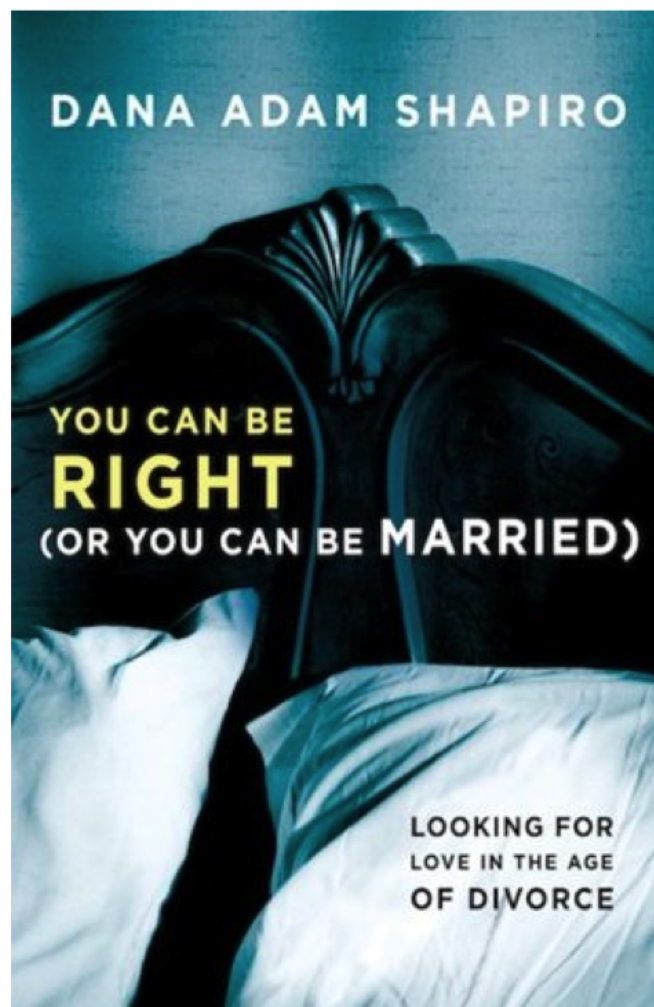


# Dana Adam Shapiro Reviews the Lessons he Learned While Writing 'You Can Be Right (Or You Can Be Married)'



By Michelle Danzig

After making a list of all the people that he knew, under 40, who were divorced, filmmaker and serial monogamist, Dana Adam Shapiro decided to answer the ultimate question: Why does love die? His book, *You Can Be Right or (You Can Be Married)*, contains 30 intimate interviews, where real people share the reasons why their marriages ultimately failed and their own important advice for others on keeping relationships alive. In an exclusive interview, Shapiro shares what it was like to write this intimate book, discusses the common reasons why he believes marriages fail and shares advice on what can be done to prevent this from happening.

**You have become pretty successful in the film industry, what made you want to write a book about divorce?**

The reason I was interested in the topic of divorce was because many of my friends started getting divorced. It started happening when I was 35. I guess people must have been going through that '7 year itch' (people that got married in their late 20s). I didn't realize how common divorce really is. I was incredibly surprised to hear that they were getting divorced each time because people are really good at putting on a show. Marriage is a great mystery: you never really know if they are happy, or even what the idea of happiness is. Some people may find it difficult to address the reasons they got divorced. Inevitably, because the interviews would not be anonymous on camera, there really was no way to make a documentary about it.

**What was it like asking people to open up about their failed marriages?**

I think the key to being a good interviewer is being genuinely interested in the topic. I was just genuinely, personally interested in what they were saying. This wasn't just an assignment, it was something I was truly curious about and

wanted help with. I was literally asking for their advice. I wanted to learn what went on behind closed doors and what they did wrong that they could have done better. I think that came through. There were definitely times when I was listening to a story and I thought, "Wow, you really did that?" But of course, you can't say that in the middle of an interview. It's very rare that people are allowed to speak about these types of things. How often can you really open up to a therapist? I don't think there are that many opportunities for people to really open up about themselves. Most of the people said that they've never spoken so deeply about the issues before and at the end, the interview almost felt like an exorcism. I got to know these complete strangers in one interview better than their own friends know them.

**Related Link:** [When One Partner's Needs are More Important](#)

**Almost all of the interviews are extremely intimate. Why do you think these first-hand accounts of failed marriages will benefit your readers?**

I think this type of hard-worn wisdom, for me, is more powerful and more provocative. All great drama has conflict and that is what these stories are about; the break ups. It was kind of the opposite of *When Harry Met Sally*, where everybody was sitting on the couch telling you how amazing their marriage is or their love-life is. My book, on the other hand, is really about how to learn from other people's mistakes.

**What was the most common reason marriages failed for the people you interviewed?**

Personally, I think it's because people marry the wrong person. I don't think that most of the marriages that ended could have been saved. Many people get married too young and too quickly. Most of the time, in the courtship phase, when we're dating, there is a lot of 'airbrushing' going on; we

really want to present ourselves to be as good and as strong as possible. Maybe we're even afraid to show our true selves because we just want so badly to get married. I think we tend to not see characteristics in our partner that may bother us. There is always the thought that, "Maybe they'll change." This alludes to how everyone talks about this idea of compromise. I believe it is essential, but there is such a thing as too much compromise. So many people woke up seven years into their marriage saying, "Where did I go?" or "Who am I?" People are so focused on trying to please their partner and becoming their ideal that in doing so they've lost themselves. The most important and first chapter in the book is called 'Accelerating the Inevitable'. Honestly, I think that the inevitable is that you're going to become yourself. Any attempt to alter your character in some way and please another person, or think that someone can fundamentally change to please you, is a recipe for disaster.

**What do you think are the most important things someone can do to prevent love from 'dying' in their relationship?**

I think you have to genuinely enjoy putting the other person before yourself. Because of fairy tales and movies, I think the idealization of love is corrupting what we believe it is supposed to be. To have a realistic idea of love is to really understand what it means to put another person completely before yourself. As a culture, I think we are getting more and more selfish. I think that's the problem because marriage is really about the two of you. One of the things that kept coming up again and again, if you traced it back to the beginning, was that one spouse felt under-appreciated or neglected for some reason. I think it sort of festers into resentment or withdrawal. In many cases, this makes someone susceptible to the affection of other people and can lead to adultery or an affair. Ultimately, the reason the marriage ends is because two people simply grew apart and are living in the future thinking maybe it will get better.

## **Has this helped you, in any way, in your own relationships?**

Yeah. It has definitely forced me to acknowledge all of these things about myself; to really just encourage my partner to be honest about who they are and for both of us to be vulnerable; to say, "If it doesn't work out, it's alright, it's not that you're wrong or I'm wrong, it's just that we are wrong about each other." I think to prioritize marriage or eternity is a slippery slope. If marriage can work out then that's great, but it's not the only result.

**Related Link:** [The Great Marriage Hoax: Why There's More to Life Than Getting Married](#)

## **After writing this book, would you ever get married?**

Yeah, I would like to get married. I think that is the ideal. If it is a great marriage, then yes. I think bad marriages, however, are far more common and the idea of happiness is definitely a tough concept when it comes to marriage. I think this idea that 'You're mine until the day that I die' is a dangerous idea.

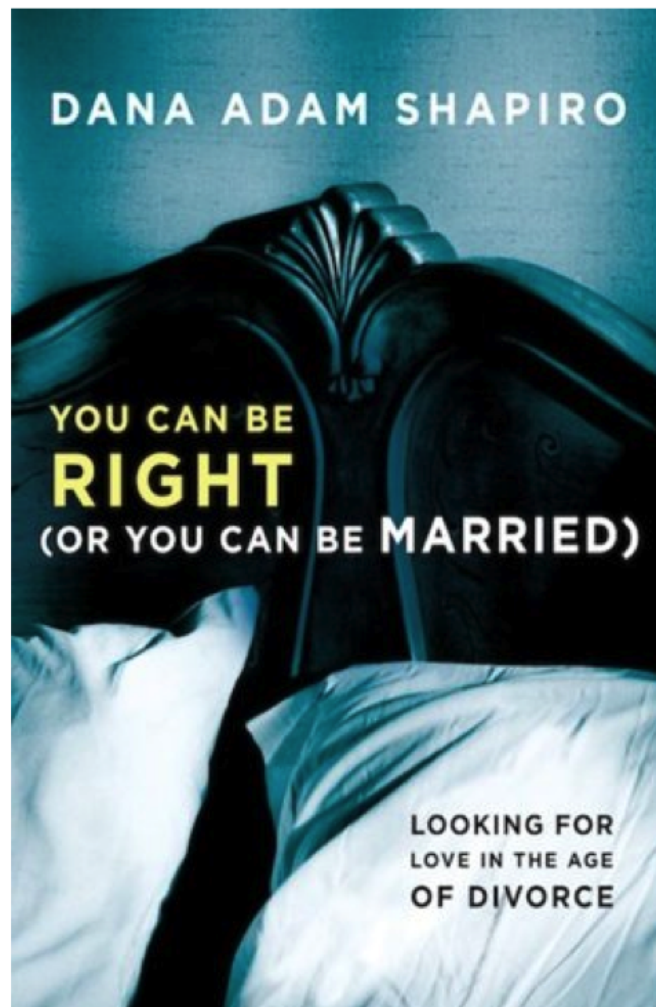
## **Lastly, will there be any other books in the future?**

I'd like to do a book on alternative marriages; anyone who isn't doing the traditional marriage like swingers, bachelors, or communes. It could be interesting to see whether these situations are created by chance or by choice.

*You can purchase a copy of 'You Can Be Right (Or You Can Be Married): Looking for Love in the Age of Divorce' in bookstores and online from Amazon. For more information about Shapiro, you can visit his website [DanaAdamShapiro.com](http://DanaAdamShapiro.com).*

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# 'I See Your Soul Mate': Sue Frederick Discusses How to Find the Love of Your Life



By Bernadettle McCadden

Sue Frederick is more than just an author; she is an intuitive life coach who helps people get in touch with their spirituality and higher self. She uses this intuition to guide her through life and encourages people to trust their gut when it comes to making decisions. Her previous book, *I See Your Dream Job: A Career Intuitive Shows You How to Discover What You Were Put on Earth to Do*, shows people how their specific birth date corresponds with the mission they were put on this Earth to do. Her newest book, *I See Your Soul Mate: An Intuitive's Guide to Finding and Keeping Love*, follows the same premise but focuses on romance instead. Frederick explains how you can't truly find your soul mate until you are fulfilling your unique mission. She uses birth paths to help you recognize your strengths and weaknesses in relationships and also provides other birth paths that work well with your own.

We had the chance to talk with Frederick about trusting your intuition to find the love of your life.

**Your book focuses a great deal on discovering your own birth path before focusing on finding your soul mate. Can you briefly define birth path and explain the importance of it?**

We all come here to do significant work that helps our own soul evolve and also helps to raise the consciousness of other people. We have the potential to do something great, which is explained in the vibrations in our birth path order. That's why we're drawn to different careers and have certain dreams. Yet, when we get here, we buy into the negative messages that talk ourselves out of that greatness. At every opportunity in life, we can still make a choice to live up to that full mission, and that's what's in the birth path.

**You talk about intuition as well. How can you develop your intuition and make it stronger?**

Intuition comes from our right brain, while logic and reason

come from our left brain. We live in a world dominated by the left brain, which is good and bad. We have great advancements in technology, but we've lost touch with our spirituality. That's why there is so much unhappiness in the world. As we each step into our right brain and trust our intuition, we're able to get in touch with our higher self. We can really see our mission and begin fulfilling it, which is what attracts true love and helps us find our soul mate.

My favorite way to make your intuition stronger is daily meditation, which quiets your left brain and gets you into right brain consciousness. The Buddhists and Hindus figured out a technique thousands of years ago where you repeat a sacred sound, which they called "a mantra."

