

# The Tao of Dating



The Smart Woman's Guide to  
Being Absolutely Irresistible

Ali Binazir, M.D., M.Phil.

[TaoOfDating.com](http://TaoOfDating.com)

# The Tao of Dating



**The Smart Woman's Guide to Being  
Absolutely Irresistible**

**Ali Binazir, M.D., M.Phil.  
[www.TaoOfDating.com](http://www.TaoOfDating.com)**

The Tao of Dating™ and the Heart-shaped Yin-Yang Symbol are registered trademarks of Elite Communications LLC.

ISBN 0-978-0-9779845-7-2

THE TAO OF DATING: THE SMART WOMAN'S GUIDE TO BEING ABSOLUTELY IRRESISTIBLE. Copyright © 2010 Elite Communications LLC. All rights reserved. Except as permitted under the United States Copyright Act of 1976, no part of this publication may be reproduced or distributed in any form or by any means, or stored in a database or retrieval system, without the prior written permission of the publisher. It is illegal to copy, distribute or create derivative works of this book in part or in whole, or to contribute to the distribution, copying or creation of derivative works of this book. For information, address Elite Communications LLC, 2647 6<sup>th</sup> Street Ste 20, Santa Monica, CA 90405.

This publication is designed to provide accurate and authoritative information regarding the subject matter covered. It is sold with the understanding that the publisher is not engaged in rendering professional services. If legal, accounting, medical, psychological, or any other expert assistance is required, the services of a competent professional person should be sought. The author and publisher specifically disclaim any and all liability arising directly or indirectly from the use or application of any information contained in this publication.

*-- From a Declaration of Principles jointly adopted by a Committee of the American Bar Association and a Committee of Publishers*

Quotes from A WOMAN'S WORTH by Marianne Williamson, copyright © 1993 by Marianne Williamson. Used by Permission of Random House, Inc.

*The Tao of Dating for Women - [www.taoofdating.com/goddess](http://www.taoofdating.com/goddess)*

*To Mom and Dad, to whom I owe everything  
To all my teachers, to whom I owe everything else*

*The Tao of Dating for Women – [www.taoofdating.com/goddess](http://www.taoofdating.com/goddess)*

**Before you proceed any further – make sure you claim your bonus download material!**

Those who purchase this book or ebook online get a number of digital download bonuses, including:

- An audio download of the popular Galactic Consciousness Meditation and several other exercises from the book
- An audio download and 26-page transcript of the *How to Be A Modern Goddess* teleseminar of January 2009, which is new material not covered in the book
- A free electronic subscription to the *Tao of Dating* articles, where I address the questions that are just too hot for the blog
- A little surprise bonus that I can't tell about, because then it wouldn't be a surprise anymore

These bonuses are designed to enhance and complement the material in the book. The guided meditation audios are particularly powerful, since they allow you to experience the meditations with your eyes closed.

I want to make sure you have a chance to get the same bonuses as the online purchasers. So go ahead and visit this page now to claim your digital downloads:

**[www.TaoOfDating.com/goddess](http://www.TaoOfDating.com/goddess)**

## **Acknowledgments**

Writing a book for women when you're a guy is tougher than I thought. Which is why I'm deeply indebted to my illustrious panel of readers who provided invaluable feedback. Alexis, Aiko, Cristina, Naada, and Sharon – you are all stars. Alison and Megan – thank you for your particularly thorough look at the manuscript and your dozens of great suggestions. Special thanks to Christine Mason McCaull for suggesting the addition of several sections which made the book stronger and for allowing me to include her 'Love Your Body Now' piece.

I also want to thank my loyal readers who encouraged me through their emails to keep on writing. This project could not have been completed without you.

Profuse thanks to my talented and highly responsive graphic designer Thomas Breher for his work on the cover. You can find him at [eCoverDesign.com](http://eCoverDesign.com). Tell him I sent you.

The words of Marianne Williamson constitute the female brain behind this work and form an integral part of it. Without them, I could not have finished this book. Michael Bernard Beckwith of Agape and the staff of Self-Realization Fellowship Lake Shrine have also contributed much-needed inspiration over the years. Thanks for being there.

And finally, I'd like to thank Mom & Dad for their unfailing support. This book is for you.

## **About the author**

*Ali Binazir is Chief Evangelist and Decision Enhancement Engineer at Elite Communications and dislikes writing about himself in the third person, so he's going to stop doing that immediately. Inordinately fond of framed pieces of cardboard, I have an A.B. from Harvard College, an M.D. from the University of California San Diego School of Medicine, and an M.Phil. from Cambridge University. Formerly a consultant at McKinsey & Company, I contribute regularly to HuffingtonPost.com and am a certified clinical hypnotherapist practicing in Los Angeles. A lifelong member of a secret society known as 'Guys', I know a thing or two about how they think. I'm committed to helping you become the best, happiest, most deliriously joyous version of yourself.*

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

### The Introduction You Can't Skip

The five themes of <i>The Tao of Dating</i> .....	24
How to use this book .....	25

## PART I: THE WAY: FOUNDATIONS OF THE TAO

### Chapter 1: Dating for Fulfillment

Which would you prefer: the menu or the food? .....	29
Square one: accept and love yourself now.....	30
Fulfillment is a feeling, not a person.....	32
The power of gratitude .....	33
Exercise 1. The Power of Focus .....	34
The Be-Do-Have Paradigm .....	36
Exercise 2. Your highest vision of yourself .....	39
Affective forecasting, or what <i>really</i> happens when you get what you want.....	41

### Chapter 2: Who You Really Are

The concept of no-self.....	46
Exercise 3. The Galactic Consciousness Meditation.....	48
Who you really are .....	52
Embracing The Goddess .....	54

**Exercise 4. Embodying the Goddess .....56**  
**Your shortcut to divinity.....57**

### **Chapter 3: Yin and Yang**

**Balancing yin and yang in partnerships..... 61**  
**The dilemma of the career-oriented woman .....63**  
**Yin and yang in a relationship.....65**

### **Chapter 4: What You Really Want**

**Exercise 5. Empower yourself by figuring out your core values .....68**  
**What you have to offer.....69**  
**Exercise 6. Walking the walk .....70**  
**Exercise 7. Take stock of your relationship assets..... 71**  
**Yin, yang and three stages of relationship ..... 71**  
**The kind of guy you would want.....74**

### **Chapter 5: Understanding Men, Understanding Yourself**

**Why men are so damn horny.....79**  
**Making your peace with monogamy (or absence thereof).80**  
**Know what you're getting yourself into .....82**  
**Kill the prince .....83**  
**The perfect guy vs. the perfect guy for you.....85**  
**A big secret about how men relate to female beauty .....87**  
**He doesn't care that much about your shoes or dress .....88**  
**Your secret gift as a woman .....89**  
**Types of men ..... 91**

Why good women get involved (and stay) in bad relationships .....	92
The slot machine model of human behavior .....	92
The self-concept and how it affects your relationships.....	94
How to improve your self-esteem .....	96
How to spot bad boys.....	97
How to spot Good Guys .....	104
The Good Guy's secret turn-on.....	109
The dilemma of dating the Great Man.....	110

## **PART II: BE**

### **Chapter 6: Beliefs**

How to keep a healthy mental diet .....	115
Cultivate a peaceful mindset .....	118
Exercise 8. Experience how beliefs set the limits of your behavior .....	127
Global beliefs .....	127
Personal Beliefs .....	129
Exercise 9. The Ultimate Freedom Exercise .....	130
The process of belief .....	134

### **Chapter 7: Attitudes**

The six rules of attitude.....	137
Your attitude towards your body .....	141
Exercise 10. Accepting and appreciating your body .....	143
Love your body now .....	143

## **PART III: DO**

### **Chapter 8: Find**

Exercise 11. The Quarters Exercise.....	153
Exercise 12. The Ideal Man.....	154
The three Cs of optimal venues.....	159
Some not-so-great places to meet men .....	168
Long-distance relationships: a brief, biased rant .....	169
Internet dating: perils and opportunities .....	174

### **Chapter 9: Meet**

To initiate or not to initiate .....	179
Use the tiered approach .....	181
How to help men approach you .....	183
How to initiate conversations.....	185
The importance of intention .....	186
Exercise 13. Powerful Positive Intent (PPI).....	188
Exercise 14. Craft your own PPI to act with greater authority and integrity .....	189
Exercise 15. The Cookies Experiment .....	190
The three-man plan.....	190
Handling rejection .....	191
Becoming Rejection-Proof I: Re-write your rule.....	191
Exercise 16. Write your personal rule to make rejection an impossibility .....	192
Becoming Rejection-Proof II: Re-framing.....	192

