

The 85% Man and Lessons from Lucille

The Ultimate Guide to Love Long and Prosper.

DRAFT VERSION FOR PUBLISHER'S PROOFING

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REVIEWS

“I loved this book. If I read this story when I was in my twenties, it would have saved me tremendous pain and a lot of money. I’ll make sure to give my grandson and copy so he’s prepared for his life. It made me wish I was at the family dinner table with Lucille. Very educational and funny.”

-Robert Cronin

Nationally recognized artists/painter

“We loved the story of Bob’s family. His dating experiences, supported by Lucille’s guidance, made us laugh, and we related with many of his men vs. women anecdotes. We enjoyed the journey of Lucille and Pops, and truly felt the pain of their tragic losses. We highly recommend this book for couples to read together.”

-Leighs Church & Dr. Sharon Cantor Church

Silicon Valley retired executive & acclaimed psychologist

“It grabbed me right away, and it was an easy read. I learned a lot that will help me be more successful in addressing the challenges in my marriage. This is a book any man or woman can relate to and Bob’s sense of humor kept a tragic family journey heartfelt! I love the intrigue of old west and adventure novels and this was a fascinating, unique voyage. This is a must have guide for every adult male.”

-Deano Lovecchio

Chef, entrepreneur, everyman, married for 10 years.

“This book changed my relationship thinking. I was entertained and engaged the entire way, and it really helped me evaluate what I want in a man. I highly recommend this book to all women trying to understand the man they’re with or seeking. It made me laugh, cry, and think deeply. I’m an avid romance and relationship book reader, and I’ve put this at the top of my ‘favorites’ list.”

-Dina Kelley

Business executive, divorcee, 85% woman.

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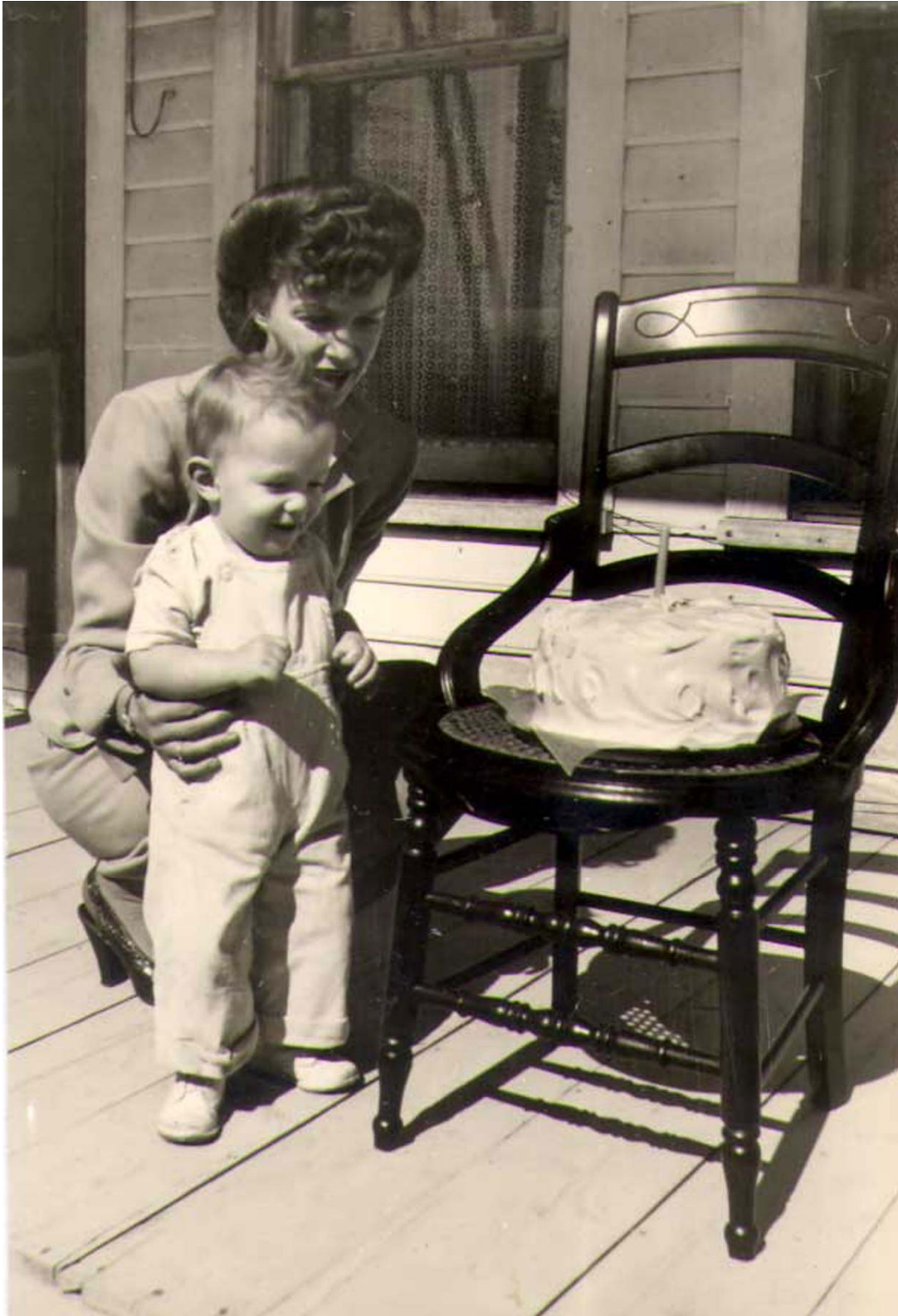
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Dedicated to the first woman I ever loved.

My mother,

Lucille Elizabeth Peak.



My first birthday on the farm in Butler, Missouri with Lucille.

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PREFACE

Everything my mother told me about women is true... and I can prove it.

NO ONE IS SMARTER OR COOLER THAN A MOM, and mine was no exception. Lucille's Lessons may have originated from reading books and magazines, watching TV, listening to the radio, or from her fondness for talking to everyone like they were her best friend. But, much of her genius was instilled from her childhood at the elbow of a wise father and a loving mother, and her life experiences at a very young age. Every event was absorbed and distilled for wisdom-on-demand.

Whether in casual after-school chats or questions about topics I couldn't decipher on my own, Lucille delivered up pearls that would resonate with me for the rest of my life. Regardless of their derivation, to me, Lucille's Lessons were sage original wisdoms. *The 85% Man* is about surviving every possible phase of dating, marriage and divorce, children, romance in the Internet age, and finally, confronting the truth about yourself.

In my youth, I did not take parental advice to heart. After all, what your parents told you not to do - drinking, smoking, having sex, partying after midnight, driving too fast, dating the wrong person - was always so much fun. Why listen to them? Time would answer that question.

My quest for a relationship like my parents has spanned three decades with a couple of marriages, several long-term romances, hundreds of online introductions, many fix-ups via friends, chance encounters, and dating service introductions. During my searches, either early on, during, or at the end of a connection, Lucille's words would bubble up in my brain. When I started digital-dating, I began to document each meeting. Initially it was to remember

introductory phone conversations or information women had posted in their online profiles. Later, my notes became interesting reading to track preliminary information versus actual meetings. In the absence of a second date or at the end of any extended connection, my choice or theirs, Lucille's observations started to form a pattern. Mom's tutelage became a serious guide for nipping dating disasters in the bud. In the worst cases, her Lessons became hindsight regrets for, "I should have listened to my mother."

DON'T GO DOWN ALONE



YOU'RE IN A SCARY MOVIE AT THE TOP OF THE BASEMENT STAIRS. The camera perspective looks up from a pitch black. You flick the light switch up and down as the dark void remains unchanged. The creepy music intensifies. You look down and hesitate before taking a first step. Your mother yells out from the audience, "Don't go down there!" But... you go down.

With your trusty old flashlight in hand, you head down the stairway. Half way down, your light flickers and dies. You're forced to feel your way through the dark. You push through the cobwebs and spiders, creaking noises, and the obligatory cat jumping and screeching. Where the hell did that cat come from? Arriving at the bottom of the stairs, there's a dim light from the tiny window up in the corner. You turn, and out of the shadows... YIKES! There's the monster your mother tried to warn you about. There's no escape. If only you'd listened to your mom.

In *The 85% Man and Lessons from Lucille*, I've shared Lucille's wisdom to keep you from going into that scary basement defenseless. Men are dumb enough to go into the gloom against all advice. Women are much smarter, and they only go into the basement because it's part of a romance novel lodged in their imagination. Their prince is down below, and venturing into the dark holds the promise of living happily ever after.

When the dead light switch and the creepy music don't alarm you, then perhaps sharing my conversations with Lucille, and my missteps, can keep you from going down those dark stairs alone. If you do go, you may be better equipped to handle what's in that basement. If you find you are the monster below, maybe we can keep you from dispatching the less-than-perfect person who stumbles down to meet you.

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INTRODUCTION

LUCILLE WAS BORN in the small farming town of Butler, Missouri, March 19, 1918. Her parents, Mack and Ruth, were fifth generation Danish farmers whose parents came to America in the mid-1800s. During The Great Depression, Lucille and her older sister Maxine never felt the national destitution. The farm offered food and a roof over their heads. It was a great farm with several hundred head of Black Angus cattle, hogs, chickens, two barns, wheat and corn fields, and a catfish pond. Lucille and Maxine rode to school together on a horse that carried them through the heat, the rain, and the ice and snow of Missouri weather.

Chasing down a chicken from the coop for that night's dinner, or milking the dairy cow for breakfast, both girls learned to work hard without complaint. Their Midwestern values were instilled by loving parents. Mack was a strong male role model who tutored his girls in how to respect and love a man. Ruth was a loving mother who nurtured her girls, and taught them the reward of unselfish love. The girls developed internal strengths to support the future hardships they would face. They acquired a strong work-reward ethic coupled with a naiveté and vulnerability, which made them incredibly beautiful women.

LUCILLE WAS DECLARED DEAD WHEN SHE WAS EIGHT. Lucille contracted scarlet fever, and before the availability of antibiotics in 1935, it was a major cause of death. Lucille succumbed to the disease and stopped breathing. The local country doctor had been called to the farm, and he declared her dead. Placed on a stretcher and covered, Lucille was being carried to the ambulance when Maxine ran from the house and started screaming, "She's not dead. She's not dead. You can't take her. Lucy, don't go. Don't go. Come back!"

Lucille sat up on the stretcher and took a huge breath like a drowning victim breaching the surface. Maxine rushed to Lucille and hugged her with an embrace that Superman couldn't pry apart.

When she first told me this, I jokingly asked the obvious question, "Did you see the light?"

"Yes," she responded with a bright-eyed recall. "It was just like they say. There were mom and dad, and grandpa and grandma smiling and waving for me to come to them. Then I heard Maxine's voice calling. Don't go. Come back. I opened my eyes, and she was hugging me."

This explained a lot about Lucille's incredible strength and attitude toward life's challenges. If you survive death, you get a second chance. Lucille treated everyday like it was her last. At age 40, she contracted bronchiectasis and had her right lung removed in a near-fatal operation in Wiesbaden, Germany. She lived the next half of her life with one lung and it never slowed her down. She didn't complain. She barely mentioned it, except for one time. She showed me the scar that ran down her back from her shoulder to her waist. It made me shiver. She smiled and said, "I have one to match in the front." This was her third chance at life.

Lucille never had a bad word to say about anyone, saw the best in people she met, and learned everything about that person so she could understand how to relate to them. Coming from California on a business trip to Houston where my family lived at the time, I brought my friend Larry to the house to stay for a few days. Lucille struck up a conversation with Larry for about an hour before we went to a meeting in town. Over the next few days, we ate breakfast and dinner with family. Larry was very picky when it came to his diet. When we left for California,

Larry remarked, “Your mom served my favorite foods at every meal. Was that a coincidence? And, how did she know my favorite TV shows? I don’t remember telling her that.”

It was no coincidence if Lucille treated you like family, and her recall was incredible. In high school if I liked a girl, I brought her home for dinner. That was the way to seal the deal. If we broke up, chances were I’d see the old flame at the dinner table sitting with Lucille like one of her girlfriends. It was a tad embarrassing with new potential sweethearts, but they understood after meeting Lucille.

Dinner usually had 7-10 people, which included Lucille, dad, or as we called him, ‘Pops,’ my four siblings, and other guests of honor. There were extra chairs for anyone who might join the ‘more the merrier party.’ Manners be damned, it was our job was to make Hamm's Beer come of Pops’ nose. A request to pass the baked potatoes would produce a hot potato flying through the air to the other end, speared by the requester’s fork. With dogs and cats under the table, family and good friends next you, dinner was a major social event we anticipated nightly. Conversation was a competition and Pops was our jovial judge.

When Lucille left the farm about 1941, she became a legal secretary in Kansas City, Kansas. She also competed in big city beauty contests. She met my father, Robert Weldon Peak, at a USO dance in Kansas City. They were married shortly after in 1943 before Pops went off to World War II. They had six children and a great life together. I was the oldest of their six children and benefited from a lot of time with mom and pops before my brothers and sisters arrived.

When I was 5-years-old, my first sister, Carole Anne, died of SIDS about five weeks after her birth. Less than a year later, my four other siblings arrived, each about one year apart, and they occupied most of mom’s time. Inquiring how they all spawned so quickly, Pops would

recall the old Groucho Marx TV show, *You Bet Your Life*. Groucho asked a contestant if she was married and had kids.

“Yes, Groucho, I have eleven children,” the contestant replied.

“Eleven. Did you say eleven kids?” Groucho asked.

“Well, I love my husband.”

Groucho took his trademark cigar from his mouth and said, “Lady, I love my cigar, but I take it out of my mouth once in a while.”

This was early in Groucho’s career and censors did not let the exchange get on the air. Fortunately it was recorded and played in later years. Pops loved Groucho, Sid Caesar, Victor Borge, and the like. Pops was a great storyteller and audience. Everyone in the family learned to use laughter for the household medicine.

Mom’s day started making breakfast for the mob, shipping them off to school and work, shopping and housework, then dinner, and bedtime. Every day she’d listen to the radio, have the TV on, read magazines and the newspaper while doing chores. In the evenings, she shared any knowledge she’d obtained that day. She could carry on an informed discussion with anyone about anything in any setting.

I had a morning paper route from age fourteen to eighteen through high school in El Paso, Texas. I got up at 3:00 AM to roll 1,100 daily papers. Lucille would drive me through the neighborhood at 6:00 AM, going 40 MPH in our Plymouth station wagon, as The El Paso Times spewed out of the back.

I was a major night owl in school. When I got my first car, I’d come home about 11 PM during the week. Sometimes Lucille would get up and ask if I wanted anything to eat. She’d

make something, sit and talk with me, then go back to sleep. When I went into my room, on my bed were articles cut from the newspaper, Life, Look, National Geographic, Boy's Life, or other magazines. These were items mom thought I should read. I'd climb into bed, read, and then go to sleep. Only years later with my own kids could I appreciate the tireless work she put in to keep everyone fed and well read.

The later stages of Pops and Lucille's life would bring unbearable tragedy, but their young lives, and their children's lives, were filled with joy and love. They were known by their kids as mom and Pops, Bob and Lucille, the head baboon and momma monkey, or other endearments we would concoct. It may seem disingenuous to call your mother by her first name, but we did it with great affection. B.B. King named his guitar Lucille. Little Richard sold millions with his hit, "Lucille." Lucille Ball was one of the funniest women on the planet. Everyone loved the name and the woman.

Pops was an Air Force officer and pilot. He retired as a full Colonel at Biggs AFB in El Paso, as Commander of the 95th Field Maintenance Squadron. Later, they moved to Houston, Texas for the duration of their lives. They were part of *The Greatest Generation*, as described by Tom Brokaw. Pops was stationed on Okinawa, one of the bloodiest battles of the Pacific during WWII. Life for him was also a second chance. He survived WWII, but lost many friends. With Lucille and Pops, we lived in ten different U.S. states, and overseas in Germany. We learned about the world, people, races, religions, and different cultures first hand.

It's not like Pops didn't give me advice. He taught me how to fish and clean a bass, hunt and dress a quail, and how to rebuild a Chevrolet engine. Pops took me flying for my first birthday, and I cried the entire trip. By age ten, I was able to do touch-and-go landings in a single-engine plane. Like most men, he didn't talk about it. He just showed you.

One day I was rebuilding the heads on my 1957 Chevy 283 motor. The manual called for 75 foot-pounds of torque on the headbolts. Pops worked on B-52s and fighter jets, and it was done by-the-book, to military specs. As he came into the garage, I was tightening a headbolt and decided that if 75 pounds were good, then 90 pounds would be better. SNAP! The bolt head cracked off in the torque wrench. Pops leaned over and asked what happened.

I said, "I gave it a few extra pounds of torque for good measure."

Pops looked at the engine build specs sitting on the fender. "They train and pay engineers at GM to write those manuals to exact specifications you know."

"Well, we learn by screwing up," I responded.

Pops took a drag off his Camel cigarette, a swig of his Hamm's Beer and said, "In that case, I guess you'll be a genius one day."

Pops' examples are something he handed down to me, and along with Lucille's wisdoms, it's my inherent task to share those with my kids. Experiencing my mistakes and taking mental notes along the way, my children should achieve semi-genius status much earlier than I did. But, there's that ignoring-your-parents thing, so maybe not. Hopefully, you will benefit from *The 85% Man and Lessons from Lucille*, and become a genius without screwing up more than necessary.



Lessons from Lucille and advice from Pops. Every kid should be lucky enough to have shared my childhood.



BEFORE WE GO ON

I'M NOT A RELATIONSHIP EXPERT, psychologist, doctor, or Ph.D. in human behavior.

There are many good books reflecting extensive couple's counseling and individual analyses.

I've benefited from therapy, and there are learned professionals with the training and experience that can help you. *The 85% Man* is not about couple's research or advice, rather my shared personal experiences reflecting upon Lucille's words that may become teachable or 'aha!' moments.

After a painful divorce, I tried to find books to read to understand my situation. There just weren't any, because men don't buy these books. The most helpful book I read was the best seller by Gail Sheehy, *Passages*, first published in 1976. Others like, *Smart Women/Foolish Choices: Finding the Right Man. Avoiding the Wrong One*, by Dr. Connell Cowan and Dr. Melvyn Kinder, 1986; *Women Who Love Too Much*, by Robin Norwood, 1985; and, *Men are from Mars, Women are from Venus*, by John Gray, PhD, 1992; were written mainly for women.

They're good opposite team playbooks. There was sparse self-help for men in these books, except for *Passages*. Professional, personal Jungian-based psychology was most helpful to me personally. My goal with *The 85% Man*, is to take a man's perspective on relationships – mine and my male friends – supported by findings of my CRO (Chief Relationship Officer), Lucille, and offer our views on men and women equally.

I haven't had a 30 year marriage that uncovered some secret formula. Long-term relationships are as much luck-of-the-draw as any recipe for success. Contrasting Pops and Lucille's marriage, and my own multifaceted relationship experiences, you may be able to gain insights into how to get more out of any personal or romantic relationship.

I am the product of marriages and divorces, navigator of the seemingly unending dating gauntlet, and survivor of real love battlefield experiences. In many chapters, I've described a specific woman or relationship that applied to one of Lucille's Lessons. These are real women and real experiences. The names have been changed to protect the innocent, namely me. I've described encounters with women who epitomize Lucille's foretelling. These encounters may have been over the phone, online, over coffee or dinner, in long-term relationships, in marriage, or worst of all, during and after divorce.

For my female readers, let me apologize in advance for being a guy, using analogies and quotes from *The Godfather* and other macho movies, employing statistics, and drawing parallels with various business paradigms. This is how a man's brain works. I had to solve my relationship problems for myself using therapy, reading, and Lucille's Lessons, then validate it with real world experiences. Now I'm happy to share what I've learned. For my male readers, you know what I'm talking about.



If you're brave enough to go down into that dark basement, then Lucille's Lessons can guide you. If you find yourself relating to any of the women in that gloomy cellar, you will have to decide if you want to be a better monster or continue to destroy everyone who ventures into the shadows to meet you.



I.

UNDERSTANDING AND FINDING GOOD RELATIONSHIPS

A general synopsis of men and women.

What makes them tick... and tock.

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1.

WHOA... DIFFERENCES

“Men and women aren't from different planets, they're from different universes. They have nothing in common, and I'm not sure why they ever get married.”

Lucille

POPS AND LUCILLE WERE MARRIED FOR OVER 50 YEARS. During this period of wedded and dreaded bliss, there were many moments when mom just shook her head in wonder at heterosexual marriage.

On one occasion, Pops had come home from hunting. There were dead ducks, blood, and feathers all over the kitchen. Looking at the macho carnage, Lucille commented, “I’m not sure why men and women get married to each other. If men married men, and women married women, this mess would never happen.” She meant that literally and figuratively. “They don’t need to have sex, just get married and live peacefully ever after.”

Once when the family was watching an episode of Star Trek, my sister Debbie marveled about marrying someone from another planet. Lucille quipped, “They tried that with men and women on Earth and it didn’t work. It’s a good thing Star Trek is exploring other universes. They might solve the mysteries of marriage.”

Lucille loved Pops and kidded him a lot. These comments never fazed him, and we usually had a good laugh at his expense. Pops knew he was a better man for being with Lucille. There were a lot of things that they never had to discuss because it was understood. They were

both from small towns in Missouri, had simple expectations for marriage, and lived full lives together and when Pops was away on duty. You could say it was a simpler time, because it was. Lucille expected to shop, cook dinner, raise the kids, do laundry, and pay the bills. Like life on the farm, she worked hard and never complained.

Pops did his part by being the breadwinner and a good father. He smoked when it was socially acceptable and cool, à la “*Mad Men*,” and because they issued him Camels in his military rations. He tipped his ashes in his pants cuffs when there was no ashtray. He was a great pilot, but a terrible driver who scared Lucille half to death. Pops never changed a poopy diaper, and he left a mess when he repaired anything in the house. Overall, he was Lucille’s 85% Man. Gender roles have changed and the world is much more complex today, but men and women will always have basic differences.

Following is what Lucille knew earlier than me, and what I learned over three decades of relationships and friendships.

MEN VERSUS WOMEN

These are some of my observations of things that men and women say and do differently. They are basic observations gleaned from therapy, reading relationship books and articles (I'm in the minority for men here), listening to Lucille, and living through these diversities. Printing a complete list would require decimating the Redwood Forests of the Pacific Northwest.

MAIN DIFFERENCE

Men: Are morons Women: Are smarter

There's one thing we can all agree on: men, in general, are morons. They start all the wars, run and ruin countries, commit the murders, destroy the environment, steal all the money, and never ask for directions or admit they're wrong. It comes with owning a penis. Lucille asked me if I knew why men named their penises. I shrugged, no.

“Because, if someone is going to be making most of your decisions, you want to be on a first name basis,” she said.

Reminder: Get a name for my little buddy before my next dumb exploit.

I'm sure our first woman president will be proof for this conclusion. Until then, we'll assume this as our base disparity.

CONFLICTS

Men: Change partners Women: Change their man

Men hate conflict in relationships. Her four words, “We need to talk,” are scarier than any *Friday the 13th* and *Nightmare on Elm Street* movies combined. Men take conflict as complaining or criticism, and withdraw. Men want to solve problems versus listening, learning, and growing. It’s easier to change partners and hope the new person won’t complain or ‘need to talk.’ Women want to fix their man and get him to change to make her happy, which is impossible on both counts.

My friend Charlie got divorced five years ago. He left a 25 year marriage he characterized as nothing but nagging and complaining. Shortly thereafter, he met a woman 15 years younger, had a hot romance, and remarried. I saw him a few years after the second marriage was in full swing, and the passion had died a bit. I asked Charlie, “How’s the new marriage going?”

Charlie groaned and replied, “Ahhh. You know.”

That’s guy code for, “I changed partners but not problems.” Women are smart enough to stick around and try to fix the existing relationship, but not quite smart enough to recognize when the man can’t be fixed. Women are just smarter than the average man.

COMMUNICATION

Men: She’s overreacting Women: He’s not listening

Men will dismiss women as overreacting when they communicate or complain. Women are sure men aren’t listening because they’re not agreeing with them. When men and women talk, it is tough for each party to hear the same thing. This lack of comprehension leads to arguments. But

even in arguments, it takes about three minutes before a woman will criticize a man about ‘how’ he is arguing, and then all communications are lost. Men just want to make a point and move on, and that’s not going to happen.

Men are very literal and will try to be direct in problem solving to end a discussion. Women are indirect in communications and men are left to guess what is wrong, because he should know (be sensitive to) her needs. A woman’s dialogue often includes words like, ‘never’ and ‘always,’ to dramatize the exchange. Women want to be right, and men want to win and have a beer.

Men are consummate salesmen. One year, when I was managing a large sales staff, I handed out gag-gift awards. Nick was a great salesman, but he didn’t listen very well. I awarded him a pair of rubber Star Trek Spock Ears in recognition of his inability to listen or respond logically. We dubbed it the ‘Transmit Only’ award. He was not untypical of the successful sales team members.

For men, their business communications and sales training is taken into romantic relationships. Sales training shows men how to overcome objections, make your ideas the customer’s ideas, and get the customer to keep saying, “Yes.” You keep transmitting and never accept incoming messages. Women are tough customers and they want to be heard, not managed or controlled, and they’re not buying the crap men are selling.

A classic example is the 1980 Kurt Russell movie, *Used Cars*. Kurt trains his burly mechanic Jim, to sell cars, telling him it’s easy, just get the prospective buyer to sit in the car. The next day a meek customer is approached by Jim who asks him if he likes the car, the color, and the size, to get him to repeatedly say, “Yes.” When Jim tries to get the customer to sit in the

car, the old man resists and says he's just looking. Frustrated, Jim grabs him and shoves him into the car telling him, "Just get in the damn car."

No matter how hard men try, women are not getting in that used car. Men should switch off transmit only, and grow some Spock Ears. She may actually want to buy his used car some day without being forced into it.

SCOREKEEPING

Men: Sports only Women: Everything, all the time

I've never met a woman who didn't keep score. A man can only tell you the sports scores. A woman's mental scoreboard tallies with garbage removal, errands, gifts, compliments, favors, or anything she does that she thinks her man should or could do also. A man may be heavily discounted for things he doesn't do, even when he's not sure what he didn't do. Men can pay bills, fix the car, mow the lawn, take his wife to dinner or on vacation, and they count for naught. These are things he should do, not things she rates as romantic scoring events.

When a woman says to a man, "I do everything around here," this embellishment tells a man he does nothing. This is because in her mind, it's not that he does nothing, but rather the score is not even. She took out the trash last time, so it's his turn now. The score's uneven, and he's done nothing lately. If he hasn't initiated sex in a while, he loses a butt-load of points, requiring superhuman effort to get back to a level playing field. That's his job, not hers.

Men don't keep score, so they only remember the last thing they did to try to make her happy, like spending money to fix her car. The car is a man's thing, so that doesn't count in her score book. Men think this is a big thing because of the money, but she discounts it as a non-scoring event, the money doesn't count.

I was discussing this with my good friend Robert one day. He'd taken his wife on an impromptu, romantic vacation, the cool thing a man should do. He related this scorekeeping event to me. "We went to Hawaii for a week, stayed at the Halekulani Hotel, had romantic walks on the beach, expensive dinners, a helicopter tour, a dinner cruise, and the works. It cost me about \$10,000. We get home, and the following weekend, and we're having a quiet, humdrum Saturday evening. She looked at me and said, 'I'm bored. We never go anywhere or do anything.' You could have knocked me over with a fart. When I reminded her we just got back from Hawaii, she said that didn't count. I'm not sure how she was keeping score, but that was a hundred points in my book."

That was something he should do, not something either could do in a joint relationship. If he'd just have taken out the trash three times in a row he'd be ahead in her score book, and he would have saved \$10,000. That marriage ended in divorce.

In professional baseball, you can get a box score book. It has pages for every seasonal game, including potential playoffs, a grid for your team, boxes for the opposition, innings, players, and a standardize format to score every play and player in each inning, including extra innings. Most men know how to keep score in this book. If women would print up a "Babe's Box Score Book," men would love it. Men know women's rules for scorekeeping are top secret stuff and trying to discuss them would surely start another argument. The only solution is for men to take out the trash more often for extra credit.

SEX AND ROMANCE

Men: Need a place Women: Need a reason

My friend in Texas, Shannon, had his 22 year marriage end for various reasons. But an embitterment his wife had carried for many years came out when she said, “You never romanced me.” This was a great couple with three kids, lots of friends, and a pretty good life, but something was missing for her. Men have a certain limit on the amount of intimacy or romance they can handle. Women have an unlimited level of intimacy and romance they can receive, and demand. While men decline over time in their need for romance and sex, women remain insatiable.

I was conducting a seminar for sales executives in Atlanta many years ago. Jack, my account manager was with me. Jack was propositioned by women constantly, and dated them by the dozens. There was an attractive woman in the audience, Georgia, that approached me after class to see if I wanted to have drinks and dinner. I try not to read too much into a conversation with a woman, as my guess is as good as the next man, and usually wrong. I accepted the invite from Georgia. Jack had a few offers as usual, and he disappeared into the Atlanta night with two women.

Georgia and I went to a nice restaurant, enjoyed a lovely dinner, and we discovered we had much in common. The wine and conversation flowed smoothly like spending time with a long-lost buddy. Georgia knew a lot about cars, skiing, movies, and even had a few ‘walks into a bar’ jokes. It was coming on midnight and the maître d' was urging us out of the door. We left the restaurant and went back to the Ritz Carlton for a night cap. Again, conversation was effortless. I mentioned that I had an early flight the next day, probing for a response. It’s been

said that a woman knows from the first minute of the date whether she's going to have sex, and the man is left to guess.

Georgia smiled and said, "I'm not in the habit of asking men out, but you looked like a nice guy. The other guy in your group had all the women breathing heavy, but he looked like trouble. This is the most fun I've had with a man in years. I'm so glad that sex didn't rear its ugly head."

That caught me off guard, but I had to agree with her. She called Jack on-the-money. I was thinking of Shannon and his wife, and I had romanced Georgia rather than pushing for sex. I'm sure she gave me bonus point in her score book. Georgia gave me a prolonged hug that revealed her satisfaction with the evening. I made a mental note, 'Romance first, sex later.' I talked to Georgia a few times after that, but Atlanta was a long haul from San Francisco. I think we both chalked it up to one for the good guys.

SELF-WORTH

Men: Accomplishments Women: Love in their lives

To be happy in any relationship, you need to be happy with yourself first. How each sex values self-worth is different. Men see their value based on accomplishments. Men feel worthless without accomplishing their goals in life. Women evaluate their worth based on the love in their lives. Love of a spouse, boyfriend, children, and friends all add to a woman's feelings of personal value. Men who climb mountains, set sports records, and build empires can maintain high self-worth without a woman's love. It's more difficult for professional women. Many women who opt for careers, at some point feel low self-esteem without the fulfillment of

romantic love. As a woman reaches her financial goals she can relax, as her next priority will focus on her need for love.

A big difference for men and women is how they build self-worth in their children. I've seen a major change over my life in this area. In the past, a woman nurtured her children telling them she loved them, they could be anything and do anything they wanted. The old-school fathers were stricter, and they never told their kids they loved them verbally. The old dads never told their children they could do or be anything just by wanting it, they had to work for it. Mothers nurtured, fathers disciplined.

Generation X (born 1966-1976, 41 million), Y (born 1977-1994, 71 million), and Z (born 1995-2012, 30 million) children, are the spawn of double-nurturing and misplaced or nonexistent discipline. Gen X-Z children have been told they can do and be anything they 'want,' and the important thing is to be happy. These children are easy to spot. Like the recent Stanford graduates with a \$250,000 education paid for by mom and pop. They're the ones that get your name wrong on your cup, and maybe your order, at Starbucks.

Pops would tell me if I wanted something, go work for it. "Crap in one hand, wish in another, and see which one weighs more," Pops said. "You want to be happy? You'll be smiling when you accomplish something by working hard and then get paid for a job well done. Being happy is for women, men need to feel proud."

I delivered newspapers every day for four years of high school, bought two motorcycles, a cool used '57 Chevy, and put money away for college. During college, I worked at night for GM making union wages, belonged to a fraternity, played intramural sports, and made the Dean's

List. I paid for all my college expenses, and when I graduated, I knew what Pops was talking about. I had a lot of self-pride.

Pops never said anything about my accomplishments until he came to my college graduation and said, “I’m proud of you son. You did it all on your own.”

Lucille gave me pats on the back every day of my life. Lucille’s approval was presumed. Pops’ delayed admiration was worth its weight in gold as he passed the torch of approval to the new man in the family.

DIVORCE

Men: Withdraw Women: Overcompensate

Divorce is traumatic for everyone, and the long-term impact on the individuals and children varies based on the mental state of each person. Single moms raise children that are in touch with their emotions, sensitive to others, and socially astute, which are all good qualities. These qualities are all too evident when you see these children on their iPhones and iPads socializing all day on Facebook.

Single moms overcompensate or spoil their children by double-nurturing. These children wind up living at home after expensive college educations, floundering to make it on their own. The double-nurturing advice is: just do things that make you happy. Sometimes, single fathers try to convey the same soft, nurturing advice to take the easy road, or they go overboard with strictness if they are angry from the divorce. More often, men withdraw from their ex-spouse and their children, sinking themselves into work. A disciplinary father and a nurturing mother are valuable disparities between women and men.

At a Christmas party one year, I talked to the chief of a local police department for a very affluent Silicon Valley city. I worked with his wife, a great mom and terrific spouse. When I breeched the subject of spoiled, wandering, double-nurtured children, he went on a very controlled rant. He told me, “If I had a nickel for every spoiled, lazy, ‘I just want to be happy’ kid who came to the station, I could retire yesterday. They’re usually from divorced families, and mom told them to do what makes them happy.” We continued talking in total agreement that you can’t give someone their self-esteem, they have to earn it on their own.

In Silicon Valley, there was a famous entrepreneur who started a company that grew to enormous success. He toiled night and day, was hardly ever home, and devoted much of his life to his company. He was married before he started the company. He was a good husband and father, although he was absent a large portion of the time. His wife complained repeatedly about being lonely and unloved, and how her husband loved his job more than her. He was being fulfilled while she was feeling just the opposite. He was happy. She was miserable. He felt she was complaining. She felt he wasn’t listening.

As the company grew, their relationship deteriorated. Then the company went public, and the entrepreneur was worth \$500 million. His focus remained with the company plus other new ventures funded by his success. He never slowed down. The wife’s feelings of being unloved and neglected reached a pinnacle. In the ensuing divorce, she demanded her half of the fortune. Her lawyer justified the large award by saying, “She had been 100% behind her husband and supported him the entire time he was building the business.”

The entrepreneur was very philosophical saying, “It’s okay. I’ve got \$250 million left.” His chipper attitude was because he was fulfilled, and his self-esteem was at an all-time high. For

the wife, she felt low and unloved. All that money was not going to make her happy without the love she felt she deserved. Nevertheless, she could search for love in style now.

FEELINGS

Men: Never discuss Women: Need to express constantly

Men don't discuss their feelings, unless they're in analysis and are questioned in secrecy.

Women will always let you know indirectly they're upset, with nary a clue as to why. This is part of a woman's need for validation, understanding, and confirmation of love. Men want to be appreciated, needed, and encouraged, like when they pay the mortgage, mow the lawn, or fix the car.

Men sitting around discussing relationships would be like talking to Tony Soprano. Man-to-man relationship talk would have one repeated, consistent response, "Whada you gonna do?" The only time men say more than those four words about a relationship would be to discuss a nasty divorce. Those conversations center on money, kids, and asshole pettifogger lawyers, not feelings.

Lucille was a big crime buff and loved Perry Mason. She asked me, "Do you know why women don't make very good serial killers?"

"No, why?" I asked, anticipating the punch line.

"Because after their first kill, they have to talk about it with everyone."

When we lived in Germany, Pops could speak reasonable German. Pops would take us to visit historic sites on weekends. He'd tell us the stories behind points of interest like The Mouse Tower in Bingen, The Eagle's Nest in Berchtesgaden, and the prison camp at Dachau.

On one trip, as we approached the Dachau Memorial, he spun me a story, and I bit. “The Germans had captured a downed U.S. Air Force pilot during the war,” Pops said mixing in a German accent. “Every day they would question this pilot, and all the pilot would say was, ‘Tick. Tick. Tick.’ This went on for several weeks. Frustrated, they brought in Hans the Hammer from SS headquarters to do the interrogation. When Hans asked the pilot questions about the Allies and other strategic information, and the pilot responded with the familiar, ‘Tick. Tick. Tick.’ Hans flashed an evil grin then told the pilot, ‘Don’t vury meine freund, ve have vays of makin you tock.’” Pops got me on that one, and we laughed together.



Women keep score for everything a man does or doesn’t do. Women will tell their hairdresser, neighbors, all their girlfriends, and the checkout lady at the Safeway Store exactly how they’re feeling and why, but they’ll make a man guess. Women can get a man to tick, but they’ll never be able to make him tock.



2.

YOUR FIRST LOVES

*“The only difference between love for your mother and
your wife is that you don’t want to sleep with your
mother”*

Lucille

FIRST LOVE IS CONFUSING. When I was in ninth grade I asked Lucille the difference between love for your mother and a girl. Unless you’re Oedipus and love your mother and wind up killing your father, you probably don’t want to sleep with mom. But, you’re curious. George Bernard Shaw wrote, “First love is only a little foolishness and a lot of curiosity,” *Bull’s Other Island, Act 4*.

We start out fumbling around with that first romantic encounter as one of the many stages of our lives. It would be nice to jump over this part, and know what you don’t know very young, but it’s a necessary and fun step for most men. For women, they’ve been primed for this from their first Easy Bake Oven. It comes with their feminine DNA, and they’re ready and waiting with very specific expectations. As morons-in-training, young boys are not prepared for early romance. The only thing boys possess is a compass in their pants that points to the girl next door. No expectations, no plans, no clues, just a one-eyed pecker compass that can’t see in the dark.

Since men don’t share their feelings, Lucille was the go-to advisor for first love. Her counsel guided me through the basic steps of how to approach young girls - be respectful, always say hello to her parents to impress them with your manners, and learn to dance.

In my junior high years we lived in military housing near Wiesbaden Air Force Base in Germany. Because Pops was an officer, we had a big six-bedroom house with maid's quarters. That's where I had my first boy-girl birthday party at age eleven. The party featured Spin the Bottle. The military base schools were very advanced like most European educational systems. I had chemistry and algebra in the sixth grade. I also learned to play soccer, which wouldn't reach the U.S. for another two decades. They also offered ballroom dancing, which was unheard of stateside.

Heeding Lucille's advice, I showed up in the gymnasium for the first day of dance class. It was me, my buddy Tex Fehrenbach, and 13 girls. Pops called that a target rich environment. We had the pick of the ladies in their poodle skirts, bobby socks and saddle shoes. I'd just gotten my new pair of white buck shoes that came with their own little white powder bag. When your dad was stationed overseas, you had to order anything hip via the military PX and wait 10-12 weeks. First shipments of Levi's went fast in those days. Tex went with the blue suede shoes.

Pretty cool dudes. So we danced.

To this day, I've never met a woman who doesn't like to dance. I've got the white man shuffle, bebop, swing, western line dance, two-step, and other moves in today's dance arsenal. If a man knows how to dance, then women should learn how to do one of his things, like play golf, tennis, or go fishing. Women can learn to like, or pretend to like football, NASCAR, or Bruce Willis' movies. If a woman is keeping score, and she always is, the dancing man gets extra points, and she just scored big with him for watching Bruce Willis kill the villain while yelling, "Yipee ki yay--"

The girls at the dances were very cute, but they were not first loves. They were cool preteen girls who liked to dance. Young boys aren't equipped to emote feelings of real love. Puppy-dog love yes, real love, no. It's foolishness and curiosity. I thought I was in the groove, and I was starting to understand the boy-girl thing. It was simple at that age. No pressure to get married, no talk of babies, no need to buy a house, or go to college. Sex was starting to come into question as my pocket pecker compass was usually pointing due north.

Bill Cosby is the master of comedy about men, women, and families. One article that stuck with me was in Playboy Magazine about his thoughts on sex as a kid. Bill the kid thought if he ever had sex that he'd be required to get a pair of bib overalls, a lunch pail, and a job. After all, that's what happened to his dad. That happened to most dads in the old days.

Now, moms are wearing the overalls and working the jobs. Women in college and the workplace have increased dramatically in the last four decades. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, from 1970 to 2010, college-educated women in the labor force increased from 10% to 42%, and female high-school dropouts decreased from 34% to 8%, respectively. Women are getting smarter and taking on more outside the home. As Lucille would comment about her sex, "You know, women are the new men."

SUMMER PUPPY LOVE

FRANCELL WAS THE FIRST GIRL I TRIED TO ROMANCE. She lived three streets up from me in El Paso, Texas. I met her during the summer before our ninth grade school year. She had beautiful blue eyes and brown hair, usually in a ponytail. In El Paso you had to water your lawn early in the morning before the hot sun came out. On my paper route on the weekends, I would

see Francell watering, and I'd wave to her. I'd just gotten my Cruisaire scooter, which was an Italian Vespa sold by Sears.

On that first day of ownership I drove around her block six or twenty times to see if she'd appear. Finally, Francell emerged in the front yard and waved to me. I stopped in the front of Francell's driveway with Lucille's words prompting me. "Meeting someone special is a random thing. You should talk to everyone you meet to find out about them. They could turn out to be that special someone."

That was my first official girlfriend. We'd sit on the hill at night overlooking McRae Boulevard and watch for a padiddle - a car with one headlight. In El Paso, people weren't very affluent and that yielded several padiddles per night. Those sightings were the signal for a kiss, my first real girl-boy kiss. The summer progressed and the romance was on. Combined with PONY League baseball, my paper route, and swimming at the community pool, that was a great summer.

School was ready to start, and I decided it was time to take it to the next level. I bought a ring from a Mexican jeweler. I think it cost \$10. I was going to take her on a scooter ride to the park and ask her to go steady. Before she could get on my scooter, she had to ask her dad. He said no, "She can't ride on that death trap." Strike one.

That night as we sat on padiddle hill, I asked her to go steady. She said she'd have to ask her dad. This was all new for both of us. Strike two, as dad repeated with another no. With my heart broken, I went home to tell Lucille. She assured me it was going to be okay when school started.

The summer ended and ninth grade started at Bel Air High School. All my summer friends were there from baseball and the neighborhood. No way was I going to take a third strike

now. School was packed with cute girls, and it looked like it was going to be a great year. It was a new game and all new at-bats were coming up. Again, everything mom told me was true.

Men remember young love as their first sexual experience, whether it's a simple kiss or a trip to first base. Women remember young love as their first romantic experience no matter what age it occurs. A girl's first may be a fantasy crush or a teen idol. Girls have their romantic future planned out, so for them, it's just the start of their romance narrative.

I thought girls were sweet, but no way would I trade a kiss for a Mickey Mantle, Roger Maris, or Bob Feller baseball card. For boys, their first love is Little League Baseball, and their future includes going into Major League Baseball, and eventually the Hall of Fame. If a girl wants to go along, that would be cool.



Young love reflects the differences between boys and girls just like mature love between men and women. Self-worth by each is based on a young boy's accomplishments and a young girl's crushes.



3.

HER BUCKET LIST

“Women know what type of man they’ll marry, including where and how, when they get their first Barbie Doll.”

Lucille

In the movie *The Bucket List*, with Jack Nicholson and Morgan Freeman, their list started from the hospital, and it moved to end-of-life adventures. Jack Nicholson was very rich and accomplished, while Morgan had been an auto mechanic. Using Jack Nicholson’s financial resources, their joint list knew no boundaries. They wanted to scale mountains, race classic cars, and dine at the world’s finest locations. Morgan left his wife to do so, but Jack had only his plutonic business relationships.

Love and romance were never on their list. But, in the end they circled back to close the romantic loops in their lives. Though they based their self-worth on their bucket list exploits, they didn’t feel closure without love in their lives. Spoiler alert - Jack reconciles with his estranged daughter and granddaughter, and Morgan returns to his wife.

It seems women have it in reverse, and they have it right. A woman’s bucket list is composed of things to do, since the first thing on a woman’s list is love and family. A man starts with things to acquire, and he unconsciously moves toward love as a final unlisted element.

HIGH SCHOOL ROMANCE

The summer before tenth grade, I had a close encounter of the carnal kind in Juarez, Mexico. In those days you could go to Juarez and not get murdered. With my junior high buddies Tony and Mike, we would hotwire Tony's dad's Ford Fairlane on the nights his parents would play bridge. We'd drive to the border and walk across the Rio Grande. You had to deposit two-cents in the border station turnstile to go over, and one penny to return.

I was a rich kid because I had paper route money. Ten dollars was a fortune and you could get sloe gin fizzes at the Del Rio Club and adult entertainment at the White Lakes. These trips were like something from a coming-of-age movie. Envision three shrimps sitting low on a bar stool ordering drinks with their prepubescent voices. Off to the White Lakes bordello like lambs to the slaughter. We were childlike in our loss of innocence, and fortunate we lived to tell the tale. The drinks in Juarez were nasty and so were the women. There had to be something more to this boy-girl thing. Lucille had offered Lessons, but they weren't sticking yet.

RUTHIE WAS MY FIRST HIGH SCHOOL CRUSH. We met at the beginning of tenth grade at Bel Air High School in El Paso, Texas. There was a new crop of cute girls, but Ruthie stood out. She was the brunette girl next door that came to dinner. Lucille sealed the deal and we began our journey through high school. Ruthie had a rough childhood with alcoholic parents and dysfunctional siblings. Her father would take her babysitting money and go to the horse track. If he lost, she was beaten for his bad luck. She wanted to date me, but be adopted by my family.

There was one very clear message. She wanted to get married. That was #1 on her list, and she had started planning the ceremony, the dress, and her vows. The only thing missing was the groom. The number I had attached to even entertaining the marriage option was age 30,

minimum. I needed to accomplish some goals first - get an education, get a good job, travel, and enjoy my life. Marriage and family were not at the top of my list. I knew I had to build a foundation and sow my oats first. I wanted to be a good husband and father, but that would come in a later phase. Ruthie's bucket list #1 item was, 'Get married to Bobby,' followed by #2, 'Get out of the house.'

