

Singleship

Imperfect Happiness
Theory and Practice

by

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for my friends

Everyone thinks of changing the world, but no one thinks of changing himself.

-Leo Tolstoy, Writer

In the beginning... there was pain.

You have the bad news now. You are in the midst of a storm a break-up a romantic partner. It would seem there is no rhyme or reason to any break-up. The big question for is simply this: will you let it define your life or control your actions or your future?

This world has a rhythm of ups and downs, high and lows and sometimes the lows seem lower than the highs have could ever be again. Low points in life are like loud and windy thunderstorms: they do pass over you eventually.

You are not alone in your current storm of despair. No one I know has ever made it through life without loss and some sadness. It is simply a part of being a human being and have choices. Soon, after some grief and tears you will need to challenge yourself to fill that empty space with something and be ready to reach for the sunshine and green landscapes beyond the storm. Take some time to cry and begin to feel the empty space that is created by your break-up.

All too often, the hardest part of the storm is filled with a singular notion of “why”

Why is this happening to me?

Why is my life this way?

Why am I feeling like this?

Why am I really here?

After experiencing a rough a break up with a long-term partner, singles will naturally consider a long weekend in Las Vegas or some other retreat. Las Vegas is great place to get your mind off your emotions, but quick carnal indulgence is not always a very good solution to occupy your mind or time.

We can try to escape from our friends, family and careers to search out the “Whys,” but these obligations always come back later. Escape is never a long-term solution and really sort of an illusion. That’ is why Las Vegas thrives today.

We need a more practical and responsible approach to getting to the next is step in life.

If you want a better life after a failure or break-up, honoring your obligations to your friends and family is a really good start.

This book is perhaps the shortest course available in learning to do just that.

We must accept that the great “Whys” of life are the ultimate questions. No human being has really answered them yet, though many try desperately to do so.

To move past failures and any break-up move on to something else.

So forget these...

Why am I here?

Why is this happening to me?

Why is my life this way?

Challenge yourself with these instead...

How do I keep up my obligations?

How do get a handle on my emotions?

How do I move on?

Where do I want to be in a month? A year?

What about my next five years?

In the weeks right after a break up, that empty place in the heart still needs something to fill it up. It needs some practical wisdom and some new tools. All the great wisdom surrounding relationships can be really boiled down to a very short sentence. It's about "How," not "Why."

"How" protects us and gives us power. It keeps us from being overwhelmed by emotions of the "Whys." This book will help anyone focus on the strength of "How."

Modern western culture seeks a "quick fix" or shortcut for everything. This book is no different.

My Story

For me being single rocks. It gets me up early in morning and keeps me curious about life and new people. Being a

single Dad (I am divorced, and I have my son twelve days and nights a month), gives me a feeling of accomplishment and purpose. I felt the need not pursue another long-term relationship until he is launched. It is an *imperfect situation*, to be sure. I call it Singleship.

Life is tricky business. We never can know the future. We all learn one day that being in love with a very special someone feels amazing and beautiful and productive all at the same time, but does not ever make life absolutely perfect.

If you examine any past relationship closely, you can always find a flaw. Nothing is really so perfect as to cause you to spend the rest of your life dwelling on its loss. Everyone has to come to the realization that when you commit to a relationship, you must expect few bumps along the way.

Your Story

Probably the most difficult thing one can do in at the end of a break-up is to try to see world the eyes of the other person. That person should not be the focus in your new story. That empty space in our hearts hurts us and even blinds us other points of view. If we stare into the empty space too long, we can fall into it forever.

The first purpose of this book: to help divorced people and young adults understand their own story after a break-up and get a grip on it and then move on and complete some goal. Completing goals will you a better mate too when cupid finds his mark again.

Emotional health is key component to a good life. When a

weird pain pops up in your body, you go to see a doctor about it. At this checkup a doctor will examine you. Doctors are obligated to examine you and then deliver an objective professional assessment. The Singleship Challenge gives you that objectivity too.

The second purpose of this book is to explain why “pre-martial” Singleship is a practical life-planning tool for young adults and students who might be losing themselves to very strong feelings of love. It may also help a parent stop their teen before they act on those feelings. Parents who understand Singleship, will be better prepared to get their kids help with these strong feelings without destroying their relationship with their kid.

I am not a doctor, psychologist, counselor or minister. I am just a writer. I interviewed happy and sad singles for this book. I wrote down some of what happy people said to me. The first basic thing was this: every person must learn what makes them happy and be skilled at creating happiness on their own as a single person before they should ever focus on happiness with a mate.

This is the beginning of Singleship. It is not a new idea and everyone should know it whether you are single or not.

Practicing Singleship for short time has a future value too. It will help anyone find a fall back position if you find yourself without that great loving partner during your life. Like the spare tire in the trunk of a car, one may never ever need to use the concepts in this book, but both are good to have around.

Singleship may also help you make good relationship choices in the future. This is not because you are hardened or

skeptical about love. You will simply have a much better view of love and well developed idea of your personal happiness. Singleship can last short time or a long time. It is your choice.

To read this book in about an hour will not help you travel to a better place, but it will help you get packed for it. The Challenge of Singleship takes only twenty minutes each night for about a month.

May I see a Menu please?

Just as restaurant owners and chefs place a menu in the window of their establishments for prospective patrons, the letters in bold are sort of a menu too. Scan them briefly to get the spirit of the text.

Intimacy for singles?

To get fullness of the human experience we would do well to expand the notion of intimacy. We need to take step back from it and simplify it. To begin, I would assert that all intimacy may be broken down into two categories: positive or negative. Again, I am no expert in intimacy and many other books can put finer point on it. For now, let us keep it very simple.

Negative intimate experiences are bad for you.

Positive ones are good for you.

Coffee shops, meeting people for dinner or watching a movie with friends are mostly positive experiences. While online the social networking sites can go either way. My view is that, is that intimacy of any kind requires you to open your self up to share an experience or thought.

Then you make an exchange. The result of the exchange

between you and another person or of group of people creates a new experience. If you string together a whole bunch of these experiences together, and you start to have a life without romance.

Being alone has a stigma attached to it. For some, being alone is a negative intimate experience with self. This book is design to create a positive exchange with self. Singles need to take as many opportunities for simple, positive social intimacy experiences. After a break up, we need understand our needs and focus on creating a positive self-image.

Negative intimacy experiences can take the form of clinical depression, bullying, constant arguing with a spouse or parent (not for the purposes of problem solving), and at the farther reaches of the spectrum, to spousal and child abuse. Believe it or not, these extremely harmful, intimate events sometimes even create strong bonds.

These bonds are *forced* on people without their consent. Generally, professionals in the mental health field (I am not one) believe that these bonds make people form dysfunctional bonds to others later in life. The solution is professional counseling, diagnoses and therapy. Find a professional to discuss a negative intimate experience in your past.

We learn about social intimacy from birth. Many patterns for behavior are set in childhood when we begin to communicate with other humans. Social intimacy is a very necessary thing for babies and adults. The exchanges between parents and small children, for the most part, seem very simple, but they are critical to help build relationships for the future.


Teens have some special needs in matters of love. The section for teens is letter K. (If you are a teen that argues with your parents all the time you may want to skip ahead to second part of letter **K**).

*Give me six hours to chop down a tree and I
will spend the first four sharpening the axe.
-Abraham Lincoln, U.S. President*

The Instructions

It will take just a few minutes each night to complete all questions in the book. You will put it all into action later.

Your goal is to be open. Then to search out and then understand what really makes you happy when you are alone. Make it a positive exchange with yourself each night.

When you see a pen like this,  answer each question in the space provided or a notebook of some sort. This is the most important function of this book.

If you are in an unsatisfying relationship now and want to restructure it to suit you, this book is not really for you. Couple's counseling is for you. Try that first.

If you are certain you will be single again, begin a dialogue with your partner about your situation. You can start with a little common sense and a simple idea that all happy singles know. You probably heard it before.

Being a single person is better than staying in an unhappy relationship.

If you and your partner can agree on this point, then share the book. Each night you might learn some new ways to express yourself to each other by communicating your partner about the subject for that day. I hope it helps you arrive at a deeper understanding of your current situation.

I personally enjoy and believe in romance and love makes everyone a poet, as Plato said and the earth would be a very dull place if we could create a family and grow our population by swapping our toothbrushes.

The fact is, human beings are, by design, tethered to instinctive needs for connections to others.

Lastly, if you are a religious person, I hope you will find that a twenty-six day study of Singleship will fit into your personal faith, not contradict it.

Some would call it self-help therapy, self-exploration,

examining life, a personal journey or whatever. Embrace all the upcoming “Hows.” Leave the “Whys” for another day.

Take your time with the book to explore how you feel about the questions.

If you are ready take a little walk around the place where you live.

This should take about fifteen minutes. Think about this simple notion: *I am going change a part of my life right now.* This little bit of exercise prepares you for the experience of being alone with your thoughts.

On the second half of your walk, make the commitment to learn about Singleness over the next month using this book. Imagine what kind of personal journey you might need to fill that empty space where you romance used to be located in your head and heart.

Use the concept of Singleness as an important investment in your future.

Keep to your daily work or school schedule, but do not socialize too much right after a break up. Search out and purchase some good stuff to read. It should be something that interests you. Find books, magazines or some cool stuff online. There is fiction reading list and movie list at the end of

the book. Reading is very relaxing.

Before you begin your study, think about the time you spent as an unhappy person and challenge yourself change. Clap your hands very loud or stomp your feet hard on the ground, shout and let out your feelings.



Write a little something in your notebook or the space provided about why you should be happy.



Write about an unhappy romantic relationship choice you have made in the past (don't write about a relationship you are in right now).

NOTES

A

Challenge of Singleship

Singleship is the *first* and most important adult relationship of your life because you seek to create happiness inside your own head and heart before seeking a romance.

Tell anyone you have studied Singleship they may tilt their head sideways and give you a bit of funny look so don't talk about this challenge until you have completed the book and all the questions.

In my view, the human instinct for grouping together for social interaction is more powerful than the basic instinct for sex. Once people take note of this concept, life gets easy. If your goals and identity were tightly intertwined with another person and the social interactions were woven into every moment of life. You need to get your identity back or make a new one. just for Singleship. Most of us don't even think about this need to interact, but it is always there.

Whoever is happy will make others happy, too.

-Mark Twain, writer

Always, always choose your own happiness first.

The nightly routine of thinking and journaling at bedtime will enable you to seek out your own special version of happiness. This new knowledge is gained not by the wisdom contained in the book or the famous quotes. It is acquired from your answers alone.

As you slowly build up knowledge of self and your new understanding of who you really want to be in the future, your thoughts will change into actions. It can transform you into that person you met on your first little walk. Remember that you need to be single and mostly alone, for now, to get the highest benefit from studying Singleship.

Stay home, save your money.

This first month is about you and learning about becoming a single person again. It's you, just you, and nobody else, but you. This book and your heart should be your new companions during your study. You are not learning to live alone.

Next month, you must get out and be with people to manage your instinct to group with others. This is a requirement for Singleship, but you will not think about these experiences in the same way.

If you have experienced the loss of a partner through their death, understand this: your last mate would want you to be happy someday. If no one has told you about them, there are many books about coping with grief and loss so make sure you have a good grasp of the grief process before starting this book. You should be mostly through that process before you begin to study Singleship.

With your study you must get some exercise because it gives you time to think about what makes you happy and it will give you focus (consult your doctor first before starting an exercise program). When you move your body you relax your mind and eliminate stress.