## **Chapter 10: Attract**

<b>You have an unfair advantage – use it!</b> .....	195
<b>The three components of attraction</b> .....	195
<b>Attract with your physical presence</b> .....	197
<b>Exercise 17. Cultivate your sensuality.</b> .....	198
<b>Have fun while you transform</b> .....	199
<b>Attract him with your mind</b> .....	202
<b>The wisdom of paradox</b> .....	203
<b>The Art of Listening and the Magic Question</b> .....	205
<b>Exercise 18. Listen</b> .....	205
<b>Attract with the heart, or how to be irresistible</b> .....	208
<b>Exercise 19. Practicing devotion.</b> .....	210
<b>Attract in the right order</b> .....	210
<b>The physiology of attraction</b> .....	212
<b>Success and your integrity</b> .....	214
<b>The principle of <i>wu-wei</i></b> .....	215

## **Chapter 11: Romance, or what to do on a date**

<b>Stoking the fires</b> .....	217
<b>Rapport</b> .....	218
<b>How to create passion</b> .....	221
<b>How to make a man fall in love with you</b> .....	222
<b>How to bring out the best in a man</b> .....	226
<b>The foolproof internal guide for your actions</b> .....	227
<b>What drives men away</b> .....	227
<b>The importance of closure</b> .....	234

Some completely obvious guidelines for date etiquette..	236
Getting physical and the art of tantalizing .....	239
So you want a second date .....	242
Physical intimacy: timing it right.....	244
Balancing desire and empowerment.....	247
The importance of sexual compatibility .....	248
Men's secret fears about sex .....	249
The importance of sexual know-how .....	250

## **PART IV: HAVE**

### **Chapter 12: Have: Making Relationships Last**

How to keep a man worth keeping .....	255
Connect at three chakras for a lasting relationship.....	256
Depth in a relationship vs. direction .....	258
Leave the cage door open.....	259
How not to be taken for granted .....	260
The four horsemen: recognizing communication problems before they arise .....	263
Some principles for a successful relationship .....	265
Take your own counsel, again.....	267

### **Chapter 13: A New Beginning**

A gentle reminder .....	271
-------------------------	-----

*The Introduction You Can't Skip*

*There was something formless and complete  
That existed before heaven and earth.  
Without sound, without substance,  
Dependent on nothing, unchanging,  
All-pervading, eternally present.  
It is the mother of the universe.  
No-one knows its name.  
So we call it Tao, The Way.  
For lack of a better word, we call it great.*

*Being great, it flows.  
It flows far away.  
And going far away means it returns.*

*It flows through all things,  
Inside and outside, and returns  
To the origin of all things...*

*Man follows the earth.  
Earth follows the universe.  
The universe follows the Tao.  
The Tao follows what is natural.*

– Lao Tzu, Tao Te Ching, Ch. 25



## **The Introduction You Can't Skip**

### **Monica's story, or how this book got started**

It was one of those early fall Boston days a few years ago when you thought anything was possible. The sky was unusually clear, the air was crisp, and Newbury Street was humming with life and brimming with attractive people. I was excited about meeting up with my college classmate Monica, whom I had not seen since we had both graduated from Harvard.

You probably know Monica, or someone like her. She is smart, good-looking, funny, in great shape, well-read, stylish, successful – the total package. She had her act together – so much so that guys in college had been almost too intimidated to ask her out.

We met at the sidewalk café Sonsie to catch up. And as we discussed work, family, friends, and love life, the question came up: “So – you seeing anyone?”

There was a shifting in the chair, a looking away, and Monica mumbled, “Well, no, not really.” Now, normally that’s not a remarkable fact. But Monica is kind of a remarkable woman. Some might even say a serious babe. If *she* was perpetually single, something must have been seriously wrong with the world.

Then I started having conversations like that one with other female friends, and a pattern started to emerge. Talented, educated, attractive women were having unfulfilling

dating lives on an epidemic scale. They either couldn't find the right guy, were with the wrong guy, had relationships that didn't last, or had given up entirely on the whole dating business.

This came to me as a surprise. I mean, these were all exceptional women. There should have been a line of fantastic guys around the block for any one of them. And yet, they were alone. And lonely. Surely something was terribly wrong with the world.

So I had to ask – what's going on here? That's when I thought there may be a need for a dating guide specifically geared for smart professional women.

### **A guy, writing a dating book for women?**

As it turns out, my guy classmates were having similar issues, so I started out by writing the book for men, which I finished in three intense months of writing and research in 2005. The book was well-received, and in late 2006, I set out to write the *Tao of Dating* for women, thinking that it would take about the same amount of time. Piece of cake, right? *Wrong*. Turns out it's not as easy as I thought to write a dating book for women when you're not a woman.

I was seriously stuck for a long time. More than once I considered abandoning the project. I mean, what does a guy know about the inner lives of women anyway? Surely there were 3 billion people out there better-qualified to write this book<sup>1</sup>.

In the meantime, because of the success of the men's book, I was getting daily letters from men about *their* dating woes. And they were having said woes with women, shockingly enough. Little by little, from these thousands of men, a database started to emerge: what they really liked, what they didn't like so much, and what absolutely sent them

---

<sup>1</sup> That would be the female half of the world's population.

## *The Introduction You Can't Skip*

running for the hills. As their confidante, I also became privy to their innermost thoughts, desires, and schemes. Could *this* be of interest to my female readers? Perhaps.

### **Holly's story, or how this book got finished**

Then, something else happened. Fast-forward to 2008. The book is still slogging along, and I was visiting Boston, having relocated to Los Angeles in the interim. I was having dinner with two of my college classmates, Ariela and Holly. Both are professional women in their thirties, both charming, sweet, fabulous-looking and divorced. Ariela is single without kids; Holly has a daughter and is seeing someone. Let's call him Tim. Ariela clearly does not approve of Tim, so I decide to get the full story.

"Tell me about this guy," I ask Holly.

She responds, "Well, he's really tall and handsome; the sex is great; he's really sweet most of the time; he's a bit of the starving-artist type, and he's not as successful as I am, so I've been supporting him for the past couple of years."

So far, so bad. I sensed she was holding back, and called her on it. And – really sweet *most* of the time? What's up with *that*?

"Well, when we first met he was just such a sweetheart. But lately he's been sniping at me, putting me down for no reason. And when I spend time with my friends he gets really jealous and makes me feel guilty."

"Tell him what happened when your daughter fell down the stairs," said Ariela with a fire of barely concealed rage in her eyes.

Holly hesitated. "Well, last month my daughter fell down the stairs at home and cut her head open. There was blood everywhere, and we rushed her to the hospital. I was so shaken, and I just needed Tim to be by my side, so I called him up. He didn't come."

Didn't come? Just like that? And you're still dating this deadbeat?

"He said he was afraid of blood, and he just couldn't deal with the situation."

My heart sank. How was this possible? Why was this amazing woman wasting another minute of her life on this unworthy man? What else is happening that she's not sharing with us? How many other women like her were stuck in the same place?

At this point, Ariela and I made a very clear case for why Holly needed to break it off with this guy immediately. Then Ariela looked me in the eye and held my right forearm for emphasis: "Alex, you have a duty to finish this book as quickly as possible."

I realized that if my book could help even one woman like Holly (and Monica) reclaim their power, then I had to complete it and bring it to light. Two months after that talk, I finished *The Tao of Dating*. And Holly asked Tim (who turns out was also physically abusing her) to move out and never contact her again, not a minute too soon.

### **A dating guide for the modern smart, professional, educated woman**

Although Monica and Holly were just two of the women amongst the dozens I spoke to, their cases were not unique. Their stories all shared common themes.

For most of the women there were external circumstances such as focus on their careers that accounted for part of what was happening. But I was also hearing excuses from them that didn't make a lot of sense: "There aren't any good men." "I don't have time to meet people." "I'm an old-fashioned girl – dating's just not my thing." Or the worst, from those who were dating the wrong guy: "But he's nice *sometimes*."

## *The Introduction You Can't Skip*

Some of them genuinely didn't know how to date effectively. And they weren't entirely at fault: the rules of dating are unwritten, and no one had bothered to teach any of us what they might be. But even more important, I witnessed that they had abdicated their own power as women and people. While I saw them as tremendously attractive, magnetic individuals that any man would be lucky to associate with, they did not. As a result, they ended up alone or with the wrong guy.

So this book has two objectives: to help educated, intelligent, discriminating women get back their personal power in the dating arena and beyond; and to give them some solid strategies for realizing a fulfilling dating life. As a man, I wish to provide a fresh perspective on women's strength and beauty that they may have forgotten themselves and also provide the man's perspective on which dating strategies work best.

Since writing *The Tao of Dating For Men* three years ago, I have been privy to hundreds of stories of men's challenges relating to women. I combined that with my own experiences to give you a sense of what works best with educated, intelligent, successful men of integrity when it comes to dating. As a hypnotherapist, seminar leader and personal success consultant, I want to give you tools to reclaim your personal power in all areas of your life. If you're reading this book, chances are you are a remarkable woman, and I want to make sure you remember that. Think of this book as what a big brother with your best interest at heart would tell you if he had a thorough knowledge of the male psyche and had experienced several dates himself. Seeing you happy makes me happy.