My '57 Chevy had a huge front seat and taking it to the Border Town Drive-in was like a mobile motel with entertainment. We rarely saw a movie because the windows were fogged over. My buddy Arturo said he saw me at the Border Town one night. I asked if he was sure it was me. Arturo said, "Si. It was your '57 Cheby, and there were four little feet waving bye-bye out the window."

One weekend we were on the way to the Border Town and Ruthie broke the news - she was late. Guys always take this news literally, wondering late for what? But it soon dawned on me that her bucket list was going to be mine. That put a damper on the evening as we discussed the options. She saw marriage. My visions of college, children, manual labor, and poverty flashed before my eyes. I recalled the Bill Cosby story, thinking I could get my bib overalls and a lunch pail at Sears.

Ruthie was the fourth woman I loved. The first three were Lucille, my sisters Carole Anne and Debra Sue. I knew Ruthie would be a good partner for a life's journey, but we had mapped different routes and destinations. My goals for education and adventure were still at the top of my list. I never queried Lucille because I was still in shock and unsure of Ruthie's determination. I thought I should join the Air Force, but that required finishing high school. The Navy was an option as I wouldn't need a diploma. First love became first crisis.

One morning I got a call from Ruthie, and her Aunt Flow had come to visit! I was relieved, but she was disappointed. After that, things were never the same. I learned that my actions could have serious consequences.

When I was 8-years-old, we used to steal cigarettes from the local diner and go smoke them by the creek. We tried smoking them through these mossy river reeds. I got so sick that I could never smoke, or smell cigarette smoke, without gagging. That probably saved my life. Ruthie's false pregnancy did the same thing - saved my romantic life. I was determined to do my life's list in the proper order.

Ruthie and I broke up when I went to school at Texas Western College in El Paso. Ruthie became like a daughter to my parents and a sister to me. Ruthie lived with my family in Houston for a while, working at a bank prior to going to United's flight attendant school in Chicago. Ruthie moved to Los Angeles after flight attendant school, and years later we reconnected temporarily. Ruthie and Lucille remained friends for the rest of their lives.



When you write a bucket list, make sure it's in priority sequence. Women and men have different items with different priorities, but there is a chance the routes and destinations may be similar.



HIS BUCKET LIST

I never created a bucket list because that was about pre-death wishes. I've always had a dynamic destiny list (DDL). The undercurrent of the times influences the list. Lucille told me I would discover my destiny in some chance encounter. That's how it happens. Lucille went to secretary school, escaped to the big city, and found a job with a law firm. She entered beauty contests to promote war bonds. She met and dated different men from work and around town.

Her destiny was waiting at a USO dance where she met Pops. Lucille encouraged me to be open to all things, try everything even if it makes you uncomfortable, talk to everyone, and seek my adventure, my destiny. It wasn't going to happen driving a John Deere tractor.

Lucille would associate some experience or challenge I had with the different elements of life. Once you discover a destiny you can map out a journey, understanding life's not a destination, but a voyage. Your destiny or destination may change, but your journey will continue.

There would definitely be two stages to life. One would be the first half of life, learning, doing, failing, succeeding, building a career, home and family. The second stage would include the empty nest, aging, philosophical perspectives, and mellowing. "Make the best of the first half of your life, because getting old is the pits," Lucille said.

Lucille told me that, "If a man was lucky enough to choose a good wife, he'd have a happy life. If he chose a bad one, then he'd spend his life making excuses." Message received. I could be smart about my choices, but luck needed to be on my side.



Try everything once. You may discover you like it. If you don't like it, then you may remove it from your bucket list without regrets.



4.

ONE UNHAPPY PERSON IS OK

“It’s better for a man to be who he really is, versus the man a woman wants him to be. Then there will be only one person unhappy in the relationship.”

Lucille

When I was discussing *The 85% Man* with my friend Frank he said, “My wife bought a self-help book once. Now she knows what’s wrong with me.” In some cases we lose ourselves by connecting with our partners, and in others we try to fix that person.

Lucille was convinced that trying to fix a man was like cleaning the Augean Stables. She loved Greek mythology, and she told me the story of King Augeias. Eurystheus, king of Tiryns, ordered Hercules to clean King Augeas’ stables which contained more cattle, sheep, goats and horses than anywhere in Greece. Hercules wanted to please Eurystheus and profit in the effort. Hercules made a deal with Augeas to clean the stables in one single night for a tenth of his cattle. Augeas knew this was impossible, so he agreed.

That night Hercules busted open the animal pen walls, and he rerouted a nearby river to flush the entire stables. Augeas came to his stables the next day and was amazed, but felt Hercules had tricked him, and he refused to pay. The moral is, if you’re trying to change something (or someone) using a shortcut, the other party may feel slighted in the outcome.

I have a friend who was an executive at Apple in the early days. He described working for Steve Jobs as a real grind and not someone he remembered fondly. I've heard this from people that worked at Jobs' other companies, NeXT, and Pixar. Steve Jobs was respected, and my friend rationalized his comment by saying, "The reasonable man expects to change to fit into the world. The unreasonable man expects the world to change for him. Therefore, only great change can be brought about by unreasonable men."

This is true of many men and women, pioneers and innovators I've worked with in Silicon Valley. They are unreasonable, unprovoked, undaunted, and demanding in their pursuit of change, originality, growth, and success. They cannot change. The world and those around them must change. They make the world better. The people they touch and inspire are better.

Would you have these leaders change to fit in to please others? If these people had changed to make their spouses or employees happy, then would they be happy, and would they have impacted business and the world in the same ways?

When your folks are in the military, they make friends all over the world with other military families. Pops and Lucille were best friends with Casey and Dot. Pops and Casey were Air Force flying buddies that went way back. Other pals included Winnie and Lorraine, Charlie and Betty, and Sid and Susie. When these couples came over, the men drank beer, the women hung in the kitchen cooking and sipping wine. As the alcohol flowed, the volume went up in the house. Dinners were the same as all our family gatherings - great food, great conversation and plenty of laughter.

They were terrific, joyous *Greatest Generation* couples that were always bickering with playful kidding among themselves. The men learned how to build friendships and drink at the

officers club where booze was virtually free. War stories flowed freely along with the libations. The women met at the Base Exchange for their weekly chats. They lived in the same neighborhoods where they'd visit and keep abreast of the latest in military politics, children, and their husband's next deployment. Couples met at each other's homes for dinner and backyard barbeques.

I observed these folks in our home or when I went to the base with Pops or Lucille. The military is an interesting culture with every race and religion, bonded with a patriotic cause. Pops would have African American and Hispanic staff sergeants, their wives, and their kids over for dinner. Rank was not a cause for social categorization. Everyone was treated equal, or as Pops put it, "Assholes come in all religions, ranks, and colors. Good people only come in gray."

As these gray-adults moved through our lives, I was curious to find what made them tick, and tock. I asked Lucille about the couples that were always bickering and teasing. How did this work? It appeared as if they didn't like each other, but they seemed happy. Was it the booze talking? They seemed cheery when I met them at the PX or around the base. I did sleepovers at their homes with their kids who were my Little League or school buddies. They were dedicated to each other, had lots of fun, raised good kids, and they were committed to the military branch they served. So what was the deal?

"When you're in the military, you learn to take orders and fit in. You aren't there to change the military, the military is there to change you," Lucille said. "The Air Force trains you to fly straight or get your wings clipped. The Navy makes you shape-up or ship-out. In the Army, you march in cadence or do KP. That's the extent of change we can expect from our husbands - military change. At home, the men are men and women are women, and we wouldn't change that for anything. We know if we try to go changing our men, which is impossible, then both of us

would be unhappy. You've got to be who you are and if the other person doesn't like it, then there's only one person unhappy, and it isn't going to be you. We tease each other because we love each other, but we know the limits. Military wives are strong. We also know when our men leave for duty, they might not come back. The little things really don't matter when you think about it that way."

Learning to let go means there is a certain amount of change that everyone has to make. You let go of old habits, bad relationships, and harmful actions. I think most people want to live a meaningful life without unhappiness or regret. We have to balance sticking to our principles with changes that are for the benefit of ourselves and those we impact. People who are out to change the world can be unreasonable, and they don't always make the best mates. For the great majority of us, we want to change a little to fit in.

Lucille and I agreed that you must have two things to prosper in this world - love and hope. This became our mantra for many discussions. If you change for another person you may lose hope for yourself. You may also resent that person, and begin to lose feelings of love. I've lost family and friends in my life to horrible circumstances which were predicated by their loss of love and hope. You must be yourself to keep hope and love alive.

Men can't be fixed, but they can change if they have confidence for admiration or accomplishment to come. Women are constantly seeking change for betterment, to improve the chance of love in their lives. The best couples are like those military couples. They're strong and accept and love the other person for who they are. Life can be short and they have a perspective beyond most civilians. They have common goals and work together to achieve those goals. They are part of a unit that knows together, they are stronger than apart.

There was a well-known Hollywood actress that was on *The Tonight Show* a few years ago espousing her exciting life with her new husband. He was a comedic actor that dressed like a punk rocker, loved to drink and party, and seemed happy-go-lucky. In and out of the tabloids, his persona was a likable, wild and crazy movie star. This was the man she fell in love with. All was good in paradise.

Cut forward five years and two children later, and the same actress is on *The Tonight Show* as the happy mom. She has a new sitcom as executive producer earning some big bucks. She is growing, changing, and prospering. However, when talking about her husband, she bemoans hubby's crazy antics, second trip to rehab, inability to grow up, horrible fashion sense, and so on. She eventually divorces him saying, "He's not the man I fell in love with and married. We've grown apart."

He was exactly the same person now as then. She had changed and wanted him to change with and for her. He was happy with who he was. If he changed there was no hope for greater accomplishment since that was her thing. His fixation was partying. She couldn't change him and she was unhappy. There was only one unhappy person, so it was an amicable divorce. Had he changed, they both would have been unhappy, and the divorce would probably have taken longer, and been very nasty. Today he's still the same, very happy in his new relationship. She's single and regretful (according to the tabloids).



You're not responsible for another person's happiness. It's simply not your job. You can't make someone happy just by your actions or changing who you are. Each person is responsible for their own lives, mistakes, rewards, partner choices, and happiness.



5.

LIFE FOUNDATIONS AND ELEMENTS

“There are five potential elements to your life, and you have to balance those as some may go away.”

Lucille

Love and hope. These are essential to survival and growth. This would prove to be painfully true later in life as we lost family members. Lucille sorted out five key elements she felt were important at different stages of life. Lucille thought it important to pass through, and tackle each one to balance your life and survive losses. Some of the elements may come and go, and you'll have the others to support you.

FOUNDATIONS: LOVE AND HOPE

These are different for men and women. Men see love as being appreciated and needed by someone who is loyal and trustworthy. Women feel loved when they are cherished and valued by someone. Caring and encouragement are valued by both sexes. Hope is part of your supporting environment. Love can provide you with the devotion, reassurance, and encouragement from your parents or spouse inside four walls. Hope is the tool you must have to go into the world without fear.



A parent's unconditional love creates a foundation. Once out of the nest, love and hope may be reinforced or destroyed on life's journey.



I LEFT HOME TO GO TO COLLEGE WHEN I WAS EIGHTEEN. I had plenty of love and encouragement at home. I knew that I had to find my own way, my own destiny. I was full of hope. If I was disappointed or rejected by the outside world I had my family's love to support me. With high self-esteem, a cool car, a tank full of gas, paper route savings, and a high school diploma, I was ready for the outside world.

When Pops was five years old he discovered airplanes and knew that's what he wanted to do with his life. Dreams of Major League Baseball had faded for me. I discovered muscle cars when I turned 15, and I wanted to design and build cars. I applied to the General Motors Technical Institute (GMTI), and I took the entrance exams at the Buick-Pontiac-Oldsmobile plant in Dallas. Pops drove me there for the all day affair. With GMTI, you completed a four year college at GM, and a one year graduate program working at your sponsoring plant. You would earn a Masters in Automotive Design, Engineering, or Production. My goal was a Masters in Design.

I used to airbrush hotrod T-shirts and build model cars. I won first place in Woolworth's National Model Car Contest and a \$100 savings bond (\$800 in today's money). Pops helped me make some custom parts to recreate Big Daddy Roth's Beatnik Bandit custom car in 1/24th scale. It was painted in candy apple blue with some of mom's corduroy fabric for tuck-and-roll

upholstery. My real car, a 1957 Chevy, now had a Corvette motor, 4 speed transmission with a custom Hurst shifter, a 4:11 positraction rear-end, Mickey Thompson mag wheels, and M&H racing slicks. I'd left my juvenile baseball card chapter to matriculate into a automotive phase. Kisses were still far behind baseball cards and my new passion for hot cars.

GMTI had three openings for the 25 guys tested in Dallas. I finished third, but GM employees' kids got precedent over non-GM kids. I got bumped to fourth position, so it was off to Texas Western College in El Paso. My hopes were only temporarily sidelined as knew I could get an engineering degree from TWC.

During this era, all you had to do was get a degree and employers lined up at your graduation exit. College started and I was full of hope. I was a good student in high school and college was fairly easy. I was still doing my paper route to pay for college, while living at home. I was bored with classes, but kept on going since this was the journey to my automotive design destiny. Engineering was not interesting to me, and I was trying to figure out a shortcut to developing the skills I would need to design cars.

My first final exams were coming up. I studied hard while a friend did my paper route for a week. I took my chemistry exam and made an A. The next day I showed up for calculus finals at 1:00 PM and missed the exam. The calculus finals had occurred at 11:00 AM. This was more than a little annoying. I was discouraged. Something clicked in me after that mistake. I realized that I didn't want to be an engineer; too much math, not enough imagination or creativity. Pops said, "The combustion engine will die one day when we ran out of oil, so there was no real future in cars. Maybe you should consider something else."

I didn't take any other finals and quit college. I was still into cars and racing, so I decided to pursue that, against Pops' advice. Lucille's cousin Sid, in Bethel, Kansas had a construction

company, and he said I could work for him. The construction wages sounded good, and I could live with Sid and his wife Susie. I packed up and moved to Kansas, and I started building industrial fences around homes, offices, and prisons. It was backbreaking work in 100 degree heat with matching humidity. I modified my 1957 Chevy and was drag racing on the weekends at Kansas City International Raceway.

During this manual labor period of my life I was having fun, but working way too hard. There wasn't much of a future or hope for one if all I did was work, race my car, and live in a relative's basement. It was time for a new plan as winter was coming, and construction work was literally frozen until spring. I'd learned my lesson, and it was back to the original plan for an education.

After screwing up again, Pops' prediction echoed, "...you'll be a genius one day." I returned to TWC full of new hope and a new direction. I switched my major to business and computer science, knowing computers were the real future. Short of the genius level, I made the Dean's List, earning a Bachelor of Business Administration degree. I've never lost hope for the next great adventure or encounters in my life. Love has never been in short supply, so I have been very fortunate. My youngest brother Randall "Randy" Rush wasn't so fortunate.

Randy was always a happy little boy. He was a kind, good looking kid, but very shy. He was the youngest of the children, and he got the hand-me-downs, last seat at the table, and he was always in the back of the family photos. He was 11 years younger than me, and I was very much a father figure to him.

When I graduated from college, I moved to Houston to work for Gulf Interstate Engineering in finance. I lived at home for a year while I went to night tech school for an

advanced computer programming degree. That was the future I wanted - to move to California and work in the computer industry.

On weekends, I'd take my little brothers to the beach to go surfing. Like clockwork, every Saturday at 6:00 AM, we'd head to Surfside Beach, Texas. Surfboards strapped to the top of my Chevelle, the back seat loaded with my three younger brothers, I felt like a dad taking his kids to play. We'd spend all day at the beach, surf or no surf, in the water, cruising the shore, having burgers, tubing, or fishing from the pier. I worked, studied, and hung with my family. Girls were not in the picture for any of us. I was on a mission to save money, get another degree and headed west. California was calling me.

I finished my tech school with an AA in Computer Programming. I packed my Chevelle and headed to California in search of a new job, new future, new romance, and some pretty cool surf. I arrived in Hermosa Beach, California, and within a week had a computer programming job, an apartment on the Strand in Hermosa Beach, and all the hope in the world. I surfed before going to work, played golf and surfed on the weekends, and cruised Sunset Boulevard in my new Firebird. Ruthie was stationed in Los Angeles flying for United Airlines, and we dated for a while. Life was not going to get any better. The years in Los Angeles were very good to me.

Over the next eight years in LA, I would visit my family in Houston during the holidays. One year, I was in Houston staying with a buddy for a few days, and it was Randy's 21st birthday. Randy was still living at home and I told Lucille I'd pick him up at 7:00 PM to go out and celebrate.

I arrived at the house at about 7:05 PM. Randy was sitting on the couch and seemed nervous. He smiled, stood up, and he gave me a big hug. Before leaving, I talked to mom in the kitchen, and she said Randy was afraid I wasn't coming. I told her I'd never broken my promise to take them to the beach or to the mall, why would he doubt me? She said his brothers and friends broke their promises all the time, and often left him stranded.

We headed out for the evening and Randy never stopped smiling. We went to the Deja Vu gentlemen's club, and I paid for drinks and lap dances. Randy got a little out of hand, and I had to tip the owner to keep Randy from getting tossed. To me this was just another night with someone I loved, and would do anything to help. I always felt responsible to my younger siblings as a role model and big brother.

Around 2:00 AM, we concluded the evening. On the drive home, Randy was very somber. He told me that I was the only person who loved him. How could this be with Lucille and Pops around? I said, "That's not true. Mom and Pops love you."

Randy said, "They don't even know I'm alive. They don't have time for me."

The gravity didn't really register. He told me he had a girlfriend for a while, but she started dating one of his friends. I found out from Pops she had given him an STD. Randy had given up on girls and love. Randy was working construction for a friend of Pops, and Randy felt like he was just some dumb construction worker.

I dropped him off at home. He hugged me and told me he loved me. I reciprocated and told him I loved him. There was something in his embrace that was desperate and foreboding. This emotion would revisit me again very soon. I waved goodbye, said happy birthday, I love you, and went back to my buddy's home.

Two weeks later, I got a call at midnight in California. Randy had put a 12-gauge shotgun in his mouth and pulled the trigger. It took a while for me to comprehend the incident. How could this happen in our family? It was a family filled with love and caring.

Lucille said Randy had gone water skiing with his brothers and friends. They left the dock and stranded him, completely forgetting he was there. Pops had to go pick him up and bring him home.

Searching for answers, I went back through the family photo albums. I was the official photographer, and keeper of the family pictures handed down. I was the only one with pictures of Randy. In those pictures he was in the back of the group, with a sad look on his face. Lucille was horrified with this revelation. Burying a child before a parent dies is the hardest thing anyone can ever do. As a sibling, the impact is only slightly less painful. In all cases, the trauma withdraws, but the painful memory remains.

After Randy's funeral, Lucille put up a strong front for her other children. Her forte would be decimated before another year would pass.

Randy had given up hope. He had given up on love. He felt unloved and unwanted. Stories of bullying and rejection came to bear after his passing. To this day I feel his absence, comforted only by the fact that the last words I said to him were, "I love you."

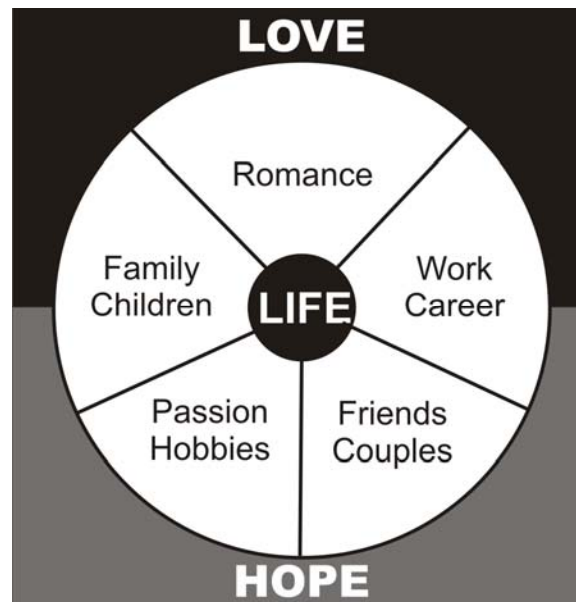


Never miss an opportunity to tell someone you love them. No matter how small, be aware of any signal that someone has lost hope. Never give up and never let someone you love surrender.



ELEMENTS

Love and hope are kept alive by securing their underpinnings. You must become a rounded individual to survive and prosper on your life's journey.



Romance

This includes relationships that involve any form of romantic love. In this arena, Lucille included flirting, courting, dating, short and long-term relationships, fighting, making up, sex, erotic escapades, marriage, and unconditional love.

These are elements you must have in your life in the pursuit and fulfillment of love. If you're single, then it's about the chase, and new adventures. If you're in a relationship you're always working on enhancing that bond. If you're married you should never stop romancing your spouse. Keep it lively. My friend Shannon was married but never wooed his wife in her

perception. Even though they had been married for two decades with kids, friends, and seemingly a full life, his wife felt she was missing the romance element.

This one is really confusing to men as they're not sure what women want. It's more of an attitude toward a woman versus any action. You can't give a woman a wedding ring and assume that's romance.

Unconditional love between a couple takes a long time to achieve. Once you're there, the romantic element is established, but must be maintained. The idea of romance begins very early for women. For men, it's mostly animal attraction. Men don't think of romance, they think of sex. Fortunately for women, men usually have to court them to get sex.

Romance can, and should be with you for your entire adult life. If you've given up on romance, then you're missing one of the elements for complete fulfillment. You should try to sustain the other elements that can keep you excited about life, but romance is most important for a woman.



Lord Byron wrote, “In her first passion a woman loves her lover. In all others all she loves is love.”



Work and Career

This is part of your adult life that may span your teenage years to your late sixties. Work is considered the element you must execute to earn a living. Your career is a goal you seek to achieve as part of a work path or studies. You may have multiple careers during your life. I

started working as a teenager with a paper route, earned a degree, and took graduate studies to support my career path into the computer industry.

I have worked in Silicon Valley, New York, and London for technology companies, reaching executive levels fulfilling my first career. In my second career, I used my tech experience to build a company for digital marketing to deliver websites, videos, and creative services for companies. My eternal goal is to never stop working, learning, and creating. And of course, playing golf and trying to shoot my age in the future, which gets easier as the years lower the goal.

Pops was a career officer in the Air Force for 30 years. After Vietnam, the military did not need as many officers, and Pops was offered early retirement, or what they call a RIF (Reduction in Force). He had a military pension, but he needed to support four kids in high school. Pops was a very reluctant civilian.

His first civilian job was selling MasterCard programs to small businesses for El Paso National Bank. The bank knew that businesses would trust the word of an ex-military officer. The credit society was new at this time. He felt he was representing the evil banking establishment that would only throw people into terminal debt. Depression era people saved their money, paid cash for necessary items, and never borrowed money to buy superfluous things. Today, he could look at the country's financial morass and say, "I told you so."

Pops quit the bank when he found a dream job with Southwest Aeromotive selling aircraft parts to airports across Texas. He had a company Cessna to fly across the state. Originally he was based in El Paso, but he was transferred to Houston. He was pretty happy, and all was going well. Then they let him go when he turned 60.

Pops was depressed and lost. This missing element had a severe impact on him and the family. Working all his life surrounded by airplanes, he had nowhere to turn. He was too old to be a commercial pilot or work in aircraft maintenance.

He had a cousin in the Midwest that had been selling central vacuum systems, and he had just purchased a new \$250,000 twin-engine Beechcraft airplane. With an energy and housing boom in Houston, Pops moved to selling and installing central vacuum systems. It was not a career, but a way to keep money coming in to support his family and his passion for flying. He had always owned a private plane, and selling central vacuum systems kept him in high octane gas money.

Working from home, he was driving Lucille nuts. I moved to Houston after Randy's death, helped Pops get a little office a few miles away, and I added new products to his business. The work element was restored, Pops was out of the house, and his life balance was temporarily repaired.

All the kids graduated from high school and they were off on their own, some living at home, others being nearby. The economy crashed in Houston, and Pops folded his business. He was able to survive on his military pension. Their house was nearly paid for, and Lucille's folks had passed away and left them some money. The bad news was Pops was back in the house, retired, and again driving Lucille nuts. Loss of the work element was not as impactful this time since there was money. Pops' career was over, but he had his passion for airplanes to keep him busy.



Most careers end with retirement. You don't have to stop working, but this element may be replaced with a new or restored passion after your career life is done.



Passion and Hobbies

This passion is not a romantic one, but a deep interest in something that is not work or career related. It may be stamp collecting, antiques, charity work, sports, entertainment, or anything that is not considered work. I include religion here as many are passionate about their faith and spiritual journey. With Pops, it was airplanes and flying. With Lucille it was reading, learning, and charity work. If you're passionate about your work or career, then you really should develop outside interests. All work and no play made Jack and Jane a dull couple.

After retiring, Pops would drive out to the little airport in Wharton, Texas and play with his airplane. He had a Cessna Skylane he'd take up and buzz the area. Often we'd load up the fishing gear, fly to the Texas coast, land on a shell-gravel road, and fish from the canal jetties. Sometimes Pops would jump over to another little airport and just have breakfast at the airport diner. These adjacent diners were filled with pilots, many ex-military, and they congregated like a flock of geese landing in a plowed corn field. I went with him many times. There were lively conversations over runny sunny-side-up eggs, greasy bacon, and the smell of black coffee and cigarettes. These pilots were all retired, but their love of flying was as fresh as their first solo flight and getting their shirt tails trimmed.

Trimming a flyer's shirt tail goes back to early flight training days. The instructor would sit behind the trainee, and because there were no radios, they would tug on the trainee's shirt tail and yell at them. Once a student had soloed, the instructor didn't need to tug on their shirt tail anymore, so it could be trimmed. Pilots lost their shirt tails, but they never lost their zeal for flying. Pops kept flying until he was in his seventies, and he had his head in the clouds until he died.

Lucille did a lot of reading, watched TV, and kept current on everything. She used to sew and make clothes for charitable groups and needy kids. Lucille's children were a huge part of her life, but any spare time she had was filled with learning and giving to others.

One of my passions is golf. I learned to play golf and joined the men's club at Recreation Park in Long Beach. I competed in the tournaments, club championships, and helped with handicaps. I always looked forward to the monthly meetings with hot dogs, raffle drawings, and 8MM films of "Shell's Wonderful World of Golf." My friend Dave was a scratch golfer who'd been on a NCAA golf championship team. Dave taught me how to keep an official PGA scorecard and how to follow the official rules of golf.

Today, I have a lot of golf friends and belong to the public golf club at Harding Park in San Francisco. Golf buffs are like the pilots at the diner. They hang out comparing Tiger Woods to historic players, talking about new technology, golf tournaments, ball speed, techniques for driving distance, custom clubs, and their last session on the computerized trainer. It's a never ending cycle of new players, new technology, and new courses. Golf is a sport you'll never master, it's always challenging, great for business, and when viewed on TV, induces some very relaxing naps on the couch.

I divert myself from work with other sports like snow skiing, surfing and scuba diving on vacation. Many people love traveling and I've been fortunate to travel around the world for business. My passions extend to movies, books, theater, going to SF Giants' baseball games, and weekends in Carmel. The great thing about having passions or hobbies is they can nourish you for a lifetime, and they never die. More importantly, you can do them by yourself without criticism or concern for what others may think.

Grandpa Mack was a hard working farmer that loved his family and the farm. He was on the Butler Town Council and later was mayor. As he got too old to run the farm, he leased his land. He took up golf at the Butler Country Club. One day I got a picture of him with the Butler Club Champion Golden Putter, and he was smiling from ear-to-ear. Grandpa Mack had a passion for wood working, made furniture, and sold it in town. I still have a dining room chair he made out of rosewood. That chair reminds me every day to keep my passions alive.



What is your passion or hobby today? What will it be tomorrow? Whatever it is or may be, it's yours for a lifetime.



Friends and Couples

Young people today have BFFs. In Texas we had what we called our, 'Butthole Buddies.' I guess they'd be called BHBFFs today. The term is rumored to come from the image of General Custer, surrounded by Indians, all his men back-to-back, butthole-to-butthole, ready to fight together to the last man. Custer is not someone history remembers with pride, but the idea of

friends who have your back is enviable. In the movie *Top Gun*, Tom Cruise was told by the squadron commander after being killed in mock combat, “You never, ever leave your wingman.”

BFFs, BHBFFs, and wingmen are important elements of a full life. Friends know you and love you just the same. Friends have common interests, share experiences, and have comparable flaws. Most of all, they have your back.

MY FIRST WINGMAN WAS TEX FEHRENBACH. We met in Wiesbaden, Germany. One of my favorite books was, *The Body*, by Steven King. It was adapted into a movie, *Stand by Me*, directed by Rob Reiner. The kids in the book are on a quest to find a boy presumed dead. Their adventure takes them on a quest in Maine in the summer of 1960 (the movie setting was moved to Oregon in 1959). The ending has one of my favorite friendship lines. The storyteller is one of the kids, now older, and he laments the passing of friends, remembering their youth and that adventure. He says, “I never had friends like that later on, like the ones he had at age 12. Hell, does anyone ever?”

Tex and I met the first day of school in Wiesbaden, and we exchanged baseball cards. You’d carry your cards everywhere like a gambler carries chips in Vegas. You could trade cards, flip ‘em, toss ‘em, or just brag about your dual Mickey Mantle Topps Baseball Cards that smelled like bubble gum. The armed forces in Germany sponsored Little League teams. Tex and I were on the Indians which made us lifelong fans of the Cleveland Indians. Beginning in 1954, the Indians would lose every trip to the World Series, but we were their wingmen. I have a signed Bob Feller baseball cap in my den. Tex and I became inseparable.

We’d go with our moms to the base to get comic books or scale models of planes or ships. Sometimes we’d have to go downtown to the German hobby shops to find really cool

stuff. We could speak some German, and we would take a taxi, giving directions in German. We'd go to the indoor schwimmbad (swimming pool), and jump off the ten meter platform as a dare. You could get Gummi Bears there long before they came to the U.S. At this time we were rich. The U.S. dollar was worth four Deutsche Marks. You could get 10 Gummi Bears for a pfennig (a penny), 40 were a dime, and a 100 cost a quarter. We swam until our arms were noodles, ate Gummi Bears till we got sick, and cruised the German hobby shops for hours.

Little League games were a big deal in the military. Weekends saw families gathered for games between the Yankees and Orioles, the Dodgers and Indians, and the Reds and the A's. Tex was my wingman and catcher when I pitched. I can still remember the smell of the grass, a whiff of popcorn in the stands, and Lucille and Pops cheering for us along with Tex's folks. Tex and I made the Little League German All Stars and we played together in the European Little League Championship. We stayed at the Army barracks, practiced in the morning, had lunch at the mess hall, and we thought we were serious big leaguers. In the afternoon we had naps on the cots in the barracks. That's what Little Leaguers did before going to the big leagues.

Tex and I would spend every weekend playing baseball, going downtown, or just goofing around. When winter came we were locked in for months, and we'd come up with creative ways to entertain ourselves. The only source to get items from the U.S. was via the Sears catalog. New Sears catalogs came every month or so, and there was the exciting prospect of cool new stuff that we could dream about, "Please allow 10-12 weeks for delivery." We'd find the old catalogs and make comic books out of them. Tearing out specific pages, we'd do bubble copy coming out of the mouths of the models.

One comic we created was, “Francee Pants.” We took the female undergarment pages, and put together a story about a girl climbing a tree, and you could see France and her underpants. Captions like, “Is it cold in here?” and “Ooops! The dog ate my panties,” were part of the dumb story.

We got this from the classic joke Lucille told us about the little girl who came home from school with twenty dollars. Her mom asked where she had gotten the money. The little girl said the boys gave it to her for climbing a tree. Mom told her daughter the boys only wanted to see her underpants. The little girl said, “I fooled the stupid boys, mommy. I wasn’t wearing any underpants!” We thought this was hilarious and “Francee Pants” was originated.

Then there was the blue flamer club. A big snow storm has us locked in, and we’d used up all the Sears catalogs we could find. A junior high urban legend surfaced about lighting your farts, and a blue flame would shoot out. Some chili for lunch, a pack of matches, and we were off to my room. When we felt a fart brewing, we’d turn out the lights, strike a match to the other’s backside and yell, “Fire in the buttohole.” I’m not sure if we ever witnessed a blue flame, but we got a flare off the matches struck. The reason young boys think farts are hilarious, is because they are. Big boys still find the humor in a good rip under the disdainful glare of a girlfriend. Tex and I laughed until we peed.

Suddenly the door burst open, and there was Pops. We had an ashtray full of dead matches, and the room smelled like methane. “Have you two jokers been lighting farts?” Pops asked. Of course we said no.

Pops said, “I don’t want to have to take you two to the burn ward or buy new Levis, so knock it off.” Pops was the ultimate enforcer. Mom had sent him in for our safety. Pops left and

we could hear Lucille and him giggling in the hallway. Tex and I were young morons in training, and from that moment on we were BHBFs.

Couples are more difficult. Finding men and women couples that like each other equally has about the same odds as winning the lottery. Pops and Lucille had better odds since their military friends were very much in sync. Having another couple as close friends is rare, but it's a bonus element if you can find it. The typical TV sitcom plays this storyline, repeats the same disastrous ending with the other couple being creeped out by the clingy couple trying to force a match. The more likely scenario is a couple having separate friends that occasionally connect at a party or dinner as a couple.

My Grandpa Mack lived until his late nineties. He had many friends from the surrounding farms and from his town council days. He had buried two wives, after which he had a stroke in his late 80s. After that, Grandpa Mack came to live with Pops and Lucille in Houston, and I'd visit him whenever possible. We'd reminisce about Saturday nights on the farm when his buddies would come over to play poker. Past my bedtime, I'd sneak out to the hallway near the kitchen with a flashlight and comic books. I'd read my comics, and listen to them telling jokes over the clatter of poker chips. Eternally embedded in my mind are the joyful vibrations from the kitchen emitted by these hard working men blowing off steam. I remember their weathered faces, gnarled hands, haystack hair, and the smell of cherry pipe tobacco and cigarettes.

I'd asked Grandpa Mack about guys like Blackie, Eddie, Ralph, and Lars. Blackie was killed in a combine accident, while most died of old age on their farms. Grandpa remembered these men not with sadness, but with great stories that made him smile. They were close friends

and a big part of his life. Because Grandpa Mack lived into his 90s, he was the last man standing. That was one of his few sorrows. He didn't want to be the last man down. He knew his family would be at his funeral, but he wanted to know his friends would be there too. He would tell me, "It's good to have friends throughout your life. They may pass on, but their friendship and memories never die."



Everyone should have BFFs, BHBFs, and wingmen in their lives. Beware of someone who has no friends or is jealous of your friendships.



Family and Children

This is an element of your adult life. Your role models are your parents, siblings, grandparents, and relatives. If your experiences in the nest or with relatives were negative, your crusade is to not repeat those examples. Most of us want to replicate our family models, certainly to have children of our own, and to provide a better life for our families. Pops used to say, "You can choose your friends, but you're stuck with your family." This was said with great affection, but usually after he'd taken one of us kids to the base emergency ward for some stupid accident, or my brothers had set the lawn on fire, or tried to mail the cat across town. More often was the occasion when he described his family as a barrel of monkeys with no shortage of entertainment.

I can't imagine a life without a family of my own, a blended family, or grandchildren. Today gay and lesbian families, biracial couples, adoptive couples, and blended second and third families are a wonderful fact of life. *Modern Family* and *The New Normal* sitcoms are a far cry

from *All in the Family*. These cocoons of love and loathe are very important for a life's fulfillment. Children are the final balance to the life elements, and hopefully they come alongside your career, passions, friends, and are supported by a great romance or three. All these elements can make for a life filled with love and hope.

One year in El Paso, my family had just finished opening Christmas presents. Everyone was inhaling the kitchen aromas, anticipating Lucille's goodies to come. I was around 15 and remember feeling this warmth in the house, not from the heat, but the spirit of love embodied in all of us. Pops and Lucille, Debbie, Roger, Greg, and Randy, all joking, and excited over simple gifts and the food to come. I told Lucille, "I love being in this family." That was a feeling I cherished, knowing one day I'd want this same warmth under a roof with my wife and children. At a young age men don't have a physical bucket list, but one of first things on my mental list was always a family of my own.

BREAKING BARRIERS

Chuck Yeager broke the sound barrier in the Bell X-1, originally designated XS-1. 'X' stands for experimental, and 'S' for spaceplane (can operate both within and outside the atmosphere). He nicknamed the aircraft "Glamorous Glennis" after his wife. Nothing could mimic a marriage more than the flight of an experimental aircraft, and the X-1 was an example of a successful marriage. The X-1 was exciting, fast, dangerous, completely new, and at times, extremely unstable. On flight number 50, October 14, 1947, Yeager recorded supersonic flight at Mach 1.06 (800 mph). Since my birthday is also October 14th, I have always felt like Chuck Yeager when embarking on a long-term relationship, specifically marriage. Just like Chuck, I loved my

experimental aircrafts, and knew they could kill me. Regardless, I was getting in the cockpit, and taking off into the wild blue yonder.

EXPERIMENTAL FLIGHT EX-000

I've labeled my ex-wives as EX, "E" for ex-wife, and "X" for experimental since they all crashed. My first experimental flight that crashed and burned, the EX-000, was more of a wind tunnel test. I never should have been taken out of the hangar.

Ruthie and I had been together since high school. We had discussed marriage in the past, mainly when Ruthie brought it up. We were excited for our first trip to Las Vegas to see Elvis Presley, and kidded about having a drive-thru wedding. I was considering moving away from the beach so I could afford to buy a home. Work was going well, and I was contemplating my future as a husband and father.

I really wanted to have kids, emulate my childhood, and become Pops to my kids. I had stored up all my witticisms from Pops and Lessons from Lucille, and I was ready to raise my kids. It was time to pull the trigger. It seemed natural that Ruthie would become my wife.

We took off, headed to the Las Vegas Hilton, had dinner at Benihana's, followed by great seats down front for Elvis. It started like a Hollywood romcom movie. Ruthie was giddy from Elvis, and I was a little drunk. At 2:00 AM we were at The Little White Chapel.

A SHORT, FATED FLIGHT

In my enthusiasm for marriage and a family, I thought Ruthie to be a stable choice. I climbed on board and the flight of the EX-000 was underway. After our trip to The Little White Chapel, I awoke with a headache, wearing a wedding band. There was no tiger in the bathroom like *The*

Hangover, but something seemed to be missing, and it wasn't Doug. On the way home, we discussed having our kids. Rather, I discussed my enthusiasm for children. EX-000 was silent.

Back in L.A., EX-000 said she was taking a trip overseas. As a flight attendant for United, this meant flying to the Orient. She returned four days later. I was about to find out what was missing as the movie turned into the theater of the absurd, a regular Greek Tragedy. She announced that she had her tubes tied, because she would make a terrible mother, and she didn't want kids.

When Pops did pre-flight on aircraft, he did what was called a tech-inspect. His military and private aircraft never had a crash, mechanical failure, or forced landing. If the aircraft wasn't stable, it never went up. The EX-000 was totally experimental. Like the Spruce Goose, it was never meant to fly, and it would not have passed tech-inspect. I never went up in the EX-000 again. I cancelled the flight program, left it in the hangar in L.A., and headed back to Texas. I could not see my life without children. L.A. was no place for me to raise a family, and aircraft there were purely experimental and quite unstable.



A huge part of life is family, and that includes children. It's should be a conscious choice to have or adopt children, or to journey forward without them. It is impossible to lead a fulfilling life if you differ here, and if you move forward together, you will amass huge regret and resentment towards the opposing party.



MY DYNAMIC DESTINY LIST (DDL)

I've always resisted the notion of a pre-death list as a morbid, selfish afterthought of regrets, and things you want to acquire or complete before you kick the bucket. Lucille's advice to try new things, talk to everyone, and find your destiny made me create my mental DDL very early. My completed exploits have yielded some lifelong friendships, mental and physical benefits, and stories I can tell at poker games. I've broken my list into sections, the most important is how I want to be remembered, as this involves people not things.

Legacy - remember me *

1. Be a good father
2. Be a good husband
3. Do my father's eulogy with my son in attendance so he can get tips for mine
4. Become a good cook and invite friends often
5. Volunteer at a soup kitchen
6. Pay for a stranger's groceries
7. Make and maintain my favorite movie list for anyone to view
8. Steal a car with a friend like in Ferris Bueller and have a great day off
9. Learn three jokes (***) – 1. Longer joke you have to stand up to tell; 2. Short one-liner when someone says make me laugh; 3. Stupid story that makes everyone groan but laugh.

*Life elements / achievements**

*Purchases and playtime**

*Sports and skills**

*Travel and events**

* FOR MY COMPLETE DDL LIST visit my website at www.bobmackpeak.com/ddl

*** MY THREE JOKES

Humor is great medicine for any relationship. If you're able to tell jokes in a crowd or at an event, then you gain self-confidence for any situation. Many people are not really funny or good at telling jokes, but you should always have a few in your pocket if you're challenged. You may make people laugh just by trying to tell a joke. It's advisable to save the punch line until the end. Lucille would often forget a joke she'd heard and start with the punch line, but after a while, she got it right, and kept that joke on reserve. Either way, she always made us laugh.

1. *Your Old Man* - Stand up and be animated to tell this one.

A man comes home and sees his wife standing in front of a full length mirror in her bikini. She is smiling as she swivels, admiring her figure.

The husband shakes his head at her antics and says, "What the hell do you think you're doing?"

She replies, "I was at the beach today, and there were some young, cute college boys that said I had the breasts of a hot 20-year-old babe."

The husband frowns and growls, “So what did they say about your 40-year-old ass!?”

The woman turns and examines her derriere in the mirror, and says, “That’s funny... your name never really came up.”

2A. *Horse in a Bar* - One liner when someone ask you to tell a joke.

A horse walks into a bar and orders a drink. The bartender says, “Hey pal. Why the long face?”

2B. *Fonts in a Bar* - Second option if they groan at 2A.

A group of Helvetica fonts walk into a bar. The bartender yells, “Get out of my bar. We don’t serve your type in here.”

2C. *Toad in a Bar* - Third option if they’re still groaning.

A Frenchman walks into a bar with a toad on his shoulder. The bartender asks, “What the hell is that?” The toad says, “I don’t know. It started as a wart on my ass and kept getting bigger.”

3. *Happy Dwarf* - A girlfriend told me this one.

A dwarf walks into a bar and sits at the far end of the saloon. The bartender is ignoring the short patron until the dwarf stands on the stool and waves his arms. The bartender finally makes his way down to the dwarf who’s now sitting with his arms folded. “I’m not happy,” the dwarf says angrily.

The bartender says, “I give up. Which one are you?”



Keep smiling, and always have a ‘walks into a bar’ joke handy. Never lose hope, and never give up on love.



6.

WHERE ARE YOU?

“I met your father at a USO dance. That was way before computers. Thank heavens.”

Lucille

OLD SCHOOL ROMANCE

In simpler times, men and women met, got married, had children, and died in each other’s arms. The theme of fairytale romance stories happened in real life more often than not. The rules were pretty well-defined for men as breadwinners, and women as homemakers. That was yesterday.

Today, relationships are complicated, and the world has changed as women have assumed leadership roles. Men and women are equally confused. Since the men in charge have created political morasses, destroyed the environment, bankrupted families via Wall Street, and started too many wars, maybe women can clean up some of their messes. In the complexity of life today, finding your mate is equally convoluted. Disposable razors, recyclable materials, meals-for-one, and other short-term ingredients for subsistence have created a ‘disposable relationship’ mentality. Young people out of college can’t find jobs, and when they do, those jobs last only a few years before mergers or collapse end their employment. Permanence in anything is problematical.

If one person doesn’t meet the perfect companion criteria, just throw that person away and move to the next opportunity, is today’s thinking. I’ve heard this referred to as ‘monkey branching.’ Like a monkey swinging through the trees, they don’t let go of one branch until they

have a grip on the next one. This is why people have affairs. It's easy to explore other people via trysts, and when you have a firm grip on something new or different, then let go of the home branch. It's been said repeatedly in movies, books, and in counseling - relationships take work.

I only recall one time when Pops and Lucille argued. My memories of them were in the kitchen, kidding around, hugging and kissing. For the greater part of their lives, they were really happy. This was an era with well -defined roles, and modest expectations that yielded very few disappoints. 'Having it all,' was never an expression for their generation. Lucille would say, "These women that want to have it all are going to be pretty disappointed. If you had everything I mean, where would you put it all?"

Lucille would remark on the disposable nature of marriages, and she was glad she met Pops at the USO. Pre-World War II, there was a patriotic attitude in America. It was a common bond of pride in America, and optimism for the future if we all worked together. The USO (United Service Organizations) held dances to raise money for war bonds. Service men and women attended these events so they could meet civilians.

Pops was stationed at McConnell Air Force Base in Kansas. Pops went with a buddy to a USO dance in Kansas City, and it was like any WWII movie where the brave soldier meets the beautiful girl next door. There was liquor, cigarettes, and loud boogie woogie music. I'm not sure where Pops learned to dance, but Lucille said he could cut a rug. Old school romances were done face-to-face, mono-e-maiden. A potential life mate couldn't fool you via the Internet. You saw someone you liked, you talked to them, and you were off and running.

When Lucille met Pops, she said, "It was love at first sight. I saw your father, and POW! I knew he was the man for me."

I asked her if it was really love or lust at first sight.

“Well, it was definitely lust. The love would surely follow. Before I met your father, I’d slept with a number of men and I knew what I wanted,” she said.

Okay, that one really caught me off guard as a total overshare. You think of old school romance as the virgin meets the prince. That was not Lucille. She was a liberal thinker all her life, open to exploration and learning, probably stemming from her young near death experience. I don’t think women back then looked at a man, especially in uniform, and ran down the 99 point checklist of today’s women. Lucille bemoaned life for her children with hit-and-miss dating styles, personal ads, video and Internet dating. She was incredibly perceptive as her children went in and out of relationships, some proving to be fatal. The USO is still active, but it’s a flyspeck compared to Facebook and Internet hook-ups. Oh, for simpler times.

