
Dating 101

*A Dating Dorks Reentry Into The
Dating World*

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*This book is dedicated to
Tesla and Dannie
you were there from the start
you encouraged, laughed, and
always believed*

D-Day

Day 1-

My first day post divorce, or D-day as I'm starting to call it, and all I can think is; Oh crap, now what?

What has happened to my perfectly planned out life?

I have had my life mapped out for as long as I can remember. I've made lists, lots and lots and lots of lists.

Hell, I've even gone so far as to make a flowchart or two. I am the person that always

knew exactly what they were going to do at all time.

I feel like a stranger in my own life; who is this person I have been forced to become? I'm even too scared to look in a mirror now. This isn't me, divorce just wasn't supposed to happen to me. It wasn't in my cards.

I swear I even talked to a psychic once that told me I would enjoy a long and fruitful love life; obviously she sucks at her job. Long and fruitful my ass.

If you take a look at my family, they just don't get divorced. We are "lifers" or at least we have been until now. It looks like I'm going to be the first to break that particular family tradition.

My parents are getting ready to celebrate their 50th wedding anniversary, my older brother is still married after 18 years, and my little sister is still blissfully married after 10 years. Yeah I know; who actually refers to their marriage as blissful especially after 10 years of marriage but she does. The truth is it has never really bothered me until now.

Finding myself at the first stages of divorce has brought out the cynic in me, now I get to be the big family marriage failure. The one that couldn't hang. The one and only divorcee. I am the family screw up. It's just so

much fun being the “black sheep” in the family. God, I feel like such a loser. Now I have two kids, one dog, a couple of cats, a mortgage, a car payment, and one brand-new ex-husband. What the hell am I suppose to do with all this?

I’ll never forget when and where we were when Ken told me he wanted a divorce, at the time all I could think was what about all our plans??? I swear I just about launched myself across the dining room table where we were supposed to be enjoying a quiet dinner just the two of us and discuss our upcoming trip. Hello, Ken. We had PLANS!!! PLANS you moron, PLANS.

We just bought our house, a fixer-upper; you know the one that YOU wanted because there was so much for you to do to put your stamp on it. It needs work, work you were supposed to do. How am I going to fix all of the things that were on your list? I can paint, hell I’ve even hung sheetrock, but I have no idea how I’m going to rewire the front porch light or fix the leaking bathtub; I checked and learning plumbing just wasn't on my flow chart.

What about the kids? How am I going to handle Taylor if she starts to date some crazy kid? Or Dylan when he starts driving?

And then what about our retirement plans? I know they were still years away, but now I’m

going to have to rethink them all. The who, the when, the how, the what, and the WHO!! I mean, what if I end up alone forever? It might happen, I hope not but then anything is possible. Right? It's not like I planned on getting divorced either, so I guess I'm going to have to plan for anything now.

It looks like I now have baggage, lots and lots of baggage. Heck, I could probably fill an entire freight liner with all of my baggage. Who in their right mind would want to take me on?

Logically, I realize I've been alone since the separation began, but until that little piece of paper came in the mail yesterday, I still held on to a small piece of hope.

Hope that Ken would come to his senses and come crawling back home begging me for another chance, (and in all of my fantasies he always came begging because, face it, he left me and I have to have some self respect right?)

I hadn't really faced the possibility that this is really it. Moving forward I will be alone. There will be dinners alone, evenings alone, going to my high school reunion alone. Just a lot of being alone. I think for today I'm just going to crawl back into bed and cry.....alone. ☹

Day 5-

I AM NOT A FAILURE!!!! I AM NOT A FAILURE!!!! I AM NOT A FAILURE!!!!

Homework. That's right folks, my brand-new therapist, which matches my brand-new divorce and my brand-new ex-husband (look at that everyone, now I have a matched set), has informed me that I have to convince myself that I am not a failure. Easy for her to say, she's not the big family failure.

The one that has somehow managed to screw up her entire life.

The person with the opposite of the Midas touch, the one.....