You are not thinking about the exercise itself (only 20 minutes a day three or four times a week), but rather about relaxing your mind from the common cares of the day. You are also thinking about what *makes you happy*.

Walking will be the best option for the first week because it is easy and is the most relaxing exercise available to you. Complex exercise movements take the focus away from your thinking and learning about Singleship. Leave the music player at home and just think for a bit about your story.

Again, I am not a professional in any field, but here is what I think about beginning a new goal, like Singleship.

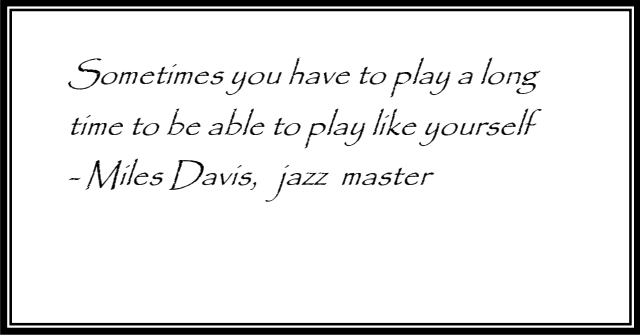
The purpose of simple exercises like walking is to help you investigate, in short periods of solitude, that new and empty space.

It soon will feel different and a bit less empty. Everyone has this space to explore when their lives change. It is where dreams, through patience and hard work, become reality.

Those who complete a great big goal or overcome difficult circumstances in life all know this place well. When you take your walk, contemplate this place. It the place was a where your current circumstances meet you new goals and desires. The dialogue you create with yourself as you walk

and then answer the questions each night will build a bridge that connects the '*what is now*' with the '*what should be.*'

A little bit of exercise releases a whole range of good chemicals that you need to be happy too. Rigorous exercise may become a great challenge or goal of single people. For now, is just for relaxation.



*Sometimes you have to play a long
time to be able to play like yourself
- Miles Davis, jazz master*

Before your daily walk, take inventory of your relationships, assets, clothes, desires, books you like, etc. You will write these in your book or journal. Do this whenever you can (during lunch or a coffee break). Enjoy yourself as much as you can. Don't think about how or what *could* make you happy, only what makes you happy right now. You won't need to tell anyone about your study. Find a mirror now. Tell the person you see in it that you want to get to know them just a little better.

One of the things I really enjoy is puttering around in my garage while listening to a football or baseball game on the radio. It's relaxing for me. You will no doubt have similar kinds of simple things that make you happy too. Write these things down just before bedtime and then plan sometime

each week to do them.



Finish writing down the things that make you happy. Take a good inventory of the good things in your life now. Try to get down as much as you can: a sweater, cheesecake, a song, a memory, a pet.

Write about a time when you remember feeling all alone in a big world. Relax and don't worry about love and romance for now. Prepare for your daily walks. Do not explore any of the great "WHYs." You left those behind for now.

NOTES

B

Be single for a reason

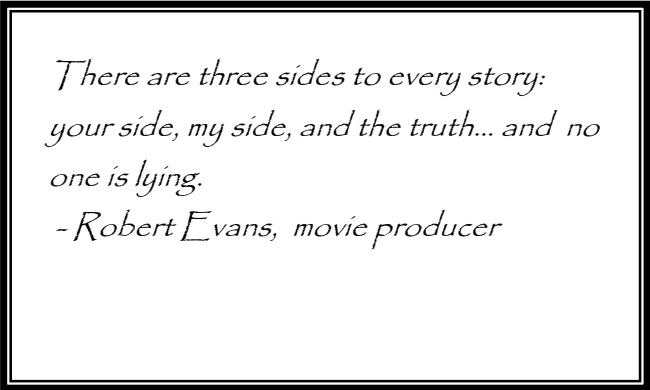
There is a reason for you to be single right now. It might not seem that way especially if you believe having a partner to share your life is important. If you have just been through a rough break up, then your world may seem upside down for a while or at least tilted sideways as though you have put a different style of shoe on each foot.

Romance makes us feel alive. Our senses tingle and the world looks better and we are overcome with a sensation of well being, warmth, and desire. After a relationship ends, singles feel as though they are lost in a fog of self-doubt and grief.

These feelings of loss can affect your day-to-day life. When you try to replace the old feelings by seeking a new love interest, you can get trapped in a cycle that is very bad for you.

Unhappy singles I met often said being in the cycle was a big regret. They probably missed out on the chance to have a long-term relationship with a wonderful someone. A good way to know if you have this problem is to count the number

of door knobs you have in your living space (the front door, bedroom door, closets etc.). If you have more door knobs than romances in your life in the past couple of years, it might be a habit. This is not to imply that you don't know the difference between a door knob and a good partner. It is to remind you that you are likely seeking new dates to get over a past love. You are in a bad dating cycle. You might be ruining your chances at real happiness with a good partner.



*There are three sides to every story:
your side, my side, and the truth... and no
one is lying.
- Robert Evans, movie producer*

Everyone knows someone that stays in this a bad dating cycle. They date get energy from the highs of a new romance, but lose it all with the lows. These folks cannot be single. It feels like the world is caving in on top of them during a breakup (too many door knobs). The thrill of the new person too soon after a break up does feel good and they will feed off the energy of a new romantic interest. In extreme cases they may breakup just to get the "new" feeling again.

In Singleship you must replace this energy with something else that really helps you. You need the inspiration of new love without the heartache. You need to find energy from a

new source: a place that will give you a new kind of inspiration. You will draw power from this new energy source each day. This power is your purpose, your reason for being single now.

Being in good Singleship means having a reason, some purpose or plan, which keeps you focused.

Is there only one purpose for your life? There may not be just one purpose. There could be a long list of things for you to do. A few singles I met had big ideas to change the world, but most were focused on short-term goals like completing an education or focusing on their families and careers. All these goals have smaller steps in between. Understand this: the smaller steps make the bigger dreams come true.

Do the small steps first.

You may be a parent and your children will need your attention. You may want to advance your career. Maybe you have a business idea or maybe you need to get more education to complete other goals. Having a purpose is the beginning, the starting line of Singleship. It would be the zero-point on a "happiness scale," if there was such a thing.

This starting point for singles is very much like putting on an ultra-hip, new pair of sunglasses as everything you see will be affected or tinted by the lens of your new purpose. The things you say, the way you spend your money, the type of

people that interest you, etc., will get new focus through this purpose. When you have a purpose, you can smile when you are all alone. This is the Singleship smile of purpose.

While you are seeking your purpose, you may get some advice from others that know you well. The rest of the concepts in this book will help you do some soul searching too.

This defense was common in the happiest single folks I met. As one smart single person said, "No matter what life throws at you, you need to always have own your thing to throw right back at it."



Form your notes and thoughts into the beginning of a purpose. You will refine it later. If you doubt you can do this, check the reading list to help you get beyond it.

A purpose will defend you like a shield against many of the troubles of life.

Life is much more manageable when thought of as a scavenger hunt as opposed to a surprise party.
- Jimmy Buffett, writer, singer, sailor

C

Singleship is Cool

Singleship is hip. Singleship is cool. For now, cool will mean just feeling good in your own skin and being relaxed as you refine your purpose. As some people transition from a romantic relationship into being single again, they often leave out this key component happy singles naturally know. Being cool is not showing someone you are cool or telling them why you feel relaxed. When you are cool, you are calm and you don't need to tell anyone how you feel.

This relaxed sense of purpose is acquired through a deeper knowledge about self. You don't need new clothes or shoes. You don't need a new car, dress, new golf clubs or a new bowling ball.

You have made some decisions about how you will live your life.

You are going to stick to these decisions.

That's cool.

You have chosen a path to travel. Others may walk with you for a time, but they can never direct or drive your cool. Only you can do this. You have to be cool on your own. Associating with others won't make you cool either. Your associations, as you will learn later, are very important to your happiness, but you have to make sure you have some boundaries that prevent other people from interfering with your purpose or disrupting your path, your coolness, and your new relaxed disposition. Try to avoid people that don't seem to have any purpose for their lives.

To remember prompt **C**, relax a bit now and contemplate Singleship. Close your eyes, breathe deep, and count to ten as a first step to relaxation.

Imagine what life will be like when you have a completed your purpose. Then imagine a small step toward your purpose. Take your time. Relax and count to ten.

Society is more accepting today of people who want to stay single for a long time. This acceptance flows from the promise of our basic human rights laws and theory, the advantage of self-directed decisions that compliment the goals of humanity in general, and lastly, (the most important part for singles) the pursuit of happiness. It offers modern humans, those with some self-control, the freedom to achieve goals they greatly desire. It's becoming more hip each day.

Once this idea was thought to be extreme or out of the

norm. It is still a tall order to ask society as a whole to seek out or accept Singleship as a *new relationship status*.

The notion of Singleship is already here, but advertisers just don't know how to put a label on it yet. They may call it the *single generation* or X, Y, or Z, but the reality is that people can adopt this way of thinking at any age.

Non-western cultures have difficulty with the idea of being single for a long time to complete personal goals. People outside of western cultures have fewer options to be happy and is especially true for women in these cultures.

Governments that don't support basic human rights, especially women's rights and equal treatment under law, are worried that our western-style notions of marriage and romance could take hold in their countries. They fear western ideas because it threatens their culture, traditions and religious beliefs which help them manage the instincts to create new families (we get to this later).

In the western world we have an odd blend of influences that shape our concept of love and romance. From the ancient Greeks we get our ideas about love and romantic fate. From the Greeks and Romans, we take our ideas about the rights of the individual or citizen. And finally, Judeo-Christian marriage tradition balances the freedoms we enjoy with our more predictable human instincts and this keeps us in check. To have a secular government crafted on a framework of basic religious values, that gets re-forged periodically to pursue equal opportunity creates a dynamic soup for dating (and politics).

Why is this important to singles? You need to know that just by being a single person and a member of a western

culture you have more freedom and opportunity to make the world a better place than most of the rest of the people on the earth. You simply will have more options, more choices to manage your life and impact the world around you. That's pretty cool too.

Ask anyone who spends time with any charity and they will all tell you that there is always more work to do. People generally join charities and service groups not only to help others, but for the experience, the feeling of doing something good. Building hospitals in Africa, repairing nature trails in our National Park systems or cooking in a homeless shelter is hard work. The people who have done stuff like this, as an act of service, usually return to a regular full-time job or career, but they are never the same after the experience of giving of themselves this way.

Being cool is also about taking control of your emotions and feelings too. Some people are deluged and overcome with strong emotions after a breakup or loss. They may have a hard time controlling their thoughts. Take control of the notions in your head by first recognizing which are good thoughts and which are the bad ones.

If your emotions are running amok and making you do some weird stuff like missing work, school or other destructive things, consider contacting someone who is trained to help you correct these behaviors. Be brave enough to seek advice from a trained professional if this ever happens to you and be brave enough to trust their advice even if it makes you uncomfortable at first.



Write something about the coolest person you

D

Don't tell too much

The skill to communicate is powerful. Of all the human talents, it changes the world more than any other. If you want to change the world, or just your world, you need to be able to communicate and be precise when you do it.

Many people feel they have a whole bunch of negative stuff to tell their friends and they tend to blurt it out all at once. When they unload their brain, it makes them feel better. When you are on the receiving end, it does not help you. It is not a kind thing to do to someone. A conversation with a person like this resembles a lecture more than an exchange.