Some time ago, I was introduced to Taoist philosophy and found much wisdom in its lighthearted yet practical way of viewing the world. As its title suggests, this book draws on

Taoist philosophy, which arises from observation of the way the world works. As such, it is more about the way things are, rather than the way things should be – more descriptive than prescriptive, more empirical than theoretical. Like Taoism, there is no doctrine, no dogma, and few rules. In fact, at every point, I encourage you to test the ideas and find out how well they work for you instead of blindly accepting them at face value. If it works for you, keep it. If it doesn't, toss it and try something else.

Like the teachings of the Eastern masters and the *Tao Te Ching*, the concepts may seem paradoxical at first. I urge you to find the hidden truth behind the paradox. You may also find that some of these ideas go directly against your expectations or beliefs. In those cases, I encourage you to just test them out, without any prejudice as to whether they are right or wrong: just see what happens. As Albert Einstein said, "If at first the idea is not absurd, then there is no hope for it." Ordinary ideas and measures will give you ordinary results at best. Extraordinary results, on the other hand, require extraordinary measures. As such, the more an idea challenges your current belief set, the more likely it is to effect breakthrough in your life.

You should think of the ideas in this book as tools for achieving whatever your dating goals may be, from a fling to marriage. I've based these concepts in ancient wisdom along with proven science to ensure that they are as timeless and universal as possible – as likely to be true a hundred years from now as they are today. As such, although the book is based on a North American model of dating, most of the principles are applicable regardless of who or where you are. At the same time, I make some assumptions about you, the reader:

- 1) You are interested in long-term fulfillment as opposed to short-term gain. There are two operating

## *The Introduction You Can't Skip*

words here: *long-term* and *fulfillment*. As with investment and career choices, the tactics for short-term gain in dating tend to be different from the ones for long-term benefit. Also, it's important to remember that fulfillment is not a person – it is a feeling. And sometimes the way to have that fulfillment will seem paradoxical (e.g. spending some quality time alone).

2) For the purposes of long-term relationships, you are interested first and foremost in a Good Guy. A Good Guy is a man (as opposed to a boy) who knows what he wants and knows where he's going. He has a strong internal compass guiding him along his life's purpose, he's completely comfortable in his own skin, and he's a leader. At the same time that he's a perfect gentleman, always having your well-being in mind, he's perfectly willing to give you some gentle ribbing every once in a while. He exists in contradistinction to such male archetypes as the Bad Boy, Man-Child and Nice (But Kind of Wimpy) Guy.

3) You are open both to scientific concepts and spiritual principles and are willing to try on novel ideas that are likely to bring more fun and fulfillment into your life. If you're more scientifically-oriented, consider this an introduction to spiritual concepts. If you're more spiritually-oriented, consider this a chance to delve into your scientific side.

In the end, this book is more about helping you find your own way than about telling you what to do. Sometimes we can get stuck in a rut, and all it takes is a tiny jolt, a little piece of information, to get us up and running again. Many

people are finding that jolt amongst the precepts of Eastern wisdom, and if you're reading this, it's likely that you are one of them.

Some of you will find *The Tao of Dating* highly applicable to where you are and where you want to be, and some perhaps less so. As for me – I have been through 21 years of formal education, attended countless lectures and gone through thousands of books in my lifetime. It's safe to say that I have not used 100% of everything that I have learned. But I still seek out new sources of information, sit through weekend-long seminars and sift through new books. Even if I get *one* new idea, *one* mental shift to see something in a new way, *one* re-iteration of a key concept that I had forgotten, or *one* new application of a concept, then that exercise has been worthwhile. I urge you to look at any new learning experience in that way, including this book. New concepts sometimes take time to digest and results may be subtle at first, so go easy on yourself.

One spark is sometimes all it takes to start a raging fire, and I sincerely hope that you will find many sparks in the time you spend with this book. I congratulate you on making the decision to bring the Tao into your life today. Once you allow it, you will find that it will empower you and change your life in ways you had not imagined before.

### **The five themes of *The Tao of Dating***

This book is organized around five overarching themes. We will go over each one in detail in the book, but I want to prime your mind so you pay closer attention each time they appear:

- The first is *wealth-consciousness*, or the mindset of abundance. There is enough of everything to go around for everyone.

## *The Introduction You Can't Skip*

- The second is the *Be-Do-Have mentality*, which relates to Napoleon Hill's famous saying from *Think and Grow Rich*: "Whatever the mind of man can conceive and believe, it can achieve."
- The third is *enlightened self-interest*, which is about acting with your long-term well-being in mind.
- The fourth is *feminine-masculine (yin-yang) polarity*.
- The fifth is *getting out of your own way*.

### **How to use this book**

The purpose of *The Tao of Dating* is not just to give you some tricks and hints for you to scrape by on, but rather to turn you into the most empowered, fulfilled version of you possible. As such, this book is equally about *transformation* and information. In order to effect that transformation, you have to apply the principles in the book to your life.

So I want you to approach this book less as a novel that you read once and shelve and more like a handbook, travel guide or cookbook. Mark up the chapters and exercises that you like and come back to them. I've read the *Tao Te Ching* at least 300 times, and I keep on coming back to it, just because something in there always provides me with a new perspective on what's happening. Think of this book in that vein – a reference you will keep on coming back to.

Now if you're like most people, you are probably going to start reading the book, get to an exercise, skip it, and go straight to the juicy parts about tips and tricks. So go ahead and do that – I won't tell anyone. Skim the book once from beginning to end. Then go back and *do the exercises*.

That is where the transformation occurs (and where some of the tips and tricks are hidden).

*The Tao of Dating* contains a lot of information. If you attempt to remember and try out every idea at once, it may be overwhelming. That is why the book is organized in a linear fashion. Start from the beginning, from the work on values, beliefs, attitudes and what you want. Then move on to the section on how to find quality men. Progress stepwise to meeting men, attracting them, and perpetuating your relationships with them.

Think of it as baking bread. If you've never done it before, you start by thinking about a recipe. You then go through each step of making the bread in order: go to store, buy ingredients, mix them, make dough, bake, eat. If you try to do everything at once, you're more likely to end up with a mess in the kitchen than an edible loaf. But if you proceed sequentially, at every step of the way you just have to remember what the next step is. As Lao Tzu says, "The journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step." Go easy, and good fortune.

I'm very interested in your thoughts about this book, so do me a favor and drop a line sometime. Just put 'Question', or 'Comment' or 'That was awesome can I buy you a drink' in the subject line of your email so I know to pay special attention to it. You can write to me personally at:

*[dralex\(at\)taofdating.com](mailto:dralex(at)taofdating.com)*

## **Chapter 5. Understanding Men, Understanding Yourself**

The purpose of this chapter is to give you some general insight into men's dating behavior. After reading it, you may still not be able to predict guy behavior, but you'll have an outside chance of understanding it instead of being baffled by it.

Note that there are as many different types of men as there are males inhabiting this planet – about 3.2 billion of them so far. Attempting to boil down this exceptionally diverse cohort into a handful of tidy generalizations would be an oversimplification that does disservice to both you and the men. As Voltaire once said, "All generalizations are false,

including this one." It's still best to examine each male specimen that comes along your way on a case-by-case basis.

At the same time, there are some principles that hold true about male behavior most (but not necessarily all) of the time. To paraphrase Shylock from Shakespeare's *The Merchant of Venice*, if you prick them they will bleed, if you tickle them they will laugh, and if you stand them up for a date they will be seriously bummed out. Men are people, too.

Subsequent to a spate of popular psychology books from the 1990s, the myth that men and women behave so differently as to be from different planets seems to have taken hold in the public imagination. Like most myths, these differences have not been supported by scientific evidence. As far as I can tell, men are from Earth and women are, too, and human beings are much more similar than they are different, regardless of sex. In fact, the behavioral and communicational differences between individual women (and between individual men) will be far greater than the differences between men and women as a group.

That said, there *are* some differences between the way men and women are built. Some of these differences have behavioral ramifications, and entire books have been written on the subject (see Pease & Pease). This book you are reading is about dating, so I will concentrate on what's relevant to that.

What's important here is to be *cognizant* of the differences. This is the first step towards understanding and perhaps tolerating what you may perceive as men's quirks. Remember – if almost all men exhibit a certain behavioral pattern, then it's not just a quirk. It's just the way they are, just part of the Tao. And, as some wise person once said, first seek to understand, then to be understood. So, from an actual guy to you, let's find out how we tick.

### Why men are so damn horny

A fair amount of evidence points to men wanting sex and seeking it out far more often than women. During the few hundred thousand years that human beings evolved on the savannah, sexual activity for a woman could potentially result in pregnancy, with its concomitant investment of resources, reduced mobility, and risk of death during childbirth. In comparison, the cost of sexual activity for a male is a few milliliters of semen which he can regenerate in short order. And, should there be a pregnancy, he's not the one who has to carry and raise the child.