Okay, Okay, I know realistically that I'm not a complete failure. It takes two to make a marriage work and there obviously weren't two of us working on ours; since here we are divorced but I still can't get over the fact that I feel like a failure.

I mean, my brain understands all of this I just have to somehow convince my heart that it's true.

The thing is I know I tried to make things work, God how I tried, probably for a lot longer than I should have gone on trying.

I managed to take on a lot of crap that I shouldn't have, but I keep telling myself that someday I'll be able to look back and say I gave it everything.

If things were going to end, which obviously they did, I didn't want it to be because I hadn't given it everything.

What a slogan.

Maybe I should have a t-shirt made.

"I'm not a failure: my ex just didn't agree with me".

What do ya think? Big seller?

One can only wish. Maybe I can use all of the proceeds from the sales to pay off some of these divorce debts I'm now the proud new owner of. Yeah!!! I now officially have divorce credit and it pretty much sucks like the rest of my life.

Still, according to all the experts and other divorcees who came before me; someday I will look back and say this was "all for the best", but right now I just can't quite imagine it. Instead

I'm writing in my diary trying to convince myself that I am Not a failure.

I can tell this is definitely going to take a lot of homework.

I feel like I'm back in grade school being forced to write sentences for punishment: "You will write that sentence until you figure out where you went wrong."

Thank God, I can drink wine to help me get through them now. Oh, thank heaven for wine, the fix all of the divorced woman.

Day 6

You would think after almost six months of separation, not to mention the months leading up to it, that I would feel more prepared for my new life. But I'm not. I'm completely unprepared for anything, everything, the whole thing.

All I can do is pray and make lists.

And, oh, the lists I have made trying to get my brain wrapped around the changes I am now trying to get use to; there are the lists of how I'm going to pay all of the bills.

Those are unfortunately short lists since I still have no idea how that's going to work out.

Then there are the lists for moving on with my life.

Super short ones actually since I've only got the title page written for that one.

And then there are the "No More" lists.

Those seem to be the easiest ones for me to write. These are the lists about what you will have "No More" of. You know, the ones that go:

No more evening adult conversations.

No more dual incomes.

No more family vacations.

No more, no more, no more, no more.

The new familiar story of my new divorced life. The life of a divorcee. When you're "No More" lists are now so long and pathetic that you wonder if you will ever be able to add more than one thing to your "Moving on with your Life" list.

If you're "Moving on with your Life" list even has a first entry.

This whole divorce thing is such a pain and it gives me way too much to obsess over.

I mean, I don't really even know what to call Ken anymore. My ex just sounds so strange after all these years. Maybe my "X" said with extra emphasis so people understand that is a big,

bold, capital X. But then, that just sounds much angrier, doesn't it?

Right now, I have to say that's good because that's just how I'm feeling, good and angry.

In fact I'm kind of leanings towards "The Stupid Idiot that broke my heart and then ran away".

Ummm, no, that just sounds pathetic and, more importantly, it's just much too difficult to say in a normal conversation. Damn it, I have no idea what to call him.

The sad thing is, this is just my obsession about what to call him around other people. With the kids it's even stranger. With them I always called him "Dad" but now that just seems too intimate. Not the right kind of relationship anymore.

Now I have to remember to add the "your" to Dad, like they're going to confuse him with my dad. Or their friend's dad. Or the neighbor's dad. Or God only knows whose dad. Ugg.

Why am I over thinking all of this? I'm sure I crossed over thinking off my list a long time ago. Or was it that I determined that over thinking couldn't be added to my "No More" list since that is all I seem to do anymore?

Day 9

I ran into Ken in the store today. I knew it was going to happen eventually, that is one of the small joys of living in a small town, but this time I had a great surprise!

Yep, boys and girls, Ken was busy showing off his shiny new girlfriend.

Okay, so I don't actually believe she is shiny and new actually. I have suspected that the whole time I was getting the "*I'm just not in love with you anymore*" speech it was because he had already auditioned someone for my replacement.