Everyone falls into this trap at one time. It does not mean you are rude or insensitive. It simply means that in that moment your skills were dim. It is not an automatic thing. There are some skills you need to communicate more effectivity with other humans. Avoid becoming a person who performs loathsome, unscheduled lectures.

I interviewed many singles. The unhappy folks all had a rather depressing back story to tell. Very often these were the first words out of their mouths. These lectures were not very interesting. When you feel the urge to fill a certain someone's day with your sorrows and gripes, you must simply hold your tongue. Perfect strangers don't need your sob stories, either. Vent in your own diary when you have a bad day. Pour this negative and hostile molten lava of emotions into your computer or in your notebook. This is the *first* skill of Singleship: leave your sad back story at home in your notebook. You may share it with a very, very close confidant, or family member, your parents or save it for your therapist's office.

Write negative words down, but don't ever speak them.

I have a few lines for you to remember. They will help you set the stage for better exchanges with others. Use them instead of telling your back-story:

"I put the past behind me awhile ago."

"I am right where I am supposed to be."

When you have learned your lines, slip them into your conversation. After you have said these lines, then you simply say this:

"And what about you? Tell me about you."

This is the *second* skill of Singleship. You must learn to become a good listener.

Deliver your lines, tell your new story and then shut up. Listen to the other person for a while. If you can resist the temptation to impress upon others what you are thinking about in the moment and find out about them first, you will be happier and they will be too. Purse your lips together now and hold your breath. Silently count to ten to remind your mouth that listening helps people.

If you want to connect with anyone, just listen to them.

This is how you begin to make the world a better place. It is a small thing, but an important key to learning about Singleship and learning to control your own thoughts too. Remember that when someone spills their guts, you are seeing the grouping instinct at work. All their sob stories are just one way, not the best way, for them to group with you (the exchange). Take their back-story in stride. Be cool. Give them no advice. It is a way of thinking and acting that can make you happy. This skill is the foundation of your coolness.

One thing happy singles share is the idea that simple preparation for social gatherings or chatting about relationship goals helps them focus on being a better friend to their friends. Yes, it seems weird to practice what you want to say and prepare for simple conversations about your life, but your friends will appreciate this skill more than you can even imagine.

If you don't have your own lines, and you want to describe your current state of Singleship to others, use these:

"I am not looking for a mate right now. I am learning to be happy on my own."

"I just hope to have better communication skills in my next relationship."

"I will probably change my idea of what a good relationship is like before I have another one."

"I am just going to relax and be single and with some friends like you I will be happy on my own for a time."

"I will relax today and focus on romance another day. My new challenge will help me accomplish my long-term goals of _____ and _____."

Keep these sentences close by. Let them rest in your mouth like a new piece of minty-fresh gum. Knowing your lines will free you up to be calmer and listen more effectively to important people in your life. You will not have to think about what you need to say to connect with someone.

You will be kinder to them by using this skill too. This is a great feeling that makes singles happy too. Be generous with your ears.



Tonight you have some basic idea of a purpose, though it may not be complete yet. Practice your lines when you have some extra time.

NOTES

LOVE

Why does love seem so difficult?

If you look at love differently, it might help to understand it. Love comes from the heart. I see no point to de-value love and romance for singles. But, there is a real process to human grouping that leads to finding a mate and then creating a feeling of family. It is not random, nor mysterious. To compress the love process into simple, easy to understand the steps here is my own explanation of the process:

Basic social skills to meet someone,

1. Places to group
2. To get a fix of safety in a this group (all humans instinctively need this),
3. Achieve appropriate intimacy and safety with a person for romance.
4. Share passion.

I probably left a few things out, but when this occurs, two people can begin to share their physical space and create a family unit. It takes only two people to create that safe feeling of a new family and it's not about sex.

It is not the strongest of the species that survives, nor the most intelligent, but the one most responsive to change.
-Charles Darwin, naturalist

When it happens to teens, it usually means big drama for parents. Young love feels so real to teens, but it is mostly chemistry. At about age twenty-five the notion of creating family unit seems hinge one more practical concerns like career choices, political and religious views, family backgrounds, the opportunity for future financial success. Until then, immature love almost always disregards these relationship factors.

When couples begin to process these practical components of love within a relationship, it is a signal of a maturity. These practical notions, become more and more important with age.

Again, I think these practical tests do not factor into teenage love or a youthful crush. It is not because they don't exist, but rather they get trumped by something else. Maybe it's very early survival mechanism in humans to break away from family groups. I really don't know.

Maybe it goes back to the time when a girl was thought by her society to be ready for children and marriage at age fourteen or sixteen. Again, I don't know.

Back to the steps



The five steps are natural, almost instinctive and operate in very subtle ways. Single adults go through these steps each day blindly without thinking about them. All peoples, on all parts of this planet do the steps regardless of their system of government, their religions, educational system or culture. Teens should try to learn about it. There is more teen stuff later.

NOTES

E

eLove? Naaahh...

If you want to be a happy single person, try to keep in mind that there are another six billion people on the earth to consider besides you. Almost everyone is trying to understand and experience love and happiness. I want to know more about it too.

All these humans are driven by primal needs for safety (by forming groups), shelter, food, and creating a feeling of family (which leads to sex). Your science teacher may have told you that our instincts for these needs arrived with us at birth. Early humans had them too. The skills you need to satisfy these simple instincts of self-preservation are all *learned* skills. Formal training in the various life skills, like language and social custom begin early in all cultures. Children also use games to learn social skills. These games help them interact with peers as they grow up.

Unfortunately, the games never really stopped. They just moved into a more complex playground. As you began to make your own decisions as a teen, this was about the time you probably assumed that you knew everything about interacting with others.

Holy cats! So wrong. We are so wrong.

There is so much more to understand about how to connect to others, especially when dating, than you learned

in your teens and early twenties. Let me explain through a simple analogy.

Just how good of a cook are you?

Creating fulfilling romantic relationships and friendships in the modern world is sort of a skill, a craft, like cooking. Cooking usually takes a fire of some sort. It would seem that there is not much skill in cranking on the burner, but the complexity underlying the instant cooking flame in your kitchen is enormous. To cook, you don't need to learn how to start a fire with sticks. You simply turn a switch to the "ON" position.

The point of letter E is this: it may look like relationship skills improve through emails and SMS, the popular *short message service*, (cell phone text messages), these do soothe the grouping instinct, but a moment between people that brings forth a warm smile, a hug or watery eyes will always mean more than billions of blinking screens of ;) , :(, LOL, etc.

Make sure technology does not rob you of your instincts to get watery eyes or give a warm smile to a friend or show someone you care for them by wrapping your arms around them. Squeeze gently, please!

Some humans are surrounded by modern things like blenders, digital clocks, DVD players, cell phones and microwaves, but the truth is many humans, more than you would guess, do not have electricity. Ironically, likely may fair a little better than you in the mystical matters of love, my friend.

At this point of intersection, where technology and human relationships crash into each other, I hope there might someday be a little set of SMS text symbols for the

phrase:

'I am listening to you and I care about what you are saying to me right now.'

Maybe it will look like this:

(q2unXOXOur<..

(q for '*I am listening.*' It resembles an ear.

2u for '*to you*'

n for *and*

XOXO for '*I care about you.*'

ur for '*you are*'

and finally....

<.. for '*saying to me*' or '*talking*'.

A warm smile will convey it much better and a good hug will make it mean something. These kinds of non-verbal methods of communication are difficult to translate over electronic devices.

The Singleship skills are the rocks, sticks and dry grass that sparked the great cooking fires of romance for our ancestors. Learn the value of building a fire of romance and friendship and then, *get cooking* my friend.



Go back and read the first two skills of Singleship. How do you think they will help your romances?

Your friendships?

If you are in constant contact with friends and loved ones, how will you ever know how important they are to you if you never miss them?

*If I am to speak ten minutes, I need a week
for preparation; fifteen minutes, three days;
if half an hour, two days; if an hour, I am
ready now.
-Woodrow Wilson, U.S. President*

NOTES

F

Finding Love

Love takes on some new meaning for people in Singleship and it is not about romance. It is about being more aware of the people around us. This kind of love is very new for some. Happy singles spoke about this kind of love as being a big part of their lives.

Let me break it down:

This kind of Love takes your time, empties your pockets and generally makes you do things for other people that could be bad for you.

When you do stuff for other people in the spirit of this kind of love, and do it a hundred times (and you are outrageously happy about it) that is the love you need for Singleship.

This is not romantic love. This is Mother Teresa of Calcutta type Love, sisters sharing a kidney, adoptive parents and grandparents. We see new stories about Doctor's Without Borders, and millions of other folks out there fighting the good fight and smiling through it all like kids on Christmas morning or beggars at a feast.

It is not easy for them. There is nothing very pretty about it. It all work. No hearts. No flowers. There are no diamonds or lobster dinners it is not romance, it is love.

This does not mean there are no gifts with this kind of Love. Happiness is the gift. This is a lofty idea indeed and you are not supposed to be the next Jesus or Buddha or some kind of modern preacher or prophet.

Prophets & Preachers share, even push their message on others, but keep this Singleship Challenge mostly to yourself.

You should not try to be the next Mother Teresa of Calcutta. Start small. Be a good listener first. Seek the simplest positive exchange. If you can start with tight lips, the rest is easy for you. You just want the world to be a better place.

Take a moment and dog-ear this page. This is the definition of Love for you in Singleship. Forrest Gump said it best, but for a different reason:

"I am not a smart man, but I know what love is."

Do you?

You might write the question on some of those yellow office notes and stick them in odd places around your living space: on the coffee can, your computer monitor, on a light switch or, at the very least, stick one to your bathroom mirror. On the outside chance your Singleship has not caused you to stop bathing, listen to the water tumble over your sleepy body each morning and contemplate those immortal words from our glorious Prophet Gump.

Do you know what love is?

Happy single people do.

You never need to say one word to represent or experience this kind of love. If you speak more than this phrase: "*You are most welcome friend,*" you are not doing it right.

The idea of Love occupies a space in your heart and brain that may not feel so good while you are single. This goes double for people with fresh heart scars from a broken romance or marriage. Love in Singleship fills some of that space nicely.

Newspapers usually hold a spot for a human interest story somewhere in the middle of the local news section. You may see stories there about a group building hiking trails, folks feeding the homeless, a baby saved, or lost puppies found. These articles are about love. Read them. Try to figure out who is making the sacrifice. Is it the charity? The kid who did a walk-a-thon? Is the piece itself trying to get you, the reader, to take action or evoke an emotion? I write this now

because most of the singles I met that were happy spoke about this love and there was nearly always confusion about the word for unhappy singles.

As an example one low-point scorer said:

Question: What is love?

*Answer: Duh! I guess I don't know.
I am single over here!*

Most unhappy singles save the "L" word for big romantic moments. Don't do it. The problem, of course, is there is not a better word for this love in the English language. The word itself creates the confusion.

A says: "He said the 'L' word."

B says: "Did you say it back?"

A says: "No. I said I am enjoying our romance."

B says: "Why?"

A says: "I am not sure."

See it does not really work. Love is the best word. Some singles use it only to punctuate romantic moments, but in Singleship, you should use it for other things. Happy single people spoke about it this way, 'It's for saving lives and healing people.'

This is the kind of love that makes you really cool in Singleship. It is the same kind of cool that you may use to attract romance into your life someday. If you have never experienced this kind of love, it is a hard thing to understand. This is the kind of love that makes the world a better place.

Understanding it is part of your study and it fills a part of that empty place nicely.

When you are not feeling love, and you are single, do something for someone, not to someone.

