



The Pleasure Principle

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The Pleasure Principle



THE PLEASURE PRINCIPLE

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The Pleasure Principle



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The Pleasure Principle



Introduction. The Pleasure Connection

HOW PLEASURE MAKES YOU HEALTHIER,
HAPPIER & HIGHLY IRRESISTIBLE

Becky had had enough.

“My life sucks,” she told me. “The only guy I ever loved went back to his ex-girlfriend. I haven’t met anyone I’ve been interested in for years. Even if I did meet someone, I don’t know how I’d attract him looking like this.” She gestured downwards.

“It’s no use.” She frowned. “I think I’m going to go back to school. Put my energy into something worthwhile.”

When your girlfriend tells you that, here’s what you *don’t* do. You don’t nod and say, “Of course, you’re right.”

Instead, you listen to what she’s *not* saying. You listen between the lines.

She doesn’t want to give up on love. She doesn’t want to believe no one will ever love her. But she doesn’t feel she has any choice. Just look at her past experience. Why else would she have such a string of hopeless exes behind her?

Why else would she still be alone?

I loved Becky. She was beautiful, with long red hair and a curvaceous sea goddess figure. She was kind, gentle, and giving to a fault. She dreamed of the day she’d have a man to cook breakfast for. She had so many plans for the home and family she thought she’d have someday.



But she was on the verge of giving up that dream. She could see only two alternatives:

Wait for a man forever...

Or make a life without one.

I didn't know what to say to Becky. All I could offer was empathy. "I hear you," I told her. I understood.

But understanding doesn't change anything. It doesn't lift her out of her situation. It doesn't magically manifest a man to love. It doesn't help her lose the extra weight or feel better about herself.

I wished there was something I could do.

I thought about that conversation for a long time. What I should have said, or could have said. Whether I had the right to say anything at all.

You see, I'd been researching and writing about the science of attraction for over a decade. But if you looked at my life, you wouldn't find the evidence.

I'd just gotten out of a long-term relationship with the man I thought I was going to spend the rest of my life with. I left with our 3-year-old daughter and two suitcases that contained the entirety of my worldly possessions. If that weren't enough, I was staring down the barrel of my 40th birthday.

Clearly, I knew nothing about love.

Because if writing 4 books about relationships and co-authoring 7 more couldn't give me happy-ever-after, I was just as doomed as she was.



Y RISING FROM THE ASHES

There's something beautiful about women:

No matter how hard it gets, we keep on going.

We dust ourselves off. We paint a smile on our lips. We squeeze ourselves into skinny jeans and show up at the ball.

Because love is worth it.

It hurts, but it's the only game in town.

You know this. You wouldn't be here if you didn't.

But that doesn't mean we don't doubt ourselves, or toy with the idea of swearing off men. Science would urge us not to.

Researchers have linked loving long-term relationships from everything to a healthier heart to less stress. They're finding out that love adds years to your life.

The most potent anti-ager of all may be loving relationships. Studies of *blue zones*, or regions of the world where people live well beyond average, show that social support is a big part of aging well. Happily married couples keep each other going.

Love's anti-aging properties come, in part, from a well-known chemical called *oxytocin*.

You may have heard of oxytocin before. It's called the "cuddle hormone." It's released in response to warm, affectionate human contact. Breastfeeding and sexual activity both trigger its release, as do seemingly random activities like kindness and soothing music.

When you experience an oxytocin high, you feel deeply connected to others. Oxytocin builds social bonds. It helps you trust others and feel safe around them.



If oxytocin could be bottled, it would be billed as a wonderdrug. It not only makes you feel great but also reduces blood pressure, protects the heart, relieves aches and pains, and combats the free radicals that age you.¹

Well-loved women look younger and feel happier because their oxytocin levels are high.

So what does that mean if you're single? Are you going to age faster?

Not necessarily. If you're a loving person embedded in a supportive network of affectionate friends and family members, you'll get the oxytocin you need to flourish.

But if you're isolated, overworked, stressed out, and exhausted, your body can start to show the strain.

My friend Becky?

She was over a decade younger than me. She had her entire life ahead of her. But she felt old and tired. Her life was one endless hamster wheel of work, care-giving, and collapsing on the weekends. She didn't have the kind of life she could invite a man into. She was just barely keeping up.

But what could she do?

Change careers? Add even more to her plate? Sacrifice her precious evening hours by slogging through online dating sites? Force herself to stick to a strict diet and exercise regime in the hope that a slimmer body would change her luck?

Becky didn't need a diet plan.

She needed a *pleasure plan*.

And I knew exactly how it was going to work.

¹ <http://www.healyourlife.com/how-being-kind-can-keep-you-young>



Y MY BREAKTHROUGH MOMENT

I was at home one day, racing back and forth to get all the chores done before bedtime. Being a single parent means there's no one to help if things pile up. You've got to keep on top of everything or you get swamped.

My daughter was sitting in front of my old laptop computer, riveted to YouTube videos of children playing with their toys. For the umpteenth time, I worried about her. Our house was quiet with just the two of us.

As I zipped by, arms full of laundry, I asked, "You okay, sweetie?"

She glared at me. "You never play with me anymore! We never have *any* fun." She crossed her arms and turned back to the screen with a huff.

I stopped in shock. A sock dropped to the floor.

As I searched my mind, I realized there was nothing I could say.

She was right.

I'd done it again.

Coming out of a failed long-term relationship gives you the opportunity for a lot of soul searching. On retrospect, I could see quite clearly the moment when the cracks in my romantic relationship had widened beyond repair.

It was when life got busy. My partner and I gave up watching movies together in the evening and jogging after work. We didn't have time. There was too much to do.

The busier we were, the less time we had to talk. It was like we were the only two employees of a bustling business. We couldn't afford to drop any balls. So we let go of everything that wasn't essential and focused on getting the job done.

We'll have fun when we've got more time, I reassured myself. We've just got to get through this rough patch first. It'll be okay.



But we didn't make it through.

By sacrificing pleasure, we'd sacrificed the emotional reward of being together.

FINDING THE CLUE

That evening, I went to my bookshelf.

I knew I'd read something, somewhere, that talked about this. I didn't know what it was called. The pleasure connection, maybe?

I wanted to know how love was related to pleasure. Why love needs pleasure. What pleasure means to us psychologically.

I skimmed sections that talked about the importance of pleasure in a healthy diet and the importance of pleasure to radiant health.

I lingered over sections that explained why we feel pleasure. Good feelings don't happen randomly. The "happy chemicals" in our brain are Mother Nature's way of encouraging us to do things that promote survival, like eat calorie-rich food and have sex.

Then I found it.

It was an old idea. In the mid-1800s, philosopher John Stuart Mill proposed that happiness is nothing more than the presence of pleasure and the absence of pain. Therefore, the right course of action is the one that maximizes pleasure and minimizes pain.

Today, we know that's not just an interesting idea. Our brains are actually built that way. The *limbic system* motivates us to seek out pleasure and avoid pain.

That strategy is essential to our survival.

All mammals have a limbic system, which works in conjunction with memory. An animal that steps in a trap will avoid traps in future, because it associates pain with that experience. An animal that finds food in a particular spot will return to that spot again and again, because it associates pleasure with that experience.



We're not much different from animals in that regard.

We seek out experiences that we know will give us pleasure: good music, hot baths, great conversation, and fun entertainment. We avoid experiences that we know will hurt: doing our taxes, going to the gym, seeing a dentist, or admitting to a mistake.

Becky had experienced too many painful relationships. No wonder she wanted to avoid another.

Other women have experienced too many painful nights alone. They'll do anything to avoid loneliness, like jumping head-first into a bad relationship.

But pain only teaches us one thing: how to avoid getting something we don't want.

It doesn't teach us how to get what we want.

To get what we want, we need to follow pleasure's signal.

Nature has made the path easy for us. Feelings of well-being show us the way.

But too many of us don't listen. We put all our attention on feelings of distress. We listen to our fears. We distance ourselves from anything that might harm us.

And we end up in lives that are safe but not fulfilling.

We're so busy protecting ourselves from being rejected, going broke, getting sick, or gaining weight that we don't have any energy left to listen to the small, still voice of pleasure leading us towards green pastures.

We've even managed to convince ourselves that we shouldn't listen to pleasure. It's too risky. Who knows what might happen if we indulge in those good feelings? We might get fat. We might lose our jobs. We might get taken advantage of.

The result is a half-lived life, where love is elusive and disappointing.

Luckily, Nature never gives up.

She's always sending out signals, hoping to nudge you towards happier choices.



Unlike adults, children hear her call loud and clear. They haven't blocked out her messages with guilt and obligations and grown-up concerns. No wonder they love so freely. Their pleasure connection is strong.

THE GLUE THAT BINDS RELATIONSHIPS

I used to believe a very common myth:

"Love is all you need."

As long as you love each other, your relationship will be fine. You'll bounce back.

But, as my daughter reminded me point-blank, love isn't all you need.

You also need quality time. Fun and laughter. Pure enjoyment in each other's company. The type of experiences that unleash feel-good chemicals in the brain.

Without those feel-good chemicals, it's hard for anyone to feel loved.

Have you ever been with someone who claimed he was crazy about you, but his behavior showed otherwise? His words of love left you cold.

A person's behavior displays their true feelings better than words.

If you're always fighting, or if you constantly get irritated by him, telling him you love him all the time won't make any difference. He won't feel it.

Love needs pleasure to thrive. There's no specific area of the brain dedicated to love, so it utilizes the existing pleasure circuits in the brain. Without pleasure, your attachment wanes. You lose the emotional reward of sticking together.

I'd seen first-hand how relationships fail when all the pleasure drains out of them. You're doing your best, but you're doing the wrong things. When it's all work and no play, it's hard to feel motivated to keep going.



We expect some kind of emotional reward from our relationships. If we don't get it, we start to doubt. Love becomes a word we throw about, or an ideal we profess commitment to, rather than a knowing embedded deep in our hearts. We talk love, but we don't feel it.

Struggling couples often make one fatal mistake.

They think that happiness lies on the other side of their problems.

All you have to do is fix your problems, and it will be fine. If he communicates better, if you're more available, if he stops working such long hours, if you appreciate him more, then everything will go back to the way it was.

And maybe those strategies help. They relieve some of the pain. But what they *don't* do is restore the pleasure.

And *pleasure* is why you got together in the first place.

You became a couple because life was better together than apart. Nature urged you towards one another with feelings of well-being and joy. Pleasure told you this was right.

Restore the pleasure, and you restore the love.



I COME UP WITH A PLAN

Looking up from my books at last, I rubbed my eyes. My head hurt from all the questions swirling inside.

It was easy to see the role of pleasure in already-established relationships, but what if you haven't met anyone yet? What was the role of pleasure in attraction?

And how could you use this idea on a practical level? Could you use pleasure to restore a rocky relationship? Could you use pleasure to get commitment?

I needed to know more.

I needed a plan.



Concrete steps that would unleash the game-changing power of pleasure.

This wasn't just about relationships. Few people knew about the groundbreaking research showing the impact of pleasure on health, youthfulness and vitality.

I frowned at the stack of books on my table. No one was going to read all these. But the information they contained shouldn't be a secret. Everyone should know the truth:

We'd dramatically underestimated pleasure.

We'd dismissed it as unproductive, unnecessary, a guilty indulgence...

Never realizing that it was one of the most powerful forces in our lives.

Powerful enough to slow down the aging process.

Powerful enough to attract and keep lasting love.

So I made a decision.

I was going to share this information myself.

I was going to get it to as many women as I possibly could.

And I was going to reduce it down to practical steps, so that it changed *lives* as well as changing minds.

I'd gathered up my books when one final insight hit me.

I hadn't admitted to myself the *real* reason I was doing this.

It wasn't because I couldn't help Becky.

It wasn't even because my daughter called me out on the lack of fun in our lives.

It was because *I* needed to learn this more than anyone.

Me and Pleasure didn't get along. I didn't have time for it. I had too much to do.

Even worse?



I'd cut pleasure out of my life deliberately. I thought that needing pleasure made me weak. I felt guilty when I relaxed or had a good time.

No wonder my life was a struggle!

I asked myself what life would be like if I opened myself up to pleasure. Really let myself experience all those great feelings.

An image popped up in my mind immediately.

Of all things, it was the final scene from the movie "Mamma Mia." Everyone is dancing around and singing. The fountain of Aphrodite bursts forth from the ground. There's sheer joy on everyone's faces. They're getting soaked, but they don't care.

Was I ready to sing and dance? Was I ready to get soaked in love?

I didn't know for certain.

But it was time to try.

THE CHALLENGE

This was my assignment:

Move towards the things that gave me pleasure.

And its corollary:

Catch myself when I made decisions based purely on avoiding pain.

This meant I would no longer stay up half the night worrying. I wouldn't immediately jump into fear mode when trying something new. I wouldn't waste so much energy on my problems.

Instead, I'd look for ways to enjoy myself. Even if that just meant standing outside soaking up the sunshine for a minute, or noticing how beautiful the clouds looked today. I'd spend



more time thinking about the things I *did* want in my life ... and believing they could happen to me.

This “pleasure principle” would guide my interactions with other people, too.

I’d focus on what other people contributed to my life, rather than their faults. I’d work on enjoying and appreciating those around me. I’d assume the best instead of the worst. I keep on the lookout for ways to make things more fun.

And I’d watch closely to see how my life changed as a result.

What did I expect from this experiment?

I expected to see:

- *Improved health*
- *More energy*
- *A different attitude when I woke up in the morning*
- *A better relationship with my daughter*
- *More patience*
- *Better emotional resilience*

And, of course...

- *More male attention*
- *More romance*
- *More fun dating*
- *Less rejection*
- *Killer mojo*
- *Better relationships all around*



Would it work?

Was pleasure the true fountain of Aphrodite?

You're about to find out.

AN INVITATION ADDRESSED TO YOU

I'm inviting YOU on this journey with me.

Everything's more fun if you've got company.

Want to see what more pleasure can do to *your* life?

Come on, no one has enough pleasure in their life as is! Life is tough. It's hard work. Maybe you're feeling old and tired. Maybe you're worried this is as good as it gets.

But we weren't made for all work and no play. We were designed for joy.

And until we learn how to listen to the small, still voice guiding us towards pleasure, we won't shine as we're meant to.

We can be beige, or we can be rainbow.

We can follow all the rules about how we're supposed to look and what we're supposed to say and how we're supposed to be...

Or we can be radiantly alive.

Men can't resist a woman with a healthy relationship to pleasure. The sparkle in her eyes and spring in her step captivate him. It reminds him of something he once knew, that uncomplicated joy he felt as a child.

