

# First Date Handbook

For the **Grownup** Woman Looking for Love

Written for you by

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The Dating and Relationship  
Coach for Women over 40



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**grownUp**

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## Foreword

I learned something when I was 52 that completely rocked my world: when you apply eyeliner, you should start from the inside of your lid, not the outside.



Did you know that? I've been doing it wrong my entire life. No wonder it was always a struggle! I was never able to create that smooth line I saw on other women. Over the years I spent

hundreds of dollars on varying brands and tried using Q-tips and other devices; but despite my constant efforts, it never worked. I was always starting from the outside.

Now that I know this simple fact – and after a little practice – my eyes are looking pretty damn gorgeous.

This experience, like so many, reminds me of dating. When I was single and dating, I was always trying so damn hard to

find love, but nothing ever worked. Looking back, I can see that I was trying, but I was repeatedly doing it wrong.

In my 40s, I finally understood. I saw other women who were just like me and they were with Good Guys, so I knew it was doable. I also knew that if I was going to do it, I had to do it in a significantly different way.

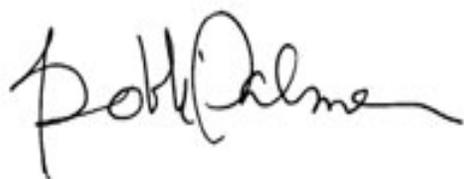
I opened my mind and my heart, and I learned some juicy stuff from a bunch of people who were smarter than me. (At least about finding some grownup love).

I also developed the courage to be completely honest, and I learned a lot from myself. Some information was hard to absorb (the truth can hurt!) and hard to put into practice, but a lot was surprisingly simple and garnered instant results.

Every time I grasped one of these simple truths, it became easier. I began shifting the way I looked at myself and men. I started to have more fun. I had more dates and more second dates. I eventually met and married my husband, the most magnificent man I've ever known.

Like my eyeliner, once I learned some simple facts and got some practice, things started to happen rather smoothly.

In this book I am giving you keys to what I have learned – both from my own experience AND that of the thousands of women I've supported over the years as [The Dating and Relationship Coach for Women over 40](#). It is a compilation of articles I've written over the years. Like me, I know you'll learn a ton!

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Bobbi Palmer". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal flourish at the end.

To you, with my love and support,

## Six Reasons You Should be Making Small Talk on Dates

**W**hen you're dating, especially if you're over 40, you probably want to know as much as possible as fast as possible. Why waste your time, right? Especially those of us who are "of a certain age"; life is too damn short to be dilly-dallying around to get to know a guy. Either he's for you or he's not.

You'd rather check out his appearance, feel out the chemistry, spend five minutes talking about the weather and...if you're interested...get to it. Why did his marriage break up? Is he close to his mother and children? What's up with his career? Does he share your political/religious/moral views?

I get it. I've been there. But the truth is that 9 times out of 10, this will not serve you well. Chatting doesn't just tell you a lot about someone; when you're not chatting, you're probably doing something you ought not be doing.

1. Like you, men can be nervous, self-conscious, and even insecure. (Does that surprise you?) Idle chatter lets you

settle in, get comfortable, and get a sense of each other. This can take some time – maybe the entire first date – but for the right guy it will be worth it.

2. Talking about non-consequential (i.e., nonthreatening) topics will bring out his fundamental personality. You'll see clues to his intelligence, well-roundedness, sense of humor, lifestyle, and general interests. This is the stuff you're going to live with every day, and it's important.
3. His body language and communication skills speak volumes. Does he make eye contact, listen when you talk, show confidence, have good manners? Again, very important stuff.
4. Context is huuuuge. Finding out about his illness or his



bankruptcy on the first date will most likely send you fleeing. But what if you found that out

after learning he was kind, confident, brilliant, and generous? (This goes both ways, girlfriend. Hush until it's right.)

5. Contrary to most women's opinion, asking him about himself and then letting him talk endlessly is not a way to attract him. While grownup men certainly look for deep connection in a partner, "someone who will hear my deepest thoughts" is far from first on their list.
  - He's not looking for a mother or sister. He wants an equal and a lover. How will he even know that about you if you just listened to him all night?
  - Leaving a man feeling like he revealed too much is a recipe for disaster. Unlike us, being able to spill his guts isn't a positive. If he gets home feeling like he told you more than he would tell his best friend, you're not getting a call for that next date.
  - Men are smart. He may not get it in the moment he's enjoying yapping about himself, but looking back he'll know you were secretly sucking out

information. Rather than think you're a fabulous great listener, he'll think...*he'll know*...that you were digging for what's wrong with him. (And honestly, weren't you?)

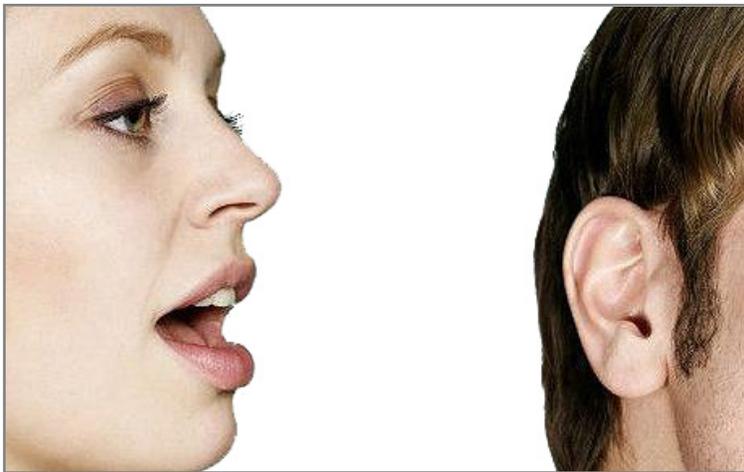
6. Your femininity is a man magnet. He needs time to "drink you in" and get a sense of that part of you. When you're grilling him – and trust me, girlfriend; that *will* be his perception – to him you are not in your feminine. (Or at least the part men like about it.)

So when first getting to know each other, talk about what you like to do, where you like to vacation, where you've lived...this is where you should stay as you Date Like a Grownup. Get a sense of his personality, intellect, and manner...and let him see yours.

## How to Talk to Men (In a Way That They Like!)

**N**ot only is it okay to talk about yourself to men, but it is 100% essential to getting first dates and future dates. When I tell women that it's GOOD to talk about themselves, it's

generally met with complete shock.



Guys *don't* love it when we let them do all the talking. Sure, most people – men and women – like talking about themselves. But

unless “good listener” is on the top of his must-have list for potential mates (I’ve never met a man who places it there), he’s not going to pick you if that’s all you do.

Imagine him driving home and saying to himself, “That Susie was such a good listener. I can’t wait to see her again!” The

only guy who does that is the “me-me-me-me” guy. And who wants him, anyway?

When you meet a man you like, I want him driving home saying to himself, “That Susie is so interesting/fun to be with/positive/thoughtful/clever...and we both like *(fill-in-the-blank)*. I can’t wait to see her again!” He can’t do this unless you give him the information to form the opinion, right?

If you’re one of the many women for whom this does not come naturally, I have three things you can do to start developing the skill of creating conversation that gets you dates.

### **Know Yourself**

Here’s a pop-quiz: name five things about yourself that you think men would think are impressive, interesting or just plain lovely.

Go on...I’ll wait.

You see, most women can’t do this. In fact, most women are convinced they don’t have five special things about them.

That's just nonsense. You needn't have cured a disease or saved someone's life to have bragging rights. I guarantee you that 99% of the men you meet haven't scaled Mt. Rushmore and don't speak seven languages.

Just like them, there are a multitude of things that make you unique and attractive...to the right guy. So get to work on figuring out what they are so you can talk about it!

### **Speak in Headlines, Not Stories**

Your story will attract the right guy; you just have to know how to tell it. Among the top complaints men have about us gorgeous beings is that we talk too much. Can you believe it?

Men's brains are wired differently than ours. Information comes in and is processed in a straight line, and they stay focused on the end of that line. What is the result or, in the case of conversation with us, the point?

When men are out scouting prey (Yeah, that's us!), here's what they do: *Is it there? No. Is it there? No. Is it there? No.* And they repeat this until they find it and conquer it.

