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To Stay Married, Start Dating

By Terry Hernon MacDonald

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One of my favorite memories from last year was not watching my young daughters rip into their Christmas presents, or seeing them perform in the school talent show. No, my happiest recollection was the date my husband and I went out on one stormy Tuesday night in November.

A few days before, we'd had our fill of running the girls to swimming lessons and fighting with them to do their homework. We could not endure the sight of one more PTA notice requesting money for this fundraiser or attendance at that meeting. We broke. We called a sitter and reserved a table at the most elegant restaurant in town.

And what a night it was. The sitter was late, of course, and the wind was snapping off tree branches and hurling them at our car, but we made it. The food, the wine, and the service were fine. We put the children firmly out of our minds. By the time the salad came, we were sufficiently unwound.

We started having fun. We were laughing. The subjects of the weird charge on our cell phone bill or our dire need for a new refrigerator never entered the discussion. We were transformed into the couple we used to be before children, two cars, and a mortgage. We were footloose, fancy free, and out for a good time.

The happiness of that evening stayed with us for many days. We were attentive to one another. We remembered why we'd gotten married and were glad for it, proving my mother's advice that happy couples continue to date each other forever.

"It's important," she'd say.

But, in the early years of our marriage, I'd make excuses. Diaper and formula bills left little money for nights out on the town. It was impossible to find a good babysitter. It was selfish of us to take time away from the children.

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"Make it a priority," my mother would respond. "Children are the result of the marriage, not the reason for it."

Like a lot of couples, my husband and I had forgotten that. We'd completely wrapped ourselves up in our children and their needs. We started losing sight of each other, but we knew that if we didn't make time for our relationship, our children would grow up and we'd be left behind, looking at each other and wondering, "Who the heck is this person?"

So we decided to make it a goal to go out on a date once a month (once a week is better, according to my mother), and I heartily recommend you do the same. If your husband is reluctant, don't guilt trip him into "taking" you out. You're not luggage. Instead, remind him that you love him, and tell him that you miss having him to yourself. That should convince him.

I'm not going to pretend it's ever easy to squeeze a date onto a calendar of never-ending responsibilities. It isn't. My husband and I had dinner plans tonight, but we had to cancel due to an event at our daughters' school. It's disappointing, but it won't deter us. We'll just reschedule our night out for next week.

We've made it a priority because, as my mother counseled, our happy marriage depends on it.

Terry Hernon MacDonald has been happily married for 12 years and writes frequently about dating and relationships. She is the author of the ebook HOW TO ATTRACT AND MARRY THE MAN OF YOUR DREAMS. For more information, please visit <http://www.marrysmart.com>.

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 doesn't 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, it's a woman's world.

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

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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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