Do you remember how it felt, looking out the window at snow falling on a school morning? How it felt the night before Christmas when you couldn't sleep?

How it felt when you dressed up in your mother's heels, put on her lipstick, and sashayed in front of the mirror?



That's *joie de vivre*, the delight of being alive.

And it's what I wish for you.

So come along with me.

Let's do this together.

Here's where we'll be heading....

YOUR ROADMAP TO PLEASURE

Warning: cheesy metaphors ahead.

I'm serious when I say I want this to be fun. ;-)

For me, silly is fun. Take it too seriously, and you're back to doing the "right" thing rather than the pleasurable thing.

So here's your roadmap to the journey ahead.

CHAPTER 1.

We'll be starting at **Self-Care Station**, where we'll examine our personal relationship to pleasure. How comfortable do you feel with pleasure? Why do you need pleasure in the first place? And what could your inner bad girl teach you about having fun?

CHAPTER 2.

Where do you go from here? The quickest route to your destination is **The Pleasure Path**. You'll learn the nuts and bolts of the Pleasure Principle, and I'll show you how Pleasure Power can make your life a whole lot easier.

The Pleasure Principle

INTRODUCTION. THE PLEASURE CONNECTION



▶ CHAPTER 3.

You'll need something to entertain you while you're **Traveling Solo**, so we'll look at pleasurable ways to spend your time. You'll find out why your [#innerbadgirl](#) is so successful with men and how to steal her tricks. Enlist a Pleasure Posse, take the Pleasure Challenge, and become a Pleasure Planner. Single life has never been more fun!

▶ CHAPTER 4.

You can see for miles from **Attraction Alps**—and he can see you, too. Thanks to what you've learned in the last chapter, your radiance is shining like a beacon. You'll learn to attract men from afar with the 3As.

▶ CHAPTER 5.

The two of you are in love, and you've never been happier. Step into a boat made for two and set sail into the sunset. You'll want **Smooth Sailing** to help your relationship grow from casual to committed.

▶ CHAPTER 6.

Storms come up even for the happiest couples. When conflict and stress threaten to break you apart, use the Pleasure Principle to **Tough out the Turbulence**. Don't get capsized by scary emotions. Learn to adjust your sails and use the force of conflict to push you to new levels of trust and vulnerability.



▶ CHAPTER 7.

At least, you've arrived at your destination, where the **Key to Paradise** has been lying in plain sight all along. The palm trees sway, the water is warm, and you can relax into the knowledge that the love and happiness you were seeking have been here all along.

What do you say?

Are you with me?

Then let's hop over to Self-Care Station.

The Pleasure Principle



Chapter 1. Self-Care Station

"PLEASURE IS A BETTER MOTIVATOR FOR CHANGE
THAN FEAR."—**MARIA RODALE**

Quiz time!

Consider your average day. Pick the phrase from Column A or Column B that best describes how you spend the bulk of your time and energy.

	COLUMN A	COLUMN B
1.	<i>Doing what you should be doing</i>	Doing what you want to be doing
2.	<i>Thinking about problems</i>	Thinking pleasurable thoughts
3.	<i>Feeling irritated, annoyed, exasperated</i>	Feeling relaxed, peaceful, content
4.	<i>Worrying about the future</i>	Enjoying the present moment
5.	<i>Feeling tired and worn out</i>	Feeling energetic and capable
6.	<i>Taking care of other people</i>	Taking care of yourself
7.	<i>Mentally zoning out</i>	Soaking in everything around you
8.	<i>Feeling isolated and on your own</i>	Feeling connected and supported
9.	<i>Struggling to eat right and exercise</i>	Eating foods and enjoying activities that give you pleasure



Which did you pick more options from, Column A or Column B?

If your average day looks a lot like Column B, congratulations! You're in the perfect mindspace to attract the man of your dreams *and* keep him.

But if your average day looks more like Column A, we've got work to do.

By "we," I mean both you *and* me.

I've spent most of my life in Column A. I grew up in a family that prioritized hard work, service, and personal responsibility. Although those were great values, I found myself suffering from burnout. Between overscheduling and fatigue, I felt like I was on a hamster wheel and couldn't get off.

I couldn't see how looking after myself could be as important as meeting deadlines, being a good parent and friend, or keeping the laundry basket from overflowing.

Thankfully, I had a great mentor who held me accountable.

Each week, she asked me what I was doing for myself. "You brush your teeth each day, right?" she said. "You take a shower, right? You put on clothes. So why don't you pick one self-care habit and do it just as regularly?"

She could see me squirm. She added, "I'm not talking about a huge time investment. It could be just 5 or 15 minutes. You could find 5 minutes, couldn't you?"

Of course I had to say yes.

Maybe someone you care about has given you the same message.

Ever had someone say to you, "You've got to look after yourself. You can't take care of other people unless you take care of yourself first"?

Then you know what I mean.

But what is a chapter on self-care doing in a book on attraction?



Surely attraction is about looking hot, or saying and doing all the right things to hook his attention.

Get ready for a major mindset shift...

Women who don't enjoy enough pleasure in their lives *need* those extra tactics to attract men. But they're not necessary.

If you have a close and healthy relationship with pleasure, you'll find yourself attracting men *regardless* of what you look like or how well you play the dating game.

Men can't resist a woman who's in touch with her own pleasure.

And that's not just my opinion.

It's the conclusion of Dr. Christiane Northrup, an OB/GYN who writes extensively on women's health.

Y THE NITRIC OXIDE CONNECTION

“Pleasure is a divine gift to us.
It should be a discipline practiced regularly
to establish happiness and joy in your body and your life.
Sustainable pleasure is the ultimate prescription for good health.”

Dr. Christiane Northrup, *Goddesses Never Age*

Dr. Northrup was researching ways to optimize health into our golden years when she uncovered research on a hitherto overlooked chemical in the body called *nitric oxide*.

Nitric oxide helps relax blood vessel walls, improving the flow of blood and life-giving nutrients throughout the body.

It's *so* important to good health and vitality that Dr. Northrup dubbed it the “spark of life.”



Although there are prescription drugs that trigger its release (including Viagra), there's an even easier way to flood your body with nitric oxide:

Experiencing pleasure.

She discovered that pleasure improves how your entire body functions. The deliberate pursuit of pleasure could even work away at stubborn health conditions!

That got her thinking. She decided to find out what else pleasure can do. I'll tell you what she found in a moment.

The connection between pleasure and health wasn't news to neuropsychologist Dr. Paul Pearsall.

He wrote an entire book about it, explaining that "those who relish life and expect to enjoy it for a long time are 3 times less likely to die young than those who expect an early death."

A life full of pleasure is worth living for.

As pleasure raises your nitric oxide levels, the body releases *serotonin* and *beta endorphin*, also known as "happy chemicals" for how good they make you feel.

So is pleasure a luxury?

Absolutely not.

We're designed to feel our best, mentally *and* physically, when we're enjoying regular doses of pleasure. Pleasure and happiness are intimately connected by design.

HOW PLEASURE IMPACTS YOUR LOVE LIFE

But perhaps you're thinking that your health isn't the issue...

The issue is your unsatisfactory love life.

You want to meet the man of your dreams and live happily ever after!



Well, pleasure has a major impact on that, too.

You see...

When you're in love with life, your love life shows it.

Men are drawn to pleasure. They want some of what you're having. They want to join in the fun.

But stress kills those sexy vibes.

No matter how beautiful a woman is, men will be reluctant to get to know her if she's often stressed, worried, or anxious about the future.

I know, it's totally unfair.

No one should be blamed for how hard their life is at the moment.

If life were easier, sure, you'd be having a lot more fun. But you can't drop the ball. You've got to focus on work or school or getting through this tough patch.

Which is exactly why you need pleasure more than anyone.

When life is stressful, amp up the pleasure.

Pleasure is the ultimate antidote to the rather pleasureless stress-management strategies doctors push on us.

Yes, you should be doing yoga and meditation and breathing exercises and progressive relaxation, but honestly? When you've got too much on your plate, that feels like more work.

So treat yourself to pleasure instead.

Pleasure engages your *parasympathetic nervous system* the same as more formal stress-management techniques.

When you're enjoying pleasurable experiences, whether it's laughing with friends or savoring a delicious meal, your body switches gears. It dials down from "fight or flight"



mode to “rest and digest” mode, a response governed by the parasympathetic nervous system, or PSNS.

Your PSNS is responsible for a range of health-restoring functions, including slowing your heart rate, digesting food, and (this is key)....

Sexual arousal.

Arousal can't happen if you're in fight-or-flight mode. Anxiety, pressure, deadlines, and looming disasters kill those sexy feelings.

You need to be able to relax to get in the mood, and pleasure is the quickest way to do it.

Have you ever noticed how much sexier you feel while on vacation? That's because of your PSNS. When you're relaxed and enjoying yourself, those sexy vibes turn on automatically.

Compare that to how you feel when you're always on the run, with no time to stop and smell the roses. Without your PSNS switched on, you enter a sexual desert.

Now get ready, because I've saved the best research for last...

🍷 THE PLEASURE BOMBSHELL

After researching the role of pleasure further, Dr. Northrup found that:

“ A woman who is in touch with her pleasure regularly is also able to turn on a man. She actually becomes ‘virtual Viagra.’”²

Dr. Northrup found that men experiencing sexual difficulties were overjoyed to find their issues resolving on their own after their wives began learning how to pursue their own pleasure.

² <http://www.stewartblackburn.com/library/articles/magnificent-article-on.html>



By “pleasure,” I don’t necessarily mean sexual pleasure. These were women who were simply doing more of what they enjoyed, whether that meant ballroom dancing or getting out more. And they were doing it on their own, without their husbands.

Think about that for a moment:

All you have to do to turn on a man is prioritize your own pleasure.

Even if that pleasure doesn’t include him.

Why?

Well, one theory is that *pleasure is contagious*.

We know that from experience. Just take a small child to an amusement park. No matter how boring it seems to you, you’ll enjoy yourself enormously as you watch your charge dash from ride to ride. It’s hard to insulate yourself from a small child’s enthusiasm.

Science can explain why seeing another person enjoy herself triggers pleasure in the viewer. It all comes down to the *mirror neurons* in the brain.

Mirror neurons are behind the experience of empathy, where you feel what someone else is feeling. They fire in response to what you’re seeing.

If you’re watching a movie and the main characters begin to cry, you may have to wipe away a sniffle yourself. If you’re watching the Olympics and an athlete takes home the gold medal, you may feel quite celebratory yourself.

So the quickest way to give *him* pleasure is to experience your *own* pleasure. The mirror neurons in his brain will fire automatically.

Here’s what I want you to take away from this:

Learning how to become utterly absorbed in your own pleasure turns you into a sexual bombshell.

And no one knows that better than the bad girl.



Y THE SECRET OF THE BAD GIRL

Sounds so easy, right?

Enjoy yourself more, and watch the men come flocking to you.

But I need to make a distinction here.

The kinds of pleasures we normally allow ourselves—going out, buying something nice every once in a while, enjoying the occasional dessert, sleeping in on the weekend—aren't enough.

To reap the full rewards of pleasure, you must learn to pursue it consciously and deliberately. Pleasure must become a *lifestyle choice*, rather than an occasional treat.

There's one group of women for whom the primacy of pleasure goes without saying:

Bad girls.

We've all come across a bad girl or two in our lives. Maybe you can recall the name of the bad girl (or girls) at your high school. Were they popular with the guys?

Of course they were.

They were girls who didn't follow the rules. Instead, they tried to have as much fun as they could without getting caught.

But isn't that selfish?

Sure it is!

But here's the thing:

Being selfish doesn't mean she hurts other people, or doesn't care about them.

It simply means that **she puts herself first**.

She does what she does for herself and not for others.



That makes her incredibly attractive to men. Every single man out there has fallen for a bad girl at least once in his life. Men fall for bad girls for the exact same reason you can't resist bad boys.

Bad boys give us permission to indulge in wanton hedonism. They're all about pleasure. They'll do anything to get it. And they'll take *you* on the ride.

Being with a bad boy feels liberating. It's freeing to follow your desires without considering the consequences. Even if the relationship crashes and burns (as it likely will), for that short time you feel extraordinarily alive.

Good men date bad girls for the same reason.

Bad girls teach *desire-oriented living*. With a bad girl, a good man can indulge in naughty pleasures without feeling shame or guilt. Her freedom sets him free.

It's ironic that being in touch with pleasure is considered "bad," as if there were something morally wrong about it.

We're taught that giving others pleasure is okay, but taking pleasure for yourself is selfish. Besides, we have to live with other people. Social rules are there to protect everyone. Part of being a good person is putting yourself last. Doing things you don't want to do is part of life. If you don't think about the consequences or plan for the future, you'll get burned.

And yet...

We can't stop thinking about the bad girl.

We believe what she's doing is wrong, but part of us wishes that we could *be* her.

The bad girl has a huge hold on our cultural imagination. Bad girls show up in movies, reality shows, novels, and music. Jungian psychology would say that she represents an aspect of our collective shadow.

We can appreciate the vicarious pleasure of watching a bad girl on screen. We can admire her courage, frankness and freedom. But do we dare to look inside ourselves and see that we're more like her than we realize?



I'm going to ask you to do something very important.

From today forward, I ask that you “own” your inner bad girl.

Invite her to come forward. Ask her what she wants you to know. Imagine what it might be like to live for pleasure.

Now, that doesn't mean you have to break any laws or get a tattoo or start drinking and carousing.

It simply means you have total permission to *feel your desires*.

Uncensored.

In technicolor.

Remember, Nature designed us with a built-in reward center for a very important reason:

To encourage behaviors that support our health and longevity.

So let your pleasure guide you in the way it was meant to.

Not towards self-destruction, but towards self-expansion.

One of the best teachers of pleasure today is Regena Thomashauer, AKA “Mama Gena.” She runs a School of Womanly Arts in New York City. Her programs teach women to get in touch with what they really want, have fun no matter what, and explore the delights of the senses.

She explains:

“It is so easy to live a miserable life, and it takes great skill to live a pleased life. You have to be so disciplined. Pleasure is not for sissies. It is for the courageous.”³

Do you have the courage?

³ <http://www.mamagenas.com/about-the-womanly-arts/>



Y THE ART OF PURSUING PLEASURE

Don't worry:

You won't be asked to run off to Europe or become a lush or invest in big sunglasses and a flashy convertible.

The kind of pleasure that matters here is entirely *personal*.

It's what makes YOU feel good.

Conventional bad girls sign up to a limited view of pleasure when they think it's about drinking and partying and skipping school. Very often, they do those things because they *think* it should be fun, not because they actually enjoy it all that much.

You can become a bad girl by spending an hour a day gardening, or going to bed early and reading a good book, or skipping the party for a long walk out in nature.

