

FINDING THE RIGHT
MAN FOR YOU

FINDING
THE RIGHT MAN
FOR YOU

DATING ADVICE FOR WOMEN

LAWRENCE J. DANKS

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*To my wife, Dee, who I thank for her support,
encouragement, and many constructive comments*

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EVALUATING YOUR SITUATION

Go confidently in the direction of your dreams. Live the life you imagined.

—Henry David Thoreau

DON'T expect to see me on a talk show anytime soon. I'm not a psychologist, counselor, or famous motivational speaker. I'm a sixty-four-year-old business administration professor. I'm old enough to have had some experience and fortunate enough to have had a good life. While I'm happily married for the second time, dating—and particularly internet dating—has given me insight into how women try to find the right man.

How many women do you know who are looking for the right man and can't find him? They've probably talked to other women about it. I can't say what I offer is always going to be representative of what all men think, but what I can say is it's a man's perspective. That's something most women never get. Moving forward through more effective dating can lead to love. You don't have to be lonely. There can be a new and happier you.

This book contains many quotations. They have been carefully selected to reinforce points I've made. Quotations are also great distillations of knowledge. They have been repeated, sometimes for centuries, because they serve as succinct guides and encouragements for us. I would suggest looking at them not as interruptions of the

book's flow, but as important thoughts in themselves to be carefully assimilated.

A Great Help

I've had a high degree of help and insight in writing this book from the beginning. I want to thank over a dozen female reviewers and advisors who have shared their opinions and dating experiences with me. Their forthright comments and contributions have been an immense help. I'm truly indebted to them for helping me to help you. I'd also like to thank those who have advised me on legal, personal-safety, and financial-safety issues. Their mention should not be construed as approval of the book's overall content. I wouldn't want them taking any blame for what I'm wholly responsible for.

Finding Increased Fulfillment

I don't believe every woman needs a man, but being with a good partner can make the lives of many women more fulfilling. It's a real loss of potential happiness when women who would like to have a relationship can't get matched with the right person. That goes for the men who could have been sharing a happy life with them too.

In the highly regarded British publication *The Economist*, dating consultant Mark Brook, quoted in "Well Met by Clublight," says, "You can meet the best people in the world and still screw it up because you didn't know how to date. People need help, guidance, style counseling and feedback when things go wrong." This book will help with those matters and make things work better once you begin a relationship. It's an incentive to change and to improve your life if you want to.

Finding Love When You're Over Thirty—And Under It

Finding the Right Man for You is primarily intended for women thirty and over. However, I guarantee that there's a great deal of worthwhile information here that can benefit single women,

divorcees, and widows of any age. As might be expected, topics such as dealing with divorce and death of a spouse are most likely not going to be as useful to younger women, and neither is encouragement to meet men through internet dating, which most younger women already take as a given.

There is an important caution younger women should keep in mind though. You have something very valuable on your side that older women can't match—your comparative youth—and often easier access to more men. Read this book with an eye toward what you need to do now to avoid putting yourself in a spot later. Your options are far broader between twenty and thirty than they are if you are in your forties and fifties, or beyond. Ask any women you know who are looking for love. They'll confirm what I'm telling you.

You shouldn't rush into marriage or a live-in relationship, but you shouldn't keep passing on man after man either. After a while, there won't be as many opportunities, so seriously evaluate the men you meet. Ten to fifteen years from now, you're going to be in a more mature age group. It's wonderful to work at a good career and to have varied dating experiences, but keep your life in balance. Look toward your future personal life and try to ensure that it's going to look the way you want it to look. Act wisely now so you won't create a potential problem for yourself later, trying to find a loving partner when many of the "good men" are already taken—including some of those you might have taken a pass on earlier—and maybe then will wish you hadn't.

