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"An Excerpt from "Midlife Dating Manual for Women"

By Susan Dunn

"An Excerpt from "Midlife Dating Manual for Women" by Susan Dunn, MA, The EQ Coach

MUSTARD, MAYO, CUT THE PICKLES

Trust radius, an EQ competency, suggests trusting someone until you have been proven wrong, but you don't want to damage yourself in the process. Midlife dating has its perils, and if you've been out of the dating world for some time, you'll need a refresher course.

First of all, you have to know what you want, because, like the wall of pantyhose or cheeses you stare at in the supermarket, there are now 500 choices, where there used to be three. Okay, two if you were Catholic. But today you can "have it your way," and you can't imagine what this means to some men!

So when you get to the drive−in window, know what you want. Companionship without commitment? Is that with or without sex? Do you want long−term and sex? Is that with or without commitment? Friend with benefits? Benefits without friendship? Marriage? Is that marriage with or without fidelity? (What do you mean "Am I kidding?")

Nearly two thirds of the 27,000,000 singles over the age of 50 in the US say they don't date because they prefer being single, and 9% say they would not date ever, under any circumstances, so you can't assume anything.

You need to know your own expectations and goals, to find out those of the man you're dating, and then get some definitions of the terms. This is why you communicate, and don't be shy! The heart you save could be your own.

Most men will say what they want without beating around the bush. But they don't volunteer it (why use words until you have to?), you must ask.

Martha asked Rob about marriage after they'd been dating a while, and he replied, "Oh, one woman would never be enough for me." Martha was then sure she was the woman who would be. She wasn't listening. Whenever he told her he'd never met anyone like her, her wishful thinking interpreted that to

mean "...and so I'll be one he'll be faithful to."

Guess what? She was wrong.

Barring the incorrigible sociopath, men don't lie, women just ignore what they hear because they don't want to hear it. Martha ended up hurt, but you can't say Rob lied or had bad intentions. He put it right out there. She just refused to believe it.

One reason we do this is because men are big fabricators, especially when they're courting. When they're trying to get you into bed, you'll get a steady stream of head−spinning affirmations, which should be taken with a grain of salt. HOWEVER, even during this fragile period, when asked a direct question, i.e., "Do you want a committed long−term relationship?" they will answer truthfully. It's part of the

peculiar and contradictory Male Honor Code.

THE MALE HONOR CODE PART II

Another part of the Male Honor Code is "what's good for the gander is not good for the goose." He honestly believes, and may honestly expect you to "understand," that it's not cheating if he sleeps with another woman, but that it is cheating if you sleep with another man.

Don't be fooled that because he demands fidelity from you it means he requires it of himself. He'll likely deny there's any connection. "That's different," he will say, with a perfectly straight face, just as if he were making sense. They do not seem to outgrow this with age. They do not necessarily become more comprehensible!

"I LOVE YOU" OUT OF CONTEXT

Because men are not as adept with words and nuances, when he says something like "I love you," watch to see if be behaves that way; if he acts that way. He may not actually know what the word "love" means. (Perhaps your first husband did not!)

Unless they bottom out, men get better at courting with age, and it's one of life's greatest thrills. Enjoy it. Just stick around to see what lies on the other side of it. "I love you" may mean "I want your body" to him, while to you it may mean "I am ready to make a commitment, to be kind and faithful to you, to respect you and care about you ..."

Be wary of the phrase "I love you" if you haven't dated in a while. Men of the Silent Generation (born before 1944) generally uttered those three words only at the end of a long and serious courtship. It was tantamount to a marriage proposal, and was likely to be said only once, unless one of you happened to be on a deathbed or something. "Why do I have to say it? I married you didn't I?" was the response. You see what "I love you" meant back then?? As sacred as Yahweh, it was not to uttered.

Not so these days! Both men and women these days are more emotionally expressive, and use the phrase much more lightly than you may be accustomed to. When your guy says it, it can mean:

·I have no idea, but I know women want to hear it.

·I'm feeling great and into myself.

·I love myself.

·Will you marry me?

·That's not what I said. I was clearing my throat.

·A lifetime commitment.

·That was great sex.

·Let's have great sex.

·We're having great sex.

·I don't know, but when the guy in the movie said it, he got laid.

"I LOVE YOU" IN CONTEXT

It matters what precedes and follows the phrase, and how long the time−gap was. If the word "but" is anywhere around it, there will be tears.

When followed several weeks later by "I care about you very much," "I love you" meant "I was hot for you but this has gotten too heavy and now I'm outa here."

