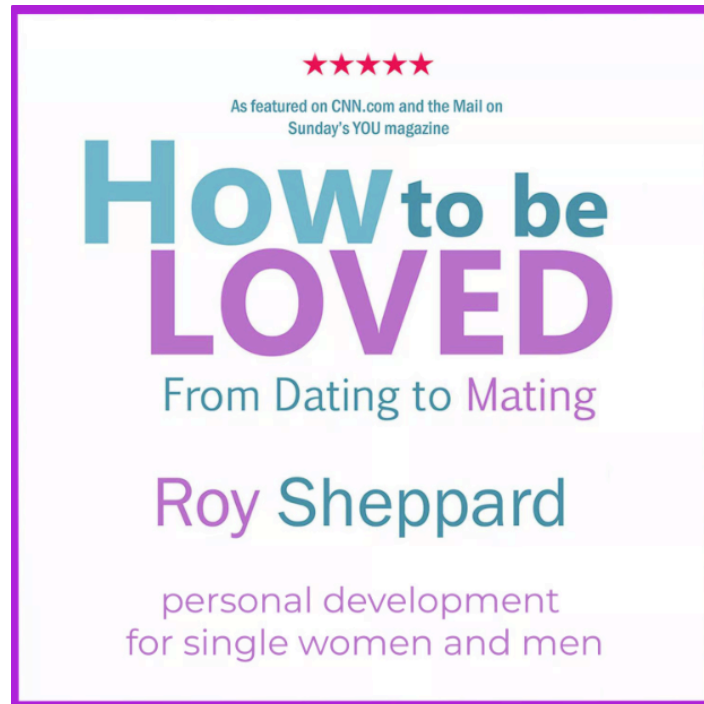


NEW for 2026



Updated Introduction

My single friend stared into his beer and said, “I’ve had it with all those dating apps. I want someone special in my life. Maybe start a family. But I’ve come to realise the apps are now full of all the ‘left-over’ people”.

He paused before adding, “*The worst part is—I must be one of them too*”.

He’s a good man—someone who would make a loving and supportive husband, even a great dad—but he’s had enough of the toxic dating world. And he’s not alone.

When this book first came out in 2011, (originally called *How to be The One*) newspapers and magazines in Britain and beyond noticed that it offered something different. It had an unapologetically male voice and perspective—not to diminish women, but to include men honestly in a conversation where their perspectives are too often dismissed or caricatured instead of being encouraged.

It wasn’t a manual for manipulation. It didn’t teach ‘tricks’ to catch a spouse. Instead, it offered a personal development framework to help you become

'relationship-ready': when you eventually meet 'the one'. It posed two simple, but challenging questions:

1. Why would anyone choose to stop their search once they met YOU?
2. What makes you so special, when apps appear to overflow with other 'hot' options - where you are so likely to become the 'ex' in the word 'N-EX-T'?

Dating today has become catastrophic for countless good men, especially in the West. But if single men are stepping away, what also happens to all the ordinary single women who dream of finding a long-term partner to start a family with?

Something has so obviously gone very badly wrong in just the past 15 years since this book was originally published.

According to the Pew Research Center, 63% of U.S. men under the age of 30 describe themselves as single, compared with just 34% of women the same age. Twenty-eight percent of single men report not having had sex in the past year. Whatever we call this—disenchantment, withdrawal, 'quiet-quitting' from modern dating—this trend is very real, and it needs to be fully understood if you are going to find (and be) a loving, long-term partner and future parent.

As an international conference and workshop facilitator, I've learned how vital it is for people to see the biggest picture of the challenges in front of them. When audiences better understand the whole landscape, their decisions immediately improve. The same is true in dating. I believe there is a solution for men and women who don't want to be single any more - but first, it's important to gain a deeper understanding of the bigger picture at play. This updated chapter is an attempt to pull together all the overlapping factors that have created this perfect storm.

