contribute, positively or**

**negatively, to the way people interpret their own relationships?**

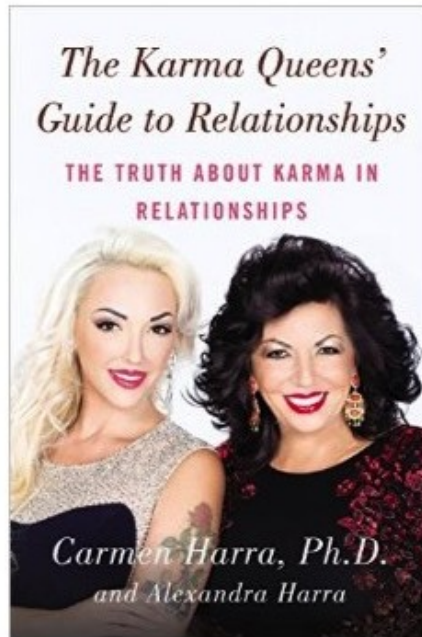
It's our focus on romance. We emphasize romance as a really great love, but it's not perfect. To have a relationship that is good enough is different than having a relationship that is perfect. After all, humans are not perfect!

*Order your copy of Love Cycles today! Check out her websites [www.lovecycles.org/](http://www.lovecycles.org/) and [www.lindaacarroll.com/](http://www.lindaacarroll.com/).*

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## **'Break Free from the Divortex' with This New Book by Christina Pesoli**





By [Sarah Batcheller](#) and Laura Seaman

When you walk down the aisle and say “I do” to the person you love more than anything in the world, the thought furthest from your mind is divorce, and yet it ends roughly half of all marriages in the United States. It happened to Christina Pesoli, a breakup coach and relationship expert. In her new book *Break Free from the Divortex: Power Through Your Divorce and Launch Your New Life*, she helps those going through the pain of a divorce find their way out of the spiraling hurt and confusion. CupidsPulse.com had the pleasure of interviewing Pesoli about her experiences and her book, which was released yesterday, August 26th.

**We love the term “divortex” and the way you define it! What initially made you want to help people entering this stage of divorce?**

Perhaps not surprisingly, it was my own divorce that made me want to help other women escape from the divortex and move forward with their lives. The thing is, when I was going through my divorce, I knew I wasn’t my normal, levelheaded

self – as did everyone else around me (the signs weren't subtle). Still, I had no idea how to get back to something that resembled the regular me again. After stumbling around for a few months, things started to get better, and I slowly began to piece together a new life.

Eventually, I started hearing from other women who were in the earlier stage of divorce. Having just lived through it myself, I realized that I might be able to help them avoid the trial and error that I had to resort to myself. I reflected on my own experience and drew up a road map of the most direct route possible, minus the wrong turns and dead ends along the way.

**Related Link:** [Considering Divorce? Ask Yourself Three Questions.](#)

**When it comes to your own divorce, what would you say is the most valuable lesson you learned?**

The most valuable lesson I learned was that I was not powerless, no matter how terrible things were at any given moment. No one has power over everything, of course, so that's important to remember too. But when you feel like the rug has been pulled out from under your life and you're laid out on the pavement wondering what just happened to you, it's easy find yourself feeling like a helpless victim. It takes a lot of hard work to reconstruct your life. If you feel powerless, you'll never even get started, let alone finish the job.

And getting started is critical, because the very act of rolling up your sleeves and getting to work actually generates more power. The more you work to reconstruct your life, the more power you get. So, there's kind of a Jedi mind trick about the whole thing: You have to remind yourself that you have power at the very moment when you feel like you don't have an ounce of it. This mindset is essential to getting back on your feet.

**Your divorce also involved your children, which can make**

**things much more difficult. What is the best way for someone to explain their divorce to their children?**

Okay, so this is a counter-intuitive answer, but hear me out: I believe the best thing you can do to help explain divorce to your kids actually happens well before you get a divorce. That's because the best thing you can do is to not promise them that you will never get a divorce. Think of it like this: You can't promise your kids you'll never get in a car accident. Of course, you don't *want* to get into a car accident. You really and truly hope you won't, and you're going to do your best to drive safely. But despite all of that, you might still get in a wreck someday.