Here's what a man DOES NOT do: *Is it there? No...But, oh look... there is a really pretty tree!* This is why our yappy-yap can absolutely drive them insane and, out of self-preservation, they turn off.

So when you're sharing about yourself – especially when you first meet – short, simple accounts do the trick. "I'm learning how to swing dance. I love the music, and it's great exercise." "I volunteer at the local animal shelter walking dogs, but cats are really my favorite." "Last year I went to Italy, drank wine, and ate like a fiend. I'm dying to go back." Start off like that and save the details for the girls. (Or for when he's a lifetime captive audience and has no choice!)

### **Manage the Conversation**

That brain difference thing gives us a definite leg up when it comes to conversation. When conversation lags or veers in a whacky direction, it's our job to keep it going. Don't complain, sister; just do it. Why? Because we're better at it!

I've seen more dates go awry simply because the conversation went off on some negative tangent, some question was asked

that was out of place (the typical “why haven’t you been married yet” comes to mind), or someone simply hogs it. When this happens, you may both end up with the idea that it wasn’t a match.

*A little conversation management can completely change the course of a date, not to mention a relationship.*

*With some practice you can learn to move a conversation along and keep it positive and balanced.*

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If he’s talking too much, it’s okay to interrupt with a smooth transition to a headline of your own. He’ll likely appreciate it and

listen. (You may have saved him from himself.)

If the conversation goes negative (as it often will if you talk divorce, illness, bad dates, or bad jobs), you can politely acknowledge it and segue in another, more positive direction.

So often we only have a short time to learn about one another. And when this doesn't happen, it results in a lot of dates that go nowhere.

When you master conversation with men, you have the power to make every meeting or date the best experience it can possibly be. So start practicing and have fun!

## 10 Tips for Talking to Men

If you're a single woman working toward meeting a grownup, confident and relationship-minded man, a must-have skill is the art of conversation. If your perception is that all a guy does is look you up and down and decide if he wants to ask you out, you're wrong.

The Good Guys want to connect somehow if they're going to spend an evening with you. They want to know you'll be fun and open and that the two of you can carry on a conversation. (Just like what you want to know, right?)

*You don't have to be a super extrovert. You don't have to tell stories of rock climbing or doing charity work in Africa.*

*What you do need to do is know how to, well, be YOU.*

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I want you to get asked out by these Good Guys, so I'm going to help you do that.

Visualize yourself at a party standing at the nosh table. A woman walks up, you make quick eye contact, and you smile at each other.

How might the conversation go? You might ask her a standard question or two: something in the realm of "So how do you know Susie?" Then you might tell her a quick story about how you and Susie met. Maybe it's a little funny. The two of you laugh. She shares a story. You tell her you like her shoes and ask if she's seen the big sale at the local Macy's. She tells you she hasn't because she's been working so much...

Are you seeing it? This, my friend, is conversation. Easy, right? Here are my 10 tips to create good conversation and make a connection with men.

### **1. Remember that men are just people.**

It's really not that much harder to talk to men...we just make it that way. If you're nervous about this, it may be because

you have some beliefs about men that are getting in your way. Check those, sister. They aren't so scary as you think.

## 2. Know why you rock.

Be prepared to articulate things about yourself and your life that you like and are proud of. If you haven't done this already, now is a great time to start making your lists.

## 3. Use "because" to help get the juicy stuff out.

This is like a magic word to help you bridge a sentence into something far more interesting. He asks what you do. You can say "I'm an accountant." Or you can say "I'm an accountant, and I love it because I've always been fascinated by numbers. And, since laws change constantly, it's always challenging."



Wow! You told him a ton in one sentence.

## 4. Fake it and I bet you'll make it.

Tell yourself you're going to go out today and start

conversations with men. Just go do it. Fake it. I promise the positive response you get will make it 100% easier to do it again...and again.

### **5. Don't compete.**

The truth is that many of us are guilty of this. Men hate it. They get enough competition at work and with their male friends. Brag away, but make sure it's done humbly and gracefully. If you're giving him your 411 in direct response to things he says, it may very well be seen as competing. He wants to hear about you, but not in a way that screams "I'm better than you!"

### **6. Take a breath.**

Men often do this weird thing: they actually think before they talk. They mull. They form full sentences in their mind before they speak them. Weird, I know. Don't be afraid of silence. And if you really want to get to know a man, just hush. He'll talk if you let him.

## 7. Compliment him.

I bet you do this with just about every woman you meet. Men love to be complimented yet women rarely do it. Be the gal who tells him he picked a great restaurant, looks hot in his black jacket, or cracked a great joke. Tell him you 100% agree with something he says. Complimenting men on their minds and wit is usually far better received than doing so on their appearance.

## 8. Be real.

Tell the truth. Don't be afraid to say something that may make you look, dare I say, *human!* Talking about yourself doesn't have to be bragging. Tell him you bashed into a pole last week while texting or that your job is great but it may be time to move on soon. (Don't forget the "because" here.)

## 9. Don't ask what he does.

It's very American to ask what people do for a living. In other countries it's considered *très grossier*. Men often see this as if we're conducting an up-front litmus test. If you want to

impress a man, just don't ask. He'll tell you in his own time (and probably pretty quickly).

**10. Smile, make eye contact, and have some fun. Repeat.**

'Nuff said.

## Why Some Men Talk Too Much on Dates

**A**s a dating coach for women over 40, I often hear stories about men talking their heads off on dates as the women sit quietly nodding and “uh-huh-ing.” (Notice I didn’t say *listening*.) Inevitably, these two will never have another date...unless the woman has been coached by me.

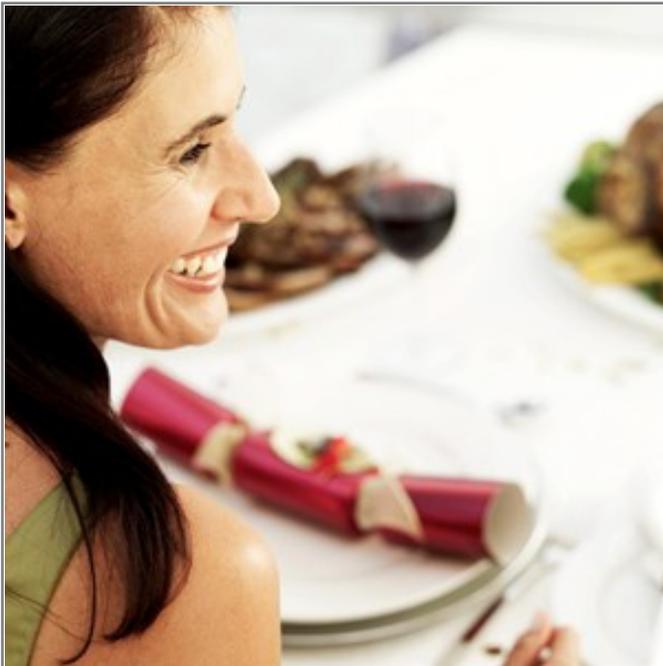
Usually one or more of these reasons will prevent them from having another date:

1. She can’t fathom the idea of listening to Mr. Blabbermouth one more minute.
2. He shared something he shouldn’t have and she’s turned off by it. (Remember: don’t over-share when you’re getting to know someone!)
3. He leaves feeling embarrassed and exposed, which means he’ll never call her again.

(There is one exception to this: the occasional guy who just loves hearing his own voice and loves an audience. He **will** call again. *Oh, goody.*)

What's funny about this situation is that it's quite the opposite of the rest of life. Overall, women talk way more than men. My husband says that women talk in stories, but men like listening in headlines. As usual, I think he's right. (Which, btw, is what bugs me about him.)

Yes, we gals do have the propensity to blab for the sake of it.



I love that about women and wouldn't have it any other way.

Yet on dates it's not uncommon for it to be the opposite, with the man chattering away. He could be nervous or overcompensating for insecurity.

But there's another reason I don't think we consider. Here's my theory:

*Single men rarely  
get the  
opportunity to talk  
about themselves  
and their lives,  
and our femininity  
brings this out in  
them.*

---

Think about it: men don't socialize like women do!

When was the last time you saw two (straight) men out having dinner or taking a walk together? Male connection generally takes place through activities. They need some sort of goal, and being together is generally secondary to that goal.