**Related Link:** [Are You My Guru? How Medicine, Meditation and Madonna Changed My Life](#)

**Can you give us an example of an intuitive dating technique?**

The minute that somebody asks you out, make sure you have a piece of their information, whether it's their name, birth date or career. Write it down and put your hand on that piece of paper. Then, close your eyes and do a little bit of mantra meditation for a few minutes. You're going to start feeling their energy. These odd little images, words or thoughts, which are about this person, will start popping into your subconscious out of seemingly nowhere. If the words are good, like sweet and loving, that means you should go out with this person. If the words are negative or you feel fear, it's someone you don't want to pursue.

**The book provides readers with birth path numbers that work well with their own number. What would you say to people who are currently in love or with someone whose birth path number does not match their own?**

There's a lesson in that relationship. If you look at Kim Kardashian and Kris Humphries, both are master soul paths 22

who came together with great work to do. Their relationship number is an 8, which is the number of power. It would've worked if Kris hadn't become a conventional man who wanted Kim to give up her career and be a stay-at-home mom. Kris was abusing his power, and Kim could see that her life was going down the drain.

There is a lot of research we have to live through until we find our soul mate. I've had great passion and joy but also great heartbreak, and I think it's all been on purpose.

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

**What do you think about the ever increasing divorce rate? Are younger couples failing to find their soul mate as older couples have done? Or are they simply more open to splitting up and starting over?**

I think the vibrations of awareness have increased. You can't just be miserable and hate your partner and not have it fall apart. It used to be that you could live a life in that negativity and never really wake up. Now, you get into that negative state and something instantly changes. You have to make a choice to evolve to your highest state and make the relationship work or to go on your own learning journey and find your own mission. If you're really living true to your mission and highest self, you can find your soul mate and have that love last for a lifetime.

**How can someone truly know if their partner is their soul mate?**

It's about how you feel when you're with them. If you feel empowered to be your best self and if your partner is looking at you and seeing that greatness in you, even when you can't see it, that's a soul mate.

**In your book, you share that fear and worry prevent us from fulfilling our true mission and ultimately finding true love.**

## How can people avoid this pitfall?

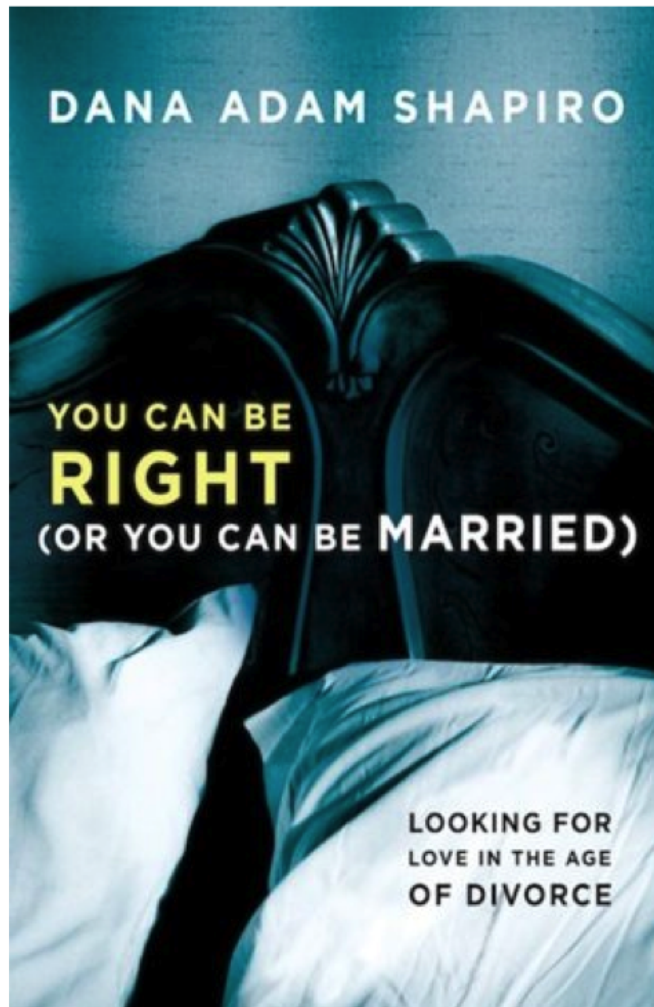
Meditation. That negative self talk is part of being in the physical world, but we can learn to override it with a positive thought. Say to yourself, "Who am I to doubt myself? I came here with something important to do, and I brought gifts and talents to do it." It's not about the ego of doing your work; it's about letting the work come *through* you to help the world. Once we can look at our lives this way, everything shifts.

*You can purchase 'I See Your Soul Mate: An Intuitive's Guide to Finding and Keeping Love' on Amazon. You can also receive guidance from Frederick or get information on her live events at [www.CareerIntuitive.org](http://www.CareerIntuitive.org).*

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## Dianne Burnett Steps Out of the Shadows in Her New Book, 'The Road to Reality: Voted Off the Island!...My Journey as a Real-Life Survivor'





By [Lori Bizzoco](#), with transcription by Kaitlyn Herzog

An hour before her book launch, Dianne Burnett is nothing but smiles as she walks into the room at the Kimberly Hotel in New York City to meet us for an interview. A clearly happy Burnett speaks with ease about her new book, her former marriage and the exciting ventures that lay ahead.

Dianne released her memoir, *The Road to Reality: Voted Off the Island!...My Journey as a Real-Life Survivor* last Tuesday. Her ex-husband Mark Burnett has been the mastermind behind some of televisions greatest reality shows, including “The

Apprentice," 'The Voice' and Survivor,' one of the most successful programs of all time. But this Reality King didn't get there alone, or at least not according to Dianne and her tell-all book.

Nine years after their divorce, the ex-wife of the the TV powerhouse is stepping out of the shadows to tell her side of the story. But, if you are looking for her to bash and destroy her ex, you won't find it here.

Burnett opens the book with her and Mark's decision to move to Morocco and then flashes back in Chapter Two to provide a glimpse into her own childhood growing up on Long Island, New York. She describes in detail her family and the confusion she faces being a young child of divorced parents in the 1960s. She then shifts to her relationship with Mark, the handsome Englishman who swept her off her feet. The story flows through their travels, the beginning of 'Survivor' and their struggles prior to – and after – their divorce. Dianne highlights the good times in their marriage, in particular the beginning of their relationship and how smitten she was with Mark. She writes, "Throughout the entire summer, whatever the day, whatever the hour, wherever I was, I felt intoxicated."

After reading the book and then sitting there with Burnett, the burning question on our mind was why was the book getting so much negative press from Mark. Burnett nodded and admitted that the release of the book has created a rift between the typically amicable exes. "I don't really know him that well right now," she explains. "Just last month we were all together at Nobu for my son's birthday, but since the book, it's been a little bit...different." However, they both try to keep a brave face for their two children, Cameron, 15 and James, 19. The author even says that part of the reason for writing this book was so that her children would know the truth.

**Related Link:** [Celebrities: Love, Marriage and the Money in Between](#)

“I gave up everything to be Mark’s cheerleader, his support system,” Burnett explains. “That’s what kept Mark going. I was doing it for all of us though, for our family.” She looks back on her marriage to Mark with no regrets and often smiles while discussing their happy times. The one thing she does regret, however, is not giving herself a title when ‘Survivor’ first aired. “I didn’t give myself an individual credit because we were a team; I thought everyone knew it was Mark and Dianne.”

So what are Burnett’s final words to Mark? “I wish he would read the book,” she says. “I think if he reads the book, then he’s going to reflect on his reaction in the press and be sad.”

**Related Link:** [How to Make Sure Your Divorce is Amicable, Fair and Fast](#)

With the release of the book giving her some closure, Dianne dedicates much of her time to more positive things. After her mother was diagnosed with esophagus cancer, Burnett began a charity in her honor called Joan Valentine – A Foundation for Natural Causes. The basis for the foundation is that medicine needs to be more personalized for each person’s ailment. She believes that “not everything works for everyone. Everybody is treated the same; the person and their individual sicknesses aren’t taken into consideration.”

Keeping up the positive vibe, Burnett is also launching a new drink called Mulberry Love, made with fruits, coconut water and antioxidants, which can help prevent disease. She describes the drink as not only healthy but “very yummy.” It hits store shelves later this year.

“This will be my year,” Dianne says affirmatively. With a new book, television and film deals and a healthy drink coming

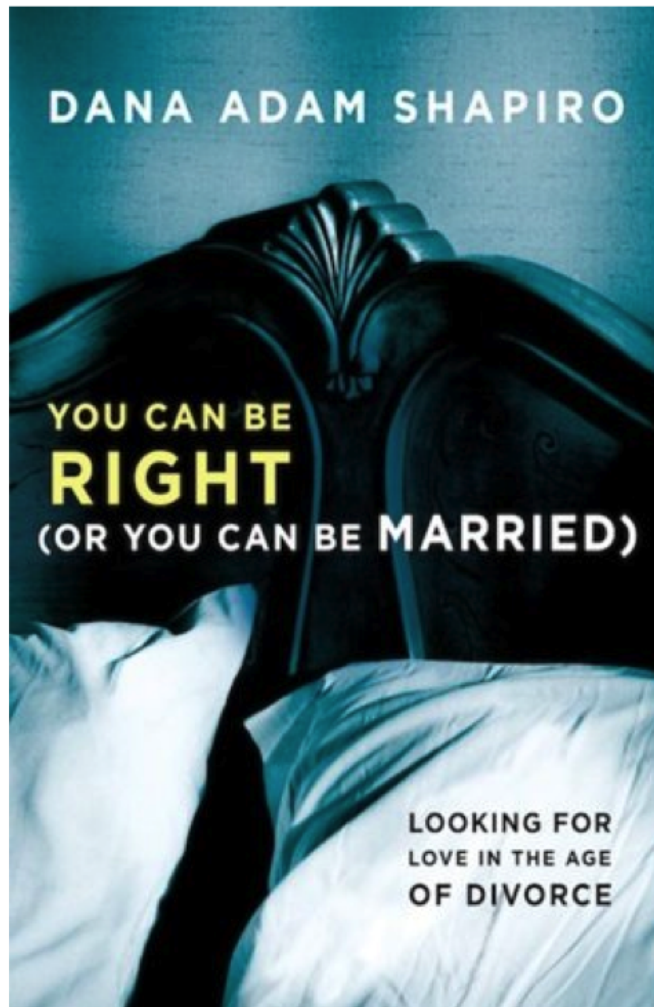
out, how could it not be? “I’m happy now; I’m reinventing myself and finding my own way.”

*Burnett’s new book, “The Road to Reality: Voted Off the Island!...My Journey as a Real-Life Survivor,” is in stores and online at Amazon. To learn more about Burnett, you can follow her on Twitter at @DianneBurnett.*

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## Entertainment Journalist Francine Brokaw Talks About Tinseltown Twosomes and Life ‘Beyond the Red Carpet’





By Whitney Baker

Francine Brokaw's writing career, which spans over two decades, has taken a few twists and turns: she's focused on everything from politics and travel to celebrity interviews and entertainment news. Her new book, *Beyond the Red Carpet: The World of Entertainment Journalists*, out today, looks at the ever intriguing world of the rich and famous. Lucky for us, she shares never-before-told stories and behind-the-scenes secrets about Hollywood's hottest residents. Having interviewed celebrities like Johnny Depp, George Clooney and Tom Hanks, Brokaw knows what it takes to get these folks

talking about life on and off the red carpet.

We chatted with the author about her experiences in the entertainment industry, specifically those celebrity interviews about lasting love and messy break-ups, and her advice for up-and-coming journalists.

**Related Link:** [Dating After Being Dumped: How to Avoid Messy Rebound Relationships](#)

**Tell us a little bit about what inspired you to write this book.**

Nobody really has any idea what entertainment journalists do and experience. I think when people hear the words “entertainment journalists,” they think of the hosts on shows like ‘Entertainment Tonight.’ That’s a very minute percentage of us. We’re actually in the trenches, dealing with the publicists and celebrities. It’s a totally different life than what people have in mind. Like I say in the book, Kevin Costner mentioned that our friends probably think we have these wonderful and fabulous lives, but it’s really a lot of hard work.