As long as you're following your bliss, it doesn't matter whether anyone else thinks it's pleasurable or not.

Marketers try to convince us that we can buy pleasure by purchasing their brand of perfume or shampoo or shoes.

But you don't need anything outside yourself to experience intense pleasure.

You have your very own *pleasure factory*, of which you're the sole owner and operator.

Your body is the ultimate pharmacy. The feel-good chemicals it releases beats anything invented in a laboratory. You get natural highs with the release of *endocannabinoids*, *dopamine*, *oxytocin*, *endorphins*, and *serotonin*.

Although scientists can predict some of the activities that will release those chemicals (cuddling, novelty-seeking, and exercising, for example), your job is to figure out the rest.

Don't be fooled by what others, including popular culture, consider pleasurable.



Genuine pleasure is a *physical sensation*. You can feel it in your chest, or in your gut, or running through your veins.

It's that warm, wonderful feeling we experience when we're doing something that gives us great enjoyment and delight.

If you're not feeling it, then what you're doing isn't pleasurable. No matter how many other people say you should enjoy it.

Try this. Imagine standing outside on a warm, glorious day.

You can feel your skin soaking up the sun's rays. The birds are singing. There's just enough of a breeze to tickle your ear. It smells like summer. You've got all the time in the world. You can stand there as long as you want, closing your eyes and enjoying the wonderful sensations.

Can you feel what I'm talking about?

That's pleasure.

A lot of the "pleasures" we allow ourselves aren't really pleasures. They're distractions or numbing agents. I call them *pseudo-pleasures*.

Most people think that watching a good movie is pleasurable, but what you're really doing is checking out of your body for two hours. You're zoning out. You're not even aware of physical sensations; your awareness is completely captured by the storyline.

Others consider it pleasurable to drink alcohol, but what they're really doing is numbing themselves. Alcohol disconnects you from your body. You stop hearing your body's signals clearly, which is why it's so easy to overeat when you've been drinking.



Genuine pleasure has 3 important traits.

1. YOU CAN FEEL IT IN YOUR BODY.

Pleasure isn't a nice thought. It's a *physical experience*. Your whole body feels wonderful, warm, relaxed and blissful.

2. YOU'RE TOTALLY PRESENT.

Your attention isn't caught up in worrying about the future or dredging up the past. Even if it's just for an instant, you're fully here.

3. IT'S GUILT-FREE.

Pure pleasure has no worried or uncomfortable feelings in the background. Simply put: *If it's pleasure, it's not painful.*

Y WHAT'S YOUR RELATIONSHIP WITH PLEASURE?

So, I've *got* to ask...

How is this striking you?

Do you like the idea of connecting with your inner bad girl?

Or are you absolutely horrified at the thought?

After all, who knows what might happen? You might get it into your head to run off and join the circus. (My former mother-in-law did!)

You might put on 20 pounds with all the rich food you'll eat. You might shock your parents. You might offend the neighbors. You might lose all the discipline and self-restraint that's gotten you this far.

Fair enough.

Those are very real fears. (Aside from the one about the circus.)



We've been raised in a culture that values the ability to delay gratification. In fact, a classic study found that children who were able to restrain themselves from eating a marshmallow now, with the promise of more marshmallows if they waited, did better in life.

Self-control might get you those high SAT scores or that promotion you wanted ... but will it fill your life with love?

American culture has always had a complicated relationship to pleasure.

Our Puritan founders viewed hard work as healthy and pleasure as decadent. In fact, the word *puritan* has come to mean “*strict and anti-pleasure*,” a warning against having too much fun.

European cultures are much more accepting of pleasure. Spaniards think nothing of stopping the day and having a 2-hour siesta. In Austria, workers enjoy 5 weeks of paid vacation time a year. The French are famous for 7-course meals.

Obscene indulgences?

Or evidence of an admirable lust for life?

One way to see whether there's enough genuine pleasure in your life is to look at how often you treat yourself by buying something you shouldn't.

Consumerism is a pseudo-pleasure. You feel as if you deserve something nice for all the hard work you put in, so you buy into the hype that tells you, “*You'll feel great if you own this product!*”

But remember:

Pleasure is personal.

If you feel a great deal of pleasure every time you use a product, then your purchase was worth it. But the act of buying itself? It's nothing more than handing over cash or a card in exchange for a bag and a receipt. There are more pleasurable acts than that.

As you start investigating your own relationship to pleasure, you may find that pleasure takes you closer to healthful living than you'd think.



Here are a few examples from my life.

- ♥ I used to buy clothes because the sale price was too good to resist, or because the sales assistant said I looked great. Now? I focus on *how it feels*. If wearing it makes me feel amazing, and it's in my price range, I buy it. If not, I don't—no matter how good it looks on me.
- ♥ I used to crave sweet, creamy lattes. I'd always get the jumbo cup, since it was a rare splurge. But then I realized that my primary enjoyment came from the first few sips. After that, I stopped really tasting what I was drinking; I drank it on autopilot. Now I get the smallest size to maximize the pleasure.

Is all this talk of pleasure making you wonder what sources of pleasure you have in your own life?

Great. Then it's time to put your new ideas to the test.



YOUR 4-WEEK PLEASURE PROGRAM

WEEK 1. DISCOVER YOUR PLEASURE PROFILE

What you'll need: Notebook or journal, pen

Over the next week, keep a small notebook or journal with you at all times. Notice when feelings of well-being surge. Write down what you're doing.

Maybe you feel exhilarated after a good long chat with a friend. Maybe you feel glorious after a yoga session. Maybe lying in bed on a weekend morning is the height of luxury. Include anything, no matter how small or seemingly insignificant.

You'll be using this Pleasure Journal for future exercises, so feel free to personalize it in any way that inspires you.



The Pleasure Principle

CHAPTER 1. SELF-CARE STATION



► WEEK 2. MAKE A PLEASURE JAR

What you'll need: Jar, paper, pen, scissors, and decorating supplies like stickers, paints, or glitter glue

Review the pleasurable activities you wrote down last week. Circle those activities that you feel give you a reliable hit of pleasure.

Write down each of the activities on a slip of paper. Fold each slip of paper in half and put it in your jar.

If you know of other activities that give you pleasure, which you didn't write down earlier, add them to your collection.

Decorate your Pleasure Jar until the sight of it makes you smile.

As the week continues, try to think of more pleasurable activities to add to your jar. Talk to friends about the project and get their input. Google “*ways to add more pleasure to your life*” if you dare. There's lots of advice out there, and not all of it will resonate with you. Trust your inner bad girl to let you know what tickles your fancy.





▶ WEEK 3. MAKE A DATE WITH PLEASURE

What you'll need: 15 minutes per day, Pleasure Jar

Remember what my mentor told me?

If you can remember to brush your teeth every day, then you can remember to take a few minutes for self-care.

This week, your task is to set aside just 15 minutes a day for a date with pleasure. (Although you're welcome to use more!) Decide in advance when it's going to happen. Make it as non-negotiable as brushing your teeth. If you need to, turn off the phone and tell your family you won't be available.

When it's time for your Pleasure Date, open up your Pleasure Jar and pull out one slip of paper. Do whatever activity is listed for 15 minutes.

If the activity isn't possible—maybe it requires going outside when the weather is miserable—then you're welcome to select another slip of paper.

Do this every day for 7 days.





► WEEK 4. PLEASURE REVIEW

What you'll need: 5 minutes

Pleasure has been on the forefront of your mind for three weeks now. Are you experiencing any shifts yet?

Complete the sentences below by picking *a*, *b*, or *c*.

1. I (*a*) understand (*b*) mistrust (*c*) adore my inner bad girl.
2. I feel guilty about taking time for pleasure (*a*) sometimes, (*b*) all the time, (*c*) hardly ever.
3. I indulge in a little “me time” (*a*) a few times a week (*b*) hardly ever, (*c*) almost every day.
4. I have (*a*) some (*b*) hardly any (*c*) tons of sources of pleasure in my life.
5. My sexy vibes are (*a*) improving (*b*) still nonexistent (*c*) exploding all over the place.

Scoring

If you picked mainly a's: You're getting there! Shifting lifelong habits can take some time. What's fantastic is that you're now aware of a different way of living. Slowly but surely does it.

If you picked mainly b's: You're a tough nut to crack. Which makes this course even more important for you. When we've spent our lives dismissing the value of pleasure (let me tell you, I've been there), it can be hard to reverse our position overnight. Keep listening with an open mind.

If you picked mainly c's: Brag a little, why don't you? ;-) You're a quick study, and you're doing great.



The Pleasure Principle



Chapter 2. The Pleasure Path

You've only begun to see what pleasure can do.

Incredibly enough, all the benefits I talked about in the previous chapter were just the beginning.

Pleasure can be the key to getting everything you want in life.

Health. Abundance. Marriage. Happiness.

Whether your goal is a successful business or life-long love, pleasure will help you get it.

But maybe you don't believe that. Maybe you're shaking your head. *"Yeah, right. Pleasure? It's nice, but hard work and self-discipline are the real key."*

That's what we've all been led to believe:

Work harder, deny yourself, and reap the rewards eventually.

Well, "eventually" isn't good enough.

If you're not enjoying the journey, then it doesn't matter how great your destination is.

You'll be burned out by the time you get there.

So here's what I propose:

Take the Pleasure Path instead.



Y THE PLEASURE PRINCIPLE (AKA THE CARROT OR THE STICK)

As modern women, we have our sights set on the prize.

We know exactly what we want from life.

We know that nothing is too good for us. We want it all: the man of our dreams, the house, the family, the career, the car, and the tropical vacations.

But, if you're anything like me, there's a big gap between where you're standing and where you want to be.

You know where you want to end up, but what direction should you take to get there?

The Pleasure Principle makes it easy.

Even if it looks like there are a thousand different ways to achieve what you want, you really only have two choices.

1. *You can move towards pleasure, or*
2. *You can move away from pain.*

Of those two options, only one is a reliable guide. (And I bet you can guess which one!)

This is known as the **Pleasure Principle**, and it's a very old idea.

We've known for a long time that pleasure and pain are the purest, most powerful forms of motivation.

Sigmund Freud coined the term "pleasure principle" to describe the way human beings instinctively seek pleasure and avoid pain.

He wasn't the only one to notice this. Several hundred years ago, British philosophers Jeremy Bentham and John Stuart Mill developed an ethical theory around maximizing pleasure and minimizing pain.



These days, there's a popular metaphor for the Pleasure Principle:

“The carrot or the stick.”

If you want to get a stubborn donkey to move, you can either dangle a carrot in front of its nose or whack it with a stick.

Depending on which form of motivation you use, the donkey will either *move towards* pleasure or *move away* from pain.

You'll get it to move in the right direction either way.

You can see “carrot or stick” forms of motivation everywhere. The employer who offers bonuses to employees who exceed their targets is using a carrot. The employer who penalizes employees who fall short is using a stick.

What's even more interesting is that **we use these two forms of motivation on ourselves all the time.**

Have you ever promised yourself something pleasurable as a reward for doing a difficult task? Then you're well versed in the power of the carrot.

Have you ever scared yourself by visualizing what might happen if you fail to do something? Then you're well versed in the power of the stick.

Most of us have a preferred way of motivating ourselves.

We know whether it's more effective to *scare ourselves* with worst-case scenarios or *inspire ourselves* with best-case scenarios.

For example, let's say you want to lose weight. Which strategy would be more effective in changing your behavior?

1. *Focusing on how much you dislike your current weight, and how awful it would be if you were stuck at this weight forever, or*
2. *Focusing on how wonderful you'll feel when your jeans are looser and your reflection in the mirror makes you smile.*



You can either move away from what you don't want (*option 1, the path of pain*)...

Or move towards what you want (*option 2, the path of pleasure*).

Both routes will get you moving. Both routes will get you to your goal.

But only one will make the journey fun.

Y THE PROBLEM WITH PAIN

Make no mistake:

Whacking a donkey with a stick is *very* effective in getting that donkey moving.

A lot of people respond better to pain than pleasure. Fearing the worst inspires us to act when anticipating the best won't budge us.

But there's one area in life where fear wreaks havoc:

Relationships.

To see why, try this mental exercise.

Imagine that you've hit a dry stretch in your dating life. No dates. No hits on your online dating profile. No men you're interested in. No prospects of anything changing.

You go out with your girlfriends, and every single time you're the only one without a partner. You're not sure what to do with your vacation time, because no one is available to do anything with you. You come home each night to a dark, silent house. You eat your dinners alone. You get into a cold bed every night.

Next, imagine that this dry stretch lasts all year...

Into the next year...

And the next.

And the next.

Quick—check in with your body. How are you feeling?



Any tension? Any tightness in the chest or gut?

Fearful thoughts cause a physical reaction, through a mind-body link known as the *stress response*.

Now, what I asked you to imagine hasn't even happened. It's only one possible version of the future. But it has the power to creep you out. It has the power to make single life feel even more unbearable than it did a minute ago.

Dwell on that thought, and your body responds automatically.

Fear primes you for action. Your *sympathetic nervous system* (or SNS, the opposite of your PSNS), kicks in. It makes your heart rate increase and your blood pressure spike. Adrenalin floods your body. Whether your fear is real or imagined doesn't matter. You're ready to do battle.

That's a problem.

If you were in a genuine state of emergency, you'd need all that adrenalin to fight or flee. But the danger is all in your imagination.

And if you were on a date, or chatting with an attractive man, when those fearful thoughts arose...

You'd be lucky to escape with your self-esteem intact.

That's because **stress sabotages your love life.**

The instant that stress response kicks in, your palms start to sweat, your heart starts to race, and nerves make you jittery. All of which might be useful, if you were outrunning a saber-toothed tiger. But you're not.

You're talking with someone *you really want* to like you back.

And all that stress... Well, it isn't showing you off at your best.

Even if you manage to pull it off, *your* stress makes *him* feel stressed. A man who feels stressed just talking to you is unlikely to want a repeat experience.



Who's in Charge of Your Love Life: Stress or Pleasure?

Read the sentences below and circle whether you mainly agree or disagree.

1. I feel confident I'll be married someday. (*Agree/Disagree*)
2. I rarely worry about meeting someone. (*Agree/Disagree*)
3. I find it easy to flirt. (*Agree/Disagree*)
4. Talking to guys is so much fun. (*Agree/Disagree*)
5. I'm not all that bothered about what he thinks of me. (*Agree/Disagree*)
6. I sweat a lot when I'm talking to someone I really like. (*Agree/Disagree*)
7. It's a big deal if I manage to get a man to like me. (*Agree/Disagree*)
8. I spent an hour or more prepping for dates. (*Agree/Disagree*)
9. I'm always worried about saying something stupid in front of a guy I like. (*Agree/Disagree*)
10. A date feels like a major test. I want to win but I'm afraid I'll lose. (*Agree/Disagree*)

Scoring

On questions 1 to 5: If you agreed, give yourself a point.