Before exploring all the external societal factors single men and women are now facing, it helps to understand the inner foundation you can develop that determines how to handle these challenges. I call them your '*Emotional Core*'. These are emotional 'muscles' you can strengthen to become emotionally stronger and more flexible. There are four of these 'muscles': attitude, self-esteem, happiness and one other which I mention later. It could become your secret weapon.

Spoiler alert: the dating world is currently grim for so many single men and women.

Let's start with what it's like for men.

Why so Many ‘Good’ Men Are Disengaging

One young guy told me, *“The dating apps took over my life. I was addicted—constantly checking for matches, spiralling when there were none. Eventually, I decided to delete them all. Best decision I ever made. I wasn’t getting dates anyway, and now I feel better”*. I’ve heard versions of that story countless times. Apps feel like slot machines: occasionally you win just enough to keep you playing, but most of the time you walk away empty-handed, a little poorer and a bit more numb.

In my experience, very few women ever give serious consideration to the challenges faced by single men. As a woman, it might be helpful to you to take a moment to consider the following male perspective:

A growing number of ordinary single men are deleting the dating apps and staying away from singles events. And it’s happening on a global scale, across all age groups. This happens for many reasons but includes these:

- **Industrial-scale rejection.** In the old world, a man would approach a woman at a bar, get a ‘no’, accept the rejection, move on and try again at some other time. Today the apps deliver rejection by the hundreds or even by the thousands.
- **Offline anxiety.** Cultural shifts — some healthy, some less so — have made many men wary of approaching any women face-to-face for fear of crossing social or legal lines. The #MeToo movement has quite rightly shone a spotlight on historical abuse and sexual exploitation of women by powerful men. However, today, innocent and decent men risk the wrath of any angry woman who may want to attack him for even the most minor behaviours she takes exception to. For example, for a while, men were routinely mocked for ‘man-spreading’ - a perfectly normal way for men to sit with their legs slightly apart. The combined result of all this is less spontaneous human contact and more guarded silence. In recent years men are now being criticised for not approaching women any more! More men feel they can’t ever do the right thing. As the philosophical joke goes: *“If a man is alone in a forest without a woman to criticise him - is he still wrong?”*
- **Asymmetric dynamics.** Men swipe broadly in the hope of **any** match. If, in the increasingly unlikely event they get a match, that’s the point when they reassess - and unmatched women who don’t meet their fantasy wish-list. It might be dumb, but women do the same, although in a different way. Women, flooded with attention (much of it low-effort), reject quickly and often for trivialities. The combined result of all this is a skewed market

where the top five to ten percent of men and women capture most of the attention, while the majority feel invisible. I'll explore this dynamic later.

- **The Weaponisation of Desirability.** Everyone who has ever dated anyone shares one particular experience: meeting people who don't look even remotely like their profile photos thanks to heavy-duty, filtered enhancements. This technology aids 'bait and switch' - a weapon predominantly used by women for luring men. Men feel cheated and have become disillusioned about this flagrant example of visual dishonesty. They will ask themselves: *"If she tries to deceive me in this way, what else would she be prepared to do?"* Based on those pictures, they wouldn't ever be chosen from a police lineup! Perhaps they were taken 10+ years ago or when the person was 40 pounds lighter. For the women with this type of expertise, they are often shooting themselves in the foot - because they end up attracting interest from a vast number of the **wrong** men! Thus making it even more difficult to identify genuine, high-quality men to date.
- **Confusion about expectations.** They simply don't exist, but nevertheless, there's a rising insistence on finding the 'perfect' person: height, income, physique, charisma, emotional literacy. This creates a pool of potential partners that's so narrow - almost no one qualifies. Ironically, this chase for perfection often blinds people to excellent, compatible partners.
- **Marriage pessimism.** Stories of bitter divorces, custody battles, and financial ruin for men are now commonplace. Single men hear them from divorced fathers, uncles and colleagues: *"Marriage is a trap; if it fails, you lose your home, your children, and your future"*. Whether every story is fair or not is beside the point; this perception shapes behaviour. Men have cottoned on to the legal aspects of marriage. The 2014 documentary *'Divorce Corp'* highlights in shocking detail, how divorced men pay for the \$50 billion dollar US family law industry. Based on the current situation, if marriage were a business deal, few rational men would sign this contract. Even though single women are so meticulous about their choice of husband, around 70% of divorces are still initiated by women. Is it possible that the criteria they used to select a husband in the first place were based on superficial attraction, rather than shared values and true partnership? No matter - the reasons for the divorce are almost always painted as the man's failure to please. Again, decent men feel they can never do the right thing.
- **Media 'Man-Bashing'.** Another factor worsening male disillusionment comes from the global media. Arguably, attacking men for simply being men, has become the norm on broadcast radio and TV, in newspapers and magazines. Normal male behaviour has been pathologised. Online blogs