Also, when you learn that a couple is getting a divorce, don't react to the news as if it's a tragedy from which those involved will never recover. You can acknowledge to your kids that divorce is hard and sad while still conveying that you have confidence that those involved will ultimately work through it and be okay. In other words, treat the news more like a broken leg than a terminal illness, if you get my drift.

When it comes to telling your kids about your own divorce, they need to know what divorce does and does not mean for your family. Divorce *does* mean that their mom and dad will live separately and no longer be husband and wife. Divorce does *not* mean that the kids will lose family members. After the divorce, they will still have a mom who loves them and a dad who loves them. The schedule and the living arrangements will get restructured, but who their parents are and how much their parents love them will always stay the same.

**Before the divorce itself, there comes the decision about whether or not to get a divorce. When do you think is the right time for a couple to start the divorce process?**

The question of when to pull the plug on a marriage is a

personal one. I once had someone who was contemplating divorce ask me if she would still be able to afford organic produce if she went through with it. I told her probably, but if that was her biggest concern, she wasn't ready to get a divorce.

It's hard to have perspective when you're smack dab in the middle of it. That's why I tell people who are thinking about getting a divorce to ask themselves two questions. The first is *why* they want to get a divorce. That one is usually easy to answer – things like, “He cheated,” “I’m not in love anymore,” or “I’m bored.” The second and more important question is *how* being divorced will remedy the problem. That question is much harder to answer – and often overlooked.

Once you have worked through both questions, you will either arrive at a clear answer or you'll still be uncertain. If you are uncertain, that, in itself, is your answer for the time being. If, on the other hand, you conclude that divorce is in fact necessary, the clarity that comes from having worked through these questions and arrived at a definite answer will give you the resolve to make it through the ordeal.

**Related Link:** [Hang Tough – You'll Get Through It](#)

**Lastly, do you have anything else to add?**

One of my favorite pieces of advice for women going through divorce is this quote from Winston Churchill: “Never, never, never, never give up.” (I think that's how the quote goes, give or take a “never” or two.) And yes, I realize he was probably talking about war rather than slogging through a divorce, but still, I see parallels.

To be clear, by not giving up, I don't mean digging in, dragging things out, or making your divorce into a bloodbath just for the sake of “winning.” I mean never ceasing to lose focus on where you are now and where you'd like to go in the future, then letting those things inform the choices you make along the way. Do that, and you'll get to a good place soon,

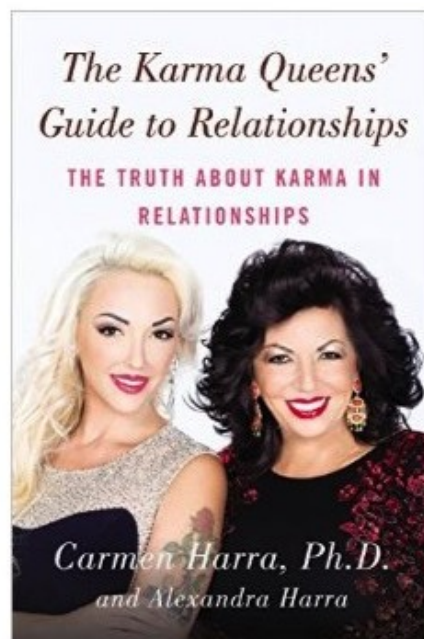


I promise.

*Pick up a copy of Break Free from the Divortex today! You can also visit Christina's website [EmotionalHardbody.com](http://EmotionalHardbody.com) and follow her on Twitter (@ChristinaPesoli or #Divortex).*

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# Be the Best Partner You Can Be with 'The Wholehearted Wife'



By [Sarah Batcheller](#) and Laura Seaman

Looking at yourself and making changes to your habits and

perspectives can do a world of good to your marriage. In *The Wholehearted Wife: 10 Keys to a More Loving Relationship*, husband-and-wife duo Erin and Greg Smalley, along with Greg's father Gary, teach readers how to be a better wife and how to have a better marriage. Whether you're newlyweds or celebrating your 30th anniversary, this book will help your relationship thrive and stand the test of time. The Smalley clan teaches you how to rekindle passion, pursue your dreams, bring vitality back into the relationship, and more! CupidsPulse.com recently interviewed the three authors about their book, which was released on June 20th.