EXPERIMENTAL FLIGHT EX-1

My first risky flight attempting a family, started as a blended one. When I was in Hermosa Beach I met my ex-wife to be, designated the EX-1. She had a young daughter that would become someone quite special in my life. Her daughter looked and acted like her father, who was a very unique guy. He was one of my best friends, we got each other, and we did everything together. I became a cliché when I married my best friend’s ex-wife.

There should have been a few of Lucille’s Lessons frothing up in my brain, framed with red flags. Unfortunately, information to my cranium was blocked by Woodrow. Taking Lucille’s advice, I had named my decision-making penis Woodrow “Woody” Teak. Woody seemed appropriate, and no one else I knew had taken that name. That’s a guy no-no. You can’t use another friend’s name. Originally, I named him Stanley, after the power tool company. Then I

made friends with a Stanley, and I had to baptize Woody. For a last name I took Teak, one of the hardest woods in nature. I was on a first name basis with the guy living in my pants, and he was calling the shots.

Lucille never had any Lessons or negative comments about the EX-1, but I'm sure they would have been doozies. Lucille said, "When I have a daughter-in-law, I'm going to treat her like my own daughter. I don't care who she is or where she came from, I'm never going to be one of those mother-in-laws." True to form, EX-1 and Lucille became fast friends, just like mother and daughter. My stepdaughter was a wonderful grandchild adored by Lucille, and they delighted in every moment they spent together.

Pops was different. He knew an unstable aircraft when he saw one. After looking over the EX-1 he advised me not to take her up. One evening before getting married, we had a man-to-man talk. "I'll just say this once. Don't marry that one. She reminds me of my first wife," he said.

Deer in the headlights says, "WHAT? Your first what? What about—"

Pops said, "Yah, she was this fast little blonde number. I went on T-D-Y (temporary duty) and came home 90-days later, and she'd taken off with another pilot. Thank heavens I met your mother."

That was a shocker to learn of Pops' failed marriage. I was still at the age of ignoring parental advice, so I didn't correlate the example. This could never happen to me. Always trust a professional airplane mechanic when it comes to getting airborne. And, if that mechanic has been in combat, never doubt his words. I took off anyway in another lesson wasted on a soon-to-be-a-genius son.

The EX-1 flight stayed airborne for six years with the usual changes in altitude. One exciting flight could never be duplicated. The birth of my son Steve, was without a doubt one of the best moments of my life. Women are amazing creatures and giving birth is so incredible, so wondrous, so astonishing, men can only marvel. Bringing a life into the world has a profound effect on most men. For me this was the beginning of fatherhood, and the opportunity to pass along my Lessons from Lucille and Pops. A child impacts men emotionally, and physically. One single smack by a doctor stimulating a baby's cry and a man becomes a father. The torch is passed and he becomes 'Pops.'

Life is said to be like Santa Claus. First you believe in Santa, and then you don't. A child's birth transforms a man into Santa, and then he starts to look like the big jolly man. There's not much of a lag between becoming and resembling a larger you. It's a good thing. Your life changes, but it is a feeling of satisfaction, completion, and one of life's great passages. You're now on your personal crusade to acquire the joy you remember from your happy family life. If you didn't have that kind of upbringing, then this is your chance to originate it for your children.

Like many marriages, mine ended in divorce. Disappointed by EX-1's unstable aeronautics, and unforgivable flaws in her flight behavior, I filed for divorce when Steve was three. This was the end of my traditional family quest, but my son had completed an element that would never disillusion or disenchant me. Decades later, my life is still complete with my son a big part of my happiness. You can cease being a spouse, but you'll always be parent. I can't imagine life without experiencing the joy of birth, raising a child, watching them grow, prospering under my tutelage, and being a voyeur and participant in their explorations.

One day I was walking past the bathroom full length mirror, and I caught my early morning, aged reflection. I moonwalked, stopped, and queried the mirror fondly... “Pops?” It was more than a reflection. It was the aura of wisdom, age, realizations, losses and gains. I knew one day, if I was a good father until the end, just like Pops, my son would smile at the same reflection.

In the quest for that special someone, my stepdaughter made the most prophetic statement I’ve ever heard or read. She was born when EX-1 was 19. When my stepdaughter turned 24, she had graduated from college, had dated a few different guys, and one day exclaimed, much like my revelation in the mirror, “When my mom was my age she already had a five-year-old daughter. I’d better get busy finding a guy that will be a good father to my children.” This is one of the best character tests I can think of, even if you don’t want children.

Steve was in his first girl-boy relationship when he was about 12. Steve and I went on a father-son trip to Hawaii. He got his initial surfing lesson on Waikiki Beach. We rented a convertible Ferrari and drove around the island. We had lunch on the beach, listened to music, did canoe rides, trimaran sails, visited the big surf at Banzai Pipeline and Sunset Beach, and we went on a submarine dive. It was just us guys. As we talked, I was starting to see little flickers of Lucille’s Lessons I’d shared with him.

We’d come back from surfing one day, and he thought he’d call his girlfriend. Dialing California, she answered the phone, and the conversation was stilted. “Hello... Yes... Uh-huh... Uh-huh... Really. Really? Uh, okay.”

I asked, “What was that about?”

Bewildered, he said, “She just broke up with me!”

“Did she have a reason or just an excuse?” Lucille used to tell me there was no excuse for bad behavior, only a reason. If your dog just died, or you’d broken your leg, those would be reasons for temporary bad behavior. In all other case, there were no true reasons for poor conduct, just excuses. Steve was familiar with Lucille’s ‘excuses’ axiom.

“No. Just some dumb excuse girls make. She liked someone else, or something like that.”

Trying to console him, and with a little revenge in mind, I asked, “Is there another girl in your class you really like?”

Steve pondered, scanning his mental contact list. “Yah... YAH! There’s this girl who’s really cute. She’s pretty cool. I don’t think she’s an ‘excuses’ girl.”

I suggested, “Here’s what you do. Call her and say this: I’m in Hawaii with my dad. We saw a really beautiful sunset last night, and it made me think of you, so I thought I’d call.”

“Smooth move ex-lax. I like it,” Steve said. He dialed information and got her number. The conversation ensued, Steve threw her the line and she bit. He hung up with a big smile on his face. “That was amazing. It worked like a charm.”

“Sometimes these thing happen,” I said. “What are you going to say when you see little miss excuses?”

Still smiling he said, “I only have one word for her. NEXT!”

Lesson from Lucille to son to grandson. The student becomes the teacher, as I’ve used the ‘NEXT’ line many times since then.



If the person you're dating wouldn't be a good parent for your current or future children, then move on. Your only comment in parting should be, "NEXT!"



TAKING A BREAK

Following my crash in the EX-1, the hard impact landing would linger for a while. I was not interested in dating, and I needed a break from anything relationship related.

I bought an old home in Monte Sereno, California. I began the task of cleaning the Augean Stables by remodeling my new, old home. I tore down walls, cut out doors, ripped the sheetrock off the walls, and pulled out the wiring. I was sleeping on the floor after my nightly remodeling labors, unable to sleep. I worked in high-tech during the day, and the remodeling until midnight was therapeutic. I finished the project with much satisfaction in the results of a nice house, and a home for my son on weekends.

I HAD ACCRUED VACATION TIME, AND THE HOLIDAYS WERE COMING. I decided I'd go somewhere fun for Thanksgiving. I booked a one week stay at Club Med in Moorea, Tahiti. I arrived at the Club on a Saturday, about 11:00 AM, and I was on the beach by noon. That trip would open my eyes and my heart to start a new journey. I met three flight attendants from Air France who'd abandoned boyfriends and husbands for a girls-only trip. Michèle, Colette, and Cécile were ready for sun, fun and romance on the beach.

I was not interested in a relationship, a fling, or anything sexual. I just wanted to relax, read, surf, and go scuba diving every day. Club Med Tahiti was a wild singles only club at that

time. The club is not there anymore as most Club Med facilities have been converted to a family oriented vacation.

I became one of the girls and we'd sit on the beach and gossip during the day. We'd dine together in the evenings, go to the nightly shows, and dance until dawn at the nightclub. Sex never reared its ugly head. The stories the ladies shared with me were funny, touching and a little sad. There was a lament for fading romance in a marriage, frustration with the inattentive boyfriend, and the recall of fiery encounters.

Colette was in her late 40s, and very attractive. "I could stop a man's heart beating by entering the room," she said recalling her 20s. This was with a French accent, which made it very believable. Her husband liked a good nap better than a roll in the hay.

Lubricated with many Mai Thai cocktails, they reveled in the details of their secret lives. When I asked about memorable sexual encounters, Colette described a flight from Paris to New York. She depicted a swarthy, sexy Italian man, dressed impeccably, reeking of sex. All the women passenger in first class were swooning with his passing. The sexy Italian caught her eye, and took his seat next to her. The sparks flew, and the Mile High Club was in full trans-Atlantic swing. She recounted their meeting with a heavy sigh for a time long ago. Each woman had a similar happenstance - in a parking lot, on a bucking washing machine, or in the back of a movie theater.

The Air France ladies left at the end of the week, and we exchanged hugs and kisses. It was time for me to go home, but I decided to stay longer. I called my boss and said I'd be home in another week. The GOs (Gentil Organisateur) at Club Med romanced the GMs (Gentil Membre) or guests, to fill the void in the GMs lives. Each week a new flock of GMs arrived, and

it was back to fulfilling fantasies for the GOs. I met some unique women at the Club, all united in their quest for romance and adventure.

I left Club Med after two weeks, departing with a renewed affection for women. I vowed to never be the disappointing guy back home that propelled his lady to Club Med seeking to fill a lost or neglected appetite. At home, I had renewed energies for work and dating.

GOING DIGITAL

I've often thought women feel they are only one chance encounter away from meeting a Brad Pitt or George Clooney type of man. A meeting that would allow them to showcase what a wonderful woman they are, a great catch so to speak. It's obviously more complex. Meeting someone at work has been deterred by the sexual harassment backlash. In the 1930s, potential couples lived within ten blocks of each other. Pops and Lucille lived in the same state in the 1940s, but 80 miles apart. The USO was the uniting factor. Today, someone is GU (Geographically Undesirable) if they live 50+ miles away. People in L.A. hate driving to San Diego, as traffic makes a potential mate GU. L.A. to Orange County is on the GU borderline.

The statistics have skewed over the years. Old school romances began in high school or college through friends or social events (parties, bars, USO). First marriages are often through friends or at school. After a first marriage, online resources may come into play.

According to news services in 2012 (Reuters, Herald News, PC World, Washington Post) there were 54 million single people in the U.S., and 40 million have tried online dating. Sites like Match.com and Match.com get 3.5-4.0 million unique visitors per month. The average length of courtship until marriage for online versus old school offline dating is 18.5 months versus 42

months, respectively. Only about 10% leave the online site after three months, and many stay on the sites for years in pursuit of a match.

DIGITAL DATING SERVICES

There are numerous dating services available, and online is very popular. These services include: Facebook, OKCupid.com, Zoosk.com, OurTime.com (over 50), ChristianMingle.com, JDate.com, It's Just Lunch and Plenty of Fish. There's a new .com every month, and you can try high-end personal matchmaking services. Following are dating services I have used in my romantic journeys.

Great Expectations (GE)

After Tahiti, I joined GE confident there were wonderful women waiting to go on a journey. For the first year of dating, I was hurt and angry after my divorce. I didn't trust women, and I needed to reaffirm my faith in the opposite sex epitomized by Lucille. GE was a good resource for getting dates, but subconsciously I was not ready for a committed relationship.

GE was a precursor to the online world of dating, featuring videotaped introductions. GE was relatively expensive at the time, I think I paid \$3,500 for a negotiated membership. This was serious money for serious people.

To find a potential date, you read the personal profiles stored in binders by first name, then you could watch their corresponding VHS interview. There was no chance of false images via VHS. Sometimes you would see a person in the office, ask their name, and then look them up in the library. Scanning the books, you listed requested names and ID numbers, gave them to the GE staff, and they put your request into the system. You went into the office to get your printout

responses which could be: no thanks, not at this time (maybe later), or yes, which included their phone number. Email was not a ubiquitous contact method then.

I began tracking each contact if they said yes, because you could date multiple people at once. My computerized notes would help me keep the names and information straight. In the old school, if you met someone and started dating, then Saturday night was reserved for dates. If you didn't call that person or go out on a weekend, that was a red flag. It meant there was something wrong, or they were seeing someone else.

At GE or similar services, not going out on date night did not raise concern. You assumed people were accepting invitations from other people, and if you were busy Saturday, then you were just in the dating rotation. At one time, I was seeing five different women at once, and I assumed they were dating other men. If a relationship got serious, you both agreed to suspend your public profile while you were exclusive.

GE was a very worthwhile exercise. I met some impressive women, had three long-term relationships, one of which became flight EX-2. You competed in this environment, and if you didn't like dating with uncertainty, GE wasn't for you. Vying for that Saturday night date, or a weekend with someone, was a premium connection. If you scored a special date, then you were progressing toward an enduring association.

I also met the odd ducks at GE. One day while reading the profile books, a woman sat across from me, and introduced herself. She was cute, bubbly, and very outgoing. We chatted briefly, and there was a mutual attraction. She said she was on a quest to find the perfect man. RED FLAG! She described perfection as my height (6'+), educated, successful, liked dancing, moonlight walks on the beach, the theater, was comfortable in jeans or a tuxedo (this was in 90%

of female profiles and became cliché), loved animals, and wanted to have children, three to be exact.

I reluctantly responded to her queries, and she seemed pleased. I was in the crosshairs of her perfect man scope. She asked my first name, and she went to find my profile. She sat at a table, read my profile, then put it back into the library shelf. She approached me and said, “I’m sorry. It’s not going to work for me. You’ve been married before and have a child.” She turned and walked back to the library.

I bore the soldier’s reaction after a bullet glances off his helmet. He removes it and sees the dent, and he thanks his lucky stars. I’m not sure who took the bullet from Miss Perfect Hunter, but she was a disappointment waiting to happen.

While there were some happy endings at GE, there were a few horror stories. One of the GE employees told me about a couple who had met, dated for a few months, and then married. A month after the honeymoon, the happy bride came into GE beaming, showing off her ring, talking about their new home and bright future. She had come to get his old profile, along with hers, so she could put them in their wedding scrapbook.

It was a Gomer Pyle surprise, surprise, surprise! Her profile was in the inactive file as requested, but his was still active. Not only was his profile in the active library, he had been requesting dates for the last month. The new bride turned pale white, and she collapsed in the waiting area. After a bit, she turned bright red, rushed into the library, tore his profile and pictures out of the library book, and she stormed out of the office. I’m not sure how this ended, but there was substantial fodder for a divorce. I guess I could have checked the news headlines for, “Newlywed Kills Cheating Husband.”

GE still has a website for their services. To my knowledge, Match.com and eHarmony are the leaders in online dating.

GE RESULTS: Four years, 88 connections, three exclusive dating relationships, one experimental flight.

Match.com

I used their services on-and-off for about three years, and I made over 120 documented connections. You connected via Match.com proxy email, chatted, and then had drinks or dinner. About half of my first dates moved to second dates or had potential for a long-term situation.

Online services like Match.com have optimized the dating process compared to GE. It's fast, easy, and you can manage numerous connections simultaneously. But, online sites have depersonalized the dating experience. The movie *Catfish*, documents how a lonely, older woman scams a young guy, and 'Catfished' has become a euphemism for digital deceit.

Going online, you experience the lies told most by women – weight, build (old photos), age, and men's lies about age, height, and income or profession. Hiding behind a digital shield, phone chats may go well, but first meetings are accompanied with excuses for the age of the photos. An apparent weight gain is blamed on an overactive thyroid, while you're thinking the problem is an overactive fork. It's never polite to ask a woman her age, so it can only be explained as Werner's Syndrome or Hutchinson-Gilford Progeria Syndrome for rapid aging, but those victims die very young.

Men connect visually online, because reading hundreds of profiles is just not efficient. Women quickly scan height, age, profession, and then photos. Email allows members to have a virtual chat and discover a person's sense of humor, current hobbies, and common interests. If you are good with words, you can flirt and build a relationship online. The most famous online hoax was Notre Dame Football star Manti Te'o who was 'Catfished' by a man.

It was a veritable gauntlet of dating disasters, one after the other, burning my time and money. You have to be resigned to kissing a downpour of frogs, sometimes at great personal expense. It's like a 24 Hour Relationship Workout Center where you run on a treadmill for hours going nowhere, while someone robs your locker, stealing your clothes and money. When you leave, a stranger in the parking lot kicks you in the groin. You catch your breath, and you look up to see your car driving away. You want to terminate your membership. Your friends and parents tell you to get out of there. Ah, what the hell. Maybe tomorrow the treadmill will be good to me.

MATCH.COM RESULTS: Three years, 120 connections, one exclusive dating relationship, one 85% woman.

EHarmony

I was with this service for about six months. The process is very different from Match.com or GE. EHarmony scientifically matches your personality with potential mates. I didn't see any pictures until I'd gone through some basic screens and matches. You're forced to read profiles before seeing anyone's images. Many women like this, all men hate it. With Match.com, you

sign-up, see the goods, and start requesting people immediately. EHarmony matches your personalities and common interests.

I thought eHarmony was a good process, but being a visual person I was completely disarmed. I went on a number of dates, but never really connected. A couple of dates were overly aggressive about hooking up. It's a good service, but it didn't work for me. It's like the query about the blind date's looks answered with, "She's got a great personality."

EHARMONY RESULTS: Six months, 10 connections, zero relationships.

Personal ads

I ran a personal ad in the San Jose Mercury and San Francisco Chronicle for over a year. The statistic for women's lies applied here. After a first face-to-face meeting, I assumed I could add 15 pounds and 10 years. This would become my "15/10 rule." The overactive fork was at work, and the Julian calendar had been replaced by a Mayan or Hindu calendar, or something bizarre. Every woman in the personal columns seemed to want younger men. Knowing they were subtracting a decade, this made the guys prepubescent. Most of the personal ads were seeking affairs.

The ads did not have to show pictures, and you sent inquiries by postal mail, and you waited an eternity. If you got a response you could mail photos to go to the next step. Sometimes you received a phone number. Being a marketing person, newspaper ads were a way to cover all potential sources.

I received numerous letters, photos and requests. I had a few dates and got the sense that woman were operating under the premise of chance encounters, thinking, “If only we can meet, you’ll see what my girlfriends are talking about.” It was hard to find them at a restaurant because their pictures were way past their prime. First meetings were so shocking, it was hard to get to their inner beauty.

PERSONAL ADS RESULT: One and half years, 12 connections, one trip to The Hawaiian Lagoon.

THE HAWAIIAN LAGOON

ALISHA SAW MY PERSONAL AD AND WE CONNECTED VIA PHONE. There was a sparkle in her voice, enhanced by an amatory French accent. We had not exchanged photos, so we were shooting in the dark. We agreed to meet at Spago’s in Palo Alto for drinks. She said she would have the longest hair of any woman there.

Alisha came into the restaurant, and I recognized her immediately. She was tall, beautiful, and she walked with a sensual confidence. She spotted me, came to the table, shook my hand, and sat down. We exchanged the head-to-toe check, and we jointly approved with smiles. Originally from France, she had lived in Canada with her husband, and she was now single. She had attended the Sorbonne, spoke several languages, and she was a Mensa member. For a Midwestern boy, the attraction was certainly that of opposites.

I walked her to her car that night, and she gave me a hug goodnight. She lingered for a while, smelling me. She said she was taking in my aura, finding my soul. I was smitten.

The relationship moved forward rapidly, and we became very close. There was always a little disconnect due to different upbringings and cultures. She was a concert pianist, and she did ballroom dancing at a professional level. She was charming and engaging in any environment. Maybe opposites really do attract. The ultimate test would be our trip to Kauai, concluding on Oahu.

We stayed at a luxury hotel in Kauai, and the trip was going well. I was not falling head over heels in love. Persistent questions had me on the fence. How would our cultures merge? What about her two young children? Was she high-spirited or just wound too tightly? Lust at first sight was at the point that it needed to shift to best friends and true lovers to continue. That required common ground to magnify my feelings.

On to Oahu, and we finished the trip with dinner at Le Mer, one of the finest French restaurants in the world. Alisha was a persnickety vegan, but she tried the fish. The service and food were spectacular, accompanied by champagne. Alisha was speaking French with the waiter, in a great mood, and eventually the chef came out to greet her. It was July 14th, Bastille Day, and the Parisians at our table were in full celebration. It was all very special, and then...

Some people should not drink too much, or at all. Alisha must have been feeling the alcohol when this new person materialized in her place, from white to black in a flash. It was one of those times you're caught completely flatfooted, mouth ajar, shaking your head.

Alisha went from smiling, to deadly serious. Her eyes searing through me, she confronted me on an accusatory level that an attorney would have asked the judge for permission to treat the witness as hostile. It was a test fueled by her insecurities. She said I was shallow, incapable of love, and well... it went downhill from there. I'd gone into that dark basement and here was a monster I'd never seen. The insecure, drunken insult monster. YIKES!

When I was a kid I saw *The Creature from the Black Lagoon*, and it scared the Jujubes out of me. I had nightmares for years about the man in the rubber fishy-monster suit. I never took baths after that, only showers. *The Creature from the Booze Lagoon* was now haunting me. Rising from the surf in Waikiki with an axe to grind, *The Booze Creature* attacked without warning. Sorry mom. I'll never go in the water again.

I'm sure on the scorekeeping level a very expensive first class trip filled with romance was just what I was supposed to do. It was big in my book. For Alisha, it was part of a starry-eyed romance imagined for years. It's just what the perfect dream man is supposed to do.

Alisha had divorced well and had millions in her Smith Barney account. I was still a working stiff, and this trip was expensive but necessary. I wanted to see if we could cohabit for a few weeks, and move to the next level. One day Alisha was going to the workout facility in the hotel and she asked me if she could borrow \$40 for the service fee and tips. Really? That seemed odd. Never on the trip had she offered to buy dinner or drinks. She had not brought any cash with her, and she did not have credit cards. I was that romantic knight that was sweeping her off her feet.

Alisha talked of her ideal life dancing through her mansion, with silk gowns flowing. The American version of having it all. This elicited visions of an old movie with Ginger Rogers dancing down the hallway of Fred Astaire's palatial home. At the time I thought it was a nice vision, but I never imagined a mansion in my future. My concept was a nice home with a family room full of kids, a big kitchen filled with friends, and a four car garage for a station wagon and muscle cars.

I was so shocked at the confrontation that I immediately asked for the check, and we went to the hotel. Consumed by the booze, Alisha crashed on the bed. I went for a sobering walk on the beach. There was a Lucille Lesson here somewhere. If Alisha had bones in the closet or an old axe to grind with her ex-husband or daddy, I was not going to stick around to figure out what it was. There would be one unhappy person here, and it wasn't going to be me.

All of us have had those shocking moments that leave us speechless. After you have time to think about it, past events come to mind to reconcile what just happened. After being jolted, and now lucid, you formulate what you should have done or said at that moment. I recalled the flowing gowns comment. She hated if someone repeated themselves. I felt a woman was required to laugh at a man's same stupid jokes for an eternity, or at least tolerate them. Alisha's husband had custody of her two children, and she was only allowed sporadic supervised visitation. Something wasn't adding up here.

I returned to the room, and Alisha had sobered up. "I'm sorry. I've been told I'm not supposed to drink. I'm not sure what came over me," she said.

I've heard this before from a few vicious drunks, but never a highly educated, beautiful princess. Saying you're sorry doesn't undo the damage. You can't un-say something. Compliments slide into the back of your memory, but insults and verbal assaults stay top of mind forever. In my experience, alcohol doesn't make people irrational. It makes them brave.

Men puff up their chests and get into fights. Women say things they are thinking, but don't have the courage to announce sober. It's a truth serum in a bottle. We were in the area of excuses versus reasons. There was no reason for this outburst on the last day of a wonderful trip. I was terrified to open the door to this relationship any further. This was a major setback for me,

and only excuses lay ahead. It was a long, silent flight home. I went from shocked, to offended, to terminally distant.

Men are pretty simple. They just want a little acknowledgement and approval of their accomplishments. They enjoy the pat on the back for trying, even when they fail. Criticism is the last thing they want. There is an abyss that relationships must cross to true, unconditional love. The bridge across the chasm is built with romance, love, respect, affection, acknowledgment, devotion, and trust. Men have a lower, or slower capacity for unconditional love. A man's love is acquired over time through acknowledgement of achievements at work or in a relationship. When men get pushed back in their attempts at romance, it takes many more steps for them to return to a previous point. The second she says, "Oops! I didn't mean that," the damage is done. He thinks, "Yes, you did. You were thinking it and didn't realize your lips were moving."

Stunned and searching for words to address my feelings for Alisha, I was at a loss. Making up the setback in our relationship would be grueling, and there were too many warning signs. My son's advice came to mind. I would conclude the relationship with one word...
"NEXT!"

THE BIRDS AND THE BEES, AND STDs

SAMANTHA WAS 39-YEARS-OLD, owned a classic Corvette, was independently wealthy, and had a killer bathing suit photo with her GE profile. We emailed, then talked, and we hit it off. We agreed to have brunch on the weekend. Samantha juggled her schedule, and the date was set. Our first short meeting turned into a 10 hour brunch with dinner and goodnight cocktails.

We started down the trail to the truth. The bathing suit shot was a few years old, before she went through a divorce that caused a weight gain. No problem. Her profile age was generously young, but never questioned. We moved forward.

We put the top down on Samantha's Corvette, and we did a weekend drive. She had money in real estate, and she now lived in a guest house behind her mother's home. We dated for eight weeks, but never spent the night together. It was very superficial, but fun.

The first time I came to Samantha's cottage, she was late getting ready. I looked in the refrigerator for something to drink, and in an 'aha moment,' I figured out why we only went out once a week. Her refrigerator had three leftover containers, marked with days of the week. Whenever we went to dinner, she had generous orders of appetizers, main course items, and side dishes. There was plenty for the doggie bag. Her invisible pet had quite the appetite. She had a Match.com date almost every night, saved the extras, and she never paid for food. Rich people have money because they let other people spend theirs.

Lucille's scary movie warning was ringing in my ears, "Don't go down there, son!"

We dated for a few more weeks, got to the amorous stage, and we had the talk. What I call "The Birds and the Bees, and STDs." I opened with my standard disclosure. "You know, I'm a pretty health conscious guy, and I'm slow to drop my pants for just anyone. Fortunately, I've never had a bad experience or caught anything contagious. So..."

I would pause allowing potential bedmates a chance to divulge their bill of health. This would not be the first time I was caught owl-eyed, mouth agape. Samantha stammered a little, then said, "Uh, I uh... you know... the first guy I was with after I got a divorce, well he, uh... gave me herpes."

The CDC states that 16% of people age 14-49 have genital herpes (HSV-2), apportioned as one in nine for men, one in five for women, and 90% are unaware of their condition. Genital herpes is highest among African Americans with a 39% positive rate. Lucille's generation didn't have this ailment. The term 'getting lucky,' for her meant having sex. For my generation and my kids, 'lucky' would mean not contracting an STD that lived in your spinal column for eternity or something that would take your life.

“NEXT!”

A strange trend was emerging. I was more compatible with women who asked me out than with women I requested. Women took time to read profiles, determine compatibility, and life stages, while looks came in a distant third. Women consistently eliminated men that were short (under 5'10"), overweight, or underemployed. I've been more or less a six or seven out of ten on the ratings scale most of my life. Being tall, in-shape, and employed, I received a reasonable number of requests. I picked women based on photos first, and profile content last. 'Nice rack,' was not a good method for picking a potential mate. Going over a hundred connections, I was on the Match-treadmill.

PAMELA WAS AN M.D. WORKING AT STANFORD HOSPITAL. She loved sports, dancing, and was a theater and movie devotee. Viewing her sexy photos, great profile, and profession, I thought we complemented each other. Pamela was a smart, passionate, entertaining woman. She was a neurosurgeon, and knew everything about the human body and mind, and I assumed she knew about the birds and the bees. We dated for several weeks, and it was leaning towards exclusivity. We decided to take a trip to Tahoe to go skiing, and spend the night together.

We arrived at the condo, and I started to unload the car. I told her to go in, take a bath and relax. We settled in, and I dried her long thick hair as I told her a bedtime story. I finished drying her hair, and gave her my opening line, “You know, I’m a pretty health conscious guy...”

After I finished, there was a long pause, and Pamela said, “Uh, I uh... you know... the first guy I was with after I got a divorce...”

WOW! Again? The same exact words. “You’re a doctor, and you didn’t know this guy had herpes?”

“Well... he gave me oral sex, and he had an infection in his mouth,” she said.

By now, Lucille would be on her feet yelling, “Get out of there NOW!” It’s unfortunate that some terrific women fall victim to these things, but at least they were forthcoming. It was my choice to stay or go. We had a good weekend skiing, but I chose to head for the exit sign. I really had to start having the B & B, & STDs talks much earlier. One of my golf buddies is a surgeon and his advice was, “Assume everyone has something you can catch.”

“NEXT!”

BE HOPEFUL, BE ROMANTIC, BE REAL

I’ve always been a hopeful romantic with realistic expectations. I was never tethered to mom’s apron strings. Lucille had dedicated her life to her family, and she was happy in her role as homemaker. Times have changed and so have women. I wanted a woman with Lucille’s heart, and capacity for unselfish love. But, I wanted a modern woman with her own life. A woman who had assimilated many of her life elements would have established her self-worth and happiness. I would be the complement to my wife, and satisfy her romance element.

Since my teen years I've been comfortable in my own skin, with my own unique personality idiosyncrasies.. A good woman friend once told me, "You're one of my favorite people, but you're also a little odd."

I laughed and said, "Thank you."

She was trying to make me aware that she and some of her girlfriends thought I was different. It was a heads-up for self-examination with an opportunity to modify myself to be normal. I took her comment as a compliment, since I never wanted to be like everyone else.

I was happy with my life, my son, and where I was headed. I also found that women who had great relationships with their fathers were very happy people. They knew how to relate to and respect a man. I don't mean women who were spoiled by their fathers, but women who had been taught to work hard for what they wanted. A woman with a nurturing mother and a strong father were good backgrounds to match mine.



Finding someone and moving to a committed relationship is half the battle. A long-term bond takes time and work. There are many measures of love that must be satisfied to realize unconditional love.



II.

THE 85% MAN AND WOMEN

Fifteen Lessons to guide you.

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7.

LESSON 1: THE UNCONDITIONAL ABYSS

“Unconditional love is for kids.”

Lucille

IT’S IN THE DNA

Love is the first item on a young girl’s bucket list. The maternal instinct comes with female birth. Women often wonder if, or when a man will love them to the level they are capable of loving a man. Women may achieve unconditional love much sooner and easier than a man. Unconditional love is not something a man understands until he has children. Even then, it’s an emotion that is not easily acknowledged for his mate, as it happens over a lengthy timespan. It can be an epiphany or an awakening, when all the conditions for true love are securely in place.

I understood the difference between love for your mother and your wife based on a Lucille Lesson. Unconditional love would come into question with a GE connection.

BARBARA LIVED IN MONTEREY, CALIFORNIA. She was on the edge of being GU, living about 60 miles away. We talked on the phone, and we agreed to meet for lunch in Carmel. Lunch turned into dinner, and a moonlight walk on the pier. Barbara was a nurse with an outgoing personality. We started seeing each other weekly. Soon we were spending available weekends together. All indicators said this would be a long-term relationship with great potential for more.

I usually came down to Monterey to visit Barbara. It was a bit of a drive, but an acceptable tradeoff for a good relationship. Barbara was quite passionate, which also meant she

had a bit of a temper. She had a messy divorce, and she was still embittered. A strong woman is a great long-term asset, as long as she understands how to use her strengths in support of, not in opposition to a mate.

Barbara found fault with a man very early. I asked her about her previous relationships. One past connection was a man that owned a plane, was very wealthy, and lots of fun, but his nose was too big. Another liaison was with a handsome young doctor, but he had a medical condition that rendered him impotent. Another date was handsome, but not emotionally available. She thought I was perfect, except I should get my lower teeth straightened. And, I really should be retired so I could concentrate on our relationship. Hummm. Was there a trend here? I attributed this to post-divorce grumblings.

One weekend Barbara came to visit me in Los Gatos. This happened two weeks after Princess Diana was killed, August 31, 1997. The royal wedding was something young girls all over the world watched with quixotic fairies dancing in their heads. I never really understood how romantically attached women were to the concept of marrying a prince. Princess Diana's death was a tragic end to the life of a very beautiful, wonderful woman.

Barbara and I had a nice Saturday evening. On Sunday we were watching the news with wall-to-wall coverage on Princess Diana. Mother Teresa died less than a week later on September 5, 1997. There was a small blurb in the papers, and one brief note on the Friday evening news. This started a discussion that revealed a new monster.

Hearing another Princess Diana story on TV, I commented that Mother Teresa had just died, and there was barely a peep about her. Mother Teresa had dedicated her entire life to helping people around the world. Princess Diana had married a prince, and her job was to work her charities, and give away the royal money. I added that Elvis' death was still talked about

today. He made a contribution that changed the world of music forever, and he did it from abject poverty with his own talent. This was not to slight Diana's presence or contributions, but merely to contrast the different levels of outpourings for each prominent person.

While this could have started an interesting discussion about legends in history, their contributions and remembrances, it did nothing of the sort. Barbara unleashed a tirade about the fat, drug addled Elvis, and Mother Teresa just doing her job as a nun. Diana was a princess!

I had no rebuttal watching the emotions screaming forth. It was one of those conversations you needed to think about rather than respond from the hip. The comparison of the princess versus the king was not stimulating or interesting. It was befuddling.

I can relate our argument to the differences in the sexes. To men, Elvis represented a self-made idol, with huge contributions to music and entertainment. To women, Princess Diana represented the ultimate in love and romance. It was achievement versus love.

A month before, Barbara had asked that we date exclusively. I put my profile into inactive status. The squabble with Barbara elicited a curious suspicion. I was remembering the story about the GE bride who found her husband was still requesting dates. I went into the GE office, and sure enough, Barbara's profile was still in active status, and she was receiving requests for dates.

I called Barbara and asked her why she hadn't gone inactive, especially since she had requested the exclusive dating arrangement. She said she wasn't really dating anyone, just checking the requests. Another dumb double-talk excuse for infidelity, with no possible reason for her actions. After you have the experience of an unfaithful wife, you are more alert to the warning signs. Barbara said she'd call the office to put herself into inactive status. I told her not to worry, she should keep looking for Mr. Perfect.

A few days later, I received a book in the mail titled, *Unconditional Love: Love without Limits*. I don't remember the author because I didn't read it. Barbara felt, as a woman, she was inherently possessing of unconditional love. As a man, I needed to be instructed, and the book would help.

I returned the book with a note, "Unconditional love is for kids. I'm not your father. My love is predicated on loyalty, trust, respect, and devotion, none of which have been demonstrated. Sorry, those are my conditions. Time to move on."

"NEXT!"

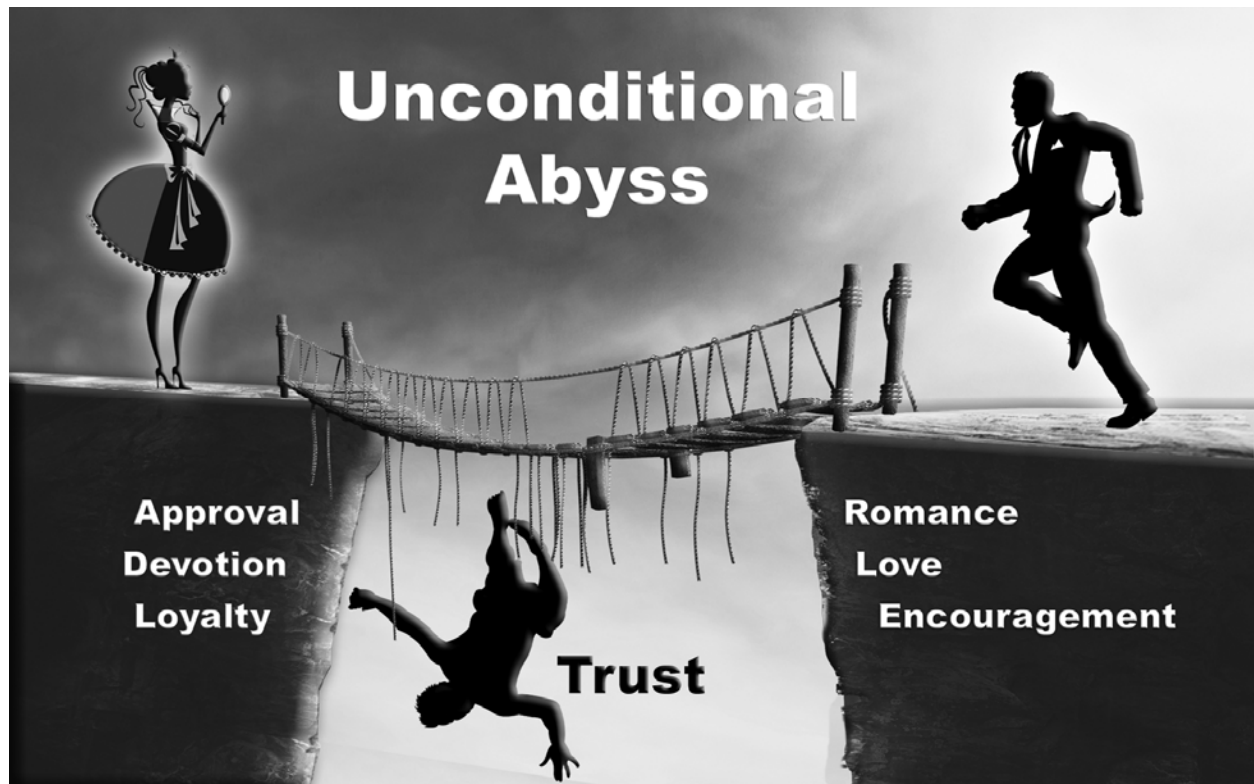


There are many conditions for adult love and they take time and commitment by both parties.



UNCONDITIONAL LOVE

I came to realize that there is a significant abyss between first love and devoted, long-term love. Whether you are dating, in a committed long-term relationship, or married you can fall into the abyss at any time. There is a point when you have successfully crossed this chasm and you are long-haul mates.



There are definable stages in crossing the love chasm, from courting to long-term commitment. At some point you are in a fulfilling relationship, or you enter a gray area, wondering if you should begin again. The measurement is different for each couple. I go back to my stepdaughter's litmus test – would this person be a good father to my children? Another timeless test of friendship is - are you better off for having this person in your life?

I HAD TWO MARRIAGES THAT LASTED SIX AND FOUR YEARS RESPECTIVELY.

They began with normal dating, romance, love, and friendship, but they never reached a level I would consider unconditional love. The pursuit of a love interest that results in marriage is filled with conditions before and after commitment. Starting with romance, respect, loyalty, and approval, cumulating with devotion and trust, relationships are complex.

The movie *The Seven Year Itch*, with Marilyn Monroe, is a good example of when trouble begins. I postulate that there is a range from 7-10 years where relationships reach a make-or-break point. This is the time it takes to successfully span the abyss. The zenith of a couple's bond is unconditional love. Many people express it as being in it for the long haul. They are committed to sticking it out, because they have crossed the abyss a trust each other completely.

Stage one: Romance

After lust at first sight, a man must provide a sufficient level of romance to keep a woman captivated. Attaining the fairytale romance level is not doable, and men will certainly fail. A woman has to be realistic to reach this level. You don't want to be like my friend Shannon and find out after two decades you missed step one, and you can't collect \$200 and pass GO.

Valentine's Day is a holiday of forced gift giving and not romantic for men. Flowers or a little gift on the odd Wednesday is real romance. After all, Wednesday is 'Hump Day.'



Women should set realistic goals for romance from their man. Men should always put romance in the forefront to maintain a healthy relationship.



Stage two: Love

If you can't say I love you, then you're headed toward the friend's zone. I hold the love word very sacred, while many people diminish the sentiment when they just love everyone. I like a lot of people, but I only have so much true love to go around. Seeing the faux hug and double fake kisses on the cheeks on a TV reality show, followed by "I Love You," seems extremely disingenuous. Especially when they are screaming at each other in the next episode. Love requires big energy for men, and it should be focused on the most important people in your life. Love is the beginning of devotion and loyalty to one person. Love is the ability to exhibit unselfish caring for someone.

Men are inherently selfish and need to work at love. For women, their composition contains a higher level of sacrifice and unselfishness than men. This reminds me of a joke Pops' Air Force friend Casey told at a party.

A wife was reading the obituaries and found one of her husband's oldest friends had died. When her husband entered the room she asked, "Did you know that Tom Chatsworth died?"

"Yes," he replied. "That horrible wife of his is going to inherit everything."

The wife said, "Well, that's the way it goes."

The husband thought for a moment, and asked his wife, "If I died would you get remarried?"

“Uh, probably. Why would you care? You’d be dead,” she said.

“I don’t want some dickhead to get my Porsche,” the husband growled.

Without looking up from the newspaper, the wife said, “What makes you think I’d marry another dickhead?”



A man imagines kindness from a partner, while a woman idealizes unselfish love as the ultimate success. A man will not say I love you to a woman unless he feels appreciated. A woman can’t say I love you unless she is cherished.



Stage three: Encouragement

The way men and women communicate is critical to being supportive and encouraging. Relationships start with a mutual attraction that must have good communication to feel encouraged to get closer. I learned the term, “Yes, dear,” a long time ago from Pops. This is the best way to encourage a woman, and show her you are listening and willing to work with her. A woman can get a man to say, “Yes, dear,” if she asks, “will you,” or “would you?” Telling a man he never helps around the house is a sure way to discourage him. Saying, “Would you take the dry cleaning in tomorrow, honey? I’m going to be working late,” is a great way to get a man to say “Yes, dear.” It’s a job he knows he can do, and he can earn points. If he says, “No,” he better have a good reason or he’s going to lose points.

Communicating in a playful manner is a good interaction method, and “Yes” should always be on the tip of a man’s tongue. Even if a man says no, don’t reject or criticize him, so

the next time he may have a chance to say “Yes.” False praise is not encouragement. Similar to the risky double-nurturing parenting style, you shouldn’t praise someone for just showing up. You have to give genuine reinforcement to a partner for contributions in a relationship.



Trust in a partnership begins with mutual support and encouragement. A woman is better equipped to set the example for encouragement, allowing a man to reciprocate. Criticism from a woman can easily push a man into the abyss.



Stage four: Approval and friendship

Once you have developed a communication style that is supportive and encouraging, you have crossed the deepest part of the abyss. When a woman asks a man for something and he hears a demanding tone, he will feel criticized. Men are never sure what women want, so men are always looking for approval. Men give it their best shot, but sometimes fall short. Giving a man approval for effort is a great way to show that his energy is appreciated. When men do get it right, it often results in sex, so men will always appreciate that form of approval.

When a woman wants to appreciate a man, she should be direct. The dreaded, “We need to talk,” words are a disapproving, indirect implication that men don’t talk enough, and it’s the man’s fault. If a woman says, “Let’s go to dinner tomorrow. I feel like we’ve haven’t had time to talk lately, and I miss that,” a man feels like she wants to be with him, not talk ‘at’ him. He may be leery of the ‘talk’ word, but he knows he gets to eat, and there might be sex later.

Friendship is included at this stage. With any true friend, you have developed a common bond, similar interests, shared friends, and good communication. Friendship is vital to any relationship, including a romantic union. It seems that along with romance, love, and encouragement, you discover you're with someone who has your best interests at heart. If you're not BHBFs by now, you're on the threshold of the abyss without someone to catch you. Any of life's challenges can push you over the edge.



A man is constantly seeking approval at work, and seldom receives it, so a woman should appreciate a man's efforts when appropriate. A man should value all the little things a woman does to warrant her approval for his deeds.

Best friends make great long-term partners.



Stage Five: Devotion

Couples reach a stage where they are fully committed to each other, even if they are not married. Commitment can be measured. Devotion is difficult to measure. Devotion means to care about someone without question or doubt. There are many ways to be devoted to a partner, including fidelity, support for the other's interests and beliefs, shared goals, and a deep friendship.

This is the stage where you both feel a mutual union without conditions. The romance and love you have experienced together has been very positive, and you feel you are more connected than ever. You both know you are right for each other.

Devotion can stand the test of time. You have reconciled that your mate is not perfect, and you set aside any fairytales for a real life together. I also call this the 'got real' stage, because everyone is realistic about the relationship, and most importantly you are positive about the future together. You are past the, "Is this person right for me," juncture.

For men, the feeling of devotion comes with the birth of children. When my son was born, it was such an emotional high, I resolved to never let anything happen to my marriage. I can't explain the feeling, but it took me by surprise. I was in it for the long haul. I had reached an emotional state that was impossible without an event like child birth. This stage was tantamount to a soldier's courage to charge a machine gun nest. Once confronted by a danger that could kill him, he felt the courage to do what he had been trained to do in his devotion to his country. I wasn't prepared for the challenge of infidelity, but I was going to charge that machine gun at all costs.

Women become quickly devoted to a man as part of their romantic nature. Following romance, love, and a strong friendship bond, a woman is devoted to the relationship. A man has reached a stage in commitment to his mate that still has another level to be obtained. A man needs a push forward when the heat of the new relationship simmers. There is no way of proving devotion. It is something that lies in a person's heart and soul. This is different than commitment, as this is proved by a couple staying together for an uninterrupted period of time. Commitments can be breached, and these are often the failure point of a marriage or long-term coupling.



Devotion is much harder to come by in the age of disposable everything.

Devotion is a state of mind and heart just prior to crossing the final expanse of the abyss.



Stage six: Loyalty

This is one thing men and women agree upon. In a recent Yahoo! survey, men and women ranked loyalty as the #1 ingredient for a successful, lasting relationship. Following loyalty (32%), were nurturing/caring (24%), sense of humor (23%), and intelligence (21%), as rated by men. Women valued loyalty (34%), then nurturing/caring (31%), sense of humor (22%), and intelligence (10%) in their men. Apparently men like smart women more than women like smart men. Smart men have to think about it before they say, “Yes, dear.” I think this pushes smart guys a little lower in the rankings for women.

Loyalty exceeds the bounds of a romantic relationship. Loyalty is key in friendship, love, and devotion. Loyalty means you will defend your mate in the face of criticism, and you will be supportive regardless of the circumstances. To encourage someone, is demonstrating your loyalty to their efforts.