On questions 6 to 10: If you disagreed, give yourself a point.

If you got 3 points or less, it's time to knock Stress off its pedestal and put Pleasure in charge of your love life. You'll see the most dramatic benefits from applying the ideas in this chapter.

If you got 4 to 6 points, you have a natural optimism about dating that sometimes gets squelched by worry. Becoming aware of negative thoughts and choosing not to feed them will be key for you.

If you got 7 or more points, Pleasure is firmly in charge of your love life. Every so often, doubts drag you down, but your resilience keeps you firmly on the road to success.



Y YOU DON'T WANT TO MAKE A HABIT OF THIS

Putting stress in charge of your love life has some pretty harsh consequences.

Your natural attractiveness slumps when you're stressed.

In the last chapter, you learned that your PSNS, or *pleasure response*, sets the stage for feeling sexy. Unfortunately, your SNS and PSNS can't work at the same time. Turning on one turns off the other. Which means...

If you're stressing, you're not "pleasuring." (Okay, maybe that's not really a word.)

The stress response dampens your sexual response. By dampening your sexual response, it dampens his. He doesn't get the signals he needs from you to feel confident about making a move. He may like you and think you're a nice woman, but he doesn't feel that physical chemistry.

Unfortunately, many of us see attracting a man as *a challenge to get stressed out over*.

It's not pleasurable. It's not relaxing.

It's hard and scary and downright intimidating.

All of the fear-mongering but well-meaning mothers, agony aunts, and the media don't help. (A 1986 *Newsweek* article claimed—erroneously—that a woman over 40 was more likely to be killed by terrorists than find a husband. Thanks, guys.)

It's stressful to be single. It's stressful to put yourself out there.

It's stressful to face the fact that you don't know how, or when, or even *if* your future husband will show up.

That background stress is *hard* to get rid of.

You've got it as long as you're single.

Even worse, *it feeds on itself*.



The more you worry about your love life, the more those fears pop up every time you see an attractive single man. You train yourself to associate dating and relationships with stress and difficulty.

Scientists have a saying:

“Neurons that fire together wire together.”

You might know it better as the principle that caused Pavlov’s dogs to salivate every time he rang a bell.

If you feel a certain way every time you do a certain thing, then pretty soon that emotion will be indelibly attached to that experience.

So, if you often feel stressed when it comes to flirting, dating, and putting yourself out there...

Then you’re training yourself just like Pavlov’s dogs.

“Is that a hot guy? Yikes, why did those sweat patches just bloom underneath my armpits? I can’t think. My heart is racing. I think I’m gonna die!”

You see a hot guy, and you’re instantly anxious. You go on a date, and it’s like visiting the dentist. It doesn’t matter how nice he is or how good it’s going. You’re sure it’s going to be a big fat fail.

You can’t live like that.

Your only hope lies in triggering your pleasure response. All your sexy vibes are locked away in your PSNS. The only way to reach them is to relax.

But how can you relax when your stress response is out of control?

Listen and learn...



Y YOUR INNER BAD GIRL HAS SOMETHING TO SAY

There's one part of you that can't be bothered to get stressed out over a man.

It's your inner bad girl.

She doesn't care what a man thinks.

She doesn't feel any pressure to perform like a trained monkey on a date.

She just wants to have fun.

Her motto is, *"If he can't appreciate how great I am, then it's his loss."*

That attitude intrigues men, especially the really good-looking ones.

The more attractive a man, the more he's used to female attention. He's used to women getting worked up in his presence. He's seen all the tricks women use to hook his attention.

So, when a woman isn't playing that game, he wonders why.

I once hooked the hottest guy in my gym using just that trick.

It wasn't deliberate. I actually wasn't attracted to him. I was interested in someone else at the time. Besides, he was quite a bit younger than me and full of himself. He knew he was the hottest guy for miles, and he expected women to treat him accordingly.

We worked out at about the same time, so we got to know each other as friendly gym partners. Even though I wasn't the hottest girl in the gym by a long shot, I was the only one who wasn't afraid of having a casual chat with him.

We became friends, and I ended up offering to introduce him to some of my female friends. I didn't realize until later that he was only interested in the one woman who wasn't interested in him: *me*.



Looking back, I think he valued my company because he could relax around me. He could be himself, because I had no ulterior motives. (Men can feel it when you're sizing them up against your Ideal Man checklist.) There was no pressure, so we had a lot of fun. He planned a mean date, I'll admit that.

I want to be clear, though.

I wasn't "playing hard to get."

I was just following what made me feel good. If I enjoyed his company, then I'd go out with him. If I didn't enjoy his company, then it didn't matter how attractive he was; I wasn't interested.

My inner bad girl was in charge, and he couldn't resist.

But bad girls aren't the only ones who understand pleasure power.

Very good girls do, too.

Except they call it something else:

Creative visualization.

Y ACHIEVE GOALS FASTER WITH PLEASURE POWER

Ask any entrepreneur, elite athlete, or anyone in a high-performance industry about *creative visualization*, and they'll have heard the term before, if not be an ardent fan.

When there's a lot at stake—a gold medal, a million-dollar business, or an Oscar-winning performance—the difference between winning and losing is *all in the mind*.

Just one stray doubt can cause a game-losing stumble. A nervous comment can lose a business deal.

High performers can't afford to think of failure, embarrassment or defeat.



So they use the Pleasure Principle.

They prepare for that tough negotiation or competition by imagining how brilliantly they'll succeed.

They visualize the scene down to the very last detail. They see themselves performing flawlessly. They feel the waves of applause washing over them. They rehearse the perfect performance again and again, until their confidence is absolute.

Then, when it's time to walk into that meeting room or onto that gym floor, there's no dread or fear. The stress response doesn't sneak up and choke them. They're relaxed, calm, and confident ... and they sail through.

Creative visualization turns a critical moment from a *scary test* into an *exciting opportunity*.

Have you ever tried anything like that?

I bet you have.

Think back to when you were a kid. Did you ever imagine yourself as a rock star or a world-record-shattering athlete? Then you were creatively visualizing.

When I was a little girl, I was thrilled when my grandmother gave me one of her old sheer white curtains. I draped it over my head and swanned down the "aisle" of the hallway. I was visualizing myself as a bride, though I wouldn't have called it that. I was just pretending.

Pretending is how kids visualize. They're experts at it. They can imagine any dream coming true, even one that's not realistic.

For example, one day I asked my daughter, then 4, what she wanted to be when she grew up. "I think I'll be a teacher," she said, "and then when I'm a bit older I'll be a fairy princess."

Wouldn't it be wonderful to have that confidence? ;-)



Borrow a little fairy dust, then! *Visualize*. If you don't like that word, then just pretend.

You already visualize all the time. All those thoughts running through your head, playing out every possible scenario? They're visualizations on autopilot.

But you don't want to give your mind free rein.

Left to their own devices, your thoughts turn dark. You imagine the worst. You can't help it. Those thoughts just pop up.

So take back control.

Turn your mind in the direction of pleasure, and you'll never look back.

Here are some fun ideas to start.

Envision all the fun you're going to have dating. Think of all the different kinds of people you're going to meet. Imagine which guy is secretly in love with you. Envision bumping into 'the One' when you go to work tomorrow. Browse an online dating site to spot the guy who's been searching for you his entire life. Imagine what your future boyfriend might be doing right now.

Fill your mind with *as many* pleasurable thoughts as you can pack in.

Keep doing this, and pretty soon the prospect of romance won't be stressful at all. It will be your chance to shine!

CAUTION: DON'T DO THIS

You may have heard a version of this idea before.

Some popular advice suggests using creative visualization to paint a picture of your ideal man. You're asked to envision your perfect partner down to the last detail. All you have to do is imagine exactly what you want, and Mr. Perfect will fall out of the sky into your lap.

Does it work?



For some, maybe. But more often it tends to backfire.

If you convince yourself that only a certain type of man would be perfect for you, you end up discarding a lot of nice men who don't fit the profile.

Men don't like being judged. They can feel it when you're evaluating them for boyfriend potential. And they back away.

A much more successful strategy is to focus on *how you want to feel*.

Imagine being with someone who makes you laugh. Imagine having such a close connection to someone that it feels like you've always known each other. Imagine staying up all night talking. Imagine how it will feel when he asks you for your number ... and calls you the very next day.

Imagine going on a date that's so much fun you never want it to end. Imagine how wonderful it will feel to get roses for no reason at all. Imagine what it will feel like to have someone to snuggle up with each night on the sofa.

You don't know who the guy in your dreams will be, but you do know how much fun you'll have together.

And that will help you spot him a whole lot faster.

PLEASURE POWER IN ACTION

By now, you understand the theory behind pleasure power. Let's look at how you might put it into practice.

Say you met someone online, and you finally managed to pin him down for a coffee date. What thoughts are going through your head in the days leading up to the date?

Are your friends warning you that he might be a serial killer? Have you got a plan in place for bailing out early if he's a creep? Are you stressing over what to wear? Planning detailed conversational topics in your head?



What a lot of work! That's *way* too much stress.

You can't afford to associate a date with all those stressful thoughts.

So associate it with good thoughts instead.

Obviously, you'll want to have safety precautions in place, but after that, focus on how much fun you're going to have. Isn't it great to finally meet this guy? You'll finally get to see whether he's like his profile. You'll get to learn about those interesting hobbies he's hinted at. Even if there's no chemistry, you'll still get to practice your conversational skills and perhaps make a new friend.

Deliberately replace all those *stressful thoughts* with *pleasurable thoughts*.

Here's what this does:

It changes your energy.

Rather than arriving for your date nervous and a little stressed out, you bounce in happy and genuinely enthusiastic to meet this new guy.

His first thought: *Relief*.

He's overjoyed to know that you're not going to be hard work.

He warms up even further when he sees that you're actually interested in getting to know him *as a person* (not just a potential boyfriend). He doesn't have to prove himself to you. You're just going to shoot the breeze for half an hour. If it works out, great. If it doesn't work out, great.

Soon, he's sitting back, completely relaxed, and trading jokes with you.

Do you think he'll want your number afterwards?

Try it and find out. ;-)



Y AS IF YOU NEEDED ANOTHER REASON

“ There are now hundreds of scientific studies documenting that those persons who seek and find shared bliss in their everyday life lead the happiest, longest lives. Research shows that our pleasure system is also our most effective health-care system, leading us to what is good for us if we read it correctly.”

Dr. Paul Pearson, *The Pleasure Prescription*

Now, I don't want to scare you...

But there's another MAJOR reason you should be swapping stress for pleasure:

It has to do with your health.

You already know just how good pleasure is for the body. But what you may not realize is how bad stress is.

Chronic stress speeds up the aging process.

A 2013 study by the Columbia University Medical center found that long-term stress is as bad for the heart as smoking 5 cigarettes a day.⁴

Stress ages your skin,⁵ causing inflammation, dryness, and acne outbreaks.

Long-term emotional distress, such as that caused by social isolation or chronic anxiety, can take years off your life.

That's the conclusion from a number of studies looking at the relationship between stress and telomere length.⁶ Stress shortens the protective caps on the ends of your chromosomes, which compromises your cells' ability to reproduce. This can lead to chronic disease or even premature death.

4 <http://newsroom.cumc.columbia.edu/blog/2013/02/01/is-stress-really-bad-for-your-heart/>

5 <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4082169/>

6 <https://www.psychologytoday.com/blog/the-athletes-way/201404/emotional-distress-can-speed-cellular-aging>



Now, no one is claiming that stressing out over your love life is *anywhere* near the level of stress needed to activate those biological responses.

You don't get wrinkles from worrying about when you'll finally meet Mr. Right!

But chances are, if you're used to worrying about men, you're also prone to worrying about a lot of other things.

So don't take any chances.

Apply Pleasure Power to every area of your life where anxiety seems to have a hold.

Don't focus on the scary "what-ifs."

Focus on the pleasurable "wants."

Use your imagination to brainstorm ways to have the life you always wanted. Creatively visualize. Spend those brain-numbing hours in traffic or waiting in line thinking about all the wonderful things ahead for you.

Move towards pleasure, rather than away from pain.

Health, happiness, and success await.



GET SERIOUS

Ready to start your Pleasure Power training? Then try this 4-week program to train your mind to think pleurably.

You'll start out by becoming more aware of the ways you habitually think about relationships. You'll learn how to deal with any negative thoughts that could trip you up. In the final week, you'll learn what your own personal paradise looks like.



► WEEK 1: KEEP A THOUGHT DIARY

What you'll need: Your Pleasure Journal, 15 minutes or more each day

This week, your task is to start noticing the messages you're telling yourself about your love life.

For 7 days, I'd like you to stop each time you notice a thought about men, dating, or your relationship prospects crossing your mind. Write that thought down in your Pleasure Journal, along with the date and time.

If it felt like a positive thought (e.g., it made you feel good), then write a + sign next to it. If it felt like a negative thought (e.g., it didn't feel so good), write a - sign next to it.

Some thoughts might not seem immediately relevant. For example, let's say the thought crossed your mind, "I feel fat." If you believe that being fat will make it hard for you to find a man, then that's relevant. Write it down.

If you've ever kept a food diary, you know how much work this can be until you get into the swing of it. But you also know how enlightening it is when you see patterns you never noticed before.





► WEEK 2: IGNORE THE PASSENGERS ON THE BUS

What you'll need: Your Pleasure Journal, 30 minutes

Now it's time to analyze the data.

Count up the thoughts you have each day about relationship topics. Write down how many of them are positive and how many of them are negative.

Are the bulk of your thoughts positive or negative?

Are there any negative thoughts that continually recur?

If you could assign a theme to the negative thoughts you have about your love life, what would it be?

Are there certain times of the day when you're more vulnerable to negative thoughts?

That's useful information. It gives you insight into what you're up against.

Make no mistake: it's hard to change habitual thought patterns. If you've been thinking those thoughts over and over again for most your life, they're part of your programming. But, as every computer scientist knows, you can always rewrite the program.

Personal change starts with awareness. And you've already started becoming more aware of where you're sabotaging yourself.

This week, your job is to continue the good work by practicing *mindfulness*.

This means becoming more aware of your thoughts. If you can notice yourself thinking, you can detach yourself more easily from the content of the thought. Your negative thoughts won't have as much power over you.

For example, if the thought comes up, "*Online dating is such a waste of time*," notice it and let it go. Don't fight it. Don't argue with it. And don't feel bad for thinking it.



Just move your attention onwards.