**We love the sense of empowerment and positivity you give to women. Why did you choose to focus on the wife's role for this book?**

**Erin:** I loved the thought of encouraging women to focus on what they can control – only themselves – and use that to influence their marriage. As wives, we can learn new skills, paradigms, and behaviors and apply them to ourselves, our husbands, and our marriages.

Often, it's easier to remain stuck and frustrated by focusing only on what our husband is or isn't doing. Believe me, I did this for years, and it got me nowhere! *The Wholehearted Wife* is based on my own journey of becoming the woman and wife God is calling me to be, regardless of what my spouse is doing. I'm a work in progress...and hope to continue learning the rest of my life.

**Are there any messages that you think husbands can gather from this book?**

**Greg:** A husband can learn the same thing a wife is learning: that he cannot control or change his wife—although I have given a valiant effort over the years! Focusing on her will only keep me stuck as well. Instead, he can focus on who God is calling him to be as a man and as a husband.

In many ways, it's like a game of ping pong. If one person suddenly changes how they hit the ball, the other player will also have to change how they hit the ball back. The same is true in marriage: When one person makes a change, it *will* cause a change of some sort for the other person. Although sometimes it isn't the change you were hoping for, a change will occur – it's a dynamic system. As a husband or wife models the behaviors they hope to see, it gives the relationship a better chance of a positive change.

**Related Link:** ['Cake Boss' Star Buddy Valastro on His Marriage: "I'm a Lucky Man Because the Show Hasn't Changed Us"](#)

**What are some specific, practical things that couples can do to be on the same page more often?**

**Erin:** After Greg and I got married, it didn't take us long to see that we had different likes, dislikes, opinions, and personalities. This set us into conflict pretty quickly—even on our honeymoon! One difference that we quickly discovered was that I was a staunch "rule follower" and Greg saw rules as "suggestions...for other people!" I didn't have any idea how to handle arguments in a healthy way, and Greg liked to avoid them.

The great news is that there are simple tools that I learned to handle conflict in a healthy way: First, take a "time out" when things began to escalate. This allows both spouses to calm down and begin to get their hearts back open. Second, I learned to name what I was feeling in the moment. This is part of de-escalating and gaining perspective of what was happening for me – again, the only person I can control. Third, ask The Lord for His truth about the situation. Your spouse is not the source of truth. Although God will use them to speak truth into your life, they come with their own issues.

Next, approach issues as a team! Just simply seeing your spouse as your teammate is a powerful perspective that can be

added into marriage. Commit to each other that you will find win/win solutions to problems – in essence, things that feel good to both of you.

All of these steps allowed me to stop responding in anger and with “what came to mind first”...which never worked. Conflict is inevitable in marriage because of the differences between you and your spouse; however, combat is optional. If I can learn a healthier way to deal with conflict, anyone can!

**Related Link:** [Create Lasting Love with ‘Marriage Meetings’](#)

**What core principles do you think should be important to every couple that wants a strong and happy marriage?**

**Gary:** After 50 years of marriage, we have found that what worked best for my wife and I was to make sure that we highly VALUED each other every day. We both have made a long list of valued qualities and characteristics about each other. We highly value marriage and family, and we’re eternally committed to having a relationship that reflects importance and significance.

Neither of us ever thinks of divorce, no matter how difficult our marriage becomes, because we always know that God brings life and hope to our marriage. And we know that somewhere in all of the information that is available to married couples, there is an answer to our specific relationship problems. Plus, Greg and Erin are amazing marriage counselors. There’s no way that we could ever divorce!