Disloyalty is just the opposite - a lack of trust, a betrayal, a deceitfulness - and it's a deal breaker. In the final step across the abyss towards trust, disloyalty will initiate the greatest fall into the chasm of failed relationships. Barbara failed the loyalty test when I found she still had her profile active at GE. The EX-1 crashed three years after the birth of our son. If someone is not capable of loyalty, they are not relationship material.



People adhere to laws or rules based on obligations or to avoid punishment. Loyalty is conduct of an open and free will. Loyalty is a guarantee of dedication to the well being of another person. Loyalty is the dynamic force that binds a relationship.



Stage seven: Trust

You've made it across the abyss. You've met all the challenges and tests in your crossing. You have romance and love. You are supportive of your mate, and you're completely devoted. You've both proven your commitment over the years. Your loyalty towards each other is unflinching. You now trust your partner implicitly. You've had the same arguments and agreed to disagree, and you respect each other's points of view.

Loss of trust is irrecoverable, and into the abyss you will go. But, when you have achieved full trust with someone, you can let your guard down, truly be yourself, discuss virtually anything, and know that your mate has your back without question. You are accepted and loved for who you are.



**Trust is the reward you have earned by testing each other and being tested
by outside forces.**



RECOVERING FROM A FALL

Whether you're pushed, or you fall on your own accord, you can climb out of the abyss. Don't confuse breakups or divorce with failure. Ending a relationship is always difficult, but the first step to recovery is admitting your mistakes, forgiving the other person, and more importantly yourself.

New beginnings can start at any point in your life. Whether it's your career or a relationship, everyone can start over. I've successfully recovered from divorces, one resurgence taking much longer than expected. I began my second career after leaving my corporate job. It was difficult to go from mid-six figure income to zero. It took five years to reinvent myself, and another five to get to level ground. I am my own boss in love and life.

My friend James told me he hated the phrase, "Live and learn." Pops' comment on mistakes leading to genius rang in my head again. James lived by the phrase, "Live long and prosper." The only thing missing was Spock's Vulcan salute. You should learn from your experiences and not embody the definition of insanity by repeating the same mistake over and over, expecting different results. As we learn from missteps and become relationship-tough, then the next crossing of the abyss should be easier and more fruitful.

There is a scene in the movie *Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade*, where Indiana meets the ancient Knight Templar who guards the cup of the Holy Grail. There are many choices of

cups that may bring eternal life. The Knight says, "You must choose, but choose wisely, for as the real grail brings eternal life, the false grail brings death." The villain chooses a golden cup because that would be the cup of a king. He drinks and then dies in a horrific manner. The Knight looks at Jones and says, "He chose poorly." The true choice was a wooden cup, the cup of a Galilean carpenter. If you choose poorly in selecting a mate, you will surely falter in your journey to find true love.



Starting over is not a failure. Time is the great healer. Learn from your mistakes and choose wisely next time.



TIMELINE

My experience shows that achieving unconditional love takes about seven years. This includes finding a mate, dating, commitment, life experiences, and realizing a trusted union. A woman can make the journey much faster than a man, but she must still achieve complete trust in her partner. After failed attempts at fulfilling relationships, it is hard to regain trust in the process. Waiting for a man to catch up can be quite frustrating. Getting married, having children, building careers, and facing life's challenges offer no shortcuts.

It may take a man many years to propose marriage, but that doesn't mean you've crossed the abyss. Life happens while you're making plans, and all the planning in the world can't circumvent the time it takes to make a prosperous journey with your partner. If you have been

together for more than two or three years and are not deeply in love, then you're with a person that is never going to commit to all the stages of finding lasting love.

You may be with someone you know is a good person and a good match. You face challenges that seem insurmountable, breakup or divorce, only to find you're still in love with that person. Physical and mental abuse, addictions, and other unacceptable behavior are reasons to leave. Petty issues and little differences are not reasons to depart.



There are no shortcuts to unconditional love.



THE 99% MAN

Guideline 1: He's slow to commit.

A man takes a long time to commit to a long-term relationship. Setting an unrealistic timeframe for an event in a relationship – I love you, proposal, marriage, children - is predestine for failure.

A man will commit to take the journey of love for several reasons.

- **A man must believe in total commitment.**

He will work with you during the tough times and not quit easily.

- **He's a grownup.**

He's done playing around, has sowed his oats, and he is willing to share his toys.

- **He feels the job is doable.**

If a woman complains more than she praises a man, or she is not a happy person, a man will certainly be pushed into the abyss. “What does it take to make her happy?” he will ask. If she’s hasn’t achieved happiness on her own, a man will say, “There’s nothing I can do. This job is not doable.”

- **The timing is right.**

A man must have accomplished something in his life before he takes on a relationship that statistically has a 50% chance of failure. A man’s goals may be education, career, purchasing a home, or another important milestone. He may sound like he’s making an excuse, but it’s a valid reason because men value accomplishment over love. It’s not what a woman wants to hear, but she should appreciate a man’s strength and honesty in sticking to his convictions. He’ll make a better journey mate if the timing is right.

- **He’s never going to commit.**

At some point you learn a man is non-committal by nature. When sufficient time has passed, you’ve crossed over the deepest part of the abyss, and you feel it’s too late to achieve fulfillment, it’s time for a new beginning. “NEXT!”



A great relationship is one best served tepid. If you want it while it’s hot, it may not last. Goldilocks waited until it was just right. Be patient, and give him time.



8.

LESSON 2: IT BEGINS WITH A KISS

“The truth starts with a kiss. It may not be the whole truth, but it’s a good starting place.”

Lucille

Lucille would always catch me off guard with her jokes. While watching *The Flying Nun*, with Sally Field, Lucille asked me, “Do you know why they call them nuns?” Blinking my eyes and shaking my head no, I turned to her.

“Because, they ain’t had nun, so they don’t want nun,” she said.

Unless a woman is a nun, she’s going to want romance, and maybe sex, until you’re both on your last legs in the rest home.

THE MALIBU LAGOON

I MET PAIGE ON MATCH.COM. There were great photos of her and her children. We corresponded by email for a few weeks. We had common interests and the digital flirting was fun. This one had promise, but she was GU. Paige lived in Malibu, over 300 miles away. The distance wasn’t as discouraging, as I could see a trip south with my surfboard in tow. An old Frankie and Annette romance-surfing movie was building in my head.

Paige said she had recently dated long distance. She met a man who lived in San Francisco, and he came to visit several times. They really connected, and things went well whenever he visited her. Paige thought it was romantic that he’d make the journey every other

week. As things progressed she decided it was time to return the favor, and visit him in the North Bay.

Gomer Pyle greeted her visit with a surprise, surprise, surprise! He was married. The distance was to his benefit, telling his wife he was going on business trips. She had encountered several of these connections, but she was determined to scour the country to find the right mate. Men in L.A. didn't seem to meet any of her criteria for romance and trust.

I assured her I wasn't married, time was valuable, and it should be spent getting to know each other on a deep level. Travel would be a minor inconvenience if it meant being with that special person. If we hit it off, I wasn't opposed to moving to Malibu, since my quest for a soulmate had been long and arduous.

Over the next few weeks we cleared the roadblocks. Our children were grown or in college. Our schedules were flexible. She was a teacher, and I was self-employed with control of my time. We liked the same foods, music, movies, and traveling. We planned a weekend together at her home near the beach in Malibu. I mailed her a letter with a gift enclosed. The letter was a short story, *Prelude to a Malibu Kiss*. I had written a piece about our proposed meeting as characters in a Harold Robbins novel. The story included an inescapable union, sunsets, foggy nights, and a first kiss.

Paige received my package, and she called me immediately. The gift was a connection to one of our conversations, and she was tickled. We were starting to bond, completely ignoring the distance. The danger in this type of long distance flirting is the potential deflation with person-to-person meetings. Based on the enchantment of our phone conversations, the 15/10 guideline would probably be okay. After all my romantic expeditions, I was more interested in the inner person.

I headed down the coast on a Thursday afternoon planning to arrive at sunset. I wound through Malibu canyon to the coastline. I stopped for a short break, got gas, and brushed my teeth. I arrived at a cute little house above Highway 1. I could hear the ocean when I opened my car door. Lucille was not telling me to leave, so I walked to the door and knocked.

The door opened, and if this was a new monster, she had a very pretty façade. The patio door was open with the ocean breeze flowing through the house, highlighted by a glow from the fireplace. We both did the up-and-down once over, and mutually approved with a hello hug. Paige offered me some champagne, and we toasted to a new beginning. Paige was flirting with her eyes and asked, “So. Do you recognize this dress?”

I thought for a moment. “Yes. It’s the one in your profile picture,” I said. It was a little tighter than the photo which was about five years old. So the 10/5 rule was in play, well within acceptable limits.

“Right. You said you liked the dress, so I dug it up,” Paige said.

So far, so good. Maybe it was because we were in L.A., but I felt like a movie producer had staged this scene. Paige was leading the romance program and it was a pleasant surprise. We stayed up most of the night talking, drinking champagne, and sampling the hors d’oeuvres she’d prepared.

A first kiss without any preamble can be just that... a simple kiss. With nothing expected, there could be little disappoint. When you talk for months, flirt over the phone, exchange letters, and then meet on a Hollywood set, the expectations will almost always exceed reality. The anticipated smooch is mapped out in your mind, and you wait for the sensory feedback to match the scene in your head.

Maybe it was the champagne or the setting, but the first embrace did not disappoint. Into the basement, and from the shadows, came a creature unlike anyone I'd met in quite some time. I think men and women differ very little in this situation. Long distance seduction, delivered by a pair of lips searching for what we hope is the truth, is titillating. For me, the phrase 'love-struck' seemed to summarize the next few days. Fantasy matched veracity.

We went for a drive along the coast with the top down on my Camaro. We had romantic dinners out and in, and talked for hours. The Hollywood story was being shot as written without a single change to the script. Like a school boy without a clue, I had found the perfect woman. Sunday came too quickly, and it was back to the North Bay.

When I was leaving, one of Paige's girlfriends had arrived, and she was distracted attempting to wave goodbye. I tried calling on the drive home, but there was no answer. I arrived home about midnight, and I sunk into bed with a smile on my face.

I don't care how many dates you've had, if you've been married, madly in love, or infatuated with someone, there is always one first encounter that stands out. For Lucille it was meeting Pops at the USO. That was the tapestry I had painted. Old school romance in a modern world with Malibu surf in the background. That first kiss might carry me across the abyss. Realistically, I knew Monday morning would shine a new light on the weekend, and the distance between us would test the power of a kiss.

First thing in the morning, I sent an email to express my pleasure with the weekend, without sounding like I was ready to move in with Paige. Previous emails evoked a response within minutes. Monday night came, and all was quiet on the email front. That night I left a short, flirty

email with a, “Thinking of you. Call me,” closing. Tuesday day and night I repeated the email and voice mail with no response. Wednesday came and went. It was nothing desperate. I assumed she was busy, but she was thinking of me.

When you feel you’re on the same page with someone, you expect parallel thinking and responsiveness. How can you spend an off-the-charts weekend together, and not feel the need to reconnect immediately? Maybe she had a rule about calling a man back too soon after a date.

Thursday came, I sent a brief email in the morning, and left to play golf. The day brought on a nagging suspicion. Paige said that minutes before I arrived, there was a Match.com guy that had showed up at her door. She said she was surprised, and anxious, and told him to go away before her date got there. At the time, I assumed this was some pest with bad timing. I was reminded of Barbara with a string of GE suitors lined up for the choosing, with me oblivious to the crowd.

I finished playing golf, and I headed home. I did not call Paige that night. Her lack of interest in responding had gone beyond any rules for not calling a guy back for x-number of days. If nothing else, it showed bad dating etiquette. Only excuses could follow. There could be no good reason unless someone called me on her behalf from a hospital.

Nothing was in the fridge, so I headed over to Lunardi’s Market about 8:40 PM, just before closing. I loaded fish, milk, beer, bread, veggies and various items in my basket. I paid for the goodies, and I headed out to the parking lot. It was a balmy night, and I was looking forward to grilled salmon and a beer. My clunky mobile phone rang. It appeared to be an L.A. number, but Paige wasn’t on my mind. I had an agent and other friends in L.A., so it could be anyone.

At the same time, a woman friend I hadn’t seen in ten years saw me across the lot, and she came over to say hello. Melissa was a super lady I had worked with some years back, and it

was great to see her. I said hello and hugged her as I fumbled with the phone. I excused myself to answer the phone.

“Hello,” I said, displaying one finger for Melissa to hold on.

There was a long silence.

“Where are you?” the phone voice asked.

“Uh, I’m getting groceries. Who is this?”

“This is Paige,’ she said.

Her voice was not recognizable and there were odd background noises. Her demeanor was terse. I nodded to Melissa, indicating I had to take this call. Melissa hugged me and waved goodbye.

“I’ve left you a few messages. What happened to you?” I asked. Again, there was a long pause like she was trying to translate what I was saying. She didn’t respond to my question, but launched into a bizarre lather of words.

“You’re just like all the others. I mean, once... and, then... you just want one thing... I’m not sure about all this. You all just come and go. I’m tired of the...” Paige was drifting back and forth with her slurred words. I think she was drinking or stoned.

I could hear water splashing. “Are you in the tub?”

“So? I’m taking a bath,” she said.

“If I can interpret what you’re trying to tell me, I’m just like all the other guys you’ve dated, and that’s probably a lot, and you’re not interested in doing this anymore. Right?”

“I guess. Right!” she shouted.

Hummm. Monster in the tub. The first appearance of this beast was in Hawaii, rising from the surf in Waikiki with daddy issues, and *The Creature from the Booze Lagoon* attacked

without warning. Emerging from the Malibu surf, I was again surprised by *The Creature*. Sorry mom, I promise this time, for sure, I'm not going back in the water.

I was shaken by the call. I got in my car and drove home, went in the door, and sat on the couch trying to recount what had just happened. Again, it was one of those conversations we've all had, knowing that we'll wake up thinking about what we should have said. My stomach growled. I realized I'd left my groceries in the cart in the parking lot.

I drove back to Lunardi's Market and there was not a cart in sight. Damn *Creature* was trying to starve me now.

The next morning I was resolved to the ending of another promising romance. I mumbled, "Next," as I recounted the night while driving back to Lunardi's Market.

Arriving at the market, I told the store manager I'd left my groceries in the lot. I explained the disturbing call from a girlfriend as the reason for temporary amnesia. He said that happens on occasion, and he told me to look in the back, they usually push those carts into the storage area.

No luck in the back of the market.

The manager told me to select what I had chosen the other night, come to his station, and it would be on the house. I think the manager had seen *The Creature from the Black Lagoon*, and somehow related to my experience. I loaded my cart with the same items, checked out, and headed to the parking lot.

Before I could load the groceries, on cue, my phone rang. I recognized the number as Paige's. I thought *The Creature* was exclusively nocturnal. Curious, I answered. "Hello."

"Good morning sweetheart," Paige said.

You could have knocked me over with a hummingbird feather. “Sweetheart? You sure you have the right number,” I asked.

“Why, what’s wrong?” she said.

“You don’t remember calling me last night? You sounded like you were drinking, and in the tub? You basically told me to fuck-off,” I said.

“I called you last night?”

“It may have been your evil twin, but I’m sure it was you,” I remarked. There was a long silence. “You were rambling and going on about other men. How we all want only one thing, you’re tired of this and that. You said you didn’t want to continue with this. I assumed ‘this’ meant our relationship.”

Another long pause. “You also mentioned a bunch of men. Does this include the Match.com guy you had to run off just before I got there?” I asked.

“I’m not sure what I said, but I’ve been known to do that. I have this problem with men,” she said.

“That’s unfortunate because I really had a terrific time with you and was totally enamored. When I didn’t hear from you for days, I was starting to wonder. I’m not sure what happened to you, but the call last night makes sense now. I really don’t want to be one of the men who trouble you. I prefer not to fuck-off. I’ll just fade away if it’s okay with you, sweetheart,” I said.

“So, you’re dumping me?” she asked.

“Not possible. You ended it last night, you just don’t remember. I think I’m the dumpee.”

“Wow, I can’t believe how easily you’re throwing me away,” she replied.

Prelude to a Malibu Kiss would not end happily ever after. It just wasn't in the script. Opening weekend was great, but the critics would pan it as, "Worst date movie ever."

At least I'd remembered my groceries this time. I had a nice vinaigrette grilled salmon with teriyaki green beans, and I called it a night.

Steve's words echoed, "NEXT!"

I'm sure I reminded Paige of the guy in San Francisco, or one of a dozen romances gone wrong. She wasn't able to trust men, or any man for that matter. I don't know how you can move forward in a relationship without putting old grievances aside, and being open to new people. Being untrusting, you can screw up something special with a single misstep.

If you ask me some time ago, and again today if I believed in love at first sight, I'd say no, and hell no. That axiom is something adolescent girls carry for teen heartthrobs. Men definitely have lust at first sight in their catalog, but it's a long way across the abyss from lust to love. There would be the occasional lustful kiss that felt like love, but it wasn't the truth. The bridge to full trust required much more, plus tremendous staying power. Lust can be suffered for *The Creature from the Boozie Lagoon*, but love will surely be devoured in that monster's swamp.



Love at first sight is for the blind. A kiss is just a kiss, and only time will reveal the truth about your connection.



THE 98% MAN

Guideline 2: He's doesn't say I love you often enough

If you're waiting for a man to say it first, then you're probably one of the 25 girls on *The Bachelor*. Just because you've had a first kiss and an intimate encounter, a man is not prepared to say the "L" word until he's ready. Giving a man what he wants too early is a sure way to delay any real connection, and the reciprocation of love. Whatever you do, never, ever push the issue when you're on the *Booze Lagoon*.

Once he's said the "L" word, then he may forget to tell you as often as you'd like. He may feel its implied when he buys dinner, pays bills, fixes stuff, or does what he's told. A woman can't hear this often enough. Some couples say it every day, specifically when they depart for work or separate destinations. Adults know "I love you," could be the last words they hear. Don't wear it out, but keep it active. "I love you," from a woman acknowledged with "Ditto," from a man is man-speak for I love you, too.

Men are visual people, and they prefer to show love rather than express it. It's like Pops teaching me to fly. He explained enough for me to get it, then he just showed me. The 85% Man shows you he loves you, just don't make him say it all the time. Keep your eyes open, you just may see it.

A man shows he loves a woman when...

- He talks about 'we/us' with his friends
- He calls to let you know where he is and when he'll be home
- He laughs with you and not at you
- He tells you you're hot

- He shares secrets with you – don't tell your girlfriends the secret, just that he shares them
- He remembers most special days – birthdays and first kisses
- He can't stay mad at you
- He lets you drive his nice car without any warnings or cautions
- He apologizes when he's wrong – and he means it
- He can describe the one thing he loves most about you without hesitating – and does it with friends without prompting
- He's got your back – he considers you one of his BHBFs
- He saves the last bite of dessert for you even if you never take it
- He kisses you for no reason because he likes kissing you
- He knows how to push your buttons, and he only does it occasionally
- He hugs you and pays attention to you at parties and social events
- He talks about something he did before that he wants to do with you – it was with an old girlfriend, but he knows it would be better with you (someone he really loves)
- He talks about his hopes and dreams and you're always in them



A man will show you he loves you more often than he will tell you. A man's romantic gestures are powerful expressions of love. Like *The Bachelor*, it's his option and the timing has to be right.



9.

LESSON 3: FORGETABOUTIT

“Women are like elephants... the most dangerous animals in the jungle, and they never forget anything.”

Lucille

I’m not saying women hold a grudge any more than a man, it just seems like it takes longer for a woman to let it go, if ever. Let’s take reality TV for example. We love to hate the bozos on these shows because they’re doing dumb stuff just like the rest of us. But, normal folks don’t have a film crew following them around to document their blunders.

On *The Real Housewives of Beverly Hills*, Kyle, Kim, Taylor, Lisa, and Brandi seem to rehash the same argument over and over. It never gets resolved and it’s just another reason to shed tears and hug it out until next time. The husbands, Mauricio and Ken for example, had a little spat, went and had a beer, and that was that. Men hate to discuss this stuff, and women live for it. Men end their conflicts with beers. Women extend their conflicts with tears.

Most of the *Housewives’* shows involve squabbling for a full season, and into the next. Same issues, same arguments. The tiffs make the covers of *Us* and *People* magazines. There is no such thing as the last word. It’s a train wreck you can’t ignore. Memories never fade and the season ending reunions are a showcase for the big rehash. They’re rich, petty, and crave attention, but they’re merely an elevated view of life down here on terra firma.

BETH WAS SOMEONE WHO FOUND ME IN THE GE LIBRARY. Beth was a tall redhead, and her GE photos looked like they were out of a Vanity Fair magazine. Beth was an executive with a telecom company, liked skiing, movies, and cooking. She was well read, and she could carry a wicked conversation about politics, science, or pop culture. Her birth name was JoeBeth. Her dad wanted a boy. She had a falling out with her dad, and she changed her name after being emancipated. The bad relationship with dad was an early red flag, but she seemed to be in control of her life.

I met Beth shortly after the EX-1 crashed, and I wasn't really emotionally available. Beth and I started to date, and it became serious over the next few months. I told her I wasn't looking for a permanent relationship. I assumed she was seeing other GE men. We continued to date and go on short trips. She was getting attached to my son. She was serious, but I was still aloof from divorce. It seemed like fun to me, but Beth wanted more.

We'd had a positive discussion about the "Birds and the Bees, and STDs." Beth was a great woman, but I thought she was out of my league. She was similar to Demi Moore who portrayed a business executive in the 1994 movie, *Disclosure*. Well dressed and very professional. Beth had a marriage some time back, and they had grown apart, a no-harm, no foul-parting. I really liked her, but I was not capable of love at this stage in my life.

I traveled the world with my job, and I met many different people. I often visited the company factory in Austin, Texas. I met a spunky Texas woman, Ruth Ann. In Texas you went by your two first childhood names. I was always Bobby Mack. That's the same name Grandma Peak called me when I was in trouble.

I would date Ruth Ann when I was in Austin, then return home to whomever I was dating in Silicon Valley, which included Beth. I had a standing date with a woman in New York,

Sheena. All my dates were amendable to the situation, and no one held their breath when I left town as they had plenty of hometown suitors.

One weekend, I had Ruth Ann visit me in California. I had a roommate at the time, Larry, who thought Ruth Ann was pretty awesome. And, she was. Ruth Ann came to visit when I won a sales contest and a trip to Vancouver.

Dating without any obligations was certainly fun, and I was regaining my confidence post-divorce. I discovered a lot of terrific women. As long as things didn't get intense, I was sailing in the clear.

The weekend came to a close with Ruth Ann, and we said goodbye until next time. As soon as I returned from the airport, there was a knock on the door. It was Beth wanting to know what I'd been doing. As grandma Peak used to say, I'd been up to no-good. I had a discussion with Beth. We were not in agreement. She wanted to be exclusive, and I was just not ready.

I asked Beth what she had been up to while I was gone. She had spent some time with her girlfriend who was going through a bad divorce. I had never met her friend, and I didn't know about her situation. Beth said they were coming up with ways to destroy her girlfriend's ex-husband's life. This was sort of a joking, matter-of-fact statement. I got chills up and down my spine imagining what lagoon her girlfriend lived in, or if they both came from the same swamp. "NEXT!"

I saw Beth a few times after that, but my heart wasn't into any romantic attachment, and it wasn't fair to her. Encounters were always cordial, and for the next few years I got comments or cards from her remembering that specific weekend. After a short while I'd forgotten what even happened, it became a blur in my past, much ado about nothing. For Beth, it was not something she would let go of easily.

I'm sure if I had developed a long-term relationship with Beth, I would be guilty of an indiscretion in her eyes, and reminded of it for years. My divorce was something that stuck in my craw, but it would pass in a reasonable timeframe.

Another problem is the retelling or remembering of an incident. Too much elapsed time allows for change and embellishment. Commiserating with girlfriends always adds fuel to the fire. A woman may describe a bad boyfriend to commiserate with a girlfriend over her latest beau, and suddenly the two men start to meld together. I've had dates from months back call me with a bone to pick, and I have no idea where they came up with version 14, a 180-degree reversal of our last disagreement. I had version one, and without version control, there will always be a thorn in a woman's side.

“Women get together and commiserate with each other over their men problems. It's the worst thing they can do. I just avoid those conversations,” Lucille would say. Men tend to archive an event, and the story is done. Men and women have a tough time agreeing on what happened last night. Let that occasion simmer a few months, and the rehashing will surely widen the discord.

Like a reality TV show, men have a beer and move on. Women want to discuss past events repeatedly, and they can't wait for the reunion show.



Men have selective recall of important things like baseball stats beginning in the 1800s, Super Bowl teams and final scores, cubic inch displacements of specific muscle car engines, bad jokes, and lines from manly movies. Women remember everything about each boyfriend, short and long-term relationships, bad breakups, and all their weird and fabulous dates.



LUCILLE TO THE RESCUE

Lucille did not have an angry bone in her body, but she did possess the storied strength to lift a car off a baby. It's a good thing when a strong woman is on your side. You didn't want to provoke Lucille, or any mother defending her children.

Lucille helped me with my paper route every morning until I got my first car. On Saturdays, I would head out and collect for my route. Block-to-block, walking or riding my scooter around the neighborhood, I divided my 1,100 customer into four groups, and collected their monthly bill. I made a penny per paper, so that was \$11 per day, plus Sunday papers at two cents. I made \$400 per month, or about \$3,200 today. Not bad for a 14-year-old kid. I never had any trouble collecting from the cool moms. The men earned the money, and the women paid the bills. No problems there. Moms loved the paperboy.

I had a baseball game one Saturday morning, and I wound up collecting in the evening. I went to one customer's house, Mrs. McQueen, and rang the bell. The door opened and the before unseen Mr. McQueen appeared (not the famous one).

“Collecting for the paper,” I said. I could smell liquor on his breath.

He slobbered and said, “What the hell do you want?”

“Collecting for the El Paso Times, sir.”

“Why the hell should I pay you anything? The paper is always late,” he said swaying in the doorway.

“I’m never late, sir. Your paper is here before 7:00 AM every day,” I said.

“Bullshit. I’m not paying you,” he said, staggering back.

“Really?”

“That’s right. What are going to do? Go crying to your daddy, and have him come beat me up?” he challenged.

I thought for a minute, then said, “No sir, but I’ll be right back. Don’t go anywhere.”

I hopped on my scooter and went home. I walked in the door and Pops and Lucille were watching TV. I told them what happened. Lucille frowned and said, “Get in the car.” She looked at Pops and said, “I got this.”

The blue Plymouth Fury went flying down the streets, covering eight blocks in about two minutes. We pulled up to the McQueen house, tires screeching to a halt.

“Come with me,” Lucille said.

We walked to the front door at a brisk pace, and Lucille rang the bell.

The still drunk Mr. McQueen came to the door.

“Oh, what do we have here? Your daddy too lazy to come over? How cute. He brought his mommy,” Mr. McQueen said.

“Let me speak to Mrs. McQueen,” Lucille said. He gave her a blank stare. Then she shouted over his shoulder, “Mrs. McQueen, may I speak with you?”

I swear I could see his legs quiver.

In the background we heard, “Yes? Who’s at the door?” said Mrs. McQueen.

“It’s your paperboy’s mother,” Lucille said.

Mrs. McQueen came to the door, “Yes, may I help you?”

“Your husband has decided he doesn’t want to pay my son \$ 4.25 for getting up every morning at 3:00 AM to roll his newspapers, and deliver them before 7:00 AM. I’m here to collect that money,” Lucille said.

Mrs. McQueen gave her shrinking husband the stink eye and said, “Just a minute.”

A split second later she came back with her pocketbook, retrieved \$5.00, and handed it to me. “Here you go, Bobby. Keep the change. Sorry for the trouble.”

“Thank you Mrs. McQueen,” I said.

We turned and headed back to the Plymouth wagon.

The door slammed, but we could hear all hell breaking loose inside. The voices faded as we got in the car, but you could hear Mrs. McQueen giving her husband the once-over.

“You’re picking on the paperboy now? What the hell is wrong with you? Why I ought to...” was what we heard as got in the car.

On the way home, Lucille smiled, looked at me and said, “I’d be surprised if you didn’t get a tip every time you collect at that house.”

All I could visualize was a Saturday cartoon with the Tasmanian devil spinning in circles around Mr. McQueen yelling and tearing him a new one.



An angry woman can be a powerful ally. Never, ever mess with a mom that can lift a car off a baby.



THE 97% MAN

Guideline 3: He can't remember important or romantic stuff.

Men do forget anniversaries, the date of a first kiss, favorite songs, the name of your girlfriends (unless they're hot), and well, most romantic happenstances. Men can be romantic if they plan ahead, or it's a national observance, although it may take some reminding. Over 240,000 people in the U.S. get engaged every Valentine's day. Men have their moments on Valentine's Day, birthdays, and holidays as they follow herds of men. It doesn't come natural, but it's in them. The little head is telling the big head, "FORGETABOUTIT." Fortunately, women are designed to remind men of all things, all the time.

Men can't remember where they put their shoes, and women will place them where they belong, like in the closet. Men consider this hiding stuff, but someone is keeping track of their junk, and keeping score. This is one of the great imbalances of her scorecard system. Men feel they've merely made a free inventory inquiry, while she's deducting points. Therefore, when a man is scolded for never taking out the trash after doing it three times in a row, he's unapprised of the point deductions for inventory queries.



Everything in a man's garage has a place, so there's no need to remind him where stuff is in his cave. And please don't touch or move things. If you think a man is forgetful and unromantic, just remember that he can't live without you. How would he ever find his shoes?



10.

LESSON 4: BUILD YOUR COMBO MAN

“If a woman may tell you what kind of man she’s used to. This is the combination of her last three relationships. My only advice is, run.”

Lucille

There is a romantic fantasy that women develop from an early age that no mortal man can ever fulfill. As women mature and realize that one man alone can’t fulfill their adolescent dreams, they try to mash a few good men together to create their prince. Like Frankenstein, this beast is made up of odd parts, will never become royalty, and might kill you, but women keep on experimenting.

When I’ve felt a dating connection waning, I knew I had disappointed her in some way. Men often joke about a great new girlfriend being their future ex-wife, as disenchantment for her is merely a Saturday night away. Men get totally confused with women’s signals in the home game version of, “What’s On My Mind?” Johnny has consolation prizes for the losers. If a man were to search a woman’s past comments, there would be clues. It’s not that one man is not the right guy, he’s just not her combo man. A woman with a dating or marriage history will recall her favorite traits of each man, and she will build her combo plate of desirable characteristics and catalogue these under, “What I’m used to.”

Following is a short checklist of attributes I've gathered from dates. When I heard these comments, I knew if we dated for any length of time, I would be the little engine that couldn't. Again, one unhappy person would be okay, and it was not going to be me. These traits were related to previous boyfriends or husbands, all of which were no longer around. Hummm. I wonder why?

Princess says, "I'm used to..."

- ✓ Men that are tall
- ✓ Men that are (professional) athletes
- ✓ Men with muscles (body builders)
- ✓ Men with great hair
- ✓ Men with perfect teeth
- ✓ Men with long hair
- ✓ Men with money
- ✓ Men that buy me big things (cars)
- ✓ Men who are famous or know famous people
- ✓ Men without kids
- ✓ Men without ex-wives
- ✓ Men with big homes
- ✓ Men who are professional dancers (ballroom)
- ✓ Men with their own planes
- ✓ Men with perfect chest hair
- ✓ Men who take me to Paris (London, Tahiti, Neiman Marcus)

- ✓ Men who are dangerous
- ✓ Men who are lawyers
- ✓ Men who are doctors
- ✓ Men who are really good looking
- ✓ Men that are tall, dark, and handsome
- ✓ Men who are Italian
- ✓ Men who are younger
- ✓ Men who speak several languages
- ✓ Men who sweep me off my feet
- ✓ Love at first sight.

You would think this is the checklist of a sexy, rich and famous movie starlet. Nope. The girl next door that's somewhat attractive, never been out of her home state, and works for minimum wage is packing this list.

I once had a woman tell me she wanted a man with a chest hair pattern different than mine. "One that goes like this," as she made specific swirling motions while mentioning Tom Selleck. I have purchased small, thoughtful gifts that have been received with comments like, "My last boyfriend bought me a car." One woman I momentarily liked said, "I'm used to dating the tall, dark, handsome, Italian type." I'm tall, light, average looking, and Danish. I would have been her 25% man.

BAMBI LIVED IN SAN FRANCISCO. I found her profile and sexy photos on Match.com intriguing. Her age was listed as 45, and she was looking for men age 30-38. Although I fit her

personal preferences – the standard moonlight walks on the beach, romantic vacations, candlelight dinners, sense of humor, blue jeans and tux – I was several years over her age maximum. I sent her an email telling her that I thought she sounded like a terrific woman, was very beautiful, and wished her good luck though I was outside her age range.

Bambi responded, and she was interested in meeting. She found me appealing, and she wanted an older man's perspective, since she was not having much luck within her requested age bracket. We set a dinner date for the following week. I figured the 10/5 rule would be in play.

We met in San Francisco at Pier 39. When I saw her, the 0/0 rule was more fitting, as she was trim and sexy like her photos, and she appeared to be her stated age. The first eye-to-eye exchange was most favorable. Dinner conversation was stimulating, and there was reciprocal flirting. Bambi had been married for 15 years, built a successful recruiting business, and she had made enough money to retire young. I was doing the mental math and five years older sounded about right, but she looked to be barely 40-years-old.

With many common interests, and a mutual attraction, I was a little disappointed that I was out of her age range, or so I thought. Bambi had dated Match.com men for about a year, and she had not made a connection of any merit. Most of her dates were immature, had no goals, were poor, had unlike political view (Democrats), and they only wanted sex. I told her there were good men out there interested in her mind, but finding a Republican in San Francisco would be impossible.

Bambi was used to: strong mature men, men with money, tall handsome men, sexy men that would wine, dine, and sweep her off her feet. Although physically attracted, my interest waned as I fell off her combo man checklist. It was getting late, I asked for the check and concluded our banter.

I walked Bambi to her car, and she mentioned that she had unpacking to do in her new place, and she had a dresser she had to put together. I volunteered my mechanical skills if she wanted help. I've always been bad at reading signals. I've woken up recalling an obvious missed signal from the night before, smacking my forehead with a Homer Simpson expression, "D'oh!" I got this signal.

We went to Bambi's house, we opened a bottle of wine, then adjourned to the couch. The night turned amorous and my age didn't seem to be a factor. And then, Bambi made a confession. She was actually 55, and she had always been able to pass for younger. She didn't want a bunch of old guys asking her out. "Excuse me!" She wanted younger guys, since she had been married to an older, stuffy man for 15 years. The younger guys were pretty, well, young, and immature. They only wanted sex. Ah-hah! Confusion explained. She wanted younger hot guys, I assume for sex, but she wanted the mature attributes of older men to satisfy the rest of her checklist.

She thought I was the perfect man for her. *One* – there is no such thing. *Two* – this could only lead to disappointment on her part. And, *three* – I could hear Lucille's voice in the audience. It was getting late. Bambi made some coffee, we hugged, and we talked about meeting next week.

I left the city and headed south. Bambi was a very sophisticated woman, beautiful, fun, and she could make a great partner for someone younger. I wasn't interested in just sex. I was two marriages to the wind, with too many mismatches under the bridge to invest any time with someone who might be happy with me in the short term. I would not be what she was used to' for the long haul.

"NEXT!"

Even when ‘checklist women’ discover a good man, they find it hard to compliment him without some caveat that spoils the moment. In the middle of a hot make out session, I had a woman pause, and say, “Wow. You’re a great kisser. I’m used to making out with men with long hair and muscles, but you’re pretty hot.” Homer Simpson says, “D’oh!”

These comparisons are trigger words for men, and they send men running. Instead of running, I will stand my ground and ask a woman, “Did you know your lips were moving when you were thinking that?” That’s usually countered with a blank stare, and, “What? Did I say something?”

Pops told me that women’s minds are always in overdrive. They can’t make a simple statement without adding a ‘but,’ a disclaimer, or a qualifier after an accolade. One such comment he mentioned that no man ever wants to hear after sex is, “That was terrific. You’re the perfect size for me. My last boyfriend was really big, and he hurt me when we made love.” D’Oh!

So, you don’t want to give up on your list because you can’t compromise? The polarized Republicans and Democrats in Washington, D.C. should give women a clue about not compromising. It’s not about settling. It’s about moving forward and getting on with your life. Finding a mate for a journey is about the “-ity’s” of life. Commonality, reality, personality, possibility, viability, teachability, flexibility, likability, lovability and trustability. It’s not about someone’s height, color of hair, or their money. You’re categorizing your search by type or possessions, not by qualities. “Oh, he’s not my type. I’m used to dating men with money,” a woman will say, when she should say, “He’s not my type. I’m looking for a man with ambition.”

Laura and Bob were longtime friends with a great marriage, marvelous children, lots of friends, loved sports, having friends over for karaoke, playing cards, and sharing their life together. They were the almost perfect couple. Bob died very suddenly of brain cancer. After two years, Laura tried Match.com dating. Following a dozen initial dates, she never got to a second date. You would think she was pining for her old super-mate, with an extensive itemization of qualities. However, she was very realistic and said, “I don’t care if he’s bald, fat, or unemployed. I just want an adventurous man with a sense of humor to share my life with.” Laura took two key, simple characteristics of her marriage that would work for her to begin again. Even with a short list, it can be difficult to find or replicate what you’re used to.

A REALITY CHECK

Any man who takes on a work project assesses the feasibility of the task. Then he sets realistic expectations with his boss, they agree on the goal, strategy, and tactics to accomplish that desired results. If a woman’s goal is to find a good man to share her life’s journey, then setting realistic attributes for her search are vital. Then she may go on a second date and discover more about her potential fellow.

Always reserve the option to attach this person in your non-romantic world. Every woman needs a few good men friends. I have several great women pals, and a female BHBF from a prior romance. I count on them for an additional perspective on things, plus we support each other in our careers and family lives.

Here’s my take on some pragmatic items for a woman to look for out of the gate. Get to know someone casually, don’t interview them. Keep some things for later, like ex-spouses, kids,

religion, and politics. A first meeting or date should be a prelude of things to come. If you like someone, make them guess a little so they want to see you again to find out more.

Is this person age appropriate?

Only Hollywood stars get the young ones, and that's only temporary. Age gaps are killers. Date and befriend the young, don't marry them.

Looks human.

Looks do matter. If you can't get over the first impression, it probably won't work. Scan for little things like clean hands and fingers, nice shoes, fashionable shirt and pants, jewelry, and grooming. Piercings and visible tattoos are a turn off for some people, while others like it.

This is why age comes first, as a generation gap may cause a disconnect later.

Acts human.

Meeting for drinks, lunch or dinner will say a lot about someone. Poor table manners tell you if they were raised by wolves, or if they know how to assimilate with people. Pulling out a chair, opening the car door, and saying please and thank you are signs they are human. If things are overlooked on the first date, they may bother you on the second or additional dates.

Speaks intelligently.

Similar education levels, not the same, matter. A high school education with street-smarts can equal an MBA. Make sure you have the ability to communicate effectively. He talks you listen, you talk he listens. You should both act human, smile and acknowledge each other.

Wants a relationship.

Lucille used to say, "Everyone is nice when they want something. If they can't even be nice

on a first date, then they really don't want a relationship." Again, don't interview. The worst question is, "Where do you see yourself in five years?" Unless you work in HR at your company and can't break the interview habit, don't go there. Let someone tell you what they want to do with their life. A man will talk about his ambitions easily if he has any and there should be room in there for his mate. You're on the date because you want a relationship. He's on the date for almost the same reason. Since men think about sex first, and a lot, you have to determine if he just wants a sexual relationship or something more. Again, timing is important for men, so don't press hard, let him disclose his desires.

Has ambition.

I had a woman tell me she only looked for three things in a man: "A man with a J-O-B." Someone without ambition or dreams doesn't want to work at a job, and they definitely won't work at a relationship.

Has common fascinations.

Common interests are important, but not as much as being intrigued about the world and respect for the other person's interests. He may like golf, but she likes tennis. You're fascinated by each other's sporting interests and want to know more. Your golf and tennis friends share your common interests when they get together. You both love reading, you're genres are different, but you love sharing stories with each other. A couple loves watching TV on Monday and Wednesday nights because they both love *Dancing with the Stars* and *Modern Family*. On Fridays he watches *Game of Thrones*, and she catches up on her recorded soap shows in the other room. At some point great couples catch each other up on what's happening in their separate TV worlds. Note: A couple with two TVs will have fewer arguments than a one TV family.

❑ **Fits like a glove.**

Ultimately you want someone who fits into your life easily. Are their habits, good and bad, in sync with yours? If you like tattoos, do they reflect your same taste in tattoos? If you hate tattoos, but find this person interesting, then think 15 years from now and you're with the purple arm stains man. Will they fit in with your family and friends, or are you just trying to piss off mom or dad? Do they travel a lot or get transferred (e.g. military), and you want to stay in one place, like near your parents? Are you breaking racial barriers and how does that work for your life?

Religion and political views may be examined as you move along, and may be adaptable or deal breakers. You should get comfortable with this person as you move across the abyss. Time will test your differences, as will your friends and family. Opposites may attract initially, but they don't make good life partners. Opposite fascinations are like oil and water to begin. Longer term, they are a gulf oil spill - a disaster with massive cleanup efforts. If your potential mate is not ready for your personal journey, don't get on the Mayflower with them. Sail off alone, as you may meet someone onboard who loves to travel.

Now you're finding out about someone rather than interviewing or scanning for your type. This new person may be a good contact for business, events, sports, or a new potential BHBF. They could introduce you to another great date. Everyone has something to offer, so find out what it is. Don't dismiss anyone as they may become a valuable part of your life. You can reject someone if they are rude or obnoxious, racist, ignorant, or overbearing. There is absolutely no excuse for bad behavior.



One man alone can never satisfy a woman with a checklist. Get to know a man on a causal, friendly basis first and never interview a man. Men are looking for a best friend for the long haul, not another boss.



THE 96% MAN

Guideline 4: He doesn't her checklist's minimum requirements.

If you made the list in your 20s, then you're probably still single and complaining about not being able to find a good man. If you still have a list in your 30s, then ask yourself, "How's that working for you?" This is like going to the all-you-can-eat buffet and loading your plate. It looks good going down the line, but when you get to the table, it's overwhelming, wasteful, unhealthy and just plain silly.

You can miss a special man if you checklist him out too soon. Men don't create lists or keep score. Men are extremely visual and it takes an effort for a man to get to know a woman. It's up to the woman to incite a man's interest. A man may be attracted to a beautiful woman in a sexual way, but he really wants someone who is kind and reassures him he is okay. When I was requested by someone online, I had to do more than look at the pictures. Reading someone's profile, I found some fascinating aspect that I would have otherwise bypassed.

Men have mental attractors, triggered by a woman's behavior. Here's what elicits a man's curiosity for a second date.

♥ **She's not interviewing for a spouse.**

Men are tired of interviewing for work. Give them a break. A woman who pushes too hard for all of his background information will turn a man off.

♥ **She's charming.**

Take an interest in him. Men have big egos and like to have it stroked. A man without an ego has no ambition, so humor him, he's a keeper. Positive, charming attitudes mean she's a happy person, and that's one less thing a man has to worry about.

♥ **She has a sense of humor.**

She tells a 'walks into a bar...' joke. Women can be terrible at telling jokes, but men give them A+ for trying. This should motivate some lively conversation.

♥ **She's encouraging.**

This is a quality a man values highly. If men feel a woman has the potential to be encouraging, he knows he will be rewarded for his efforts. If she sounds like she can be critical, he may feel she'll disapprove of him often.

♥ **She's a man's woman.**

Too much makeup, fancy purses and designer labels all scream high maintenance. The adage, women dress for women and undress for men, applies here. Women who like sports, movies, cars, cycling, hiking, swimming, scuba, or any similar activity are very attractive to most men. These women are more interested in doing something fun than going shopping.

♥ **She has a life with great friends.**

I dated a very beautiful woman that had no friends. Major red flag. She said other women were jealous of her and didn't want her around their men. She was maximum maintenance and didn't fit in with my life or friends. A big key to life is building friendships to share your

future together. If a woman has great friends, she is more likely to be a great friend to her mate. If she has her own life, she is probably a happy person, and will be easy to live with.

♥ **She has/had a great father.**

This is one specific trait I found to be the optimal indicator. A woman that grew up with a man that taught her the value of hard work and respect for others, specifically men, has already learned how to respect and love a man. My worst nightmare was with a woman who did not have a father (died young), and she didn't know how to relate to a man, or love unselfishly. Conversely, my best relationships have always been with women who had great dads. A woman who never had a good dad, can still be a great life mate, but she's had to work harder to understand and relate to men.



Get real and get rid of that checklist. Be charming and never interview a man for a spousal job. Men are looking for their best friend, a woman should too.



11.

LESSON 5: BASIC TIPS FOR DATING

“Never discuss religion or politics on a first date if you want a second date.”

Lucille

If you discuss religion or politics on a first date, you’re doomed. Based on cultural teachings, the Jews and Arabs are filled with hate for an eternity. In Ireland, the Catholic and Protestant conflict was about social classes. England (Protestant) colonized Ireland (Catholic) in such a harsh manner, that the classes attached to these different religions created their ‘religious’ war.

In the surfing movie, *Step into Liquid*, pro surfers travel the world searching for waves. On a stop in Ireland, they introduce Protestant and Catholic kids to the sport. These kids have carry their parent’s ignorant prejudice. But when the surfers get all the kids into the water, their animosity is suspended for the day. It’s about surfing, not religion, and they find out they really like each other. They discover their differences are about religious beliefs, not facts, and they are not worth killing someone. Respect the ocean, respect each other.

In my young surfing life, I found dropping into a pristine wave in places like Hawaii or Tahiti, to be both exhilarating and calming. It’s hard to explain until you’ve been ‘In the Tube,’ or ‘In the Green Room,’ the feeling of a wave furling over your head as the world becomes momentarily silent and beautiful. Regardless of religion, race, creed, or other beliefs, surfers who have shared

the Green Room relate to each other through the power of the ocean. Surfers develop massive respect for Mother Nature and the sea. They extend that reverence to the world around them.