and videos constantly regurgitate everything that's wrong with men. If a man ever says anything a 'modern' woman already knows, he's 'mansplaining'. If she dislikes or disagrees with something he says, he's instantly labelled a misogynist. If he can't read a woman's mind, he's accused of being emotionally insensitive. If he touches any woman inappropriately - he risks being 'outed' as a sexual predator and potential rapist. There are countless stories of men who engaged in consensual sex only to discover that he's arrested for rape after his willing partner regretted her behaviour the following morning. Newspapers report it and destroy his reputation while her identity is always protected.

- **Cost of living crisis.** I'd been interviewed by a 25 year-old newspaper journalist about my eBook and audiobook *'Meet Greet and Prosper'*. When we'd finished, I turned the tables, and interviewed him about life as a single guy. He was quiet and thoughtful, intelligent, a little overweight, but presentable. He said he rarely met any young women. He wasn't on any dating apps and added *"I still live at home with my parents. I can't afford my own place. No woman would be interested in me"*. He could be correct. But he's given up already. That's the tragedy.
- **Online Pornography.** If real flesh and blood women aren't interested in a man - the vacuum has now been filled with easy access to pornography from light to hardcore. OpenAI sees the vast potential profits to be made too. They are allegedly developing AI-generated 'erotica' (porn by another name). The huge growth of websites such as **OnlyFans.com** demonstrates the scale of the problems men have, engaging with women in real life. Interactive messaging with the adult content creators gives the illusion of intimacy. Little do most of the high-paying male users realise that the message responses are not written by the sexy women they see online - but almost certainly, this role has been outsourced to middle-aged men, in places like the Philippines. For many young men, their only sexual experience is through watching porn. If, at any time in the future they find themselves with a real woman, trying to behave and perform like a male porn star, practically guarantees an unpleasant experience for the woman.
- **MGTOW, Incels, and Misogyny**

Not all men who step back from dating belong to the same category. It helps to distinguish between these overlapping, but very different groups:

1. **Quiet Withdrawal** - These men simply lose interest in dating apps or relationships because of repeated rejection, the financial risks, or disillusionment. These men often aren't hostile to women—they're just cautious, tired, or focused on other areas of life such as watching or participating in sports or playing video games

with their online ‘besties’ who they have probably never met in person. This is the largest but quietest group.

2. MGTOW (Men Going Their Own Way) A global online movement where men consciously choose to avoid long-term relationships, marriage, or cohabitation with women. Motivations vary: some see it as self-preservation after divorce or heartbreak, while others are openly bitter toward women. Communities often highlight men’s legal and financial risks in marriage and promote independence from traditional relationships.

3. Incels (Involuntary Celibates). Unlike MGTOW, Incels want relationships (especially sexual ones) but feel excluded or rejected. Online incel forums can become echo chambers of resentment, entitlement, and misogyny. While most remain passive, a small number have become radicalised, linking incel culture to real-world violence.

4. The Rise of Modern Misogyny. Misogyny has always existed, but online platforms have amplified it. Toxic communities normalise anger and blame women for men’s unhappiness, fuelling a sense of grievance and entitlement. Mainstream media and anti-male activists often focus on these extreme voices, reinforcing negative stereotypes about men in general—while overlooking the majority who quietly disengage without hostility.