A simple way to understand the difference between male and female reproductive strategies is to answer this question for yourself: what is the maximum number of children a man and a woman could have in a year if each had sex with a different person every day? It becomes immediately obvious that, in the genetic lottery, a man stands to gain a lot more from having multiple partners. Hence the difference in sexual behavior.

That said, women are horny, too. A famous diagram of sex drive (see Pease & Pease) shows that men's sex drive peaks in their teens and early twenties, then steadily declines. Women's, on the other hand, rises steadily (always less than that of the men) until the late thirties and early forties, when it surpasses men's sex drive. Perhaps that's where the expression 'dirty thirties' comes from.

Taoist philosophy says that one of the keys to living a good life is to observe the way the world is and then to flow with it, as opposed to trying to shoehorn the world into some notion of how you think it *should* be. These notions manifest in various forms: religion, culture, local custom, family upbringing, fad, trend. My definition of pain is *wishing the world to be different than it is*. So, to avoid pain in your relationships with men, it's good to observe human sexuality

and the patterns that have emerged over thousands of years and work *with* them, not against them. You don't have to like the way it is, but you can at least make your peace with it.

**Pain is wishing the world to be different than it is.**

### **Making your peace with monogamy (or absence thereof)**

Primatologists have measured the ratio of testicle size to body weight in various primates and observed an interesting correlation. Species with a high testicle-to-body-weight ratio, such as chimpanzees and bonobos, tend to be more promiscuous than species with a lower ratio, such as gorillas (who have sex maybe once a year). *Homo sapiens* fits somewhere in between chimps and gorillas, which would predict that we humans would be chiefly monogamous with some excursions outside the pair bond. Studies bear out what literature, history and our own experience hint at being true: both human males and females are inclined to engage in what anthropologists call *extra-pair couplings*, even within the context of a monogamous relationship. Although both genders stray, men do it at a higher rate than women.

Strict monogamy is quite rare in the entire animal kingdom and may not exist at all<sup>4</sup>. And until recently, polygamy seems to have been more common than not. Historically men were involved in aggression and war, and each battle reduced their numbers. This led to a perennial shortage of men, making polygamy an effective survival

---

<sup>4</sup> For a thorough, warm and humorous treatment of this subject, I recommend *The Myth of Monogamy*, by the husband-and-wife team of David Barash and Judith Lipton

## *Chapter 5. Understanding Men, Understanding Yourself*

strategy for the tribe so the widows were taken care of. Thus it makes sense that one study showed a slight majority of human cultures studied all over the globe to be polygamous in nature.

Men have extra-pair couplings, and so do women. A study conducted in England by zoologist Robin Baker between 1988 and 1996 revealed that the biological fathers of 10% of the population were not whom they expected it to be. So be careful the next time you call someone a bastard. You may be closer to the truth than you think.

Another study involving women rating the attractiveness of male faces showed an interesting result. The women in the study usually preferred the more feminine-looking male faces except for when they were ovulating. During that time, they had a marked preference for the more masculine-looking faces. This may mean that, depending on time of the month, women pick different sex partners for different purposes: the more nurturing-looking ones for raising the family, and the more rugged-looking ones for sexy genes to pass on to their offspring.

The point of citing these studies and observations isn't to condone or condemn one type of behavior over another. It's simply to tell you that these things happen, have been happening and will continue to happen. If you see these tendencies for what they are without labeling, judging or getting all worked up about them, you'll probably have more peace of mind – and get more of what you want.

So if you come across a handsome, virile, well-to-do fellow that you fancy, be prepared for him not to be a celibate monk. And if you two start dating, it's quite possible that he'll be seeing other women unless he tells you he's not. And if you get married, know that even you yourself may someday have an office fling. These things happen, so know them, expect them, plan for them, and place them in the larger

context of your long-term fulfillment. Monogamy need not be completely out of the question. Just know that you don't need to make something relatively uncommon an absolute requirement for your fulfillment.

### **Know what you're getting yourself into**

To put this all in practical terms, if you've started dating a man, it's possible that he will be seeing other women at the same time. Just so there are no surprises for you, assume that until a man has made an explicit promise of sexual exclusivity to you, he will reserve the latitude to be intimate with other women. In the meantime, you are free to date other men, too.

Although you may not be able to tell *him* what to do, you have control over setting *your* boundaries. For health reasons and just to clarify where you stand, it's wise to know whether your date is having sexual relations with other people and decide how comfortable you are with that. A simple, direct question usually gets that information for you, provided it's at the appropriate time. "When was the last time you had sex?" gets to the heart of the matter and is perfectly appropriate if you're already having sex or heading in that direction, especially if you preface it with your genuine concern for health. If that's too direct for you, then "Are you seeing anyone else?" will usually yield the same information.

If you're considering sleeping with a man, you also have a right to know whether he's engaging in safer sex or not. So ask him. Be wary if you get anything but a simple, direct answer back. If you feel that his behavior violates your values or endangers your health, you may wish to look elsewhere. Of course, it goes without saying that you will always engage in safer sex.

### **Kill the prince**

I noticed a curious irony when I was speaking to my friend Heather the other day. I asked her about her weekend date, and she said, "Oh, I had a really great time. This guy was really fun, good-looking, and we were laughing the whole time. After the theater we went to this late night café and talked until 3am." I said, "That's fantastic! When are you going to see him again?" She responded, "Well, I don't know. I'm not sure if there's going to be a second date. I didn't feel that instant chemistry, you know, those butterflies in your stomach, that tingle you get all over your body that says *this guy is the one.*"

Well, that's interesting. Clearly she's had a good time, and yet she's reluctant to follow up. Sometimes this happens because she's had relationships in the past which have started with that 'big spark'. But the irony is that all those relationships that started with intense chemistry and the big spark have ended, leaving her – single. Those men aren't around anymore. Although this does not invalidate those relationships, it does make one wonder if instant chemistry is indeed the prerequisite for a fulfilling long-term relationship.

This leads us to an even bigger irony. I always make a point of asking women in happy relationships – married or not – about how they first met their partners. And before even getting started with the story, many of them say, "You know, the first time I met him I didn't really like him that much." So it turns out that a lot of long-lasting relationships start with the woman *disliking* the guy somewhat, let alone having instant chemistry with him.

Love is not a sudden burst of energy and excitement that overwhelms your neurology in an instant. That's called a roller coaster, or a fireworks display, or infatuation, or panic attack. Love is the sustained, ever-deepening appreciation of another person over time. It is more like an edifice than a

spectacle. It takes time to build, and once built, it tends to last a while. As Shakespeare said in *Romeo and Juliet*, "violent delights have violent ends." A fulfilling long-term relationship *may* start this way. Most don't.

Yet some women look for a cataclysmic first meeting where bells go off, firecrackers shoot around, and the earth shakes beneath her feet. He will be a prince in rust-free armor on a white horse, perfect in every way, and he will materialize to sweep her off her feet and whisk her away to the great kingdom of romance. And he'll have ballet tickets.

Perhaps this has its roots in popular Western depictions of love in movies, television, romance novels and such. What we have to realize is that these accounts of courtship are specific to Western culture. In India, where the divorce rate is lower than in America, most marriages are *arranged*. On their wedding day, the bride and groom may be meeting each other only for the first time! And yet, after time, many learn to love one another and have a lasting union.

I am not at all recommending that you go and ask your parents to find you a suitable boy and give up on the whole dating thing. What I do want is your empowerment and fulfillment. The Western romantic model of relationships is a cultural construct, and one that isn't necessarily all that successful, considering the 50% divorce rate in the United States. For something as important as fulfilling companionship, I believe you deserve better than a coin flip.

So release your attachment to the notion that you have to fall madly in love with someone in order to be fulfilled. Passion is great, romance is great, but do bring a little bit of yang into the mix – a little bit of deliberation. Madly in love is still mad, and mad people tend to make silly choices.

## Chapter 5. Understanding Men, Understanding Yourself

Now love at first sight does happen on occasion, and very rarely, you do get those butterflies in your stomach from the get-go. That's great, but just remember that there's little correlation between the butterflies and whether a man can actually be a source of lasting fulfillment for you. This is because the Prince, the perfect man, *does not exist!* Moreover, researchers show that fulfilling long-term relationships happen between partners who are more or less equal. This is called the equity theory of love. So unless you're a princess yourself, then the prince is by definition not your equal, and your partnership with him is a setup for likely failure. Eventually, a partner who feels he's bringing more to the relationship will become more demanding, impatient and dissatisfied, and the relationship founders.

Sometimes I hear from a friend that she's met 'the perfect man.' This makes me cringe a little, because often it is a prelude to heartbreak. Since the perfect man does not exist, she's expecting something that the world is not going to deliver, which is how you get pain and disappointment. Real men inhabit the real world, and the real world is a dynamic, ever-changing place. All good relationships are based on a measure of mutually acceptable compromise and influence. You mold to him a little bit, he molds to you a little bit, and we have a good fit. So even though there may not be a guy who's perfect, there is one who is perfect *for you*. And you have the power to bring that perfection about.