Here's an example. My husband went sailing for four hours with a friend who is in poor health and in the middle of a divorce. When he returned I asked how the guy is doing. He

had no freaking idea; they never discussed it. Why?  
Because...they were sailing!

Then there's us. Women get together for the purpose of talking, listening, and sharing. The activity – if there even is one – is secondary. When I get together with a few girlfriends for dinner, we spend two to three hours and talk the entire time. What we eat and the ambiance of the restaurant are of little importance.

When women get together, even often in a business environment, it's about the human connection. We love being able to talk about ourselves, hear our pals' stories, and support one another when needed.

Hence my theory: I believe that, when in the company of a lovely woman, some men simply feel like talking—especially when the women seem open to it. Men are just like us: they need human connection and to feel heard and understood. And they get that from the women in their lives.

If you're out with a man who hasn't had much female companionship, he may have a lot bottled up. He may "get drunk" from the opportunity to talk about himself to a kind, pretty woman—especially one who appears to be willing to



listen.

When you find yourself with a chatty man, show him some compassion. Remember how much you love talking, and consider that he might as well but doesn't often get the opportunity. When you present him with it, along with your beautiful smile, he might take advantage of the situation.

So instead of just writing off the guy, give him a break. Look for things you like about him and things you have in common. Then manage the conversation away from him, by either using a subtle segue or interrupting if necessary.

If he's a smart and Good Guy, he'll be thankful that you steered him away from his yammering.

And if you find things you like and decide to go out with him again, 9 times of 10 he will not repeat it.

Ask my coaching client Sharon, who's now madly in love with one of these guys. She never would have agreed to see him again had I not encouraged her to do so. Now, for her, life is back to normal...and she does most of the talking.

## Are You Expecting Men to Act Like Women?

**A** man cannot be like your girlfriend, just with different parts.

I cannot stress the importance of this! Do you know why we're so often disappointed by men? Because we expect them to behave based on how women would act. It's all we know.

We don't leave room for men to be men. We consider how they think and feel, but it's generally not based on any real knowledge; it's based on how **we** would think and feel.

One of the keys to finding a fabulous man to share your life is to commit to learning about men. When you do, you'll find that men aren't "wrong": they're just *different*. And once you "get them," you'll see their magnificence and absolutely love, love, LOVE them like I and so many women I work with do.

Here are a few simple examples of how our differences play out in dating.

- When a man asks what you want to do on a date, it's because he wants to be sure you enjoy yourself. We

think it's because he's lazy or doesn't care, but it's quite the opposite. It's because he wants to please you, and the best way to do that is for him to have you pick your pleasure.

- When you offer to pay on a date – especially on the first – he assumes it's because you don't like him and don't want to owe him anything. If you insist on pulling out your wallet, don't be surprised if he doesn't call you again.
- When a man you've been dating doesn't call you for a few days or just dashes off a quick text, it may be that he's simply busy. Can't he just pick up a phone, you ask? Well, when men are working they are doing just that: working. Men are generally singularly focused. Women, though, can do 100 things at once. We can participate in a conference, notice we need a manicure, write a to-do list AND wonder what our boyfriend is doing—all at the same time. That would make many-a-man's head explode.

- Asking some men how they feel about something can be like asking him about quantum physics. Processing feelings can be challenging for men unless they approach it via their intellect. Instead of asking how he feels, ask him what he thinks. Then listen. You'll likely get to his feelings. (Most men's feelings run very deep if we just know how to help them talk about it.)

Learning about these and the many other ways we perceive things differently will make your dating life way more fun and help you make better choices.

All your relationships with the men in your life will improve. When you know how men think, you'll be able to communicate in a way that nurtures and respects them and also gets you what you need in the relationship.

## Four Ways to Flirt with Flair and Class

**N**o matter your age, the way to connect with a man in the “I think you’re hot and would be interested in going out with you” way is to flirt.

When I suggest that to the over-40 women in my dating workshops and coaching programs, I can see them cringe. Most of these otherwise outgoing women have no idea how to flirt, and many consider it childish and classless.

I have news for you. Here’s what you get when you don’t flirt with nice men: a nice conversation. That’s it. But you’re not looking for a buddy, right? You want to be asked out.

Here are four ways to flirt with flair and get that date.

### 1. Compliment Him

Have you ever noticed that we use compliments to connect with other women? “I love your purse!” “Your job sounds amazing!” “You crack me up!”

Why don't you do that with men? Granted, it takes a different approach, but everyone likes to be complimented. Men love to know that you think them to be smart, capable, fascinating and funny. A sincere compliment in those areas will take you a huge step forward toward connection. (Ahem: note the word "sincere.")

Tell him when you agree with something he says, ask his opinion, let him suggest a book or restaurant, laugh at his jokes, or tell him his business sounds interesting.

You can tell him he has nice eyes, and he'll appreciate it. But that won't go so far as these more substantive compliments. The confident, grownup Good Guys need to hear more than you think they're cute.



## 2. Use Your Body, Baby

Using your body to flirt doesn't have to be slutty or silly. Remember how you flirted when you were 22? Much of what attracted those boys in bars is still what attracts men in Starbucks.

Be subtle, not aggressive. Stand straight in front of him and make eye contact; be playful with a little teasing (stay away from sarcasm); brush your hand against his arm or shoulder; twirl or flip your hair; and use open hand gestures.

Responding to this type of behavior from a woman is instinctive, ladies. Men can't help themselves.

## 3. Show Off

This may be the hardest part for you; it is for many women. We aren't used to talking about ourselves because we've been told it's selfish and braggadocious.

You've got to get over this. You want to be memorable and enticing. He's only going to know how fabulous and confident you are if you get some of your shiny stuff out.

Squeeze in mentions of your unique or shared interests, accomplishments, interesting life experiences, kindheartedness or passions.

Don't tell him long stories. Keep it brief; if he's a match for you, he will want more.

#### **4. Show Clear Interest**

A simple "I had a great time talking with you, Bob. It would be nice to do it again," is all it takes to let him know that you're open. Help him feel safe and appreciated, and if he's interested he'll make a move.

Notice that I'm not suggesting you ask him out. Let him do that.

*Remember that if  
he doesn't go for  
your attempts, he  
probably knows  
something you*

*don't about why  
you're not a good  
match. (He's  
married, gay, not  
looking for a nice  
girl, is mad at  
women, etc.)*

---

Don't let it discourage you if your flirting doesn't end up in a date. You'll get points in your dating karma bank by making him feel good about himself, and it'll be easier to do it the next time with the guy who may be your perfect match.

## 15 Ways to Dazzle Him on a Date

**G**ood for you, girlfriend. You've made the connection.

You made eye contact, smiled that friendly smile, and he asked you out. You're sitting with him at that coffee shop or restaurant.

Now what? How do you make it a fun time and turn it into a second date?

Dazzling him on the date takes a positive approach, finesse, skill, and the ability to be your real self.

### **1. Timeliness is next to goddess-ness.**

I know you're usually on time, but make it definite for your date. Many people think that being late shows disrespect. If it's taken that way, and disrespect is your first impression, it could end your date before it begins.

## **2. Go with kindness.**

Approach your date with an open mind and open heart—to him and yourself. Allow for nervousness and even awkwardness, and show compassion by being willing to see things from his perspective.

## **3. First, find three things you like about him.**

We tend to look for the negatives first: what discounts him as a potential suitor. Wonder why you never meet guys you like? This is one big reason why.

## **4. Stay connected.**

Keep eye contact, smile, laugh (when he's truly funny)...repeat.

## **5. Manage the conversation.**

Be the master of the segue. Learn how to change the conversation when necessary and to respond to inappropriate or overly personal questions with ease...while remaining open and charming.

## 6. Listen the way a man wants you to.

Simply put, let him speak! Keep easy eye contact and let him talk with no interruptions; not even uh-huhs, oh yeahs or me-toos. Smiles and chuckles are okay.

## 7. Hop on his wavelength.

Dr. Diana Kirschner, in her book Love in 90 Days: The Essential Guide to Finding Your Own True Love, talks about “assuming his vibe” with mirroring voice, body language, intonation, energy, sitting position, etc. (This helps you make good connections in all parts of your life, so it’s a great skill to learn.)

## 8. Flirt with flair.

There can be a fine line between flirting and coming on too strong. You don’t have to be a hussy or silly. Keep eye contact, be playful (but not sarcastic), give and receive compliments graciously, laugh (again, when he’s funny), and strategically touch (him and yourself) in the right places.