Recognize the various charity groups, shelters, and relief organizations as basically springing from selfless acts: the yellow wrist bands, pink ribbons on lapels, MIA bracelets, groups collecting canned goods to fight hunger, organ donation, and the Red Cross. Love. Love. Love. Thinking this way will tune your perspective, widen your objectives and change your expectations for this period in your life. You will not have to go far to find this love. Remember all the billions of other people? They are trying to feel this love too. It is probably close by you now.

The examples of love I have given here have a purpose other than to weaken your resolve to impulsively respond to television ads about hungry orphans, disaster victims or fund cancer research (but consider them, please!). It is not here for you to start considering religion either. It is simply that I want you to examine love as a different kind of goal.

Love in good Singleness is not a life altering, connection to another person, but a life altering connection to humanity.

This is a simple, bold, and bright idea, but it is not a rule. I

didn't make it a letter prompt because *no one* can make others feel this way. No one should try to do it. It is here for you to know about. You can seek to make the connection or not, but you can't fake it. If you can make this leap and rethink the meaning of the "L" word to include something else other than pouring it over your lover like honey. When you are in Singlenesship and you *desire* romance use the word romance. When you need unconditional love, use the word *love*. Simple right? We will get to lust, and love in later pages.



Write something tonight about two or more examples of this love.

How does this make you feel to receive this kind of love. Would you know how to give it to someone else? Does this feeling tell you more about who you really want to be?

*Tension is who you think you should be.
Relaxation is who you are.
- Chinese Proverb*

NOTES

G

Get Busy

Most self-help experts will tell you that your thoughts are the key to changing your actions. So get busy *thinking* first. You have a purpose that should make you happy and now you have the time to do it. Understanding what love is will help, but making time to get your thoughts to serve a more positive role in your life is critical. Think about each letter prompt carefully and remember that there is no quick fix to make you happy. It is a process, a journey. In a way, the path to happiness in Singleship is like creating art: it takes both skill and inspiration.

*Thought is the sculptor who can create
the person you want to be.
- Henry David Thoreau*

Get busy writing down every single thought you have each night before bedtime. Make sure to write *all* your thoughts and do not bottle them up. Take a good inventory of all your feelings to discover something about the choices you have made in your life. Then take all the best stuff that inspires you and helps focus your thoughts on the future and study them. Don't worry how off-the-wall they might seem at the moment.

When you wake up in the morning you will read it again. It will tell you something about your feelings and desires. Over time these random notions will present you with two very important concepts in Singleship:

Every thought you have is not exactly trustworthy. Some feelings may betray your new purpose.

You must take the time to edit these random thoughts in the light of the day. If you have recently been through a breakup or you have been feeling very lonely, take some extra time to get your mind right. Cross out the bad stuff. Keep the good stuff that inspires you toward a better future.

This concept comes from the ideas happy singles had about how their emotions shaped their single experience. This activity will help you keep your purpose at the forefront of your mind at all times.



Leave some time to write down any random thoughts you have. Write about any anger you feel toward and ex-mate or date. Edit these for clarity and cross out

SEX

H

Happy Singles are sexy

What was the best sex you ever had? Does that one experience make you happy each day? Some things that do make you happy each day are: caring for something, helping a person in need, and completing some simple goal just for yourself. These moments last long in the mind's eye, the soul and build character in a way sex can never ever will do for you.

Sex is never on a job application, never helps the people around you and often harms you in Singleship.

Sex feels great. Sex is not a bad thing, but doing good stuff for yourself and others carries with it a feeling of accomplishment and it is sexy to other singles that share this experience or goal with you. Almost all the dating books will advise singles to be confident to be sexy. If there is nothing underneath this confidence except good looks or nice clothes, then the person is projecting a false image to everyone else. Being a sexy single is not about *projecting* something, but *being* something. Happy singles look deeper into people. If someone is blessed with genes that represent

beauty in a culture, be happy for them.

Happy singles, good-looking or not, look inward first to discover their foundation for happiness in some new fashion. It is defined by their purpose. Your decision to be happy is a key step to making you sexier than you can imagine.

In Singleship, you are investing in your sexiness. Your quest to be happy for your own sake is good for you and will improve your attractiveness to others as much as six months in the gym. Don't make a big deal about sex. Most people spend much more time talking about it than really doing it. Take your time with sex. It will always be around to experience and explore in a mature way that you and a partner can enjoy together.



Tonight write about a time sex was the only goal for a romantic relationship and a time sexual contact and intimacy was not a goal. Did you have a different feeling about each one? What were the results of each?

NOTES



Intimacy Rules

The instincts that create the need for intimacy rules some humans like a vicious dictator. They cannot break the hold it has on them no matter what they do. If you finish your study of Singleship, you can make it work for you too.

This is my personal belief and may not fit into the ideas in some religions as it depends largely on the fact humans have survived and developed all their achievements in a group setting. It is not to say individuals don't do great things all alone, but even the cave painters essentially were part of some sort of social group to survive.

You can stop having sex, but you cannot stop the need to be with others to feel safe. The need inside of you to connect with other humans often challenges the logical parts of mind.

At this point, you may ask yourself why does this need affect (or afflict) so many people. The answer is: we can't help it. We need food and water too and there is nothing you can do about these needs either.

If your body never told you when you needed food, you could eventually die.

Opportunity is missed by most because it is dressed in overalls and looks like work.

-Thomas Alva Edison, Inventor

Most relationship problems swirl around a need for this thing called intimacy. I am just a writer and the word was defined for me by happy and unhappy singles and not by the good and patient people in any of the professional disciplines that study and repair human relationship.

For the average single person Intimacy it is cloudy wisp, a vapor, a dust bunny under the bed. It has a paper-lace like reputation. It's that spider web in your garage. Singles really don't understand how to craft it and probably think they don't need to know. They are wrong.

We know couples need it. Intimacy is the bricks and mortar of the marriage counseling industry. These pros sing the praises of its economy and purpose for hundreds of dollars per hour and all single people, in my opinion, need it too.

Though I skimmed over the basic positive and

negative aspects of intimacy in the beginning of the book, here is more on intimacy.

Let us look into *romantic intimacy*. I hope no one takes offense from this, but let us make this concept more real, a person, a woman perhaps. Imagine a long-haired leprechaun, if you will, in a referee-styled evening gown with matching pumps, of course, holding a whistle and standing over a pot of gold called "romantic happiness."

If you are at the kitchen table with a partner, Miss Intimacy is there too. You can't see her, but she is there. She is hiding behind your coffee cup or under the place mats. She makes couples feel safe and cozy. Most people know by instinct alone that this gal can make or break your romantic relationships. Sometimes she is just down the road or out to bowling practice (I heard she likes to bowl) when a couple needs her most. And when she leaves, trouble fills her place.

Some of the singles I met told me that Miss I. was murdered by an intruder (one of the parties became involved with another person). Either by neglect or by the knife, when Miss Intimacy rolled away in the funeral hearse, the hope of a good romance went away with her.

In Singleship your happiness comes first. You may be attracted to multiple partners, but romantic love is a different thing and the romantic physical intimacy associated with it is usually exclusive to one person at a time. Some try to extend it to multiple partners, but it never works. The lies that are necessary to start and maintain multiple romantic relationships are like a short noose that can strangle you. It does not make the world a better place.

Social Intimacy, her cousin, is a little less dramatic and

more polite. She is less formal, but has good manners that your great-grandmother would appreciate. She prefers a jogging suit and good running shoes and is happy to work a room at a party with you or share a lunch with a best friend. She is not exclusive. She likes to move around. She is not going to stop the action with a flag or whistle if someone gets a little out of bounds either. She just taps you on the shoulder when things are slightly off.

This kind of non-physical intimacy is very important to people in Singleship.

When you are learning about Singleship, you will feel the instincts that make you want to connect with others. Take steps to manage them in positive ways. If you can do things like volunteer to work with a charity or cook a meal for a friend, it can make the world a better place for all of us.

One mark of a mature and happy person is to be aware of these needs and then make plans to address these basic human instincts in positive ways.



Write about how this need affects you. See if you can spot the instinct in other people you see around you. What can you do differently to bend this instinct into something positive for your life?

J

A Journey with Miss I.

Where do you bank? What kind of shoes do you wear? Do you enjoy fall better than summer? What kind of stuff do you like in your omelet? A pizza? What sort of television and books interest you? Just about everything you do means you make a decision. These are choices you make each day and most people have some reason to choose one thing over another. Choices are the stepping stones on our journey through life. While you are single, you need to be ready to make good choices about how to spend your time. Unless you have just won the lottery, happiness is no cosmic accident. Happy singles I met made a choice to find out what makes them happy.

The great apes, our nearest neighbor in a biological sense, have strict rules for the types of intimacy that govern the leadership roles of the clans or groups. This suggests how important and primitive intimacy is to survival. There seems to be much more information available about how different animals group than for humans.

Reality television shows, movies and commercials are all bad examples of how real human social grouping instincts

work. These dramas create fiction, not facts. These old dramas can trick human into the idea that everyone has a unique romantic fate. It's a nice fantasy, but understanding instincts for intimacy make us happier than any fantasy and it makes us better mates and also makes the world a better place. This is not a fantasy, but a very worthy dream.


The great apes have no math skills, they don't read books about dating, they don't build cities, but their moment-to-moment social intimacy boundaries are *instinctive* and keep life in the clan going forward, safe and successful. They have no fantasies really the way we know them. They are not confused about what they need to do to be happy, but humans, in general, are very confused.

Choosing to make non-physical intimacy a priority in your life is a very important part of overall happiness in Singleship.


Shocking as it seems, as you date, you should try to keep the your religious traditions or at very least wait three months before sexual contact (under your clothing) in my view. This is a very simple idea and a powerful thought that happy single people possess.

The old three-month rule is not a perfect solution, because there is not one. It was just the average amount of time most people said it takes to make a lasting connection with another person that actually promoted a real feeling of family and makes happy couples trust one another. Holding hands and kissing and all that kid stuff was is fine for most during this time.

Making sure Miss Intimacy is in the seat next to you on your trip through life will make the journey much more enjoyable and predictable.

 Write about how you will tell someone about the three-month rule. Tell them why intimacy without physical sex (intercourse and other sexual acts) is important to you during the first three months. This is an important thing I learned from happy people. It is a hallmark of Singleship and a good rule for those who want a date to build a strong relationships and prevent bad dating cycles and suffering that most unhappy singles spoke about.

OK. OK. Enough about sex for now.

 Write a bit about some “sexy” advertisement or commercial you saw today.

NOTES

K

On Kids (or if you are one).

*If you mess up your children, nothing else you
do really matters.
- Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis*

*Here are some notes on teenagers (my personal views)
and why they give some parents indigestion and pre-mature
gray hair.*

As humans transition into adulthood, the shaky bridge of adolescence is often where these behaviors and experiences get set like foot prints in fresh concrete. The teenage years in western society are a mythical place of change and sort of an era emboldened confusion.

In the western world, teens have a special class of super-

angst about their new freedoms and especially about social and sexual intimacy. Teens of both sexes seem to be extra sensitive to the new and natural grouping instincts bubbling in them like a shook-up soda pop.

When teens desire new kinds of intimacy for the first time as young adults, these feelings are fragile and unfamiliar, but natural. Most kids do not take guidance well during this time. Here are a few things for parents to keep in mind.