### **The perfect guy vs. the perfect guy for you**

When I think of the Western idea of perfection, it's intertwined with notions of flawlessness. At its essence, it is a hard, unforgiving concept. The Eastern formulation is different and perhaps best embodied in the Zen parable of the broken cup. The Zen master says that a broken cup is

perfect because it is perfect at being what it is – *a broken cup*. As long as you're not attempting to compare the broken cup to some idealized version of a cup without chips or cracks, then the broken cup is a perfect broken cup. What makes it perfect is how you look at it. If you accept the cup as it is, then it is perfect. If you expect it to be a puppy, then it is not.

All human beings are like broken cups. We are perfect at being who we are – no more, no less. And in relationships, no partner will be perfect *per se*, but some will be perfect *for you*. This softer, Eastern notion of perfection comes about when you choose to mold your mind around who a person already is. It is, in essence, a creative act, and one that requires effort.

It is also an act of forgiveness – for the perceived faults of your partner, but most importantly, forgiveness for your own faults. We tend to judge others to the same degree that we judge ourselves, so start with yourself. Realize that you and I and everyone else are all still growing in this world, and make allowance for that.

Love, in many ways, is a choice. For example, you may know someone who adopted a child, taking in a person who is a complete stranger with no blood relation and raising that individual as her own child. In workshops, I have seen how after a few minutes of exercises, two total strangers can look into each others' eyes and absolutely see one another as the beloved. So remember that you possess this gift. You don't have to pick the next guy who comes around the corner and throw yourself at him, and you don't have to be super-picky and hold out for the prince, either. You can tread the middle path – the path of the savvy woman who knows what she wants and knows where she can find it.

### **A big secret about how men relate to female beauty**

I know women worry a fair amount about the whole beauty thing. And yes, as a guy I can assure you that looks do matter. But allow me to let you in on a little subtlety about how we view feminine beauty: *men appreciate you for what you have to offer, not what you don't.*

Let me illustrate that point. Imagine that you're hungry and someone puts a great dinner plate of broiled salmon and fresh vegetables in front of you. What's your reaction? Do you think, "Wow! This is great! Thank you so much!" Or is it, "Well, it's food, but where's the lobster and truffles? This is clearly not a dish from a 4-star restaurant!"

Most normal people would be thrilled to get the decent meal, even if it's not the best possible meal on the planet. In fact, to compare it to some dish that's not there and then have it come up short is *an act of imagination*. That requires additional effort and blood flow to the brain, which means that it effectively never happens (unless you're a big food snob). This is why almost all of us loved our college experience: we only had one, and therefore nothing to compare it to. So as far as we know, it was the best college experience possible!

**A man will appreciate you for what you have to offer, not what you don't.**

So when you're with a guy who's into you, and it's just you and him – which is most of the time you're together – he's not going to sweat the little physical things *you* think matter. He's too busy celebrating your company! He doesn't care about your butt size, thigh size, breast size, less-than-

flawless hair or any of that. That stuff comes up, if ever, only when he's comparing you to other women -- and there are no women around! And if you are the one who makes him feel like a million bucks, then even when there are other women around, he secretly knows that you're his gem that no one else has. And if he's in love with you, you automatically become the most beautiful woman in the world.

Now let's examine the converse scenario. Let's assume you're a contestant in the Miss Universe contest. Ever seen one of those shows? Now, even though a guy would be thrilled to be with any one of those young, beautiful women, when there's a bevy of 100 of them, he's going to start to get picky. And suddenly Miss Venezuela doesn't look so great because she was standing next to Miss Brazil, who's more his type.

When you go out with a group of very attractive girlfriends, or head out to a place like a nightclub where everybody's all gussied up, you're putting yourself in a pageant-like situation. This puts you at an instant disadvantage, since it makes it much more likely that you'll be standing next to Miss Brazil, who may very well be more his type.

So emphasize your strengths and leave alone the rest. Do your best to interact one-on-one with a man who interests you. And for crying out loud, don't invite comparison or ask him what his type is. If he's with you, you're his type. And he appreciates you for what you are, not what you aren't.

### **He doesn't care that much about your shoes or dress**

Here's another little secret: as long as you're presentable and alluring, men don't really pay all that much attention to the specifics of what you're wearing. A man will be happy as long as your outfit is elegant and flattering.

## *Chapter 5. Understanding Men, Understanding Yourself*

So if you want to keep up with fashion or impress your girlfriends, go ahead, as long as you keep in mind that what's fashionable isn't necessarily what men find appealing. So if you want to dress for your girlfriends, be fashionable. If you want to attract men, wear something elegant that emphasizes your best features, regardless of what's in fashion at the time.

### **Your secret gift as a woman**

The good news is that, as a woman, you are designed to see beyond short-term attractiveness (or unattractiveness) of a man to recognize what is deeper and more meaningful. For better or for worse, men are designed to put a lot of importance upon a woman's appearance. Things like hip-to-waist ratio, complexion and youthful appearance are surface proxies that evolution has chosen to signal fertility – and thus, desirability – in a woman. Anecdotally, it is rare to see a handsome, well-to-do man with a woman who is not outwardly attractive, which bears out this point in the real world.

The converse situation, on the other hand, is common: very attractive women routinely associate and marry men who are not nearly as physically attractive. Scientists believe that this is because during the course of human evolution, the survival of human offspring depended very much on the cooperation of the male partner. Human infants are remarkably helpless, requiring nurturance for the better part of two decades before they can thrive on their own. As such, the women who were very good at choosing male partners who were strong, reliable, long-term providers had offspring that did disproportionately better than the women who did not have that skill. Those genes got passed on, and here we are.

This is a crude sketch of why women are willing to overlook certain characteristics in men, and we have seen enough versions of the rich older man/attractive younger woman couple to know that it is borne out in reality. What you have to remember is that this is your gift as a woman. It is part of the design of the universe, part of the Tao, that for you, beauty is more a feeling than a sight. If a man makes you feel good, he will look good in your eyes. Feeling good is the essence of fulfillment, so you have the extraordinary luck to be able to find fulfillment in all kinds of unexpected places.

**As a woman, you possess the extraordinary gift of making a man who makes you feel good look good.**

The more you use the Tao, the more you move with the Tao, the more it brings fulfillment to your life. So be patient with yourself and with the men you meet. If you actually enjoyed the company of a man, allow that to take its course. See what happens for another meeting or two, even if thunderbolts did not descend from the heavens during the first date and he did not have a halo around his head by the end of it. Love visits at unlikely moments. And as Williamson said memorably in *A Return to Love*, there is one mistake in life, and that is not to let love in. At the same time, chemistry (or more accurately, a certain chemical compatibility) is an essential part of any relationship and you will ignore it only to your peril. As we will discuss later, listen to what your body is telling you.

## **Types of men**

There are as many types of men as there are males on this planet, so it's unwise to pigeonhole a man and close his case. At the same time, there are some useful classifications for figuring out who you're dealing with. The purpose of the following archetypes is to increase your awareness and help you answer the following question: "How likely is this man to be a source of long-term fulfillment for me?"

I like the heart and spine classification because of its simplicity. It gets down to what really matters in a man. Here are the four categories and some types that you may encounter in each:

*No heart, no spine.* Needless to say, this is not the kind of person you'd want to involve yourself with. If you were meant to hang out with jellyfish, you'd live in the ocean.

*Lots of heart, not a lot of spine.* This is the nice guy. He can communicate his feelings, he's in touch with his feminine side, and in the end, he will annoy you because he either doesn't stand up for himself or have clear direction and purpose in life. Earlier, we called him Lance.

*Lots of spine, not a lot of heart.* Stands up for himself just fine – and mostly just for himself. Bad boys fall in this category, as do macho men, successful and super-driven businessmen who have no time for you, and all manner of bullies and petty tyrants. We called him Biff in Chapter 4.

*Plenty of spine, plenty of heart.* This is the domain of the Good Guy, or Victor as we dubbed him.

## **Why good women get involved (and stay) in bad relationships**

When I was younger, I always noticed that many of my beautiful, accomplished, sweet and brilliant female friends dated men who did not treat them nearly well enough. Turns out that powerful reasons drive such phenomena, so my friends weren't entirely crazy. Once you know why good women end up dating jerks, then you can use your awareness to prevent such a thing from happening in the future to yourself or a friend.

Some of why good women end up in bad relationships has to do with their self-concepts and self-esteem. And some of why they stay in them has to do with what I call the *slot machine model* of human behavior and *sunk costs*. Let's talk about the slot machines first.

### **The slot machine model of human behavior**

Let's say you're in Las Vegas, and you've decided to play a slot machine. You put in a coin, pull the lever, and – nothing. Well, that's fine – you weren't expecting to win immediately anyway. So you put in another coin and – nothing again. In fact, nothing is the most likely outcome every time. Funny that.