There's a wonderful metaphor that really brings the idea to life. My mentor described mindfulness as *ignoring the passengers on your bus*.

Imagine you're trying to drive a bus. But your passengers keep shouting at you. "You're a failure!" "You don't know what you're doing!" "We'll never get anywhere at this rate!"

Your passengers are all the negative thoughts clamoring for your attention. They're the thoughts you identified just a minute ago.

You can't kick them off the bus. But what you can do is *keep driving*. Focus on getting to where you want to go. Don't let your passengers distract you.

You may never be able to shut up your passengers. But you don't have to let them stop you from getting where you want to go.





► WEEK 3: FIGHT BACK

What you'll need: Your Pleasure Journal, 30 minutes

For the past two weeks, you've become more aware of the thoughts running through your head. You haven't attempted to challenge those thoughts; you've just focused on noticing them.

This week, it's time to fight back.

Take out your journal and look at the thoughts you identified as negative. Write out a response to every single thought.

For example, if you wrote, "I feel fat," you might write, "I am beautiful." If you wrote, "I hate online dating," you might respond with, "I'm learning the system."

When you're done, slip that notebook into your pocket or purse. You'll need it.

For the next 7 days, your job is to talk back. Use your prepared responses. Challenge those annoying thoughts. Refuse to let your own mind put you down.

If the thought crosses your mind that you'll never have a boyfriend like that? Tell it, "Yeah, my boyfriend will be better," and move on.

You're not at the mercy of your programming. You have the power to retrain your mind. But you can't eliminate unwanted thoughts unless you have something to replace them with.

From this week forward, consider yourself your own personal life coach. When life gets you down, tell yourself what you need to hear to get back up again. If you have a favorite motivational figure, like Oprah or Pastor Rob Bell, ask yourself what they would tell you.





► WEEK 4: FINDING PARADISE

What you'll need: 30 minutes, your Pleasure Journal (optional)

After a battle like last week, you need a rest.

And you don't need a plane ticket or vacation time to do it.

This week, I want you to find half an hour for yourself. Half an hour where you can enjoy some peace and quiet without being disturbed.

Maybe you'll draw yourself a hot bath. Maybe you'll close your bedroom door and put on some soothing music.

Get comfortable. Set a timer to beep in half an hour, and close your eyes.

Cast your mind into the future. If nothing was holding you back, what kind of life would you create for yourself? Imagine that you have no limits, financial or otherwise.

What would you *really* like to do?

Who would you *really* like to be with?

How would you earn your living?

How would you spend your days?

Let your imagination roam free. Think thoughts that make you smile.

You have half an hour for this exercise, which may feel like more than you need. But sometimes the breakthroughs come when you think you're done, so take the full 30 minutes.

If you want, you can write down your flow of ideas in your Pleasure Journal.



The aim of this exercise is to get you fantasizing about a life of pleasure, a life that enriches you in every way. We don't often give ourselves permission to fantasize. Reality comes down hard on our dreams.

But you won't be able to move towards the life you want if you don't allow yourself to dream. Don't get stuck fighting against everything that irritates you in your current life. Instead, imagine alternatives. Creatively visualize.

Power up with pleasure, even imaginary pleasure, and watch how far you'll go.





Chapter 3. Traveling Solo

*P*erhaps you're thinking...

This all sounds great, but how am I going to find any opportunity to practice it?

There's not a single man in sight.

Not one. Zilch.

So, what, I'm supposed to magically summons forth Prince Charming with the power of pleasurable thought?

Exactly!

I know, it sounds a lot like *The Secret*. But I'm not claiming the perfect man is going to magically appear on your doorstep just because you "believe."

(The perfect man is more likely to appear on your doorstep when you start throwing parties!)

Believing with all your might is child's play compared to *pleasure power*.

Pleasure is the "secret sauce" that puts the kick back in your love life.

Take pleasure in *thinking about* what you want, take pleasure in *working towards* what you want, and you'll get there before anyone else.

Let's find out how pleasure can start to shift your life right now and break that man drought once and for all.



Y THE CURSE OF THE CHRONICALLY SINGLE

A while ago, I noticed something very interesting about certain women.

These women just weren't getting any results in their love life. Which was strange, because they were smart, attractive, and accomplished. I thought they were wonderful. I couldn't understand why they were still single.

But then I noticed they all had one thing in common:

These women didn't see anything pleasurable about dating.

They were very vocal about it. The whole process of trying to meet someone was painful. They felt angry, frustrated, and overwhelmed by all the hoops they had to jump through just to meet someone decent. It just wasn't fair!

Now, these weren't lazy women. They were putting in an enormous amount of effort. They were trying speed dating, singles mingles, ballroom dancing, karaoke nights, even Tinder. With all the effort they put in, you'd think they'd be swimming with dates. But they weren't. No wonder they were fed up.

I got to thinking...

Was the Pleasure Principle at work?

These women *hated* being single. They *hated* dating. But they did it, because it was the only way they could get a relationship. Pleasure wasn't driving them. Duty was.

Without pleasure, their efforts just weren't working.

(As an aside, this is where a lot of people get led astray by the Law of Attraction. They assume that just thinking about what they want is enough. It's not.)

You've got to do more than fantasize about having a relationship.

You've got to do more than just show up.



Putting yourself out there is not enough to attract a man's attention. Lots of women put themselves out there. Nightclubs and online dating sites are full of women putting themselves out there. It doesn't mean they're getting asked out.

There's a missing ingredient to the formula. One thing you *have to have* before your efforts start making magic. You know what that is?

Pleasure power.

The spotlight falls on those who are enjoying themselves the most.

Pleasure makes you shine. Sheer enjoyment in what you're doing makes you shine. When you shine, everyone looks your way.

A lot of us have this backwards. We think that we'll enjoy ourselves if the party is good, or the company is good, or there are attractive men in attendance. We don't realize that *enjoying ourselves* makes the party good, the company good, and the men attractive.

Pleasure comes first. And it can't be faked.

If you don't like where you're at or what you're doing, pasting a smile on your face won't hide it. Pretending that you're having a marvelous time won't make you have a marvelous time.

You've got to love what you're doing, or it's not worth the effort.

So here's what you need to know:

If the whole process of trying to meet someone feels painful to you, you're shooting yourself in the foot.

You can't attract a man easily if you resent the effort it takes.

You've got to enjoy the process. You've got to want to do it. You've got to be having so much fun that you don't care whether it gets you a guy or not.

Do you know who knows that better than anyone?

Your inner bad girl.



Y THE BAD GIRL'S SECRET WEAPON

Your inner bad girl just doesn't care.

She does what she feels like doing. She's not afraid if it keeps her single longer. Better to remain single and enjoy life than shrink herself down to be acceptable to a man.

She's not going to follow the rules, either. If everyone tells her that she shouldn't accept a weekend date after Wednesday, she laughs at them and follows her gut.

Guys think that's wonderful.

The Bad Girl is spontaneous, irreverent, and tons of fun. Her boldness is a breath of fresh air. No one puts her in a corner.

You can steal her secret weapon:

Being detached from the outcome.

The Bad Girl doesn't let herself get too attached to how things turn out. As long as she's being true to herself and following the fun, she's okay with whatever happens.

And that's good, because things don't always turn out for the Bad Girl. Maybe she gets into trouble. Maybe there are consequence she doesn't like. That's fine. She did what she wanted to do, and that's what mattered.

That attitude is rare.

Most of us want a man to like us. We want the date to be amazing. We want him to call us back. We want to dazzle him with our sheer uncontestable perfection.

We're so attached to that positive outcome that we feel *crushed* if it doesn't happen.

That's when we need to listen to our inner bad girl.



She might tell us:

It doesn't matter what he thinks of you. Being single isn't so bad. There's so much fun to be had in life. Don't limit yourself because you think you're not good enough or you don't deserve it. Live life now, because you may not get another chance.

She might add:

Men come and go, but there's one person who'll be with you forever. That's yourself. Don't let yourself down.

What do you think *your* inner bad girl would tell you?



Give Your Inner Bad Girl a Voice

Just for fun, share your inner bad girl advice on social media by using the hashtag [#innerbadgirlsays](#)

Y THIS IS WHY SWEARING OFF MEN WORKS

You may have used the Bad Girl's secret weapon before, although you may not have recognized it as such.

Have you ever sworn off men?

Maybe you just got fed up with dating. You were totally done with it. You had better things to do with your time.

How did that work for you?

Did men come out of the woodwork? ;-)



It's a well-known fact that men are irresistibly drawn to women who want nothing to do with them. Give up dating, and next thing you know a guy will be begging you to let him be your boyfriend.

It's like some great cosmic trick. As long as you really want a boyfriend, you won't get one. The minute you don't want a boyfriend, it's raining men!

I don't think you should swear off men. But I do think your inner bad girl knows what's going on.

Being too attached to anything backfires. You start treating what you're doing as a means to an end, rather than something enjoyable for its own sake. Next thing you know, you've become way too serious about the whole thing. It stops being fun, with disastrous results.

I'm thinking about the kids I knew in college who wanted to get into medical school or law school. They worked so hard. You'd see them now and again, drinking too much to let off steam before hitting the books again. Years later, I'd bump into them and find out they were in entirely different careers. They were jewelry designers, or homemakers, or basket weavers or something.

What happened?

Well, they were so focused on their goal that all the pleasure was gone by the time they achieved it.

It's a good lesson:

Take your romantic goals too seriously, and you put yourself at risk of burning out.

You can pursue your goal with such single-mindedness that, even if you achieve *everything* you said you wanted—the family, the husband, the white picket fence—you look up years later and realize you're not happy. You were so fixed on what you *thought* you wanted that you didn't stop to think about whether it made you happy.

Don't go down that path.



Don't get so fixed on achieving a certain goal that it stops being fun.

No matter what you decide you want, *pursue it with pleasure.*



Take the Pleasure Challenge

Are you more in touch with your pleasure now than you were when you started this book? Then prove it!

Snap a selfie of yourself enjoying what, for you, is *sublime pleasure*. It could be reading a book, lying in the sun, drinking something fabulous, or hanging out with friends.

Post it on social media using the hashtag [#pleasurechallenge](#) and tag some of your friends. Challenge them to reveal their secret pleasures. See how fast your pleasure inspires everyone.

Y PLEASURE = POWER

Here's the great thing about pleasure:

It's empowering.

When you feel great, you're ready to take on the world. You're charged up. You're on fire!

Pain doesn't really have that effect.

In fact, pain tends to make you feel powerless. Like you don't have any control. Like nothing will ever change, no matter how hard you try.

So why, then, do we do so many painful things just to attract a man?

Think about it:



When you do something you don't really want to do in hopes of meeting a man, do you expect you'll *actually* meet someone?

Doubtful. If you really expected you'd meet someone at that singles mingle, you'd be raring to go. Wild horses couldn't hold you back!

Most of us do a *lot* of things just to meet men, even though we don't think they'll do any good. We go through the motions, just on the off chance we might get lucky.

That's not very empowering.

But, hey, if you don't like being single, and you want to be in a relationship, then you have to do things you don't want to do. That's the way it works, right?

Wrong.

I hear that message all the time, and it's just not true. I've heard it said that dating is not supposed to be fun. If you want a husband, you've got to do it right. You can't go off and do your own thing. There are rules, and you've got to play by those rules if you want any chance at happiness. *Really?*

I've also heard it said (by women) that men are in charge. Men make the rules. Men get to make the first move. Men get to decide whether there's a second date. There's nothing women can do but look pretty and hope to get picked.

Those messages aren't just wrong, but *deadly*.

The less power you feel you have, the harder it is to feel any enjoyment in what you're doing.

If you didn't *choose* to do it, how can you enjoy it? You're doing it because you have to.

So a big part of walking the Pleasure Path is *taking back control*.

#innerbadgirlsays: Don't give your power away! Don't let anyone else tell you what you should enjoy. Don't let anyone guilt-trip or shame you into doing what you "should" be doing to attract men.



Love always finds a way. Love slips through the cracks. Follow your heart, pursue what gives you pleasure, and trust that it will all work out in miraculous ways.



Who's in Control of Your Love Life?

Read the sentences below and circle whether you mainly agree or disagree.

1. There's nothing I can do to change how men respond to me. (*Agree/Disagree*)
2. Men aren't interested in someone like me. (*Agree/Disagree*)
3. There's no one I'd even consider dating where I live. (*Agree/Disagree*)
4. No matter what I do to attract men, it doesn't work. (*Agree/Disagree*)
5. I feel like I'm waiting for my real life to start. (*Agree/Disagree*)
6. Every little thing I do gets me a bit closer to what I want. (*Agree/Disagree*)
7. Who knows? I could meet Mr. Right tomorrow. (*Agree/Disagree*)
8. I'm not limited by my past experiences. (*Agree/Disagree*)
9. There are opportunities out there to meet men I haven't explored yet. (*Agree/Disagree*)
10. I'm willing to give anyone a chance, if he's kind, decent, and good to me. (*Agree/Disagree*)

Scoring

On questions 1 to 5: If you disagreed, give yourself a point.

On questions 6 to 10: If you agreed, give yourself a point.



If you got 3 points or less, then it's time to listen to your inner bad girl. Forget what you're supposed to do. Throw out the rulebook. Follow your passion, and trust that it's exactly what you need to be doing.

If you got 4 to 7 points, then you've made a great start on finding your own path. You know you have choices. You know you make your own destiny. But sometimes doubts sneak in and trip you up. Nip those limiting beliefs in the bud.

If you got 8 or more points, you're firmly forging your own path. You're in control of your love life, and it couldn't be in better hands. Lead on!

PLEASURE CHECK

Look critically at anywhere the pleasure is draining out of your life right now.

How many things are you doing that aren't actually serving you?

If you think that online dating is mind-numbingly dull, then don't do it. There are other ways to meet a man.

If you're forcing yourself to go out on Saturday night on the off chance Mr Right will be lurking in the corner bar, then don't do it.

If the man-hunt is draining you, then take a break. Recharge yourself. Connect with what makes you feel good. Live it up a little. Then try again.



Take a Pleasure Break

Every woman knows the power of that **post-vacation glow**. When you come back from having a little time off, you're radiant, relaxed, and so much happier.

But you can get that post-vacay glow without actually going on vacation. Take a **#pleasurebreak** instead.

Dedicate an entire week to pleasure. Sure, you'll still have to go into work, but anything you can skip for a week, skip! Consider this week a break from everyday life as scheduled.

Don't do any of the things you normally make yourself do (unless there are major consequences, like not paying a bill on time). If that means you don't make your bed, let the dishes pile up, and misplace your to-do list, go for it. It's only a week!