**Do you have a favorite story from the book that you can share with us?**

I always love speaking with the veteran actors. I love James Garner; he was just so open talking about fellow actors, like Steve McQueen (who he co-starred with in ‘The Great Escape’) and Kim Novak (who worked with in ‘Boys’ Night Out’). He brought them down to earth and told us things about them that they probably wouldn’t want the public to know. He was very candid.

Julie Andrews is always fun too.

**Can you walk us through a celebrity interview? What goes on behind the scenes?**

I usually have a list of questions that I want answered or that I need answers to for a specific article. Then, when the celebrity mentions a new project or some aspect of their personal life, you can go into further detail about that topic. A one-on-one interview requires a lot more research than a roundtable interview or press conference – you can't rely on other journalists to ask questions that you may not have thought of.

I will say I have had to run into the paparazzi while going into interviews, and it's frightening. I feel for celebrities because these photographers are really intruding into their lives. As an entertainment journalist, I don't want to be thought of as intrusive.

**Have you ever interviewed a celebrity couple – either together or separate? Any stories to share?**

I haven't had the opportunity to interview a celebrity couple together, but I have spoken to partners separately.

I interviewed Catherine Zeta-Jones and Michael Douglas at different times, and they seemed to be very compatible. Catherine's interview was at a resort in the Palm Springs area, and she was so excited that her husband was able to come along. She said that he was probably golfing, which was one of his passions, and she tried to catch sight of him out the window. I thought that was really sweet.

I've also spoken with both Brad Pitt and Jennifer Aniston. I interviewed Brad right before the break-up, and he let nothing slip about their impending divorce. And then a few months later, we hear that they've split. I interviewed Jennifer afterwards, and she didn't want to talk about it at all.

**Related Link:** [4 Things Jennifer Aniston Taught Me About Love](#)

I interviewed Hilary Swank during her almost-decade long marriage to Chad Lowe, and she said how great they were

together. Someone asked about the basis for their relationship, and she implied that trust and honesty were the most important things. And then we read later on that he was hiding his addiction from her. When I interviewed Chad right after the break-up, he refused to talk about anything related to his personal life.

Then there's Mandy Moore, who was so gushy about her relationship with Andy Roddick. She called him her soul mate and told me all about how they met, how they were meant to be together. And that didn't last. It's funny to hear what people say about their relationship and then see how things play out.

**How do you approach the topic of love and relationships in an interview? How personal is *too* personal?**

If they happen to bring up a dating partner or spouse, that's my invitation to ask about their love life. I've had celebrities mention the great love of their life and talk about their fabulous relationship, and then they break-up a few months later. It's interesting to see what people volunteer.

For instance, around Valentine's Day, one of my friends asked Antonio Banderas, who is married to actress Melanie Griffith, if they had any specific plans for the holiday. He happened to say that their relationship was really going well but that he can't guarantee that it is forever, which I thought was very honest of him.

**And finally, what advice do you have for someone interested in entertainment journalism?**

Be prepared to do a lot of work. It's not easy; it requires a lot of preparation, research and time. It takes talent to bring information out of celebrities. Plus, it's a 24/7 job – sometimes you need to do a phone interview with a celebrity who is working in Europe; the time zone is different, but you have no choice because you're at the beck and call of the

celebrity.

Also, you can't always rely on research. I read a story on IMDB about an actor saving someone from drowning, so I asked if it had really happened. He said that he didn't know where they got that and it had never happened. You have to put question marks by a lot of things that you find online and figure out if it's fact or fiction.

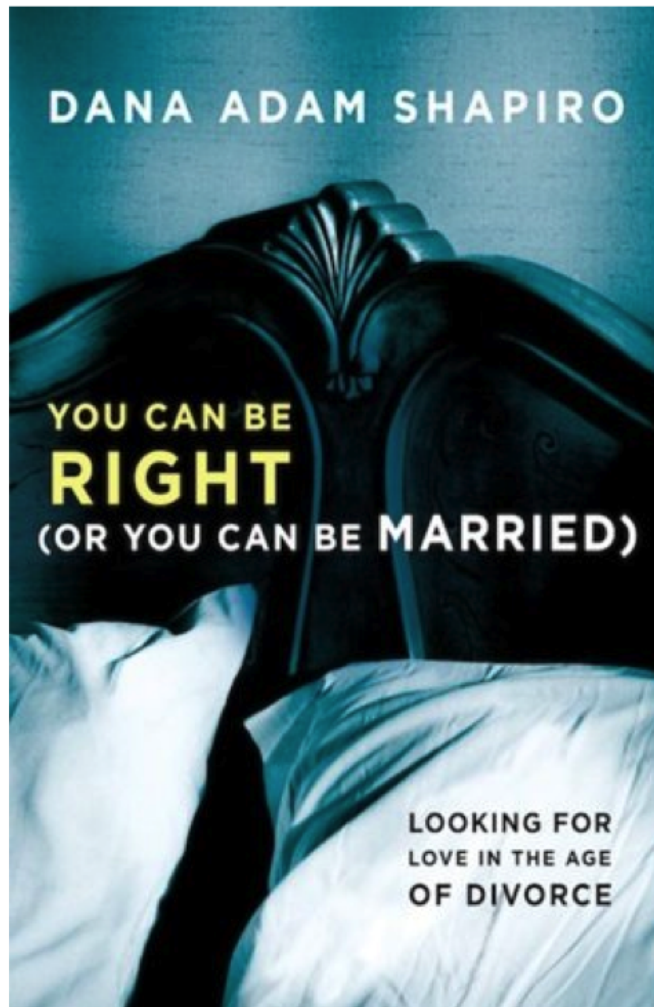
Brokaw leaves us with this final observation when the interview is done. "I gotta tell you, it's much easier asking the questions than answering them!"

*You can purchase a copy of 'Beyond the Red Carpet: The World of Entertainment Journalists' in bookstores and online nationwide today. You can also purchase a signed copy when you buy it from her website at [www.FrancineBrokaw.com](http://www.FrancineBrokaw.com). For more information about Brokaw, follow her on Facebook and Twitter at @FrancineBrokaw.*

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## **Author Janine Driver Shows How Catching Someone in a Lie Can Save Your Relationship in New Book, 'You Can't Lie to Me'**





By Sarah Ribeiro

When body language expert Janine Driver suspected her live-in boyfriend of cheating, she knew better than to make accusations. Although his habit of coming home at late hours in the morning roused her suspicion, she took her own approach to catch him in the act. “I asked him, ‘Why are you so late?’” she shares, “and he told me, ‘I was walking around M Street thinking about our future together.’ When he said that, I decided to come up with a lie of my own and said, ‘No wonder you’re late – I heard about the five-alarm fire at Urban

Outfitters on M Street on the news. Is that what held you back?’ A truthful person would have said, ‘No, I was there, and there was no fire. What are you talking about?’ Instead, he paused – and liars will always have an uncomfortable pause – and then went on and on, making excuses. I told him to pack his stuff and get out of my life.”

**Related Link:** [Find Out What Kristen Stewart’s Body Language Reveals About Her Cheating Guilt](#)

While the five-alarm fire may not have been real, Driver’s methods of catching a liar are. In her new book, *You Can’t Lie to Me: The Revolutionary Program to Supercharge Your Inner Lie Detector and Get to The Truth*, released August 28, she shows how to spot a liar and get them to admit the truth. Her five-step program walks you through a ‘BS Barometer’ to help you detect those who lie to you. Following Driver’s steps, you can learn to read people, avoid unfaithful partners, keep your children from lying to you, hire people you can trust or even keep yourself from getting swindled out of money. Driver even uses her expertise to train police officers to read body language while in the field.

We were able to speak to the author herself and gain some tips on how spotting a lie can help your relationship.

**What are some simple body language cues?**

We all wear different masks in different situations, but body language can tell you if someone’s holding back. If you ask a man if he’s married, and he says, “no” and shrugs his shoulders, there’s more to the story. A shoulder shrug is uncertainty – it doesn’t mean he’s married, but it means he’s uncomfortable with marriage, either through his own experiences or ones he’s witnessed. Ask him a question like ‘Is there any reason why marriage would make you uncomfortable?’ and you’ll get the full story.

**What are some situations you've been in where body language has helped or benefited you?**

Everything – from parent-teacher conferences, to meeting my husband on Match.com, to working with my son. I say, from the boardroom to the bedroom to the barroom, just knowing what question you have to ask is how to get what you want. The key to using the successful 'You Can't Lie to Me' program is thinking like a detective. A simple question like 'Is there any reason why...?' can make someone give up on a lie and win you the truth without an argument.

**Related Link:** [Trust: Should You Give Your Passwords to Your Partner?](#)

**What are some ways you can catch an untrustworthy partner?**

You have to figure out when your partner has changed their baseline or behavior in some way. If they're avoiding looking at you or, on the other hand, are looking at you all the time, you should be suspicious. A change in behavior will tell you if they're hiding something from you or not, and the tools to approaching that are in the book.

**In what ways can being able to read lies help you with your love life? How do you use lie detection to strengthen a relationship?**

You can get real: you get to know what your partner's concerns are and what he likes or doesn't like and vice versa. When you hold back secrets from people who are important, that's toxic to your relationship. You need to flip the script on your intention: focus on ridiculous amounts of transparency, honesty, hope and kindness. When you can spot deception in people and approach it well – knowing how to ask the right questions – you can make your relationship stronger. It can stop your husband before he cheats or stop your kids before they go down the wrong path. The people who tend to be the best at deception are the people who tend to be the most

trustworthy.

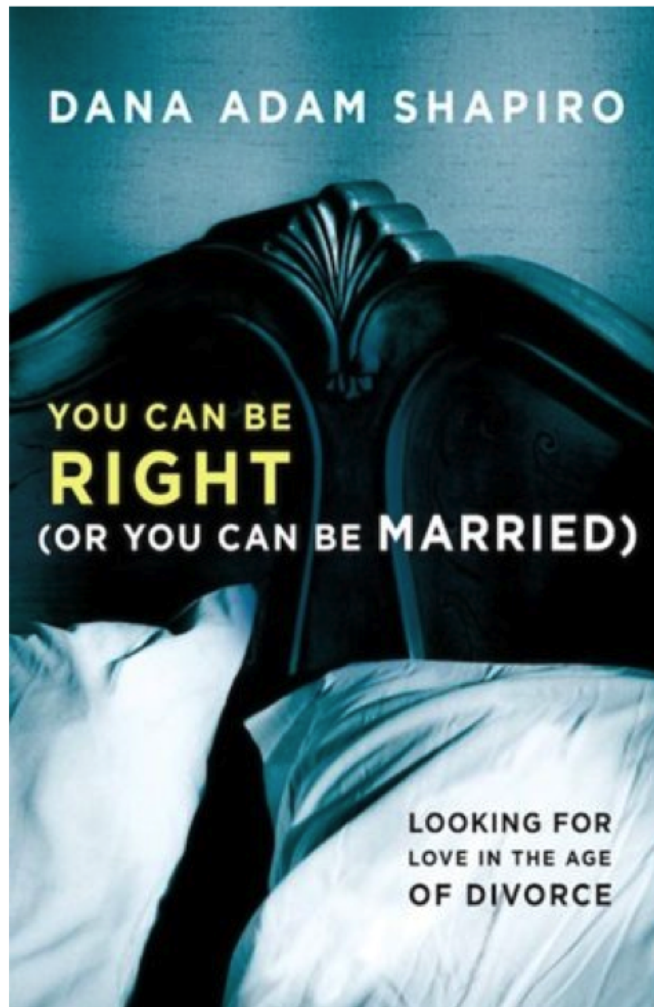
Ask people to tell the truth in advance, and the likelihood that they'll tell the truth will skyrocket. Starting off with a statement like, "I'm going to ask you a few questions, and I want you to tell the truth" works better than saying "Don't lie to me." We never hear the word *don't* – we only hear the command "lie to me," so we *will* lie. The best thing you can do is to say, "Whether you tell me the truth or not" – make sure you pause here – "I'll still love you, and we'll get through this together." You've told them to tell the truth, and that sets you up for romantic success.