We also keep a very short list of hurts and discouraging offenses toward each other. Everyday, we “download” our offenses toward each other and either seek forgiveness from our mate or readily forgive. Every new day is a fresh start for us, and we have no “stored up” resentment toward each other. Low hidden anger levels keep our hearts open toward each other, and seeing each other as extremely important keeps our affection for each other at the maximum levels.

**When it comes to parenting, what would you suggest parents do to teach their kids about successful marriages?**

**Gary:** I am in the middle of writing about my wish for my grandchildren for the next five generations. I have seven main pillars that my wife and I used in raising our own kids, and they turned out amazing but not perfect. When I see my adult children today, I know it was worth every hour that we spent in raising them. Here is a summary:

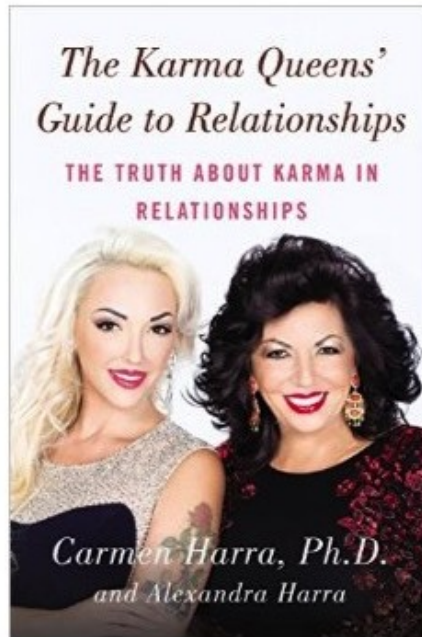
- They grew up hearing that “we honor God and His creation above all else.”
- We never keep anger inside of us. Forgiveness is key.
- We found blessings, benefits, and “pearls” within all offenses towards us. In essence, “God causes all things to work together for good. “
- We keep Jesus’s commends and learn from His teachings.
- We learned the 5 M’s: Master, Mission, Methods, Maintain, and Mate.
- We have continued to stay bonded as a family.

*Pick up a copy The Wholehearted Wife today!*

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## **Mother-Daughter Duo Talks Life and Love in New Book ‘Have a Nice Guilt Trip’**





By [Sarah Batcheller](#)

Growing up and growing older offer a variety of challenges, including the guilt imminently packaged with being a mother or daughter. *Have a Nice Guilt Trip* is the fourth book in its series from this lovable and popular mother-daughter duo and details their journey in vibrant colors. Filled to the brim with witty, hilarious, and heartwarming anecdotes, the authors have mastered the art of tugging at your heart strings and putting a laughing cramp in your side simultaneously. Lisa Scottoline and her daughter Francesca Serritella share the pages, decorating them with the stories of their lives and loves. CupidsPulse.com had the pleasure of interviewing both authors about their new collection of tales, which was released on July 8th.

**We love the title *Have a Nice Guilt Trip*! What inspired the two of you to co-author this book?**

**Lisa:** What inspires me is my daughter. I love being her mom, and we've evolved into being best friends. Plus, we both like to make people laugh. By the way, the credit for the title

goes to Francesca – she thinks of them all!

**Francesca:** Now that I'm an adult, our mother-daughter relationship doesn't always take place in the same room, but you always carry your mother's voice with you, either in your head or calling you three times a day on the cell phone. This book is about the ways we stay close and find our "space" across state lines.

**Being that losing and finding love again is a significant theme in your work, what lessons do you think are most important when moving on from a failed relationship?**

**L:** As Francesca will tell you, I think my motto in life is "move on." It's really important to not to get stuck in relationships or in any situation generally, and I think that stasis is really the enemy of growth and creativity. As I've gotten older, I become more able to take risk and embrace change, and I think it's all for the better. I used to think it would be terrible to be divorced twice, and now, I think it's wonderful. Everyday, I wake up, and I am living the life that I truly want to live.

**F:** I don't think there are any rules about how much time there should be between relationships, and we rarely have as much control over it as we'd like. It's a feeling, a sense of security in yourself, that tells you you are really ready to move on. My mom always taught me to be financially and emotionally independent, to try and build that wholeness in myself first—she's been a great model of that for me. It isn't always easy, but I think it's an essential pre-requisite for any new relationship.

