



CULTURE & GOD
THE DATING BOOK

**An E-Book About The Dating World
For Singles, Couples & Everything In Between.**

THE DATING BOOK

LOVE IS ALL WE NEED?

It's something out of a telenovela. You draw close to each other and nothing has ever felt so right. A perfect summer-time breeze enwraps your bodies as you kiss for the first time and you are left breathless. As if that breeze flew away with the air in both of your lungs. While your pupils align and the cheesy sunset catches your peripherals, you manage to grab only one thought out of all the fluttering sentences running through your head. "I think I'm in love."

As Telenovela as this may be, we all have a variation of this story, whether it be in a college frat house, a bar, a high school party, or an actual beach; we all have some sort of romantic novelty memory that shaped the first time we fell in love. The question is, if we didn't end up marrying that person...was love really enough?

Passion

Love is not enough in it's societal definition. Society tends to see love as Hollywood movies. "You make me feel this way. And because you make me feel this way, I want to be with you." This could be anything. Thrills, adventure, adrenaline, butterflies, awkwardness, all of those things are feelings. What tends to happen is that once life gets tough and that goes away, you will hear the same people saying "I don't know what happened, I just don't love you anymore. There's no spark." This is passion, not love. And passion must be earned and worked to keep. Passion is not all we need.

Lust

Love is not enough in it's physical definition. Sometimes we have an electric connection with someone, whether it be the feeling we get when we kiss them, or the way we feel around them. All of these emotions surge through our body and make us feel a closeness that we've never felt before. It becomes harder to leave this person if something goes horribly wrong, even if the person isn't good for us, or if we rushed into a physical relationship. This is lust. Lust is sex without holiness. Lust is not all we need.

Conditional Love

Love is not enough if it's conditional. We tend to live our lives on a scoreboard sometimes. Picking and choosing when we will show love depending on whether or not our significant other has "met our standards" in that moment. It's more about how many points we can rack up as opposed to how much we can give. This is not love, this selfishness. And selfishness is not all we need.

Love

Love is only enough if it's perfect. How can I be perfect man?! You don't have to be perfect. That's the thing, you just have to learn about a love that is perfect. Then show that love to your significant other. A love that never fails. And even though one person may fail, the reason love doesn't fail is because the other person is there to lift them up, forgive them and grow from that experience. Love is long-suffering. Love is there for the good times and the bad. It is there when you may "feel" like you are falling out of love but is not a feeling but an act of building and restoration. This goes in particular for those who are married, but it's not exclusive to them.

Suffering

Long-suffering is kind of dated nowadays (kinda like abstinence, but we won't get into that). People don't really practice it much but everyone likes to talk about it. Long-suffering is being there through the hardest possible times and knowing that love isn't all Hollywood-like romance. It's patience with your partner when others are coming against your relationship. Not turning on each other the minute something bad happens but sticking together like the team you're supposed to be.

Truth

Love doesn't shy away from knowing the truth. If someone you love, tells you that money is tight, or tells you that they don't like something you are doing; you can't get mad at them. You need to understand that because they love you, they are telling you the truth. Understanding their emotions listening to what's beneath the surface is what love really is. It is about giving yourself fully to the other person. It is not about what you can receive in return. I leave you with one of my favorite quotes by C.S Lewis:

“

TO LOVE AT ALL IS TO BE VULNERABLE.
LOVE ANYTHING AND YOUR HEART
WILL BE WRUNG AND POSSIBLY BROKEN.
IF YOU WANT TO MAKE SURE OF KEEPING
IT INTACT YOU MUST GIVE IT TO NO ONE,
NOT EVEN AN ANIMAL. WRAP IT
CAREFULLY ROUND WITH HOBBIES AND
LITTLE LUXURIES; AVOID ALL ENTANGLEMENTS.
LOCK IT UP SAFE IN THE CASKET OR COFFIN
OF YOUR SELFISHNESS. BUT IN THAT CASKET,
SAFE, DARK, MOTIONLESS, AIRLESS,
IT WILL CHANGE. IT WILL NOT BE BROKEN;
IT WILL BECOME UNBREAKABLE,
IMPENETRABLE, IRREDEEMABLE.
TO LOVE IS TO BE VULNERABLE.