The problem with the world is pretty simple. It's ignorance. The solution is considerably more complex, because the problem is so pervasive. If you connect with someone on a personal level first, you are more likely to be accepting of their beliefs. The challenge with dating is similar. There are three recommendations for first dates: don't discuss religion, don't discuss politics, and don't date dummies.

If you go on a date with a checklist or preconceived notions, you won't be able to see the real person. If the world could go surfing together for a day, putting aside their differences, we'd find out we're not all that dissimilar. There would be more understanding and love in the world.

Connecting with persons of opposite political views is so rare, they made a movie about the exception. "The Ragin' Cajun" James Carville (Democrat, consultant for Bill Clinton), and wife Mary Matalin (Republican, consultant for George W. Bush), were the subject of the movie, *Speechless*, starring Michael Keaton and Geena Davis. They fight constantly over political differences, but somehow they make it work. I'm sure most couples could not handle this, but James and Mary are smart, accepting people. Couples with this aptitude can overcome anything, but I don't recommend trying it with a dummy.

There are fundamental rules for first date behavior. Religion and politics can kill any chance of a second date. Bambi was part of the Bay Area Conservatives, and she could never date a Democrat. She wanted young men, who are almost exclusively Democrats on the West Coast, so her odds of dating harmony were miniscule.

Even with same sex friends, these topics are verboten. Once, I was called to retrieve a girlfriend from a restaurant, miles away. She was with her BFF, they had a few drinks too many,

then got into an Obama - McCain discussion, and *The Creature from the Booze Lagoon* attacked. I thought that monster only attacked the opposite sex. True friends accept each other's differences, but even that can go awry at the local pub.

DONNA WAS SOMEONE THAT I MET TWICE. When I was with GE, she had requested me, we talked for a bit, then set a dinner date. She lived in Carmel, and we met at the Crossroads Restaurant. Donna was very cute, and conversation was lively. She had two martinis before dinner, and she became more animated as the drinks went down. She was not a lagoon creature, just a happy, tipsy lady.

She had two kids, ages five and seven. She had been through a bad divorce, describing her ex-husband as mean and unloving. There was the custody battle, money issues, and her sad single life. She had been on many GE dates with very few second dates. Maybe it was the alcohol, but she was soon crying the blues. With tears in her eyes, she was bemoaning the challenges of meeting a really nice guy, and living happily ever after.

I listened quietly to her sad tale. On occasion, she would change her mood to try to be charming, then it shifted back to tears. It was a bit uncomfortable, but I hung in there and consoled her with a goodnight hug. As with most of her GE dates, I did not repeat.

CUT FORWARD TEN YEARS, and I was now with Match.com. I had survived a marriage and divorce, and endless dating encounters. I checked my email and saw a request from Donna. I was surprised to see her email, and I checked her profile. It was very similar to her GE profile, but her kids were in high school. I thought this would be a nice reunion to hear how things had gone over the last decade. I suggested we meet at the Crossroads for dinner.

We met at the restaurant, and I hugged her saying, “Nice to see you again.”

She gave me a blank stare. I suddenly realized she did not know who I was. Even though we were meeting at the same restaurant, nothing rang a bell. I decided not to mention our previous meeting, sparing her any embarrassment.

Dinner was a time capsule as she had two martinis, and she replayed her old situation. She still had problems with the ex-husband, kids doing poorly in school, and her dating life was miserable. Then the waterworks began as Yogi Berra would say, “It was déjà vu all over again.”

I walked her to her car and hugged her goodnight. She said, “I had a good time tonight. You seem like a nice guy, and I’d love to see you again.”

Talk about irony. I guess I didn’t make a good first impression in a faceless search for Mr. Right Now. Instead of no second date for her, it would be no third date for me.

DOS

To display the best you, make a good first impression.

✓ **Dress and groom appropriately.**

First impressions are visual on both sides. Unless it’s a blind date, you should have an inkling about what someone likes physically. For a woman, a dress and heels, jeans and a nice top, conservative makeup and jewelry, to attract without distracting will do the trick. Don’t show off your labels. For a man, clean hands, polished shoes, pressed pants and shirt are minimal requirements.

✓ **Talk positively about everything.**

Always use a compliment about your date as an opening remark. Speak about your great friends, discuss positive current events.

✓ **Be honest without being negative.**

Avoid those risky areas like ex-spouses, religion, politics, and tragedies. “That’s a topic for another day,” is a way to sidestep tricky first date questions.

✓ **Be yourself.**

Mind your manners, but be yourself. Any false pretenses will be exposed quickly.

✓ **Be smart without being be a smart-ass or know-it-all.**

If a topic is raised, let that person tell you what they know. Don’t contradict on a first date.

There’s plenty of time for arguments and make-up sex.

✓ **Be interesting.**

Men love interesting women they can learn from, but it’s a slippery slope. Women are usually more street-smart than men, and really smart women know how to let a man take center stage on the first date. A woman should use “WKSYDK” to their advantage, “Women Know Something You Don’t Know.” I pronounce this as, “Whiskey Dike.” Teasing is appropriate and very appealing. She might say, “Oh, that’s an interesting topic. I have some bizarre trivia about that. I’ll tell you next time.” This drives men nuts, and they will certainly call again because she knows something he has yet to discover. Men who brag about themselves or talk about their stuff or money are not interesting.

✓ **Be mysterious.**

Part of being interesting, is mystery. Let someone get to know you over a period of time.

Don’t expose everything on your first, second, or third date. Keep them guessing. If you’re compatible, the sexual tension will build like the Great Pyramids of Egypt. Each date should leave something more to explore.

✓ **Flirt if you like him. Pay attention if you like her.**

Men don't get the signals immediately. Smiling, playing with your hair, light touching, eye contact, and being witty will signal you want a second date. Men who listen, although rare, and ask questions about her, not talk about himself, will pique a woman's curiosity.

✓ **Assume he or she is the one.**

Start here and work your way backwards. Look past all your adolescent checklist items.

Leave the checklist at home, preferably in the paper shredder. Men should look above her bustline, and make eye contact. Assume they're special, and let them prove otherwise.

✓ **Tease but don't test.**

You can tease someone about their different opinions or preferences, but don't test them. He likes country music and hates hip-hop, while she likes alternative rock and thinks country is dumb. If he comments that he likes country music, but hates hip-hop, a smart woman might say, "That Carrie Underwood is pretty sexy, even if she is country. She could have been a hot Black Eyed Pea. Carrie definitely has that *Boom Boom Pow* going on." If the biggest disagreement you have is music, you'll be fine.

✓ **Take a valuable first step across the abyss.**

If you imagine yourself moving forward with this person, think about crossing the abyss.

Romance, love, encouragement, approval, devotion, loyalty, and trust begin with a good first step. Men should remember the elephant is in the jungle, and she'll remember first date missteps.

✓ **Withhold sex.**

Men appreciate working for things. Accomplishment is everything to a man. Women who make men wait and work for sex are the most attractive as potential life mates. Your position

on sex is a personal one, so don't expose it too soon. Using "WKSYDK," what she knows immediately is if she's going to have sex with a man. Make him guess and wait.

✓ **Let your masculine side show.**

If you want to be a man's woman, relate to a man on his level. All sports, Guy Ritchie and Quentin Tarantino movies, what the new Corvette or Porsche is going to be like, riding motorcycles, gambling, Sports Illustrated articles like "Where is Earl Campbell now," and tracks such as "Shake Your Hips," on the Rolling Stone's "Exile on Main Street" album, are all interesting things to men. The Kardashians don't count as things or interesting.

✓ **Go surfing and have respect, respect and more respect.**

Listen and learn. Respect the other person and their beliefs. Intelligent people know that differences make the world more interesting. Unless you were raised by wolves or rednecks, you learned respect at home. Dive into the ocean together. Grab your surfboard, and bring your respect for the power of love everywhere you go.

DON'TS

Here are some things to avoid on a first date if you feel the other person has future merit.

Diet.

Leave it at home. If a woman orders food like a scientist, dissecting every ingredient and querying the waiter like a lab partner, she's too critical for a second date. Keep it simple and order an item as-is on the menu. I once had a date lay out a dozen vitamins on a first dinner date. If I found her to be smart and health conscious later on, that would be fine. On a first date, this seemed like the act of a difficult woman.

☒ Don't order food for someone.

If you leave your diet at home, then pick your own food. Men shouldn't order for a woman unless she asks. He'll assume she is trusting and likes him, or maybe she just forgot her reading glasses and is a little vain. In any case, keep it simple, and get approval for your order (price aware), so he can offer to pay. Let the man order Don Perignon and Caviar as his choice.

☒ Prior experimental flights.

Don't bring up your flights with the EX-1. Avoid questions about your ex-relationships by saying, "That's a tale for another day." I've made this mistake before, and I have no idea what a second date may have set in motion. If your prior crashes are still fresh in your mind, don't bring them up. Focus on the other person, it's the best way to leave the past behind.

☒ Tragedies.

This takes things in a negative direction. Building appeal requires the promise of a positive adventure ahead. Put your best foot forward. Everyone can be nice when they want something (a second date), so be positive and be nice. Don't discuss tragedies in the news either. That will take things negative south and kill the aura of new adventures.

☒ Oversharing.

Don't make the classic mistake of over communicating. Gross stuff like medical procedures, accounts of your troubled kids, or some sort of rash you can't get rid of shouldn't come up or your date's lunch might.

☒ Digital disconnects.

Leave your friggin' iPhone, iPad, or walkie-talkie in the jeep. Period. You're not on high alert with the Pentagon. If you're on call at the ER, then don't go on a date.

☒ **Bad habits.**

Smoking became socially unacceptable decades ago. Chewing gum is just as bad. If you have to smoke, do makeup, or pick something, do it outside the dating arena.

☒ **Lust at first sight.**

This can only end in a one night stand. Save this for your twenties. Start down the path to friendship., steady and steady wins the race. Lust is fine, but it's not relationship fabric.

☒ **Don't star in *The Creature from the Booze Lagoon*.**

Two drinks maximum.



A first impression is the beginning of respect. Good karma is the only religion surfers share on a first adventure. James Carville and Mary Matalin discussed politics on the first date, but you shouldn't. Follow Lucille's Lessons and the basic dos and don'ts if you want a second date.



THE 95% MAN

Guideline 5: He doesn't make a good first impression.

Men are clumsy at dating. If they're really good at it, then they get lots of sex, with lots of women. A clumsy man can go the distance, while a dating aficionado only wants to go the night. Women get all tingly meeting a handsome man, just the way men go speechless with a beautiful woman. Take a second and third look at someone, there may be wedding plans sealed inside their unimpressive packaging.



**It's the short trip versus the long haul. The wrapper is hiding the real
goodies on the inside.**



12.

LESSON 6: OH BOB!

*“Your father never asks for directions because he said
Columbus discovered America that way.”*

Lucille

Pops was the world’s best pilot who never had a forced landing or mechanical mishap, and never missed navigating to a landing strip. He was the world’s worst driver. As hard as Lucille pressed on the passenger side floorboards, her imaginary brakes never worked. Her panic was usually exclaimed with, “Oh, Bob!”

Driving to the Wharton Airfield with Pops, he went flying through a stop sign. I applied my passenger brakes and said, “Pops! There was a stop sign back there you know!”

Pops said, “Ahhh. I’ll stop twice at the next one.”

WOMEN DO HAVE THEIR MOMENTS, but men just roll with the punches. I met Rhonda via GE, and we became good friends to start our relationship. We both loved sports, especially scuba diving. I was a beginning diver, and she was a certified diver with excursions around the world. I was thinking of a diving vacation to Fiji, Australia, and Tahiti.

Redeeming my 600,000 air miles for first class tickets on Quanta airlines, it took months to coordinate blackout dates with each segment of the trip. The plan was to land at Nadi Airport on the island of Viti Levu in Fiji. Then we’d shuttle over to Magic Island for some incredible diving. Next it would be off to Sydney, and up to the Great Barrier Reef. We’d finish on the

island of Moorea in Tahiti, then head home. This was going to be epic. I was hoping it would not be a scary new story like, *The Creature from the Pacific Lagoon*.

Rhonda was a very savvy real estate investor, had done race car driving, and she was always quick with witty verbal comebacks. She was a smart cookie with some masculine traits, including her reluctance to ask for directions.

At work I had accrued two months of sabbatical time, plus vacation days allowing me to take 14 weeks off with pay. Like most of my prior vacations, I had worked 40 straight hours on Thursday and Friday to get everything done before I left. I had a line of credit with the Monterrey Credit Union, and I needed to drive down to get some cash. This was about 90 minutes south, and over two hours from our departure at the San Francisco airport.

Rhonda stayed overnight, and packed her suitcase at my house Saturday morning. I told her we needed to make a short trip to Monterey to get some cash. I said I'd pack when we stopped on the way back, as we had plenty of time.

We arrived at the credit union about six hours before we needed to be at the airport. With cash in hand, we got set to head back, and I said, "I'm pretty sleepy. Would you mind driving so I can take a little nap?"

"No problem," she said.

I settled into the passenger seat, programmed myself to dream about warm beaches and pristine waters, and we departed. I was asleep in sixty seconds.

Later, I awoke and tried to get my bearings. I looked out the window and saw a sign, "BAKERSFIELD 120 MILES." It took a few seconds to register that we had gone the wrong direction. I jolted upright and said, "How long have we been driving?"

Rhonda said, "About two hours. Did you have a nice nap?"

“Yes, but you’re going the wrong direction. We’re never going to make our flight. Game over, trip over, goodbye air miles,” I said.

Some quick calculations had us four hours from the airport and that’s when our flight left. Check-in for international flights was 90 minutes before departure. Rhonda said, “Hold on and watch for cops. I’ll pay for any tickets, but we’ll make that flight.”

On occasion I like to drive fast, but this was the 24 Hours of Le Mans. Rhonda hit 100 MPH most of the way. My house was just off the freeway, so we stopped to get my clothes. We skidded into the driveway, and I ran into the house, couldn’t find my suitcase, so I grabbed a trash bag and packed in about two minutes. No dive gear, no shoes, just some random attire.

We grabbed her suitcase, jumped back in the car, and we raced to SFO. Amazingly, we made it there 30 minutes before the flight. We rushed to the counter and looked at the departure boards. The flight was delayed two hours. As we checked-in, I passed my garbage bag over the scale, and the Qantas employee did a double-take, “Anything to declare?”

“Yes. Never let a woman drive you to the airport. By the by, do they serve Valium in first class, mate?”

Once onboard I started with vodka and caviar, and all was forgiven. It was a glorious trip, the people we met were fabulous, the diving was spectacular, and we returned home tan and relaxed. I never saw a lagoon creature. Rhonda and I remained friends and we both had great stories to tell about our trip.

A woman has dated her man for years, had the big romance, love, adventure, and she feels her man’s trained for marriage. She thinks they’ve crossed the abyss. They get married, have kids,

buy a home, and they face all of life's challenges together. The man slides toward the abyss as his wife disapproves of his occasional misbehavior. They have not quite mastered the approval stage of their relationship. She goes back to her checklist created during the Reagan era. She thinks, "Damn. How did I miss all those things when we were dating?" The wife knows she loves her man, but she realizes husbands are just annoying by nature.

TEN REASONS MEN ARE ANNOYING

1. They think they can fix a woman like they can fix a leaky faucet.

Men are problem solvers and mechanics. Men can fix a lawnmower, repair a washing machine, and change the oil in the car. Why not fix the wife? Pops could keep a B-52 bomber flying 24/7, repair everything in the house, and he had a toolbox that would make Tim Taylor (Tim Allen) on *Tool Time* jealous. Once Pops bought a Heathkit build-it-yourself color TV. It went together fine, and worked great, but occasionally the signal went sideways. Pops would crawl behind the TV, trying to adjust it, but he only made it worse. This was always in the middle of *Bonanza*, and it drove the family bonkers. Whenever Pops would try to fix mom, she'd say, "I'm fine. Go play with the Heathkit if you want something to fix." Eventually Pops got rid of the Heathkit, bought a new Curtis Mathes color TV, and he quit trying to fix Lucille.

2. They think they can win an argument with their significant other.

“The only way to fight a woman is with your hat. Grab it and run,” John Barrymore said. I crashed and burned on too many flights with the EX-1 trying to win arguments. I kept forgetting to say, “Yes, dear.” Occasionally, I would try to diffuse the situation with, “You’re right, dear.” It would stall her for a moment, then the flight would resume, shakier than ever, under the flight plan described as, “What do you mean I’m right!?! You’re just saying that!” You can’t steer the craft when it’s flying with the nose up, and there’s no communication with the tower. The aircraft just has to run out of fuel on its own before you can land it. Put it on auto pilot and shut up.

3. They act like ambitious cavemen.

Men are still in the dark ages when it comes to the value of careers, money, toys, power, and status symbols. Men feel if they earn the money and bring it home, the rest is up to the wife. If a wife has a career, she may have some of his traits, but she still knows that you have to work to make a house a home. If a wife is raising the kids, that’s a full-time job that pays nothing today, but she knows tomorrow’s value of being a good wife and mother. Once a man has children, he really needs to pitch in or lose his place at the dad’s table. No Hamm’s Beer for him. It’s a balancing act for everyone, but it can be done if a man will come out of his cave into the light.

4. They marry too young or for the wrong reasons.

It’s not entirely the man’s fault. He has a partner that convinced him to do the crime, now he doesn’t want to do the time. When men marry young, they lack the wisdom that comes with age and experience. It takes a man longer to assimilate the value of a strong marriage, while a

woman has it built into her DNA. A man may attach for sexual reasons, family pressures, or he's just trying to do the right thing. Like a first date for a woman, a man should look twice, check inside the wrapper, and then make a mature decision about marriage.

5. They think they're exempt from dating.

If a man doesn't want to romance a woman forever, then he shouldn't get married. It's tough with children in tow, but like anything worthwhile, it takes work. A man's reward for keeping romance alive is substantial, so this element should never be overlooked or trivialized. With proper, recurring romance, a woman feels wanted, needed and loved, she puts away her scorecard, and a man may get to play golf more often.

6. They still play with toys.

Pops had a picture with his Cessna Skylane and the caption, "The only difference between men and boys is the price of their toys." This doesn't make them annoying to other men, just to women. Women have got to let men have this one.

7. They think a partner is someone you play golf with.

Being a partner in a marriage really takes work for a man. Men are confused by signals, when to help or get out of the way. How much control should he give or take? What exactly are his chores? Women will let men know with a groan or a "never mind" comment if they're doing it wrong or not at all. They won't say specifically what is wrong, but they'll raise the "I'm not happy flag."

A man should think of everything as a joint effort. If she cooks, he should do the dishes. If he mows the lawn, she should do the laundry. If she's sick, he needs to fill all the gaps - pick up the kids, do the cooking or get takeout, do the dishes, give baths, read the kids to sleep, take care of the laundry, and walk the dog. She'll do it for her man. In golf, if a man

is playing in a twosome tournament, he can count on his partner to carry him on his bad holes. It's called, "Ham and eggin' it." In marriage, when he's eggin' it, she will surely bring the ham. If a man can keep score in golf with a buddy, he's certainly able to balance the score at home with his partner.

8. They still hang out with their single high school or college buddies.

Marriage is for grownups. Your mom told you early on you'd be judged by the company you keep. A wife is no different. When building a life together, friends are important. You don't have to like each other's friends, but it's a big bonus if you do. It comes back to accepting people for who they are. If a man's old running mates and his BHBFs haven't grown up and are just BHs, then his loyalty lies with his family. Great friends make for a great support system and a fulfilling marriage. Bad friends can't ruin a good marriage, but they certainly don't help.

9. They retain bad habits under the banner of allowable vices.

Men have so many misdemeanors on their record, that when they do clean up their act, they feel they are still allowed a vice or three. He'll quit smoking soon, no more chewing tobacco next month, he'll slow down tomorrow, he'll cut back to three energy drinks a day, the new diet is coming soon, he just joined a gym and any day now he'll actually go. It's no longer about him, he's part of a team. With children comes a more important reason to get control of bad habits. When a man has a child, he is immediately filled with a sense of protecting his family. The first step is to take care of his own health and wellbeing.

10. They still think with the little head.

Men have been on a first name basis with the pal in their pants long before marriage, and it will be the same after. Unless you start a man on an estrogen program, he's going to be

testosterone driven. Men should continue to be men, otherwise they risk changing into someone other than the man his wife loved in the beginning. This is a fact of nature, and a male can control his little buddy if he's evolved. As an adult, a man should be able to evaluate risk versus reward. The exception is politicians. They don't seem to be able to control their libido regardless of the costs to family and country. Say hello to little Hillbilly Clinton.

REASONS WHY WOMEN ARE ANNOYED

- 1. They marry men and think they can change them.**
- 2. For other validations, see #1 again.**



Men are never going to ask for directions. A woman has to take the wheel once in a while, or use her phone GPS if she wants to get anywhere with a man driving.



THE 94% MAN

Guideline 6: He can be so annoying.

DON'T CALL YOUR MAN AN IDIOT, IT'S QUITE INACCURATE. I hear women say, "My husband is an idiot." Here's the actual math to disprove this statement. An idiot has an IQ of 0-25, an imbecile 26-50, and morons have IQs between 51-70. Normal is around 100 for about 68% of the population. A woman is lucky if her man is only an annoying moron, he has more

than twice the IQ of an idiot. A few men really are idiots, hopefully you're not married to one. I think women only fluctuate a few points up or down at any moment, so a woman is better equipped to cope with the nature of an annoying man. The trick is to learn from our mistakes, raise our intelligence with experience, and then try to keep the IQ bubble level.

Men will be men. They don't do things in a logical fashion. Many prior Lessons can help women accept this basic difference. As long as a man is not an idiot, let him be the man. His little annoyances are only temporary. Ignore him and tell him to take out the trash and mow the lawn. He can't get in much trouble there. If all else fails, make him upgrade his phone to one with a GPS.



**Men hate to ask for directions, but they still want you along for the ride
because they love you, and your phone has Google Maps.**



13.

LESSON 7: DON'T HOLD A GRUDGE

*“Women are vindictive by nature. But, don’t tell them
that or they’ll get even with you for saying it.”*

Lucille

A grudge is the extension of anger. Unresolved issues that originally upset you keep coming up, even escalating. Both of the parties reach an impasse. They can’t agree to disagree. Unable to resolve issues, one may become vindictive as an offense mechanism. Long after an argument, the sign that someone is carrying a grudge is apparent when they stop talking to you. They try to get even with you to absolve the grudge. The Hatfields and the McCoys stopped talking and started shooting over Civil War allegiances. This was a feud with ignorance at the helm.

THE EX-1 NEEDED MAINTENANCE. We visited a marriage counselor to see what was wrong with our flights. We were going in circles, then crash landing. These visits can be frustrating when one party is not honest, and they try to win the therapist over to their side. That person may withhold personal information, hoping the therapist will like them, and gang up on the other party to prove they are right. Trained therapists see this coming a mile away.

“So Bob, what’s troubling you?” our therapist asked.

“Well... we seem to argue all the time, and it goes nowhere. She’s always angry. About what, I don’t know. Whatever it is, she seems to want to get even for it. Without reason, she’s just plain vindictive.”

The EX-1 gave me one of those ‘I hate you’ looks.

The therapist asked her, “How do you feel about that?”

“I don’t know what he’s talking about,” EX-1 said. “We have normal arguments like all couples.” Then she looked at me and mumbled, “I’m going to get even with you for saying that!”

The therapist heard that, and looked at me. All she could do was raise her eyebrows, smile, and return to her notations.

ROBIN WAS A CURVACIOUS, BEAUTIFUL WOMAN. I met her at Neiman Marcus in San Francisco. I was in the men’s department, and I assumed she was shopping for her man, but there was no wedding ring. WWLS – What Would Lucille Say? “Talk to everyone, it can change your destiny.”

I visit Neiman’s once a year to renew my favorite cologne, so this was a true chance encounter. Robin came to the fragrance counter, and I complimented her on her shoes, referencing *Sex in the City*. I had seen a Manolo Blahnik display in the shoe department riding the escalator down.

“I love your shoes. Very Manolo, Carrie Bradshaw.” I said.

“Manolo? How did you know?” she said.

“I’m straight, really. Just don’t tell any of the guys I know.”

“Ah, shoe fetish. Okay, I won’t tell,” she said. “I got these at the Galleria.”

“Neiman’s in Houston?”

“Yes,” she said.

“I used to live there. That’s where I first bought this cologne. I don’t normally shop at Neiman’s, but I had a Texas girlfriend that used to drag me there. I’m more of a Tommy Bahama’s guy,” I said.

“I’m looking for a fragrance for my uncle. He’s a widower and I’m trying to get him dating again. I’ve got to get him off the Old Spice.”

“Here, try this,” as I sprayed some cologne on a sampler paper.

Guys really hate the woman’s designer label thing, because it means high maintenance. I’m not a designer person, but Neiman carries one of the only colognes I like. When I left the corporate world, I put away my Italian suits and ties, took off my simple no-brand watch, and I went to a casual wardrobe. I shared my favorite scent with Robin, and she liked it. One thing led to another, and we decided to have Sunday brunch.

We dated for a few months, and she was fabulous. She was a little self-conscious about her weight, and she was always on a diet. She had curves in all the right places, and I never thought of her as fat by any stretch. But, there was some insecurity nagging at her.

Robin was educated, sophisticated, and she had made her mark as a fashion consultant. I thought she was amazing. The dating continued, and there was not a love connection immediately, but we had fun together. I was just the dumb old Midwestern boy dating the educated, high society woman.

On one occasion we were at a charity event with runway models strutting their stuff.

“That is an amazing suit that guy has on,” I commented.

“Which one,” she asked.

“The dark haired guy that looks like Antonio Banderas,” I said.

“Yes. Yummy. Maybe one of these days I can lose some weight and meet a guy like that. Then I won’t have to date guys like you,” Robin said.

Do you ever get those comments when you’re having fun, that just drop on you like a turd in a party punch bowl? I was speechless. Robin was still drinking in the handsome men on the runway, oblivious that she had said anything. It was an auto response triggered by something from her past. I had no retort.

After the event, we went to dinner. I couldn’t get my head around what had prompted the “guys like you” remark. It made me feel like the total dirtbag guy she was dragging around until someone better came along. I told her I took offense to the comment. She struggled to recall the remark. I told her she didn’t have to date guys like me, or lose weight, she was beautiful the way she was.

Reflecting back, she said her dad had always called her fat, told her no one would love her unless she lost weight, and she’d never get married. The cologne was for her uncle, not dad, for a reason. She had been carrying a daddy-grudge for many years, and he died before they resolved their issues. She had accomplished a lot, and her weight did not hold her back, but she never got to say, “You were wrong!” to dad.

This old grudge was causing her to project her anger onto other men. She lashed out at me unconsciously, when she was angry with dad. Personally, I don’t have a body type, and what turns my head is a woman with spirit. Young, angry women that can’t get over things become grudge bearing older women. I thought Robin was incredibly hot physically. Her old wound had injured me, but it was merely a flesh wound. I’d get over it. I wasn’t going to let a momentary insult turn into a grudge. Guys like me don’t let it bother us. We simply move on, and say, “NEXT!”

Anger is expressed soon after it is felt. Grudges, like the Hatfields and the McCoys', or Robin's, are based in anger that won't go away. If you are ever going to make peace, it starts by burying any resentments or grudges. Embitterment will compound heated discussions. It will also keep a new relationship from fully developing. It's not healthy.

These are things you should work on to release a grudge:

1. Assume it's your fault.

Look inside your heart to see if your grudge has become internalized beyond the fault of the other party. You have the ultimate power to release a grudge. This is the part where you say, "You're right. I'm wrong." Become introspective as the bigger person. Take the blame. Now you've isolated your part in the original issue.

2. Find a point of forgiveness for yourself

You have to determine how deeply the offense has wounded you. If you carry some or all of the responsibility, then forgive yourself first. If you feel the other party is totally at fault, then you have a longer road to navigate. Usually it's somewhere in the middle. It takes two to hold a grudge.

3. Determine the elements of pain.

If it's just pride, you have to figure a way to set that aside. Nations have been at war since the dark ages over pride, so it's no easy task. Pride fogs clear thinking.

4. Measure the damage to your life.

If this is damaging your ability to be with other people or start new relationships, you have to release the grudge before you can resume a productive life. We have all seen

and read the true stories where shockingly, the victim's family forgives the killer.

They have to move past the pain they are feeling. The pain that they had absolutely no part in creating. Like Robin, she would have to bury the grudge with her dad to appreciate someone who would love her for herself.

5. Duke it out, or hug it out.

Confront the other person and decide if it can be resolved. If it can't, then distance yourself from that person, and let time heal the wound. If it can be settled, apologize for your part, then forgive the other person for their self-admitted part. They should accept your offer and reciprocate, and you can hug it out. You must be cognizant of your new relationship, and don't do anything to trigger a relapse.



Anger that won't go away becomes a grudge. You must resolve this grudge one way or another before you can fully appreciate and enjoy new relationships.



THE 93% MAN

Guideline 7: He holds a grudge.

If a woman feels her man won't let a grudge go away, it's because he's standing his ground. Make sure it's not you standing in the way of resolution. If you initiated the argument that festered into a grudge, you have to resolve it. If a man appears to be carrying a grievance from

the past, then it's up to him to resolve that situation. A woman should make him aware that he's taking it out on her, and tell him, "Knock it off, buddy."

On several occasions, I've had to ask women, "Do I remind you of your dad or ex-husband, because I don't remember doing whatever you're pissed off about." I really must look like a generic ex-husband, as I've been hit by a lot of friendly fire in the past. Fortunately, Lucille has been my flak jacket since I was a teenager.

It's been years since Robin insulted me. It's not a grudge that I carry, but it's one of those things you don't forget. I bear no ill will, and I let it go. It made me stronger to keep the reference intact for future encounters. If I'm judged to be one of 'those guys,' I can laugh it off and chalk it up to an old grudge a woman is carrying. She'd get called out then and there. I know I'm my own guy, not one of them.

Stubborn men aren't all bad. They can be a pillar of strength when it comes to supporting a woman. Let him be the rock.



Just because he's not talking about it, doesn't mean he's not letting it go. Let a stubborn man be your rock. If you break a rock, it becomes dust.



14.

LESSON 8: YES, DEAR

“Women love being right, so let them.”

Lucille

If a man hasn't learned to say, “Yes, dear. You're right,” then he's angry, miserable, single or all of these. If a man offers an olive branch, a woman should receive it with an open heart. It's all too easy to try to go toe-to-toe with a woman in an argument, but impossible to win. A smart man knows that he can't survive this battle, so he should listen first and apologize later.

ONE OF MY BHBFs DR. JEFF, IS MARRIED TO A PH.D., who is his best friend, a talented executive, and a marvelous mom. He has the perfect solution for a happy marriage. He said he starts everyday by telling his wife, “I love you. And, whatever I do today, I just want you to know that I'm sorry, and you're right.” That's advanced thinking, even for a Ph.D. Dr. Jeff gets to play golf whenever he wants.

NATALYA WAS BORN IN RUSSIA, and she had a doctorate in chemical engineering. I met her on a business trip to Finland. She worked for a large company I was consulting for in Europe. Natalya was a lovely, highly educated woman, but had little or no sense of humor. She was my host and tour guide for the week.

Helsinki is a beautiful city that managed to avoid the major ravages of WWII suffered by most of Europe. The Finnish are tough people, and they fought to keep Russia out of their country, while avoiding conflicts with Germany.

The men are tough as nails, and the women are well educated, and even tougher. A large portion of the population today is from Russia, where life is hardened by the Russian Mafia and state controls. Finland offers a lot of opportunity for Russian women who often speak three to four languages, and have as many degrees.

Natalya was fun to be with, and she taught me a lot about her culture, and the Finns. American jokes didn't play there, but you could relate some things to American cinema. Our connection was not romantic, but we became friends. We had heated debates like a married couple. It was important for her to be right, because she just knew she was. "Yes, Natalya. You're right," became my mantra in Finland. After all, I was a guest.

Natalya had a boyfriend, and she said he was loyal, "Unlike many Russian male pigs." She noted, "Once you've been loved by a Russian woman, you can never be loved like that again."

I translated this as, if you mess with a Russian woman, you will find your man parts in the smallest section of a Matryoshki (Russian nesting doll).

We were having dinner one night with much vodka, and we got on a WWII topic of great disagreement. Something about the Germans and Russians. Natalya raised her eyebrows and said, "Well that is your American opinion. All Americans are entitled to their opinions, no matter how STUPID they are!" She raised her vodka filled glass, smiled, saluted, and slugged it down.

I thought for a moment, stuffed my mouth with a blini loaded with caviar, downed my vodka, swallowed, smiled and said, "Yes, Natalya. You're right."

Except for the caviar, it was just like home.



No matter what country you are in, women want to be right. The world would be better off if all countries were run by women. There would be no wars, but we'd have jealous countries that wouldn't want to talk to each other, and, "That flag makes your country look fat," catty remarks flying about.



THE 92% MAN

Guideline 8: He 'never' listens.

This is the top complaint listed in relationship books and surveys. Relationship counselors thrive on teaching men and women how to communicate. The smart man listens and doesn't say a word until a woman is finished, and then he waits a little longer. He's trying to decipher the problem, but she's not stating one. She's testing him to see if he values her words and thoughts. This does not require a solution or a fix. She merely wants to be acknowledged. She gets run over by men at work, at school, and in sports, the least he can do is listen, and let her win on home ground.

The only problem here is embellishment with the 'never' and 'always' words. Women should be careful how and when they use these adverbs, the reaction penalties can be punitive. This may start an argument via emotional dysregulation where his temper may rise, or he may withdraw as communication stalls. Then she will feel controlled, marginalized, and abandoned. Brain in gear, then mouth in motion is a good rule. He stops listening when he perceives she is

complaining that he never, ever listens. He feels he will be voted out of the tribe, and he will be asked to leave the tribal council immediately.

But, there's more to it. Men view relationships as a competition, and they will try to win a discussion, and we know that's impossible. Also, if a man feels he is being criticized, he may be listening while standing his ground to keep his self-respect. She may be so demanding, he has put his foot down once in a while. Men do listen and remember things, when it benefits them.

Here's a cautionary tale inspired by true events in the life of one of my BHBFs, portrayed in a soap opera I call, *All My General Hospital Young and Restless Children*.

Zack and Jill live in Hill Valley. In their cozy little kitchen, the stage is set for a recurring argument. Jill just noticed the trash was filling up. It's not full, and it's not time to take it out, but she says to Zack, "How come you 'never' take out the trash? You 'always' forget this kind of stuff."

She's actually peeved about Zack forgetting their anniversary. After all, it was their first kiss on a cruise ship. He should have remembered that, it was only six years ago.

He's left wondering what she's talking about. Could he have forgotten something like that? What does the trash have to do with anything? He thought exam night was on Monday nights when he liked to watch football.

Later that evening in a bizarre, uncharacteristic twist, Jill tells Zack why she is mad, and he doesn't even have to guess. "About earlier, you do take out the trash on occasion. I was upset that you forgot today was the anniversary of our first kiss on that Royal Caribbean cruise," she says. She probes his memory, "On the railing... 2AM... that full romantic moon... after we'd danced all night?"

He's a little shocked. First, because she was so specific about what was bothering her, forget his points for the trash thing. Second, he doesn't ever remember going on a cruise, he gets deathly seasick.

"Royal Caribbean? We never went on a cruise. I *can't* go on cruise," he says.

"Sure we did. May 4th, 2006? We met those people at the table that kept ordering escargot. Then we—"

"May 4th, 2006?! We met in April, 2006. But, our first kiss was behind the Hill Valley Grill on June 2nd, on dry land," he says.

There's an awkward silence. He's tapping his toe, scrunching his face... pondering.

She's looking at the sky, counting, trying to remember. Could she be wrong? It's never happened before.

His face goes rigid as his eyes widen. "Hey wait a minute. Your Aunt Trudy, that I never met, died the first week of May that year, right? Really!" He crosses his arm and gives her a *Police Squad* interrogation stare. "How is old Aunt Trudy? Still dead!"

She is so busted.

"Let me see, that can't be right..." as she stalls for time to dredge up an alibi.

He's not really upset, because they didn't become exclusive until the fall of 2006. He's actually pleased that she's on the hot seat for a change, and he won't have to go on one of those vomit cruises, ever. This could score big points. He keeps running through all the benefits of being right just once, while she squirms.

Talk about abusing 'always' and 'never!' Zack is always going to remember this moment, and he's never going to let her forget it. Who's the elephant now?

And so goes, *All The Restless Days of My General Hospital Young Children.*



**There's never a problem when men and women talk, as long his lips don't
move.**



15.

LESSON 9: YOUR LIFE'S A FIRST DATE

*“Keep dating your wife as long as she continues to act
like a date.”*

Lucille

“GOT ME A DATE AND I WON'T BE LATE, PICKED HER UP IN MY 88,” are lyrics from “Rip It Up,” by Little Richard, circa 1956. My other favorite lyrics are, “Lucille, baby satisfy my heart,” in Little Richard’s 1957 song, “Lucille.” “Rip It Up,” was a song about dating old school style. It’s been a long time since anyone got picked up in an Oldsmobile 88. Even a new Oldsmobile is not going to impress her, unless she loves the Sizzler in Des Moines.

Treat every date like a first date, forever. Open her door, pull out her chair, bring flowers, and go for the goodnight kiss like you mean it. Yes, with your wife, dummy. This might include driving the baby sitter home first, but go for that big make out session at home.

The art of first dates has been lost in the rush to checklist someone in five minutes, and move to the next table like you’re speed dating at an “It’s Just Lunch” session. Lucille would say, “If you behave well enough to get her clothes off, then keep up the good behavior.”

When a man marries the love of his life, he should treat her that way. We hear all too often that the spark has gone out a marriage. Whose fault is that? It takes one to be boring, and two to be terminally boring. Even if the husband plans a Saturday night date, makes the reservations, dresses up, opens doors, and brings the occasional flowers, it’s not romantic if his wife doesn’t do her part.

Men are not romantic by nature. They're mechanics, amateur jocks, big toy boys, pranksters, bowlers, and hunters. When they first tracked their prey, they had to set a romantic trap. Once snared, the prey became domesticated. She forgot how to leave a scent. He forgot how to take a hint. Take an example from the French. They are romantic as a nation, both men and women. Do you know what the French call date night? Answer: Night.

The woman who complains about not going anywhere or doing anything, is not inspiring date-behavior. Some women feel it's up to the man. A woman I worked with said, "I would never ask a man out, that's his job." She was attractive and personable, but she was hardly ever asked out. Even if a woman has a rule about not asking men out, she should try to entice an invitation.

I MOVED TO NEW HAMPSHIRE WITH EX-1. My company had relocated HQ from London, to Londonderry, New Hampshire, and they wanted all the executives in one place. We put the furniture on a moving van, and I headed east while things got wrapped up at our old home. A week later, EX-1 got on a plane with her daughter, and they headed from sunny San Jose, California to frozen Boston, Massachusetts.

It was the dead of winter in the East. I motored to Logan Airport in driving snow, recalling the weather forecast, "It's going to warm up today. It's going to be one." Talk about an oxymoron – warm and one degree. In California, one is a time of day, not a temperature.

At the airport, I spotted EX-1 with daughter in tow, and I pulled to the curb. She looked awesome as usual - mini skirt, boots, silk blouse, and blonde hair blowing in the wind. I stopped, got out of the car, and was greeted by my California-raised lady with, "Where in the hell am I going to wear a silk blouse in this crap!" The EX-1 was not designed for winter weather.

On a visit to New Hampshire before moving, I had stopped at a gas station. I told the attendant that I was moving here, and I was looking forward to the four seasons. He was a craggy old dude out of a creepy Steven King novel. He had this northern-southern odd accent that reminded me of Daryl and his other brother Daryl on the TV show *Newhart*, which was set next door in Vermont.

“Well, if you want the four seasons, I suggest you find them on the radio,” he said. “Here in New Hampshire, we gotcha three seasons. A-yup.”

“Three seasons?” I asked.

“Well-a, yah gotcha winter, she lasts six or eight months. She warms a little, then you gotcha mud season. Ah-huh. If summer happens on a Saturday, then it’s yur black fly season. Then she snows again. Three seasons, a-yup.”

He was not kidding. It snowed like we were in Alaska. When it melted, the mud became *The Blob That Ate New Hampshire*. And damn, those black flies can bite. I’d like to say I remember a beautiful fall day golfing in Portsmouth when the leaves turned orange, but I get chilled thinking of the snow drifts, and 40-below ice skiing weather in the White Mountains. This was going to be rough dating terrain.

Trapped inside all winter, I could feel a Steven King novel fermenting with the theme, *Crazed New Hampshire housewife murders traveling husband for coming home from a Florida business trip with a tan*. Honest. I had to be careful about leaving EX-1 in the snow.

We had an exciting dating life before and during marriage. Every week had a date night, and we made time for romance. It was easy to be creative in California with sunshine 300 days a year. Trips to Carmel and Wine Country, dining and theater in San Francisco. A quick jump over to Hawaii. Golf and tennis on the weekends.

She was good at looking like, and acting like a date. Before we met, EX-1 worked at a bank in L.A., and she was an aspiring model. Speaking of jealousy. When she got dressed up, there were women that really hated her. She could make any outfit look sexy. She could stop traffic in a bikini. She always dressed up, and she wore lingerie I would buy for her. She said that she didn't have women friends because they were jealous bitches. That was her story.

We went dancing, went to parties, got into private clubs, and had special hotel rendezvous. We traveled to New York, Miami, Chicago, New Orleans, Hawaii, London, and Scotland. After five years, every date was still like a first date. That was before it snowed. In New Hampshire, or NH, we'd have to get creative to survive.

In NH, people loved to sit around the pot belly stove, bake pies, and knit. EX-1 was asked to join a sewing circle. "Sewing circle! Who do they think I am, a pioneer wife, or Betsy Ross?" she barked.

"Maybe you should show them that picture of you in the bikini on Manhattan Beach, and ask them if they know how to sew one of those," I told her.

We joined a fitness club that had workout facilities, and indoor racquetball. Everything was indoors come to think of it. It did get nice enough to play golf for a few months. I played at the Manchester Country Club, which I must say is one of the most pristine courses I've ever toured. But the season was short.

The Portsmouth Country Club, designed by Robert Trent Jones, Sr., was on the Great Bay. I do remember one glorious day in the fall. I was playing alone, and one hole extended into the water. The trees along the Great Bay were an explosion of red, orange, and gold. I stopped playing, pulled a soda and a Snickers out of my bag, and admired the scenery. I was thinking

how incredible this was, but there was still the memory of black flies biting me at sunrise on Golden Pond.

We played cards, rented movies, and had date nights at home. We went to Boston, toured the Mayflower, Museum of Arts, and Harvard. We had lunch at Legal Sea Foods, and had dinner at the Bay Tower Room. Boston saved our dating life.

If you treat your wife like a first date, then you can make any place interesting. The only thing to do in NH was eat, shop for antiques, and eat again. But, with the EX-1, it was always fun. So what else do you do when you're snowed in and bored? The fear of freezing my nuts off in January was a motivation to stay under the electric blanket. So, while I was there, I found something to do. NH was where our son was conceived, so I give a nod to new Londonderry.

LUCILLE CAME TO VISIT RIGHT AFTER MUD SEASON. We took a fabulous summer trip to New York. Her granddaughter was only ten, but she dragged Lucille all over New York shopping. We went to Newport, Rhode Island, and we were there for the America's Cup yacht races, which America lost for the first time in 132 years. Newport is one place people from California don't really know about.

The mansions are an eye-popping display of history, and the opulence of the titans that built our country. The Breakers was the summer home of Commodore Cornelius Vanderbilt (1794-1877). He was an American industrialist and philanthropist who built his wealth in shipping and railroads. The Breakers is a 70-room Italian Renaissance-style palazzo inspired by the 16th century palaces of Genoa and Turin. It has three story ceilings, fireplaces you can stand in, and interior décor beyond imagination.

The Breakers, Chateau-sur-Mer, The Elms, Marble House and Rosecliff, are some of the summer “cottages” that were part of a Gatsbyesque society in America. One of my favorite photos was taken in front of the Breakers. It features Lucille as a proud grandma, the EX-1 with precious cargo, and our stepdaughter anticipating her new baby brother.

In my company in NH, there were a dozen married men. We were all young software company executives, but I was the one from out of state. The one from the land of fruit and nuts, and no one could see my nuts, they would say. These married guys were at a dating disadvantage in the frozen tundra of NH. Married to women that bundled up like Eskimos, it was hard to get them excited about a hot weekend with the Pillsbury Dough Girl. Dinner at the Olive Garden wasn't going to set off a romantic night, either.

EX-1 was invited to hang with the wives one Friday night. The chatter was about kids, wainscoting for the house, and the new quilts they'd started. EX-1 told them about a piece of jewelry I'd bought her in London. She had worn her new silver fox fur (pre-PETA) that was a surprise gift. EX-1 told me the wives couldn't relate to wearing lingerie for their husbands. What was this date night thing about? Why did he bring you flowers if it wasn't your birthday or anniversary? You shave your legs in the winter? The inquisition went on as the ladies consumed homemade pastries.

I went to work Monday, and I was called into a meeting. Three of the NH-born married men shut the door behind me. Balding, rotund John looked at me and said, “Okay, Peak. Your wife's been talking to our wives, and we ain't happy.”

If John was a dwarf, I would have jabbed back, “I give up. Which one are you?” but, I just listened as the mob had their say.

“Yah, man. Knock this dating your wife shit off, too,” said the accountant Richard.

“Quit buying your wife expensive gifts for no reason. It’s making us look bad,” said Tony the operations guy.

I was smiling as I walked out, “You three don’t need me to make you look bad. If you really want to enjoy your lives, you should try dating your wives.”

Meeting adjourned.



Rodney Dangerfield exits the airport, gets in a cab, and tells the driver, “Take me someplace for a good time.” The driver did as requested. “He took me to my house!” Rodney said. A man will get no respect if he doesn’t treat his wife like a first date, every date. If a man doesn’t date his wife, someone else will.



THE 91% MAN

Guideline 9: He never takes his lady on real dates anymore.

