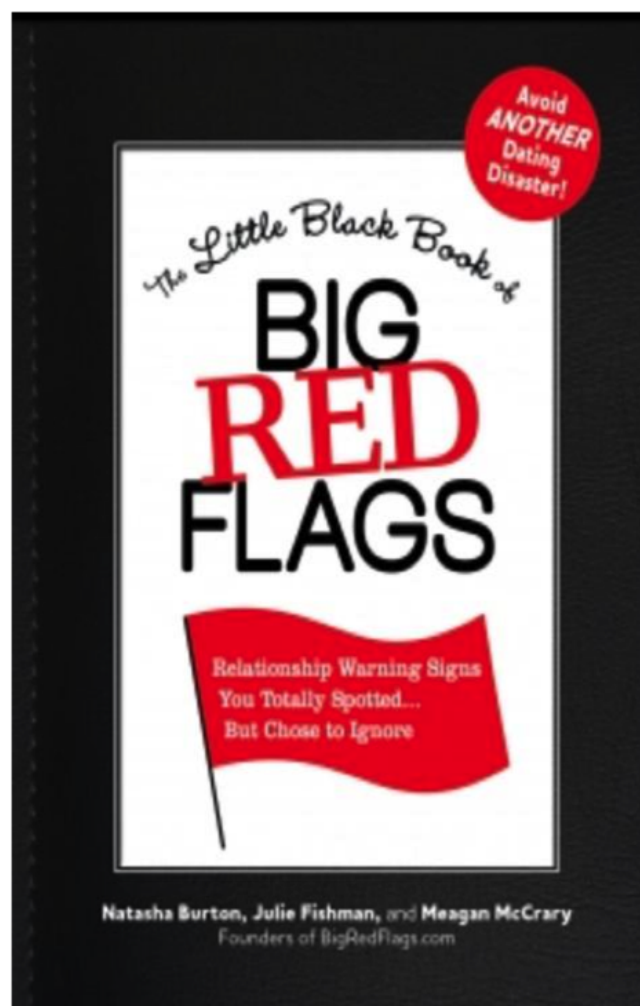


The Authors of 'The Little Black Book of Big Red Flags' Help You Avoid a Dating Disaster



By Tanni Deb

Ever had a relationship with a boyfriend that spent more money on himself than he did on you, expected you to pay (in full) while on dates, or constantly spoke about a past romance? You probably assumed you were both meant to be together – until he dumped you a few months later and you finally recalled the red flags in your relationship you shouldn't have ignored. According to *Little Black Book of Big Red Flags: Relationship Warning Signs You Totally Spotted... But Chose to Ignore* by Natasha Burton, Meagan McCrary and Julie Fishman, you aren't the only one. These three have all encountered several flags in their love lives and they're sharing their stories with you. Alongside their dating disaster tales, the book also offers advice on how to handle similar situations and figure out what kind of relationship will make you happy.

While you might have disregarded that prickling sensation that your relationship is on the rocks, ignore no more. Read on for our author interview:

Why did you guys write this book?

Meagan: The three of us were sharing stories about ex-boyfriends when we came up with the general idea of "red flags" – those *I-should-have-known-then* moments we often dismiss. We figured that if we had so many over-the-top stories, women across the country would as well. The next step was to build a blog and find out.

Natasha: When we first launched the blog, we hoped to some day turn the material into a book of women's red flag stories, just because it really hadn't been done.

Julie: But after receiving thousands of submissions, we started to notice some trends in the types of big red flags being sent in. Simultaneously, readers began asking us for advice on what they should do in certain situations. We

thought a book was the best way to share the stories and answer these questions. Plus, we knew we'd have a ball writing it.

On the website it says, "If you spot a red flag, the offense doesn't necessarily mean you need to kick the person to the curb..." After how many red flags should you break up with your partner and why?

Julie: There's no secret number: One really bad flag, like a man threatening to break up with you if you don't do things in bed that you've told him make you uncomfortable, may hold more weight than a series of smaller flags, like if he's sloppy or a momma's boy.

Do you think some acts – like cheating – should be forgiven?

Meagan: Really, it's up to the woman. There are no black and white rules for relationships, and if you try to impose them it's going to be a long, brutal journey. There are many couples who have worked through major issues, such as cheating, so to say such acts should or shouldn't be forgiven is irrelevant. But working through a red flag is very different from ignoring or not dealing with one because you just don't want to break up. Our book really encourages awareness and sticking to what you know, in your gut, is right for you.

The book contains Red-Flag Rules, signs that tells you it's time to get out of a relationship. What kind of research was done in order to create these rules?

Natasha: After reading thousands of stories we've received from women as a collective group, we took some of the more prominent themes to create our rules – which can serve as a cheat sheet women can refer to as some of the most prevalent and egregious flags.

What's the best advice you can give to those who have been in

difficult, red flag relationships?

Julie: Using our book and your own dating experience, note the qualities you must have in a partner and the ones you will not stand for. Reflect on past relationships to determine what worked and what didn't. Then proceed with caution and don't settle for just anyone. There are tons of terrific guys out there, but you'll never find one if you don't know what you're looking for. Lastly, keep your head up – you may not have found your Romeo yet, but you're closer than you were yesterday.

Natasha: I'd say it's also important to recognize what your pattern is. Like, if you tend to date guys with emotional problems (the kind who need you to "save" them), you have to look at yourself and understand why you're attracted to guys like that. Only then can you have the self-awareness to start searching for the right kind of guy for you.

Meagan: I'd encourage people who have been in difficult relationships to work on their personal happiness and self-worth. While I don't think a person can't date while doing this, it's difficult to focus on yourself when there's a relationship to attend to. It sounds super cliché, but you have to love yourself first, and once you're in a place where you don't need someone else to help you feel good, the guy who's right for you will typically come along.

Cupid thanks Natasha Burton, Meagan McCrary and Julie Fishman for their time! You can visit Amazon to purchase *The Little Black Book of Big Red Flags*. For more about the authors, check out their book trailer and visit their website at www.bigredflags.expandedapps.com.