Teens are by their very nature, rebellious. If viewed this way, even the story of Adam and Eve has practical point beyond explaining our origins. They become just like any rebellious teen and the author of this story, whether human or truly divine, was trying to tell us more than just a simple tale of creation. The writer's message: teens rebel because humans are made this way for a purpose.

Nature rewards it in almost all cases. When you are parenting your teen, do not be offended by mother nature's rebellious influences (unless spring flowers upset you too).

Humans wired to form new groups make new bonds outside of our original family unit. It creates more humans. It moves our species along its way. There really should be no mystery about this concept and I am sure I am not the only parent thinking or writing about it.

The simple teen instinct to create new family bonds (beyond their birth family) makes them appear to be little monsters beginning at age thirteen or so. Lions, bears and all birds species do exactly the same thing. They either rebel like well-programmed robots to breakout of the original family unit or they driven off by parents to fend for themselves. It will always be here for human parents to curse.

The instinct for rebellion keeps that funky music on the radio, sells, loads of t-shirts and eventually teaches people that staying “cool” or on top of changing notions of “cool” is fun, but also exhausting and expensive. I used have a t-shirt business. I was always looking to capitalize on what was “cool” for that month.

When a troubled teen groups with other teens, out of the human instinct to do so, it is a difficult dilemma for parents. At what point should a parent intervene and disrupt a teen's social circle? If you are not sure, ask a professional about it.

Accept the fact that kids will make parents feel “uncool” as way of breaking the bonds of their originally family unit. Another thing that will blow-up the teen/parent dynamic is when a kid seems to repeatedly try to get some moral high ground on a pointless issue. Be a grownup please.

Do not take offense and please don't scorch the earth with parental authority bluffs, or clever barbs and insults. Do not take personal. This is the Adam and Eve drama repeated. A clever or mean comeback is not the medicine you need in that moment. Just thank your teen for growing up, before you say anything else. All kids roll up their eyes and scoff at this statement. It's sign that your little one will shortly seek out and form new family-like bonds with their peers. It takes courage not retaliate, but it's the only way to go.

Rebellion is not logical, but it is a fact of life.

As a parent you must meet instinct for rebellion with an equally logical and equally factual belief system by repeating:

“It’s not about me.”

“It’s not about me.”

“It’s not about me.”

Hey moms and dads you are going to want begin practicing this line shortly after your child’s birth.

Many teens mistakenly hitch their new instinct to group outside the family unit to common commercial ideas of teenage “cool.” Common signs of this are of course, dressing like a popular music star, changing their dress to fit in at school or withdrawing inward. Kids may become moody feel lonesome and then become distant or aloof. Do not be offended by this because in my view, as a parent, this is a simple part of the human condition. Say the line to yourself and move on.

How does a parent convince a teen that they do indeed have a kid’s best interest at heart? I am not a professional in this field, but any successful parent will tell you...

Building good bonds prior to these years is really the only solution.

This takes time.

These bonds of trust are your only protection against all the bad stuff that goes on (teen drug use and premarital sex) that sometime teens will twist into positive bonding experiences. It scares the hell out of parents because kids don't know enough to be afraid of experimenting with sex, drugs or alcohol. If the new grouping instinct takes kids into

drugs and alcohol and bonds with peers form around these dangerous events, parents will have a tough time convincing their kids to be scared of these bonds.

Again, this rebellion is just a part of trying to bill bonds of social intimacy through drug and alcohol use with peers. It's the beginning of a race to the bottom to these teens as the these innocent rapport building experiences turn kids into addicts.

Kids really have no way to understand how much unhappiness they can experience with sex, drugs and alcohol abuse in the adult world.

Some bad behavior is simply an outlet for this grouping instinct. That's my two-cents anyway and, again, I don't consider myself to be and expert, but thinking about it this way may help you someday.

This is not to say teens live on instincts alone or can not make logical choices, but rather to say these new feelings that drive some teens have roots some parents don't see and don't understand. Teens, when properly bonded with a parent, should be more worried about their status in the family unit than the views of their friends. "Good" kids more are afraid to put the parental bond in jeopardy.

Are there really any “bad kids?”

I am sure there are plenty of kids that don't have productive parental bonds and don't have sense of family or home. These kids are not the same as a bad orange or apple you get at the market. The instinct to group, create bonds and form a new family unit are new big surprise for everyone. The choices they make under this biological pressure to make connections with peers confuse teens and parents alike.

Teens often have no response when they defy their parents to group (Adam and Eve again) and these actions are illogical and inexplicable, but it is simply part of the maturity mechanism that drives our human population forward.

Building good bonds with your children, if you have any, should be a big part of your purpose whether you are single or not.

To build bonds with your kids, work with them on a common goal or share an experience.

You can not *tell* a teenager about bonding. Never say the word "bond" to them. They will look at you as though you just came back from a successful journey to *Planet Lame*. You have to show them. It is part of the parenting job.

Plan it carefully as NASA would prepare for a space mission. Preparation, in my view, is the real key here. Prepare, and then wait for it. Do not push too much. When you see your teen branch out, away from the family unit and group out of instinct with peers, do not meet it with anger or contempt. Try to be as positive as you can.

If you are still a kid...

Being a teenager is the short stage in human life. You must realize that one day in the future you will wake up and everything you see will have changed. You will be out of school and all the kids around will be gone. You may keep a few close friends of course, but none of the annoying people you know will be around you any more. They will be gone.

Don't worry too much about what they think right now. The end is near, but does not feel that way. Remember that the only thing that stays with you from school is the grades. All of the other drama is crap. Think about that for a moment.

Your family will probably be around too. So to avoid a lot of headaches down the road, forgive your own parent(s) if they are not too good at making you feel safe and forgive them when they argue with you.

Forgive them especially when you want to hang out (group) with your friends. Learn from their mistakes. Take up the challenge to be with your family as well as your friends and recognize that your family will stay around you for a long time and your friends may come and go. To manage parent drama and to break their cycle of negativity just get in their face(s) and *make them* learn about you for just ten minutes a week.

Do this if you want to be a whole person someday. Do it to avoid therapy as an adult, but therapy will always be an option if your parent(s) are stuck in a cycle of negativity with you. Make them learn about you. It will help you avoid bad feelings down the road toward your family and if it doesn't

work out, you can always remind yourself (and them) later on that you tried to do the right thing.

Be brave if you are still a kid and don't really feel a strong bond with a parent. If you want to be happier living with them for now, find out what one thing you have in common, one simple goal. As an example, clean plates are common goal for any family unit. If they never do the dishes, for instance, just do them once a week together.

Just ten minutes of this "in their face time" will teach them about you, but don't tell them your plan. Just let it happen to you and don't get angry with them. Be as logical as possible. If they start asking questions about your life or your future, your haircut or color, or whatever tell them you want to get the job done first.

When you are finished, ask them to write down any questions they have for you. You want avoid an argument for now. Look over them when you get them. Then ask them to let you sleep on it over night. Sleep on them. After you have slept and are ready, answer the questions as directly as and honestly possible. If you don't know why you did something they didn't like, say exactly that.

Never have these sessions or discussions in your living spaces. Take it to the garage or neutral room or have these conversations in public places.

This will probably freak them out at first for you to be so direct and in their face, but that is a good thing and it's sort of a rush too. Lastly, be brave enough to consult a professional at your school if doing all this with a parent seems impossible. They will help you.



Write down as many common goals (like clean plates and food) you and your family share as human beings.

When I was 14, I left home as my father was an idiot. When I returned at the age of 18, I was keenly surprised to find how much he learned in my absence.

-Mark Twain, writer, humorist

NOTES

L

Learn to like our planet... and its people.

Part 1: Our planet...

Singles I spoke to about happiness, show a connection to the planet by "going green" and seem to achieve slightly more happiness than others who don't because a small portion of their instincts for social intimacy and grouping are met by this connection to earth. It sounds is weird, I know, but it works. This connection is fairly new for western societies, but it has been around a long time in many cultures.

Many cultures, not just the ancient ones, have an intimate connection to the earth because the lives of their people and their culture depend on the land. It is both a spiritual expression and a logical one. Take a walk in a natural sort of place to know what this really means.

Imagine you had to eat the stuff you see growing around you just to stay alive. Imagine you had to feed a family on it

too. For most people, caring for the planet is not like believing that the whole earth (from the trees in green valleys to the waves at the edge of the sea) has some unseen spirit or consciousness. What happy singles feel about the earth is a connection to future generations in a profound way. This connection is not limited to singles. People who "go green" feel they are true benefactors and it helps them manage some behaviors and choices for the *consumption* of goods and services. This has some meaning for them.

We all buy stuff. This is the basis of much of the economic activity on the planet. When you buy a thing, it tells something about who you are and a little bit about whom you wish to be. Why is this important for singles to know about? It has to do with the smack-down between two theories about how industrial societies evolve.

These two ideas could affect the way you think about your life on this planet in a small way. This book is not a treatise on economics and the two theories are only loosely defined to meet my objectives.

The first one, written by Karl Marx in 1812, spawned a rash of social revolutions that created hate, famine, and death on an unimaginable scale for millions of people. This continues today. This theory despised the rich as people who spend their time devising ways to keep poor folks poor. Communist theory holds societies, cultures and economies in a neutral state and advancement is nearly impossible unless their citizens face the points of shiny bayonets and stare into the dark little holes at the end of guns.

Communism fails every time because it goes against the human instincts to group freely and feel safe. My guess is that the human need for grouping and feeling safe is the root

of its failure. No one in a communist state or dictatorship feels really secure. My opinion is that communist philosophies try to subvert human needs for safety and independence, subvert the human instincts to create new families and therefore these states eventually fail.

The other one, by an obscure Norwegian- American economist and sociologist, Thorstien Veblen, was written roughly eighty years later. Veblen wrote that humans will *naturally evolve* to not despise the rich ever so much as to murder them as Marxists have done, but rather always strive to move up and join the rich or *Leisure Class*.

Maybe Veblen's theories explain why some former communist countries today are rapidly transforming into wealthier, more consumer driven economies peacefully, maybe not. I subscribe to the simple notion that when one has the freedom to work, scheme and plot to build wealth, it keeps them happy and it keeps them out of politics and statecraft (unless that freedom is threatened).

Veblen's other famous theory, the theory of "conspicuous consumption" (an aggressive and wasteful display of wealth), pegged all upper class people as not caring about anything, but showing off just how much money they have in their pockets as a way of marking their territory, (like how coyotes, dogs, lions or other beasts tend to do with their urine) with flashy junk that tells everyone who is around.

In my view, our society has created a wealthy class and working, upper class that gives, gives, gives, gives away its wealth to support life and positive changes for the planet and its people in huge amounts. True, some greedy rich folks still spend much of their day marking the land with flashy-stinking junk (as way to display their aggressiveness) that

demonstrates their ability to suck all the money they can out of their circumstances.

The mere idea that some wealthy people of conscience give money away to help humanity and pursue very planet-friendly consumption of goods and services in our modern world would puzzle both Marx and Veblen.

The point of all this is: understand why "being green" can make you a happier single and why the pursuit of personal wealth is good for your health and happiness. Marxism not really option. Be clever enough to recognize and understand the implications of Veblen's notion of conspicuous consumption.

So, friend while your happiness is the goal of this book, be sure your happiness keeps the earth safe for the rest of us and our children. Make a living doing something that can benefit others some how and does not make you penniless.

You are no good to the planet or its people if you are broke (trust me).

Save your money and try not to buy stuff that ultimately sits in a big pile (after you are long gone) with other peoples junk and stinks up the joint for a thousand years. No one wants that.