- C.S Lewis

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HOOK-UP CULTURE

You swiped right, chatted up this girl, met with her at 'Teak', bought her 3 rum & cokes and now its off to your house where smooth music and dim lighting will do the trick.

Or maybe you decided that you would finally ask out that girl you've been flirting with forever. You know, that girl that pops into your head when you listen to Drake. That girl.

Or is it the effortless chemistry that happens between you and the charming girl at the rooftop bar that wins you over with witty banter and irresistible elegance?

All the same, the moment has come and gone, morning is here and you have a decision to make. Should I stay or should i go? (bad impression of the clash)

In the last 15-20 years our culture has developed a system via movies, sitcoms mostly.. oh, and pop music videos of how to accomplish a one night stand. Giving us a depiction of them being funny and quirky when in reality they can feel degrading and unsafe. As jaded as we have become we have forgotten some fundamental values behind the sport of sex. Some key components that go along with sex for fun. I will run through those for you and talk about why one night stands are more damaging than we think.

1. DUH

There are the obvious realities that go along with sex like catching something from your partner, duh. Which can be prevented to a degree. But only to a degree. Cuz lets face it, you guys are like little animals.

2. FEEL-FACTOR

Let's not pretend people don't catch feelings, like we can compartmentalize our hearts and turn off our feel factor. Even the most numb of people still develop attachment to the person they sleep with every time. It is in our biological make-up to do so. It's not just a physical connection with a woman, but a biological one.

3. STRANGER DANGER

Once you're alone with this random person, (yes even you guys) you have no idea what could happen! There is a huge risk of anything going wrong when you're with a stranger in their house.

4. SEXCLUSIONARY

Now to direct my attention mainly at girls, although I won't be sexclusionary (I just made up that word). When you're alone with someone and getting physical, there's no one there to protect you if you say no and they don't listen. There is great wisdom in avoiding these situations altogether.

5. HOW I MET YOUR MOTHER...

Back to the guys. If this girl ends up being the one...What will the story of how you met look like?

6. SHE COLD

That awkward moment when she doesn't call. Ugh! Why! 2 days pass, 3 days, 3 weeks! Then you see her at the same bar and she acts like she doesn't know you and gives you a cold half broken smile when you say hello.

7. YOU COLD

Or maybe she won't leave, she calls every day, sets up lunch dates, brings you coffees to work, writes on your Facebook wall (Who even does that anymore?) and you're left with the daunting task of breaking up with someone who you were never dating, or going ghost. Either way, you're the jerk, right? And either way my friend, the one night stand ends in heart break.

FINAL THOUGHTS

Skipping to the end of the love story is a short cut and can cause a huge chunk of heartbreak, even if we don't know the person. The emotional damage alone done by a one nighter can be quite daunting. It effects our way of being and even causes bitterness, regret and shame. It can even cause turmoil and strife in later relationships. Theres a famous quote that I have grown to love dearly, and I don't necessarily dig the source but it is relevant.

"If you liked it, then you should have put a ring on it" -Beyonce

Listen to Queen Bey everyone.



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FINDING THE ONE

We all want our soul mate. Our one true love. The person who God destined for us to spend the rest of our lives with, doing life, advancing His Kingdom. We can't wait until God reveals this person to us, She will light up the room when she walks in—everything else will fade to black and white slow motion pixels, and we will be caught at eyes length. Staring at our one. true. lo—okay I can't do this anymore I feel like Nicholas Sparks (the author of the Notebook for all you bros).

Love is a universal feeling and something we all deserve. So it is easy to see why we have succumb to Hollywoods definition of it, even in church culture. 'The One' is a concept which Hollywood uses time and time again for tearjerking crescendos to mediocre movies which hold no basis in God's character (even though people will tell you I LOVE those movies).

The idea of 'the one' actually holds it's roots in Greek Mythology. When Zeus and the gods of Greece were not receiving enough worship from the 4 armed, 4 legged people of the land, he decided to rip them in half and cast them to opposite sides of the world. Forever doomed to search the world for their missing half; your soul mate.