*To learn how to tap into your own inner lie detector, you can buy 'You Can't Lie to Me: The Revolutionary Program to Supercharge Your Inner Lie Detector and Get to the Truth' on Amazon. Be sure to check out Janine Driver's website at [www.lyintamer.com](http://www.lyintamer.com) and follow her on Facebook and Twitter at @JanineDriver.*

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## Dr. Catherine Salmon Shares 'The Secret Power of Middle Children'





By [Deanna Atkins](#)

One thing you can't change in life is your birth order. Firstborns are destined for leadership, and lastborns take the role as the family's beloved baby, making it a confusing ride for a child growing up in between. While a vast amount of research has been done on birth order, it always seems like the ones left out are middleborns. Realizing this truth, Dr. Catherine Salmon strives to credit middle children's extraordinary traits through her research, surprising readers, myth-believers and parents with the real facts about middles. Salmon teams up with journalist Katrin Schumann to reveal how

middleborns can “harness their unexpected and remarkable abilities” in *The Secret Power of Middle Children*.

Although Dr. Catherine Salmon happens to be the baby of the family, she has great admiration for her father who was born a middle child. Throughout her book, she speaks about his honorable qualities, which she believes stem from his middle-child nature. A “trail blazer and a justice seeker,” her father inspired her to be independent and, above all, herself. We had a chance to speak with Dr. Salmon, and she filled us in on what sets middles apart from their siblings – intellectually, romantically and emotionally.

**Related Link:** [Will Smith Says Family is All About Love and Communication](#)

**Why do you think people still choose to believe outdated myths which categorize middle children as being neglected, overshadowed, resentful and negative?**

I think there are a number of different reasons for it. A lot of time, our opinions are based on what we see in the media. Sometimes, shows like ‘The Brady Bunch’ give middle children a reputation of being overlooked and neglected, which is powerful because so many people grew up watching that. Also, in general, there’s not a lot of research on middleborns; it’s usually just firstborns and lastborns, which proves the overlooked theory again. People look to firstborns and assume that, if they are this way, everyone else must be the opposite.

**You say that middleborns are great love matches for first and lastborns. Why do these pairings work so well?**

Generally, middleborns go well with most other pairings because of the traits they developed simply from getting less attention from their parents. They work diligently to develop relationships, and they’re good negotiators as well as cooperators. They tend to be more concerned about what they’re

doing for others than what other people do for them. This quality transfers to their relationships, thus making them good at understanding what the other person wants.

**Related Link:** [4 Steps to a Stronger Long-Term Relationship](#)

**What are some disadvantages of having two middleborns in a relationship?**

When you match two middles together, neither wants there to be much conflict, so each partner may not address problems that arise in the relationship. Actually, many birth orders don't do well when paired together. Firstborn pairings tend to butt heads all of the time, and when two lastborns are in a relationship, neither really wants to deal with the problems at all. Middles can easily become pushovers, and a relationship won't be successful if that's the case.

**Additionally, middleborns have stronger friendships and longer-lasting marriages. What makes them more relationship-oriented than first and lastborns?**

Like I've said, middles are better at figuring out what the other person wants. They're dedicated, value their relationships and also show a willingness to survive the tough times. Middles are agreeable, loyal and flexible – which are all upstanding qualities that are essential to making a relationship or marriage last. Having a high sense of responsibility also helps them in relationships because they're eager to stay in a long-lasting relationship.

**Related Link:** [When One Partner's Needs Are More Important](#)

**Middleborns are also “agents of change in business, politics and science – more so than first and lastborns.” Can you explain this idea further and share a few examples?**

One of the things we talk about in the book are the strategies you learn when you're younger to get what you want.

Middleborns are not only good negotiators, but they have an 'openness to experience' – which usually derives from not being given enough freedoms at a young age. Therefore, they're open to new things and willing to take risks and think outside the box. For example, Charles Darwin would probably not have come up with the idea of evolution and natural selection had he been a firstborn. He created a huge change in the way that people thought about science because he didn't follow his family's expectations for what he should be, which was a doctor. Middles are more sensitive to issues about justice and whether people are being treated fairly. They see inequities in the world and want to change what isn't right.

**What's the greatest hidden personality trait you believe middleborns possess?**

The openness to experience – the willingness to not go by the typical way of thinking about things. They're empathetic and are internally good psychologists. These traits all go into what makes them so successful.

**From Donald Trump to Madonna to the Dalai Lama, how can more middleborns channel their secret powers like these famous people did?**

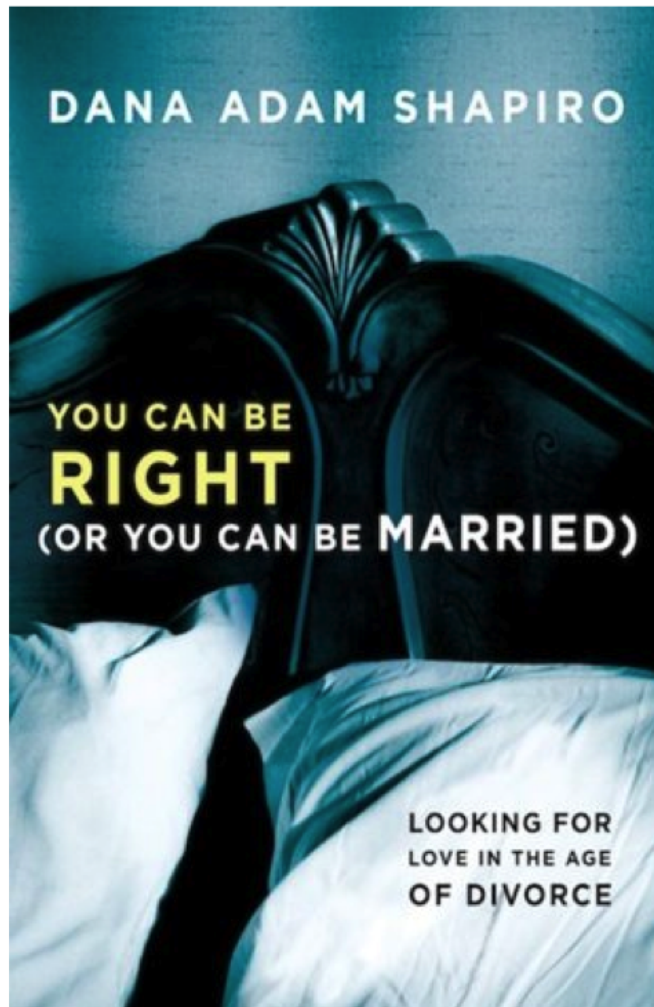
Recognition is the first thing. Sometimes, middleborns don't see their skills for what they are because they have a lower sense of self-esteem. They have this great package, and at first, they might not see how all the pieces fit together. I think that, if they had more confidence to go out and do the things that they want, then there would be a lot more successful middles.

*You can learn more about 'The Secret Power of Middle Children at [Amazon](#).*

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# Amy Laurent Tells Us How to Navigate a New Relationship and Go From '8 Weeks to Everlasting'





By Whitney Baker

Matchmaker and reality star Amy Laurent didn't realize how much she needed her own help until she began filming Bravo's 'Miss Advised.' As viewers saw throughout the first season, she quickly learned how hard it was to be open to love and how scary it was to feel vulnerable. That was the catalyst she needed to write her book, which she began working on two-thirds through filming. *8 Weeks to Everlasting: A Step-by-Step Guide to Getting (and Keeping!) the Guy You Want* isn't about getting the ring or getting to the altar; it's about building

a strong foundation for a lasting relationship with your perfect person. "This book offers simple guidelines that every woman needs to follow when they first meet someone they like," Laurent explains. "It's about how to change your approach to dating so you don't lose yourself in it." No one knows the importance of these parameters better than the author. We had a chance to chat with her about what rules to follow, what lies men tell and what she's learned in her search for love.

### **How did you develop your dating philosophy?**

I found that women kept asking the same questions when it came to men and the early stages of dating. I've been giving women solid advice on how to handle these situations, and they've come back to me and thanked me for everything I said. But here I am, getting back into dating myself, and I'm totally stinking at it. During the course of filming 'Miss Advised,' I realized that I needed my own coaching. Talk about a sense of urgency! It was like, "Oh my god, I need to take everything that I've been telling women to do and turn it into a handbook so I can find a guy for myself!"

No matter who we are, whether we're the expert or not, we really need rules that are clearly laid out, week-by-week, about how to date men. It's the first eight weeks that are the most torturous for women!

**Related Link:** ['Miss Advised' Star Amy Laurent Says, "I've Always Seen Katie Holmes With Someone Who Is More Mellow and Chill"](#)

**In the introduction of your book, you tell women that they're in charge of their fate and they can have any kind of relationship they want. What is preventing women from finding their ideal relationship?**

Accepting less than what we deserve. There are boundaries that teach a new guy in your life what is acceptable and if you are a relationship girl or a casual dater. Your actions towards

him define how he looks at you; you teach people how you want to be treated.

How many of us get excited about a guy and then start to cancel our plans with girlfriends because he suddenly calls and asks us out? That's the complete opposite of what you're supposed to do, but we've all been there. We're so emotionally invested in this guy that we've only been out with a handful of times that he has an affect on whether we have a good day or not. As women, we need to remember that we're in control. If someone isn't respecting you or treating you how you want to be treated, you get to choose to write that person off.

**You banish women from making the first move, yet so many of our male readers tells us they *want* a woman to approach them first. What are your thoughts on that?**

One of the biggest points in my book is that women should *never* initiate. You don't call or text a guy first; you don't suggest that you get together on a Friday night. You have to let the man take the male role. If you become aggressive, he's going to lose interest very quickly.

As a matchmaker, I work very closely with men, and they tell me things that I wish they would say to more women's faces. If a guy says he loves when a women takes the initiative and asks him out, he's lying to you. Any man will say that it's cool at first – it's less work when the woman comes to him. But he'll also tell you that he's never dated that girl for longer than two weeks. That's the truth.

**Related Link:** [Subtle Ways to Get a Second Date](#)

**What love lessons did you learn from filming 'Miss Advised' and writing this book?**

First, I gained a newfound respect for my clients. It had been so long since I put my heart out there, and I realized that my clients do it everyday. It's not easy!

I also learned that dating is about enjoying the process, weeding out the jerks, finding your perfect person and having fun along the way because you're in control. One of the keys is balance: you need to stay open enough but also hold the reins and pace yourself.

**Lastly, if there were one piece of advice you could give women looking for love, what would it be?**

One thing I said repetitively is that, if a guy genuinely cares about you and wants to get to know you, he is going to try to impress you – and you should let him. You really have to communicate what kind of relationship you want, and you have to stick to that.

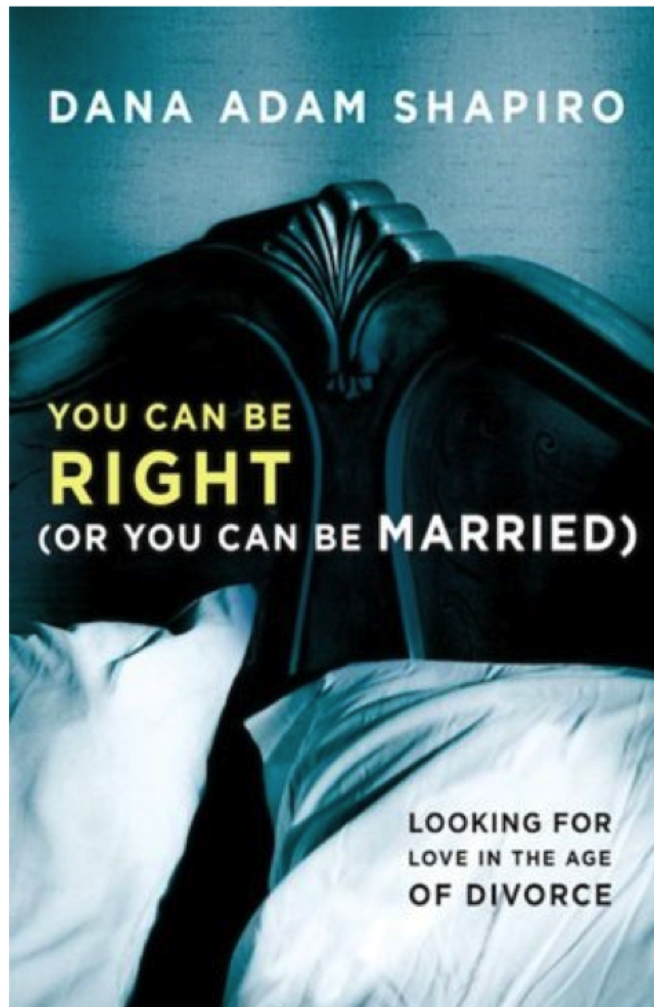
And buy my book, of course!