When a woman feels her man has forgotten the art of dating, she may ask herself, “How did he get me in the first place?” The truth may be that she has forgotten how to be a date. He wants her to be a date, but many women feel that it’s up to the man. After marriage and children, priorities change and romantic nights are fleeting. Early in the relationship, couples had the dating thing down. Weekends were exciting. First kiss, first sleepover, first exotic vacation, the engagement,

a memorable wedding and the honeymoon are in the past now. Those great memories will always be there. How do you draw on them and keep it lively?

Reading a depressing headline about nuclear war threats, a man turned to his buddy, “It’s scary to think that the world could end tomorrow.” He thinks for a minute, then asks, “If you knew the world would end tomorrow, what would you do?”

The buddy snaps back, “I’d marry my ex-wife immediately.”

“That’s interesting. So, you’d rekindle the old flames one last time?” the man asks.

“Nah. If I was married to her for just one more day, it would seem like an eternity.”

NOTES FOR WOMEN

How to date a husband

Your own husband is preferable. It’s your call.

- Make a plan and stick to it.
- Start the day by teasing, “I love you. You’re going to get it tonight. And, I mean that!”
- On date day - hide the kids, dogs, cats, TV, and your sweat pants at grandma’s.
- Set aside your money to pay for the date.
- Stop using the words ‘always’ and ‘never’ for the day (or forever, your call).
- Make dinner reservations where he loves to eat or a new place he’d like.
- Pull out a photo album – set the tone for the day – reminisce why you fell in love.
- Stage and reenact an old memory – e.g. making out on the couch by the fire, cheerleader outfits are good.
- Take him to a hotel (romantic, exotic, remote), and pay for it.

- Be the Karate Kitten – wax on, wax off every square inch.
- Get your mind into the date in the AM – shave, mani/pedi, yoga, massage, read and relax.
- Dust off your garter belt, and those sexy seamed stockings.
- Shop at Victoria’s Secret - let him see the outside of the bag only.
- The higher the heels, the better.
- Find a movie to watch at home with the shades down – no one dies, everyone is naked.
- Go to a midweek daytime movie theater, and make out in the back.
- Tell him if he’s good, you’ll be bad.
- Write him a sexy note.
- Have a professional boudoir photo done.
- Get hair extensions, and surprise him that night.
- Go for a little extra makeup – borderline slutty.
- It’s you he loves, but it’s your evil twin he wants tonight.
- Borrow his car for the day, and have it detailed.
- Take him to a baseball game – you’re going to get it tonight, and he’ll mean it.
- Keep smiling, make him laugh, Google some new “Walks into a bar…” jokes.
- Give him a small gift certificate – Golf Mart, Amazon, iTunes, Starbucks, McDonalds or Tommy Bahamas - he’ll think of you when he uses it.
- Consider the washing machine a giant two person vibrator.
- Share your toys (battery powered items).
- Be consistently sweet and sexy all day – no flare ups or drama – stay on plan.

- Whatever he does, don't back down, get discouraged, or take no for an answer, and go through with the date you had planned - tell him to relax, you got this.
- If he's bad or fails to cooperate on the date, remind him he's not too old to spank.
- IMPORTANT ON A DATE DAY/NIGHT: No chores, no complaints, and no panties.
- DAILY: Remind him of and be the young girl he fell in love with.
- POST-DATE: No complaints for a day, don't analyze the success or failure of the date.

NOTES FOR MEN

How to date a wife

Put a little thrill in your life, try dating your own wife.

- Dr. Jeff's advice: Start each day with, "I love you. And, whatever I do today, I just want you to know that I'm sorry, and you're right."
- Be *Cool Hand Luke* – Get your mind right and think of her as your hot date, not your wife.
- Clear the decks for her - hide the kids, dogs, cats, TV, favorite shirt, and your golf clubs.
- Pick her up at a bar or restaurant (role play).
- Don't rush her – wait until she's ready to go, no matter how long she takes.
- Say yes to her outfit choices – she'll pick what she wants anyway.
- Do grocery shopping, and get flowers (Safeway has nice ones).
- Buy just flowers on Wednesday without an occasion, and present them - don't say "Here, these are for you," more like "I saw a cute couple today, and it made me think of us" sorta thing.
- Vacuum the house, clean the kitchen, pick up your crap for once – don't shock her, just do it.

- Cook dinner for her tonight, and do the dishes first thing in the morning (before she wakes).
- Pull out a photo album – set the tone for the day – reminisce why you fell in love.
- Stage and reenact an old memory – e.g. nail her in the car, if your back can handle it.
- Take her to a hotel (romantic, exotic, remote), and pay for it ahead of time.
- Manscaping is mandatory (unless she likes Sasquatch men).
- You should know what she likes, even though she won't tell you, so do it or guess.
- Fulfill a fantasy – she's told you 50 times, try to remember.
- No white underwear today.
- Buy candles for the night.
- Think about the other rooms in the house besides the bedroom – if it's in the kitchen, you'll be closer to the snacks afterwards.
- Wear a bowtie – and nothing else.
- Give her a lap dance - Chippendale's style, or Gangnam Style, her choice.
- Join a gym and actually go to it for her.
- Eat healthy for her.
- Go to a midweek, daytime movie theater, and make out in the back.
- Borrow her car for the day, and have it detailed.
- Take her someplace she likes and you hate – the opera, chick flick, the mall?
- Make her laugh – you have in the past.
- Make up a bedtime limerick style story that features her – “There once was blonde from Los Angeles, that had the finest little ass. All the college boys thought she was hot, the local bitches did not, saying she's got no class. Then one night...” sorta thing.

- Get her laughing then naked.
- Minor and major gifts work – scarf, jewelry, a car (or fix her old one).
- Buy her a piece of art she'll display and treasure.
- Give her a gift certificate – Macy's, Bloomingdale's, Victoria's Secret, iTunes, Starbucks, Brighton's or her favorite boutique - she'll think of you when she shops.
- Go shopping with her, for her – smile and be happy the whole time, you can do it.
- Be romantic all day – no sports or guy junk today.
- If you don't have one, use an accent when you're in bed (not a Boston accent).
- Remind her she's not too old to spank, even if she's good.
- Do something that will make the other women hate her – give her a spa day, send her on a shopping spree that she can show off the goods, vacation brochure to Tahiti for bragging rights, or anything the other husbands wouldn't do so they'll tell you to “Knock it off.”
- IMPORTANT ON A DATE DAY/NIGHT: No chores, no inventory inquiries like, “Where's my black pants, honey?” Get your act together, you da' man, so be da' man.
- DAILY: Remind her of and be the young guy she fell in love with.
- POST-DATE: Don't ask her where any of your crap is for one day, and take out the trash.



Remember when you were first dating? Do it again, and again, and again.

Women should shave their legs anyway, put on that sexy bra, and flirt with their man. He will be shocked, but he'll be a better date.



16.

LESSON 10: GET A PERSPECTIVE YESTERDAY

“You don’t have to have something bad happen to get a perspective. Get one while you’re young and you’ll be ahead of the game.”

Lucille

WE JUST CELEBRATED OUR 40TH WEDDING ANNIVERSARY, are words that I’ll never be able to say. Old school marriages set the standard for longevity. Today couples have driven the standard way down. First marriages average eight years. *The Greatest Generation* was born before the Great Depression, and they lived their young lives through this period. As young adults, they fought in WWII, and they became a great, proud group. They believed their government, paid their taxes, and respected their spouses. It was easier to cross the abyss, and they trusted each other happily ever after.

Perspective, *noun*, (a): the interrelation in which a subject or its parts are mentally viewed <places the issues in proper *perspective*>; *also*: point of view; (b): the capacity to view things in their true relations or relative importance <trying to maintain my *perspective*>; (c): mental view or prospect <to gain a broader *perspective* on the international scene>. Use: *You have to live here a few years to see local conditions in perspective.* Merriam-Webster definition.

Most people understand the definition, and use it after something bad happens, or they have a chilling story that prompts them to say, “Wow. That really puts things in perspective.”

Pops and Lucille would hear us kids whining about some privilege or pampering we felt we deserved, and they'd shake their heads. "Stop your bellyaching, and get a perspective. If you'd lived through the Depression with us, you'd know what tough is. That's when bread was a nickel, and a family couldn't afford a single slice," Pops would say.

When Pops wasn't around, Lucille would say, "Your father had it tough during the Depression, but bread was never a nickel. The Depression didn't hit our farm, because my father had paid off the farm mortgage before the crash."

Lucille had her own perspective, surviving a near death experience, and working hard on the farm. If you wanted to eat on the farm, you raised it, cared for it, butchered or harvested it, and then you were rewarded. Then, you started all over again. No one gave you anything, you worked for it.

Pops would find a light on in a room someone had just left, and we could hear him yell, "Were you born on the damn sun! Turn out the lights!" Grandma and Grandpa Peak did not enjoy any success or comforts in their lives until they were in their 60s. The Depression hit them very hard. But, as children of Danish immigrants, they worked diligently to get through tough times.

They had a small vegetable patch and a general store, which was lost to the bank. Then, they started a local grocery store in Springfield, Missouri, and lived in the back. A new couple they met came over to play cards one night. The liquor flowed as they bonded. In the morning they awoke to hangovers, and an empty store, stripped of every food item, cash register, and furnishings. The couple was gone, and so was the Peak's livelihood.

They sat in their empty grocery store that night, a family of five, without anything to eat. Pops told of an old neighborhood mutt that dragged a large ham shank into the store. He saved

their lives. They had ham and bacon for a few days. When they cooked the ham, they saved the grease so they could have lard sandwiches. I assumed this was using a nickel loaf of bread. The dog was desperate for a home like many people, and he became part of the family. They named him Alexander. That's what I named my first dog.

Next, the Peak family toiled at hard factory and farm labor. They saved enough to buy a diner. It was one of those long silver railcar styles with seating for 40 or so. "The Peak-In Diner" was opened for breakfast, lunch, and dinner. Then they closed and went to bed, on the diner floor. Grandma, Grandpa, their kids Robert, Ralph, and Helen, huddled for warmth in the sub zero Missouri winters. Luxuries were the wall heater, and the indoor toilet. Saturday baths were appreciated at the local soup kitchen or a shelter for the poor.

As the country recovered, they were able to buy an office supply store in Clinton, Missouri. Peak Book and Office Supply sold stationery and office supplies, and repaired typewriters. They hit it relatively big when their salesman Gary got school book, and supply contracts with all the public schools within a 100 mile radius. Gary also did the typewriter repair work. He was someone they met on the skids during the Depression, and they took him in. He worked at the diner, and it was also his home at night.

Peak Book and Office Supply became the preferred vendor for many Central Missouri schools. Clinton was like Mayberry R.F.D. (Rural Free Delivery), on *The Andy Griffith Show*, (1968-1971), set in North Carolina. R.F.D. meant you had mail trucks running all over to homes, farms, and businesses delivering mail. There was a courthouse in the center of the town square. Their book store was between Western Auto and Lou's Barber Shop. I spent terrific summers there hanging out with the kids of the other store owners.

Their book store afforded them a nice home, and they could feed the family. Grandpa Rob, also Pops, got a nice bass fishing boat, and he formed his local fishing club. In Missouri, there were big gaping holes in the ground as the result of coal strip mining. Local fishing enthusiasts bought acres of land with these holes, dredged water, and then seeded the mini lakes with bass. These were known as coal pit lakes. They put a fence around the property, posted a sign, “PRIVATE CLUB. NO TRESPASSING,” and it became their fishing club. Then they waited for the snow to melt. Spring came, and all the men in Missouri went fishing.

When I stayed with Grandma and Grandpa Peak, the words, “Let’s go to the pits,” meant the fish were biting, or Grandpa Rob wanted to get out of work at the office. My rod and reel, and my tackle box were always in the back of Grandpa’s Buick Roadmaster. They were next to Grandpa’s gear, along with a small Evinrude outboard motor.

When Grandpa Rob went fishing, Grandma Elna never said a word. She was the backbone of the marriage under really old school rules. The man made the money and the woman did everything else. Elna was the brains, maid, accountant, banker, manager, mother, and nurse, and Rob was the self-described brawn. Grandma Elna could lift a car off a baby I’m sure, but Grandpa Rob couldn’t pick up a pair of shoes. It worked for them. They never complained, and they appreciated everything they had. They had perspective.

Their youngest son Ralph was killed in a car accident when he was 22. It hit the family hard. Elna and Rob knew they had two other children that needed their love and care. Poverty and death were harsh lesson masters for this generation. If it didn’t kill you, you came out tougher. This was an incredibly resilient generation we will never see again.

This was the norm for *The Greatest Generation*, and they came into marriage with hindsight. Today, people see the wealth and privilege in America, and they set their sights on a

lifestyle of the rich and famous. Hoping their Internet video will go viral, and they'll be the next Justin Bieber, Gen Y-Z children look over the rainbow. With no fault divorce, if someone isn't happy, they file the papers, and they monkey branch to the next primate. Armed with foresight only, and no perspective, individuals and couples today often see their Cristal champagne glasses half empty.

SPOILED LITTLE JEWISH GIRLS ARE EVERYWHERE. I've never dated any, but I knew two fathers who loved, but lamented the monsters they created. After graduating from tech school in Houston, I headed west to Los Angeles. I stayed with my high school girlfriend Ruthie as I looked for work. I found a job with a computer service bureau in downtown Los Angeles. The company was owned by two Jewish men, Ike and Murray. They were true princes. They hired me to run operations and computer programming, and embraced me like a son. I thought my Pops was cool, but if I had been an orphan, I would have wished for parents like Ike or Murray.

I was in heaven. I was living on the sands of Hermosa Beach, surfing before work and every weekend, making a good living, and pursuing my dreams. I was dating Ruthie, and things were good. You'd wake in Los Angeles and hear the seven-day weather forecast, "Monday through Sunday it's going to be 72 to 84 degrees, sunny and clear. Enjoy the week. See you in seven days." You'd hear this for 48 weeks. Then came the winter forecast, a bone chilling 60 degrees. If you stayed indoors, and kept the livestock sheltered, you'd survive.

Ike and Murray's company serviced every Jewish business in L.A., from Alder Shoes to Paramount Pictures. I'd print the weekly accounts receivable statements for Nate 'n Al's Delicatessen in Beverly Hills, and deliver them to Millie. She had been with Nate and Al for

over 35 years. She reminded me of Grandma Peak, a spindly little firecracker of a woman you didn't mess with. Nate, Al, and Millie had seen some hard times. They had friends and parents who died in the Nazi death camps, and a few who survived. They had perspective.

Nate 'n Al's clientele included stars like Johnny Carson, Doris Day, and Groucho Marx. I'd deliver the reports to Millie, she'd thank me and say, "You're a Ziskeit (sweetheart). You want maybe I should make you a sandwich to go? The pastrami's nice today." I just loved her. True to Lucille's tutelage, I'd take time each week to ask Millie about her work, the family, the weather or whatever.

Knowing I was coming one Tuesday, Millie made me a sandwich in advance, and had it in a booth waiting. "I made you a sandwich, with extra pickles, and put it in Doris Day's booth. She's not in today, so you can eat there." Little things like that stick with you all your life. It reinforces the kind and thoughtful nature of people who have perspective, and you want to pay it forward. I knew Millie was Jewish because when I'd come in and talk to her, she'd say, "You're such a nice boy. My son, the big shot attorney, he never calls. God forbid I should die someday. Oy vey."

How many Jewish mothers does it take to screw in a light bulb? "Never mind, I'll just sit in the dark."

The children of these wonderful people wanted for nothing. They received new expensive cars, educations, homes, business opportunities, and virtually anything they wanted. The boys were made to work hard, even if it was in the family business, and they learned the value of money very early. The girls were another story.

Murray was the salt of the earth, and he had a great wife and kids. His boys excelled in their schools, and they were primed to go to Ivy League schools. His daughter was a true princess, received new cars, clothes, charge cards, and pampering second to none. Murray knew he spoiled her, but would say, “What do you do when all the girls in the neighborhood are given everything? I can’t tell her no, just because my upbringing was tough.” She worked at reception for dad during the summer. We’d tease her by asking her to have the computer room come to the lobby. She’d make the page as asked, “Would the computer room please come to the lobby.”

Ike was prince #1 on the team, and the elder of the two. They had made their money as sales reps in the garment industry in New York. They came to California for the sunshine and opportunities. He had deep, painful perspective.

When my brother Randy committed suicide, I left abruptly to go to Houston for his funeral. I returned home, then back to work the next week. Ike called me into his office, and he shut the door. He asked me how I was doing. I said I was fine. It would take some time to ease the pain.

Ike said, “The pain will probably never go away, but it can be put behind you. When I was five, the youngest of seven, we watched our mother blow her brains out in front of us. Your loss made this all come back to me.” He was so empathetic that I could feel his heartache from 40 years ago.

Ike’s father had died before he was born. Ike and his siblings buried their mother, and they banded together to stay out of an orphanage. The oldest took care of the next one down and so on. They raised themselves as a unit, and never lost touch as they moved through their lives.

I was privileged enough to be invited to Ike’s daughter’s wedding, held at the Beverly Wilshire Hotel. His siblings were all in attendance, and all I could think of was Ike’s tale of

destitution. You would never know the grief they'd shared if you saw them together. I looked on with admiration, and when introduced to a brother or sister, I could visualize them in one room, united against the world. Their children were wonderful loving people, but oblivious to any pain suffered by their parents. Nothing more than a little Jewish guilt was ever imparted. The sons were set to go to medical school, and the daughters were set to go shopping at Bloomingdales.

Ike's daughter married a gentile, non-Jewish boy. They were both in their early twenties. At the wedding, Ike shook his head, "This is what she wants? A goy? I shouldn't have spoiled her so much. I told her I'm paying for one wedding, and the next one she'll have to figure it out. Oy vey." It seemed impossible for the men to give their kids any perspective on life. It didn't come with their new Mercedes in high school, so they'd have to figure it out on their own.

During the wedding I talked to Murray, admiring their faith and camaraderie. "Maybe I should find me a nice Jewish girl to marry," I said.

"I don't wish that on any man. You'd better be good at listening and doing what you're told, because you'll never hear the end of it until you give them what they want," Murray said.

Lessons from Lucille, or Ike and Murray, Christian or Jew, the moral was the same. Men should shut up and listen, only responding with, "Yes, dear. You're right."

Oy vey.

Without great loss or personal trials, a perspective is more of an attitude. Without shared parental insights, children go into the world clueless. Double nurturing is another way to delay perspective.

I dated an overindulged rich Christian girl in college named Joannie. Her father was an executive with Standard Oil in Ohio. She rented two dorm rooms. One was for her clothes. I took her with me to the Catholic Mission in El Paso one Sunday. They fed the poor, down on their luck Americans and Mexicans, keeping their hopes alive. Our fraternity did this once in a while. Joannie didn't really get it, and she didn't want to be around these poor people. It made her feel bad. It made me feel good. I thought of Pops' family, happy to have lard sandwiches. Joannie thought of lunch at the country club in Ohio.

“NEXT!”

Hopefully you have not borne some tragedy that made you reassess your life. If you have, you should have a higher viewpoint of your journey. If anger, grudges, or other things are blocking your peace with the matter, you have to find a way to put them behind you. If you do, you will never have to say, “That really puts things in perspective,” because you already have one.



A dose of reality is good for everyone. If you shelter someone all their young life, they will not be equipped for the tough journey ahead. A broad perspective makes the roadway of life much easier to navigate, and will make you a better wingman or wingwoman.



GAINING PERSPECTIVE

1. Put aside petty things.

Focus on what's important. I recommend that you buy a copy of one of my favorite books, put it by your nightstand, and twice a year, read it front to back. *Don't Sweat the Small Stuff... and It's All Small Stuff*, by Richard Carlson, PhD., first published in 1997. It only takes about 30-40 minutes to scan the book and remind yourself how small things can affect your ability to get a real perspective on life.

2. Read things that motivate you.

Biographies, stories of heroism, or true adventures. I hope *The 85% Man* will inspire you. I also recommend, *Unbroken*, by Laura Hilenbrand, a true story of survival of *The Greatest Generation*, detailing the unbelievable life of WWII veteran Louis Zamperini.

3. Listen to your elders.

I don't mean lectures, but discover their history, and how they survived hardships. What are their most cherished memories? What would they do differently? What was their hardest challenge and how did they survive? What do they think you should do to fully appreciate life?

4. Become a kid.

Children, yours or your friends, have a way to simplify life, and be playful with each other. They have no scar tissue from loss, and offer a refreshing look at what life is like when you don't sweat the small stuff.

5. Wear someone else's shoes.

I have been confronted by angry or horrible people, and I think, "It must suck to be you." Look at people that are resigned to a life of misery, and use them as a "How Not To" guide.

Volunteering at a shelter or clinic can make you realize how good your life is and how fortunate you are. I recommend everyone attend Glide Memorial Church in San Francisco. They feed 80,000 people a month. Glide is non-denominational, non-judgmental, and spiritually uplifting for all faiths. Even agnostics will rise and sing with the entourage. If nothing else, the music will rock you to the core, and you'll leave feeling good. Look for a similar venue near you.

6. Pay it forward.

I first learned this from Lucille's unselfishness. I witnessed it again on a date with a sweet woman. She was driving as we headed across the Golden Gate Bridge, and she paid for the car behind her. I was enamored by this action, and I've done this on occasion, feeling pretty good afterwards. If you're a good person, and want to share your goodness, then pay it forward whenever you can. If you're not familiar with this term, then rent the movie *Pay It Forward*, from 2000, with Kevin Spacey, Haley Joel Osment, and Helen Hunt. A young boy attempts to make the world a better place after his teacher gives him that assignment.

7. Be brave.

Mental preparation is just as critical as physical conditioning for an athlete. You must prepare in the same way for relationships. Setting realistic expectations includes anticipating the outcome, balanced with what could go wrong. Mark Twain said, "The fear of death follows from the fear of life." If you are afraid of living, you will worry constantly. Grab hold of your copy of *Don't Sweat the Small Stuff*, read it again, and dial your stress back a little.

“If you worry about something for more than 10 minutes, that’s too long. A problem won’t go away by worrying more. Face it head on, and keep moving.”

Lucille

THE 90% MAN

Guideline 10: He doesn’t give his lady enough attention.

If a man doesn’t dote on a woman, maybe there’s a reason. If a woman was spoiled as a child, she will expect all the attention, all the time. A man who has worked hard to earn his way, doesn’t sweat the little things. If his attention is not forthcoming, it’s because he doesn’t feel the matter requires his consideration. A strong man will focus on important matters to keep a union strong, and not respond to every whim.

Anyone who’s survived loss of love, family, or valued friends, has a greater appreciation for those close to them. They appreciate new, quality relationships with adults that have persevered travels over rough roads.

Who’s your daddy?

I was not exactly like Pops, and I never wanted to marry someone just like Lucille. They were a different generation. I admired qualities they had: unselfishness, kindness, liberal thinking, adventurous, and fun loving. I didn’t want a woman who stayed home with the kids, and I didn’t want to join the military and follow orders. The Boomer generation has ideals about love and marriage that differ from *The Greatest Generation*.

Pops once said, “The problem with your generation is, \$1,000 dollars is nothing.”

When bread was a nickel, \$1,000 was a lot. In my high earning career days, he was right. He’d be sad to learn today that a several million dollars is not much. I loved my father, but I was not like him nor was my generation.

I knew if someone shared my parents’ basic principles, they would support my journey. I wanted a mate to have their own ambitions that I could support and share. I wanted fresh experiences for my life. Each generation must adapt to the challenge of changes in their worlds.

A woman who was spoiled by her father, and given everything without earning it, will come into a relationship expecting the same fatherly treatment from a man. If she behaves like in her youth, demanding things, or pouting until daddy bought her something, it could go one of two ways. One, a strong man will put his foot down, and treat her like a child. Two, a man will capitulate, and give her what she wants.

In the first case, she may feel like he is treating her like a child. That is appropriate, because she is still a spoiled child emotionally. Unfortunately for him, this infantile behavior cannot be reversed, only modified. If he’s strong, then she’ll be the only unhappy person.

In the second case, he is fostering her childish behavior, she will never be truly happy, he will be eternally frustrated, and we have two unhappy people. This is a lose-lose contest.

When I was a senior executive at a high tech company, I had several hundred people reporting to me. To put a stop to childish behavior, and get on with business, I had a large sign put behind my desk. It read, “ADULTS ONLY.” People would walk in with a he-said-she-said complaint, look

at the sign, see me frowning, turn and walk out. If you wanted to talk business, stick around. If you wanted to complain, call your mommy or daddy.

It's a sad state of affairs if either side of a union is less mature than the other. Research has shown that women who pick men like their fathers, good or bad, may not be happy long-term. They are secure at first, but later on they may become bored. If they go too far the other way, just to piss off mom or dad, they risk running askew of their role models. If a woman is disappointed because a man treats her like a child, then she might want to ask her daddy why.

Finding someone with the good core values of your parents is advisable. Choosing someone exactly like mom or dad can be risky. Heed the Knight Templar and, "Choose Wisely."



Get over yourself. A strong man will focus on important facets to keep a union healthy, and not respond to every whim.



17.

LESSON 11: I'M WITH DUMMY

*“Love at first sight is for the blind. When I met your
father, I was blinded.”*

Lucille

Old school romance, or love at first sight, was based on person-to-person contact. You had to see someone up close and personal to trigger any pheromones or visual stimuli. Today you can view an online profile, watch a video on YouTube, or receive an email that will entice you (or Catfish you) into saying, “I think I’m in love.” If a woman sees someone digitally and not personally, she will be skeptical, as caution is part of her defense system. If she sees someone face-to-face, she may be smitten old school style.

LANA SENT ME A QUERY ON MATCH.COM. She was one of the most physically stunning women I had ever seen on the site. She had blonde hair down to her hips, a petite curvaceous figure, and beautiful eyes. We had instant physical chemistry. I was besotted by her looks, and I barely heard a word she said on our first date. She was alluring like a diminutive Marilyn Monroe, and she said that was her nickname, “Little Marilyn.”

As we continued to date I could hear Lucille’s whispers. Lana said she didn’t have any girlfriends because they didn’t want her around their boyfriends. This was probably true, as men would hit on her right in front of me. We went dancing one night, and after a long spin on the

floor, we returned to our table. Lana was on my lap with her arms around my neck while kissing me. A man walked up to us, completely ignored me, and asked her to dance.

While in line at a grocery checkout, a woman behind us tapped Lana on the shoulder and said, “Excuse me, but I just have to say you are one of the most beautiful women I have ever seen. Are you a model or in the movies, because you should be?” This woman didn’t appear to be gay, she was just struck by Lana’s beauty.

Being with a self-described ‘show pony,’ was fun at first, but I was diminished to the arm of an escort. I tried discussing books or movies with very little rejoinder. Lana didn’t read and could only discuss a few movies, *Pretty Woman* being a favorite as she identified with Julia Roberts.

Lana envisioned herself an undiscovered actress. I was doing a video promo for a client and needed a female voiceover. When Lana discovered I was looking for talent, she started bouncing in the air shouting, “Pick me. Pick me.” I set up a recording session, and gave her the script that involved three lines of dialogue. We spent one hour trying to get through those three lines, finally cancelling the session. I discovered she was dyslexic, and she couldn’t read the words in order, so she did have a reason for struggling.

As time passed, my passion began to wane. Lucille’s whispers elevated. Lana’s hobbies included shopping and beauty treatments, not really hobbies in my book. She had no friends, and was estranged from her father. Her sister had slept with her ex-husband, so there was no family connection whatsoever. She had no formal education, and she worked as a medical receptionist. This was a good job for her, but she had no ambition to advance. She didn’t want children as she felt she was getting too old. She was in her mid-30s, a prime age for motherhood.

My Lessons had gone for naught, veiled by lust at first sight. I awoke one morning, recalling my discussions with Lucille about life elements. Lana was missing four of the five components. Lana did her part for romance by showing up in full makeup, hair coiffed and dressed to the nines in clothes I had purchased. I was beginning to feel like Richard Gere, while wishing Lana was as sharp as his *Pretty Woman*.

There was no love, no future, only a physical attraction. I became detached like a derelict caboose. It was a somewhat painless parting, except for watching her drive off in the new Corvette I had purchased for her. She had suitors lined up, blinded by the glow of her golden locks. She was like the Sirens drawing sailors onto the rocks. I chose to sail beyond her allure.

“NEXT!”

Only time will reveal the distinction between lust and love. Lust fades, love lasts. When I was young, lust precluded many experimental flight crashes. In my older, wiser years I became more cautious, but physical attraction was still a critical ingredient for falling in love.

There are reasons why love at first sight is believable:

1. We have witnesses.

Unless you’ve been living in a cave, we all know someone who will testify. Pops and Lucille were my first witnesses.

2. We have proof.

Long-term marriages are the proof. Pops and Lucille went 50+ years, and they died only a few years apart. I have a BHBF that married his ‘first sight’ high school love, and was married for 35 years until she passed away. He waited about two years before he was ready

to date again. He's a very smart, handsome, and wealthy man. What women call a good catch. He found plenty of willing candidates of like mind and financial status. In the end, he found 'love at first sight' again, and has been happily married for the past ten years.

3. The survey says...

Scanning opinions by scientist, therapists, and surveys, it appears that 50% of short marriages (less than eight years) began this way. Around 75% of long term marriages (10+ years) claim love at first sight. The happiest couples tend to start with love at first sight.

4. It's natural.

We know there are pheromones and other stimuli that can attract individuals to one another. But, it's one sided. It is rarely mutual at a specific moment in time, but nature draws animals and humans together with scents, visual stimuli, and mating rituals like a sexy woman's walk or a peacock shaking his money-feathers. One party emits the stimuli for a specific purpose, the other is dumbstruck in love.

5. We believe in miracles.

Like ghosts, angels, urban legends, or a kiss, it may not be the truth, but it's what we wish were true. Romance novels begin this way, and we've accepted fiction as fact. It was in our hearts. We read a great romance novel, and now it's in our heads.

6. History shows us.

Cavemen had no idea what was happening. Nor did the cavewoman when she got bonked on the head by a Neanderthal, and dragged into his cave. History describes love legends like Paris and Helena (Helen of Troy), Romeo and Juliet, Mark Antony and Cleopatra, Lancelot and Guinevere, Odysseus and Penelope, and F. Scott and Zelda Fitzgerald. If history is a great teacher, then we must believe in first sight adoration.

7. Men believe because...

It was in *The Godfather Part I*. Al Pacino is exiled to Italy, and he happens upon a beautiful young woman and is struck by “Colpo Di Fulmine,” the lightning bolt. Men believe that everything in *The Godfather* is true. Every guy knows this, duh!

8. Women believe because...

They want to.



After many years of marriage, if you lusted for your spouse on first meeting, then you can qualify your connection as ‘Love at first sight.’ If you split in less than two years, then the warranty on love has expired and it was just lust.



THE 89% MAN

Guideline 11: He does really stupid stuff.

Let’s draw a distinction between dumb and stupid. Doing something without thinking is dumb. Doing something odd consciously, is just plain stupid. Under every woman’s clothes is a phantom T-shirt that might read, “I’M WITH STUPID,” and we know to whom she’s referring. If she’s with an 85% Man, then he does dumb, not stupid stuff. Her T-shirt should read, “I’M WITH DUMMY.” You must question being with a man that does stupid stuff versus dumb things. Read on to judge what your T-shirt should say.

For example, the way women and men vacuum is different. Women do things in a logical fashion, while men act like cavemen. A woman will stop before vacuuming over something the Hoover can't pick up, like a bottle cap. She'll bend down, retrieve that object, walk to the trash, and she'll throw it away. A man will vacuum over that same object five times, then stare at it for three seconds. He'll bend over, pick it up, analyze it like Chinese algebra, place it back down, and then he'll try to Hoover it by going over it fifteen times.

When it doesn't come up, he will bend over, pick it up, and place it on the nearest flat surface, like an end table. That object will reside there for an eternity, or until a woman sees it, shakes her head, because she knows who left it there, retrieves it, and then she puts it in the trash.

On the way to the garbage she is mumbling, "How hard is it to throw it in the trash? What a dummy." It's not stupid, because it wasn't premeditated thinking. He did it because his mechanically minded father was the role model for dumb man things. The dummy apple doesn't fall far from the tree of knuckleheads.

A man is frustrated with his wife and he shouts to the heavens, "God, why did you create women?!"

The heavens open and the man hears the voice of God. "Yes my son. You have a question?"

Shaken, the man composes himself for the receipt of wisdom. "Uh... yes my Lord. I was just wondering, these creatures you made called women--"

"Yes?" the voice queries.

"Well, why did you have to make them so beautiful?" the man asks.

"That is so you would be attracted to them," God says.

The man ponders a bit, then asks, “Well, why did you have to make them so dumb?”

“Ah, yes my son. That is so they would be attracted to you.”

So... women do dumb stuff, too.



If you love your dummy, cut him some slack.



18.

LESSON 12: IT'S A MARATHON

*“A woman shouldn’t mistake kindness for weakness as
nice guys are hard to find.”*

Lucille

After a circular argument with EX-1, I sought guidance from Lucille. She would shake her head about the new breed of intractable women. “In my generation we didn’t have this angry woman thing,” Lucille said. “Women knew how to get what they wanted using their feminine wiles, because you can catch more flies with honey than vinegar. We married nice men because they were kind, not weak. I don’t know where the idea that nice guys finish last came from, but marriage is a long trip to take with a mean man.”

WHO IS THAT MASKED WOMAN?

Men don’t have the coping mechanisms to assuage female incense. If a man gets angry, that only fuels her ire. If he backs down, then he gets the behavior he tolerates. He’s not sure if she’s a monster from the dark, damp basement, or that woman he fell in love with. She’s on the couch with her arms crossed, and she is not pleased. What has he done now?

Scorekeeper's brew

Women (Scorekeepers) keep a relationship tally, while men (Contenders) keep baseball box scores. This is her mental list of where she feels she is in the relationship. The Scorekeeper gives the Contender big points for just listening, and big deductions for being his usual self and forgetting what she just told him. Whatever the Scorekeeper's upset about, she'd told everyone that will listen, and now it's the Contenders turn to guess what's wrong.

A big common complaint I've read and experienced is that Scorekeepers don't feel heard. Even if he's nodding yes, she knows he's doing his fantasy football picks in his head to pass the time until she's done transmitting. Spock ears be damned, he just won't listen. If he won't listen, then how can he understand or remember?

Her frustration comes from the lopsided scoreboard, and there's no way to square the count. It's not about the issue at hand, it's just about a victory. No one wins. The 60 seconds it took to state the dispute, turn into a 30 minute quarrel that no one can remember what they were talking about in the beginning. Other issues permeate the discussion as adrenaline fuels old complaints. There are more categories of questions and responses on the table than at the start of a *Jeopardy* broadcast.

Happy couples have something going for them. She talks, he listens. Really listens. He talks, she listens. He tells her she's right, she smiles. She feels it's not necessary to keep score, because he's fully trained to listen and react like an adult.

Keeping things pent-up, not communicating effectively, and not being heard skews the score. The Scorekeeper is unhappy with the game execution, and the Contender has no idea what the game or rules are, or how to score points.

I once had a women tell me, “If you’re an ass, you’re not necessarily a man. But if you’re man, then you’re probably an ass.” Well, an angry woman is not necessarily a Scorekeeper, but a Scorekeeper is surely an angry woman.

Lost in translation

Men try to handle women like they’re in a business meeting. This tactic is meaningless in a personal relationship. When she says, “We need to talk,” it means he’s supposed to listen, not attend his next meeting where his input is required. His facts and figures are filtered as being disrespectful, and he’s not listening. He’s just quoting stuff that she couldn’t care less about.

Once on a bumpy flight with the EX-1, “I needed to talk,” about the household budget. I thought I’d use a farming analogy to make it fun. I started our meeting (don’t invite your wife to a meeting), and opened with, “Let’s say you’re a farmer. You have to determine where to spend your money next year to produce a bumper crop, and keep the livestock healthy.”

I was looking at a deer in my headlights, stupefied by the analogy. This was no sweet Bambi, it was the most dangerous animal in the jungle. Occasionally I’d forget my Lessons.

I pulled out an Excel spreadsheet to go over our budget. “So, here’s the budget for the whole farm. This section here is the general expenses for the farmhouse, vehicles, insurance, and maintenance. Now this part is where we keep the livestock, and the cost for food and entertainment. Let’s call this section the spreadsheet sheep.”

There was a momentary pause, then the EX-1 got hot. She became unstable, pitched and crashed right into the spreadsheet sheep. They went up in flames. She tore up the spreadsheet and said, “Screw your sheep shit. What’s your problem?”

So much for indirect communications and analogies. Every time I'm tempted to use an analogy in a discussion with a woman, like I would with a man, I just don't. First step is to listen and nod. Then, much like an IRS audit, only answer the questions that have been asked. Don't volunteer any addition commentary.

Jealousy monsters

“Jealousy is one of the ugliest traits any woman can possess,” Lucille would say. She was quite secure, and found jealousy a waste of time. It occurs in the animal kingdom. Primatologist Jane Goodall described a female chimp named Passion that would entice males with a pose. When one of the males ignored her and began to court another female, Passion would go over and slap the male hard. Birds do it, bees do it.

Therapists relate jealousy to childhood events, past relationships, or psychological problems. People who feel insecure or inadequate may be more prone to jealousy. In our primordial past, jealousy protected family units from outside intrusions. Jealous mates kept partners faithful. Jealousy can be healthy when it notifies a partner you still care. It goes south when it becomes unchecked anger.

Some people let it undermine their self-worth, and they act out with anger, driving partners away or to another person. Jealousy is one of the leading causes of homicide worldwide. Whether it's wrapped in misguided religious beliefs or just plain ignorance, it can be deadly.

A private detective BHBF said, “If the average Joe suspects something, then monkey business has been going on for a while. A woman can smell monkey shit immediately, and from a mile away.”

Jealousy levels in a man or woman are based on the individual, and the couple's behavior patterns. Men feel women are jealous a lot, and it's not always about their man. Every woman has another female she works with, plays tennis with, met at the gym or a party, that is jealous of her, or so it seems. "That bitch hates me," she will say. "I don't know what her problem is. She's probably just jealous." Thanks to these outside jealousy conduits, men get a lot of relief from conflict at home.

At my high school reunion, I saw my old friend Arturo. We began to reminisce, and the subject of wives came up. He married his high school sweetheart, but they had divorced years ago. He said she was insanely jealous, and it drove them apart. He said in one fit of jealousy, she was reading their high school yearbook, and she saw all his pictures from football, student council, and one with the cheerleaders. Following a fight, he left for the night. The next day he returned and his letterman's jacket was cut up, along with his yearbook. He found them in the trash.

I had the same experience with EX-1. We did not go to school together, and didn't even grow up in the same state. I was voted Most Handsome in my junior year, and had a big picture in the yearbook. Pops heard this news and said, "With those big ears. You're not handsome, you're just popular." He was right. Arturo and I were just average guys, but we got along with people.

I came home from a business trip and my stepdaughter asked, "Did you have a red book from your school on the bookshelf?"

"Yes. Why?" I asked.

"Well mom was drinking and cussing up a storm reading your book. She was tearing out pages, and then she threw it in the trash," she said.

I never did find my album, and EX-1 disavowed any knowledge in the disappearance. It had been signed by a hundred people, and even if it was destroyed, my memories remained. You can't take someone's memories or personality from them by destroying their keepsakes. During the reunion, Arturo and I found two other divorced classmates that had the same experiences. Over the years these tales have been reiterated by men and women I've met.

If a person finds a reason to be jealous, they should deal with it head on, and express themselves. Depending on the nature of the offense, they may be able to repair the damage, and even renew an interest in their mate with a jealousy wake-up call. Sometimes the only way out is via the door.

Taking advantage and justifiable anger

Charlie Sheen went to anger management, and then he got a new TV series called *Anger Management*. I've never been to anger management therapy, but Arturo went to satisfy his wife's request. All they did was argue, and he found himself yelling a lot. Arturo said she knew how to pull his chain. She was using all the tools in the female arsenal to aggravate him. The therapist suggested she go instead of him.

She was a big flirt, and she knew it made him mad. She withheld sex until she got her way. She used the children as weapons, and in a fight she'd say, "I'm leaving and taking the kids." She criticized him in public and made sure he heard her or got the feedback. Once in a while, she'd just haul off and smack him. Hard, like the chimp, Passion. Arturo was a really nice guy, but his wife had daddy issues that drove them apart.

Arturo kept his emotions in check, particularly when threatened with the kids. He did not know how to combat her manipulations, so when he did get upset, she'd smile and goad, "Someone needs to go to anger management." Someone besides Arturo needed counseling.

Short of divorce, a man needs to learn how to fight fair and fight back, even if the other party uses dirty tactics. Women have more weapons, and it's not an evenhanded fight, but men must maintain a certain level of what I call justifiable anger. Everyone should use their internal regulators to manage anger.

If you communicate effectively, and there is that occasional spat, you can call a truce. Everything stops and you go to the peace tables before war breaks out. Take a walk, hug it out, have a Coke and a smile, or admit you're wrong to stop anger escalation.

MARILYN LIVED IN LOS GATOS. From her GE profile, things looked promising. In a picture, she was in a formal gown posed next to a Viper automobile. She was tall, blonde, educated, and she appeared to have it together. We connected for drinks, and the first meeting seemed promising, with the exception of an apparent 15/10 variation in her weight and age. People should really post current photos to save discussing their phantom glandular problems. I had tickets to an outdoor concert, and we set a date for the next Saturday.

Marilyn had a contemptuous divorce that had raged for almost ten years. Her ex-husband was a big time contractor, a real gangster type, a tough guy that made millions in some shady deals. His money was hidden in offshore accounts, and her attorneys hounded him. He was the antithesis of a nice guy, and their divorce attorneys were no better.

On a visit to her bathroom in her massive home on a hill, the counter was lined with about 15 different prescription bottles. She mentioned that her sons were grown, and one had a few problems. He was about to go to prison for his third DUI involving a homicide.

WWLS?

We went to the concert and she said she hadn't had this much fun in years. I tried to keep it light, understanding she was dealing with some major challenges in her life. The next date was a proposed top down drive to Carmel. I showed up in my classic Corvette, ready for a great day. She asked if we could take her Mercedes, going with the top down would aggravate her allergies. Okay, medication #1.

We were having a nice time at the beach, drinking wine and eating cheese. Marilyn got a sour look on her face, and she asked to go home. She said one of her meds was wearing off, and she didn't have any with her. Medication #2, check. Thirteen to go.

We arrived home and we walked to my Corvette. I asked her if she wanted to grab dinner tomorrow. She said, "I don't know. You're a really nice guy, and I enjoy spending time with you. But, you're probably too nice for me. Nice guys finish last."

I've tried to be a kind person during my life, but sometimes the situation requires manning-up. I've developed a hard enough exterior to repel evil, but when I was younger I was describe as being too nice. Marilyn was used to the gangster, bad-boy with money. She couldn't distinguish kindness from weakness. When I'd first asked what she was going for with GE, she said, "I'm just trying to get a few more years out of my skin."

This was a new one. If she could only keep her youthful look for a few more years, she could snare a guy with money, and nice guys, who finish last, didn't have money. She never came to my house, and she didn't know anything about cars. My Corvette was very rare, and

worth about 9-times the value of her old Mercedes. I owned three more expensive cars. I owned a beautiful home, not a house like hers. I made high six figures, had my original friends, never had one problem with my stepdaughter or son, and was amicable with EX-1. And “I” was in last place? At least I wasn’t in court every month.

Sitting in my car with the top down, I said, “You’re probably right. You should go take your meds, visit GE, and add ‘looking for a rich asshole’ to your profile.”

At this moment one of her giant dogs ran out, jumped on my car, slid his paws down my custom paint, and scratched the finish all the way down the door. She gave me this startled look, and then smiled sheepishly. She grabbed her dog and pulled him back.

I got out and surveyed the damage. It was about \$1,000 worth of paint repair. I got in, started my car, thinking WWLS? I said, “I think you mistook my kindness for weakness. I’m sending you a bill for the damage your dog did. You’ll have 10 days to pay me or get sued. Good luck at GE.”

Payback was supplied through justifiable anger with a side serving of a Lucille Lesson. Please get me out of this vicious circle.

“NEXT!”

I was playing golf with my buddy Mike, and I related a driving incident on the way to the course. “I pulled onto the freeway and merged in front of some woman in a Porsche Cayenne. I was hauling ass, and moved well in front of her, but I could see her flashing her lights, and she was flipping me off in the mirror. She tore around me, pulled along side, honking and giving me the finger, yelling till she was red in the face. She was going to show me she owned that road. These women are becoming like men.”

“I feel that one, bro,” Mike said.

“My mom said that these women are the new men.”

“Man, I hope not,” Mike said.

“What do you mean?” I asked.

Mike fired back, “Well, that means I’d have to date myself. And, I can’t do that. I’m an asshole!”



It’s pointless to keep score in a game no one can win. Nice guys finish first in a marathon.



THE 88% MAN

Guideline 12: He won’t argue or he doesn’t fight fair.

If he seems like a nice guy, don’t take it for granted. A normal man may want to argue, but a smart man will smile and say, “Yes, dear. You’re right.” That only works for so long before she’s on to him. To fight fair, a man would need a bazooka, and that’s against the home edition of the Geneva Conventions.

Here are a few tips for both sides of the couch.

✓ **Most of all, listen. Really.**

She talks, you listen. Wait for it. Count to ten. Is she done? Have you really thought about how you want to counter? Your first thought should be, “Yes, you’re right.” If you dare, you

might ask, “Have you thought about it this way...” Above all, hear what the other person is saying, and think about it!

✓ **Stay on topic.**

If you’re at a boxing match and a hockey game breaks out, then you’re off topic. That’s a bit of an analogy and an old joke. Let me put it this way - one thing at a time. Your body is secreting chemicals that impair decision making. Old wounds are opened, and you want to dump it all out there. It begins with, “While we’re on the subject ...” and then you go off topic. Or, the classic time travel question, “When the hell did I do that?” he asks. She says, “Eight summers ago.” Get it? He’s boxing. She’s playing hockey. Moving on.

✓ **Ask real questions.**

If you don’t understand the problem or issue, then ask questions. Be nice. Beginning with, “What the hell...” is not asking or being nice. Make sure you understand the issue, otherwise you’ll just be arguing about how you’re arguing. Men hate that one. Be polite. “You, in the corner with your hand up. What’s your question or do you just have to go to the bathroom?”