Understanding the difference between quiet withdrawal, MGTOW, and incel culture is vital. Lumping all men together fuels division and oversimplifies the problem. The real challenge is helping disillusioned men move past resentment and mistrust, toward healthier mindsets that make lasting love possible. The same applies to women. There are millions of good single women who would never do any of these cruel or dishonest things. Are you one of them?

As a woman, how much do you care about the current plight of single men affected by the factors I’ve just described? How much would you be prepared to do to devote yourself to support a good man? Or is your own well-being and emotional self-protection more of a priority to you right now?

A single male friend gave up on dating after meeting a string of women who he claimed all possessed the same middle name ‘Mimi’ (translated as ‘MeMe’) He added *“They only saw life through what **they** wanted. They’d expect a man to support her emotionally and financially during tough times - but I never felt any of them would ever have my back if or when I might need it”*. He’s good-looking, a highly successful multi-millionaire engineering inventor whose products make life-changing improvements for disabled older

women. So he cares about the well-being of women and has devoted himself to helping them. Instead, he got a dog.

Sadly, because of the long list of factors I've outlined above, too many men have made the same fatal error: they care far too much about what the 'wrong' women think and do!

My message to good, genuine, caring single women is - how can you demonstrate you are not like the entitled 'modern' women who demand that men be, and do, everything they expect. She believes she is the 'prize' even though she doesn't always offer much that's of long-term value to a high-calibre man? Good looks and a 'MeMe' attitude aren't enough for high-calibre men. More and more women realise that it's the good men who are the real prizes; who are worth appreciating and supporting. For those men, wouldn't it be worth putting in more effort to prove their potential as a wife and possibly a mother?

Why Women Are Frustrated Too

Women aren't winning in the current system either. Current popularity of the health and wellness movement which has gained much momentum in recent years, has become their number one priority. Sometimes with the focus 'at all costs'. Media magazines and social media constantly have messages along the lines of *'you do you babe'* - encouraging women to put themselves first - always. Anything that doesn't meet this approach and the expectations women place on themselves inadvertently causes inner angst and arguably, makes many of these women retreat at the first sign of challenges to their mental health. Selfishness is encouraged as a way of protecting themselves. The quest is to be the best version of themselves - which reinforces from the male perspective, the 'MeMe' mindset.

In addition to this, women who are dating, often describe being inundated with lazy messages, if being messaged at all after a date and low-effort attention. In recent years, countless YouTube videos feature distraught young women (mostly speaking in their cars) desperate to meet a man. They ask *"Where are all the good men?" "Why can't I find a date?" "Where do single men do their food shopping?"*

This highlights even further, how the wrong men and wrong women are negatively impacting the prospects for Mr or Mrs Right.

This is perhaps a bit harsh - but millions of these good men live in 'Left-Swipe Land' where you, as a discerning woman, may have put many of them. The uncomfortable answer is that millions of good men have been trained, by apps and culture, to believe they're not wanted.

These days the odds are stacked against good, hard-working men even more than they were in the past. Good, genuine women need to support these men - but the opposite has become the norm: 'modern' single women in the US demand the 'four sixes' from the men they are prepared to date: over six feet tall, a six figure salary, six pack abs and six inches! In America, the average man is five foot nine inches. The average salary is \$40,000. Men have to have less than 10% body fat to have a six pack. In one of the world's most obese countries, this represents less than 5% of the American male population. And as for the six inches - well, the average is about five and a half inches when 'ready'.

5-10% of the men who check all those boxes, receive 90-95% of the attention online. While the remaining 90-95% of men, receive only 5-10% attention from women. The same applies to women: the most visually attractive women receive 95% of the attention from men online.

Here's the thing: single women who rate themselves as 'very desirable' are all competing for the exact same, very small number of men. They are under the mistaken belief that these are the highest-calibre men. Many of them are absolutely not. Those women just think they are.