Tonight write something about a part of the natural world that you like best. Write how you would feel if that place was damaged or changed in a way so that you could no longer enjoy it.



Write about any purchase you made that made you feel super cool in the eyes of other people. How long did that feeling last?

If you don't have that special something anymore where is it?

NOTES

Part 2: It's people

Now that the weight of creating romance is gone for a time and you have outlined some purpose for your life, other than conspicuous consumption, think about accepting humans the way they are. Try to like them and hope the best for them. Maybe you can get to know people that are different from you and try to understand something about their point of view.

All the happiest singles I met talked about this concept of exploring the differences between the wants and desires of different sorts of people. Most of all, you cannot judge them if they offend you and you cannot wish bad things for them or else you run the risk of bigotry, hatred and intolerance. These are the three horsemen of unhappiness.

These three things make living harder than it should be and are the beginning of the darkest moments in human history. It is the darker side of human nature, I think, to be afraid of things and people that you don't understand. This is the most primitive fear we have as human beings.

Fear triggers unhappiness and bad other things too. If you ever watch television shows about how groups of animals will defend their territories, we are not much different from beasts here. Take a ride with this primal fear, travel with one of the horsemen of unhappiness, and you will not be as satisfied with life as those who make foot prints on the path of humanity.

The power of love in each human is the only thing that can solve human problems.

Whether you dislike someone because of their brand of politics, religion or culture the one thing that is certain is your point of view is not absolute. Because of this fact, you must treat people with respect at all times, but you should know this already.

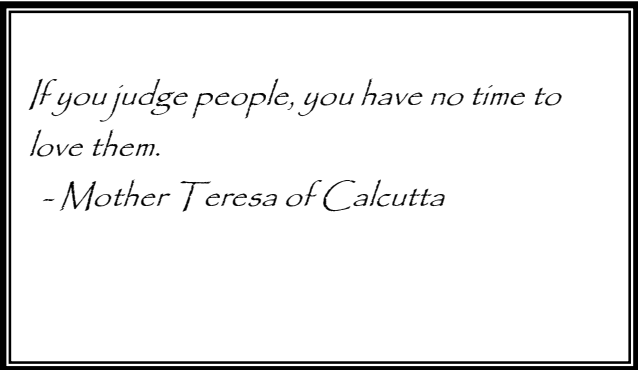
This is not an emotional argument. It is logical. If you want to be happy, recognize the things that offend you are an opportunity to challenge your instincts and emotions and go follow logic. Once you decide it is more logical for your

happiness to like people whenever possible, love (page 47) will show you the way from there.

As my father always told me:

The meanest, most hateful word you should ever say to someone is 'Goodbye.'

I believe this kind of thought, this concept or sentiment alone, not tools, technology or the ideas about higher beings or souls or whatever, that separates humans from all the regular animals, fish and crawly things that roam around the earth. For singles, the simple idea that it is good for you to like people who are different from you comes out of letter prompt **F**. Remember it? This is not to say that you embrace people who are mean to you, cause harm to you or others. Those are problems you cannot fix. Just walk away.



If you judge people, you have no time to love them.

- Mother Teresa of Calcutta

If you want to make the world a better place, do not try to change those folks you do not like. Don't try save the ones you do like without some kind of organization structure or

charity to back you up. This kind of ‘savior’ thing does not usually end well.

Feed your need to group and save the world by finding a suitable group of folks with similar goals. Feed your need to group without the notions of romance until you have at least completed this book.



Remember that nobody is perfect and no one is immune from failures on this subject.

NOTES

M

My flaws are tools for bonding with other people.

Will they like me? Am I wearing the right shoes? Is my breath fresh? These can be barriers to good Singleship. Always brush your teeth and deal with your other flaws as best you can and make sure to recognize if something like this is holding you back from connecting with others.

Happy singles noted once their hairy mole, sixth toe, crooked nose, or funny chin was the subject of friendly comment this was a beginning, of sorts, in a new and higher level of a friendship experience. When the subject came up, this level of intimacy often became a bonding opportunity.

If you perceive a problem with height, weight, age, looks, hair, wealth (or lack of it) as stopping you from experiencing intimacy, know this, once you forget about the things that hold you back, you will be happier. Because being thin, rich, and good looking won't make you happy, but friendship and social grouping will make you very happy.

After experiencing a rough a break up with a long-term partner, singles will naturally consider a long weekend in Las

Vegas or some other retreat. Las Vegas is great place to get your mind off your emotions, but indulgence is not always a very good for everyone.



Write something about a flaw of another person you know. Compare them to your own flaws. List yours on another piece of paper.

Wad it up and then put a big smooch on them both and then throw it all in a trash bin.

*There is nothing in a caterpillar that tells you
it's going to be a butterfly.
-R. Buckminster Fuller, inventor*

NOTES

N

New people are fun.

The single folk in coffee shops, bars, and night clubs go there for non-physical intimacy and to satisfy grouping instincts. In some cases, they seek physical intimacy as well. True, some are addicted to caffeine or alcohol or both, but largely they seek to group because they must. These places are good to observe the human grouping instincts in action and observe the people getting their daily dose of safety. Get your cool sunglasses on and go forth to watch people group. You should only *observe* people in the first thirty days. Keep to yourself.

After completing your study, you may see these folks again. Be open to them and you will be rewarded with some very pleasant interaction. Remember your lines and watch for signs of nervousness in them.

Their nervousness stems from the fact that they are conflicted because their internal instinct to group is mucking up their logical mind. You will automatically be relaxed when you see it. You know what is happening to them. You are studying it yourself.

Have a conversation or two, but don't let them in on your secret. Remember they are on *autopilot*, like a laser-guided missile, cruising that place for platonic, non-romantic intimacy. They are seeking solace and safety, though they will try to deny it.

Listen first and then keep it short. Remember your forward story. Your interest in creating a better world for all of us should not be apparent right away. Be low-key and cool and be yourself.

If you get very nervous or run away from a person who is open to intimacy with you, you may have a fear of Miss Social Intimacy. If you think you are afraid of someone getting to know the real you, mark this page and come back after you have invested a bit in what it means to conquer this fear. You may not conquer it by yourself, but you should at least understand what this fear does to you. You can judge how to proceed.



Write tonight about a need to group. Think about how many times you have felt lonely, and cured that feeling by going to a crowded place.

NOTES

O

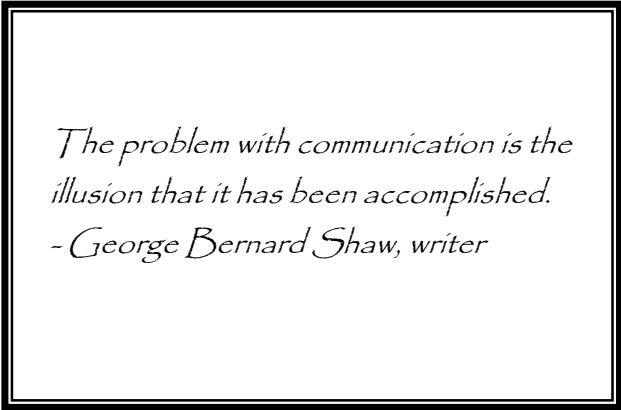
Open your mouth only for the most positive words you know.

After the listening skills, good speaking skills in Singleship are important too. As you gain more confidence in Singleship you will no doubt want to learn how to speak to other people and get your intimacy needs met by sharing your views, ideas and feelings with other, select happy humans you know and like. Your communication skills, when fully developed and functioning properly, will make you happier and this will make the world better too. As new, positive words slip past your teeth your world will be better and will make more sense to you as a single. Letting the positive words flow from your lips is another skill of Singleship that happy singles use. Your words should show respect to others and benefit people around you.

In order to let positive words flow to benefit the world at large, there first must be some positive thoughts our brains. You have edited your thoughts each night to help you be more positive and focus on your purpose. Now let some of those thoughts come to help you. That is perhaps the harder part of the communication equation.


When you are faced with a negative situation or disagreement, use a simple phrase ...

"What I hear you saying is this . . ."



The problem with communication is the illusion that it has been accomplished.
- George Bernard Shaw, writer

I recommend you use this simple phrase often to help you hone your ability to understand people better. It is not a game of tennis. Any negative emotions they send you should bounce on past you with no reaction. Diffuse an impending argument with anyone with this phrase. You also do it without any judgment of them or their motives. This shows that you are ready to deal with emotions or differing points of view with respectful language. It will help express your views to them.

 Write down the phrase two times. Write about a situation where this phrase would have been a big help to you.

1. _____

2. _____

NOTES

P

Plan your Intimacy

I coached my son's soccer team when he was four. The warm up drill before the game was always the best part of the whole day. As each child coaxed the ball into the goal by themselves, I asked the parents to cheer for each player as if they were in a real game. When the ball finally went in, a great roar of joy came from our side of the field. This is what I would call planning success. During the games the kids were all about making that roar happen again. They played harder than most of the other teams because, in a way, the parents showed them what success feels like.

Once you understand your intimacy needs, the next step is planning your success.

In some countries today, parents often arrange and approve the marriage of their children. These parents are trying to plan success for their kids too. Without a structure like this in western society we have run wild with the notion of "romantic dice," a cosmic plan, fate or luck.

Most people still rely on the "cosmic roulette wheel" because literature, television and movies about star-crossed love collisions are big business. Many single people lose hope in the wheel after a short time and become a little

frustrated with the whole dating scene. Others have made bad choices in mates because they felt that the stars were aligned to bring them a partner. The results were disastrous for the couple.

* * *

The new trend is for mating, dating, and sex to move away from chance and get some help from computer software. Scientific rules are being applied to the idea of the wheel of romance because science is now a major driving force in all aspects of life in the modern world. The science behind personality matching in essence denies the existence of the celestial wheel of love. Is this the thing now that controls your social and romantic happiness?


Indeed, some people are exchanging chance for a microchip-match from a large data source. Happy people are not happy by accident nor do they plug their psyches into a database to learn what makes them happy. When you are ready to get hit by a love bolt of lightning, personality matching is like a tall tree in a thunder storm: you are *more likely* to get a jolt standing there under the branches than in your living room, but there are no guarantees.


Happy people plan and meet their social intimacy needs with some precision. They have the knowledge and skills to choose their "one and only" someone when the time is right for them. There is no cosmic cloud hanging over them. There is no blinking cursor keeping them from a happy life.

Many people report great success with personality matching systems. When you are in Singlenesship you need to remember if you use a data source to help you find a date, *it is only a date*. You may have twenty people that match your data set and that is good. You will have many new

opportunities for social intimacy, but you are not looking for a mate.

Think of intimacy as food for your heart that is not sold in any store. You have to make it happen. Grow feed it. Care for it. You have take steps to make intimacy happen and see where it takes you. No one else can do it for you.

 Write two ways you could plan and enjoy platonic intimacy.

 Write ways you can plan and enjoy romantic intimacy. Where are the closest venues where you are able to group and be apart of a community (like a local library or coffee shop) and feel safe?

NOTES

Q

Quality intimacy really rules!

If you grow corn in Iowa, the harvest begins only when the crop is fully developed. The key to better sex is friendship and intimacy. Let's say that romantic intimacy needs to grow and mature like the corn on your farm.

Most folks would rush in like pigs and chew up the crop early. Pigs have no concept of farming. It's not in a pig's survival design to wait and get the best out of what nature designs. The pigs just can't wait for the crop to fully mature. One would be a fool to try to reason with pigs or tell them about how *time* will improve the crop.