✓ **Remember it’s hot in here.**

Biochemically, you’re not yourself. People handle anger and stress differently. Be aware of this, and don’t push beyond someone’s ability to fight toe-to-toe. When they get angry, they might withdraw, and they are at a disadvantage. Someone with a massive vocabulary, and a pocket full of analogies and euphemisms, may overwhelm a lesser equipped person. They can’t dissect, or understand the witty repartee, and it only makes them madder. The EX-1 was a shaky craft, and she knew how to push me into a tailspin. If I ignored her for a while, she’d start to feel abandoned, and flare up on purpose. It was with a smile, but she could

definitely get a rise out of me (pun intended) without anger. Cool your jets and keep from going supersonic on someone.

✓ **Don't encourage bad behavior.**

Set a limit on what you will tolerate. Depending on maturity levels, or parental role models, some people will push the envelope. If arguments are too frequent, too melodramatic or abusive, or excessively angry, then put a stop to it. Get a handle on things or go to neutral counseling grounds. Going over the line can diminish self-worth, and may cause unrecoverable damage. If someone screams and argues uncontrollably in your early dating life, it's a preview of things to come, and it won't get better.

✓ **Say it if you mean it. If you don't, SHUT UP!**

This is my biggest complaint. I've seen harsh words lead to suicide. With Lucille's high threshold for pain, she was prepared me for life's punches, but she knew callous words could pierce any heart. You can't unsay hasty, nasty remarks. "I'm sorry. I didn't mean that," should only be accepted for very minor offenses. Otherwise, call them on it. It becomes an excuse, not a reason to abuse someone verbally. There is no excuse or reason for verbal or physical abuse. It becomes a 'get out of argument free card.' You're giving someone free license to unleash hell, then play the, "Oops, sorry. Didn't mean it" card. Then why did you say it? Everyone remembers cutting remarks from early childhood. They are top-of-mind. Compliments are back there somewhere, but they can be blurred by painful words. Apologies are seen as disingenuous and forgotten in seconds for over-the-line offenses.

✓ **Life is real, but it's not a show.**

Men feel like they're being judged on a reality show. A man will try his hardest to please a woman, then he will get a glare from his lady like a judge on *Project Runway* or *Top Chef*

saying, “Pack your knives and leave the runway.” It would be nice if a woman could hold up a yes or no sign, or flash a scorecard from one to ten. Don’t sit back and judge someone. It’s a partnership in failure or success.

✓ **Really make the peace.**

In the movies, the Mafia does it by getting the five families together at Vinnie’s Clam Bar. Sooner or later, the shooting starts again. They’re bad guys and bullies. You can’t reason with a bully, so don’t try. Show him the door, or you can go through it and never look back. When you make-up, and you haven’t said something deeply injurious, it’s possible to really make the peace. You may agree to disagree, give it a number, decide it was misguided in the first place (she just wanted to be heard), or agree to work on it in a kind, loving manner. Smart, caring people can communicate without anger, sarcasm, or inflicting pain.

✓ **Don’t lose your passion.**

When someone fights dirty, it can damage or diminish passion. A little bit of you dies, and passion fades little by little. Really bad fights can end at the morgue. Good fights, which result in make-up sex, can unite and grow a relationship. It’s up to you to be strong, hold your ground, speak your piece clearly, be a good listener, keep your passion alive, and hug it out. Fight, but fight fair. Then go do something together immediately after.



SOMETHING TO DO TOGETHER: Build a pillow fort and get inside with your mate. You’re safe in there from the creatures that live under your bed.



19.

LESSON 13: RULES VS. GUIDELINES

“Women have rules. Men have guidelines.”

Lucille

This is an elemental difference in the thinking between men and women. Once a woman sets her mind to something, she is intractable based on ideas founded on a childhood belief, a fairytale, a religious or political platform. She has built strict rules around her life for what is acceptable, and what is not. This begins with her mom, and her mom, and so forth, as women pass down their unwritten rules from generation to generation.

A man responds to a woman’s rules Tony Soprano style, “Whada you gonna do?” His life is always in flux, he knows he has no control over what a woman thinks, wants, or does. He’s heard her rules, and to traverse the abyss together, he modifies proposed rules so they are malleable. Her rules translate to his guidelines. He will adjust his guidelines for survival purposes and always assume, “Yes, dear. You’re right.”

For example, a woman has a specific place that the dishtowel should reside. It’s on the hook or ring by the sink that was designed for just that purpose. This is a rule. Men feel the dishtowel can go anywhere in the kitchen area. On the counter, next to the stove, or in the dish rack. He has no rule about replacing the dishtowel, as long as it’s in the general vicinity of the kitchen. It’s a guideline that works for him. She’ll find the dishtowel by the stove and ask him,

“Is this where this goes?” while placing it back in the towel ring. To which he’ll reply, “I didn’t know there was going to be a test today.”

When a woman closes a loaf of bread, she always spins the end of the bag, then places the little blue or red clip onto the twisted top. There is no other way for her to do this. A man will spin the top, but fold the twisty end under the loaf, then set it down, trapping the twisted top. The little plastic tab may get thrown in the trash, or remain on the kitchen counter. There are several male ways to close the bread to keep it fresh. She knows there is only one way. Why else would the bakery put those tabs with the bread?

Then there are those tags on the pillows. Federal law forbids removing those, and so does she. Men could take the tags or leave them, and tearing them off is no biggie.

These endless examples also fall under the heading of Ten Reasons Men Are Annoying in Chapter 12. Here’s a few more instances where XX chromosomes are annoyed by XY chromosomes. One little tiny chromosome puts the whole relationship on tilt.

SAMPLE RULES VS. GUIDELINES

<i>Her Rules</i>	<i>His Guidelines</i>
I shouldn’t have to explain what I want. If he really loved me, he’d know.	If she’d just tell me what she wanted, I would do it without hesitation... maybe.
A man should always put the toilet seat down.	It’s a good idea to look before you leap or sit.
When I’m talking, he should just listen to me. I don’t need him to respond.	As soon as she’s done talking, I need to solve the problem.

Never ask a man out on a date.	I don't care who asks who out, if I like her, I'm going to go on a date.
Never call a man after a date, wait for him to call you.	I don't care who calls who. I'll call when I'm ready, no biggie.
Never ask a man to dance.	I love women in Chicago, the girl next door type, they'll ask you to dance and buy you a beer.
I'll never let him know my rules.	If she has too many rules, she'll be difficult long-term. "NEXT!"
Don't accept a Saturday date after Wednesday.	Sometimes I'm late asking a woman out, but it doesn't mean I don't care about her.
If I'm upset, he should just hold me.	When's she's upset, I need to keep my distance.
A man should remember what he promised last year.	I don't need to remember anything, it's in my computer, like an eBay item I'm watching.
Valentine's Day requires a special night, and expensive gifts. Birthdays, too.	I'll try to remember Valentine's Day and her birthday this year, and get flowers before they run out. I think it's close to baseball opening day, always the first Monday in April.
Men should put their stuff away.	"Honey, where are my running shoes?" I last saw them under the kitchen table. Where did she hide those things?

There is only one way to do something. The right way, which is my way.	There is one way I must do things (when she's around), and that's her way. After that, I'm taking a nap.
A man should stay in shape for his woman.	I'm in shape. Round is a shape.
A man should act like a man all the time.	A man should act like a man at work and at sporting events. At home he should be able to relax. Hey honey, pull my finger.
Men should outgrow their toys at some point.	Men should be allowed to die with their toys.
I won't settle for just any man. There's no need to compromise on my checklist.	I just want a woman who is kind, likes sex, sports and beer, and not in that order.
The cost of a diamond ring should equal three month's salary. The carats should be my age divided by 10. I'm 33, so that's 3.3 carats.	I'll let her pick out her ring. I'll only have to pay for that once. If I choose poorly, I'll pay for it forever. I know not to do math with her.
In the old days, a gentleman always walked on the outside of the curb to protect his women from a runaway horse carriage.	Here's a fact. In old England, a gentleman always walked on the inside of the sidewalk to protect his lady from chamber pots that were emptied from second floor windows onto the street below. Why are we walking when we could take a taxi?
A real gentleman should stand up when a woman comes to the table.	What does a man do standing up, that a woman does sitting down, and a dog does on three legs? Take a piss.

Why does a man need expensive rims on his car?	How many dresses, purses, and shoes can she own?
He never apologizes when he's wrong.	A man should apologize when he's wrong. I'm not sure when that has ever happened, but he should if it does.
Women should be able to be natural and not feel pressured to get a boob job. They always look fake.	A woman should be able to get a boob job if she wants. Men don't care if they're fake.
He always tells me I look fine, no matter what I wear, and I know I look fat.	She looks great no matter what she wears. I just want to get there sometime this century.
These are my rules, and I'm not budging.	Whada you gonna do? Honey, are we out of beer?



A woman's strict rule: A man should listen and do what he is told.

A man's general guideline: "Yes, dear. I hear you," followed by silence.



THE 87% MAN

Guideline 13: He won't do what he's instructed to do.

He's breaking the rules again, and she doesn't know what to do with him. No matter how many times she tells him something, he can't remember what she just said. "Does he ever listen to

me?” she wonders. There is a big difference between listening, respecting someone, and doing what you’re told.

There are two big Hollywood actresses that come to mind here. They both are beautiful, sexy, and accomplished women. They both attempted marrying successful artists or actors of equal or greater stature. All nature of rumors surrounded the turmoil in their public and private lives. In the end, they divorced their men.

How did they rebound? They married men that worked for them, and were many rungs down the Hollywood status ladder. These men did what they were told. Happy wife, happy employee. The famous husbands broke the Hollywood rule, she comes first, and your star can’t shine brighter than hers. There are lots of big stars happily married, but I would guess each man has guidelines that keep their stars many lumens below their wife’s luster.

Red wire, blue wire

This is a simple way to sum it up: men and women are wired differently. The wires are color coded for easy assembly. The red wire is intended to connect to the red wire in the logic center of the brain. The blue wire is designed for connection to the blue wire in the communications center. Men have the red wire connected to the other red wire, and information is analyzed in the problem solving center. The blue wire is connected to the outbound messaging blue wire, and it’s only function is to announce solutions to problems, or order beer.

Women have the red logic wire connected to a green wire, which is a ground wire that controls feelings. The communications blue wire is not connected, so that communications can run 24x7, free of any logic control. This wiring keeps a woman from putting her brain in gear

before putting her mouth in motion, and adds extra power to the transmit only system. Her feelings are always known, and not restricted by the red wire. This wiring has women over communicating feelings, while men are unable to receive an emotions-based broadcast.

Why women don't listen to men

- Men use analogies, like 'Red Wire, Blue Wire,' and it doesn't translate to the current issue.
- Women haven't seen *The Godfather*, or didn't like it, and can't relate to references.
- Having sex is not going to get her attention for more than three minutes.
- Men are only talking because they can't find something in the house.
- Women don't care what happened with his fantasy football league over the weekend.
- He's covering up something he did wrong, so she'll wait until he comes clean.
- He's talking about stuff, she wants to know how he feels.
- He's not supporting her way of thinking.
- He's solving a problem when there isn't one.
- He's not agreeing with her.
- He's raising his voice to make sure she hears him.
- His words don't inspire forward motion toward her goal.
- He's being direct, and her style is indirect as she'll imply, and he has to guess.

Why men don't listen to women

- They think they are being criticized.
- She gets emotional and he shuts down, or worse, he gets angry.

- He can't figure out the problem and his mind wanders.
- He's doing his fantasy football picks for the weekend.
- He's ADHD, or so he says, but it doesn't affect his performance at work. Hummm?
- He's searching for an analogy from *The Godfather* or any of the *Die Hard* movies.
- She tells him what "she's used to..." with old boyfriends.
- He has no archival retrieval for her reference from three months ago.
- They just don't. Not really.



He's listening, but he doesn't think it's something he can fix. Don't criticize.

Use your feminine charms, and he'll respond better. Embellishing with

'never' and 'always' will end all transmission receptions.



LESSON 14: LOOK INSIDE FOR A GOOD ONE

“A woman should be attracted, not distracted by a man’s looks.”

Lucille

BEVERLY LIVED IN EL PASO AND WAS VISITING US IN L.A. She was an old friend of Ruthie, and Beverly was excited to come to L.A., see some movie stars, go to Universal Studios, and hang at the beach. Ruthie thought we should fix Beverly up with a date.

“Okay, but don’t blame me if it doesn’t work out,” I said.

“How about that guy, uh, what’s his name? Peter, or Freddy, or...?” Ruthie said.

She knew exactly what his name was. Philip was a major stud that lived down the beach. When he walked into a room it went silent, except for the heavy breathing of the women. He was tall, dark, handsome, Italian, and he surfed everyday giving him an Adonis body. He had his nightly pick of women in bars along the Strand. Seeing him with the same woman twice was like viewing Haley’s Comet in the same decade. Not gonna happen.

“You mean Fill-leap?” I said sarcastically.

Feigning surprise she said, “Oh, right. Philip.”

The following week Beverly arrived. She walked into my home on the Strand, looked out at the Pacific Ocean, and just giggled.

“Wow. What a view,” Beverly said, and without skipping a beat, “When do I get laid?”

Beverly was a tall, sexy redhead that Lucille would describe as, “A fast woman.”

Pops would describe her as, “A girl who polishes her panties so they slide off easily.”

I told Beverly I had arranged for a date with a friend, but warned her he was the beefcake from the beach, really good looking, and she’d have to swat the girls away.

“I’m used to good looking men. They don’t bother me. He may think he’s hot stuff, but I’ll put him in his place,” Beverly said.

Friday night came, Little Richard was singing “Rip It Up,” but there was no Oldsmobile 88, just Beverly, Ruthie, and me waiting for Philip’s arrival. Beverly had on her mini skirt, high heels, and she looked hot. We were sitting on the front porch, watching the sunset on a beautiful night.

Strolling down the Strand came this tall, dark, Italian guy, with his long hair flowing in the breeze. His shirt was open revealing his muscular chest. Ruthie and Beverly turned to see Philip coming towards the house. It was like watching a box of puppies wiggling with joy upon seeing their full doggie dishes coming closer.

Philip walked onto the porch as Beverly and Ruthie stood up to greet him. Philip took Beverly’s hand and said in his swarthy accent, “You must be Beverly,” and kissed her hand.

Beverly’s response was a vertical orgasm, and she could only respond with, “Arggth duu blethh narg muzup.”

“Oh, my heavens,” I mumbled. Beverly was emphatic that she would not be one of those women fawning over a hot guy. No one could resist Philip. One of my BHBFs said he knew he wasn’t gay because he didn’t want to have sex with Philip. He only wanted to hang out with him, use him as bait, and grab the ones he threw back.

Because of Lucille, I’ve always had massive respect for women. After watching Beverly and Ruthie, I knew they could be just like men at moments. Beverly acted without thinking, just

like a penis owning moron. Her only excuse was, “You didn’t tell me he was THAT good looking.” The rest of the night she acted like an idiot in a skirt, and I dialed my respect for women down just a bit.

Beverly got to experience the Philip pump-and-dump program. Philip was not going to make a good husband for any woman, but he sure looked good coming in and going out of the doorway. Beverly spent the next few days wondering if Philip was going to call. She went back to El Paso with a nice memory that she could file under “What I’m used to...” Let’s see... tall men, sexy men, muscular men, men with long hair, and Italian men. Those characteristics would surely go on her checklist.



Choosing someone based on looks, or lust at first sight, will eventually demote you from a run-of-the-mill moron to a full fledged idiot.



THE 86% MAN

Guideline 14: He’s good looking, but immature or childish.

Men are just big kids, if they’re lucky. If they lose that inner child, they may become boring, angry, resentful, grudge bearing, or just plain mean. Kids are innocent, fun, happy little people. Those are great qualities for adults to possess. It has been said that Marilyn Monroe was so attractive to men, because she had a childlike innocence. She was sexy, but her appeal was her vulnerability. She seemed attainable, unlike hardened women that have lost their naiveté.

Lucille was a beautiful woman that had a quality of innocence, and we teased her a lot. She was in on the jokes except this one time. For some reason, my younger brothers were using the word “dildo” a lot. Talking about someone doing something stupid, or wearing a weird outfit, they’d refer to them as a dildo. Lucille put this word in her vocabulary without knowing what it meant.

One evening at dinner the word came up again. She asked, “What exactly does dildo mean?” Well, we explained it and she was shocked, and she exclaimed with her favorite term, “Oh, my heavens.”

She put her hand on her forehead and said, “Oh, my heavens. I was at the A&P Market, and I agreed with one of the checkers about how stupid her boss was. I said, ‘Oh, yes. He’s such a dildo.’ I’m so embarrassed.” We laughed as she tried to smack all of us boys at once while beer came out of Pops’ nose.

When I came home from college on a break, my brothers told about another of their adventures with Lucille. They were getting into the marijuana phase, and Lucille said if they were going to smoke something like that, she wanted to be objective. Could they let her try some? I asked what happened.

My brother Greg said, “We brought home some Maui Wowie, and lit up with mom. Before we knew it, she had the radio on singing and dancing, and she was trying to cook everything in the kitchen cupboards.”

You’ve got to love a beautiful woman that likes to party and can cook.

You may be attracted to someone for their looks, but that will fade if they are not a grownup. There is a big difference between acting childish and acting like a kid. Childish behavior is immature, irresponsible conduct by a man. Acting like a kid is a temporary condition that allows a man to be young for a moment, and put the world behind him. Witness the joy of 40-year-old men acting like kids when they win the World Series. In a Bugs Bunny Cartoon, it is known as “Dog pile on the rabbit,” as they jump on each other in celebration. It’s no different in the Little League World Series, only minus 30 or so years in age.

“You boys will be my sons until you get a wife. My daughters will be my daughters the rest of my life,” Lucille said. She told us that we should keep the little kid inside of us, but be the type of man a woman can love and respect. I still think of Pops cracking up at our jokes at the dinner table, and acting like a kid with a big toy when he would go to the hangar and play with his airplane.

Bellevue, Nebraska, was headquarters for SAC (Strategic Air Command) Air Force. Pops had a hangar that was available to him to work on a beat-up Mooney M-18 Mite that he had purchased. The Mooney was an older design aircraft constructed of fabric-covered wood, with a single spruce and plywood "D" wingspan. It had an incredible 20:1 glide ratio, which meant you could fly 20 miles for the one mile it dropped in altitude. When he finished the aircraft, Pops would take me up, turn off the engine, and we’d just float through the air.

I was nine years old, and he’d ask me to go to the hangar on Sundays. I was playing baseball on the weekends, and becoming curious about girls. In the hangars, the guys would hang the Playboy centerfolds on all the walls. It was an offshoot of painting babes on the nose of bombers and fighters to boost moral.

I never refused an invite to the hangar. It was great Pops-time, and it satisfied my curiosity for the female form. It was the first time I ever heard a P-51 Mustang, the most powerful, feared aircraft in WWII. The Mustang had a Packard version of a Rolls-Royce supercharged engine with over 1490 horsepower. I can still feel the vibration of that Mustang P-51 taxiing between the hangars, then taking off. The Germans and Japanese had no answer for this bad ass fighter.

Inside the hangar were a group of Air Force officers and enlisted men, smoking cigarettes, drinking beer, and telling war stories. There were several private projects going on, and they helped each other with special tasks and tools. It reminded me of playing with my buddies and our Matchbox cars. The only difference was the price of the toys.

The men always went home to their women after their playdates in the hangar. These were real men, not children. They'd earned their weekend time by fighting in WWII, and by being good fathers and husbands.

A city banker, who held the mortgage on a hillbilly's farm made the country boy loan him his prized bird dog to go hunting. The banker knew nothing about hunting, but he knew he needed a good dog. Hours later, the banker returned with the bird dog, all beat up, and cowering in the brush. The hillbilly asked, "What the hell did ya' do to me dawg?"

"It was the darnedest thing. Every time we'd come up on some brush with birds, the stupid dog would go all stiff, and he'd start pointing," the banker said. "So I took a stick to him, and he ain't' going to do that no more."

If a man acts like a big kid, that's okay. If you try to make him 'grow up,' you may regret it.
"That dog don't hunt no more," is not something you want to say about your man.



**If a man is just childish, then a woman will want to look elsewhere for a good
hunter. A lovable mutt can help you find your way across the abyss, and it
will be a fun journey with a loyal friend.**



21.

LESSON 15: EXPLORE THE WORLD, PICK A COUNTRY

*“The failure of every personal or business relationship I
have known was due to false expectations.”*

Lucille

Pops used to say, “Young women today want to have it all, but they can’t find anyone to pay the bill.” The ‘having it all’ attitude is reserved for the young and naïve. As we move through life, and we gain valuable relationship experiences, we should use those experiences to level-set our expectations. The Serenity Prayer, originated by Reinhold Niebuhr, could apply here. “God, grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change, the courage to change the things I can, and the wisdom to know the difference,” is declared by Alcohol Anonymous, and wise people everywhere. Live your life one day at a time, and enjoy each moment.

A woman changing a man is like Hercules cleaning the Aegean Stables. It’s impossible to do unless you have a trick up your sleeve. Even then, the person you change may not be happy with their modified persona. Changes may be superficial as old habits or modified behaviors revert back, and the woman will be disenchanted.

EXPERIMENTAL FLIGHT EX-2

Following the crash of the EX-1, and after a few years with GE, I met a very special woman. She was considerably younger (17 years), but she had an old soul. She was used to dating older men, because she could always learn from them, and she did. She had top notch parents, and a

wonderful relationship with her father. She was unselfish and gave everything when it came to a relationship. She had the youthful expectations of a Gen X woman, but she wasn't looking for the perfect man, just the perfect man for her.

EX-2 was a great man's woman, and she maintained relationships with former mentors and love interests. She had Midwestern values very similar to my upbringing. She loved cars, sports, concerts, and traveling. She did marketing for a Japanese company with operations and stores in the U.S. I was immediately attracted to her, not love at first sight, but it would progress to that level. Everything looked good for this flight, so we took off together across the abyss.

Up to this point, I'd run across many Lessons from Lucille dating via GE, and newspaper personal ads. It took me over six months after the crash of the EX-1 to get "Cool Hand Luke" ready to date again. I had my mind right, but little things would creep in to push me back. Susan and Pamela went down with the Birds and the Bees, and their STDs. Beth, forgetaboutit! Ruth Ann and Sheena were GU, and Bambi was not going to fall in love with a liberal. I was able to leave and learn, but this was getting exhausting.

The EX-2 and I dated for a few months, and then she moved in with me. We had a great journey, going to concerts, traveling around the U.S., to Australia, and French Polynesia. I was making good money, and I had plenty of time to bridge the abyss. We had romance, love, encouragement, and then halfway across the abyss we got married.

Marriage can change you for better, or worse. When the timing's not right for a man, there's not much a woman can do. The EX-2 was in for a little of the best, and a little of the worst. The EX-2 should have been a smooth flight. The problem was going to be pilot error. Discouraged by past encounters, dealing with old issues with EX-1, and carrying a grudge, I struggled to close the gap to devotion and unconditional love. I withdrew for reasons I couldn't

diagnose. I began gambling. I could play poker for 48 hours and not come home. The upside was, I usually won. The downside was, like all addictions, they get the better of you at some point. What was taking me down the gambling route was deeper than I thought. I was emotionally blocked from finagling with EX-1. I was still dealing with the horrible loss of siblings, and Lucille's health was failing.

Losing people you love makes it difficult to cross the devotion gap. You avoid loving unconditionally to lessen the pain of a potential fall. The hitch is, unless you commit totally, you will most certainly fall. You must be fearless in your journey. I was not.

In the past, I had literally run away from checklist bearing women who wanted it all. I knew they were unrealistic, and I would fall short in many areas. Men can't read a woman's signals, and when she is angry, upset, or unhappy, men feel like they are the reason.

Sometimes it's easier for a man to just slide away emotionally, to not disappoint someone. If a man knows he doesn't have the goods to fulfill a woman's desires, he gives up hope. What women want will remain a mystery for all time. What men don't want is to disappoint someone they love.

Being with a person who had a great outlook on love was refreshing. Even though EX-2 had set reasonable expectations for her journey, she didn't count on my inability to cope with my personal challenges. There was not a big crash, but a soft landing that everyone survived. Today, EX-2 is one of my BHBFs, and she has a great life of her own. Thankfully, I've been able to keep special people like her in my life. The other elements in my life - hobbies, friends, family, and work - have helped me stay positive as I floundered with other elements while keeping love and hope alive.



The best way to keep your friends is to not give them up. The friends you keep over your lifetime help you sustain a realistic perspective on life, love you for who you are, and support you through thick and thin.



TAKE LUCILLE TO WORK DAY

You can carry Lucille's Lessons into business, and prosper from her philosophy about people and relationships. I worked with one of the best CEOs in America, Jimmy Treybig, who founded Tandem Computers in Silicon Valley. He built a billion dollar company from nothing by being an inspirational leader. He was a good 'ol boy from Texas, with an engineering degree from Rice, and a Stanford MBA. He believed you hire good people, and you trust them to do the right thing. The bad ones are the exception, and they can be handled on a case-by-case basis.

Tandem Computers was a Silicon Valley legend that set the standard for creativity, innovation, and achievement. They built a computer system that never stopped (Tandem NonStop) and could process millions of transactions per second. It was used by virtually every banking institution, the NYSE, and large-scale retailers worldwide. This was at a time when analysts said there could never be another big computer company. Jimmy knew if he found the right people and inspired them, they could do the seemingly impossible.

Tom Perkins was an initial investor, and today is one of the most successful venture capitalist in the world. Tandem was one of his first portfolio companies, and without Tandem Computers, Kleiner Perkins Caulfield & Byers would never have existed.

Jimmy said all employees are equal, management and staff, and have an equivalent voice. Everyone has tremendous worth, and open communication at every level, internal and external, was key to success. Jimmy endorsed sabbatical leaves, and casual Friday with beer busts where you could talk to every level in the company. Tandem had basketball courts, day care, volleyball, and a swimming pool open to all. Visiting customers from stuffy suit-and-tie companies in Chicago, New York, and London called it a visit to Disneyland.

The billion dollar revenue party was celebrated with entertainment from Chuck Berry, Charlie Daniel's Band, and Kenny Loggins on rotating stages. The Blue Angels strafed the parking lot party while Kenny Loggins played music from *Top Gun* as the film displayed on a 60-foot screen. You knew everyone at the party on a first name basis, and the 5,000 employees plus guests had a great night. Jimmy set up a table near the portable toilets, and he had a beer keg tapped next to him. He said everyone had to come there eventually, and he wanted to thank all the men and dance with all the women. You had to work there to understand the environment. It was the best place I ever worked because of the philosophy about people, and how relationships were built.

Everyone loved Jimmy, and you'd work your ass off for him. His philosophy made him rich with admiring friends, and very wealthy financially. His outward appearance was always disheveled, with his messy shock of hair, shirt tail hanging out, and glasses tilted on his face. He was an 85% Man that could have been overlooked by a woman, but he was the perfect human being when it came to personal relationships. If Lucille were at the billion dollar party, she and Jimmy would have traded stories, had a spin on the dance floor, and shared a beer. You can read more about this incredible personal story in the book *Tandem Computers Unplugged*, by Gaye Clemson.

THE 85% MAN

Guideline 15: He is not the exact man I want, and I won't settle.

No man will ever get an A+ on a checklist review. If fulfilling every item on an infantile, absurd list is settling, then so be it, and dream on. A woman will realize as time and relationships pass, that it's not about settling. It's about establishing reasonable hopes for your journey. A woman must ponder a man that does dumb stuff, but loves her. That same guy doesn't always listen to her, agree with her, communicate effectively, or say I love you enough, but he really does love her.

The checklist burdened woman desires the combination tall, dark, handsome, rich, sexy man. Like Anthony, who took her to Rome, Thomas who bought her a Mercedes, and Pierre, the French ballroom dancer she met on that Mediterranean cruise. How did she get to this place with her current imperfect man? Had she settled for something less than she deserved? Was there more out there for her? Could she find a scientist to build an Anthony-Thomas-Pierre monster of her own, and if so, how would she be able to control him?

A woman looks in the mirror, questioning her relationship. She first sees the laugh lines, and new wrinkles in her face. Stepping back, her reflection holds the husband or boyfriend that does dumb stuff, but makes her laugh. In their last argument, he wouldn't agree with her. She knew he was right, but she'll never admit it. On his business trip to New York, he called her from the airport to say, "I miss you already." She thinks of the trip to France she's always wanted, but he surprised her with a trip to Kauai. At first she was disappointed, but on reflection that was the most romantic trip of her life.

The mirror reveals the man that brought her flowers on Wednesday for no reason, and said, “Here, these are for you.” It would have been more romantic if he enclosed a card, held her in his arms, gave her a passionate kiss and said the ‘L’ word like in the movies. But, the floral scent and the look in his eyes are still fresh in her mind.

He signed them up for ballroom dancing, but he didn’t want to follow the handsome teacher’s instructions, because he has his own moves down pat. Even now, she can feel his arms around her, with his hand in the small of her back, attempting his flawed version of the Tango.

Prompting their daughter to “Pull my finger,” annoys her. But it makes their little girl giggle. Watching him read bedtime stories with sound effects, makes her heart melt. Their daughter’s laugh is a memory that will never fade.

She considers, “Is my life better for having this person in it?” A final reflection brings clarity. She realizes she didn’t settle for just any man, rather she was lucky enough to find the imperfect man for her.



Want to calculate how your man scores? Visit www.85percentman.com and do the math for yourself.



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III.

YOUR PLAN

How to prosper with The 85% Man.

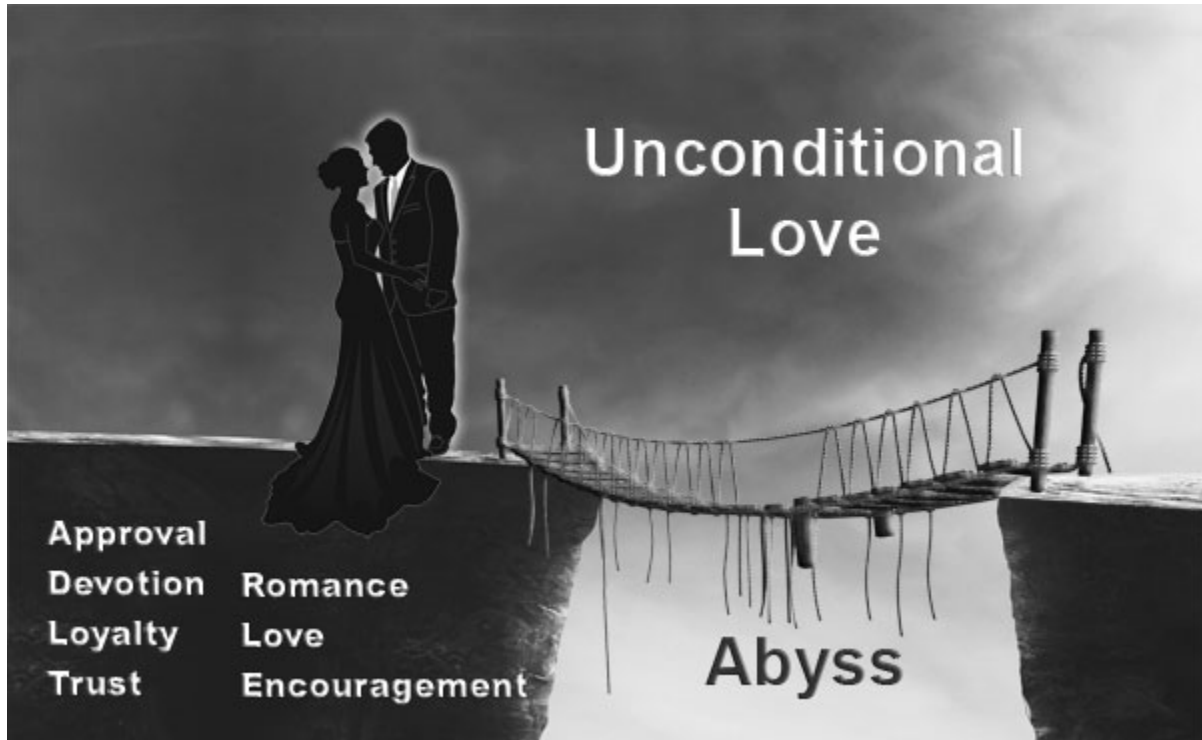
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22.

CROSSING THE ABYSS

“Your father and I raised you to be a good husband and father. Your wife shouldn’t need another daddy, but your kids will.”

Lucille



Finding someone who will be a best friend, good lover, and great parent is a challenge. The bigger challenge is finding that imperfect person that will accept you for who you are, and love you unconditionally, even when you hide their shoes in the closet where they belong.

If you’re in a successful relationship, you have crossed the chasm together. You may reflect on your journey to appreciate the crossing. If you’re just starting, or still trying to find

your imperfect match, then hopefully you have acquired some wisdom from Lucille for your journey. From the shores of loneliness to the other side of the abyss, there is a place filled with love and hope. It is a place where you may prosper for as long as you live.

THE TREADMILL PAYOFF

Match.com was my go-to resource for meeting potential mates. I went back to the treadmill, had my wallet stolen a few more times, and got beat up in the parking lot again, but I was undaunted. Finally, the last person I met on Match.com was just that, and the best. She is my significant other, my BHBF, and my 85% Woman. After decades of dating, online services, and personal ads, I reached a stopping point on my journey. For me, she landed at the end of 200+ intersections over several decades. For her, I was Match.com date number one, discovered by her niece.

In my profile, I explained my theories on clothes and pillows. I believe that your clothes in the closet must all hang in the same direction, left-to-right, otherwise when you close the door, and it's dark, your clothes could get motion sickness from going backwards, and throw up on each other. I believe that you should have at least six king size pillows on your bed to make a fort to hide from the grizzly bear that is lurking underneath on windy and rainy nights.

“BINGO!” said her niece. It was a match, and true to the trend, women were better pickers than the pecker.

LYNN WAS MY BEST FIRST DATE FOREVER. She did all the dos, and none of the don'ts. We met for dinner at Kapp's Pizza in Mountain View, California. Lynn and I both liked to build a bed fort with a plethora of pillows. Well, hers was a decorator fort, mine was still to protect

against a childhood grizzly. I also found out that the word “plethora” is one of our favorite words from the movie, *The Three Amigos*.

Lynn had just finished playing tennis, was wearing a blue tennis outfit, and I mean she was wearing it. She had very little makeup on, shaggy blonde Heather Locklear hair, a beautiful smile, a bubbly personality, and my first impression was inspired. The conversation was lively and the food was simple. She was quite attentive to what I was saying, except for one thing. There was a San Jose Sharks hockey game playing on the TV behind me, and it kept catching her eye. I turned around to see what was distracting her, then I turned to her and smiled. Suppressing a giggle, she had me at, “Sorry. The Sharks just scored.” She was a man’s woman.

Our second date was to a Sharks game. We kissed every time they scored. It was a high scoring game, much to our delight. The Sharks scored, and won with five seconds left, which was celebrated with a long kiss.

Our first kiss was the truth. Sometimes she’s a little too much of a guy, and she can’t remember our first date anniversary, so I remind her. We respect our differences. We share our diverse genre audio novel plots on our iPods. Occasionally, we listen to the same novel separately, and we hash over a chapter’s discoveries. *Unbreakable*, written by Laura Hillenbrand comes to mind. Angelina Jolie is set to direct the movie, and we can’t wait to see it together.

Her first gift to me was roses sent to my office with a card, “I love you.” My first gift to her was a mini booklet I designed with photos and notations of our dates and trips taken. The book was titled, “BALEA. Bob and Lynn’s Excellent Adventure,” and it ended with “I love you.” BALEA is part of our vernacular in recapping a great vacation or event. We took it slow and, “The Birds and the Bees, and STDs” were never a problem.

Our sons from previous marriages, Steve and Deano, are best buddies. We share our friends from tennis and golf. Lynn's dad Jim raised three great kids, and his passing shortly after meeting Lynn was difficult. His love and kindness lives on in his children. Lynn's mom is completely different from Lucille, and I love her spirit and strength. Lynn gets her stubbornness from her mom, and I love both of them for it.

I kid Lynn that she started menopause on our first date. We affectionately labeled her hot flashes as "cheeseburgers." There have been many "cheeseburgers" over the years along with other challenges, but we've conquered those with humor and respect.

Lynn sometimes tells the punchline first with her jokes, which makes me laugh even harder. She told me the, "A dwarf gets in a car accident" joke, which I stole, and I changed it to, "A dwarf walks into a bar." When I tell it, she claims ownership, and she has to retell it properly. I do it on purpose just so she'll tell it again. Having inside jokes and trigger words is part of building an emotional fort to protect a relationship. It makes Lynn laugh whenever I interject "plethora" in the movie context.

Lynn tolerates my sense of humor, even when I wear out a joke's welcome. When I go to the bathroom I declare it with the time honored male comment, "I'm going to see a man about a dog." I created a version for her, so when she announces a trip to the lavatory, I ask her, "Are you going to see a woman about a cat?" It cracks me up, but she never laughs and replies with, "It wasn't funny the first time. Still not funny."

My phone wallpaper is a picture of us at AT&T Park before a San Francisco Giants game. I have three favorite photos of her. She's smiling, smoking a cigar at Brennan's in New Orleans on July 3rd, a few months before Hurricane Katrina struck. I love the photo of her in the

pool at Club Med in Cancun, Mexico. The one with her surfing on her first wave at Waikiki Beach makes me smile.

Lynn hides my shoes in the closet where they belong, puts up with my man-habits, and she loves beating me at tennis. I was accepted into her remarkable family because I love playing cards, dominoes, and board games. Lynn, and her most of her clan are really poor losers when it comes to games. They call it being competitive. I call beating them, payback for tennis losses to Lynn.

I first liked her as a man's woman, with a life and friends of her own. I had no idea what initial impression I had made. After Kapp's, she said she was attracted to my soul. I'm not sure how I emoted my spirit, but it was a second look most women never took. I'm an acquired taste, have never been anyone's lust at first sight, and it takes a second and third look for anyone to attach me to their life.

Lynn is the perfect, imperfect woman for me. I love her good qualities, and I respect her idiosyncrasies. Her perseverance is a great strength, and she pushes me to be better. She gets frustrated when I don't do what I'm told, but I stand my ground knowing occasionally, one unhappy person is okay. She's in a hurry when I want to go slow. I call her my perfect little flower - she's my little impatiens.

I went willingly into that basement, and came back up the stairs with a beautiful blonde monster. Lucille was surely smiling and applauding in the audience. Lynn and Lucille would have been best friends, giggling at the dinner table, and telling stories about me. Now, Lynn and I are best friends at a table we share every night.

Kapp's Pizza was over a decade ago, and we've crossed the abyss together.



On a romantic journey, unconditional love is the ultimate destination.



23.

IT'S YOUR TIME

“Men are afraid of dying.

Women are afraid of getting old.”

Lucille

Like Sampson losing his hair and his power, a woman feels she loses her control over a man as she ages. I witnessed a good example of this with Marilyn. Before her true age showed, she needed to trap a rich man. “Nice guys finished last,” was her criteria for weeding out the poor ones before her beauty faded. Unfortunately, her insecurities eroded her exterior appeal.

On my Club Med Tahiti trip, Colette fondly recalled her twenties, and the amorous impact she had on men. In her forties, she wasn't able to get a rise out of her lethargic husband.

Part of the instability of EX-1 was her fear of aging. When we were married, she said she never wanted to be called grandma. When we divorced, she lamented, “You'll just leave me for a younger woman one day. It might as well end here.”

Sadly, I've heard these dejected remarks in the forms of jealousy, embitterment, and anger towards men. On any of *The Real Housewives of Wherever* shows, all the women fight aging. It's Botox here, a boob job there, here a nip, there a tuck, everywhere a nip-tuck. The women squabble, the men go for a beer.

A woman will never discuss dying, until she's near her deathbed. At that point, she measures her success in life by the love at her side. The unhappily divorced woman may feel the device to acquire love was youth and beauty, and it has faded and she is alone. The 85% Woman

will have her man, her friends, her children, and grandchildren with her all the way. She may even have an ex-husband there, mourning her impending death.

Over the years I've heard at least a dozen men recalling one common female comment following a divorce or the end of a long-term relationship: "I gave up my youth for you!" Men are not sure what to say about this since they accept aging, but regret not accomplishing certain goals. A woman may feel that an ideal man may only be obtained with a beautiful snare. No one person's vitality is more valuable than another's. You go into a relationship willingly, and the consequences of failure must be accepted by each person.

Decisions made when we are young are not tempered with the wisdom of age. The reality is, true love may be achieved by anyone at any age. People make poor decisions when they're young, like a teen pregnancy, or an impetuous marriage that ends in divorce. There is that horrid looking tattoo that was cool back in the day, but is just embarrassing today. While youth is wasted on the young, maturity has the advantage of better decision making.

Men know they are going to die someday, and visualize their final scene in a movie like they're Bruce, Arnold, or Sylvester going down with guns blazing. Every man wants to die with his boots on, which means he'd be in Texas or Oklahoma. In the other 48 states, he wants to die standing up, and he dreads dying in a hospital bed. Men's biggest fear is that they will fall short of their lifelong goals. They won't have hit the winning run in the World Series, bottom of the ninth, with two outs and a 3-2 count. Dead men can't score the big touchdown, win the Master's Golf Tournament, or finish first at the INDY 500.

Realistically, men want to be able to expire as grandpa, but not before they've helped their grandson catch his first fish, or taught their granddaughter how to ride a horse. I'll avoid the *Godfather* analogy here, but it was pretty cool when Marlon Brando died in the garden chasing his grandson, and he... Oops, sorry. There I go again being a guy.

At bare minimum, men want to accomplish their career goals, and retire with a well-respected salute from their peers. If a man dies with the love of his life at his side, that is satisfying, but it's not a conscious desire, because we know men place accomplishment higher than love.

Men who successfully cross the abyss later in life, and taste the sweet nectar of unconditional love, put career and work behind them. This is a major shift for men, as they find love and family are the greatest rewards. Unfortunately, many men realize this too late, and their 85% Woman may have slipped away while they were climbing mountains.

Women who accomplish a crossing with their prince attain what they knew long before any man, that love reigns supreme. Women understand this comes with their children at birth, but they may fear they must do it with a man while they are young.

THE 85% WOMAN

We've discussed putting aside imperfections to find a man with which a woman may love long and prosper. The checklist has gone by the wayside, she's set realistic expectations, and she's ready for unconditional love. But, what about what a man wants?

I had a first date with a GE woman who declared, after dinner and *tee-many-martoonies*, "You're the perfect man for me." I suspected that the alcohol allowed me to slip under her listed minimums. She's was very attractive, successful and charming, but based on our conversation, I

could never satisfy her long-term conditions. I knew she was packing a checklist, had read *The Rules*, written by Ellen Fein and Sherrie Schneider, and she had a master plan. I told her I was not even close to being her perfect man, as there was no such animal. She seemed shocked, because she felt she was very picky, and if she chose a man, that was the final decision. She didn't know I had a vote. I knew I was the 85% Man, far from perfect, and I was looking for an 85% Woman, which she was not.

Let's look at what an 85% Man wants in a great woman, his 85% Woman.

The 85% Man doesn't want to marry a Ferrari

There are many parallels men can draw between women and automobiles. Men love a dependable, fun, economical, sporty ride – Honda, BMW, Lexus, Toyota, or Chevrolet. A Honda dealer tune-up is \$900 every 100,000 miles. Men would like to drive a Ferrari once in their life, but only a rich man, with more money than good sense, will buy one. A tune-up on a Ferrari Enzo is \$25,000 and lasts 3,000 miles. The 85% Man doesn't don't want to own a Ferrari, let alone maintain it.

If you have a Ferrari, other guys want to drive it, but don't want to put it in their garages. You're stuck paying the insurance and maintenance while trying to keep someone from stealing it. It's short term fun and excitement, versus a lifetime of satisfaction and loyalty.

We'll put all the great, fun, reliable, sporty cars in the world into the category of The 85% Woman. A Ferrari is still a Ferrari. Now, let's see what a man is actually looking for in a great,

imperfect, 85% Woman. I know, it's one more analogy. But please, step into the man's showroom, I'd very much like to take you for a test drive.

<i>Features</i>	<i>The Ferrari Woman</i>	<i>The 85% Woman</i>
Finish	Heavy makeup, fake lashes, lots of mascara.	Keeps it simple, lipstick, blush and no fake lashes.
Upholstery	Hair extensions.	Okay for parties or Halloween. For everyday, styled nicely does it.
Audio	iPhone, iPad, online junky	Men can't talk to women who are always wired. Hang up!
Luxury	Loves to shop and show off her labels. Loves expensive dinners, expensive vacations, Cristal and Dom Perignon champagne.	Braggs about how much she saved at Nordstrom's The Rack, and she looks great. Loves hot dogs at the baseball park, occasional weekend in Carmel, beer with Mexican food, otherwise she'll have a Cosmo.
Options: Exterior	Bee stung lips or lip implants, Botox, nip-tuck.	Oh, please, no, no, no. No one wants to kiss those puffy lips or try to make your frozen face smile.
Options: Headlights	Breast implants.	Optional accessory for parties. See Victoria for her Secrets, she knows how to work with her natural beauty.

Options: Trim	Expensive jewelry	Loves simple, yet elegant, affordable jewelry, costume jewelry or makes her own.
Options: Custom Finish, Special Paint	Loves symbolic tattoos. Pierces everything. Your skin is beautiful and you got what tattooed where? You got Hepatitis C, how?	She knows the Chinese symbol for 'Love' will be unrecognizable in 15 years, and read as 'Lard.' You got that purple stain on your pelvis how? Those infected holes in eyebrows came from what? No way for her.
On the Road	Loves the theater in NY. Loves shopping in San Francisco and Paris.	NY theater, yes, but likes Yankee Stadium. Loves cable cars, Pier 39, and quaint Carmel cafes.
Garage	Wants a big, fancy house.	Wants a home filled with family and friends.
Fuel Type	Always picky about her food. On fad diets.	Eats healthy, works out, gives it a rest on weekends. Diets are M-F schedule.
Fuel Economy	Has favorite French restaurant, doesn't really cook.	Likes sushi, Italian, Cheesecake Factory and has a recipe file. Loves to make pastries for friends and co-workers. Will try anything once.