The men who fit this profile, know very well indeed that they are in huge demand by most of these single women. Many have become 'players' who are having a ball. They have the golden ticket to the largest sweet shops in the world. They can pick, choose, 'pump and dump' as many of these women as they want to. And they do. Those women in turn often feel cheated and used. Wrongly concluding if the 'best' men are this bad, every other man must be worse!

Elena is a very good, long-standing friend. She's single, intelligent, beautiful, very feminine and elegant, solvent and a talented artist and sculptor. Most of her time online was spent filtering out the torrent of men wanting to date her. She told me about a particular man she'd been in touch with online. She was very keen indeed. At last she thought, here was someone worth all the effort. But added *"I learned a very hard lesson from him. One day he stopped responding to my messages. Normally, I'd just shrug my shoulders and accept it - but he was different, so I messaged him to ask why he was ignoring her. His response shocked me. He said "You didn't make enough effort". I'd attended a dating seminar and the dating expert told us NOT to show how keen we are. I blew it because of that advice. My message to all single women is - if you are keen on someone - don't play games - demonstrate how keen you are! Don't wait days to respond to messages with just one line of text. Men gauge sincere interest on how much thought and time you invest in your messaging and other communication"*.

Some go to the other extreme. Take 42-year-old Lisa Catalano in California, who, after years of frustration online, rented billboards along a highway offering her hand in marriage. She insisted it wasn't a stunt but a genuine attempt to find a husband. And spent a lot of real money doing it. Perhaps she'll succeed. Perhaps not. But the gesture tells us how broken and demoralising the mainstream options feel for a great many single people.

So how did we get here?

All of this has unfolded largely within the last fifteen years. The goal of this book has always been to offer an alternative, more authentic approach that favours character, clarity, and commitment: not gimmicks, manipulative techniques or fake glamour.

There *is* a solution, but it requires a different mindset. And different behaviours. Most single people will carry on doing what isn't working, and they'll try even harder or give up entirely when it inevitably fails.

What Made This Book Different in 2011 – And Why It's Needed Even More Now

When this book was originally published, it attracted a lot of media attention because of its unique approach. YOU, the UK's largest circulation women's supplement in the Mail on Sunday newspaper published a double-page article about it.

Journalists are constantly bombarded with requests from publicists and public relations professionals to persuade them to feature their clients in their publications. So, imagine my surprise when a CNN reporter in the US actually contacted me to find out more about the unique approach in the book. She gave the resulting article this title "*It's really NOT him. It's YOU*".


The point is about becoming the sort of person who naturally fits a healthy, long-term, loving relationship—because of who you are, what you value and how well you are prepared to treat others.

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It's really NOT him, it's YOU

By **Jacque Wilson**, CNN
November 16, 2010 -- Updated 1353 GMT (2153 HKT)



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Roy Sheppard says a fish adorns his book as a reference to the advice, "There are plenty more fish in the sea."

STORY HIGHLIGHTS

- British relationship author writes about how to be "The One" for someone
- Don't ask, "How can I find that special someone?" but "How can I be that special someone?"
- Author suggests improving your emotional core: self-esteem, happiness, attitude and kindness

(CNN) -- Scary thought -- with more than 98 million single people in the United States alone, you're simply one of many fish in the sea.

Even scarier -- after years of searching for that special someone, "The One" might reject YOU because you're not "The One" for them.

British relationship expert Roy Sheppard has a new book, "How to Be The One," explaining how to strengthen your emotional core through four pillars -- self esteem, attitude, happiness and kindness/compassion -- in order to make sure you're ready for that moment.

This book's previous title.

Your Emotional Core: The Foundation That Works

As mentioned earlier, at the heart of this book is what I call your **Emotional Core**—four emotional 'muscles' you can actively develop to improve your inner strength and flexibility, making you more able to bounce back quickly from emotional upsets.