Some singles today grab whatever physical sex they can to achieve the need for physical intimacy. Then they break it off because of mismatched interests and relationship skills and repeat the cycle. They have conquered their need for intimacy, but only for a short time.

This is why the three-month rule is so important. Do your sexual experiences solve all your intimacy and linking needs? If the answer is yes, then check your face for jowls and a flat snout.

The measure of success is not whether you have a tough problem to deal with, but whether it is the same problem you had last year.
- John Foster Dulles, diplomat



Write something about your idea of the perfect romantic moment (no sexual acts please). It should enhance intimacy between you and your partner. What is one thing a past partner date did not like about you?

NOTES

R

Reason is lost to chemistry

Sexual attraction is a thrill, flush, flutter, jitter, shake, echoing moment, hot flash, weak-kneed, lip-trembling, breathless moment of hot romantic insanity that you never want to be without again. Sexual attraction is not intimacy and it is not sex, it's just a chemistry recipe made in the plains and winter caves thousands of years ago before there was complex human language. It's not a design flaw.

It is not a bad thing and I imagine that someday a huge drug company will invent something so we can feel this way at anytime, like some sort of breath spray. The commercial for it would go like this: *Pubermint Ice Blitz. A minty-fresh torrent of adolescent sexual angst.*

If you and another person aim this energy at each other you will immediately set boundaries of personal space that govern the speed and progression of physical and emotional connections. The boundaries will constantly change in a new relationship and that is what makes new romance fun and agonizing in the same instant.

The human need to love is very strong and whether you

believe the notion that chemistry and instincts control your logical mind or not (in the matters of romantic love), consider the darker side of the experience. How many news reports do you see about terrible life changing events called "crimes of passion?" Jilted lovers, who by all accounts are not mentally ill, become obsessed with an ex-lover and then commit unthinkable vile acts that they credit to their "love" for the victim or victims.

So for folks who don't know how to be happy on their own first, this kind of intense, earth shaking love can actually be a very dangerous thing. It is a harsh assessment of the "dark-side" of romantic passions and the love experience and I would not mention it unless many of the people I met spoke about how prime-time television shows portrayed these bizarre crimes as having very normal and innocent beginnings.



Tonight focus on your first crush. What is one thing you remember most about them? Do you think this was just new chemistry starting up in your head? Do think there was some sort spiritual "meant to be" notion in your mind when you first saw them.

NOTES

S

Sexual attraction is my body telling me to procreate. Yikes!

Yikes! Sexual arousal can have many sources, but the original biological intent is to make more humans, not to enjoy intimacy and feel safe. When you have some sexual interest in someone it means that person is Mrs. or Mr. RIGHT NOW! This conflict between the human instinct for sex and the need to group to feel safe is a delicate balancing act for singles.

Some couples can recall love at first sight. But according to most experts, most happy couples develop romantic feelings and respect over time and through shared experiences. Sexual desire between couples can change like the seasons. In a perfect world, the commitment couples make to each other will out last and even overcome the loss of sexual desire for a partner.

But it is not a perfect world indeed. Intensely physical relationships often bloom and bust quickly. Maybe this happens because sex is a bit too over emphasized in modern relationships and some think it equals happiness. A focus on

sex will harm any relationship over time.

Couples sometimes feel that there should be no boundaries for sexual activities in the bedroom. Most happy singles I met said that they seek friendship as much as sex and this should come first and set the boundaries for sex.

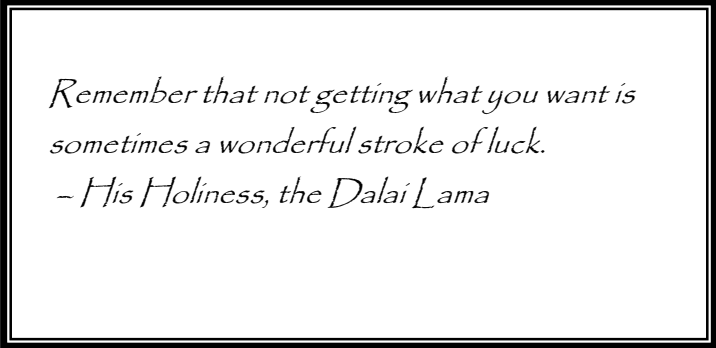
When you see a very close couple you know that the friendship they share is the most important thing about the relationship. Sex will never rule this friendship. It is always the other way around. The skills you learn in Singleship will help you build this kind of special romantic friendship with another person someday. These skills will give you the insight to make a partner happy and keep your sex life and romance very interesting with a long-term partner.

Sex appeal is 50% what you've got and 50% what people think you've got.
- Sophia Loren, Actress

Our western culture heralds sex as the greatest thing you can do with your body. This is really not so. Sex is big business, but the sex you see on television and the Internet (especially the pornography there) is sort of an urban legend.

The best explain I ever read of why pornography is popular is because it represents people in unequal

relationships and this causes a conflict. Oddly enough, this came from a book about writing fiction from a fine writing teacher (see my reading list on the back of this book). The author compares and equates pornography to such famous urban legends as the suburban woman who puts her shivering poodle in the microwave just to warm it up a bit.



*Remember that not getting what you want is
sometimes a wonderful stroke of luck.
- His Holiness, the Dalai Lama*

This is the type of urban lie that sounds plausible and maybe even believable because of the unequal relationship between the woman wealth and her intelligence. I really don't do it justice here so find the book and get it from the source. For our purposes building an equal relationship with a partner is the goal. Sexual fantasies are, in fact, the definition of the unequal sexual relationship.

An intense friendship with another person and shared goals will translate into a happy life and better sexual experiences.

Respect and equality seems to trump just about everything. According to some experts, if you and your lover are sort of “in awe” of each other for who they are and what they do in life that seems really deliver great sex. This kind of respect is what all the therapist and “love doctors” are writing about. Again, sex is an area where humans would like the believe that intellect can guide them into pure happiness.

There are of course other factors that control us in romance: attractiveness is probably the most confusing one.

Concepts of beauty are changing all the time. I think we are blasted with so many symbols of sexy people from various sources that the idea of beauty is founded in the *symbols* of people in the media and are not *real*. The old adage that beauty is skin deep should be renewed as: *beauty is the symbols you see*.

People are viewed as much more attractive when their features are more symmetrical. Fashion, body types, and all the things that make someone "easy on the eyes" revolve around elements of symmetry. The idea comes from evolutionary theory. The unique features and location of facial components, the nose, mouth, cheeks and chin, determine the surface level attractiveness of any person. These symbols are first recognized because as children we have seen them in simple drawings or from the features of parents and relatives. So, when you are sexually attracted to someone you don't know, you are most likely laying the symbols you have seen in the past over someone new.

Visual artists, like painters, use this idea of symmetry and angles to fool the eye and alter perspective. Fashion, hairstyles and make-up often mask the face and body so that the person appears to have more symmetrical features. This

enhances their confidence when they are more symmetrical and more attractive. It also makes people do some rather foolish things sometimes to feel more attractive. Before you try something new always ask yourself if you feel attractive without the new thing.



Tonight write what you like about an actor or actress you think is attractive. Do their features seem to fit the theory or not?

NOTES

Dating

T

Turn on your dating radar

I found people of all ages view dating in three ways: dating for physical intimacy, social dating or those that are seeking a life-time partner. From your study you know we humans are wired for different types of intimacy.

I use the term social dating, because a long-term romance may not be a part of your purpose just now. If you use the term social dating, your dates will be more focused on friendship than a "hook-up" or to invest in a long-term romance.

The obvious point here is to make sure you and a date have the same goal. This ability, this radar, to find a person that meets your needs is another skill of Singleship.

The gaps between these types of dating are the biggest challenges single people face. There has not been a good pre-text to determine which kind of date a person seeks.

Yes, it sounds about as romantic as setting up your new DVD player, but the Challenge of Singleship is like a new set of directions for an old stereo.

If you want to have a simple social date, just learn to have some fun. The idea that you want to "keep it real," or tell the truth, usually means you just want to vent. This is part of your back-story. Be genuine, but remember to practice the Singleship skills: no back stories please.

You can complain to a new person you meet, if you want to, about my book, about politics, the weather or that your coffee is too weak or whatever, but you will find yourself alone and losing the opportunity to share a relaxed conversation. Remember to:

- 1. Understand Prompt C and relax.**
- 2. No more past sob stories, please.**
- 3. Learn to listen to others.**
- 4. Date socially: non-physical intimacy.**
- 5. Use the phrase from letter O.**

One important tip (for a first date) that I have learned from happy singles that just date socially is to find something to disagree about and talk about it.

This is good practice for getting your feelings about certain issues under control as well. Resolve to be nice to your date and to treat them well, even though you may disagree about something. Don't be a fake about it.



Tonight write two positive things to say if you meet

U

Unhappiness = negative intimacy

Why would a couple argue or fight all the time? It is a very intimate thing to do. Everyone knows couples like this. I have read that anger releases a rush of chemicals that people sometimes learn to crave in a way that is not good for them. It can satisfy their grouping and intimacy needs the way crack cocaine makes a junkie high and scotch makes an alcoholic feel better. Anger is a very complex addiction, in my view.


The power intimacy has over people makes them start these bad pairings. These dating relationships are doomed from the start. When it becomes an integral piece of the bond a couple shares, it seems to actually force people to create negative situations to feel that bond they have with their mate.

Negative intimacy is often learned in childhood. If you have the opportunity to ask a parent about their own childhood, you may discover some clues about current state of affairs.

This intimacy is so strong that people I met have a hard

time shaking their reliance on it. If many of your pairings in the past produce a consistent string of anger and meaningless arguments, you or your mate might be addicted to these chemicals, seek professional help to break this relationship pattern. Yes my friend, anger is a big rush. And like any rush from any chemical, it messes up your head and can be addictive.

Any romantic partners you date along the way should understand your Singleship status, your desire to date socially, and the perils of negative intimacy. It is only fair that they know how important your happiness is to you while you are dating them.

 Tonight write a short break-up letter to tell an old boy/girl friend about your new status of Singleship. Will they accept your new relationship status? (keep it to yourself)

*Drugs and alcohol, anger and greed are our
most of precious villains, ever lurking over our
shoulders to steal our humanity.*

- Anonymous

V

Vanquish the blues

I can't write enough about how many singles go to bars, and coffee shops to try to stop a feeling of loneliness and be with others. They instinctively gather at neutral places to satisfy their primal need to group.

The reason it is important to recognize the grouping and intimacy needs that drive humans to these locales is that you will need to spot the grouping instinct in your own mind. Smile when you feel it. Now you know how to deal with this feeling. You need some social activities to be happy, group and feel safe.

To help you group, find a local book store or library and seek out a book about something you always wanted to know about like a country, an event in history or a language or find a book by an author you have heard good things about.

Do not interact too much with others and focus on the subject or book that interests you. Maybe you are interested in visiting Spain, learning about the history of Japan or creating a veggie garden. Take some time and relax and learn.

As for me, I read fiction of all stripes: Elmore Leonard, Michael Ondaatje, and William Faulkner to Flannery 'O Conner and some good non-fiction too.



Tonight write something about your new interest. What attraction does this new thing hold for you?

NOTES

W

Watch and learn


In the last few weeks you have been a student of what it takes to be happy. You should be looking for more opportunities to observe people interact too. You will see them act on their instincts. Remember this as you watch unhappy singles around your locale. For some people, the hard part of being in this observation mode is learning not to interfere with others who don't seem to be very happy. Stay away.