**Related Link:** [Beauty Expert Kym Douglas on Falling in Love](#)

**There seems to be a debate of what it means to define a woman as independent. How would you describe an independent woman?**

**L:** I think it's about maintaining control. We used to talk



about the life you lead, and I think about that phrase a lot. More and more, I try to lead my life; that is, I try to steer it or run it in a positive way according to what I want to accomplish. This is not the same thing as control, but it is really a change for me. I think it's a really good thing for women to try to do. We are so often asked to meet the needs of others that we have defaulted to thinking of ourselves second. I say to myself that we should all be the stars in our own lives. That doesn't mean that we're selfish, but it means that we shouldn't negate our own wishes and desires and subordinate them to someone else's. I was a single mother my whole life, and the only person who deserves to be placed above me was my child.

**F:** An independent woman isn't looking for someone to complete her. She isn't looking for someone else's goals to give her purpose, and she doesn't need a man to validate her life choices. An independent woman loves herself, even if she struggles with not *liking* everything about herself. She has her own goals and agenda, even if they're flexible or changing, and she's looking for an equal partner.

**Lisa, in the "Homely Remedies" section of this book, you find yourself apprehensively conforming to Mother Mary's old tricks of the household, but you still find your own way to do things. What lessons would you like to pass on to Francesca?**

**L:** Believe it or not, I'm not a big advice giver as a mom or as a best friend. So in a paradoxical way, if I pass on any lesson, it's that there are no lessons to pass on and that every woman needs to make her own way in the world, find her voice, and give herself the permission to meet her needs and fulfill her desires. Your time belongs to you and no one else – until you give it to them – and the same thing goes with your money. My only lesson is to trust yourself and find your own way.

**Related Link:** [Comedian Julia Sweeney Discusses Love and Family](#)



[in Memoir 'If It's Not One Thing, It's Your Mother'](#)

**Is there a specific message you hope readers take away from reading this book?**

**L:** It's an entertaining book and one that makes you laugh out loud, but it also has moments of deep poignancy. I'm not sure that it's a message per se, but I think our love of family comes through loud and clear in this book. I think the message is that family matters, and that's much more than lip service with the flying Scottoline/Serritellas!

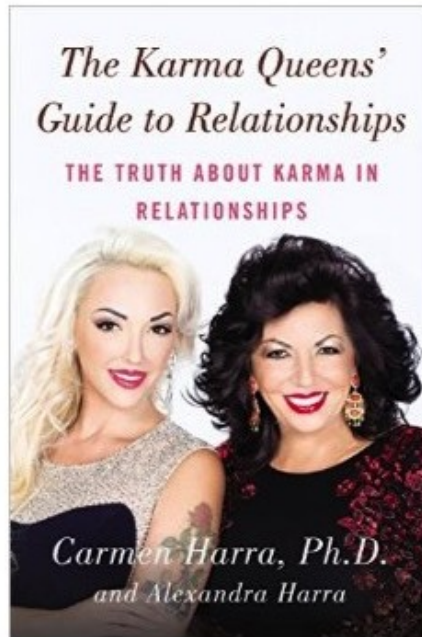
**F:** I hope the message is that a mother-daughter relationship is something that can evolve over time and that finding that adult friendship is worth the occasional scuffle.

*Pick up a copy of Have a Nice Guilt Trip today!*

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**'The Bachelor' Winner  
Courtney Robertson Tells All  
In New Book About Love: "I  
Really Didn't Hold Back!"**





Interview by [Lori Bizzoco](#). Video by Damian Kolodiy.

Everyone knows that with every episode of [The Bachelor](#) comes plenty of heartbreak and drama. However, one name has stood out during recent seasons: Courtney Robertson. Even though she was known as one of the most notorious villains of the franchise, *Bachelor* Ben Flajnik proposed to her at the end of season 16. Unfortunately, after the finale aired, the drama didn't stop for Robertson. She and Flajnik split, and the celebrity dating rumors about the former contestant continued.