Gearbox	Always speaks her mind under the banner of “I tell it like it is!” which is a code for, “I’m a real bitch!”	Understands the mechanics of, “Mind in gear before mouth in motion.”
Maintenance	Has read <i>The Rules</i> . Has a checklist of perfect man qualities (circa Reagan era).	Please, no. Refer to Three Pieces to the Love Puzzle in the Love and Hope chapter following.
Practicality	Is a MAW (Model, Actress, Whatever), or used to be. Getting her real estate license. Knows how to tie a cherry stem in a knot with her tongue.	Teaches at a public or private school. Getting her Masters in Special Education. Knows how to sign for the deaf.
Handling	Loves to ‘dish’ about people and Hollywood stuff. Has read <i>50 Shades of Grey</i> . No sense of humor, doesn’t get men’s jokes.	Doesn’t gossip. Talks about sports, weather, news, movies, and books. Has read the classics, not sure if she’s going to read <i>50 Shades</i> . Knows how to tell a joke or three at the sports bar.
‘Smart Car’ Technology	Loved the movie <i>Les Misérables</i> , can’t pronounce it. Hugh Jackman was hot. Hasn’t seen the stage play, too boring.	Her too. Especially fond of the performance at Queen’s Theater in London seen when she visited with her school class.

<p>Options:</p> <p>Voice Activated</p> <p>Controls</p>	<p>Uses “like” multiple times in a sentence, and loves to respond with “whatever.” Pronounces “wouldn’t” as “wunnet.” Gargles the last half of her sentences</p> <p>Valley Girl style.</p>	<p>Doesn’t suffer from speech disfluency or use filler words. Talks like an adult. Enunciates all her words correctly, and finishes sentences in the same voice octave.</p>
<p>Sportiness</p>	<p>Thinks Wimbledon has a “T” in it. Doesn’t play tennis, it ruins her nails.</p>	<p>Went to Wimbledon tournament when in London with her class.</p> <p>Loves to play tennis. Knows how to pronounce the venue.</p>
<p>Family Use</p>	<p>Went to Hamptons for Thanksgiving and had dinner with rich family. Later name-dropped.</p>	<p>Helped cook Thanksgiving dinner with boyfriend’s family. Talked about the food, his family and the NFL games she watched that day.</p>
<p>Dependability</p>	<p>Treats herself to massages and shopping when she’s happy.</p> <p>Expensive, name label clothes preferred.</p>	<p>Just paid bridge toll for person behind her. Fitted jeans and high heels gets her noticed everywhere by men and women.</p>

Overall Appearance	High heels, designer labels.	Okay, one thing that's mutual. Men like the heels and know they're uncomfortable, but men love legs. Men don't care who makes them, higher is better.
Brand	Likes Bentley automobiles. Received first Mercedes in high school from daddy.	Likes Honda and Prius, wants a BMW convertible some day. First car was VW Beetle she bought with money from babysitting and working at local hospital.
Fun Factor	Name dropping – famous people, movie stars she 'knows.'	Knows the name of sports stars and legends, but never dated one. Got Phil Michelson's autography at a golf tournament once. Has favorite MLB, NFL, NBA and NHL teams.
Owner Type	Loves the tall, dark, handsome, unshaven Italian or French type of man.	Smart enough to not have a type, but would faint if she was kissed by Gilles Marini.
Driver Preference #1	Prefers man that owns his own tuxedo.	She likes a man who's comfortable in a rented tux, but loves a man in tight jeans.

Driver Preference #2	Loves a man who opens doors, pulls out her chair, says please and thank you.	Ditto.
Resale Value	Worries about aging constantly, always needs maintenance. Buyers are rare after seeing the service records. Only rich fools want this model.	Ages gracefully, retains beautiful original design. Classic model always in demand. If you don't want her, someone else will snap her up. You can love this one forever, and she will love you back.



Unless an 85% Man is rich, stupid, or stupid rich he shouldn't date a Ferrari or park one in his garage. He'd go broke financially, then emotionally.

The 85% Woman will win the 85% Man every time. He's not perfect, and neither is she. They are the perfect imperfect couple.



24.

A WORD OF CAUTION

“I don’t think the world needs another angry person.”

Lucille

Biochemically, anger is an adrenal gland hormonal survival reaction, which allows the body to fight or run. Blood pressure rises, glucose and insulin increase to fuel the muscles. Blood is directed from the other organs to the brain. This is supportive in an emergency, but as a common occurrence that becomes a lifestyle habit, it’s deadly. It can cause heart failure, mental breakdown, and retaliation by someone who can’t control their emotions. This is not exclusive to women or men. According to the CDC in 2012, 1.5 million women, over 4,100 per day, were physically assaulted by their partners, as were 835,000 men.

MY SISTER DEBRA SUE WAS A FUNNY, BEAUTIFUL WOMAN. She worked as a Candy Striper then went to Nursing School, eventually becoming a Registered Nurse. She was a professional water skier that competed behind drag racing boats. She had all of Lucille’s best qualities. She was fearless, thought of others first, and she helped everyone she could. Unfortunately, she helped the wrong people on too many occasions.

Debbie got pregnant when she was 16-years-old, living at home with Pops and Lucille until she gave birth. Lucille had her give up the baby girl for adoption. Her boyfriend Dave, was the good looking bad-boy type. He was a mechanic and did motorcycle trick-riding with his dog

on the gas tank. I have a newspaper clipping of Dave and Scooby on the freeway in Houston, going 70 MPH. Dave has his arms crossed so it appeared Scooby is steering.

Dave was the father of Debbie's baby, and he wanted to marry her. Everyone in the family liked Dave. Remember the dumb things guys do, also featured by Jay Leno as "Stupid Criminal Tricks?" He needed money, so he stole a fire truck in Wharton, Texas, and he tried to crash it into the vault wall at the bank. The police found him unconscious in the fire truck crashed into the bank wall. He was convicted of auto theft and attempted robbery, and sent to prison.

Debbie really loved Dave, and she was heartbroken over giving up her child and Dave's prison sentence. During nursing school, Debbie worked at Houston Memorial Hospital as a Nurse's Aide. I had moved to Houston after Randy's suicide to help Pops with his post-military business. It was a time of healing for our family. I would visit Lucille and Pops everyday. I would see my sister, and I'd take her to movies or out dancing.

The men she dated were typical macho Texas men who talked big, and thought small. Debbie would help some poor soul, and then he'd attach himself like a Remora on a bigger fish. Grover was a short man that had done prison time, and he always had his little .38 pistol tucked into his pants. Somehow he connected with my sister, and he got her to move in with him. Everyone hated Grover, not just my family, but everyone. When a family member picks someone, you try to accept them, so Grover was tolerated. Behind the scenes, he was verbally and physically abusive. This was unknown to anyone in our family until it was too late.

One weekend I called Debbie and said EX-1 was visiting her family in California, I had a free night, and I asked her to dinner. She seemed excited to get out and have fun. We dined at Pappadeaux's Seafood Kitchen, a popular Houston restaurant with great Cajun eats. Next, I took

her to a local disco, and pulled her onto the dance floor. My junior high dance moves were easy to follow. We danced and joked for hours. Towards the end of the night, she looked at me and said, “This is the most fun I’ve ever had. I really needed a break. Thank you. I love you.”

I said, “I love you too, sis.” My lasting memory is swinging my sister around on the dance floor, with her laughing like a kid on a playground.

I didn’t see her for a week, and I stopped by the house to see Lucille. Debbie was there, and she had bruises on her face where Grover had smacked her around. She said she might have a fractured jaw, and she needed to go to the hospital. My blood was boiling. Debbie told me not to do anything, because Grover said if she ever told anyone or left him, he’d come over and kill the whole family. This was the cowardly behavior of an abusive man.

I contacted a couple of friends from college, now living in Houston. One was an attorney, and the other was a bad-ass sheriff. They knew people who could deal with this kind of situation. I told them to find this guy, bring him in dead, not alive. They knew my sister and loved her, so off they went. Grover was nowhere to be found. He had disappeared. After this, the details are fuzzy, and we could only presume what happened.

Debbie had gone to the hospital, and she did have a fractured jaw. She went back to the rest in the apartment they shared. Grover had not shown his face for four days. Then he appeared at their apartment late that afternoon. Neighbors said they heard arguing, and they saw Grover pulling Debbie to the parking lot, shoving her into his car.

Grover had an old car he used to tow his ski boat, and he’d run it into the lake. He took Debbie to help him retrieve that car. On the way back to Houston, towing the old car, they were doing about 75 MPH going north on the freeway back to Houston. Witnesses said their car was swerving, and they appeared to be arguing, when suddenly they veered head-on into southbound

freeway traffic. They were slammed by a Pontiac Grand Prix, one of the heavier cars GM makes. The 150 MPH impact was felt five miles away, and they died instantly, along with the other car's driver and passenger.

A normal car is about 18 feet long. Grover's car was hit from the front, rear-ended by the car in tow. I went to the junkyard to retrieve any personal items from the car. I paced the length of the Chevy Nova, and it measured about 10 feet. The floorboards were stick thick with blood, and I retrieved my sister's blood-soaked wallet. The entire top was sheared off, and Debbie and Grover were cut in half. There were no bodies to collect, certainly nothing for an open casket funeral. The bucket seats, engine and transmission, the top half of their bodies, and the roof were found 250 feet from the impact area.

I imagined them arguing, Debbie telling Grover she was leaving him, and Grover saying something like, "If I can't have you, no one else can," as he swerved into oncoming traffic. Even if it was an accident, Debbie should not have been in that relationship, or that car. Abusive unions can take a woman's life anytime, anywhere.

ONE MY OLDEST BHBF'S DAUGHTER WAS MURDERED by her husband of 25 years. My BHBF had just finished a phone conversation learning his daughter was leaving her husband. He was on his way to visit her the next day. She was in a bubbly mood, excited about her father's upcoming visit, and enthusiastic about her new start. The call ended with, "I love you, daddy," and he echoed back with his love. Seven minutes later she was dead.

The police ruled it a suicide. Overwhelmed with local murders, they didn't have the time or evidence to pursue any charges. There are so many crimes against women daily, police can't

tackle these felonies, or they have been numbed to the dreadfulness. Justice only happens on TV crime shows.

His daughter had gone off the 34th floor balcony of her condo, mysteriously jumping early in the evening. It was easy to put together a scenario where her bully of a husband found out she was leaving him, and in a fit of rage, threw her over the railing. He would get angry if she left home and had forgotten to set aside food, or was too busy to come home at noon to feed him. He was a tough guy from the East coast, didn't drive, and just did his big deals from the condo. She was literally the breadwinner, and leaving him would mean he'd starve to death. She was murdered by, "The Man Who Couldn't Make a Sandwich."

Both of these women were the type that put other's needs ahead of their own. They would light up a room when they entered, and everyone who knew them loved them dearly. They didn't get angry, because they were smart women who knew how to communicate effectively with normal people. No one knows how to communicate with a bully.

The impact of these deaths, and thousands like them every day, are shocking to friends. To relatives it's horrifying. To parents, it is a pain without respite, a dagger to the heart, a grief that must be confronted with every dawn.

Men use anger in different ways. When they are young, they learn that if they get out of line, the school bully is going to punch them. This never solves anything, as the anger simmers, and the offended party's mental health may suffer. Pent up anger can explode with dreadful consequences. It's the story where the dead man is ridiculed for bringing a knife to a gun fight.

In Arab and African countries, it's not terrorism, or the religious fanaticism that are destructive. It's the way they treat women. Statistics for abuse in other countries is just as shocking as in the U.S. Women have every right to be outraged with the global atrocities committed against their sisters. Idiocy knows no geographic boundary. Unfortunately, ignorance that drives anger and hatred, are ruinous parts of our world for the foreseeable future.

People can make lethal decisions by being in the wrong place at the wrong time. Someone may choose a mate that turns deadly in an infuriated instant, even after years together. There is no way to anticipate these toxic events, or what poison lurks inside someone. You must have your wits about you, listen to the Knight Templar, and choose wisely. Lucille's Lessons are guidance for making intelligent relationship decisions, achieving unconditional love, and protecting each other on our journeys.



May we all love long and prosper.



25.

LOVE AND HOPE

“People were meant to be loved and things we’re created to be used. If you love your things, and use people, then you’ll never be happy.”

Lucille

Life is a giant puzzle. All the pieces fit together sometimes. Often, there are pieces missing. When you balance the elements in your life, they can support portions that may go missing. If you surround yourself with love, you will remain hopeful for the future. Things can never make you happy, only comfortable. Real joy is selecting the right mate for a journey. Extreme pain and loss of youth, come with choosing poorly.

THREE PIECES TO THE LOVE PUZZLE

FOR WOMEN

There is much to consider when dealing with *The 85% Man*. First you must internalize who you are, what you genuinely want, and how you are going to go about fulfilling your life’s ambitions. It’s about the wisdom to know what you can and cannot change. You have to be happy with yourself first, before you can be happy with someone else. Your happiness is not someone else’s job, it’s yours. You are responsible for your own mistakes and choices. Knowing this, you are

ready to cross the abyss with a mate, then follow these three simple steps. Ask yourself questions at each step.

1. Find your 85% Man

Q: Would this person make a good father to my children?

Even if you don't want children, examine the evidence. How does he treat other people's children? What does he want for his future and his offspring? Is he unselfish? Does he act like a kid, or is he childish? You want a man to have a little boy inside him, but you don't want to raise an adult child. Does he have ambition, and does he discuss the rewards for success as a happy home with children, or is it about toys for himself (what he'd buy if he was rich)? Does he talk about 'we' and 'us' versus himself? Watch closely, listen carefully, and choose wisely.

2. Set realistic expectations

Q: Will this person be a good journey mate?

Get real to get what you want. Flowing gowns in a mansion is a fantasy, not a reality. Did he have good parental role models? If he didn't, does he aspire to be a great person alongside you? He truly loves you, and he understands what unconditional love is, and how you earn it. He knows it's a long journey. He's willing to go on a journey parallel with yours. Your destinations may change, but you'll always share the same desired endpoint.

3. Explore your life tomorrow

Q: Will my life be enriched by having this person in it?

You will feel this as time passes. You realize that you feel good about yourself, miss him the minute he leaves the door, and you can't wait to see him again. He will let you have your life and your friends, and share his life and friends. He is not jealous, and he trusts you because you've earned it. He is a happy person, and he doesn't require fixing or emotional repair. Would you rather be with a rich jerk or a poor prince? Tomorrow, the jerk will still be just that. A poor good man can become your hero, a rich man, a great father, or all of these things.

If you can't answer yes to all three, then my son Steve would advise you to say, "NEXT!"

FOR MEN

There is less to consider for a man, as women are equipped for love and life's journey at a very young age. They've mentally planned their wedding as a teenager. The downside is, they have defined every single detail about their nuptials and romanticized their prince. Love is a woman's game, and men have to guess at her rules. The main consideration for a man is whether she's a happy adult. Men approach a relationship as a job or a task, and they don't want to take on something they know they can't handle.

A woman's happiness is not a man's responsibility. But, as the EX-1 told our marriage counselor in response to this challenge, "I know I'm responsible for my own happiness, but I'd be a lot happier without this guy next to me!" No man wants to get on that flight. Here are the steps and questions for men.

1. Discover your 85% Woman

Q: Would this person make a good mate for me and my children?

First examination for a man is visual. Will she fit in my arms when we dance? Every woman possesses specific features a man fancies, and each man's tastes are different. Is she tall, thin, have nice legs, busty, athletic, or Rubenesque? Blonde, brunette, or redhead? Looks are important to both men and women, but a man's first visual observation is his primary attraction trigger.

Did she have a good dad, and does she know how to respect and treat a man? Men don't need to worry too much about her role as a mother. She is programmed to love her children unconditionally. One quick question: Does she want to have children? A negative response should tell you she's not marriage material, or selfish. If you don't want children either, then ask yourself this: Who's going to be grandpa? You must also ask: Is she high maintenance? A man will go down the list of Ferrari versus The 85% Woman, as his journey is a long one. The Ferrari will be fun for a joy ride, but it won't go the distance.

2. Set expectations based on her visions

Q: Will this person be a good wingwoman on my life's journey?

Has she set realistic expectations for a journey, or does she need a mansion to dance about? Does she value things or people? Your journey is your professional career now, but it will be family later. Will she support you during your career years so you may enjoy your time as grandpa? Does she have her own ambitions so the empty nest syndrome won't implode your marriage? Is she another angry woman with an axe to grind, or a strong woman on your side? The angry

woman will be cranky the entire journey, and she will make you pull over far too often. The strong woman can drive while you take a nap.

3. Explore your life tomorrow

Q: Will my life be enriched by having this person in it?

A man feels this very early. If she is jealous or insecure, you will struggle as an adult couple trying to cope with adolescent behavior. If a woman is encouraging, and not critical, you know she will be good for you. She wants to share her life and friends. She thinks of you, and she is romantic without requiring specific reciprocation, which makes you want to romance her even more. She allows you to take your time, and she knows when to push, and when to back off. She does not have excess baggage. She's had good relationships in the past. She shredded her checklist long ago, or she never had one.

If you can't answer yes to all three, then you know what Steve would say.



Look closely, listen carefully, and choose wisely. Then it's one, two, three, go across the abyss. Your crossing should be exciting, fun and safe. Your reward will be friends, family, unconditional love, and a life without regrets.



MEMORABLE MOVIES

“In the end, you only have your memories. So make good ones while you’re young.”

Lucille

UNFORGETTABLE

I’ve been fortunate to have great experiences with some terrific people. This includes all my experimental flights, since they didn’t kill me, they made me stronger. I have no regrets for the risks I’ve taken. I’ve lived and traveled the world, and I’ve discovered the good in people. People from diverse cultures, with different beliefs have reinforced Pops’ perspective that good people only come in gray. The world is a fascinating place, while ignorance is the one characteristic I wish I could change. The world would certainly be better without it.

From a very early age, I started building special memories, thanks to Pops, Lucille, relatives, siblings, friends, lovers, and acquaintances. I’ll share a few of my best memories, and it may jog your recall for people, things, and events that upon reflection, made you smile and helped you offset the bad times.

Fishing with Grandpa Rob Peak

Going to the coal pits, it was my job to get the snakes back in the weeds when I turned over the aluminum boats the club had on the shores. Down at the Lake of the Ozarks, we had great fun at the Peak Haven cabin. Memories of nights sleeping on the Haven screened porch with buddies or

my siblings, telling tall fish tales, are still fresh. The crickets, mosquitoes, and hoot owls are memorable audio tracks.

I remember one special adventure to the lake at Bull Shoals, Arkansas. Pops, Grandpa Peak, Cousin Jimmy, and I went on a big fishing trip when I was about 9-years-old. We set limb lines (also called trotlines) for the catfish that would feed at night. These are lines you tied to a willow or sapling branch hanging over the water. You hook a live perch on the line, with the bait just below the water so it splashes around. You do this at dusk, then come back around midnight to see what's literally shaking. If you see a branch bowing into the water, thrashing up and down, you've got a big old catfish. You motor up, pull in the fish, throw him in the boat, head to shore and skin him for tomorrow's supper.

One moonlit night, we set the lines, had dinner and waited. Pops woke me about 11 PM, and we all went out to check the lines. Shining a spot light on the shore, one line was going up and down like crazy. Pops told me to go to the front of the boat and grab the line. We hit the mud bank as I went forward and grabbed the line. This fish was huge, pulling the limb below the water's surface. I pulled on the line, and the catfish made a dive, bending the branch down into the water. Behind me I heard a huge thump BA-BOOM! A giant, poisonous water moccasin had fallen out of the tree, and slammed into the bottom of the boat. I heard Jimmy yell, "SNAKE!" I jumped onto the shore in a religious moment allowing me to run on water.

Grandpa always carried a four shot .22-pistol in his tackle box. There was yelling and screaming coming from the boat. Grandpa started shooting at the snake, missing all four times. Pops grabbed a paddle and tossed the snake into the lake, which immediately headed towards the shore, and me.

A water moccasin is quite poisonous, very aggressive, and it will bite you repeatedly. I bounced back in the boat like a kangaroo. Pops was laughing, although he never dropped the Camel cigarette in the corner of his mouth. Cousin Jimmy was cackling as he grabbed the line, and hauled in a 25-pound catfish. Grandpa never flinched, and he calmly said, “That’s going to make a nice meal. Plug those holes Bobby Mack.” My job was to cork the holes in the bottom with my feet and hands so we could make it back to the shore before the boat sank. To this day, I hate snakes with an Indiana Jones passion. I remember it like it was yesterday. Fun times. Love you Grandpa. Grandpa Peak died in his sleep at age 92.

Grandma Elna Peak

She was a pistol, just like Granny on *The Beverly Hillbillies*. She ran the household, the business and every adventure they had. She made it through the Depression and tougher times than most of us will ever see. My summers with the grandparents in Clinton, Missouri were always special. Elna still drove when she was in her nineties, racing around in her Oldsmobile 4-4-2, which had a large V8 and plenty of go-go. The employees at the grocery store knew to hide when she drove 60 MPH diagonally across the parking lot.

I can remember Grandpa Peak sitting in his chair, smoking Walter Raleigh Cherry Pipe Tobacco, while he listened to baseball on the radio, watched the Kansas City A’s on black and white TV, and he read the sports page. Grandma Elna would make him raise his feet so she could vacuum, and he did it on cue. A few minutes later our sandwiches would arrive, and Grandpa Rob would start talking about fishing.

We’d go to Peak Haven cabin at the Lake of the Ozarks and fish, and eat, fish, and eat, and eat some more, the favorite things in the Peak households. One morning we went out to

check the limb lines we'd set the night before. We caught this huge 30 pound catfish. Those things are mean and will 'horn' you with the spine on the top of their head. It took me and my college buddy Jimmy Wingate about 15 minutes to get the stupid thing in the boat. Then we had to keep poking it with a paddle as it flopped around the boat trying to horn us. We motored across the lake to the docks.

When we arrived, there was Grandma Elna. We hollered, "Look what we caught," as we docked. We didn't want anything to do with that monster.

Elna came down to the boat and looked down, "That's a nice one Bobby Mack. Let's get him ready for supper." At this time she was about 75-years-old. She took a gaff and hooked him behind the gills, and he fought her all the way up to the end of the dock. She threw him down on the table where you cleaned the fish, took an icepick, stabbed him in the head pinning him to the wooden dressing table, and he quit flopping. She took a knife, cut all the way around his head. She said, "Let's get his little black pants off." Then she pulled the skin all the way off in one jerk. Jimmy and I were cracking up.

Grandma Elna turned to us and said, "Okay, boys. Let's get the skillet fired up. He's gonna make some good eating." I never had fish that tasted like that ever again. I can still smell the cornmeal, catfish, and bass frying at the cabin. The taste of Elna's fried fish is on my palate. Thanks Grandma Elna. She died at the age of 102.

Grandpa Mack

I'd spend half the summer with G-Rob, and the other with G-Mack. On the farm, Grandpa Mack had me driving the big John Deere tractor, getting eggs for breakfast, and chasing down a

chicken for dinner. Most days I'd take the little tractor, and head down to the catfish pond in the south-40. I remember the smell of bacon in the morning, and fried chicken at night.

Once, G-Mack caught me shooting the pigs with my BB rifle. He yelled at me, "Stop putting dents in my pork. That's 20-cents a pound Bobby Mack. Besides momma sow is getting mad, and she'll come right through that fence." I ran like hell as the half-ton pig charged the fence. Poker nights on the odd Fridays brought more chatter from Mack's buddies, along with the scent of pipe tobacco, mixed with jokes and laughter.

Grandpa Mack had a heart attack in his nineties, and Pops and Lucille brought him to live with them in Houston. He'd lost his speech. This was tragic for a man with many tales of a rich life.

When I lived in Houston, I'd come over on weekends, and I'd take him for his weekly haircut. He was ready on the couch anticipating his ride in my car with the sunroof open so he could feel the breeze. He couldn't speak clearly, so I would recall stories of days on the farm. We'd sit in his room on the couch, one he'd made in his workshop, and he'd hold my hand. He would feel the skin on my hands and face as I talked, comparing me to his body weathered by decades on the farm. I assumed he was thinking back to younger days and our times together.

As I recalled memories of his poker games and his buddies, I could see tears well up in his eyes, and knew I had struck a happy chord. Love you G-Mack. Grandpa Mack died peacefully at age 94.

Wiesbaden, Germany

From the moment we landed my senses were heightened. I was 10-years-old when I flew with Lucille, and my three brothers and sister (ages 3-months to 4-years-old). From Omaha, Nebraska

to Frankfurt, Germany, it was a 20-hour flight on a TWA Constellation propeller airplane full of military families. Pops was already in Wiesbaden, and I filled in handling half the load of kids. The turbulent flight was racked with children screaming, crying, and throwing up for 19 hours. We landed, and Pops picked us up in his Studebaker that had been shipped overseas. On the way to our new home, he said, “Welcome to Deutschland.”

I thought, Dutch Land? Where are the windmills?

From that moment on, I remember every day of my life. I was in a new country, speaking a different language, and drinking in the alien surroundings. We drove through the Black Forest to eat at a private home café where you picked your trout from the pond in the backyard. The forest was so black, you couldn't see a thing out of the side windows of the Studebaker. It was like going into a pitch black cave with a tiny flashlight.

Pops and Lucille took me to bingo at the Officer's Club, and I always won and give them my booty. I went for the Wiener schnitzel, sauerbraten, and strudel. The Officer's Club was a 60-room mansion where Hitler's top officers partied. It was rumored to be the house depicted in *The Dirty Dozen*. Little League was very cool, and I made the German All Star team. I met my first BHBF, Tex. It's all documented on 8MM film, stored in my office. Those are incredible, unforgettable memories.

Flying with Pops

Driving with Pops was like Mr. Toad's Wild Ride, but flying with him was a joy. In Missouri, we'd put the fishing gear in his plane and take off. Airborne, Pops would be scanning the ground below, and I'd ask where we were going? He'd say, “Fishing. Hang on.” We'd peel off and head down to a stranger's farm displaying a wind sock and a crop duster. We landed on the airstrip,

taxied in, and stopped at the hangar. Pops headed over to the mechanic working on the duster. Next thing I knew we were riding in the back of a pickup truck down a dirt road to a nearby lake. At the end of the fishing day, a farmer would ferry us back to our airplane, and off we'd go. Anyone who's ever flown or owned a plane is in a club that announces, "ALL FLYBOYS WELCOME."

I remember when Pops finished the Mooney Mite. We'd took her out on the maiden voyage to soar above Nebraska. He cut the engine, and we floated over the countryside. With his usual Camel cigarette hanging from his lips, he looked over at me and said, "Tighten your seat belt, and hold onto your butt." He yelled, "Contact!" switched the ignition on, and the engine roared to life. Next thing I knew, he did a half roll, and we were flying upside down. He looked over at me, cigarette burning, ashes falling on the ceiling, and asked, "How we doing over there." He chuckled, then rolled us back upright.

I'm smiling now remembering those moments. Love you Pops.

El Paso, Texas

Back then, it was the Wild West. You could go over the border to Juarez, Mexico in 10 minutes, party as a teenager, and come back alive. Today, Juarez is the most dangerous city in the world, with over 20,000 murders in the last 2 ½ years. Back in the good old days, I had my first formal date when Pops and Lucille took Ruthie and me to see the Kingston Trio at the Flamingo nightclub in Juarez. Pops had frog's legs, and I had my first lobster. The Border Town Drive-In, Bel Air High School, Industrial Avenue where we drag raced on weekends, surfing the sand dunes at White Sands New Mexico, my drunken days at Texas Western College, and my idiot

fraternity brothers at Phi Kappa Tau that made *Animal House* look tame, are etched in my mind. I'm lucky to be alive.

TWC was part of what was described by Sports Illustrated as, "The most significant event in NCAA history," when the all-black TWC basketball team defeated the all-white team of Kentucky, lead by Adolf Rupp. I tutored two of the members of that team during an incredible season portrayed in the movie and book, *Glory Road*. Two years later Bob Beamon set the world long jump record at the Summer Olympics in Mexico City. The mark of 29' 2 ½", would stand for almost 23 years. Don Haskins was the coach of both teams, and he's in the Basketball Hall of Fame, and the College Basketball Hall of Fame. I witnessed that jump, and it is another moment in the history of my alma mater. Both events were proud, significant advancements for African Americans, and great memories for me.

My first child

The birth of my son, Steve, was a major highlight in my life. We didn't know if he would be a boy or a girl, but I wanted a boy. When the doctor said, "It's a boy," I was speechless. EX-1 barked, "That's what you ordered. What did you think I was making the last nine months. Now get me some drugs." My life is certainly better for having her and Steve in it.

Making a movie called *The Monster That Ate San Jose*, starring Stevie (1-year-old), EX-1, and our stepdaughter, is a classic I have on VHS for Steve to watch when I'm gone. It's posted on YouTube under the movie title. I hand crafted a Ferrari bed, a black lacquer replica of a Ferrari GT4 Daytona Spider (like Miami Vice) for Stevie. I remember the first night we slept in it together when he was 3-years-old. A custom leather jacket I had made for Steve's 13th birthday from the Hard Rock Café, San Francisco, had the insignia changed to "May the Schwartz Be

With You.” This is a line from *Spaceballs*, one of our favorite movies, and it hangs in his closet. Thanks for Steve, EX-1. Good times.

Steve grows up

My son Steve is the product of divorce, two households, and two different philosophies. I divorced my wife when Steve was three, and he was raised via shared custody. There were minor conflicts with his mother after separating, but I maintained a position of strict fathering on weekends and vacations, and she was very nurturing. Children of divorce are at a disadvantage to begin with, having role models who have eroded the child’s vision of harmony and safe harbor. If each parent can maintain their roles, and not double-nurture to overcompensate, then the child has a fighting chance at becoming an adult available to give and receive unselfish love.

Around age 13, my son was exhibiting some behavior unacceptable to me on his weekend visits. He was breaking his promises to me, acting out at school, and being rude in general. I was very hard on him, much to the displeasure of his mother, and I didn’t speak to him for nine months. I kicked him out of my house saying, “Don’t come back until you get your act together and learn to keep your promises.”

I knew there was a narrow window for him to fix these habits or live with them forever. The easy path would have been to let it all slide without conflict, but I knew he’d pay the price as an adult.

He took my words to heart, and after many painful months for both of us, he dropped by to say hello like nothing had happened. He had internalized my words and made a promise to himself to be a better person. That was the right promise to keep, not the ones he had made to

me. Today he is one of my best friends, a very special, socially aware, responsible person making the world a better place, and someone I am extremely proud to call my son.

My first...

Dog, kiss, scooter, car, drag race, fishing trip, hunting trip, flight with Pops, Gummi Bear, surfboard, trip to Las Vegas (Elvis) – Hawaii – London – Tahiti – Australia – China - New York and Rio, first scuba dive in Fiji, and my first 85% Woman, Lynn.

Life with Lucille

Every minute.



What memories will you have to share with your grandchildren?



COWBOYS AND COWGIRLS

I have a great perspective on life, founded with Lucille, and evolved through friends and challenges along the way. In Germany, Lucille and I would go to the base theater every Saturday to watch the new (six month old) movie from back home. It cost a nickel for me (honest), and a dime for her. Steve can't believe it cost five cents, but it's my nickel story like Pops' Depression era bread, and I'm sticking to it.

LUCILLE'S FAVORITE MOVIE GENRE WAS WESTERNS, or an "oater" as Pops called them. Her favorite TV westerns included *Rawhide*, *The Rifleman* and *Bonanza*, which Pops dubbed a high school horse opera. Their theme was a handsome sheriff, the good guys always won and the women wore a plethora of petticoats. Lucille liked her town marshals played by men named James, including James Garner as *Maverick*, and James Arness on *Gunsmoke*, the longest running TV show in history at 635 episodes over 20 years.

Lucille had some favorite movies like *Ben Hur*, *Gone with the Wind*, *The African Queen*, *The Sound of Music*, and *Casablanca*. But, nothing topped the satisfaction of movies like *Stagecoach*, *How the West Was Won*, *High Noon*, *Valdez is Coming*, and *The Sons of Katie Elder*. If there was a backstory, she filled me in. *The Searchers*, starring John Wayne and directed by John Ford, explains the foundation of racism and prejudice in this country, according to Lucille. Movies for her were a great escape from reality for two hours.

The Hollywood studios don't release westerns very often, because they don't earn much at the box office, and TV Westerns are non-existent. Lucille commented that she hadn't seen a good cowboy movie in a while, and she missed her horse operas. I was heading down to Houston on business and scheduled my usual visit where we would catch up. The movie *Silverado* had

just come to VHS, so I picked up a copy for my trip. *Silverado* was written and directed by Lawrence Kasdan, who wrote *The Big Chill*, *The Bodyguard*, *Body Heat*, and *Raiders of the Lost Ark*. *Silverado* was very successful at the box office and starred a young Kevin Costner, Kevin Kline, Scott Glenn, Danny Glover, and Brian Dennehy as the bad ‘must die’ sheriff.

After dinner with the family, my brothers headed out for the evening, while I settled in with Pops and Lucille to watch our movie. Lucille had a habit of going to sleep right at the very end of a movie at home. She was always the first one up in the morning and the last one down at night, but often ran out of gas late at night. Pops would get up and head to bed if it was after 9:00 PM. We were all enjoying the movie, and on queue Pops announced his departure for bed about half way through the movie.

Lucille and I would chat during the film, and I could tell when she was getting sleepy. It would either be close to the end of the film or it became very quiet where she was reclined on the love seat. It was a standard joke that we would have to wake her to go to bed. I went over to the sofa and shook her, “Lucy, come on. You have to wake up and go to sleep.”

She stirred and blinked, “Is it over?”

“Yes,” I said.

“My heavens, I don’t know why I can’t stay awake for the ending of these things,” she said.

I helped her up and she headed toward the hallway to the bedroom.

“Did they finally kill the naughty sheriff, Cobb?”

“Yup, the polecat got what was coming to him,” I said.

“Good riddance to bad rubbish,” she said. “I’ll see you in the morning. I love you.”

“I love you too, mom,” I said.

Lucille wandered into the hallway and commented, “That was a good one. They don’t make them like that anymore.”

As usual, I had to agree with her.

Come to think of it, when it comes to moms, they don’t make them like Lucille anymore.

-- THE END --

EPILOGUE

“I’ve shed my tears. It’s time to move on. I have children who are still alive, and I have to be strong for them.”

Lucille

Many friends, and too many family members have passed on. In my family of eight, as the oldest of six children, only my brother “Greg” Gregory Lee remains. This chapter is a farewell to people I’ve loved, lived and laughed with, and I miss each of them every day.

BHBF



“Tex” Theron Carl Fehrenbach II

Tex was my first BHBF, and we met in Wiesbaden, Germany. He was born in Louisiana, attended the US Air Force Academy, was commissioned as a First Lieutenant, graduated flight school, and was assigned to fly C-7 Caribou supply ships. The photo here is his graduation picture from the USAF Academy. Tex was sent to Vietnam, where he was a great pilot and a brave soldier, but he was killed in action April 6, 1970, while supplying ground troops.

His name is on the Vietnam Memorial at location 12W, 101. Many people have family and friends with their names on that wall, and it’s a very moving experience to visit this

memorial in Washington, D.C. I left a picture of our Little League Indians under his section when I visited in 2002. I love you and miss you, pal.

Photo is Tex's United States Air Force Academy graduation picture.

"Tex" Theron Carl was 25-years-old, and he's buried in Consolata Cemetery in Lake Charles, LA.

FAMILY



This is our passport photo taken before our Wiesbaden, Germany duty station. Left to right: "Debbie" Debra Sue, Pops, Roger Paul, "Greg" Gregory Lee, Lucille, "Randy" Randall Rush, and me. Pops said my ears in this picture made me look like a taxi cab with both doors open.

Our family was as Pops described, "A barrel of monkeys, with never a dull moment." From the first memorable moments of my life, I remember love, happiness, fun and adventure in our home. We all know that we are going to die someday, and we hope to pass gently into the night.

All of my grandparents went quietly, and were remembered fondly. Pops and Lucille were not so lucky, and before they died, they'd buried half of their children. This is always stated as the most unnatural, worst thing a parent can experience. They had to endure it three different, unimaginable times, each one more horrific than the other. In the end, it was too much for Lucille, and as strong as she was, she could not withstand the pain of losing her children,

Carole Anne Peak

Pops was stationed in Albany, Georgia and my new baby sister had just arrived home from the hospital on February 19th. I remember Lucille and Pops smiling as we all looked upon her in the basinet. About five weeks later she died of SIDS (Sudden Infant Death Syndrome). This is when infants just suddenly stop breathing, and they presumably die without pain.

This was my first encounter with sadness in our home. I was only 5-years-old, but I could feel Lucille's grief. One night I heard her crying in her room. I was a big comic book reader, and I came in with a few issues, sat next to her, and I started to read to her like she did for me at bedtime. I remember she stopped crying, and hugged and kissed me as I read on. This was my first experience of the healing power of love.

Carole Anne was 39-days-old, and she is buried in Babyland Crowhill Cemetery, Albany, Georgia.



“Randy” Randall Rush Peak

He was mom’s little baby. One thing Lucille told me after Carole Anne died, and after other funerals, that it was important to have an open casket ceremony so you could see that person and say your final goodbye. Randy had put a 12-gauge shotgun in his mouth and denied her a final farewell. Two weeks later, the funeral home in Houston, Texas was in the papers. They had been closed, and two employees were arrested for necrophilia - sexually molesting young male corpses. Lucille read that headline and nearly fainted. The absence of an open casket was bad, but the indication that Randy might have been molested was worse.

I never told Lucille about my last conversation with Randy. I told Randy I loved him, and then he was gone. After Randy’s funeral, Lucille said, “I’ve shed my tears. It’s time to move on. I have children who are still alive, and I have to be strong for them.” She was brave, but she would not be strong enough to handle what would happen a year later.

One evening shortly after Randy’s death, Pops and I were sitting in the kitchen drinking Jack Daniels together. We were reminiscing about fishing and flying. After a lot of whiskey, I said, “You know, you don’t say ‘I Love You’ a lot. I know it’s not your thing, but you really should tell me now unless something bad happens to me, or any or us for that matter.”

Pops looked at me, paused and said, “I love you.”

I said, “I love you to, Pops.”

There was an even longer pause, and then Pops said, “Don’t make me do that again.”

“Okay,” I said. Then we talked about the trip to Bull Shoals.

Randall Rush was born February 5, 1956, and died when he was 21-years-old. He is buried in Houston, Texas.



“Debbie” Debra Sue Peak

Debbie’s death shook our family to the core. I had come home from playing golf, when EX-1 told me the news. I was stunned. Another year, and another horrible family death? EX-1 loved my sister, and when she got the news, she threw a drinking glass through the sliding glass door in our townhome.

No one could reconcile this senseless death. I would be haunted for decades thinking what could have been if my BHBFs had found and dealt with her abusive boyfriend. My nightmares sent me to counseling and men’s groups for grief. Lucille would never recover. Pops hardened and it was difficult to get a smile out of him under any circumstance. My other brothers absorbed this tragedy in their own way.

Debra Sue was born January 12, 1952 and died when she was 25-years-old. She is buried next to Randy in Houston, Texas.



“Lucy” Lucille Elizabeth Peak

Debbie’s death was the fatal blow. Lucille had shed tears for Carole and Randy, then came back strong for her other children. This time, her tears would never end. In one year I saw Lucille age 15 years. She withdrew, became frail, and began to forget things. She succumbed to dementia. Coming into her home I was confronted by an angry, decrepit woman who had no idea who I was as she shouted, “Who are you? What are you doing in my

house?” This continued for years as her health failed along with her mind.

She would live with one lung for 36 years, and labored to function on many days. With her failing health, it became even harder to breathe. She had lost all hope, and in her heart, love was nowhere to be found. Debbie and Lucille talked every day, and they were inseparable. Her most cherished friend was gone. She had dedicated her entire life to her children and too many had been taken. She struggled to find a purpose to go on. Lucille said in a rare moment of anger, “My children have been ripped from me for no reason. My life has been wasted, and I have no reason to go on.”

Lucille literally died of a broken heart ten years after Debbie died.

Photo taken with Grandpa Mack, Lucille, and me in Clinton, Missouri.

Lucille Elizabeth died when she was 75-years-old, and is buried next to Randy and Debbie in Houston, Texas.



Peak - Four Generations

“Pops” Robert Weldon Peak

Pops was lost without Lucille. He wandered around the 5-bedroom house fiddling with radio controlled model airplanes.

When that became boring, he started making wine and beer in the bathroom tubs. I got him a bread machine, and he started making bread daily, packing on a lot of extra weight.

I had moved back to California after Debbie’s death, but kept in touch with the family weekly. I’d talk with Pops about politics, the idiots in Washington (nothing has changed in two decades), airplanes and old fishing stories. We spent time recalling funny moments in Germany, El Paso, Bull Shoals, fishing with his Pops, and stories of his childhood. He seemed in good spirits, but I knew he was concealing his pain.

In some ways, Lucille’s death was a relief for Pops. He cared for her for three years when she was unrecognizable as the vibrant woman she had once been. He put her in a convalescent home where she could get constant care. He eventually had to let her go.

He started seeing one of mom’s oldest friends, and they were good company for each other. One of the last times I saw him in relatively good health, and he came to San Francisco with his lady friend. We went to dinner in the city, and I was talking with them at the table like I would with Pops and Lucille. Suddenly, I realized this was not my mom. It was weird. Pops was in good spirits and seemed happy.

He had ordered the swordfish, and it came with a dollop of green wasabi mustard. Pops had lived in the orient and traveled the world, so I assumed he knew his cuisine. I looked over

and he was bright red, with a vein in his forehead bulging. This usually happened when he started laughing too hard. I asked what was wrong.

He said, “That horseradish really packs a wallop!”

He had smeared the whole lump of wasabi onto a small corner of his fish, and downed it in one bite. I ordered some milk, and he survived.

He continued his new life, but 40-years of smoking had taken its toll. He quit smoking when he was in his sixties because the flight doctor said he was not going to pass him for his pilot’s license. No one in the family could influence him, but the thought of not flying was dreadful. He stopped smoking the next day. Chewing Nicorette gum and constantly jingling the change in his pocket kept him occupied enough to kick the habit.

As his health declined, he said to me, “I’ve lived a good life. I’ve been everywhere I wanted, done what I always wanted, had a great wife and great kids. I’m tired now. I’m ready to go.” He spent a few months dragging around his little oxygen tank before he was rushed to the hospital.

I saw him one last time in the hospital in Houston. He was connected to all kinds of tubes, with a tracheotomy to breath. He couldn’t really talk, but I held his hand, and told him he had been a good dad, and I loved him. The tears in his eyes reminded me of Grandpa Mack when he couldn’t respond. A few days later I was back in California, and that night, I sat up in bed and knew he had died. I got a call that next day that he had passed away about the time I had awakened.

I returned to Houston for his funeral, and much to the dismay of EX-1, I took Steve with me. She didn’t understand this. I did Pops’ eulogy and told stories about Lucille and Pops, their

children, his challenges during the Depression and the story about nickel bread. I had one last story about Pops that none of his friends or other family ever heard.

When we lived in Germany, and Lucille got critically ill, Pops knew she might not make it through surgery. Technology then lacked the precision we have today for operations like removing a lung. I found a pink 3x5 index card in their dresser drawer that Pops had written to her when she was in the hospital. It was a romantic promissory note, written 39-years-ago.

When we lived stateside, Pops still had memories of the Depression. He combined economy with his gift giving, and Lucille told me, “You’re father thinks anniversaries are for new appliances. For our silver anniversary I’m sure he’ll give me a new chrome refrigerator.”

When we lived in Germany, his pay was doubled for overseas officer duty, included free housing, and the exchange rate was four Deutsche Marks for every U.S. Dollar. His buying power in the German market was about eight times what it was in the U.S. We lived very well then, but his memories of the Depression still kept him tight with a dollar.

The card read:

To my wife. I know I don't tell you enough that I love you, but I do. When you get out of surgery, this is my promise to buy you that sterling silver place setting for eight you've always wanted.

Love, Bob

On the back of the card:

P.S. This offer is good for one year, or until we leave Germany, whichever comes first.

He was a great father and husband, a loyal friend, the best pilot and worst driver, and he made me laugh one last time as I read the back of his card to Lucille. After my eulogy speech, I went and sat with Steve, who was 11-years-old, about the same age as me when we were in Germany and that note was written.

Steve said, "That was great dad."

I said, "You know what your job is when I go, right?"

Steve said, "Yep. I got you on this one Pops."

The five generation photo (rare today) was taken in Clinton, Missouri with me, Pops, Grandpa Rob, and Great Grandpa Olaph.

Robert Weldon was born January 3, 1917 in Magnolia, Missouri. He died when he was 78-years-old. He is buried next to Lucille, Debbie, and Randy in Houston, Texas.

Rest in Peace All.

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Taken at Sears & Roebuck in Butler, Missouri. Love you mom.



Lucille and Pops, shortly before he went to Okinawa at the end of WWII.

Circa 1944.

I miss you every day and love you both.

Bobby Mack

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I'd like to thank Pops and Lucille for starting me on my journey with love and hope, and sage advice. To my brothers and sisters, I love you. To my hundreds of relatives in Missouri, Iowa, Kansas, and Nebraska, I send my best wishes. To my BHBFs, thanks for having my back. To my son and stepchildren, you're the best. To my experimental flights, EX-000, EX-1, and EX-2, and all the women I attempted to cross the abyss with, good luck in your journeys. To my love Lynn, there's more good things to come, and, "I love you. And, whatever I do today, I just want you to know that I'm sorry, and you're right."

Gratitudes to my friends and readers, Steve, Deano, Lynn, Robert, Rose, Leighs, Sharon, Dina, Peter, Jeff, Jim and Dianne. Additional thanks to my Jungian therapist, various men's groups, and the people and choir at Glide Memorial in San Francisco, which inspire me when I visit. I appreciate the game of golf and the tranquility of surfing as life elements that have kept me pleasantly distracted during hard times. All of life's answers are in the movies and books, and I hope to contribute to solving some of life's mysteries through my words.

Finally, to all my new readers, thanks for your time. I hope your life will be better for knowing Lucille through my eyes, and may you always "Love Long and Prosper."