But before you know it, you've sunk quite a few coins in this machine. Now you're thinking, "I'm invested; I can't just quit now! I've fattened this thing up – it's going to pay off any second now! Jackpot city!"

The fact remains that the most likely outcome of your next pull (and the next, and the next, and the next) is still nothing. And that likelihood does not change whether you put in one coin or 10,000 coins before this pull.

Psychologists have noticed that one of the reasons why this happens (and why casinos are making a mint) is that the human mind grasps poorly the concept of *sunk costs*.

## Chapter 5. Understanding Men, Understanding Yourself

Those first 100 coins that you put into the machine are gone forever, and they have no bearing upon the outcome of the next pull of the lever. People tend to mistake the sunk cost for an *investment*, which has an expectation of future payoff commensurate with the investment. A sunk cost, on the other hand, is just plain gone.

The way this concept plays out in a bad relationship is that the aggrieved party thinks that she has *invested* two years dating a jerk, so she can't just throw that investment away. Besides, through her efforts, he might reform and thereby reward her with the jackpot she's been working on all along.

Well, there is no way to retrieve or throw away those two years – they're gone for good. They are *sunk costs*. And the jackpot isn't coming. Just as in playing a slot machine, the best policy once you realize you're in a sunk cost situation is to cut and run and immediately stop your losses. The sooner a woman leaves behind the jerk, the sooner she's opening her life to the arrival of a guy (perhaps even a Good Guy) who can be a catalyst of fulfillment.

Why does this happen? I can think of a few reasons. The first has to do with a hormone called *oxytocin*. As far as we can tell so far, oxytocin has three main functions: it promotes powerful contractions of the uterus to expel the infant during childbirth; it promotes breastfeeding; and it creates a sense of bonding. The bigger the dose of oxytocin, the greater the sense of bonding. The whopping dose of oxytocin that bathes the brain during childbirth is part of the reason why mothers remain deeply in love with their babies for life.

An interesting feature of oxytocin is that it is released as a result of touch and at the moment of orgasm. So whenever a woman gets sexually intimate with a man, especially when she experiences an orgasm with him, she is bonding with him more closely. This bonding occurs at a

deep, unconscious level and no amount of rational thought can undo it. In fact, psychologists conducted a study showing that a small whiff of oxytocin administered nasally was enough to make people far more trusting of total strangers (Kosfeld et al., 2005).

So if you're one of those good women who has been spending far too much time with a bad match, consider whether it is your good sense speaking or the oxytocin. Like any hormone or drug, withdrawal results in exponential decay of the effects. So one way of breaking the bond between you and Mr. Wrong is to stay away from him. A trip is often an excellent idea.

The reason why good women end up with bad men in the first place (and stay with them) has much to do with self-esteem and the self-concept.

### **The self-concept and how it affects your relationships**

How you perceive yourself has a significant effect on the companions you pick and the relationships you have. *Self-concepts* are the beliefs and judgments we have about ourselves. Some of them are objective: "I am a 32-year old female." Some are subjective: "I am likable." *Self-esteem* is one of those subjective aspects of the self-concept, corresponding roughly to how much we like ourselves.

Psychological research shows that in the context of relationships, our self-concepts try to fulfill two functions. First is to seek feedback from others that *enhances* the self-concept. Second is to seek feedback that is *consistent* with the self-concept (Sedikides & Strube, 1997).

It's easy to understand why we would seek out compliments and positive feedback that make us feel good about ourselves and allow us to see ourselves as attractive and competent. But what about consistency? Turns out that we all have a strong drive to avoid cognitive dissonance by

## Chapter 5. Understanding Men, Understanding Yourself

seeking out a world that is consistent with our beliefs. As stated by psychologist Carol Brehm, "our self-concepts... make life predictable and sustain coherent expectations about what each day will bring." Without them, "social life would be a confusing, chaotic jumble."

Now here's where things get interesting. If you happen to *like* yourself, then the self-enhancement drive coincides with the self-consistency drive, and all is well. If you're around people who are saying nice things about you, then you are getting the self-enhancement ("You're great!") that is consistent with your self-concept, which is that you're a nice person ("I'm great!"). Life is hunky-dory.

However, if you *don't* happen to like yourself very well, you run into a problem. Psychologists find that you will still like getting praise and compliments from others – this much seems to be an automatic, unconscious response. But once you have a chance to think about it, you will come to distrust the positive feedback (Swann et al., 1990).

How does this affect your romantic life? It seems that in the context of *dating*, self-enhancement is the primary drive, and everyone likes companions who are supportive, kind and accepting of who we are. However, for long-term, *committed* relationships, self-consistency becomes more important. This is such a prevalent phenomenon that it even has a name: the *marriage shift* (Swann et al., 1994).

The way this plays out is rather interesting (and may even sound familiar). If a person has good self-esteem, then hallelujah – she will gravitate towards people who accept and cherish her as she is and tend to stay with those people.

However, if she has a negative self-concept, initially, she will enjoy the compliments and positive feedback. But over time, the self-consistency instinct will rise up and ask questions along the lines of, "Well, he can't *really* believe I'm that great. What's wrong with *him*?"

Eventually, the dissonance between the positive feedback she's receiving and the low self-concept will be so great that it creates feelings of inauthenticity and distrust ("He's just saying this stuff; he can't possibly be sincere") and leads to the dissolution of the relationship.

This is part of the reason why those wonderful female friends of mine dated and even married men who treated them poorly. Those women were not crazy; they were simply ending up with men who fulfilled their self-concept.

If you can look back on your long-term relationships and count off a series of partners whose treatment of you made all your friends scratch their heads, then the problem may lie with your self-esteem.

### **How to improve your self-esteem**

The good news is that self-concepts can change, and you can enhance your self-esteem even if you think it's a little low (but not rock-bottom). The ease with which someone can change her self-concept has to do with how sure she is with her self-concept right now (Swann & Ely, 1984). If she's convinced she's totally unworthy, that's tough to turn around. Luckily, that's rare, and even people who have low self-esteem only *suspect* that they're total dweebs but aren't quite sure. In that case, here are two things that can turn your self-esteem around.

***Allow positive feedback.*** Even if you start out with low self-esteem, kind words from an adoring lover can turn that around in short order as you start to enjoy and even believe what he says. So whenever you hear a compliment, stop, take it in, and allow it to sink in. Resist the reflex downer comments like, "Well, you don't really mean that" or "Well sure I have nice hair but look what a mess it is." Just *take* the darned compliment and say only "Thank you." Or even

## *Chapter 5. Understanding Men, Understanding Yourself*

better, "You're absolutely right – thank you." Positive feedback from others also helps, so surround yourself with appreciative people who prop you up and spend less time with those who bring you down. The compliments are coming at you all the time if you only pay attention, so -- pay attention! And accept them with open arms.

***Engage in service.*** We get a lot of our sense of self-esteem by how useful we feel we are. So go ahead and make yourself useful! Nobody's stopping you. Tutor some kids, volunteer at a shelter, sign up as a Big Sister, help out at church. Go to a website like [volunteermatch.org](http://volunteermatch.org) and find a project you can pour yourself into.

There is no faster way to feel worthy than to serve. Not only will you feel like your services are useful and necessary, you will also exercise dormant talents which you may have never thought you had. And scientists have shown that altruistic behavior actually lights up your brain's pleasure center. In his book *Why Good Things Happen to Good People*, Professor of Bioethics Stephen Post has shown that people who volunteer benefit from improved mood, reduced anxiety and depression, better relationships, and even increased lifespan. Doing good makes you feel good every time. And it's a lot cheaper (and safer) than drugs.

### **How to spot bad boys**

We talked about noticing aspects of your own behavior that are relevant to your fulfillment. For example, if you're chronically getting in the way of your own happiness through self-deprecation, that's useful to know (and, by the way, stop doing that already. Thanks.). Equally important is to notice behaviors of potential male companions which bear on your fulfillment.

This section is for those of you who find yourselves occasionally (or serially) involved with bad boys only to regret the episode afterwards. If you've never had a problem with bad boys and don't think you ever will, you may also skip this section. If you like bad boys and can handle them just fine, then skip this section. If you've ever found a bad boy even slightly appealing and think you *could* someday get involved with one, read on.

There's something attractive about bad boys, which is why smart women need to be able to spot them *before* getting involved with one, because they're just so darn tasty sometimes. In a way, getting involved with a bad boy is like obesity: prevention is the best solution. If it's already happened, it's often too late, and the solutions are laborious and ineffective. So unless you're signing up for a relationship of limited duration with a definite expiration date, you're better off avoiding the bad boy altogether.

Also, because of the particularly heady brew of chemicals bad boys induce in your head and body, getting involved with a bad boy makes it more difficult to recognize and appreciate a Good Guy. Don't tell me I didn't warn you.