Spend a week doing as much as you can for YOU. Raid your Pleasure Jar. Consider doing all those things you haven't had time for in ages, like homemade spa treatments, dancing around the living room, or simply sitting in the warm sun with your eyes closed.

Pleasure breaks reset your system and get those juices flowing again. They'll give you a gorgeous glow that even the best cosmetics can't fake. Men can't stop looking.

THE PLEASURE PROMISE

I've seen too many lovely, wonderful women putting their dreams on hold because they don't have a partner.

I understand their position. None of the things they want to do would be any fun if they did them alone.

They don't want to go out to eat alone, or go on vacation alone, or take a picnic to the park for one. Doing those things alone would just be a reminder of what they don't have. It wouldn't be fun.



So these women make a decision. While they're single, they'll work hard and get ahead. They'll get everything in order so that, when they *finally* meet someone, they'll be able to take a break and finally enjoy life.

Sounds so reasonable, doesn't it?

Until you talk to these women years later, and they're still working hard. They're creating an admirable life. Everyone around them is in awe. No one knows the truth.

They're *tired*.

Bone-deep tired.

Because he still hasn't showed up yet.

And they're starting to doubt he ever will.

Now, their future is not written in stone. Any one of those women, at any time, could overturn the legacy of self-sacrifice by *inviting pleasure into her life*.

She could honor the universal truth that:

No woman has ever needed a man's permission to experience pleasure.

Can I say that again?

You don't need a man to experience pleasure.

Are there 1001 things you want to do, but you can't do them alone? Then start inviting other people along.

I bet you have friends right now who would *love* to do the same things you're dreaming of, but they have no one to do them with.

You don't need a man to start living. All you need is the initiative and the courage to make it happen.

That's the Pleasure Promise:



That you will not wait until you have a boyfriend if there's any way you can make your dream happen now.

Make that promise to yourself.

Don't wait for a man. Don't postpone your pleasure. Sacrificing yourself only *sounds* admirable; in practice it drains the life force from you. You need pleasure in your life as much as you need the blood in your veins.

And here's the beautiful thing...

By pursuing pleasure *now*—and not waiting for a man to join you—you create the kind of life that men can't resist.

Pleasure attracts pleasure.

Something about you changes when you actively pursue your pleasure. You send out *pleasure vibes*. Men pick up those vibes, and they're fascinated.

So let's finish off this chapter by looking at some concrete ways you can walk the Pleasure Path, with a man or without one.



ENLIST A PLEASURE POSSE

When you're looking to make any big change in your life, there's one surefire way to keep yourself on target:

Get yourself a support network.

Share what you're trying to do with friends. Explain what you're learning in this book, and ask them if they'll help you.

Even better, get them to make the Pleasure Promise with you. Support each other in living out those dreams. Send each other silly cards and chocolates. Take each other out to dinner. Who needs a boyfriend when you've got each other? ;-)



If there's something that one of your posse wants to try, but she's too nervous, then promise you'll join her for moral support. You might even find you like it yourself!

There's something irresistible about a group of women having fun. Don't be surprised if men approach you all the time. They can sniff out the fun, and they want to join in.

BECOME A PLEASURE PLANNER

But what if there's *nothing* you like to do?

There's nowhere you like to go. The local parties are lame. Your town is full of people you don't want to hang out with.

All excuses, darling. ;-)

Stand up and accept the badge of Pleasure Planner.

I can guarantee that your town is hiding a number of women who, like you, want something different.

You may not see these women at the moment, because they're at home entertaining themselves. But if you offer the right thing, they will come.

There's something incredibly powerful about planning pleasurable experiences and inviting others to join you.

You realize that you've been imposing unnecessary limits on yourself. No one can force you to stay stuck. Instead of waiting for someone else to make something happen, you can make it happen yourself.

Being a Pleasure Planner may mean forging into the unknown. You may not feel like a leader, and you may not know how to make things happen. But you'll learn.



Y JOIN AN EXISTING GROUP

But maybe you don't have to be a Pleasure Planner. Maybe there are already people in your area doing exactly the kinds of things you like to do.

Want to find them?

Then do a search. Try sites like Meetup.com or Citysocializer.com. Browse social media groups. Pay attention to the notice boards at your local grocery store. Pick up the weekend paper and find out what's happening.

I can't tell you how many people I know who've met their future spouse on a group outing, such as a group hike or indoor soccer event.

When you're doing something you really like, in the company of other people who like the same thing, the stage is set for magic.

Y INVITE ROMANCE IN

There's one thing you *surely* need a man for:

Romance.

How can you have romance in your life if you're single?

It's easier than you think. There's one person right now who is waiting to love you more than you've ever dreamed.

That person is *you*.

Most of us have no clue how to love ourselves properly. Self-help author Louise L. Hay believes that every single problem we experience in our lives comes down to a lack of self love. "Love is the great miracle cure," she explains. "Loving ourselves works miracles in our lives."



Just to be clear, self-love is not the same as self-confidence or self-esteem.

You don't have to think you're amazing or pretend to be perfect.

All you have to do is **unconditionally love, honor, and accept yourself just as you are.**

That includes your mistakes, your flaws, your imperfections. They're all part of you.

You know how, when you fall in love with a man, you see everything about him as wonderful?

What other people might consider his faults, you consider his dear little quirks. You know he's not perfect, but you don't care. You love every last inch of him.

Can you love yourself like that?

Try it. Just try.

Treat yourself like you would treat a lover. Lavish yourself with all the good things you'd lavish on someone you love. Give yourself compliments. Make yourself a candlelit dinner. Buy yourself flowers. Go crazy and visit the jewelry store counter!

Don't keep waiting for someone to love you, when you can love yourself.



WALK IN BEAUTY

Just because you're single doesn't mean life has to be dull.

Pay attention to ways you can make your life more beautiful. Bring beauty into your life wherever you can.

Make your living quarters beautiful. Dress in beautiful clothes. Visit art galleries or beautiful natural spots. Listen to beautiful music. Do things that make you feel beautiful.

Beauty isn't a luxury. It's non-negotiable to the human spirit.



But sometimes, when you're single, you think that it's wasteful to spend a bit of extra money on beautiful silverware, or a beautiful throw for your sofa, or art gallery tickets. After all, it's just you. No one else will enjoy those things.

Stop thinking that way.

Do those things for you. Do them because they bring you pleasure.

Maybe beauty, for you, means putting on makeup every day, even if you're just staying home. Maybe it means adding a beautiful screensaver to your phone or laptop. Maybe it means putting a plant on your office desk, or exchanging that old chipped coffee mug for one that makes you happy every time you look at it.

Every area of your life, no matter how small or unimportant, can be beautiful to you.

And (this is the beautiful thing):

The more you surround yourself with beauty, the more beauty rubs off on you.

Women who see the beauty in everything become more beautiful.

I discovered this principle many years ago. It was when I was in my early twenties, volunteering for a month on a Navajo reservation. There, I learned a profoundly moving Navajo prayer, part of the Blessing Way. It's stayed in my heart for twenty years, and I'd like to share it with you. May it inspire you as it has inspired me.

“ In beauty I walk.
With beauty before me I walk.
With beauty behind me I walk.
With beauty above me I walk.
With beauty around me I walk.
It has become beauty again.
It has become beauty again.
It has become beauty again.
It has become beauty again.”



LIVE “AS IF”

It's time to put together everything you've learned thus far.

To conclude this chapter, I'm giving you a challenge:

Live *as if* you already had the relationship of your dreams.

Get out your Pleasure Journal. Write down everything you'd be doing right now if you were in your ideal relationships. Then, go through each idea and ask yourself:

“Is there a way I could do this now?”

If you're waiting for a man so you can travel, stop waiting. What do you need to start traveling now? A traveling buddy? Information about where to go? Low-cost alternatives?

If you're waiting for a man before you can make a beautiful home, stop waiting. What do you need to make that beautiful home now? Can you make your current living quarters more beautiful? Could you find a way to buy a home on your own? Consider your options.

If you're waiting for a man before you can enjoy romantic Valentine's Day dinners, stop waiting. Get a bunch of your single girlfriends together, dress up, and go out to dinner at the fanciest place in town. Take each other's arms. Compliment each other lavishly. Let the love shine.

If you're waiting for a man before you can feel loved, stop waiting. Look at yourself in the mirror and give yourself a big, warm smile. Wrap your arms around yourself and feel grateful for having such an awesome woman as yourself at your side. Refuse to treat yourself badly. Tell yourself everything you've been waiting to hear: how amazing you are, how strong you are, how you're never going to let yourself down.

Stop waiting.

The life you've always wanted is right here.



I'll leave you with this quote by Howard Washington Thurman, which I've tweaked a bit:

“ Don't ask yourself what [men] need,
ask yourself what makes you come alive.
And then go and do that.
Because what [men] need is [women] who have come alive.”

The Pleasure Principle



Chapter 4. Attraction Alps

SHINE LIKE A BEACON WITH THE 3 A'S

Dana was amazing.

She was in her 40s, single, and turned heads wherever she went.

She couldn't explain why. She told me, "I got gray hairs sprouting up everywhere. Eye cream can't touch my crow's feet. By rights I should be a pariah. Men don't pay attention to older women, right? But it hasn't worked that way."

She smiled, and just then I saw it. Magic happened before my eyes.

She shifted her gaze behind me. A man who was taking his drink to a table caught her glance quite by accident. He stopped in his tracks. He didn't seem to know what to do. Then he stood up straighter ... and smiled right back.

Dana winked at him and turned back to me. "Who knows what it is?"

I had a clue.

I had more than a clue.

This is a tough time to be single.

Sure, more Americans are single now than at any time in history. But that doesn't help. We're paralyzed by choice. Competition is fierce, and dating apps just make it worse. If you're not twenty with pouty lips and heavily made up eyes, he's swiping left.

Luckily, science is coming to our rescue.



We now know more about what makes a man propose (and a woman accept) than ever before. The research has flooded in over the past few decades.

And what we've found is that a LOT more is going on beneath the surface than we ever realized.

In this chapter, you'll find out what *really* makes a man fall for you. I'll give you specific techniques for speeding up the process. You'll find out what the ancient Indian chakra system has to do with pleasure and how to make him feel loved without scaring him off.

Finally, you'll discover why *your* pleasure is the key to success in love. If dating and relationships have felt more frustrating than fulfilling to you, it's time to rewire your brain. Your future happiness depends on the enjoyment you find today.

BID GOODBYE TO THE MEAT MARKET

Not that long ago, the science of sexual attraction was still in its infancy.

Early researchers did the best they could to come up with common-sense theories that explain why we're attracted to the people we're attracted to.

One of those was the *marketplace theory of attraction*.

In this theory, hunting for a romantic partner is no different from hunting for a great job or a great pair of jeans. You look through all the options, decide on the best you can get with what you've got, and take your purchase home.

The marketplace metaphor makes a lot of sense. A dating site *is* like one big shop of singles. All the rules of consumer behavior apply. You can shop 'til you drop. You're susceptible to good marketing, like a flattering profile pic. You can get buyer's remorse once you do settle on seeing someone.

But the marketplace theory overlooks one very important point:

Chemistry is inexplicable.



Just because a guy looks good on paper doesn't mean you'll click with him. He might technically be the best choice, but he may not be to your tastes.

Human beings aren't commodities. We don't choose a partner in the same way we'd choose an insurance plan. We don't compare benefits and rank each other on a scale of 1 to 10. His looks, social status, wealth, education and so forth matter less than how when we feel when we're with him. All we want to know is whether he likes us and we like him.

In fact, if you look back over your dating history, you might wonder if any of your picks were "rational purchases."

Social psychologists now know that interpersonal attraction is much more complex than the marketplace theory allows. We're attracted to people for irrational reasons. We like people who like us back. We like people we spend a lot of time with. We like people who like the same things we do. (We also like people who remind us of our parents, but that's another story.)

That's good news for *all* of us.

There's more to you than the marketplace allows for. You're not just a piece of meat. You're not a 7.5 on a 10-point scale. You're not reducible to a profile pic.

Even if there are zillions of women in your area who are more "interesting, attractive, and fun-loving" (blech) than you are, it doesn't matter in the slightest. The dating pool isn't actually a market, so you don't have to worry about who's going to "buy" you.

Y BUT WHAT ABOUT HIS BIOLOGICAL TRIGGERS?

If you read a lot of dating advice, you may have heard another theory of attraction.

The *evolutionary theory of attraction* tells us that men are wired to respond to markers of fertility.



They can't resist women with large breasts, perfect skin, blond hair, and an hourglass figure. Those traits indicate youth, health, and a body capable of bearing him many children. He can't resist the thousands of years of programming that tell him the point of a mate is to pass his genes on to future generations.

At first glance, this theory makes sense. No wonder we women spend so much time perfecting our faces with makeup, getting highlights, and forcing our bodies into shapewear. We want to look like youthful, fertile women.

But why do men fall in love with all different sorts of women, then?

A man celebrating his 50th wedding anniversary can see nothing more beautiful than the face of his wrinkled, gray-haired wife. Brunettes with stick-thin figures still get the guy. Everyone has different tastes, and those traits often contradict the Barbie-doll prototype men are supposed to go for.

So what *does* explain why we're attracted to the people we're attracted to?

Pleasure.



WHAT MAKES HIM FALL IN LOVE WITH YOU



I've learned that people will forget what you said,
people will forget what you did,
but people will never forget how you made them feel."

Maya Angelou

There's another theory, which I call the *hedonistic theory of attraction*.

It simply states:

Men fall in love with women who make them feel good.



Men may enjoy looking at pictures of beautiful models, but that doesn't stop them from happily coming home to their fabulously normal wives. A man will date a woman who *looks* good, but he'll marry a woman who makes him *feel* good.

He may not even realize he's doing this. Men and women are both notoriously inaccurate when it comes to explaining their own behavior. Ask a man why he fell in love with his wife, and he'll give you the default answers. They like the same things, they have fun together, she's hot, etc.

But those are just convenient explanations. They're not what's really going on.

The truth is that no one else gives him the same feelings she does. The way he feels when he's with her is so good, so deep, and so comforting that it removes all doubt. Being with her is like coming home.

That's not all. Men don't just fall in love with women who make them feel good.

They fall in love with women who make them feel *more pleasure* than *pain*.

Every man can tell you the story of a woman he was wildly, madly in love with ... but being with her was such a head trip that he finally broke it off.

Pain is a huge deterrent. Men tend to avoid relationships that are difficult, stressful, volatile, or too complicated. If being with a woman brings him too much pain along with the pleasure, he's going to think twice.

Even though he may not be conscious of it, he's keeping track of the ratio of pain to pleasure in his relationship.

