

DANVILLE COUNSELING

“Dating From A Female Therapist’s Perspective”

By Heather Marchman

This topic is quite hot especially with the current release of the movie “Sex In The City”. Recently I was asked to come up with dating tips for women that are suddenly single in their 40s and 50s. Honestly, at the time I agreed to do so, I really didn’t have a clue as to what I would say to these women. However, with a little research and thinking about what I know from my years of working as a psychotherapist, I came up with this short piece.

There are numerous self-help books, articles and Internet blogs devoted to divulging top dating tips for women, especially the ones that suddenly find themselves single at middle age. Interestingly, many of these tips come from the male perspective, even when written by a female. How many times has one come across dating advice for women that alludes to the fact that women need to act a certain way to get a man? The classic advice is for women “to act less needy” as men don’t like like clingy females!

If one looks back to the origins of male and female behavior, it’s apparent that there are some vast differences in how the two sexes operate. A simple explanation of difference is women “gather” and men “hunt”. I believe this female/male dichotomy is still present in today’s life. Let’s use shopping as an example. Females are notable for loving to shop hours at end, often coming home with nothing! Men, on the other hand...study, target their buy, go out and make the purchase in the shortest amount of time possible! Hmmm...seems like we have a difference approach here.

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Using the shopping analogy, I think it's safe to say, women like to go out into the world and "gather" stuff while men target and then "hunt" stuff. Taking the shopping metaphor further and applying it to dating, it's interesting to note that in fact lots of dating ideas stem from a "how to catch a man" approach...which seems to me to resemble the male perspective to "hunt".

I recently read a humorous and intriguing book called "The Year Of The Yes" by Maria Headley. She writes a true story about how after many years of never "finding" the right man no matter how many dating tips she practiced. Finally she decides to take a way different approach and simply not search for one but be willing and open to going out with every single guy that asks her out! So for one year she goes out with everyone from homeless guys, to taxi drivers, and even, women! In the end, she does meet her prince and is now happily married to him. Apparently this process of, "gathering" or "window shopping" helped her know herself better and ultimately recognize a good match.

Perhaps you don't need nor want to go to the extent that Maria did to find love. I think the message here is to be true to yourself and stick to your principles when dating. So if you happen to be "needy", then be "needy" and you will eventually find the man that embraces and loves that part of you. I believe this approach to be the Yin to the Yang, the feminine to the male.

Anecdote: Here's another unusual love match story: I know a couple that have been married over 35 years. They got married essentially on whim. They were at a personal growth workshop and were sitting next to each other. They sort of knew each other but that was it. Apparently they were doing an exercise on taking risks and the women spontaneously asked the man to marry her. He agreed and they did so a few weeks later. The rest is history 😊

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