## Courtney Robertson Talks About New Book About Love

In her new book about love *I Didn't Come Here to Make Friends: Confessions of a Reality Show Villain*, the reality TV star reveals the whole story, including intimate details about life before, during, and after her time on *The Bachelor*. "I wrote this book for fans of the show," she says in our [celebrity video interview](#). "I really didn't hold back. If it pertained to me finding a relationship and love and what led

to me to go on the show, I put it in!"

**Related Link:** [Can You Really Find Love on 'The Bachelor'?](#)

After the roller coaster of drama, Robertson is now "happily single," focusing on her book, which she sees as her "labor of love," and her modeling career. Of course, *The Bachelor* will always be a part of her life. She remains friends with former contestants and is enjoying this season of *The Bachelorette* (she thinks Josh is "pretty cute!"). Fans can also catch her on a future episode of *Untold With Maria Menounos* where she'll spill even more behind-the-scenes reality TV secrets.

*You can purchase I Didn't Come Here to Make Friends on Amazon or at your local bookstore.*

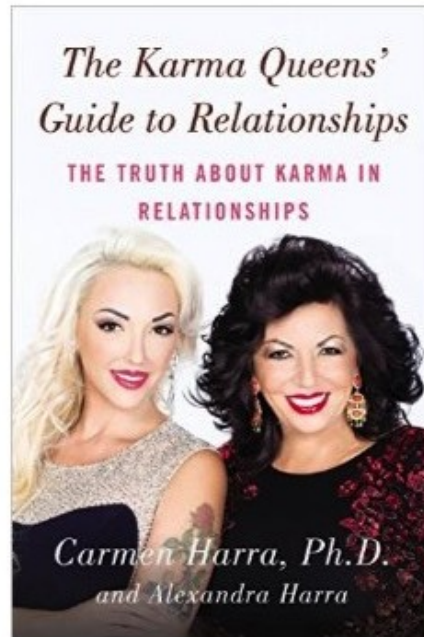
*Update: The paperback version of I Didn't Come Here to Make Friends is available from Dey Street Books as of January 6, 2015 for \$15.99. Buy it now!*

*For more videos from CupidsPulse.com, check out our [YouTube channel](#).*

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**'Love Sick: A Memoir of Searching for Mr. Good Enough' Recalls the Humorous and Insightful Journey of**

# Looking For Love



By Brittany Stubbs and Laura Seaman

*Love Sick: A Memoir of Searching for Mr. Good Enough* is a sharp and irreverent memoir recalling Frances Kuffel's quest to replace her on-again, off-again lover with someone new and preferably less unstable. As Shakespeare said, the course of true love never did run smooth, but for Kuffel, it seemed like one pothole after another. Fifty-three and never married, she opens her mind to all possibilities: She goes out with an Orthodox Jew, is almost the victim of a scammer, stays out all night with a man twenty years her junior, encounters food fixations and shoe fetishes, and generally reads a lot of strange emails. Brazenly honest and insightful, the author comes through the experience with a new understanding of love and, most importantly, herself.

**For starters, what inspired you to write this memoir?**

I fell in love with a younger man with whom I had a friends-with-benefits situation. He did not reciprocate my feelings, although he very much wanted to remain friends. The best way to get over a broken heart is to fall in love with someone else, and as a memoirist, I could see my challenge was ripe for writing about.

**Related Link:** ['He Texted' Authors Lisa Winning and Carrie Henderson McDermott, Discuss Dating in the Digital Age](#)

**Your determination to find love is inspiring. What kept you going through the rough patches? What would your advice be to other women who are having a difficult time and thinking of giving up?**

There were rough patches, and then, there were really rough patches. It took a while to go out on some decent dates, and it was my friends and their senses of humor that buoyed me through the tough times. I have always said you go out with other people, but you date your friends: It's friends you go to with the stories, and it's friends who laugh it off with you, psychoanalyze with you, tell you to get over yourself, or hand you tissues.