Maybe being with her is so good that he can tolerate a little discomfort. Or perhaps the pain is only temporary, part of the natural ebb and flow of relationships. Too much pain, though, and he'll end it. Being unhappy is too high a price to pay for staying together.

So it's easy to see who a man will choose to be with.

He'll be with the woman who brings him the most pleasure with the least pain.



But there's a problem...

What is pleasure?

The word is just so vague. What does it really mean?

Sex, sinful food, tropical sun, and Dom Perignon?

Surely that's a bit crass. It's not much better than flashing your boobs.

It's easy to misinterpret this theory as saying that you should act like Santa Claus. You should make all his wishes come true: make him dinner, buy him gifts, wear tacky lingerie, and do whatever gives him pleasure without a thought for yourself.

But think about it. Everyone loves Santa Claus, but no one dreams of marrying him.

Gifts are nice, but their pleasure is short-lived. We've all seen the guy who passes over the sweet, nice girlfriend who'd do anything for him in favor of the snooty ice queen who twists him around her sharp manicured finger. Maybe he just likes pain?

Or maybe we're misunderstanding pleasure.

THE 4 TYPES OF PLEASURE

Not all pleasure is created the same.

There are different levels of pleasure, based on the ancient Indian *chakra system*.

Chakras are energy centers in the body. They start at the base of the spine and go all the way to the top of the head.

Each chakra is associated with a different area of life. The base chakra, for example, is associated with security and getting your basic needs met.

Each chakra is also associated with a different kind of pleasure. Some are "lower pleasures" and others are "higher pleasures," based on where they fall on the chakra system.



It turns out that *sensual pleasures*—like the pleasure of sniffing perfume, hearing great music, or stroking a cashmere shawl—fall on the base chakra. They're the lowest form of pleasure. They're also the most universal. Even babies appreciate sensual pleasures.

Next up are *creative pleasures*. This is the pleasure that comes from creating something. Pinterest is the home of creative pleasure. Doing crafts, redecorating your house, expressing yourself, and cooking a new recipe are all great sources of satisfaction and well-being.

Then there are *social pleasures*. This is the pleasure of connecting with friends, achieving fame, or being in a position of power. If you've ever wondered why talking on the phone with your best friend for an hour makes you feel so good, this is why. Human beings are wired to enjoy connection.

The fourth level is the one that matters most to us.

The fourth chakra is also known as the heart chakra. It's the *love center* in the body. From it flows one of the purest forms of pleasure:

The love you give and receive.

We don't often think of love as a type of pleasure. But given the choice between an exquisite box of chocolates, creating a magnificent work of art, winning the highest honor in your work, or receiving unconditional love, most of us would choose love.

Love's pleasures last when everything else is gone. Love fills us in a way nothing else can.

When dying people are interviewed on their deathbeds, there's one theme that cuts across all nationalities and genders. *They wish they'd loved more.* They wish they'd told their loved ones how they felt. They wish they'd spent less time working and more time with their family.

A young man might dream of riches or fame, but a mature man knows that nothing can replace love. No sensual pleasures can compare.



Unfortunately, the word “love” is so overused that many men (and women, too) shy away from it. They associate the word with pain, not pleasure. They jerk back when someone offers them love. They don’t know how to accept it, and they’re not sure they even want to.

It doesn’t make sense. If love is so pleasurable, then why does it hurt so much?

Because what’s hurting us is not *love*, but our thoughts, beliefs, and expectations around it.

Loving someone is wonderful, but it can hurt if you expect them to love you back. Being loved by someone is wonderful, but it can hurt if you worry you might lose them.

If we could experience pure love, devoid of any messy thoughts, we’d be in bliss. But human beings don’t work that way. We complicate pleasure. We feel guilty for eating a big slice of chocolate cake. We get addicted to power. We have a hard time just letting ourselves feel good.

You’ve seen this yourself. Tell him you love him, and watch him squirm.

He’s not sure he feels the same, he doesn’t know how to respond, he’s worried that the confession has changed your relationship for good. It’s all too messy. He doesn’t like messy. So, instead of accepting your love, he pushes you away.

You can’t make him feel loved by telling him how you feel. You’re not giving him love, anyway; you’re just giving him words. You don’t have any control over what he feels inside.

And what he feels inside is what counts.

The pleasure of love isn’t out there, but *in here*. It’s not the words or the ring but a special mixture of feelings that lets you know you’re loved. Warmth. Contentment. Happiness.

Feeling accepted for who you are. Feeling special and irreplaceable. Trusting your loved one will always have your back.

If you could find a way to bottle those feelings up and give them to a man, he’d be your slave for life. The pleasure would be so intense he’d never look at another woman.

But you can’t give him love if he’s not willing to accept it.



And what if you've just met one another? Love isn't appropriate if you don't even know if you like the guy yet. No wonder you stick to safer pleasures like having dinner together or watching a good movie. The pleasures of love are too risky.

Luckily, there's a tool you can use.

You can use it from the moment you meet a man. It never loses its effectiveness. It won't sabotage you. And it will help him fall in love with you faster than the wittiest banter or sexiest dress.

It's *the 3 A's*.

Y ATTENTION, AFFECTION, ACCEPTANCE

My friend Dana was a master of the 3 A's.

She didn't even realize it. She did it naturally.

Every time she was willing to catch a man's eye and smile at him in a friendly, uncomplicated way, she was winning hearts.

Dana was the type of person who found everyone interesting. She always asked the greatest questions. She knew how to sit back and listen.

She gave you the kind of attention that made you feel like you were the only person in the room. You always felt as if your thoughts and feelings mattered to her. She never pulled back if you said something she didn't like. She was willing to consider your point of view, even if it didn't match hers.

She poured attention, affection, and acceptance on everyone she met. Everyone became her friend. Young or old, male or female, married or single.

People felt loved around her. They wouldn't have described it that way, of course. It was just a really great feeling.



If you've ever been around anyone like Dana, you know how that is. When someone is listening to you carefully, smiling at appropriate moments, and radiating warmth, you relax into the conversation. You lose your self-consciousness. You start to shine. It's incredibly flattering. You bask in the feeling of being heard, appreciated, and enjoyed.

Attention, affection and acceptance make people feel awesome. They produce the same good feelings we associate with being loved.

Even just giving someone your undivided attention can make a huge difference. We all know that children associate attention with love, but we don't always realize that adults do, too.

When you talk with someone, do you look into their eyes? Do you pay attention to what they're saying? Or are you busy reacting or planning your response in your mind? Do you feel as if you have to give your own opinion, or do you ask follow-up questions?

Maybe you could be better at listening, but you *are* affectionate. You smile warmly at the people you encounter during your day. You're the queen of back rubs. You genuinely enjoy people.

Or maybe you're reserved, but you do accept other people for who they are. You don't judge or shame people. You have a diverse group of friends. You try to be as inclusive as you can. Your friends know they can come to you with anything.

Each trait alone is powerful, but put them all together?

That's love in a bottle.



Y ATTRACTION IN ACTION

When I asked Dana how she learned to make people feel so good, she told me that she hadn't always been like that.

"When I was in my 20s," she confessed, "I was so self-conscious. I thought everyone was paying attention to me and judging me. I didn't think men would have the slightest interest in me. I probably missed a lot of nice guys who were giving me the right signals, you know?"

I smiled, thinking of the way she'd just made eye contact with a stranger. She didn't have that problem anymore!

She continued, "I wanted to be the cool, hip girl who didn't need anyone. That's how I'd attract all the cool, hip guys. I had it all figured out. But it wasn't honest. I wanted to pretend I didn't need guys ... so I could get guys. I was being someone I wasn't."

"Sounds familiar!" I agreed. "Anything to be popular."

She nodded. "So what I did was realize that love comes from everywhere. Not just guys. If a relationship happened, great. But in the meantime there were a lot of lovely people around me. It wasn't fair to treat their love as if it were worth less than some random guy's love."

She smiled. "So I love a lot more now. I love my friends. I love where I live. I love my dog. I feel loved, and I look for things to love. And I find them!"

Dana had happened on an incredible insight:

Love isn't so scary when it's something you share often.

We all know that guys can react really badly to an offer of love. They've got a lot of messy thoughts and beliefs around it. They're cautious about accepting something that may have strings attached.



But a guy won't be as freaked out by your love when he sees you loving your friends and pets and random strangers, too. It's part of your personality. It's not something special you're doing for him, in the hope he'll love you back. It's a benefit that everyone who comes into your life enjoys.

Once he sees this, he can relax and bask in your attention, affection and acceptance, knowing that you don't want anything else from him.

Unlike your friends, though, the pleasure he feels in your company does something else to him. *It stirs something inside.*

Warmth, affection, and attention are feelings he associates with relationships. They're feelings he associates with being loved. That confuses him. You're giving him love, even though he didn't "earn" it by asking you out?

So he concludes the only thing he can conclude under the situation:

He must be falling for you.

Try it.

Just don't be surprised by the reaction you get!

Thinking about Dana's story, I realized that most of us have it wrong. We focus on what he's thinking of us. We focus on our performance: looking gorgeous for him, saying the right things, coming across as desirable and interesting.

He's used to that. Women try that tactic on him all the time.

But what he's not used to is being accepted. He's not used to women paying genuine attention to him. He's only used to women paying attention to him when they want something from him, i.e., a relationship. He's used to being judged by women based on whether he fits the boyfriend mold. He's used to getting the cold shoulder when a woman isn't interested.

That's why he likes women who are "just one of the boys" so much. They don't play games, and they're not performing.



But he doesn't want to date one of the boys. He wants to date a woman. He wants to date a woman who likes him for who he is. A woman who makes him feel good. A woman who's okay with everything about him, even the "bad" parts.

Are you up to the challenge?

Y PUTTING THE 3 A'S INTO PRACTICE

The 3 A's can completely transform how you interact with other people.

You can find yourself taking on more of a leadership role at work. Being noticed more. Being asked to more functions.

You may also find yourself enjoying those interactions more. Nothing feels better than knowing you made someone's day.

So start practicing today. Practice with work colleagues, friends and family members. It may take time for your new perspective to become automatic. The more you apply the 3 A's effortlessly, without thinking about what you're doing, the more successful you'll be.

Here are some tips on where to start.

1. PAY MORE ATTENTION.

When someone talks to you, don't think about what you'll say next. Pay attention. Ask questions. Be willing to sit in silence, mulling over what they've said. Notice whether you're making eye contact. See if you can read the subtle messages of their body language. Don't worry about contributing anything. Just focus on becoming a better listener.

2. SHOW MORE AFFECTION.

If you're not demonstrative with your feelings, showing affection can feel awkward. But being openly affectionate is one of the quickest shortcuts to a man's heart.

Start simple by saying "thank you" more often. Let your friends and family know how much you appreciate them and the things they do for you. Gratitude is one of the easiest ways to show affection.



Look at your body language. Do you hold back, or are you physically affectionate? Being physically affectionate can be as non-threatening as touching someone's arm, rubbing a friend's back, or relaxing into a hug. Notice how far away you stand from someone you're talking to. See if you can close that gap a little.

Make "love" part of your everyday vocabulary. Talk about the things you love, or the people you love. Get used to saying the word until there's no awkwardness attached to it.

3. GIVE MORE ACCEPTANCE.

Start noticing when judgmental thoughts cross your mind.

We often judge people as a way of making ourselves feel better. We might be sarcastic, or gossip, or make fun of someone. But those tactics create a wedge between you and others.

If a man hears you judging someone—even if he agrees with you—he realizes that you could just as easily judge him. And nothing makes a man pricklier than being judged.

Although you could dismiss it as male pride, a man's sensitivity to criticism is a result of life experience. Men often feel as if women are evaluating them. They feel judged based on how they look, whether they're single or married, and whether they make enough money. They believe that women just care about whether they're boyfriend material.

So it's a breath of fresh air for a man to meet a woman who's not interested in summing him up.

She doesn't look at his hand to see if he's wearing a ring. She doesn't ask leading questions about where he works or what kind of car he drives. She's willing to simply sit and let him reveal himself to her in his own good time. Less pressure, more pleasure.



PLEASURE IS A 2-WAY STREET

But what about you?

We've been talking a lot about his pleasure. What about *your* pleasure?

If you are so focused on giving him pleasure that you block his every attempt to return the favor, then you'll short-circuit your budding relationship.

Pleasure needs a giver and a receiver. In the happiest relationships, those roles switch frequently. You give him pleasure, and he receives it with gratitude. He gives you pleasure, and you receive it with gratitude.

He might not be as good with the 3 A's as you are—men who've mastered attention, affection and acceptance are dangerously irresistible—but he can offer pleasure in other ways.

Most men feel most confident giving a woman sensual pleasures. Dining out, fragrant roses, or concert tickets are guaranteed hits.

But there are other ways to make a woman smile. He may try to make you laugh, or arrange a fun outing, or introduce you to something new. Your visible enjoyment gives him the confidence to continue.

When a man gives to a woman, he pays attention to how she responds. Her pleasure gives him pleasure. If she deflects his gifts, he assumes she's not interested.

How do *you* respond when a man tries to make you smile, gives you a compliment, or does something nice for you?

Pleasure is a complicated subject for most of us. We feel guilty if we enjoy ourselves too much. We worry we'll have to pay for it later. We wonder if there are any unspoken expectations attached. We're not sure how to respond. Respond too enthusiastically, and you scare him off. Fail to respond enthusiastically enough, and you let him down.

No wonder we'd rather give instead of receive. It's less complicated.



But here's why you shouldn't give up:

Mastering the art of receiving pleasure from a man catapults you beyond most women he's ever known.

Why do some men stay with selfish women who twine them around their little finger? Because making her happy gives him such a high. He gets more pleasure out of her pleasure than his own.

But most of us can't be that woman. We don't want to be selfish. We worry about putting him out, inconveniencing him, or not doing enough for him. We tell him, "*You didn't have to do that,*" or "*You shouldn't have,*" or "*I appreciate the gesture, but...*"

That cuts off the flow of pleasure.

If you're going to give pleasure to man, you have to be willing to receive it. And you have to stop keeping score. Pleasure isn't something to hoard and dole out in equal measures. The more pleasure you receive, the more you have to give.

So give attention, affection, and acceptance to those around you ... but receive what they have to give you, too. Honor their gifts in the same way you'd hope they'd honor yours.

Y DON'T MAKE THIS MISTAKE

By now, you've seen that making a man feel good involves triggering the very same warm and fuzzy feelings he experiences when he's giving and receiving love ... while doing so in a way that *doesn't* push his freak-out button.

But what if you try and it doesn't work?

It turns out that *what's going on inside your head* when you try to attract a man affects your outcome in a very big way.

Pleasure and pain aren't just things we experience with other people. They're things we use to motivate ourselves, too.