*You can buy '8 Weeks to Everlasting: A Step-By-Step Guide to Getting (and Keeping!) the Guy You Want' on Amazon. Be sure to keep up with Laurent on Facebook, Twitter and her personal site at [www.AmyLaurent.com](http://www.AmyLaurent.com).*

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## **Marcy Miller Sheds Light on Looking for Love and 'Rebooting in Beverly Hills'**





By Deanna Atkins

From catching her husband cheating to combating breast cancer, there's no doubt that former lawyer and author, Marcy Miller, is a survivor. Sure, everyone has gone through a breakup, but Miller's memoir, aptly titled 'Rebooting in Beverly Hills,' covers so much more than your average heartbreak. She shares a witty and humorous account of finding herself at the age of 45 after two devastating divorces. Whether you've settled down with the man of your dreams or just recently found out the guy you loved is gay, anyone can relate to the challenges of twenty-first century living, dating and loving. We had

the opportunity to chat with the Hollywood writer, and she unveiled her biggest fears and challenges as well as her love lessons learned.

**What were your biggest fears as you re-entered the dating world after divorce? How did you overcome them?**

For me, one of the biggest fears had to do with physical intimacy. In 2000, after being diagnosed with breast cancer, I had a mastectomy, and I hadn't been with a man other than my husband since. I'm very proud of my reconstruction, but I feared what a new man's reaction would be to my naked body. What I learned is that we all have something that makes us feel self-conscious. Frankly, it wasn't an issue, so I was able to relax.

**Why do you think women are more hesitant to get back into the dating world following a divorce?**

No one wants to be heartbroken again. In order to fully put yourself out there, you have to take risks. If you protect yourself too much, you're not going to be relating to men and other people in a way that allows relationships to develop. It's a leap of faith to say, "Okay, I'm going to go back in there even if that means my heart's going to be broken again." I think it takes time to heal, to get yourself together. But it's important to be proactive. If you don't come up with a strategy to get back into the dating world, then you won't get past that passive-negative mind set.

**You write that every woman needs a 'BGF' (Best Gay Friend). What can he offer you that a female friend cannot?**

A gay-man friend sometimes sees things differently than a girlfriend. My BGF feels comfortable asking me, "What is wrong with you that you think this time will be easy?" Through humor, he can say to me, "Knock it off! Stop wallowing in self-pity." For some reason, you take criticism a lot better

from a gay friend. Maybe because those sort of things aren't often said by a girlfriend. Women tend to want to make you feel better, while a gay friend can just let you have it – which is what you need at times.

**Some women get offended when their friends try to fix them up. Why do you think that's the case? What are they missing out on when they say no?**

That is my number one rule: do not say no to a fix-up! A fix-up is your best possibility of meeting someone; it's a pre-selected date. Somebody who is nice enough to fix you up already knows who you are and also knows a nice man who seems like the type of person you're trying to attract. That doesn't mean you have to go out for a long dinner or evening of dancing, but why not have a drink or meet for a cup of coffee? It's a huge mistake to ever say no to that.

**Related Link:** [How To Ease Your Nerves Before a First Date](#)

**What is the most important lesson that you learned as you were looking for love?**

That's a really tough question, but I think the hardest lesson for me was to realize that I had to be able to bless my ex-husband – and mean it – in order to get on with my life. I would only be ready to attract the right man if I had totally forgiven him. His actions were unforgiveable, and it took me about four years to do it, but I had to truly forgive him in order to free myself.

**What's the biggest takeaway that you hope your readers will discover from your book?**

I hope my story will help people because there's a lot of practical advice in there. But if nothing else, I hope that they'll be inspired to keep trying. We all kiss a lot of toads before we find our prince, so enter into the process with a sense of humor and a sense of joy. Know that those experiences

are just adding to the tapestry of your life.

**Related Link:** [Five Top Tips On How To Find 'The One'](#)

**And finally, what do you think is the biggest challenge of searching for love in the modern dating world?**

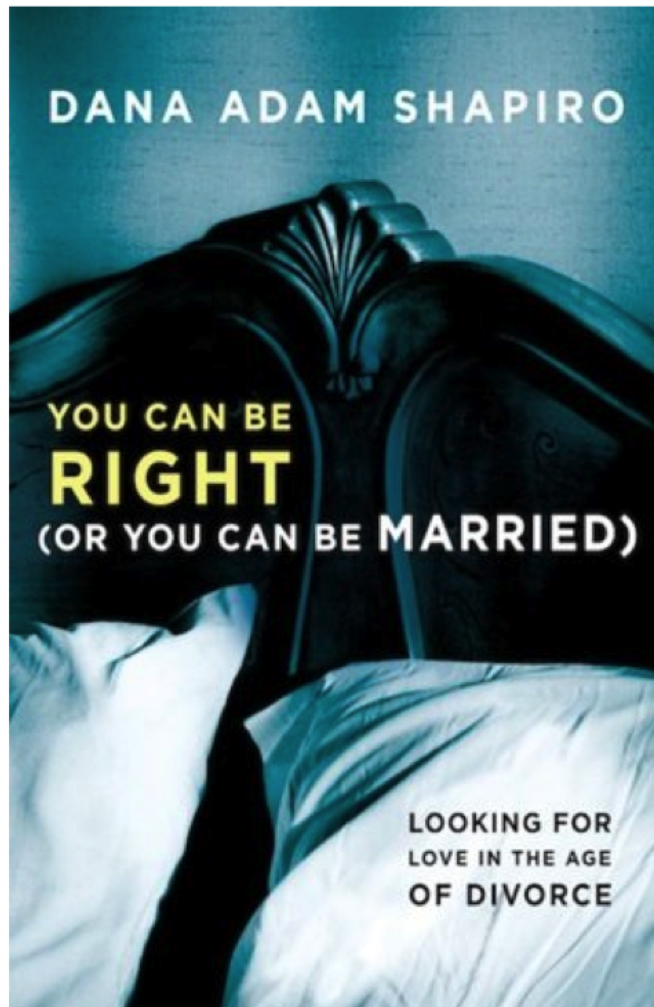
To me, it seems like there's almost too much social media. We're bombarded by all of these different options of communication. There's a whole new set of etiquette that isn't discussed anywhere yet. Like, how many times do you email someone before you speak on the phone or meet in-person? Do you Google your date before you go out with him to ensure that you have things in common? Or is it more fun to discover these details during the date? In many ways, it's easier to meet people with the Internet, but it does come at a huge cost.

*To learn more about fix-ups, pick-ups and the craziness of modern dating, pick up a copy of Rebooting in Beverly Hills. Her smart, attractive humor will keep you laughing and learning. Be sure to check out her Facebook and blog on Huffington Post.*

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## **'Wedding Cake for Breakfast': A Love Letter to Marriage**





By Whitney Baker

*Wedding Cake for Breakfast: Essays on the Unforgettable First Year of Marriage*, edited by New York literary agents Kim Perel and Wendy Sherman, offers an intimate peek into the first year of marriage, as experienced by twenty-three critically acclaimed female writers. This collection of essays explores the unexpected and often difficult moments – from a surprise pregnancy to ghosts of husbands past to blending families – that brides fail to plan for as they prepare for their “big day,” and the 365 days that follow.

We had the pleasure of chatting with Perel and Sherman about the inspiration for, and evolution of this book, as well as what they learned about their own relationships and what they hope that their readers take away from these stories:

**1. The stories shared in this collection are so diverse. What is the unifying theme that links these essays?**

**Perel:** They're all fraught with concerns, questions and exploration, but the tone is still one of "we're going to be okay." Ultimately, it has this uplifting message, but another aspect of the book is that there are bumps along the way, and that's okay. It's not going to be perfect as you figure out how to be together.

**Sherman:** To expand on what Kim just said, there were definitely the stories that focused on the way in which women suddenly saw themselves in the role of "new wife." You know, you wake up one day, and you're a wife. What did you think that was going to feel like? It often doesn't feel anything like you thought. So I think that the journey these women shared with us, some of it has to do with filling that role and playing the part.

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

**2. Wendy, you've been married for 25 years. Do you have any words of wisdom that you learned in your first year of marriage or even in the years since?**

**Sherman:** I think expectation is the theme that I keep coming back to when I think about my first year of marriage. I was actually cleaning out my attic recently, and I came across my wedding album. I was looking at the pictures and wondering what was going on in my mind at the time. You know, you put so much energy into going through the process: you find the guy, you get the ring, you think that you have your whole life planned, and that it's all done.

And then you're married, and now, you're living your life. I think I was young and naïve to think I was done, because you're never done; you're always in the process of evolving and growing and changing. You have to learn to redirect yourself, your life, your expectations.

But that's the beauty of it. When you look at that first year, how can you ever think that it's the end of something? It's not- it's absolutely the beginning. What lies ahead is so completely unknown, and that's such a big part of the excitement.

### **3. Do you feel like you learned anything about your own relationships from reading these essays?**

**Perel:** You so rarely get an intimate and well-articulated glimpse into other people's lives and relationships, so how can you not look at your own life after reading some of these stories? I think what struck me the most was how they worked together as a team. It was always about the teamwork and the give-and-take. That was a beautiful and interesting thing to read- how in every situation, no matter how terrible, they always pulled together.

**Sherman:** Another thing that we noticed throughout the collection, is how many women wrote about this underlying friendship that existed with their partners. Some relationships start off as a friendship and evolve into something more passionate and romantic, while others later develop into a friendship. At the core, that deep friendship is probably what holds marriages together over the long haul.

Joshilyn Jackson talks about friendship in, "The Marry Boy." She started off as best friends with the man who later became her husband. That story really touched me because I thought it was beautiful that a relationship could start off one way and turn out another.

**Perel:** I like when she writes, "It is an odd transition, to

see one's best friend's head perched atop of [a] lovely, naked male body." That's the moment where they truly shift from best friends to something romantic. I think anyone who's ever moved from a best friendship to a romantic relationship would identify with that moment of strange and wonderful.

**Related:** [Famous Couples and Exotic Honeymoons](#)

#### **4. What do you most hope that readers takeaway from the book?**

**Sherman:** I think that there's an illumination of what a matrimony can be. Some of the writers talk about the adjustment period. Ann Hood, for instance, talks about getting used to the way in which her new husband arranges their furniture.

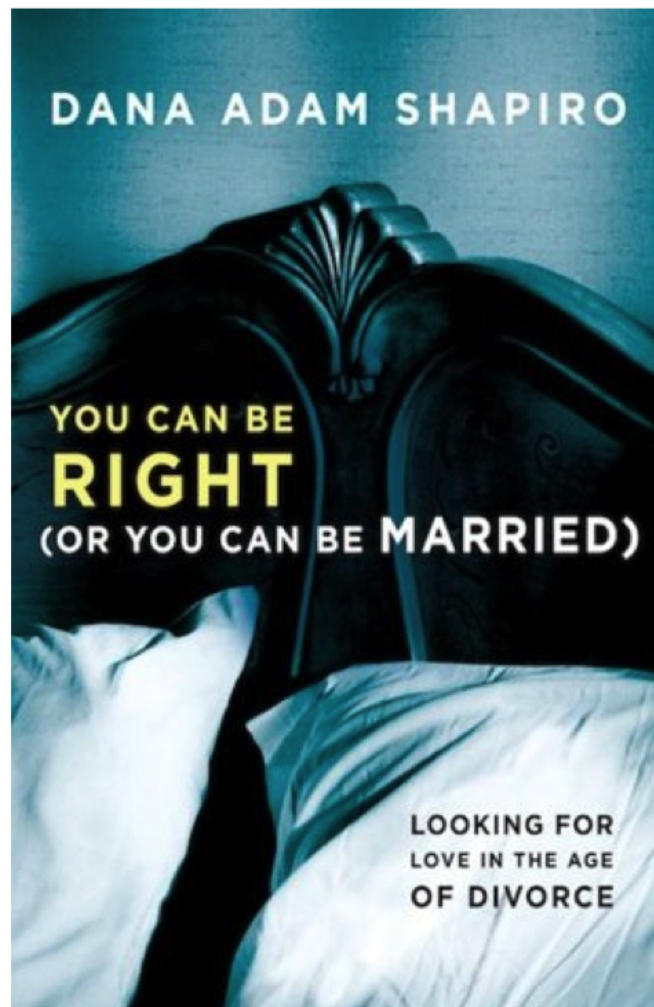
There are so many adjustments and realignments that take place in a marriage, especially in the beginning. Your marriage is going to happen; it's going to change and evolve. It just gets better and better if you can be flexible.