My definition of a bad boy is simple: he is a boy (as opposed to a man) who is bad for you in the long term. By *bad* I mean that overall, he will bring more pain to your life than joy. Don't get me wrong: there will be some good times with the bad boy. That's why women get involved with them. But the *net result* tends to be more pain than joy.

By *you* I mean the whole of your life: your mental, spiritual, physical and financial well-being. No one item here absolutely certifies a person as a bad boy; however, the occurrence of several of these characteristics in one individual should be a warning sign.

Incidentally, a man's number of sexual partners is not necessarily an indicator of whether he's a bad boy or not.

## *Chapter 5. Understanding Men, Understanding Yourself*

This is all about how he treats *you* in the long term. It would be just as foolish to let go of a sexually experienced man who loves you and treats you like the queen of the universe as it would be to attach yourself to a monk who disrespects you. In any case, always expect a genuinely desirable man to have been noticed by women before you.

If I were to pick one quality that would be the most accurate indicator of whether someone's a bad boy, it's a presence of *extremes*. Whether of beauty, wealth, intelligence, tidiness, messiness, neglect or solicitude, extremes are tipoffs that this guy might be a handful who'll bring you more trouble than it's worth. The Tao is about taking the middle path; those who court extremes are not with the Tao. If you bring those people into your life, you may be inviting instability and trouble. Chapter 29 of the *Tao Te Ching* says:

*The sage sees things as they are  
And takes the middle path,  
Away from the extremes.*

Every characteristic listed here is like a double-edged sword: the very thing that makes it appealing can also render it detrimental. The list is intended to make you aware and wary of whether you're signing up for the fun or the pain. Whenever you spot one of these list items, ask yourself: "What's the purpose of this behavior? What's he trying to get out of it?" Put yourself in his motorcycle boots for a moment, and you'll gain instant insight into the male mind.

Don't get me wrong -- bad boys can be a lot of fun, and the totally nice guys might be pretty deathly boring. The purpose of this is, first and foremost, your awareness so you can choose a middle path. You want a guy who has a little bit of an edge and is decent to boot.

Here are some behaviors that could mean you're dealing with a bad boy, and how your mind may rationalize it as appealing rather than problematic. *Caveat emptor.*

***Moving things along too quickly.*** Bad boys tend to make early declarations of affection – genuinely or for effect. They also fall in love easily and have no problem proposing a romantic weekend getaway when they've known you for less than fifteen minutes.

*What it looks like:* Spontaneity and joie de vivre.

*What it could really be:* Impulsiveness; trying to get into your pants as swiftly as possible

*What you're signing up for if you date him:* plans only made at the last minute; plans cancelled at the last minute; general irresponsibility; similarly impulsive overtures to other women.

***Being just a tad too smooth.*** When you first meet him, does he touch you too early and too often? Is he whispering in your ear? Is he overly generous with his compliments? Does he attempt to take you away from your friends and get you alone? Is he always subtly (or blatantly) pushing the boundary of what's appropriate and comfortable? Is he telling stories that seem too well-rehearsed and designed to aggrandize him, impress you, and get you worked up? Is there a lot of showmanship going on? Once you've started dating, are his excuses for marginal behavior all too plausible? If so, you are almost certainly dealing with a bad boy.

*What it looks like:* Romance! These men know that this is the ultimate bait for getting a woman, and therefore use it skillfully and without apology.

*What it could really be:* Too good to be true is almost always exactly that. Deliberately seductive behavior usually means you're dealing with an experienced player.

## Chapter 5. Understanding Men, Understanding Yourself

*What you're signing up for if you date him:* sexual infidelity (and possibly diseases); unreliability; rapid emotional detachment once he's gotten what he wants from you.

***Thrillseeking behavior.*** He rides a motorcycle – a big Harley, actually. He skydives, takes all kinds of drugs, drinks a lot, goes out five times a week or more, and generally looks for the adrenaline rush.

*What it looks like:* A life of excitement that you want to be a part of.

*What it could really be:* Although many grown, responsible men take calculated risks, chronic thrillseeking is often a sign of immaturity and recklessness.

*What you're signing up for if you date him:* worry; genuine fear; loneliness as he goes off on his jaunts; infidelity; irresponsibility; run-ins with the law.

***Devil-may-care attitude.*** He lives by his own rules – and *only* by his own rules. He dresses like he wants, works when he wants, eats what he wants, says what he wants. 'No one will be the boss of me' is his motto.

*What it looks like:* Fierce, roguish independence.

*What it could really be:* Lack of consideration and antisocial behavior, which will inevitably extend to you as well.

*What you're signing up for if you date him:* inability to make plans, or broken plans when he does make them; verbal abuse; insensitivity to your feelings and desires; financial distress.

***Studied physical appearance.*** A stylish man is good to find. However, you can tell if a man has spent more time than normal on his appearance for effect. Too disheveled goes in the same category as too slick: extremes are what you're watching out for. Heavy cologne is often a tip-off.

*What it looks like:* Style, baby, style.

*What it could really be:* Narcissism and vanity.

*What you're signing up for if you date him:* Player tendencies; mistreatment; self-absorption.

***General evasiveness.*** When a man is evasive about personal questions – especially about dating, the women in his life, the length of relationships and such – beware. He *may* be doing it for sport, but chances are he has something to hide. A good relationship is based on honesty, trust and respect. Chronic evasiveness precludes all three, so this is an inauspicious start to things. Incidentally, if a man lies to you even once for non-humanitarian reasons (e.g., only something like "There's no one hiding in the attic from the secret police" is acceptable), that's grounds for leaving him.

*What it looks like:* Mystery and intrigue.

*What it could really be:* Skeletons in the closet.

*What you're signing up for if you date him:* Unreliability; mistrust; lies.

***Living space that's too well thought-out or too messy.***

Psychologists talk about the concept of *thin-slicing*: how from one snapshot of a person's life you can intuit fairly accurate information about his character. In fact, psychologists showed in an experiment that walking through a person's uninhabited apartment yielded a more accurate character assessment than an interview with that person (Gosling et al., 2002).

As such, the well-appointed love nest and the messy bachelor pad are both potential signs of trouble ahead. A man's chic apartment with the bearskin rug in front of the fireplace, four-poster canopied bed, strategically positioned *Art of Sensual Massage* on the coffee table and scented candles everywhere should make you wonder why he created this ambience from which a woman would supposedly find it

*Chapter 5. Understanding Men, Understanding Yourself*

difficult to escape – and how many women preceded you and will succeed you. On the other end of the spectrum, the dishevelment of the messy apartment should make you wonder whether that's the level of consideration with which he'll be treating you.

*What it looks like:* Good taste (love nest), endearingly boyish disorder (messy bachelor pad).

*What it could really be:* A player.

*What you're signing up for if you date him:* See 'Being too smooth' entry above.

***Lack of consideration.*** Did he ask you out far enough in advance so you'd be able to make plans? Did he call ahead of time to say he was going to be late? Did he open your car door for you? Did he offer to pay when he invited you out? Did he ask about your sick cat when you said she was sick? How about your sick grandmother? How about when *you* were sick? Does he offer you his coat when you look cold? I'm belaboring the point here, and what I'm saying is this: you know what consideration looks like, and it's different from when a guy's being a jerk to you. Any *one* of these things is not a big deal, but a bunch of them happening in close succession is a sign of trouble.

*What it looks like:* Non-conformity, roguish independence.

*What it could really be:* A jerk.

*What you're signing up for if you date him:* see *Devil-may-care attitude* above.

***Indecision.*** This is one of the characteristics that truly separates the men from the boys: can he decide? Decision means leadership, leadership means responsibility, and responsibility means *power*. An indecisive man is a powerless man. If he waffles and weaves with every decision he makes, or even worse, consults you for all his decisions, *run*. Better a

man who decides and is wrong on occasion than one who refuses to decide at all. Of all the characteristics mentioned here, this may very well be the worst. Just stay away.

*What it looks like:* Sensitivity and consideration.

*What it could really be:* Spinelessness, weakness.

*What you're signing up if you date him:* Exasperation, ruined plans, total disaster.

***Highly selective availability or too much availability.***

Again, you have to ask yourself why this is the case, because there are usually good reasons for extreme unavailability or availability. A man with highly selective availability is often seeing other women or married to one. A man who's always available may be unemployed or desperate. Either way, keep your eyes open.

*What it looks like:* Busy, important man-about-town (unavailable one) or a guy who's really, really into you (highly available one).

*What it could really be:* A man with too many or too few options.

*What you're signing up for if you date him:* A man who will either keep you hanging on or will be always hanging on you.

## **How to spot Good Guys**

We've discussed how to spot the kind of man you'd rather avoid. How about the kind of man you would *want* to have in your life – the Good Guy? Here's a field guide to spotting the keepers. What's interesting about these characteristics is that they are harder to spot than the ones for the Bad Boys. It will take more time and effort to discover the Good Guy's best qualities precisely because of the kind of

## Chapter 5. Understanding Men, Understanding Yourself

person he is. Treasures are often buried. The bigger they are, the more digging they require.