### 9. Relax and have fun.

Don't over-think, don't over judge, and don't overindulge. You're simply there to learn more about this guy and enjoy yourself. You can chill...you don't have to decide that night if he'll be your future husband. The more you relax, the more you are yourself. The more yourself you are, the more he's going to like you. Trust me on this one.



### 10. Stick to the good stuff.

Keep the conversation positive and don't bond over the bad stuff. Nix the talk about crappy exes, jobs you hate, or pain-in-the-butt children or grandchildren. Make a plan for how you'll respond positively when he asks you about your divorce or your crappy job.

### 11. Agree even when you disagree.

This too is about staying positive. When he tells you that he loves to play golf, don't just say, "I don't golf." Tell him, "Oh yes, my brother's a great golfer...he loves it too!" (And btw:

just because he loves something or believes something you don't, never assume that's a deal breaker. Who says life partners have to think the same and do everything together?)

### **12. Focus on him, but not too much.**

Keep your connection with your eye contact, listen to his stories, and ask questions to show you're interested. But keep your questions nonintrusive, and don't – **DON'T** – let him do all the talking! (See #4.)

### **13. Get that shiny stuff out.**

Remember that you're trying to be memorable here. If you want him to remember you for being a good listener, let him babble on and on. If you want him to remember you because of your unique or shared interests, accomplishments, allure, interesting life stories, compassion or kindness, then make sure you grab the chance to share those at the appropriate times in conversation.

### **14. Always leave him wanting more.**

This is just a date, not a lifetime. We tend to want to dig deep and get it all out all at once. Slow down and get

comfortable with taking time to get to know him. Allow him to hold some things back, and give him just a little bit of your story. Not only will this create some intrigue and make him want to see you again, but it will keep you from being a chatterbox. (We do that...admit it.)

### **15. Close in a bold and specific way – but not too.**

If you're interested in seeing him again, let him know. Don't just give him an "I had fun, thanks" kind of send-off. That's a throw-away line. All women tell him that, including the ones who have no plans of ever returning his calls.

Show your confidence and add something that leaves no doubt. Try "I had a great time talking with you, Bob, and I loved the restaurant. I'm looking forward to doing it again. Thanks." Then stop and let him make the next move.

## First, Decide Whether You Like Him

It's pathetic how easily I can find myself acting like the insecure kid I was in high school. These days it doesn't come up too much, but it can happen when I meet people I especially like and admire and then get the sense they don't return the feeling. I can get to feeling so hurt and undeserving that I turn into a withdrawn ball of mush.

Sometimes it's hard to ignore these feelings, real or not. Whether you're 18 or over 58, rejection feels like crap. Over the years it's caused me real pain.

But there's a difference between when it happened in high school and when it happens now. Now I've learned some life skills that help me through it. I have a conscious conversation with myself that goes something like this:

*Stop! You're acting like a high school girl. That woman has shown no clear signs that she doesn't like or respect you. It's all in your head. You're being insecure. Just be your terrific self. There's no reason she shouldn't like you.*

I try to drop myself back in reality and be kind to myself. It almost always works.

This was definitely a pattern for me as I started dating and looking for love. When I'd meet a single man, it took me only about five minutes to start trying to figure out if he liked me. Until I had that answer – or at least thought I had the answer – I was stuck in my head.

The chatter was often overwhelming, and not just during the date. It lasted well after it was over. Looking back, I'm sure it affected how I acted when I met men, and it probably cost me some good dating action.

Once I learned the "be real and be nice to yourself" self-talk tool, it helped me a lot when I was dating by lowering the voice of that chatter. But it wasn't until I got the following brilliant nugget from my super-talented therapist that my dating and love life really changed:

*On your date?  
First, decide  
whether you like  
him.*

---

What a concept! Do you like him? Is this a man you feel good being with? Does he seem to have the qualities you're looking for in a close companion or potential husband?

I never considered that question because I was so wrapped up in whether he liked me. Do I like him? Once I learned to ask this first, it turned out I didn't even need to have that whole other conversation with myself; if the answer was no, the rest didn't matter.

It took me a lot of time and money to learn this. It's pretty simple, isn't it? It honestly changed the way I looked at men and, surprisingly, it changed the way I thought about myself. Asking and answering this first kept me from wasting time and energy wondering if I was liked by someone I didn't even like.

More importantly, it forced me to think of myself first. What do *I* want? Does this man seem worthy of me? These were questions I hadn't been asking myself, and they are the most important questions.

## One Thing You Can Stop Doing to Improve Your Dates and Relationships

**R**aise your hand if you can accurately read the minds of your girlfriends. My guess is that, at least for a few, you actually can. Larry and I can read each other's minds at times. When you've spent about 2000 days with someone you love, that happens. (It's not always a good thing, btw.)

Now, raise your hand if you can accurately read the minds of the men you're dating or have had short relationships with. Anyone?

Okay, now raise your hand if you've tried to read the minds of the men you're dating or have had short relationships with. I bet you have, and I bet you can't.

I bring this up because of something that happened to my friend Jan. I think this is a great story of how becoming more aware of your thoughts and actions can make a really nice change in your life. This includes managing the propensity to read men's minds.

## Jan's Meet Date

Jan was on what we call a "meet date" with a new guy she met through online dating. Jan appropriately coined these meet dates because it's just that: a way for two people to meet. It's only after this that you decide if you want to go out on a real date.

I think she's brilliant for thinking of it this way, because guess what? Many men see it this way. When they do, it means they may not be in their full-throttle, romantic, wow-the-woman date mode. Knowing this may affect your high expectations for these types of dates.

Jan and Mr. New Guy were having lunch, and after talking a little she thought he was a nice guy. Her lunch was served along with her iced tea, but the waitress never brought the requisite straw.

They were sitting just a short distance from a table where



straw-o-rama awaited. Jan looked over at that table, looked at Mr. New Guy, and waited for him to get up and get her a straw.

He didn't.

So Jan asked, half joking, "Hey...aren't you going to get up and get me a straw?"

To which Mr. New Guy replied, "Nope, I was looking forward to watching you walk over there." A sheepish smile followed.

Okay, so what are you thinking about this guy right now? Got it? Okay, please read on.

Here's what Jan thought. There were two things about this that really surprised her:

1. It didn't offend her. A year ago she would have considered that rude and sexist and completely inappropriate. She may have even gotten up and left. But she'd been working on a handful of changes that were making her a more conscious, graceful, and

grownup dater. She'd been more compassionate and less judgmental of men.

Also, Jan was becoming much more in touch and comfortable with her femininity. She was loving feeling softer and being able to show all aspects of her personality, and the men were definitely responding. So when Mr. New Guy made his comment and smiled, the woman inside her felt flattered...and she was quite tickled.

2. She never would have guessed his reason for not getting up to get her the damn straw. Her old self would have tried to read his mind and instantly assumed either he didn't like her enough to get off his butt to be gentlemanly, or that he was just plain ill-mannered. (Which we all know is a total deal-breaker, right ladies?) "Knowing" this would have rung the "this guy is a jerk" bell, and off she would have gone. There would have been no redemption.

## The Story Ends

So what happened? Jan returned the sheepish grin, and on the date went...after he got her the straw, of course.

Mr. New Guy is now Mr. Past Guy. They agreed that it wasn't a match. But her decision had nothing to do with the straw-capade. And since she didn't jump to offense or assume, both Jan and her date left feeling good about themselves and all the better for their next date. (Practice makes perfect!)

These small changes in attitudes and habits – like accepting you can't read a guy's mind, like giving a guy a break, and like getting comfortable with just being yourself – can make all the difference in your search for love and, as a great side benefit, in your love of yourself.

Oh! And let me hammer home this advice: don't try to figure out what a man is thinking. They think so differently than we do that you'll be wrong a huge percentage of the time. But you already know that!

## One Simple Thought That Will Change the Way You Date

**M**y guess is that you've been dating a while and not getting great results. You're here reading this, after all. The best way to shift into having dates that render positive outcomes – like having more fun and eventually meeting The One – is to change the way you talk to yourself before you even leave the house.

Whether it's a meet-date or a date-date, there is one important thing you can tell yourself that will improve your chances of meeting Mr. I Love You. And here's the great thing about this: it's 100% in your control. (After all, we do love our control, don't we?)