**Perel:** In Sarah Pekkanen's essay, they're blending their families. It's one thing to blend your furniture, but when you get married, there's a whole family element to consider. I think that the takeaway would be to roll with it. Also, you're not expected to have figured things out before getting married; people think that they can mitigate problems by living together or just knowing the person really well, but it's okay that marriage still changes things.

*You can purchase Wedding Cake for Breakfast: Essays on the Unforgettable First Year of Marriage on Amazon. Visit the authors at [WeddingCakeforBreakfast.com](http://WeddingCakeforBreakfast.com) or follow them on Twitter @WeddingCakeBook.*

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



By [Whitney Baker](#)

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

So that brings me to the five steps.

**1. Embrace the universal rejection truth of relationships.**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

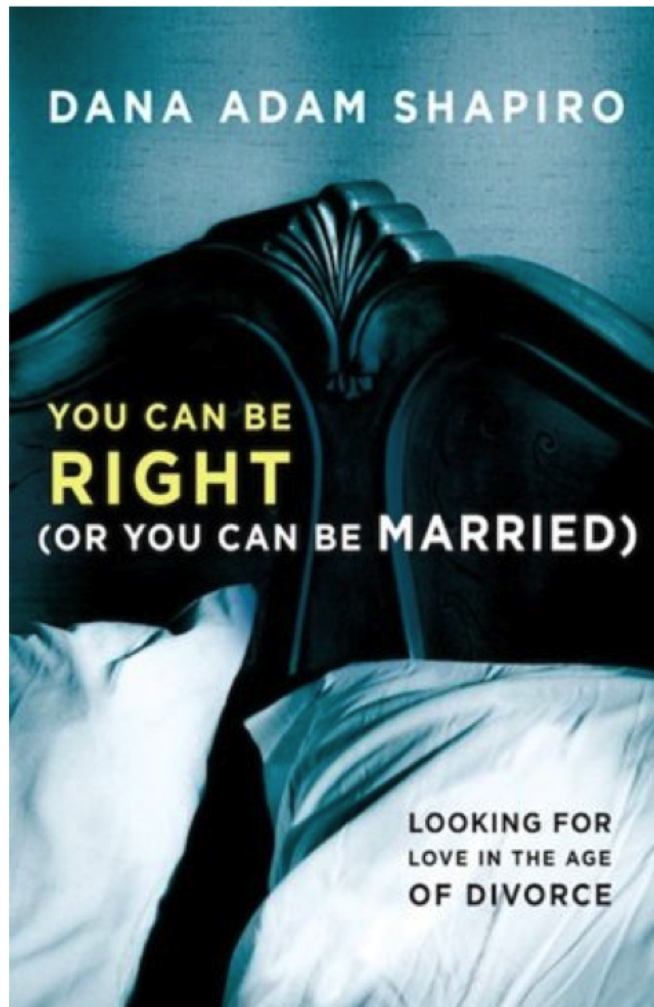
*In the fall, Cohen will be going on a Getting Naked speaking tour, visiting over 30 colleges across the country. There is also an online Getting Naked experiment for readers to visit.*

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

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





By Bernadette McCadden

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

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

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

### **What is so great about having a gaggle?**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

enriching and much healthier.

### **How does technology play into the post-dating world?**

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

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

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

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

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

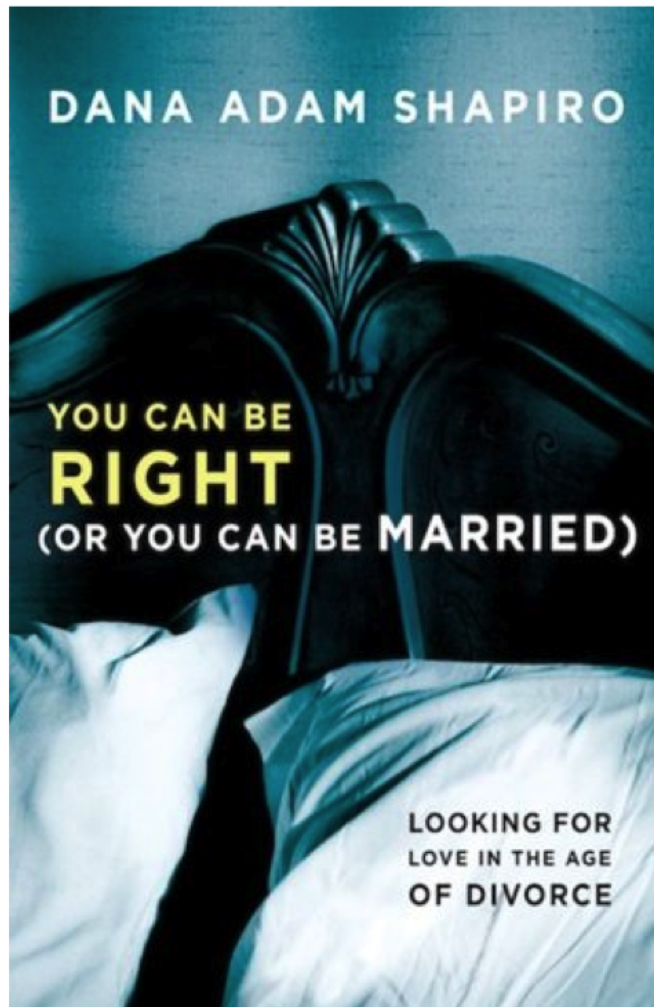
The Gaggle is truly inspiring for women and can change the way they have thought about dating (or non-dating) in the past.

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

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## Dr. Ian Smith Reveals 'The Truth About Men'





By Nisha Ramirez

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

secrets to a successful marriage.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

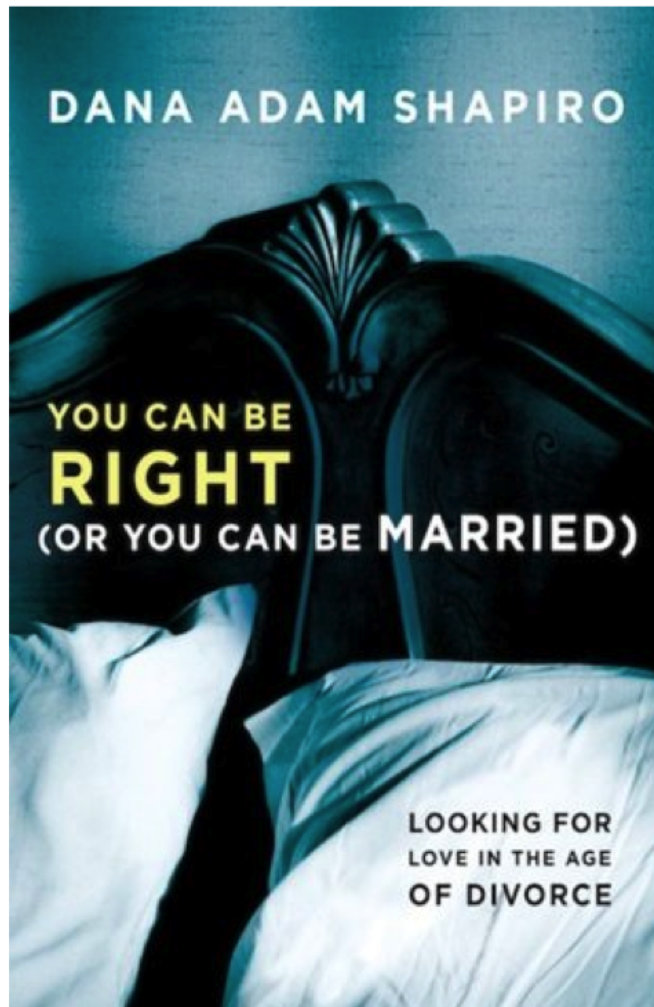
Finding Mr. Right is not as difficult as you might think. He's probably right in front of you, and you don't even see him. Understanding what men are and aren't saying is key. Having some knowledge of their inner most thoughts and motivations can make a big difference. For those who have been in long-term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

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

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





By Joseph Weissgold

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

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

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

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

### **Why are some singles so anxious to get married?**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

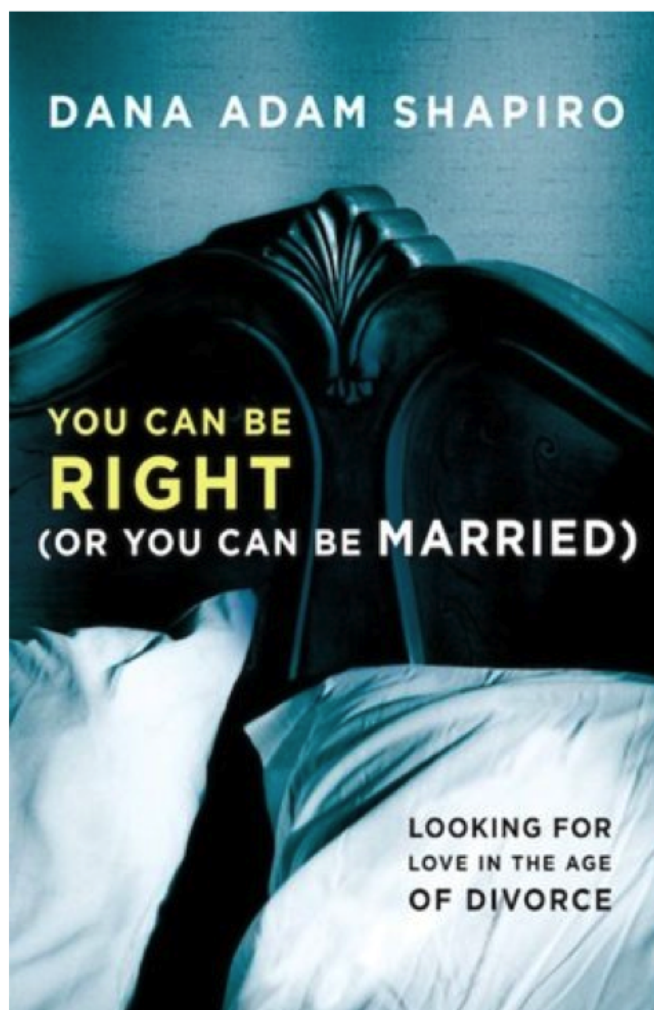
**What's the final verdict: love comes when you give 110 percent or love comes when you stop trying?**

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

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

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



By Daniela Agurcia

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

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

### **What triggered you to write 'Swirling' ?**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

### **How do you feel about celebrities in interracial relationships?**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

**How has your blog, [BeyondBlackandWhite.com](http://BeyondBlackandWhite.com), helped you with the insight you provide for the readers in 'Swirling'?**

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

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

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

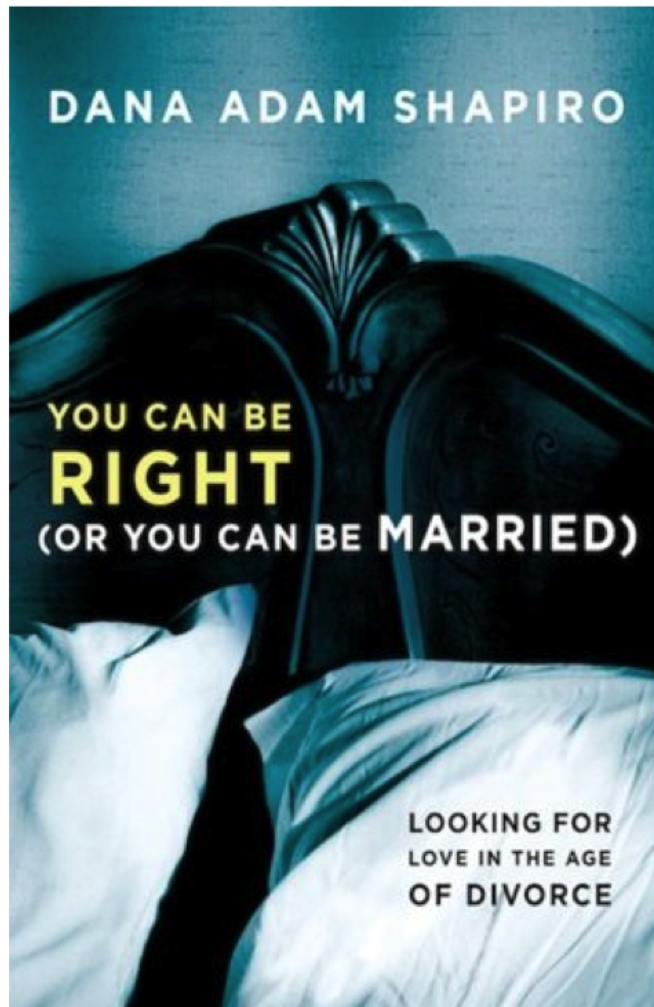
themselves through their writing than they do outloud.