It's unlikely that any one person will have all of these characteristics at once. Moreover, to get *too* picky about the kind of man you want to associate with would be a negation of the principle of abundance. The purpose of this list is to prime your conscious and subconscious mind such that when one of these features pops up, you will know what it means.

***Sense of purpose.*** This is the foundational characteristic of the mature masculine and the source of the Good Guy's power. Since the Good Guy is the embodiment of the mature masculine, then he will always have a strong sense of purpose and direction in his life. He knows what he's doing with his life and why and has a plan for achieving his goals.

*Signs to look for:* Has set and achieved a number of life goals; has a list of goals, written or not, that he'd like to achieve; fills his time with activities that are aligned with his purpose.

***Humility.*** Although he is aware of his own powers, he is also aware that the world is much bigger than he is. This grounds him, giving him a great sense of awe and humility. He recognizes that his talents are a tool for service to the world, as opposed to an instrument for self-aggrandizement and appeasing his ego.

*Signs to look for:* Mild tendency towards self-effacement; underreporting his achievements; greater interest in talking about you rather than himself.

***Decisiveness.*** A Good Guy knows that his job is to take care of things. Since part of that involves making lots of decisions, he has gotten good at that. He trusts his instincts and renders decisions efficiently. He would rather make a decision quickly and then change his mind rather than dwell

on it until it's too late. Because of his decisiveness and the quality of his decision-making, people around him come to trust him, too. In the presence of a trustworthy man, the divine feminine has a chance to relax and express itself.

*Signs to look for:* Makes decisions efficiently without dithering.

***Trustworthiness.*** A Good Guy's word is a Good Guy's honor. If he says he's going to call you in two days, he calls you in two days. If he says he's going to pick you up at 7:15, he shows up at 7:15.

*Signs to look for:* Does what he says when he says he's going to do it; gets genuinely angry on occasion without trying to sugarcoat it or suppress the anger.

***Consideration.*** Lao Tzu says in Chapter 67 of the *Tao Te Ching*:

*I have three treasures to keep and hold:  
Compassion, economy and humility.*

The way people manifest compassion is in their ability to put themselves in someone else's shoes. The way people show that in their behavior is in what we call *consideration*. We hold the door open for someone walking in behind us because we know a door in our face is no fun and do not want someone else to experience that. Similarly, a compassionate man will demonstrate consideration towards you and everyone else around him, from the waiter to the parking valet to an employee.

*Signs to look for:* Does all the things thought of as well-mannered; remembers birthdays, anniversaries, and your preferences and does something about them; tips well; treats subordinates well; gets along with kids.

Chapter 5. *Understanding Men, Understanding Yourself*

**Strong internal compass.** The chief feature that distinguishes a man from a boy is the same as what distinguishes a woman from a girl: an internal frame of reference. When a man has a strong internal frame of reference, he makes decisions based on what constitutes *his* fulfillment, as opposed to looking to outside sources for approval. For better or for worse, one of these outside sources is sometimes *you*. Therefore, somewhat paradoxically, the Good Guy is not the one who caters to your every whim and desire, but rather the one who has his own enlightened self-interest in mind.

Part of being the embodiment of the divine masculine involves the ability to stand firm amidst the passions and vicissitudes of the divine feminine, the most likely source of which will be you. The man who easily bends to your will, then, is not necessarily the one you want (you *will* get bored with him – trust me on this one). The one who listens to you, weathers the storm of your passion, and still renders rational decisions based on what's best for everyone in the long term, is a much better bet. You may not necessarily agree with him all the time, but you do respect him for his solidity. This breeds further trust and allows the flourishing of the divine feminine in you.

*Signs to look for:* Stands up for himself without being argumentative; is not afraid to contradict you (in a non-hysterical way) on occasion.

**Equanimity.** The Good Guy is a calm man. He keeps his cool even when the world presents challenges to him – *especially* when the world presents challenges to him. Things just don't *bother* him that much. The way he handles challenges is not through whining or complaining, but rather through action (see *decisiveness* entry above). Very rarely he may get angry about something that genuinely upsets him, but

he does not dwell on it. Although he is a passionate individual, he has learned how to channel his passion in an organized, constructive way.

*Signs to look for:* Grace in the presence or absence of pressure.

As a side note, you're probably noticing how all these characteristics dovetail into one another. Equanimity is related to the internal compass, which in turn relates to decisiveness. Humility and compassion go hand-in-hand and are related to the last feature: acceptance.

**Acceptance.** One of the central principles of Taoist philosophy is accepting the world as it is instead of trying to struggle against it. Chapter 29 of the *Tao Te Ching*, one of my favorite which I have drawn upon several times in this book, expresses this principle succinctly:

*Those who try to fix the world fail.  
The world is sacred; it can't be improved.  
Those who tamper with it harm it.  
Those who grasp at it lose it.  
There's a time for leading, and a time for following;  
A time for blowing hot, and a time for blowing cold;  
A time for motion and a time for rest;  
A time for vigor, and a time for exhaustion;  
A time for beginning, and a time for ending.*

*The sage sees things as they are  
And takes the middle path, away from the extremes.*

The Good Guy understands this. Therefore he accepts himself. From Chapter 30 of the *Tao Te Ching*:

## Chapter 5. Understanding Men, Understanding Yourself

*The good are effective.*

*They achieve results but are not proud*

*They achieve results but do not boast.*

*They achieve results but are not coercive.*

The Good Guy is in control, but not controlling. Because he accepts himself fully, he is able to accept you fully. This means that he will not try to fix you – he will have chosen you because you are already what he desires. He will not rail against the world because it does not conform to his will. Rather, he will flow with it.

*Signs to look for:* being comfortable in his own skin and generally tolerant of others.

### **The Good Guy's secret turn-on**

I'm about to let you in on a big secret on how to make the dating dance significantly easier and more fun for yourself, especially if you find it a challenge to meet men. And the secret is this: an available man loves to be approached by a woman. Especially if he is the right kind of man.

What women do not realize is that men are terrified of rejection. I have spoken and written to thousands of them, and that is by far their biggest fear in dating. So even though they may look like invincible hulks of self-confidence on the outside, all of them secretly cower inside at your power to utter that dread syllable: "NO."

This explains why you have so many men who have taken considerable time and effort to show up to a venue and then spend the next three hours chatting with their male buddies or twisting swizzle sticks instead of meeting the nice ladies who are there specifically to meet them.

Recently, I asked ten thousand of my male readers to recount a specific episode where a woman did something that

was particularly appealing. The answers all boiled down to two things: *showing appreciation* and *taking initiative*. So taking the initiative turns out to be one of the most attractive things you can do when interacting with a man. In Chapter 9, we will elaborate on how to make it incredibly easy to get the interaction started with any man practically anywhere.

**Good Guys love it when you take initiative.**

### **The dilemma of dating the Great Man**

Some of you will have the opportunity to date truly extraordinary men. These are men who have excelled in their fields of endeavor, be it science, art, spirituality, leadership, business, or sports, and may have even achieved some renown. They aren't just Good Guys – they're *really* Good Guys. Let's call them Great Men.

Should you have the opportunity to get involved with one of these Great Men, there's something you need to know. The extreme manifestation of any trait tends to become its own opposite. And so when a Good Guy becomes really, *really* good, he becomes in effect – you guessed it – a bad boy.

Let me illustrate. If he's a powerful guy and very sociable, he's going to be very smooth. Because he doesn't have a lot of time and he's used to getting his way, he'll want to move things along quickly. Because he likes to challenge himself, he's likely to be a thrillseeker. He's a powerful guy, so he's not going to care too much what others think of him. He's a man of status, power and perhaps wealth that other women have noticed, so he's going to have some options for companionship. So for all the world he looks like a bad boy on the surface.

## *Chapter 5. Understanding Men, Understanding Yourself*

Greatness is both boon and burden, and it will always impinge upon the close relationships of the Great Man. The rewards of being with a Great Man can be significant, so if you have the patience and strength to put up with the burdens, perhaps it's right for you. I'm not here to prescribe you a course of action, but rather to increase your awareness so you can make better decisions.

Every Great Man may not be a pain in the rear, but it happens often enough to be worth mentioning. My job is to ensure that you are as well-informed as possible, and so I want you to know what you're signing up for when you choose to get involved with a Great Man – specifically, a bit of trouble. Gandhi beat his wife, neglected his family and got himself assassinated, which is enough to ruin any relationship. Martin Luther King and John F. Kennedy philandered and made their share of enemies. Any number of renowned composers, musicians, artists and writers seriously tried their partners' patience with various excesses. It's up to you to pick the kind of trouble you're willing to put up with and to find it exhilarating or annoying. Every relationship involves a degree of compromise; just know what you're getting yourself into.

**Want more? Of course you do. For a bunch of cool articles, audios, videos and interviews, visit *The Tao of Dating* blog:**

**[www.TaoOfDating.com](http://www.TaoOfDating.com)**