Remember, you're going into the date not worrying whether he'll like you but instead hoping you'll like him. And the next step?

## Discover, Don't Decide

There's hoping you like him, and then there's hoping that every date will be your last. This is especially true of women dating over 40. Enough already, right? But let's face it: all but one of your dates will be your last. If you go to each telling yourself "I hope he's The One," you will explode from the pressure.

So...take off those rose-colored glasses. This is the lens you look through when you're always hoping he's The One. And if, by chance, a second date comes up, the lenses can go a deep, hot pink. That's what starts us searching for signs of hope and connection with every word and action.

We can find the silliest things to validate our belief that he's special...and this could be IT. I'll confess: on my first real date with Larry, when I saw his CD collection in his car, I thought, "Oh geez...he could be the one! We can talk so openly, and he loves all the same music I do...and we read the same authors! What a great sign!"

And then...fast-forward an hour...and he did something that really bugged me. (Out of respect to him, I'll keep this detail to myself.) And in an instant I thought, "Deal breaker. That's



it; another one bites the dust."

All of a sudden I was looking through a different color lens: maybe black. I set out

on the path to uncovering his fatal flaws.

I went from planning our wedding to "Here we go again – another disappointment" within 60 minutes. It was getting distracting and exhausting. So I recalled the lessons I had been learning and I took off the glasses. I let all that judgment go. I just told myself to enjoy being with him "tonight" and see where it goes.

Thankfully, I was able to turn off the voices in my head and not jam him into a “he’s the one or not the one” slot. I was able to give us both the breathing room to really learn about each other. It didn’t take long for us to fall in love.

(Apparently it took him about two weeks. Men can be so much smarter than us at this stuff.) Larry absolutely was and is the man of my dreams. I am so grateful that I was able to remove my glasses and see him for the man he is.

I know it’s so hard to keep our expectations, hopes and dreams in check. But please go into your early dates with the attitude of just getting to know him and how he might enhance your life.

Take the pressure off of both of you and just be open without the burden of having to come out of it with a thumbs up or down. Take off those glasses, put your expectations on hold, and you might actually DISCOVER who your date is before you DECIDE who he is. How refreshing (and relaxing) is that!

## Nine Ways to Make Your Date Great (in the First Ten Minutes!)

The first 10 minutes of a date often determine whether a second date is even going to happen. And let's face it: second dates are not the norm for many. That was definitely my story until I learned about (what I now call) "Date Waste."

Date waste is when a date is a drag but has little to do with whether you're a potential match. It's a drag simply because neither of you set the date up to succeed. These aren't the dates with jerks that you can't wait to end. They're the ones that are just a little boring, lack sparks, or just go nowhere. You can turn these into very positive experiences.

I see date waste all the time when I'm coaching, and I lived it for years. When I accepted that every date was part of the journey and not just a means to an end, my life changed. Every date is an opportunity. You can talk to a nice person, learn something new, get much-needed practice, and maybe connect with someone you want to know just a little better. It doesn't have to be "Oh, he's The One!" or nothing.

Here are nine things you can do in the first 10 minutes of each date to make it a positive experience and begin to eliminate date waste from your life.

- Go in with the “I hope I like him” attitude. We usually approach meeting men with the “I hope he likes me” feeling. Start with whether he seems to be someone you like. This stops you from trying to read his mind and focuses you on what really counts: how you feel being with him.
- Find three things you like about him. Fight your habit to lead with the negative. Find reasons he can be ON your list rather than why you should check him off. It can be his timeliness, his smile, the restaurant he chose; what do you like about him?
- Compliment him. There’s a chance he’s nervous and feeling a little funky. Give him a sincere compliment early on to start off on a positive note. This will help him loosen up and, besides, it’s just nice!

- Think of it as practice. Every meeting is practice that brings you closer to Mr. I Love You. Statistically, your date won't turn out to be him. So what? Here's a chance to learn more about dating, men and yourself. After each date, jot down what you learned and apply that next time. See how no date is a waste?
- Dump your agenda. Don't let it ruin your time if, in the first 10 minutes, he doesn't appear to be your man. Just relax and be open to what comes up. You never know; you may just let yourself relax into a very nice feeling.
- Ask the right questions. It's important to stay positive and put your best foot forward. Avoid questions that lead to negative chatter. "So how's the online dating thing going for you?" stings of the negative. How about "I liked what



you said on the phone about [fill-in-the-blank]...I'd love to hear more."

- Quiet those dang gremlins. We all have them: the voices that tell us we aren't good enough or it's not worth it. When these voices rear their ugly heads, take a deep breath and tell yourself "this is an opportunity I don't want to miss." (There are very effective ways you can learn to manage your gremlins and limiting beliefs. I can help you with that.)
- Let go of control. You are there to talk and listen to your date, not yourself. Your over-thinking and analyzing will exhaust you. Grab your grownup girl and remind her that you can't read minds and there are two people involved here. Stop and pay attention to the man sitting in front of you. If you don't, you may completely miss the man of your dreams.
- Be kind and practice empathy. He has fears and insecurities just like you. Don't get hung up on some little thing he does that you instantly determine you just

can't live with. Consider why he's doing it and if it truly is a deal breaker.

Then look at him again with the kind and wise eyes of a woman working hard to find a good man. Regardless of how you end up judging him, always leave him feeling good about himself—even if you're not going to see him again. It's the nice thing to do, and you'll help prop him up for the next woman who's going to meet him.

You're looking for a lifetime partner with whom you can share deep connection, unconditional trust, mutual adoration and a lifetime of happiness. Everything you do should be toward that end. Every date is a spectacular opportunity. Don't be a date waster.

## Avoid Dating Burnout by Thinking More Like a Man

I once had a client, Sue, who had recently entered the online dating world. Right off the bat she had scoped out a profile she really liked and emailed him. He seemed interested, attentive, and pretty fabulous on paper. The next thing you know...she had a date!

When they met in real life, he complimented her generously, told her he felt so lucky to have met her, and talked about doing lots of things together. At the end of the date they both agreed they wanted to see each other again. She felt a major connection.

Sue was understandably thrilled and got



that he-could-be-the-one tingle thing goin'. I'm sure you know that feeling. But it's likely you also know the end of this

story: he never followed through. He didn't call when he said he would. He cancelled two dates. He had a long story for why each time, and professed his interest and desire to be with her again. And then he stopped calling.

By the time Sue and I connected, this entire story had transpired. When I talked to her she was in damage mode. You know...ruminating hell, where we gals can't help but go. Why did he say all those things to me? What did I do wrong? Do you think he ever liked me? Maybe he just has too much going on in his life right now...should I tell him I'll wait? Why do guys keep doing this and not following through???

Sue was emotionally drained and her dating confidence was in the dumps. She was exhausted. And then those words I hate to hear started coming: Why does this always happen? I'm done! This is bulls#%!

Listening, I felt the same here-we-go-again feeling. But it wasn't about the guy. It was about her.

First, let me answer her questions:

**Why had he said all those things to me?** *Because he probably liked you.*

**What did I do wrong?** *If you showed up, had fun and were "real"...absolutely nothing.*

**Do you think he ever liked me?** *Again, yes. I do. When he was with you.*

**Should I wait?** *NO! For what?*

Why does this always happen to me? *It doesn't. You've gone out with about ten guys in the past several months and this disappearing act has happened twice. That doesn't count as "always" in my book.*

And the major, most important answer I gave her was this: *You will never know what happened. Ever. And it doesn't matter.*

She didn't even know this guy. She was totally disregarding his bad behavior and holding on to her initial uninformed impression. She was hitching her wagon to a fantasy; a wish that she was finally in the presence of The One, at least potentially. After one date she jumped in HEART first...and created her own crash-and-burn drama.

And the kicker is, while she was spending all her energy on a



relationship that never existed, she was not responding to the dozens of men in her Match.com inbox waiting for her attention.

Seriously...dozens!

Now let me guess the guy's side of this: "Oh, she was nice and kinda pretty. Fun to hang with. Yeah, It would be nice to see her again. I'll make a date. Oh

look! Something shiny!" That shiny thing could have been

another woman, his career or some family thing. Who knows. But he found something he'd rather do and he did it. I agree it would have been gentlemanly of him to tell her that he was moving on. But I don't think he was a jerk or a liar. He was not yet invested in her and he was taking care of himself.

