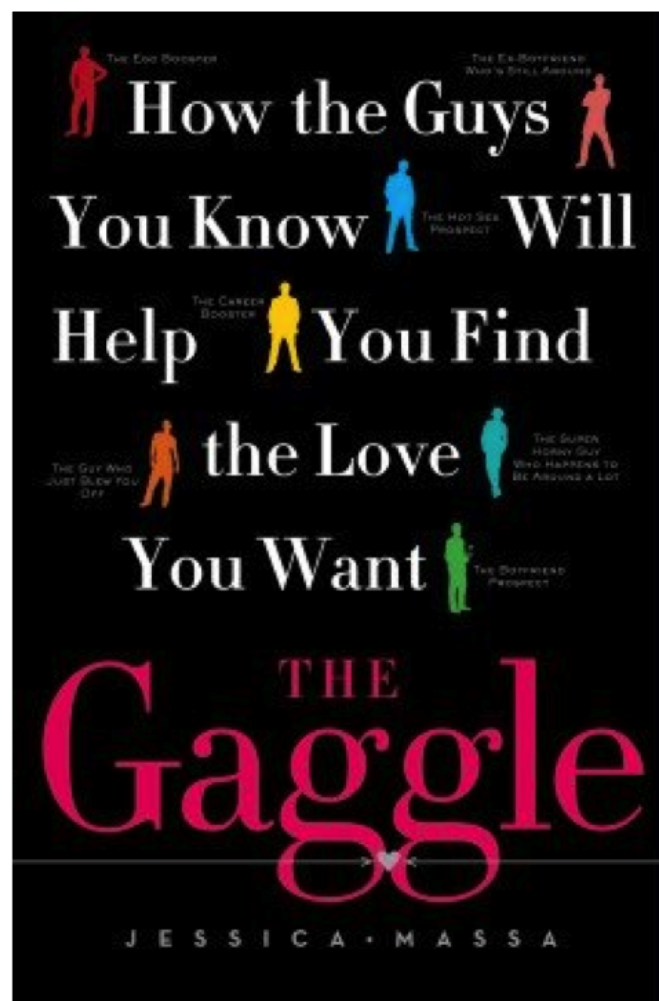


The Gaggle: Jessica Massa and Rebecca Wiegand Discuss 'The Gaggle' of Guys in Every Woman's Life



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.

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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.