To get more detailed and insightful advice on interracial relationships, purchase *Swirling* at Amazon. Also, visit Karazin's blog, [www.BeyondBlackWhite.com](http://www.BeyondBlackWhite.com).

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





By Creshawna Parker

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

10 years then something is terribly wrong.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

**Do you have any additional advice for our visitors?**

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

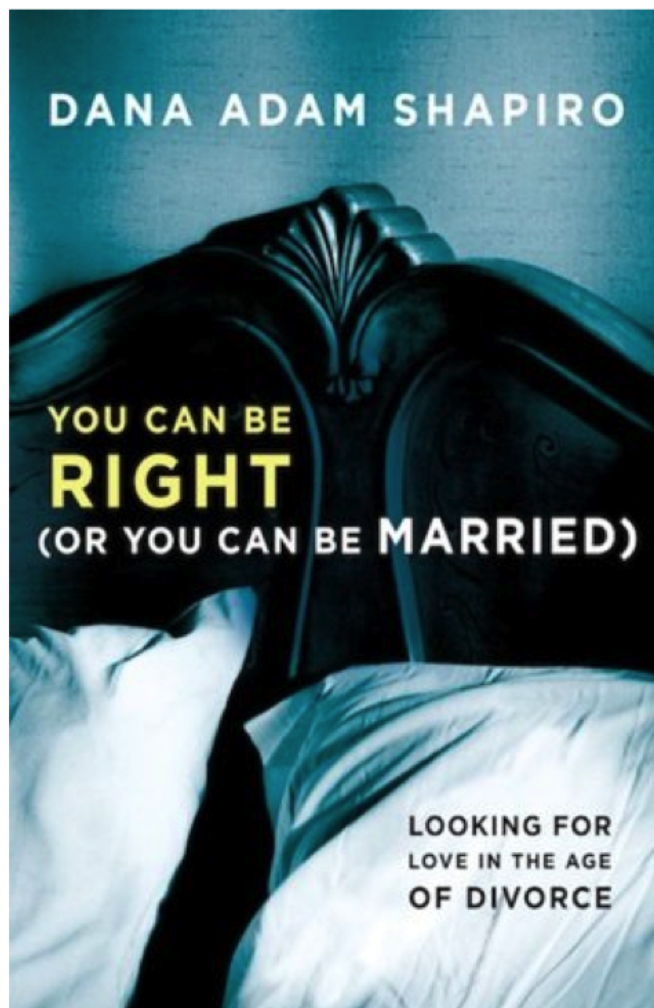
*I promise to share my life with you for as long as I live. To accomplish that, I promise to change when my marriage needs me to change and to grow when my marriage needs me to grow. I promise to be more than the husband you need me to be today. I promise to be the husband you need me to be today, tomorrow,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

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

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





By Daniela Agurcia

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

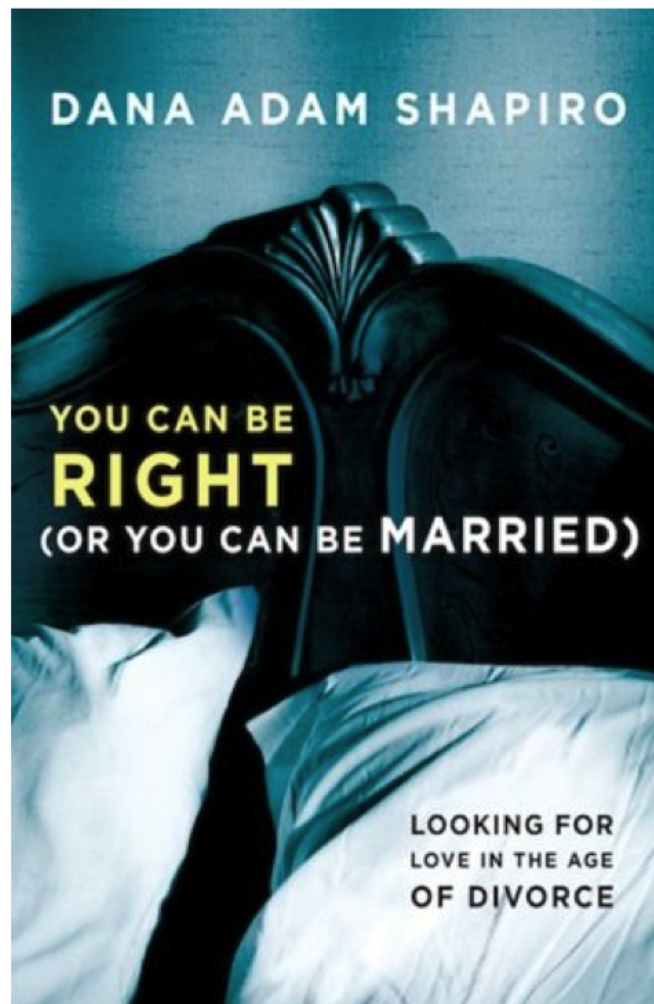
## **What is the one piece of advice you would give to someone who wants to build back trust in their relationship?**

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

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

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



By Nisha Ramirez

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

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

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

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

**Why did you write this book?**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

**Are rebound relationships healthy?**

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

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

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

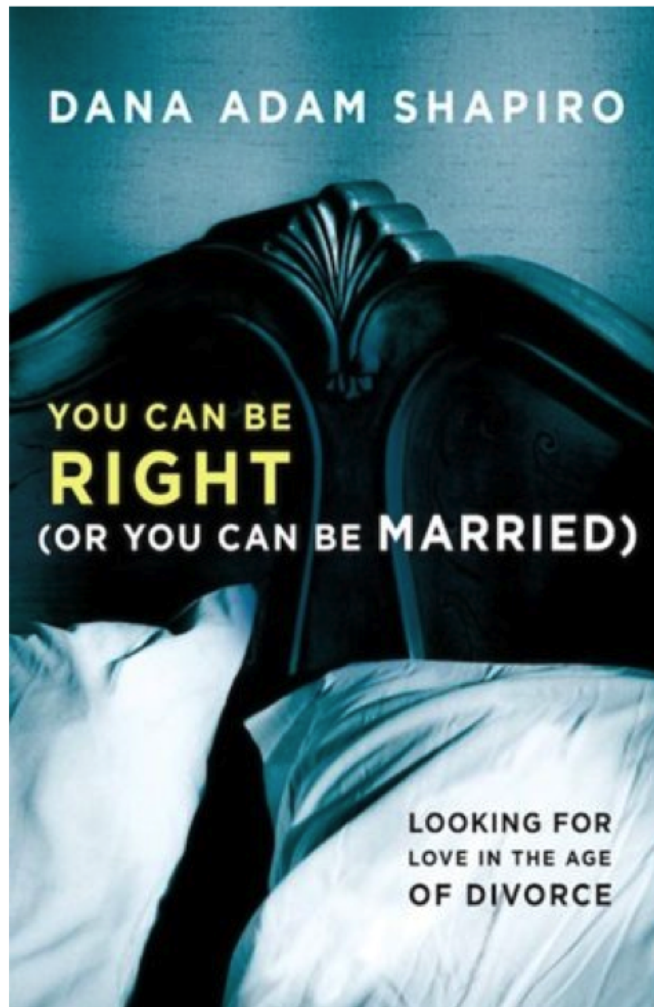
lonely; you're not depressed; and you're not obsessing about your ex. Maybe you begin to make new friends, to go out more. Then it's like, "Yes, I've made it! I'm here!"

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

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





By Daniela Agurcia

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

sit down next to someone, and make yourself available.

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

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

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

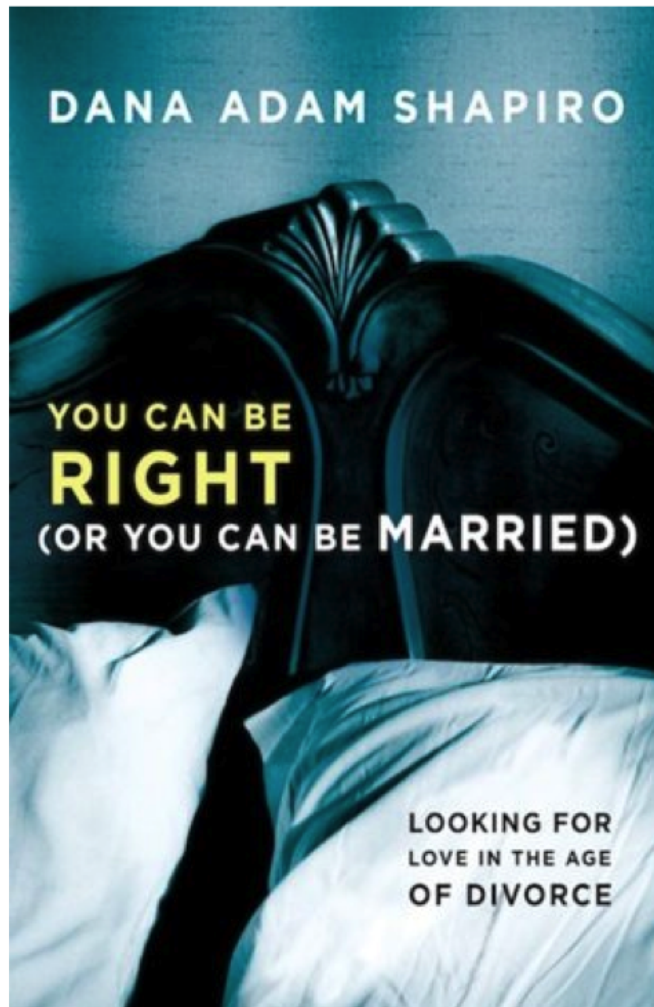
They're in fantasy land. They don't look at what's really going on. They don't trust their gut instinct because they date from a need instead of dating from power. I look at it this way: I'm an incredible, amazing man, and if I'm not with somebody who feels the same way, then I'm with the wrong person.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

*To get more insight on dating, you can purchase David Wygant's new book Naked at Amazon. For more information on his practices, visit his website at [www.DavidWygant.com](http://www.DavidWygant.com).*

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





By Nisha Ramirez

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

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

## **What is Spiritual Dating?**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

## **dating?**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

#1 Do: Trust your instincts.