Ladies, it would help you to approach dating a little more like the guys. Yes, I said it: like the guys. Most women go on a date hoping he's the one. Even though he might be seriously looking for the one, most men go on dates thinking something like "She seems nice. It'll be cool to see her and get to know a little about her." And if what he learns doesn't knock his socks off, he may get waylaid if something shiny comes along.

Remember, the purpose of dating is to **DISCOVER** whether he's your guy, not to **DECIDE** if he's your guy. That's what a relationship is for. It isn't about getting him to like you or making him fit your expectations. Not only did Sue lose three weeks of potential fun dates, Sue burned herself out and brought herself to the verge of giving up on finding love...all over a guy she never knew.

Start slow, keep an open mind, stay in the moment and don't go ALL IN on anyone too soon. This is the grownup-girl part of dating: manage your expectations and keep your fantasies in check no matter how strong the guy comes on. Balance your heart with your head.

By choosing the crazy woman's path of dashed hopes and disappointments (I think I can say that because that was me for many years.), you will likely burn yourself out. The ups and downs will get the best of you. And then you miss out on so many opportunities to enjoy yourself and to stay open to many guys; one of which will be your last first date. Slow and steady wins THIS race—and the right guy.

## How We Spoil Perfectly Lovely Dates with Perfectly Lovely Men

**H**ave you ever wondered about how many times you let a potentially good man get away after going out with him only once, maybe twice? If you haven't wondered about this, you should.

I once worked with a client on her proclivity to be sarcastic – even rude – on dates and in relationships. She came to me aware that she did it but was entirely unaware of why. She finally dealt with this because her one-liners and flip retorts had chased away the man she thought was “The One.” She was devastated.

This was about fear, plain and simple. Fear of rejection, making bad choices, getting hurt: name your fear. It's about putting up a wall, or taunting your suitor with an “I dare you” kind of behavior.

It shows up in all kinds of ways: overly quick judgments; defensive reactions; unwillingness to show empathy or

understand men's point of view; talking too much or too little; drinking too much; or insisting that you must dig deep into a man's life on your first date. (Hey! I've told you...stop doing that!)



I know this to be true...not only because I read about it and see it in women every day, but because I lived it myself. My fear showed up in my insistence in making it immediately clear to every eligible man that I was a very happy, secure, independent, smart woman who had created a great life for herself. He'd better know that right off, I thought, because if that threatened him...well Mr. Man...sayonara!

In my eBook Confessions of the World's Worst Dater: 7 Secrets to Finally Finding Love after 40, I explain this as one of my three epiphanies; how accepting this about myself, and changing my behavior, totally altered my dating experiences.

This is one of the shifts that took me from never having a second date, to being called back every time, to ultimately finding my spectacular husband. (For the record ladies: grown-up men love smart, independent women. It's just that they first want to see your femininity and kindness, and then they'll look for this other great stuff.)

The irony is that by doing all these crazy things, we create the very situation that is the source of our fear, right? By virtue of running away too fast or chasing away good men, there you are with no fabulous man in your life.

Now is the time to look at yourself honestly. What are you afraid of, and how do you try to mask your fear? And, how is that affecting your success with men? As they say: acknowledging your problem is the very first step. Once you have this awareness, use it to guide you to showing up without the walls and to just coming as the authentic – incredibly lovely – you.

## For Geez Sake, Don't Dump Him: It's Just Salad Dressing

**R**emember *Ally McBeal*? I loved that show. Yes, her skirts were too short and she was way too skinny and neurotic. But I thought she accurately represented women I knew, including me. She was smart, attractive, accomplished, connected to many friends...and oh-so single. She was always trying to find Mr. I Love You or keep her current Mr. I Love You, but it just never worked. (I was rooting for her to end up with Robert Downey, Jr.'s character.)

One episode I always remember is this one: She meets this charming and gorgeous lawyer, and he asks her out. He takes her to a lovely restaurant. At dinner they have stimulating and engaging conversation, sharing big smiles and a few nervous giggles. Ally is falling hard. The love song plays in the background. (You see this guy, la la la la, this guy's in love with you...)

Uh-oh. Here it comes: a spot of bleu cheese dressing on his chin. Oh no! Not that! Ally takes notice. Ally stares. Ally

obsesses. All she sees is the freakin' bleu cheese. In reality it's a little dot, but as she becomes more obsessed she starts seeing more and more and MORE bleu cheese! And then, poor gorgeous lawyer man is literally bathed in bleu cheese dressing from head to toe.

Errrrrrk! Music stops playing. Ally takes on the "Oh crap, not another loser" look. She is done with him. B'bye.

Oh geez! It was just bleu cheese! In the next scene her dear friend tells her how she seems to find every excuse for it not to work with a man. "You could have just blotted it off," she tells her. Nope, Ally insists, she has a thing about first impressions. Forevermore, all she will ever see is Mr. Salad Dressing Face.

Okay, I know I don't *have* to. But I have to give you my view of the salient points here:

- Ally is single
- Ally is sitting across from a successful, gorgeous, smart, available, interested man

- What was a dot in reality became a drench in her mind only
- It was just salad dressing!

Honestly, I think Ally is really afraid of intimacy, rejection, \_\_\_\_\_ (you fill in the blank).

## The #1 Killer of Good Dates and Relationships

**“W**hat’s the biggest challenge women face when dating?”

This is the question I get asked most often as a dating and relationship coach for women over 40. And the interesting thing is that it’s mostly asked by men.

I usually respond by asking them what they think is our biggest challenge. Almost every man responds with “self-confidence.”

A while ago I had a cab driver “Martin” ask me that question, and he too figured self-confidence was women’s greatest dating challenge. I asked him why he thought that, and he said because it’s the biggest challenge for men, and I assume it was the same for women.”

Does that surprise you? That a man (who by the way was single and in his 50s) says lack of self-confidence is the hardest thing for men when dating?

Here's something else I hear often on this subject: men tell me that they meet many women who seem pretty terrific...but the fact that they don't know they are great is a huge turn off.

Frankly, smart, accomplished, confident men are pretty tired of meeting women who lack confidence.

How about that? Surprised?

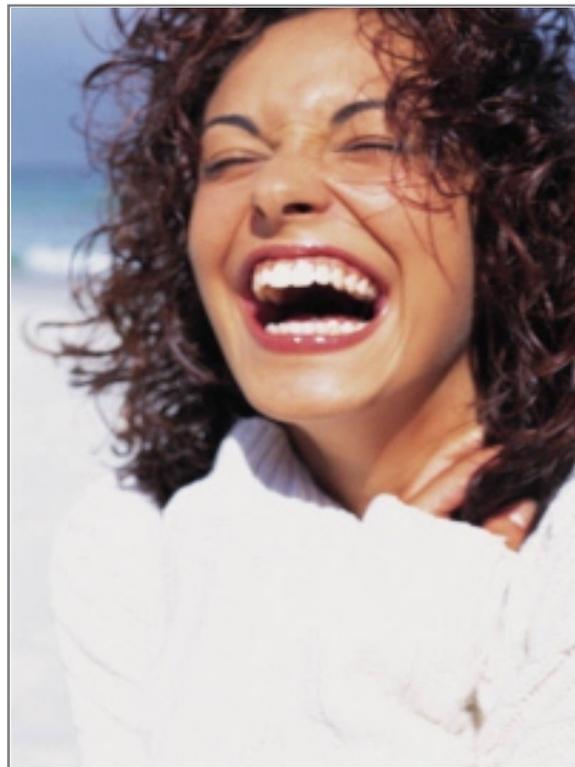
So here's what I've learned from this:

1. Men are no different than us when it comes to dating and relating. They have fears and insecurities. (Consider, too, that since they were young men they have been expected to be the one who is assertive and puts himself out there first. Ouch. They really experience more rejection than we ever will.)
2. Being fearful or insecure about rejection in dating will...well...get you rejected.

Are you confident? Do you believe in your worthiness to find love, and are you hopeful that you will? And how does your lack of confidence or self-esteem come through? Lack of eye contact, accepting compliments badly, trying too hard, or over-compensating by putting up walls?

Once you answer this, I want you to decide two things you are going to do differently as you date and come in contact with eligible men.