I mean, isn't that written somewhere in a handbook or something?

We all know that whole line is as old as time and still translates in all languages as: "*I'm getting it on with someone new and you're cramping my style*". Plus Ken has never been able to be on his own.

I do have to say that it's nice to know that I wasn't crazy all those months after all, or at least not as crazy as he wanted me to believe. It all just made me want to yell at him.

I mean "*Hello*" we've only been officially divorced for 9 days and the separation was pretty darn short as well. You really aren't fooling anyone, and besides; nothing says "*I'm afraid to be alone*" like jumping into a new relationship super fast or, in this case, before you even get out of your last one. It's just tacky.

I'm sure if he had bothered to check with Miss Manners she would have told him so.

Oh well, I guess I can just be thankful he didn't bring her with him to our divorce proceedings; that would have been fun to experience. "*Shiny new girlfriend, I'd like you to meet my ex wife, or almost ex wife, or it doesn't really matter. Let's go get a drink.*" Of course, maybe she decided that attending your new boyfriend's divorce hearing isn't such a great date after all.

Okay, enough about that, let's get back to what is really important here, Ken and the new love. She, of course, just has to be some young, skinny blond or in other words: the exact opposite of me. And when I say young, I mean YOUNG; I'd be checking her ID if I was their cashier.

Hell, I'm sure half the people there would have thought she was his daughter. Except then they would have had a lot of explaining to do,

since I don't think either of them came up for air more than once or twice an aisle.

I can't even imagine what they can possibly find to talk about. Ken has a hard enough time carrying on a conversation with his 13 year old daughter, who isn't that much younger than the arm candy. Then again, from the way they were acting in the store, talking is not what's happening there. (I think I just threw up a little bit there. Not something I ever wanted to think about.)

It took everything in me to not run the other way as soon as I saw them. Really, I didn't run but I will admit that I hid behind a display rack until they got by so I wouldn't be forced to actually talk to them. Not one of my finer moments, but that's one conversation that I don't know if I will ever be ready to have.

I'm finally to the point that I don't actually want Ken back in my life, but it's still tough to see that he's moved on. It would be much better for my ego if he had spent at least a couple of years mourning his life now that I'm not a part of it. Now I'm left wondering if I should hate her on principle or just be thankful that he's her problem now.

Oh hell, why bother to choose. I think right now I'm going to go with both of them just

to be fair. After all, being divorced is all about being fair.

Day 14

Two weeks since D-day and the first day of my journey to “A new and improved me”. (In my head I always hear that said in a deep booming voice.) Anyway, the “new and improved me” would be none other than a new diet and exercise program I have decided to start.

In the past I’ve always had big plans but no follow through. I mean, it was tough trying to please Ken and the kids when it came to food, and then trying to squeeze in enough me time to do my body any good. But now, there is no argument. One of the definite perks to being the only adult in the house: it’s all about me.

Okay, it’s not all about me, but it’s nice to be able to make decisions without someone always second guessing you.

Or changing the schedule on you.

Or questioning your plans.

Or just plain flat trying to undermine your efforts by having a spur of the moment all-you-can-eat BBQ or some other crazy idea that completely messes with your plans.

Instead if someone tries to argue with me now I get to say: “‘cause I’m the mom; that’s why”, and then we do whatever I want to do.

This time though, the kids decided they were completely on board with the new foods I’m wanting to try out, and me in all my neuroticness, (yes, I know that’s not a word), have spent well over 20 hours researching new, healthy recipes to try out.

Okay, I’ve actually spent several weeks on these but who’s counting?

Plus I bought my first gym pass. Ever.

They have a pool, and as scary as I think I look in a swimming suit, I’m ready to get out and start swimming again. It’s past time to get myself back into shape. Bikini season here I come!

Maybe?

Hopefully?

Alright, I’ll settle for a cute Muumuu right about now. Just as long as by summer I don’t look like a hippo in a tutu.