One of my advisors commented that sometimes women will pass on a guy because he's "too nice" or because he's "too sensitive" or because he isn't manly or macho enough. A nice guy might be viewed as "a wuss" and disregarded, while the men women go for might be thought of as "real men." My advisor said when she was younger, she used to think that way too, but fortunately an older and more experienced lady advised her that what was really important was to look for a nice man who really thought she was special and treated her that way. She took her older friend's advice, and she's

been happily married now to a man who still treats her well after over twenty years of marriage. My advice is to go for the guy who's really nice to you, who is kind to you and tries to treat you like a queen. In spite of what your experience might have taught you, chivalry is not dead. Look for your own personal knight. He will know how to treat you.

It's my goal to have this book help as many women as possible of any age, so as you read it, please think in terms of others who could benefit from it too.

Moving Forward

There are over ninety-five million single Americans. Many of them are looking for love. As we get older, on the plus side, we know ourselves better and have an improved idea of what we want in a partner. Research has also shown that as long as people are in good health, they become more positive as they get older. That's helpful in living a happier life. But the older we get, the more set in our ways and inflexible we can become and the more complicated dating can get.

On ABC's *Good Morning America*, Marysol Castro presented a feature, "Dating after Forty." A very charming lady from Connecticut who had an otherwise good life said dating was awkward and embarrassing, the opportunities were fewer than when she was younger, and lots of people in her town were already married, a familiar refrain for many women.

The segment included suggestions from Terry Real, a family therapist. Some of his thoughts were: "It won't be easier waiting until later. Go out and get it done ... If you're over forty, you have to work harder ... Feel the fear, but get out and do it anyway ... Take baby steps and get the support you need." I couldn't agree more. Why postpone an opportunity to be happier?

The nice Connecticut lady had a team comprised of her three lovely daughters who supported her and advised her that she needed

to get on the internet. I'll talk more about that later, but develop your own support team of family and friends to advise and encourage you. It can help.

Improve Your Situation or Start on a New Road?

Before trying to find the man you want in your life, carefully evaluate whether you might already have him. If you're married or in a relationship where things aren't ideal, are you certain what you have now is unworkable? Have you fully communicated with each other about what the problems are in your relationship? Would counseling help? If you've tried it and it hasn't worked, would trying a new counselor make a difference? You don't want to attempt to start a new relationship while still confused and encumbered by a current one. If you're going to move forward, you want to do it with a clean slate.

One of my advisors remarked that "women have already done most of the work and sometimes their man is the problem. Women are often responsible for keeping the emotional part of a relationship going because sometimes their men didn't pay as much attention to the responsibility as they should have or felt that it was the woman's responsibility to do it more than his."

Sometimes the problem isn't with the man though. It can be with women too. Dr. Laura Schlessinger, in *10 Stupid Things Couples Do to Mess Up Their Relationships*, cited the following example of a woman who stated that she was in an unsatisfying and boring marriage. She said they "did almost nothing together or as a family. We never hugged, touched or kissed. I wanted him to love me first the way I needed and then I would love him back, the way he felt he needed." She went for counseling. She said "the entire session became what I could do. It was about what I could give. My marriage became a complete turnaround. After just a few days of being my husband's wife, he began to try to find ways to make me happy. I

can't tell you how much the selfishness I had was the problem. I now have the man of my dreams."

I'm not suggesting that everyone in a problem relationship is going to have this kind of Cinderella ending, or that you might be selfish either, but take a look at your side of the equation to see if you might be doing something that's keeping an existing relationship from working. Maybe you don't need to look any further than the man you already have. But if you do, that's what this book is all about.

The example above shows the importance of giving in a relationship. Look for men who are willing to give to make a relationship work better. Ask yourself if you would be a giver too. We've often heard that it takes each person giving 50 percent to ensure that a relationship works well. It's more accurate to say it requires one partner to give 70 percent, the other 30 percent, or for one partner to give even 100 percent sometimes, depending on who needs what on any given day.

Would You Like a Man in Your Life, or Do You Need One?