Later chapters go into practical detail about how to develop each of the following:

1. **Self-Esteem:** Not arrogance, not self-loathing—but self-respect rooted in reality.
2. **Attitude:** How a bad attitude makes you disagreeable. And how to replace them with the qualities that make you far more agreeable and attractive.
3. **Genuinely Deep Happiness:** A baseline of well-being that isn't hostage to other people's approval. And
4. ??

Years ago, a female journalist wrote a generous 5 page feature on the book but left out the fourth pillar of the book. When I asked why, she said, "Our

readers are cool. Kindness isn't cool". I disagree. Men tell me kindness is extremely rare among the women they have dated. Women say they long for it too—but fear it will be mistaken for weakness. And is perhaps why so many single people put on a hard exterior to act as a protective shield against getting hurt. A stronger emotional core allows you to be a kinder person with the confidence to deal with a relationship that might not work out. The truth is: kindness without boundaries is weakness; kindness with boundaries is strength. A robust emotional core allows you to be kind without being a doormat.

If you develop these four emotional 'muscles', two things can happen. First, you become a more appealing partner. Second, you get better at identifying who is right for you—against those who simply **look** right in a highly filtered photo.

Over the years I have been invited to speak at various conferences for single people. These are almost entirely attended by single women - hardly any men. The majority of women consistently complained about what was wrong with all the men they'd met. Never accepting that they too could possibly be part of the problem. Single women repeatedly told me at the time *"If he loved me. He'd take me as I am. I don't need to improve"*. Their message was clear: *"I'm already perfect as I am"*. or *"He must accommodate me"*.

They really didn't think they needed to put in any effort (beyond investing hours doing their makeup and choosing an outfit that makes them look as hot as possible).

Could it be they are single because they are not as perfect as they think?

Many years ago I wrote an article for the Huffington Post entitled '*Date Hot. Avoid Cold. Marry Warm*'. I believe successful long-term relationships require mutual warmth. Developing your emotional core helps achieve that.

The Cult of 'Chemistry' — and How It Misleads You

Apps have magnified an old myth: that great relationships begin with 'fireworks': unless there's an instant lightning bolt—sparks, butterflies, the whole cinematic rush—you should move on. In reality, instant chemistry is a notoriously poor predictor of long-term compatibility.

How well has instant chemistry worked for you so far? You're still single, right?

Values, character, and compatibility matter far more. And apply regardless of gender, sexual preference or persuasion.

But apps—by design—make those deeper qualities hard (or even impossible) to see. You can't tell from a short profile whether someone keeps promises, is kind or generous under pressure, or tells the truth when telling the truth could be costly. The apps always focus almost exclusively on the superficial: superficiality rarely leads to a long-term, mutually happy shared life.

But these deeper qualities can appear SO boring, if you are constantly seeking (or demanding) 'excitement' in your relationships.

The irony is brutal: the more you chase chemistry and drama, the more you miss the people you could build a peaceful, joyful life with. This book will help you see deeper - both into yourself and those you get to know in the future.

AttractIQ: A Practical Tool for Seeing Yourself More Clearly

An app called **AttractIQ** is being developed based on Chapter 2 of this book (*Project YOU*). It helps improve your relationship intelligence by assessing your values and relationship priorities, then invites anonymous feedback from people who know you well. The app aggregates the data, placing your self-view alongside others' anonymous perceptions, so you can spot gaps and blind spots. And work on improving them if you want to be 'relationship-ready' when you meet that special person.

This is about accuracy and getting real. If your self-portrait is wildly optimistic (or unfairly harsh), you will be more likely to make poor choices. AttractIQ builds on the *Emotional Core* framework to make better-informed relationship decisions. Check the App Store or Play Store. If it's there, use it. If it isn't yet, keep an eye out—it's coming!



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The Expectations–Reality Gap

Another modern distortion is the gap between expectations and reality. Social media and dating apps inflate perceived desirability. For example, a woman who receives hundreds of likes and messages concludes, understandably, that her market value is sky-high—when the truth may be that most of those men swipe on nearly everyone, hoping for any response. A man, receiving almost no engagement, assumes he’s worthless—when the truth may be that his presentation is weak, his photos are poor, or he’s simply not being seen by the right audience.