You made your choice. You are not working on anyone else's life. You need to observe people and decide to socialize with the happiest humans you can find. Be a friend to yourself first and follow through on that choice. If you bump into a real sad sack of bones, don't judge the person. Don't try to help a depressed person. It is not your job. It is not my job. Professional therapists are trained to diagnose and counsel these folks. Though it seems that your study of Singleship has given you some special new insights to life, and you feel like you should share it with others, you will likely make matters worse for your sad friend.

Do not interfere with another person's choice to be unhappy.

Now is the time to put your sunglasses on and watch humans do what they need to do to feel safe. After you observe people group and exchange intimacy, there should be a new type of confidence you never had before as a single person. This comes from the feeling that you are more prepared to manage your life than before.

Use the smooch and throw technique from letter prompt **M**. Write down the stupid things you have done to others. Smooch. Throw. Breathe. Forgive yourself for not being perfect.

 Get rid of any guilt you may have in your life. Write down anything that have done or not done that makes you feel some guilt and symbolically throw it away in the trash.

NOTES

X

Extra points

At this point, make a list of ten or more people you can spend time with in the spirit of fellowship and Singleship and social dating. These are just friends and acquaintances. There should be little sexual attraction between you and the people on the list. Contact these friends and have some fun. Go to movies, make meals together, take a bike ride, hike, and enjoy these activities.

Study and think about your friends and what you like about them. Do they speak or listen to you in a certain way? Do you share a hobby or other interests? Do you have common friends or occupations?

To review: all happy singles know that the ability to satisfy the need for grouping and intimacy, without the component of sexual attraction or conquest, transforms their Singleship experience into a more positive one. Though it would seem that the non-committed, one night "hookup" has a place in good Singleship, it does not. Simple social dating does a good job though.

Lust is really not good intimacy and does *not* make you feel safe in the long run. It is in everyone to some degree, though more the genteel folk I met rarely discussed it. Don't be afraid to call it out when you see it. You can point to it, blow a whistle at it and throw a flag like in a football game to

stop it. Imagine if you had a sign on your head that flashed the word LUST every time you saw someone you thought was "hot." In my view, people use this word "hot" instead of lust. "Hot" is a hip word. Lust is not so good. People will try to disguise lust or call it something new.

Lust does not fit into Singleship on a daily basis. If you want to look "hot," it generally means you are willing to let other people lust after you in a way that makes them suffer the affects of your "hotness." To paraphrase what the Buddhist folk say (I am not one), suffering does not make the world a better place. Do you make people suffer under your extreme hotness?

There is a certain concept of "hotness" today that is really more about being in fashion and chic and this causes a list of annoying maladies in unsuspecting humans. If you are so very "hot" each and every day as to make people suffer, consider that the long-term, cumulative effect on this world maybe not be so good.

If you are just plain single, being "hot" is fun. In Singleship there is just one kind of salsa: mild. The hot, very hot and extra spicy, and spendy versions of lust and "hotness" are only for those who are single, on the prowl and ready to give or get some pain.

So many relationships begin with "hotness" or lust and these end badly. Don't do it in Singleship. Store lust away for a while like a pair of summer sandals. Bring out your unique "hotness" only for very romantic dates. It's not for social dating in Singleship. Happy singles noted that when they shared their personal and unique "hotness" with a special someone, it meant that they were saving this for that person alone. This idea should make your unique "hotness" more

valuable to you.



Write about someone who you think is super-duper hot. Are you suffering from it?

Happiness is as a butterfly which, when pursued, is always beyond our grasp, but which if you will sit down quietly, may alight upon you.

-Nathaniel Hawthorne, writer

NOTES

Y

It's all about *You*. Sort of...

When the time comes for the first big date make sure you have your lines ready. On the date you will naturally chit-chat about everything under the sun. As the subjects that are important to you come up in the conversation, do not squash the moment if your date says something you don't like about religion, music, politics, sports, hairstyles or whatever.

Remember that thing called 'the connection to humanity?' Your date is part of that humanity too. You cannot be in that spirit and take the first opportunity to be offended by your date's personal views. Your humanity applies to dating too.

To be a happy single, date socially and remember to have some fun. Be positive. Keep the conversation flowing (and have some class). Learn about the person before you dismiss them as a romantic partner or pleasant social date. You are not going to have too much fun in Singleship if you insist that everyone you date should be perfect for you before you have a date with them.

This "perfection" requirement is sometimes a sign of a fear of intimacy. We know humans need intimacy, but some

fear it. A disagreement on fashion or taste is no reason to stop a date, but crude language or unwanted aggressive behavior is a very good reason.

I want to take a moment to cover an important dating topic: **safety**. Most singles have had a few phonies and rip off artists come their way. It is important to get some basic contact information before going on a date no matter what kind of dating you want to do. Just make sure they are telling you the truth about certain things:

- 1. Get some basic information (a home or work address). Verify this information is real.**
- 2. Meet in public and tell someone where you are going.**
- 3. Don't change the plan.**
- 4. Share this information with two other people.**

**Remember, you are not looking for a mate.
Relax. Keep it casual. Keep it safe.**



Tonight write about how Singleship will change the way you talk to people and change the kind of people you might date.

How many things can you disagree about before you end a date? Sports? Politics? Sex? Food? Movies? Music? How important are these to your happiness now that you know some new stuff about human instincts and needs? What is more important now?

Z

Going back to Zero

If you have found someone and dated them in the spirit of Singleship, congratulations! Most often the romance goes pretty well until this person reveals that they may not be the right one to date in Singleship. They must have shown you, in some way, that they were not exactly your cup of tea. When you feel this way, do not think of it as a failure.

It happens to everyone. Every situation is different and most singles noted that the decision to end a romantic experience with a date was a gut-level, heart-felt decision. It may take a week or so to decide whether or not to end a relationship. In Singleship you have to make yourself happy first and not rely on dating someone to be happy. Stay friends if you are able to do so.

Once you make the decision to break up, tell the person:

1. You are going to break it off in one week.

2. You would like to see them in that week.

3. Two positive things about them.

You may have to go back to square one, especially if this person was a very strong romantic partner. After the break up, start with the zero point of happiness again: your purpose. Take a long shower and symbolically wash away the experience. Get a fresh, new notebook and go back to the first month's activities. You are starting the Singleship plan again.

This could happen to you several times in your life, but it should not occur more than a few times per year. You may meet someone new every few months, but this will probably not be the scenario for you. The folks I met had an average dating cycle from one to three years.

Use the relationship as a learning experience and when you start over again you will be ready with the plan to meet the challenge. The ABCs are here to help you get past it. Your notebook will fill up much faster than before and each time you go through it, you will begin a new Singleship Plan.

The romantic relationships you choose to create and enjoy in the spirit of Singleship you should also choose to

end in that same spirit. If a date makes you sad or angry enough to want to end the relationship because of something they did or said, make sure you end it with some class in a public place. You should wish the best for them.

Make sure to tell your date that you need to be happy and the relationship is not making you very happy. Good communication at the end of a relationship will help you avoid problems later. Your last words to them should be positive ones.

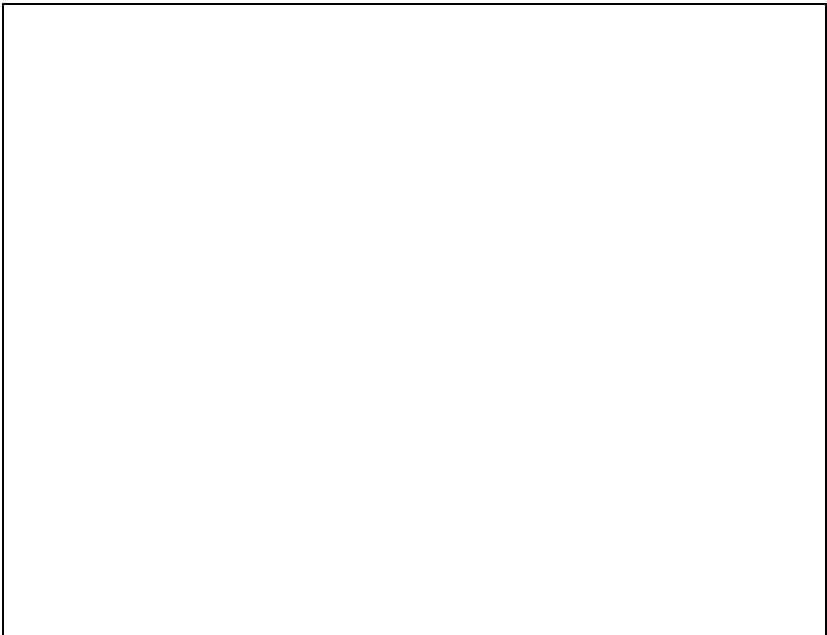


Read your notebook from end to end and look for changes in your thinking. If you have changed your mind about some of the stuff in those old notes, cross it out and write new stuff. Write down the new stuff now.

NOTES

Think about your writings over the last month. If you were to one day write a story about your life, would it be a thriller, love story, comedy or what exactly? Could you write a new, happier ending for your story after going through this book?

Because you are unique, write your own quote about Singleship or anything else you like that comes from your writings. Make it fit in the box below.

A large, empty rectangular box with a thin black border, intended for the user to write their own quote about Singleship or anything else they like that comes from their writings.

The Singleship Plan

Remember not to socialize too much for the first month. Stay at home and save your money. Exercise and get your heart, mind and body in shape. Eat healthy food, watch good film and read some good books to relax your mind.

First 26 days:

- Get a notebook or journal.
- Read one of the 26 rules each day.
- Journal at night. Edit in the morning.
- Find your purpose. Be alone.
- Exercise, eat healthy foods.
- Explore new interests.
- Enjoy great film. Read some good books.

Next 30 days:

- Journal at night/edit in the morning.
- Explore new interests.
- Manage your instinct to group.
- Be positive. Listen.
- Understand the three types of dating.
- Be calm and date someone.
- For romantic dating, no sex for ninety-days.

After a break up

- Relax.
- Start over - back to Letter A.
- Get a new notebook, (not a new lover)
- Refine your purpose.

My Reading List

Here are some self-help books.

1. Forgive for Good by Dr. Fred Luskin
(Published 2003 by HarperOne)
2. Change Your Brain, Change your Life by Daniel Amen
M.D. (Published 1998 Times Books)
3. The Power of Positive Thinking by Norman Vincent
Peale (Published 1996, Ballantine Books)
4. The 7 Habits Of Highly Effective People by Stephen
Covey (Published 1990 Simon & Schuster)
5. Seven Levels of Intimacy by Mathew Kelly
(Published 2007 Simon & Schuster)
6. The Half-Known World: on fiction writing by Robert
Boswell (Published 2008 by Graywolf Press)

Movie List

1. American Beauty
2. As Good As It Gets
3. Jerry Maguire
4. Bridges Of Madison County
5. The Blindside
6. Broken Flowers
7. Crash
8. Elegy
9. Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind
10. Forrest Gump
11. Glengary Glenn Ross
12. Good Will Hunting
13. Up In The Air
14. Pay it Forward
15. Oh Brother! (Where Art Thou?)
16. Lawrence of Arabia
17. Pursuit of Happyness
18. Raising Arizona
19. Master and Commander Far Side of the World
20. The Fighter
21. The Curious Case of Benjamin Button
22. The Good Girl
23. The Last of the Mohicans
24. The Wind and the Lion
25. The Memory Keeper's Daughter
26. To Kill a Mockingbird