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

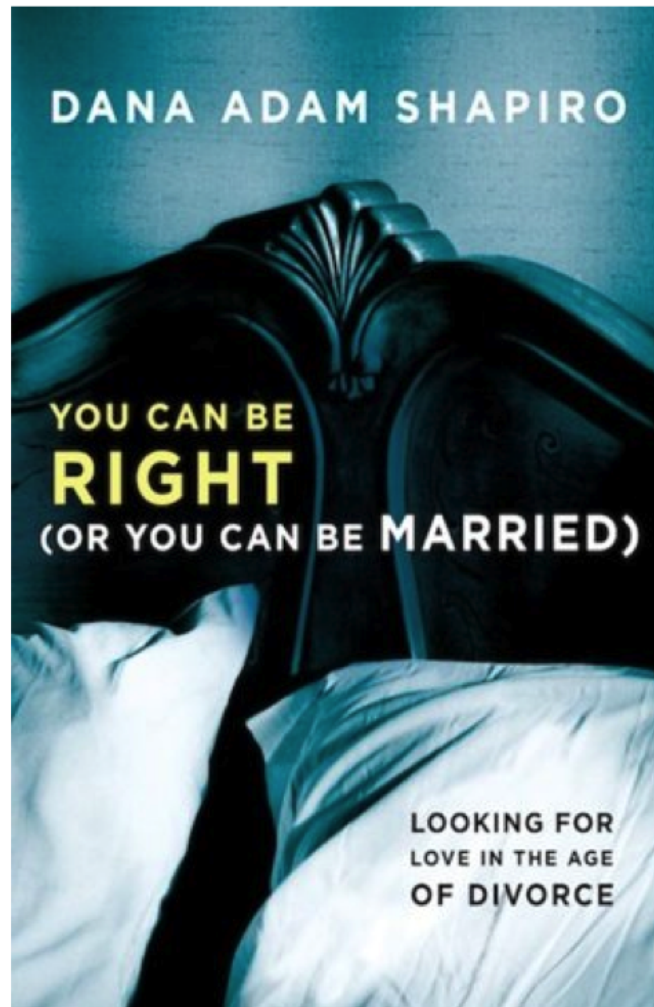
It is crucial to listen to your intuition and inner voice. You already know what is best for you. You just need to listen.

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

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





By [Whitney Baker](#)

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

heart.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

**Do you have any additional tips for our visitors?**

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

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

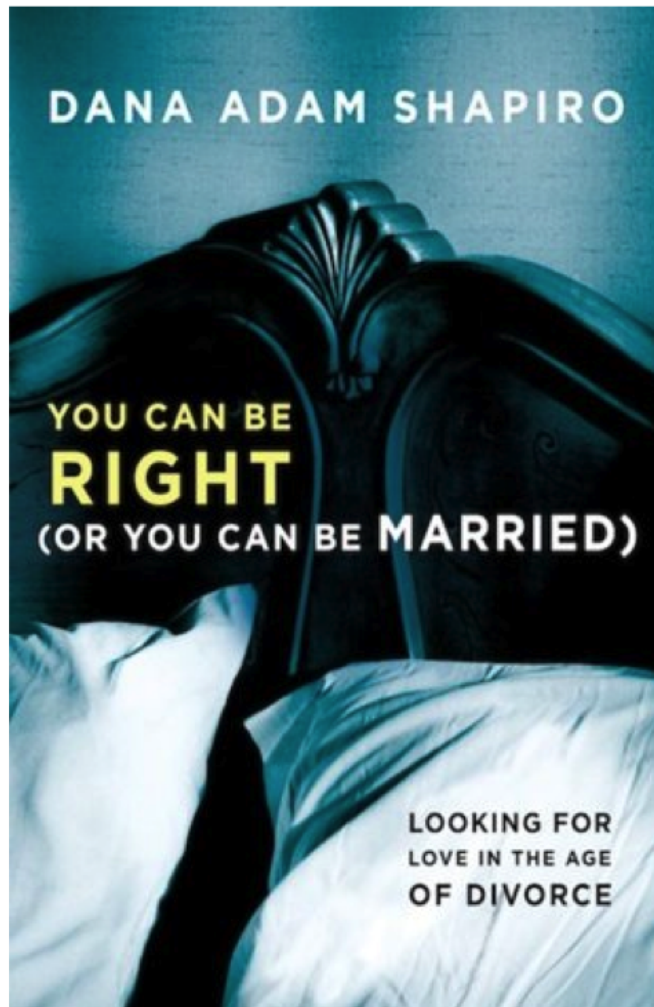
Lastly, the romantic phase of your relationship – obsessive thoughts, constant sexual desire and so on – will naturally die down in about 18 months. We would all be exhausted if that didn't happen! That does not mean you have fallen out of love. It is the deeper form of attachment that indicates that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

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

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





By [Whitney Baker](#)

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

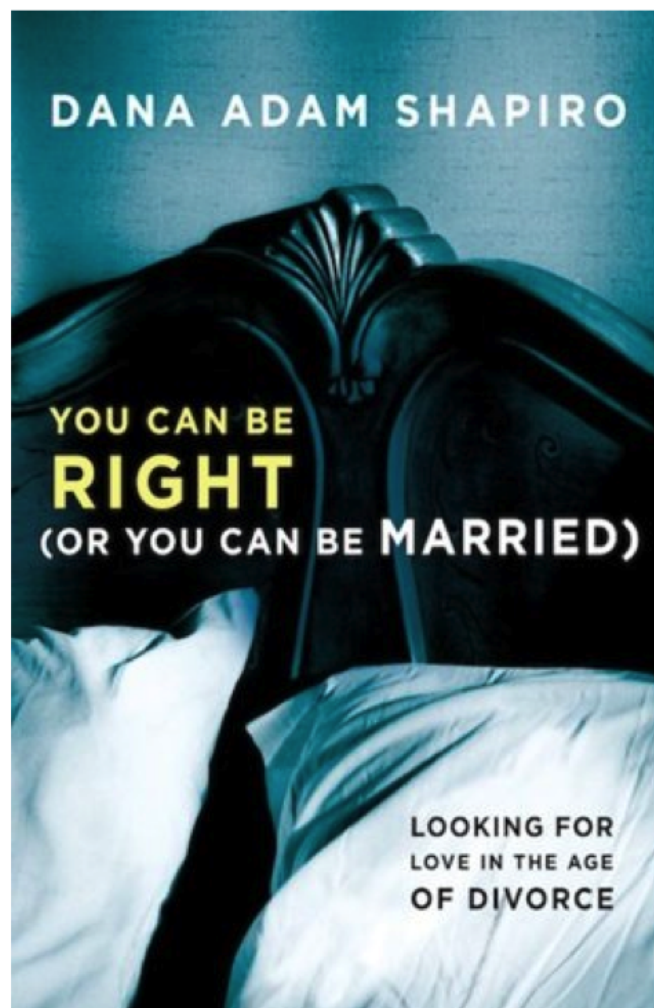
Then she told me he suggested they do show-and-tell and wasn't that "cool." I thought, "A match!" It was the request of someone who wanted guaranteed talking points and was accepted as a smooth move. Eric brought old coins that she found intriguing, and she was also impressed by the history lesson that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

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

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

# Boy - Crazy Lesbian Beauty Queen'



By Steven Zangrillo

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

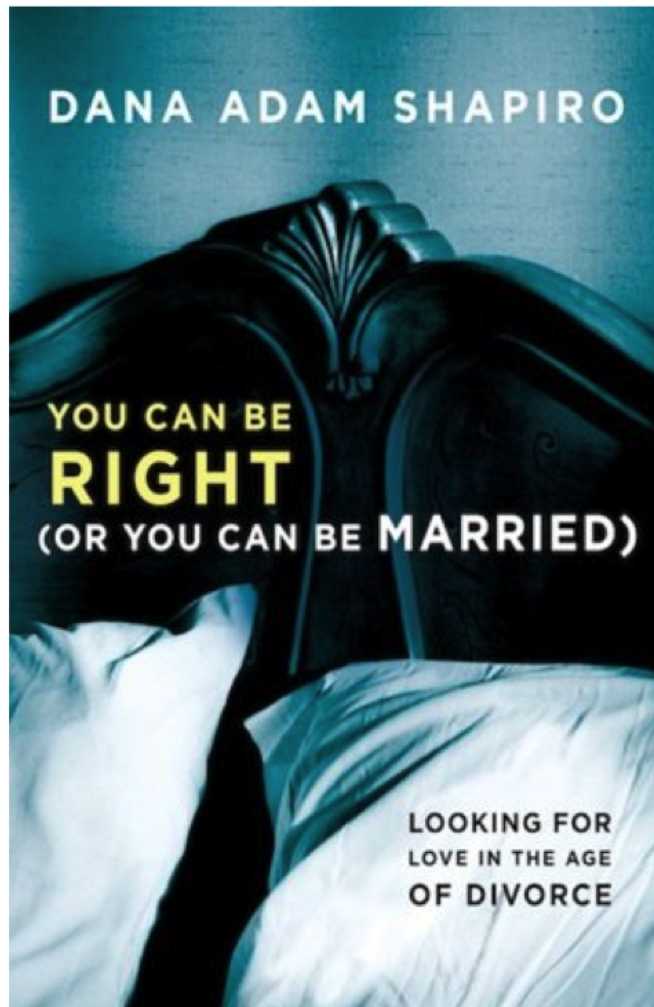
would delete his number from my phone and write him off completely. I would come up with about a million different scenarios and over-think everything. Sure enough, every time this happened he would end up calling like “Hey, babe. I was just watching the game when you called! I miss you.” It was always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

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

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





By Tanni Deb

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

how to move on – with or without their partners.

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

**What made you choose to write about this topic?**

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

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

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

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

**What challenges did you face while writing the guide?**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

**When should someone move on from a difficult relationship?**

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

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

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

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

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

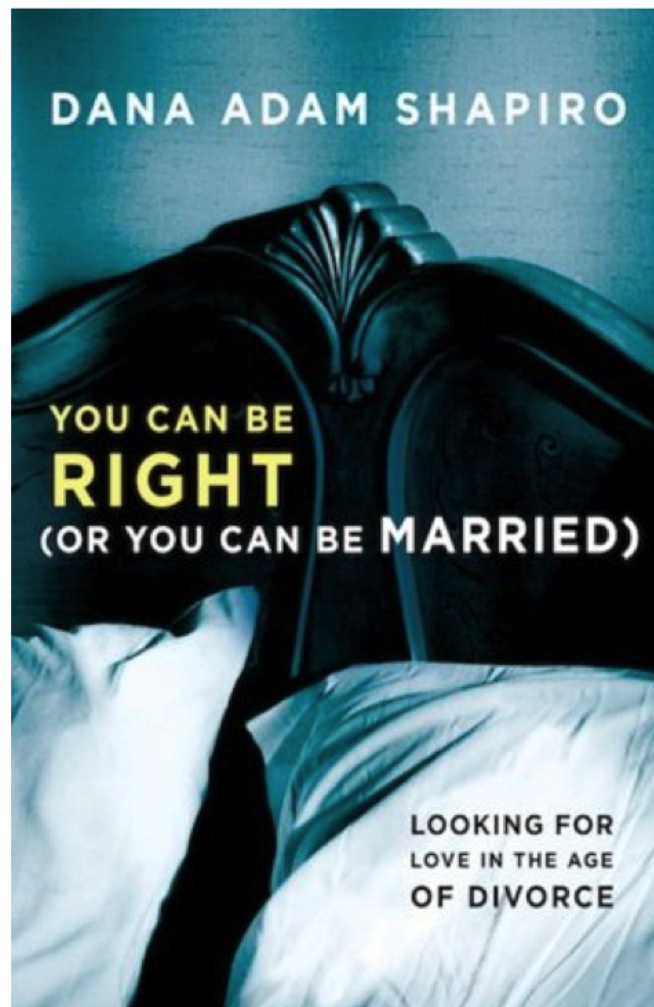
In order to stop spending all of your time waiting to figure out what's going to happen between you and your lover, you'll need to create your own "No-Matter-What-Happens" life goals for yourself. That is the typical kind of life-planning people do. If you're in a healthy, but sadly unfulfilling partnership,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

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

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

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



By Amanda Martin

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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