For older single women who want children, biology matters. Fertility declines sharply after the mid-30s, and it is not a moral judgement to say so—it’s a medical reality. That reality collides with career ambitions, cultural messaging (“*You can have it all, later*”), and a dating market in which many men prefer to start families with younger partners. The result is heartbreak. Some resort to risky strategies such as intentional ‘accidental’ pregnancies or calculated ‘love-bombing’ to lure an unsuspecting man into believing she’s into ‘him’, rather than how she is setting him up to provide for her. None of these end well.

Meanwhile, many men hesitate to date single mothers, not because these women are undesirable, but because most prefer to build their own family, not raise someone else’s kids. They also recognise a hard truth: in any healthy household, the children always come first. Love her as he might, a man will always be at least second, third or fourth to her kids. For some men, that’s noble, understandable and acceptable; for others, it’s a deal-breaker. Honesty about those differences saves everyone time and pain.

The Case Against the Online Dating Industry

Online dating is not your only option to meet someone. Indeed, I would invite you to consider the downside to dating apps. Just imagine if the dating industry were in the dock, the charges might read as follows:

1. **Dehumanisation:** Apps have reduced people to swipeable, easily replaceable commodities.
2. **Psychological Harm:** Constant rejection inevitably erodes self-esteem and fuels anxiety and depression—especially in men, who receive fewer matches and messages for the reasons stated earlier.
3. **Unrealistic Standards:** Filters and endless choice, create illusions about availability and what’s normal and achievable. People hold out for ideals that simply don’t exist.

4. **Undermining Commitment:** A revolving door of options fosters caution, distrust, comparison, and the fear of ‘settling’ - what if there was someone ‘better’ out there for me? This mindset is poison to long-term relationships.
5. **Biological Betrayal:** Apps encourage people to ignore time-sensitive realities around fertility and family planning, particularly for women who want children.
6. **Family Breakdown:** It’s now too easy to replace a partner (in theory at least) at the first signs of tension or difficulties in a relationship. The downstream effects of delayed commitment could conceivably (forgive the pun) mean far fewer children in the future. Imagine how that might impact the future need for teachers. No one to teach. As a result of more single people living alone - this puts enormous pressure on housing. Because of housing shortages, this has already led to a global increase in rents charged by landlords.
7. **Loneliness Epidemic:** With more people living alone, hyper-connection online has produced isolation offline. The human need for belonging is unmet by algorithms. Widespread social anxiety as a longer-term consequence of the pandemic and fears that initiating even innocent conversations with strangers, could be interpreted as a threat to the person’s safety, has had a devastating effect on the human need for social interaction.

The dating industry promised love and delivered despair. It promised connection and delivered loneliness. It promised freedom and delivered fear.

As I stated earlier, online dating is only ONE of your options for meeting a future partner. Don’t have all your eggs in one basket. You don’t have to play by the rules of the masses. So make it a priority to grow a social network - even if the very thought of it currently fills you with dread. To learn these social skills, read or listen to my short eBook and audiobook ‘*Meet Greet and Prosper*’.

Education, Debt, and Status: The Hidden Filters

Another misalignment sits quietly beneath the surface: **status signalling**. University-educated women with large student debts often won’t date men without degrees—even when those men, trained in skilled trades, are debt-free, in high demand, and earn excellent money doing work that AI cannot currently replace. The degree becomes a filter for compatibility when, in reality, **values, reliability, and shared life vision** matter far more to long-term happiness than the letters after your name.

Add to this the way debt laws work in some jurisdictions. In many countries if one person has large debts, their spouse automatically shares the liability for that debt. In those cases, you can see why many men feel the odds are stacked against them in this way too. It's not misogyny to notice these things. It's prudent to calculate the true cost of a partnership before you sign your name to it.