My advice to other women is to give yourself a certain amount of time for several days a week to read profiles and answer messages because people who are constantly logged in look a little desperate. If you see your Saturday night coming up without a date, do something with friends or on your own that you keenly enjoy. Take a break if you have a great date that doesn't lead to a second one – respect your heart. And get out in the world! One problem with online dating is that it's solitary until you meet someone. Remain a citizen. And the big one? DON'T TAKE ANYTHING PERSONALLY.

**Your book mostly focuses on your search for love past age 53.**

**What are some of the differences you noticed between dating**

**in your twenties as opposed to dating in your fifties?**

It's an entirely different activity. There was biological imperative in our twenties, pushing us to make babies. Looks mattered more then than now, to a certain extent. Dating in your fifties means forgiving weight, hair loss, hair color, etc. I did a lot of group activities in my twenties too – a gang of friends would go out for pizza and beers or to the movies or “just hang out.” We paired off within the gang. I don't have a gang like that any more, and what social circles I move in tend to be dinner parties or the occasional outing.

We had school and new careers in our twenties, but we could also stay up all night. Now, we have positions in our careers and less energy. Many people have children or grandchildren, which entail a whole other set of obligations. We're also more entrenched in habits and hobbies. If someone announces himself to be a golfer on his personal ad, he's saying, “This is what brands me; it's where my leisure hours go.” We were more amorphous in our twenties, more willing to try golfing or give it up, according to whom our partner was.

**Related Link:** [Find How Strong Women Find Love in “The Alpha Woman Meets Her Match”](#)

**As you wrote this book, I'm sure you learned a lot looking back at your dating experiences. If you had to pick the most valuable lesson learned about dating, what would it be?**

If I'm not comfortable dating myself, I'm not ready to date anyone else. If I can't treat myself with the same care, tenderness, romance, admiration, and surprise that I would expend on someone else, I'm going to get short-shrifted by a man. And when it's all over, I'll be empty and blaming myself for the failure.

**You've spoken a lot about weight loss in your books and in interviews. How has your journey with the loss and gain of weight impacted your search for love?**

When I lost weight, I gained the confidence to really try dating for the first time in my life. I kept enough of that confidence to keep dating as I regained weight. My weight has turned a few men off. It's turned a few men on too – and I tend to hear about that because not many guys are going to say, "You're too fat." They'll just fade out instead of risking rudeness.

I say I kept "enough" confidence. I know I'd be a higher ticket item if I were a size 10 than a 22. But I've come to understand that weight is a journey – in my case, it has been one of a few journeys that define my life. If I don't accept where I am today, I'm not going to accept myself at size 8, which as it turned out, I didn't really.

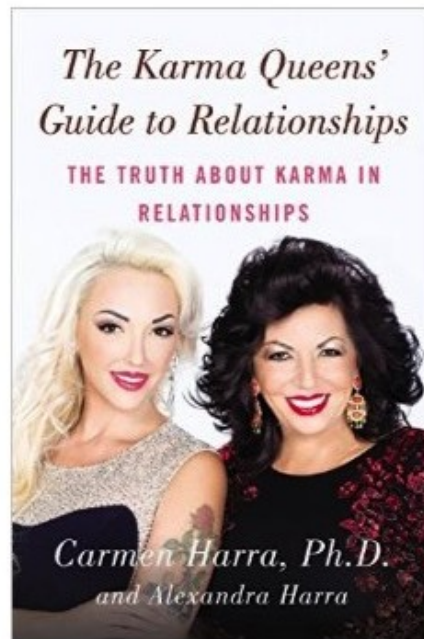
*Learn more about Frances Kuffel in her new book, Love Sick: A Memoir of Searching for Mr. Good Enough.*

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## What Singles Can Learn From Weddings in 'Save the Date: The Occasional Mortifications of a Serial Wedding Guest'







By Liz Kim and Brittany Stubbs

Weddings come in as many varieties as there are brides and grooms, and with them come some great receptions and some equally terrible ones. With each ceremony, you play a different role, and at a time where people are getting married later in life, weddings give us a little peek at what we want and don't want in our relationships. And when you've gone to as many weddings as author Jen Doll, you get a pretty good handle on wedding guest culture. In her memoir *Save the Date: The Occasional Mortifications of a Serial Wedding Guest*, she recounts many of the different weddings she's been to in her life (which is nearly 30 at this point!) and what they have taught her about herself and love.