Many women are doing fine on their own, but would value the benefits of a good relationship. It's the idea that "I'm happy, but I know I could be happier." There's no sense leaving a potentially better life on the table if it can be achieved through some conscientious action.

In "Girls, Stop Being So Picky" from *Marie Claire* magazine, Lauren Iannotti interviewed Lori Gottlieb, author of *Marry Him: The Case for Settling for Mr. Good Enough*. Ms. Gottlieb thought "feminism was great and I'm all for it, but we took this idea of being self-sufficient and not depending on anybody and applied it to our romantic lives. That's antithetical to being in a relationship, which is about interdependence and vulnerability."

This single mother, now in her early forties with one child, was asked, "And you really think a husband is the key to your happiness?"

She said, “It’s not about being happy or unhappy. I have areas of my life I get satisfaction from. I adore my four-year-old son. And I’m very happy in my career. But it’s so lonely in many ways. Every decision I make is alone. I can ask my friends, but they aren’t invested in my life and my son’s life in a way a husband would be. So yes, I very much want a man to go through life with. I very much want that. Every day in my life I want that.”

I’ve written this book for women who want a man, or need one, in their lives. Ms. Gottlieb doesn’t need a man. She said that she’s doing well. But she’d like to find the right man to complement her life, just like I believe many of you would. For some, that can be through marriage. For others, a committed relationship might accomplish it.

Some women might say, “I don’t need a man.” And most likely, you probably don’t. But others might be at least very lonely, and perhaps miserable without one, but might not like the sound of “needing a man.” If you think it sounds weak, there’s nothing weak about it. Doesn’t being independent mean knowing yourself well enough to decide what you need in your life, then going after it? By “need,” I’m not talking about living a life of daily desperation, just honestly assessing what you see as being important to your happiness.

If you really feel you need someone in your life, rather than just want it, I wouldn’t apologize for it. Knowing what we need in life is an important step toward attaining it. If needing someone is viewed as weak, then color me weak too.

I could live independently. But I’ve known for a long time that I don’t want to. I know I need a woman to love, and a woman who loves me. Would I shrivel up and blow away without one? No, and neither would any woman who didn’t have a man either. But I know myself well enough to know what I need to be happy. Whatever you think is okay too, whether you want a man, need one, or don’t want one at all.

Just make sure you’re being honest with yourself about what’s best for you and aren’t simply caught up in a philosophy. As Ms.

Gottlieb implied, the characteristics that bring about freedom often aren't as suitable for making everyday life work the way a woman might like. I offer these thoughts because I've received some push-back to the words about a woman "needing a man," even if she might. That's a distinction she should make, not me or anyone else. Irrespective of any avowed position on wanting a man or needing one, my goal is simply to help women find the right man for them, if that's a goal that is important for them.

The Candidate Pool

If you're hoping to find a man, you're going to have lots of company. There are many more women looking for men than there are men looking for women. It's my hope that this book will give you an edge. It's like playing musical chairs, except it's far worse. In musical chairs, there is only one person who goes without a seat. In the case of women looking for a man, there are millions of fewer seats to go around. Add to this statistical fact that women over thirty-five are going to be competing against younger women, and that women will lower their available pool of men further by saying that the man has to fit into a narrow age range, has to be at least three inches taller than they are, but not more than six feet tall, has to be Jewish, or has to be Catholic, must be open to living with pets, and on and on. It doesn't take long to see how women start shrinking an already limited pool of men.

Getting Real

If you want to find a man, something's got to give. First, you have to be willing to get real with your requirements. Second, you also need to give yourself competitive advantages. I'll offer some suggestions about those later.

Look into the crystal ball and see yourself five to ten years from now. Where are you going to be? Don't think being alone can't happen to you. It can happen to anyone. Just look around you.

Maybe it's happening to you now. Your attitude should be, "I see this happening to lots of other women, but I'll be damned if I'm going to let it happen to me." If you don't like what you see, it's time to create a new vision and a better future through your own dynamic actions.