Maybe you'll be kinder and less judgmental. Maybe you'll take some time to take a good look at yourself and practice some self-kindness. (I absolutely know you are fabulous!) Maybe you'll go out there and just fake-it-'til-you-make-it.



## It's Really Not about the Size of Your Thighs

**W**hen I used to meet men, my first mission was to make it clear to them that I had a very full life and was doing just fine on my own. I thought it was important for them to “know who I was.” After all, I was an independent woman, and I was not going to give up or change anything for any man! If he was the man for me, he would appreciate my strength and the real me; then we could move forward.

With this approach, I had more first dates than Macy's had sales. And I was absolutely 100% certain it was because of the size of my thighs. Seriously! That's how I rationalized why I never got asked out on second dates. I told myself it was because those shallow, superficial men were all looking for a hot bombshell who wouldn't be too much work. They just wanted her to be great to look at, flirty, and sexy. They couldn't handle a woman like me who wanted to have meaningful discussion and insisted on being respected.

This was a story I truly believed, and it protected me from the truth for many years. I actually waved it as some sort of

proud banner: I'm too smart for those men! But the reality was that I was sabotaging every date I went on. I was ruining the chance of a second date, and therefore any chance at a relationship...and it was all about me...

...After quite some time and a lot of self-discovery, I eventually came to understand that what those men heard every time I droned on was: Hey!!! Mr. Man!!! I don't need you!!!!

A first date for me went something like this:

**Nice Guy:** Hi. Nice to meet you.

**Me:** You too. Excuse my being frantic. I rushed here from work. It's so crazy there! Lots to do.

**Nice Guy:** Oh, what do you do?

**Me:** I'm a consultant. Right now I'm managing an international training project. We're developing an eLearning program that teaches people how to use proprietary technology. I've been doing it a long time; the last several years as an independent consultant. I work mostly in the

foreign automotive field, but I've also managed large projects in the health care and mortgage industries. I really love it. I work a lot but I'm lucky to have such a great job and career. How about you?

**Nice Guy:** Oh, I'm a \_\_\_\_\_ (fill in the blank).

**Me:** That's interesting! I read an article about that... My opinion is... What do you think?

Get the picture? Was I hot or what???

Here's what else I learned: men want to feel needed. Just like us, men feel good when someone relies on them. In fact, they require it.

Here's one of the most brilliant questions my therapist put to me: if you had a friend who never needed you, who never asked for help or advice or support...would you want that friendship?

Think about it: helping each other – being there for each other – is an integral part of any good relationship. And being able to help people is part of being able to feel good about yourself, right?

I learned that needing a man doesn't make you needy; at least, not in that negative I'm-such-a-loser kind of way.



Relying on someone else and letting them see your “weaknesses” or “flaws” actually takes courage. It takes more courage than doing it all alone.

Over the years, I learned to let myself fully open up and rely on my women friends; and I finally realized I could do the same with men. And, like women, most men met me with kindness and generosity.

And this leads me to my favorite quote:

*“Being deeply loved by someone gives you strength, while loving someone deeply gives you courage.”*

*~ Lao Tzu*

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## Should You Call Him if He Doesn't Call You?

**I**t's Monday and you're talking on the phone with a nice guy you're interested in. After some chit-chat, he finally asks you out on a date. It goes something like this:

**Nice Guy:** Do you want to go out for dinner Saturday night?

**You:** Yes, that would be nice.

**Nice Guy:** Okay, I'll call you later in the week to firm up the plans. I'm looking forward to it.

**You:** Me too. Talk then.

*[Click.]*

**You:** Woohoo!!!!!! (Okay...I added that on for dramatic effect.)

You like him, and you're looking forward to Saturday. In fact, you're already wondering what you're going to wear and what you're going to talk about.

Wednesday there is no call. Thursday there is no call. Friday morning comes, and you wonder, "Do we actually have a date?" You're disappointed: maybe a little mad. You're fretting over what to do next.

You email your friend or your dating coach and ask: What should I do? Should I call him?



Unfortunately, this is a common situation—especially when you're meeting men using online dating. I usually advise clients not to email or call men to confirm dates. I know it's difficult to wait: kind of painful, even. But he asked you out and, although it was up in the air about the details, it was set to do a particular thing on a particular night. That's a date, right? Wait and see what he does.

Whether a man keeps his word is, of course, extremely important. It's on your list as a must-have. You want him to

know you're serious about finding a man whose word you can trust and that you respect yourself and expect him to as well. Equally as important is letting him take the lead, especially at the beginning.

The gal who emails "just to confirm" sends the signal she's willing to accept him even if he doesn't come through with his promises. And you are not that gal. That gal also says "yes" when he calls on Friday afternoon for a Friday evening date. She's the woman he plays with, not the one he marries.

I'm not saying that if he doesn't get in touch, you should forget about him. Something may have come up out of the ordinary that prevented him from coming through. But it's important to see what he's going to do without prompting. Hold tight! This is where you set the pace for all that comes next.

And by the way, there's a way to avoid this in the future. When he asks if you want to go out and then says he'll call later in the week, tell him this very kindly: "You know, I'm really interested in going out with you, but my schedule is pretty hectic this weekend. [Make sure you qualify that it's

this weekend so he doesn't get the impression you're so busy that you won't have time for him.] It would be great if we could make our dinner plans now. That way we can be sure it works out. Would that be okay with you?"

If he's serious about getting to know you, he'll spend the extra few minutes it takes to make a plan, or he'll commit to when he's going to call back with details. If he doesn't do either, it gives you some valuable insight. Maybe he isn't serious about dating and relationships?

## Should I Waste My Time Meeting or Dating an “Imperfect” Guy?

*30 minutes.* That’s about how long you generally have to “get to know” a man before deciding to have a cup of coffee or a date with him. You meet online, or at the local bank, and that’s about it.

But he seems imperfect. He’s clearly missing one of your must-haves. Should you gracefully decline? After all, you have very little time to waste, right?

We all have a list, or at least a vision of the perfect guy. He’s probably hysterically funny, always interested in your happiness, openly shows that you rock his world, and shares your love of [art, music, astronomy, etc.] Oh, and I’m sure he’s taller than you.

When you have a chance to meet a guy, but he sure doesn’t seem like all that, is it a waste of time? I hear forms of this so often that I’m compelled to share with you what to do if you

find that the men you're meeting aren't living up to your standards.

When it comes to dating over 40, the only waste of time is saying no to men because of superficial criteria or prejudging. Let's face it: very few of us who are "well over 40" and dating have hundreds of men to choose from. We should grab our opportunities and see where we can take them.

Every date is a chance to find love, or at least a nice companion. At minimum it's a chance to practice so you can get closer to it. I encourage you to:

1. Revisit your list and decide what you truly must have and if what you want is realistic. If you want a full head of hair, and you're dating 60 year olds...good luck with that! You just decreased your chances of finding "your perfect man" by about 70%.
2. Remember that you know very little about these men you're meeting if you're online dating, so being flexible with your judgments will serve you well. Spend more time with them – get that first and maybe the second

date – and then start sizing him up against your (newly created) list.

## The Wondrous Effect of Showing Kindness to Men When Dating

**H**ow kind are you when you date? I know you're well-mannered, but are you being kind to the men you meet? Here are definitions of "kind":

1. Having or showing a tender, considerate and helpful nature.
2. Showing sympathy or understanding; being charitable.

So...are you being kind?

Can you say that you show tenderness and understanding, and that you approach men with sympathy?

Lack of kindness is one of the most common reasons women aren't finding loving partners. And btw, girlfriend: I'm talking about kindness women show to men, not how men treat women.

I talk about this on [my blog](#), in my workshops and with my [private clients](#) constantly. I do so because I've seen with my own eyes, over and over again: that when women "get" this, it's one of their biggest ah-ha moments.

We can spend so much energy looking for red flags and trying to protect ourselves from various threats (real or imagined) that we respond by making quick and often harsh judgments. We forget to extend the normal kindness we would to anyone else we meet. We throw out benefit of the doubt or attempts to understand and put ourselves in another's shoes.

Dumping the overactive critical stuff and extending kindness to men generates this fantastic, positive cycle. Through your kindness you accept and connect with more men; they appreciate that kindness and are more attracted to you; you have better dates; and you improve your chances of finding a meaningful connection with a good guy. See how that works?