So your 'soul mate' is the result of a mythological curse. Not a blessing from God. But, I don't want to be a negative Ned about this whole thing so men, instead of searching for the one, lets try becoming the right one. This way, when you see the woman you could never live without, who would be the perfect for lunch dates with friends and a Euro-trip to preach the Gospel, you won't mess it up!

So here are my tips on how to prepare yourself for a relationship:



Be a Christian

A big part of the problem in Christian dating scenes that I've witnessed is that the guys are afraid to say something, and girls get tired of waiting. So girls look elsewhere. Girls, just to be clear I am not condoning this, to be in the lord is to seek the kingdom above all and to not make searching for someone to date an idol in itself.

"Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged, for the LORD your God will be with you wherever you go."

So men, build up that Old Testament courage, put on your best sandals and put a sword at your side (metaphorically speaking for pete's sake!), walk right up to her and begin a normal conversation!

We live in a culture that says men shouldn't have to make the first move but we are not of this culture we are of a kingdom culture and as MEN not boys, we should think that way. In scripture God meets His Church. He ravishes us, He comes to us, He gives his life for us (okay thats a bit much we're only talkin coffee, maybe some panera). But you understand what I mean. We are given the authority to lead as Christian men, and some mistake that to mean being a dictator. This means we should lead as Christ lead us, with gentleness, humility, wisdom, and truth IN LOVE! My point is that when all of those characteristics are imbedded in us, making the first move will come naturally, from a place of leadership.

Be a Leader

This doesn't mean you have to be like, a pastor or something. But learning to lead yourself before bringing someone else into your junk is essential. Why else would a woman who serves the God of the universe even give you a second glance?

Being a leader means you conduct your own spiritual and daily life as someone who loves Jesus on your own. No one has to force you to read your scriptures and pay your bills because you want to know what God says about you and you know one of the things God says is:

This doesn't mean you gotta be King David. This just means you gotta be David the shepherd. Who defeated Goliath and worships The Lord with all his might. Its about the direction your going in. Have some vision men.

Be Teachable

Learn from mentors and accountability partners everything you can about what scripture says in context to purity, holiness, honoring a person, covenant and promises. But do it for you and for your growth with the Lord not just to get a girlfriend (I saw you checking out the way that girl was praying dude).

Be Intentional

Now that you checked her out. Let her know. The problems we face as men of faith is that we feel politeness and charisma are opposites and we can't approach the girl we like and talk to her because it will be a sin. Or on the opposite side of the spectrum, we are so stuck in the worlds customs we like to play the "let's see where this goes" game and hang out with numerous girls until one calls our attention enough to stick with them.

This is not only dangerous but it is blasphemous. If the relationship between God and His Church is supposed to reflect a wedding, would He, in the process of courting us wander around making sure there was no one else that could offer Him better "chemistry" or "attraction"?

Likewise is it with men and women. There is a Bob Marley quote that I love.

"When you smoke the herb, it reveals you to yourself."

Totally kidding. Not that one. It's been like 5 years for me and I'm not going back! I mean this one, okay!

THE BIGGEST COWARD
IS A MAN WHO
AWAKENS A
WOMAN'S LOVE
WITH NO INTENTION
OF LOVING HER.

Bob Marley

The beginning of the article talked about guys being scared to say something. This is what I mean, my rule of thumb is that whoever you are looking to pursue, she should never have to question what stage your friendship/relationship is in. I am not telling you to be weird and ultra communicative, but make sure you both understand that this road is leading somewhere up front. If not, you are both wasting your time.

Final Thoughts

Love is a natural part of life, and it is natural to want to be with someone. Being honest with ourselves and allowing ourselves to grow where needed before there is even a prospect for someone new to come into the picture is a sure-fire way to begin a loving and flourishing relationship. We all need to work on ourselves constantly and no one is an exception, but that is the beauty of life, as you meet someone and God begins to work in your lives together, you will begin to see that the work you put in was much needed and well appreciated.

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