**What inspired you to write *Save the Date: The Occasional Mortifications of a Serial Wedding Guest*?**

From the time we are very young, wedding culture surrounds us in so many ways. I grew up seeing pictures of my parents' wedding, watching televised weddings of celebrities and fictionalized wedding stories, and, of course, perusing photos of myself at weddings as a child. As a kid, I thought about my



own future wedding; I considered it something that was just inevitable. You grow up, you fall in love, and you get married. But as I got older, I realized it's not always that simple – and just because it's not simple doesn't mean it's not good.

I was inspired to look at my own wedding-going life because I think we've all been there in some way or another; while the specific stories may be different, the things we face at weddings – in the external situations or with our interior selves – are in many ways universal. The feelings we bring to these events play into our experience, just as those weddings also shape us and our feelings. I wanted to write about it so we could start to talk about it. Wedding guests have their own stories too.

**Related Link:** ['Never Have I Ever' Author Katie Heaney Says Love Should Be "a Supplement to a Full Life"](#)

**What would you like readers to learn from reading *Save the Date*? Do you have one message you're hoping they take to heart?**

I'd like people to come away with a sense of openness and possibility, to be relieved of some of the anxiety we tend to bring to weddings, and to feel that there is a community of wedding guests who have all been there too. I'd like for people to feel like they can tell their own wedding guest stories. We can have each other's backs! I'd also like people to feel that they don't have to judge themselves so harshly for failing to live up to old expectations. We should all just be the real selves that we are, acknowledge our inherent complications and occasional mortifications, and try to be good to ourselves and each other as we learn and grow and have as much joy as we can in life.

**Since you've been to your fair share of weddings, can you give our readers a few of your dos and don'ts when attending a**

## **pal's nuptials?**

If you have concerns about the person your friend is marrying or about the marriage, do not get drunk and decide it's the right time to talk to her about it. I would recommend, if it's possible, addressing your concerns beforehand. She has her feelings, and you have yours. You are not the same people, and all that is reasonable and fair. But if you are good friends who love each other and want to stay close, you have to tell each other how you feel.

As for drinking in general, it's so easy to overindulge at a wedding. Waiters are constantly refilling your glass, sometimes without even asking! So just be careful. Sometimes, in the festive atmosphere, things turn a bad corner without you noticing, and then it's too late to get a handle on it.

And oh yeah, if you hate the bouquet toss (I hate the bouquet toss), leave the room!

**You reference the single woman's perspective in your book. What have you found to be the most difficult part about being a single woman at weddings? Do you usually bring a date or go solo?**

I have gone to weddings in each and every way it is possible to go to weddings as an unmarried person. I think the most difficult part of going to a wedding as a "single woman" (and probably guys feel this too) is just about going to anything alone. It's nerve-racking to show up by yourself, and you can feel awkward. But this also means that going as a single person to a wedding can be really expanding. You learn to be on your own and feel the power and freedom that comes with that. You can move seamlessly between conversations; you don't have to worry that your date isn't having a good time. You are just you. That's kind of awesome.

**Related Link:** ['The Bridesmaid's Manual': A Guide to Wedding Planning And Friendship](#)

## **Any advice for other singles attending a wedding or two this summer?**

It can be really fun to go to a wedding on your own! If you are going by yourself to a wedding, I recommend really owning it. If it's in a nice destination, stay for a few more days before or after. Treat yourself to a massage, a new dress, a great haircut. Admit how you're feeling to yourself – because with repressed feelings come disaster, at least in my experience. Even if you are feeling a whole lot of confusing or complicated emotions, admitting that fact frees you up a bit. You can say, “Yes, that's there. I feel that, but I don't have to let it determine how I'll behave or prevent me from having fun in this moment.”

*You can get your hands on 'Save the Date: The Occasional Mortifications of a Serial Wedding Guest' on Amazon. Keep up with Doll on Twitter @thisisjendoll.*