When preceded immediately by "I have to tell you something. I'm married but I love you," it means "I'm hot for you, this will never get heavy, but I hope you won't kick me outa here."

You see how complicated it gets!

There's no general meaning or even non−meaning for the term with men. Man are from their OWN planet. It isn't even as easy as to say they're all from the same OTHER planet.

THE MALE HONOR CODE PART III

It does remain true that if you don't want the answer, don't ask the question. This takes us back to the Male Honor Code. Remember that direct questions get direct, rational answers; that is, untempered by sensitivity. Being generally lower in empathy, if you ask your man, "Does this make my butt look fat?" (which you wouldn't ask if you didn't think it did), and he answers, "Yes. Very," don't say I didn't warn you.

A last part of the Male Honor Code is about "don't kiss and tell." This comes up in intimate

conversations. You are discussing a relationship or sexual issue, and sharing a past experience in order to increase understanding, to improve things, to make a point, and because you value your relationship to him the most. Then it's his turn to share, and here's what you get: "I don't kiss and tell."

I don't think it has to do with empathy. It's more like if there's one thing that's gotten through to them, it would be that to talk about sex with another woman would get them castrated. It could also be that while you were talking about making out on a beach with a pina colada in your hand, he was flashing on something about a Mile High Club, himself, 3 stewardesses, a seeing−eye dog, Murat the Turk, some duct tape, and a hookah.

WHEN WORDS ARE LACKING

While men will talk about their former spouses, the ones who had divorce filed on them usually claim to have no clue as to why. It always just happened out of the blue. "I walked in one day and she'd taken all her things. I had no idea she was unhappy.

If your guy is doing this, understand that his interpersonal relationship skills aren't the highest (again, no reason per se to disqualify him) and that you're going to have to deal with problems very directly. I can't imagine a woman divorcing a man who hadn't spent sometimes years belaboring the same points, which, because he doesn't know why he was "left," means he never heard them, which is why

she left. Words had more or less become meaningless. Perhaps you, with more age, wisdom and experience, can have better luck!

I don't speak or understand "Martian" any better than you do; I've just learned alternate means of communication over the years which work better. How about you?

Communicating with a man in a daily relationship has been likened to training a dog. Reasoning doesn't work. Explaining doesn't work. Begging doesn't work. Clear commands and quick, consistent consequences do. And, as with your dog, you must figure out how to get his attention first. It may mean removing the remote control, or even swatting a rolled newspaper on the coffee table. Do what you have to do! After all, the way they learned not to "kiss and tell" was because they did once!

©Susan Dunn, MA, The EQ Coach, http://www.susandunn.cc . Susan is an Emotional Intelligence coach who works with women in midlife, and is the author of "Midlife Dating Manual for Women," available on her website. Mailto:sdunn@susandunn.cc for FREE ezine.

Why Online Dating is so Tough For Men

By Kenneth Scott

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Online dating has become increasingly popular over the past several years. Every year millions of men

turn to internet dating in an effort to meet more women without risking face−to−face rejection. Unfortunately, internet dating doesnt work very well for most men because the odds are so heavily against them.

According to a November, 2003 study by Jupiter Research, men are four times more likely than women to subscribe to an online dating site and twice as likely to browse, post, or respond to a profile. Obviously, those odds are stacked strongly in favor of the women.

When it comes to internet dating, to paraphrase James Brown, its a womans world.

This is quite a contrast from the off−line world, where attractive women are not approached nearly as often as men might think.

While doing research for my book, Take Action: How to Meet Women and Get Dates, I surveyed over fifty single women in their twenties or thirties about being approached by men and their views on being hit on and dating in general.

The most striking finding from the survey was that most women very clearly want men to be more daring about approaching them. In response to the question, should men be more bold in approaching women, 82% responded yes.

With a lot of effort and time, online dating can work for some men but it is not easy. You will probably have more success with internet dating by viewing it as a supplement to other methods of meeting women, instead of relying on it as your sole method. Also, use one of the larger services like match.com. You will need to use a shotgun approach and will therefore want to make sure you are in as target−rich an environment as possible.

But if you really want to meet and date a lot of women you will probably need to do it the old fashioned way. Approach women in person.

As the old saying goes, the more things change the more things stay the same.

When it comes to meeting women, a confident man who can approach a beautiful woman and strike up a conversation with her will always do better than the 99% of men who cannot. Technology might change a lot, but it will never change that.

Kenneth Scott is the author of Take Action: How to Take Action and Meet Girls, which is available at amazon.com and

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Finally, Women Have the Advantage
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How Nice Guys, Shy Guys and Good Guys Finish First!
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