I once had a client who had what she described as a "perfect first date." He was exactly the way he looked on his profile, and the evening ended in a quick kiss goodnight.

After that fabulous date, he immediately let her know of a couple discrepancies in his profile. Notably, he was a smoker and wore a hairpiece. For my client, this could mean only one thing: he was a liar who absolutely was not to be trusted.

Here's the thing. He "lied" so she wouldn't make quick judgments and would take time to get to know him. He



probably doesn't get many "yes" responses with the smoking and the hairpiece working against him.

That he told my client right after he met her makes me think the "liar" label is too

harsh. He could have waited a long time to tell her those things, but he did it rather quickly.

One more thing: he must have been interested in getting to know her better. Otherwise he wouldn't have bothered to tell her the truth about his insecurities. He took a risk, and that counts for something.

## What Shoehorns and Bad Dates Have in Common

**H**ere's an admission: there is no "right" or "wrong" when it comes to giving women advice about dating and relationships with men. There. I said it. We all know it's not a science.

But those of us who dated for a billion years, made all the awful mistakes, studied and shifted, and finally come out in the end with a good man and spectacular relationship...we can share some good and bad habits with women who are on the same path.

Shoehorning in dates is one of those bad habits.

What I mean by shoehorning is squeeeeezeing in that quick "date" in the middle of your workday or at the end of your day on your way to the gym. If you're dating with any regularity, you're probably doing this. How's that working for you so far?

I know it's the traditional way, especially when you're Internet dating. I know you're very busy and that this may be your

only option. (At least it seems that way.) And, yes, first impressions do count a lot. So why waste your time if you don't feel that spark?

Well, I think it's the shoehorn thing that's actually wasting your time. It's a lose-lose proposition.

### **Your Loss #1: You Fail to Impress a Great Guy**

You actually have to prepare for a good date.

When you go on a date, especially the first or first few, it's all about putting your best foot forward. Hey! This man could be the one you've been wishing for! You need to take time to prepare physically, mentally, and spiritually.

I don't have to tell you that first impressions are everything. Set yourself up to succeed by allowing time for some reflection, calming moments, goal setting, and affirmations. And do this before every single date! Simply by being positive and fully present, you will have gone incredibly far in attracting men. (Men rank these very high as qualities they require in a life-long mate.)

And, like it or not, men are visual creatures. You have to take time for a good “what should I wear?” plan and show up as the lovely, put-together, feminine woman you are. (And that likely isn’t the you who rushes to Starbucks on your lunch break.)

### **Your Loss #2: You Let a Good One Get Away**

Squeezing in a quickie just can’t give you enough information.

If you’ve been dating with any regularity, I can absolutely promise you that you’ve passed up good men by deciding in the first 10 minutes that he’s “just not for you.” Can you seriously look me in the eye and tell me that in 25 minutes you can judge someone? Don’t you hate when men do it to you?

I get it when he shows up five inches shorter and 10 years older than he claimed. You have my permission to run for the door. But when you tell me he’s boring or you had nothing in common or he didn’t seem like the man you talked to on the phone...I’m going to make you show me how you can possibly

know that in less than a half hour with someone you have met for the first time.

I know that some dating coaches tell you that you only need that first impression; that there's either a spark or there's not. I'm making the case that you just can't trust that after only a few minutes.

You have to allow for two things:

1. Practice compassionate thinking ladies. He's meeting a beautiful woman (Yeah...you!) and he's nervous. He just came from a meeting that went bad. He's shy. His daughter just called and told him she's getting a divorce.

I challenge you to question that kneejerk feeling of intuition (aka judgment) or lack of attraction (aka judgment). When you get that feeling, I want you to consciously shift to your intellect. In that moment, force yourself to be the logical and compassionate woman you are in the rest of your life.

2. The importance of adding a fabulous man to your life is huge, right? Don't you think this deserves more time

than 8 minutes of planning and 24 minutes of exploration? Be good to him and to yourself by devoting at least an hour to the initial meetings. (I'd rather have you devote two.)

Oh, and one more thing. I know the Starbucks thing is convenient. But environment can really affect the course of a date. Again, it's no science, but it makes sense that a warm, quiet, inviting place lends itself better to a pleasant encounter than does a cold, loud, stark place.

The bottom line is this: when you squeeze a date into your schedule, there's an excellent chance you will not have a next date. I'm not saying you should always meet for a formal dinner or a day at Disneyland. And I know there are realities.

But I assume you're looking for a meaningful, long-term relationship. Isn't it worthy of delaying a date for a few days to give yourself the time and attention needed to attain what is likely the most important thing in your life?

Every definition of squeezing involves "exerting pressure." Stop pressuring yourself on all sides of the dating equation.

Slow down, relax, pay attention. It's more fun, and I promise that it will be more fulfilling.

## About the Author: Bobbi Palmer



**Bobbi Palmer**

The Dating and Relationship Coach for Women over 40  
[www.DateLikeaGrownUp.com](http://www.DateLikeaGrownUp.com)

Hi. My name is Bobbi Palmer. I am a 50-something, joyfully married, proudly imperfect, open-minded, kinda short, often sassy, ebullient, critical thinking, optimistic, gentle but direct ex-corporate manager now CEO of Date Like a Grownup, coach and Compassionate Truthteller helping smart, accomplished grownup women around the world Find Hope and Find Him.

My expertise comes from decades of teaching, consulting, managing and mentoring adults.

More importantly, it comes from becoming a first-time bride at age 47 and experiencing firsthand how we can transform from a pretty damn happy single gal to and emotionally fulfilled, peacefully happy women who knows she will be loved by a spectacular man...forever!

I offer real-world advice and deep understanding and compassion to women over 40 who are dating and looking for love. This can only come from a grownup woman who's been there, done that, and figured it out.

My passion for helping you achieve your dreams, along with my unique ability to teach and support you, has taken countless women in their 40s, 50s, 60s and beyond from dreading dating to joyfully searching for and finding, not just a man who they love and loves them, but the yummy self-love that has to come first.

Keep reading if you just have to have more...

My commitment to you as your coach is a labor of love: mine and yours. It's a gift to give yourself as the smart and deserving woman you are. It leads you to the clarity, confidence and optimism you need to get out there, find joy in dating, meet and

connect with good men (maybe for the first time in your life) and eventually choose your life partner.

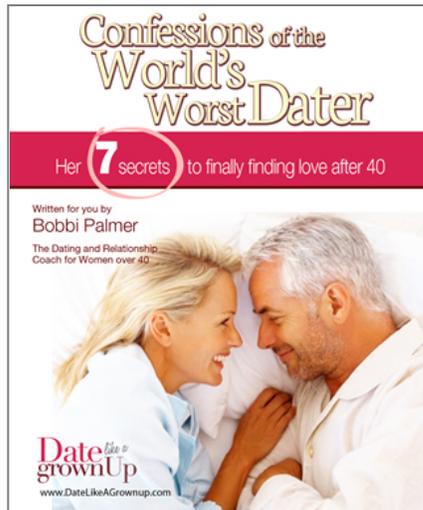
It's a gift to me when a woman I work with tells me she feels good about herself for the first time in years; that she finally realizes there are tons of nice men out there and she's having fun meeting them; that she feels hopeful, confident and well-prepared to attract a good man; and finally that she has met someone special who values and loves her in the way she's always hoped for and now knows it can actually happen!

Connect with me for more of my no-nonsense approach to finding love with a wonderful, grownup man.

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And be sure to read my 100+ articles on my website at <http://www.DateLikeaGrownup.com>.



I also invite you to pick up a copy of my eBook [Confessions of the World's Worst Dater – Her 7 Secrets to Finally Finding Love After 40](#) via Amazon, for Kindle.

You've heard the term "Dream Man." You've probably even used it when talking about what you were after. Maybe over the years you have toned it down to make it more "realistic"; maybe now he's your "partner" or "companion." I'm here to say that you can fulfill your dream.

Whatever you call it and whatever shape it takes, wherever you are in your life, you can complete your circle by finding the man of your dreams.

And guess what? You are closer than you think. I spent many years learning and growing so I could fulfill my life's truest wish. I hope you read my book and let me share what I've learned so you can get closer to fulfilling *your dream* of bring that man into your life with whom you feel safe, adored and loved forever.