Dating Apps: their impact on Sexual Health

Apps have made casual sex so much easier to access, which has driven up rates of certain infections across age groups. Older adults re-entering the dating pool after divorce or widowhood—who grew up in an era when pregnancy, not STIs, was the primary concern—often underestimate the risks. Younger single adults, who enjoy the 'hook-up' culture, have become cavalier when it comes sexual intimacy. Women's empowerment has also led to a culture (predominantly in the west) where it's an entitlement for any woman to have as many sexual partners as she wants (known as their 'bodycount'). These 'fun-loving', promiscuous women may not be aware of the following:

30 plus years ago, I had my own primetime LBC radio show in London. It featured highly successful people from all walks of life who talked about how they achieved their career success. One guest stands out: Dr Carl Djerassi. He became known as *'the father of the birth control pill'*. I asked *"Have you been successful in your life and career?"* He paused before saying *"No."* And then added *"I set out to find a cure for cancer. But I am singularly responsible for the global explosion of cervical cancer"*. While the pill gave women unprecedented control over fertility for the first time in history, it also led to a massive rise in HPV-linked cervical cancer. The core medical point matters here: for women, multiple sexual partners can dramatically increase the likelihood of exposure to high-risk HPV strains. Inconsistent condom use offers only partial protection. None of this is moralising: just a sober reminder that our bodies keep score, no matter how clever our apps have become.

The Social Experiment Gone Wrong—And How We Repair It

So much has changed in the last 15 years: smartphones, social media, swipe culture, the professionalisation of 'influencing,' and the capture of attention by algorithms. But the fundamentals of human flourishing haven't changed at all. People still long to be recognised, loved and appreciated for who they are. They still thrive in relationships where trust is earned, forgiveness is practised, and promises are kept. The path to that kind of life has never been easy. It is, however, simple—and it looks nothing like the gamified, anxious,

surface-driven circus the dating industry has built - and profited from at our expense.

When you stack all the factors in this chapter together it's a social experiment that made us hyper-connected and heartbreakingly alone. But just accepting and absorbing the despair is a poor strategy. Awareness is the first step; agency is the second. We cannot change the apps, but we can opt out of the parts that harm us. We cannot make kindness 'cool,' but we can make it non-negotiable in our own lives - first towards ourselves as well as to others.

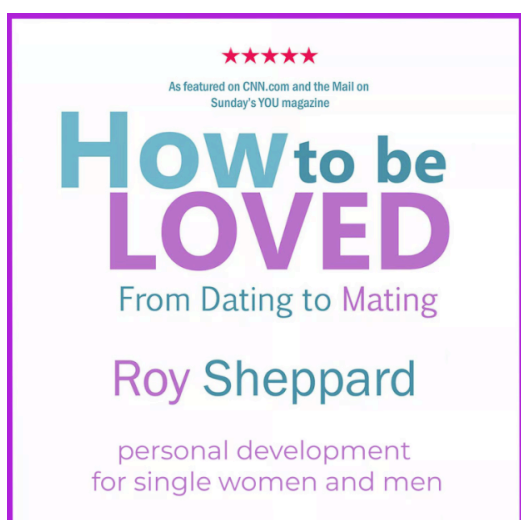
Where You Go From Here

If you're a single woman or man who would rather not be single, the rest of this book is for you to help chart a practical way forward. You'll learn how to strengthen your Emotional Core, how to evaluate partners by principles rather than their photography skills, how to make decisions more confidently that are aligned to your deepest values, and how to build the kind of relationship that can last for decades.

In the chapters that follow, please be open to new ways of thinking that lead to new behaviours that have the power to improve your self-esteem, attitude, happiness, and kindness. This will better equip you when meeting and getting to know others in a more open, yet discerning way - being a more enlightened adult, in a childish culture.

The work is simple, not easy. It asks for courage, restraint, patience, and hope. But the reward is everything the apps promised and didn't deliver: a partner who chooses you and keeps choosing you; a home that feels safe and alive; and a future you are proud to build together.

If that's what you want, read on...



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