We hold up the specter of another lonely year alone, in order to force ourselves to try online dating again.

We frighten ourselves with thoughts of being rejected, in order to ensure we're at our sparkling best on a date.

Every time the fear of failure hits, we try harder. We do more. We pull out all the stops.

Does it work?

In a way. If scaring yourself gets you to finally put up that online dating profile, then maybe it's achieved something good.

But those painful thoughts have an unintended consequence:

They make us feel anxious, panicky, or desperate.

And those feelings sabotage everything we do.

We put up an online dating profile, but it's so bright and cheery that it comes across as inauthentic. We turn the full force of our charm on our unsuspecting date, and he withers under the intensity.

We're so afraid of ending up alone, being rejected, or messing it up, that we do the very thing we're trying so hard to avoid. We say something stupid, or come on too strong, or put on an act. We lose him, adding yet more evidence to the pile that says we're hopeless with men.

Don't forget:

"Neurons that fire together, wire together."

If you're always thinking about the worst that could happen, then you end up feeling fearful every time you think about your love life. Every interaction with an attractive man causes you stress and anxiety. Even the thought of having to talk to someone you're interested in sparks a wave of panic.

It's time to rewire your brain and put pleasure back in its proper place.



Y AS IF YOU NEEDED ANOTHER REASON TO EMBRACE PLEASURE...

So here's what you do:

You look for the pleasure in every interaction.

You stop worrying about what he's thinking of you, and you find something to enjoy. Maybe it's nice just to stand there and talk to someone. Maybe his smile makes you feel good. Maybe you're just glad you brushed your hair that morning. Whatever it is, it's enough.

Pleasure is a much more pleasant way to motivate yourself. Instead of scaring yourself, you encourage yourself. You lure yourself with positive thoughts of the outcome you want to achieve. You dangle a carrot instead of a stick.

Your behavior doesn't change. You're still doing the exact same things as before. You're just looking for the fun in them.

And that makes all the difference.

Something amazing happens when you motivate yourself to try new dating techniques with the promise of pleasure rather than the desire to avoid pain.

Your blocks with men dissolve.

What was hard becomes easier. What was difficult becomes more fun. What was awkward becomes more natural.

You're moving towards what you want—a more fulfilling social life—rather than away from what you don't want—more loneliness and despair.

When you think about talking with a man or going on a date, you may still feel anxious, but you know to override your anxiety with anticipation. There *will* be something to look forward to. You may not know what it is yet, but you'll find it.



There's one final thing about pleasure you should know:

It's contagious.

The more pleasure you feel in his company, the more pleasure he feels in your company.
The more pleasure he feels in your company, the more he wants to be in your company.

You may not be able to control how he feels, but you do have control over how you feel.
That's enough. Enjoying yourself is the quickest route to get him enjoying himself.

So the mystery is solved.

How do you make a man fall in love with you?

You load up on the pleasure.

You enjoy yourself. You respond to his gifts with genuine enjoyment. You bestow equally valuable gifts onto him, of attention, affection, and acceptance.

That's the hedonistic theory of attraction, and it works every time.

As Cyndi Lauper sang, "*Girls just want to have fun.*" Guys do, too.

And the most fun of all is the pleasure of connection.

The Pleasure Principle



Chapter 5. Smooth Sailing

FROM FALLING IN LOVE TO COMMITTING FOR LIFE

*I*t's sheer bliss.

You're in love, and you've never felt happier.

He loves you. You love him. Your cheeks hurt from smiling so much.

Things just couldn't get any better.

Your own personal pleasure factory is cranking out those feel-good chemicals at high speed. Your body is awash with *dopamine*, *oxytocin*, *norepinephrine* and *phenylethylamine*. You can talk to him all night and wake up at 6am bouncing with energy.

Everyone around you has noticed the change. "It must be true love!" they tease you.

Your Pleasure Jar sits abandoned on the counter. The pleasure you once took in your self-care routine pales next to the intense joy of being with him. You find it hard to think of anything else. Even just a text from him makes the sun shine brighter and the world more beautiful.

You could stay in this blissful state forever.

Except...

Why can't you stay in this blissful state forever?



Because he won't commit.

And with that thought, paradise starts to crack.

Y HE HAS WHAT YOU WANT, BUT HE WON'T GIVE IT TO YOU

Falling in love is addictive.

It stimulates the same pleasure centers as heroin. You can get hooked on a man like other people get hooked on drugs.

Addicts, in general, have one major concern:

Securing a reliable source of their addiction of choice.

Nothing infuriates an addict more than denying him access to the one thing that makes him feel better than anything else.

Although it's not the same, being without your beloved—even if it's just for a few hours—is painful.

You *physically suffer* without him. You go into withdrawal.

The thought of being without him is unbearable. So, like all women in love, you focus all your energy on figuring out how you can make the pleasure last. You fantasize about how it would feel to hear him say, *"I love you. Would you marry me?"*

But he won't say it. He won't even make plans for the future.

All you've got is today with him, and it isn't enough. You want tomorrow, too.

It's so unfair. What you want from him is so small, so insignificant compared to the happiness it will produce.

You *know* he wants to be with you. He's shown it, by the way he acts when he's with you. You know he's happy. You know you can make him even happier.

So why won't he put a ring on it?



Y LOVE'S DESPERATION

Pleasure, by its very nature, is addictive.

It's designed to keep you coming back for more.

But Mother Nature has an ulterior motive in making love so pleasurable.

Although romantics like to believe that only destiny could produce such an intense feeling of connection, biochemists tell a different story.

Love isn't written in the stars. It doesn't ride on Cupid's arrows. Rather, it's a powerful neurochemical reward designed to encourage us to...

Wait for it...

Ensure the survival of the species.

No less than the continuation of the human race depends on love.

That's a *huge* task.

Our very survival depends on love.

Which means that love can't be some paltry, wishy-washy feeling.

It's got to be absolutely dependable. It's got to be all-powerful.

It's got to be *the strongest force in existence*.

Mighty enough to overrule the drive to eat, sleep, and preserve one's life.

I'd like to share a story with you that explains why we love. It draws from real-world research done by evolutionary biologists like Dr. Helen Fisher.

It goes like this...



THE INVENTION OF LOVE

Back in the dawn of time, Mother Nature needed a strategy that could bring a man and a woman together for long enough to raise a child. She thought long and hard.

She needed a force so powerful, so irresistible, that it would dampen the responsible part of a woman's brain that might question whether she really wanted to undergo the dangerous task of bearing a child. Back in those days, having a child could cost a woman her life.

Mother Nature also needed a force so powerful, so irresistible, that it would keep the child's father with the mother for several years, at least until the baby was old enough to join the tribal playgroup. If the father abandoned the mother before then, both baby and mother would likely die.

Mother Nature had a trick up her sleeve:

She knew that human beings would do anything for pleasure.

That's why she made food so pleasurable, and sleep so pleasurable. It was the easiest way to ensure that humans would do what they needed to survive.

Mother Nature had already made sure that humans would want to have babies, by making sex pleasurable, but that wasn't enough. She needed her human parents to stick together long enough to raise a child.

As she pondered the problem, Mother Nature reflected on her own feelings towards her creations. She would never abandon the plants and animals she nurtured. She wouldn't dream of it. They were part of her. What happened to them happened to her.

Suddenly, a light bulb went off.

If she could trigger this feeling in a human...

If she could program the human brain to believe that another person was *essential* for his or her own survival...



Then her human parents wouldn't abandon each other.

They couldn't abandon someone who was part of themselves.

And so she invented **Love**.

THE COMMITMENT SWITCH

Now, you could dismiss this as a silly little fable.

After all, evolutionary anthropologists can only guess how traits like love arose in certain species.

But research has been remarkably consistent thus far.

All the evidence clearly shows that **love is a chemical experience in the brain**.

We're programmed to fall in love. We don't have any choice in the matter. Mother Nature has made sure of it. She knows the stakes. Without love, we wouldn't stick together. And we *need* to stick together to raise our families.

Biology is so entwined in love that we're not even free to choose who we're physically attracted to. You think you just don't like how he smells, or his kiss leaves you cold. But what's *really* happening is that biology is telling you that you're not a good match for making babies together.

So, if biology can bring us together, why is it so bad at making men fall in love?

Love *isn't* inevitable for most couples. In fact, most couples date for a while, then break up. They're attracted to one another, but not committed. That's a pretty unreliable system.

There must be some kind of "commitment switch" that's not getting turned on.

And, knowing Mother Nature, chances are good this commitment switch is hidden somewhere in the brain.

Let's see if we can find it, and unlock the secret of what makes us stay together.



Y DOES SEX ACTIVATE THE COMMITMENT SWITCH?

If you were a prairie vole, it would be so much easier.

All you'd have to do is mate and live together for 6 hours. Done. Together for life.

Scientists have found that the act of mating changes a prairie vole's brain, increasing the number of receptors for *oxytocin* and *vasopressin*, chemicals associated with pair bonding.⁷

How easy is that?

Sleep together, hang out, and kaboom! Husband and wife.

We're not prairie voles, of course. It doesn't work that way for us.

Well, let me correct that.

It doesn't work that way *exactly*.

Not to scare you, but something similar happens to you when you sleep with a man.

Sleeping with him doesn't alter your brain (at least, not that we know of), but it does cause the release of *oxytocin*. Scientists call it the "love hormone." It creates an intense feeling of trust, affection, and bondedness.

Every time you sleep with him, you feel more and more closely connected. You lower your defenses. You start falling for him.

Is it true love, or is it the result of all those constant hits of oxytocin?

That's a matter for you to decide, but a word to the wise:

If you don't want to fall in love, don't sleep with him.

Does it work like that for men?

Nope.

⁷ <http://www.nature.com/news/gene-switches-make-prairie-voles-fall-in-love-1.13112>



Men don't get the same oxytocin hit from sex.

Sleeping with you gives him a major burst of *dopamine*, also known as the “pleasure hormone.” The act itself feels great, but it doesn't necessarily make him want to cuddle and talk with you all night.

For men, sex is *not* the commitment switch.

Then what is?

Y HOW TO TRIGGER MONOGAMY

Now, what I'm about to tell you is *not* advice. It's just information. I don't want you to act on it.

But there is ONE thing that's known to act on a man's brain in a very similar way to how mating works on prairie voles:

Having a child.

When a man becomes a father, he gains more *vasopressin* receptors. *Vasopressin* is known as the “monogamy molecule” for its role in sexual fidelity.

Mother Nature is clever. She gives men a commitment boost right when the mother of his child needs him the most.

That's interesting information, but it doesn't help much.

You're in love with the guy, not having his baby!

(And having a baby together is no joy ride. Many couples find their relationship struggling in the wake of all the stress and sleepless nights. I never advise women to try for a baby unless their relationship is already established and secure.)

But there is something you can do.



You can boost his oxytocin levels naturally.

Oxytocin, as you'll recall, is the "love hormone." It helps develop a deep feeling of trust, affection, and bondedness between you.

While a satisfying sexual relationship boosts your oxytocin levels, the opposite holds true for him. A satisfying sexual relationship is fun for him, but what really makes him feel attached to you is *non-sexual physical contact*.

Think lots of cuddling, hugging, kissing, dancing and back rubs. Keep it G-rated and out of the bedroom.

You might hold his arm as you walk to the restaurant, or ask him to put his arm around your waist while you wait. You might grab him for a quick dance around the kitchen, or hold hands while you walk down the street. You might snuggle up on the sofa when you're watching TV or give him a foot massage.

Want him to start falling in love? Then let your hands do the talking.

The more you touch, the more you connect.

OTHER OXYTOCIN BOOSTERS

There are other ways to boost oxytocin naturally, like laughing together, exercising together, or petting a dog. Doing nice things for you boosts his oxytocin levels, so be a willing recipient of the gifts he gives you and ask for his help every once in a while.

Then there's my personal favorite:

Soul-gazing.

Soul-gazing, also known as *eye-gazing*, is an enormously powerful technique that comes from *Tantra*, the ancient Indian system of rituals designed to purify the consciousness and harness the body's vital energies.



To do it, you simply look into each other's eyes for five minutes or more.

Does that sound easy?

You'd be surprised. It creates an intimacy that can be incredibly uncomfortable.

Most of us never look directly into anyone's eyes for more than an instant or two. The only exceptions are parents with infants, and lovers. Researchers have found that they can predict how much a couple is in love by how much they look at one another.⁸

Prolonged eye contact releases a powerful burst of oxytocin. It can even cause strangers to feel an unusual degree of attraction towards one another.⁹

To try it yourself, create a comfortable space where you won't be disturbed. Your bedroom might be best. Dim the lights, or light candles. Tune out background noise with soft, soothing music (another known oxytocin booster).

Pick a time when you're both relaxed and wound down, preferably in the evening. Sit on the bed, cross-legged, facing each other. You can also sit in chairs facing each other, if that's more comfortable.

Hold out your left hand, palm up, and your right hand, palm down. Grasp each other's hands.

Close your eyes, and breathe deeply. Feel yourself relax. When you're ready, give your partner's hand a slight squeeze, and open your eyes.

Gaze softly into one another's eyes. You may find it easier to gaze into one of his eyes rather than both at the same time—tradition suggests the left eye. Let your breath synchronize with his.

⁸ <https://blogs.scientificamerican.com/guest-blog/learning-the-look-of-love-that-sly-come-hither-stare/>

⁹ https://www.researchgate.net/publication/223385329_Looking_and_loving_The_effects_of_mutual_gaze_on_feelings_of_romantic_love



You don't need to be serious about this. If you want to smile at him, smile. If you get giggly, giggle. Whenever your attention drifts away, gently bring it back. Focus on your breath whenever you begin to feel too uncomfortable.

See how long you can stay with it. Five minutes is ideal, but you're welcome to do it for longer.

When you've finished, take a moment to process the experience together. How do you feel? Any closer? Did it do anything for you?

Soul-gazing can become a wonderful evening ritual. But it doesn't work for all couples.

In that case, an easy way to harness the power of soul-gazing is to look deeply into his eyes whenever he's talking. Don't be scared of eye contact. Show him that you see him for who he is.

Don't flinch away when he looks into your eyes, either. Let him see you for who you truly are. Being seen feels wonderful.

Y WHEN HIS COMMITMENT SWITCH IS STUCK

Now you know how to boost the love-inducing chemicals in his brain, but unfortunately...

That's not enough.

All these chemicals can do is prime him for commitment. The final decision is in his hands. **He's got to consciously, willingly choose to be with you.**

Mother Nature may push us to act in certain ways, but she also gave us a *cerebral cortex*, a higher mind able to overrule our instincts. Nothing trumps free will.

His free will isn't so easy to persuade.

Making the decision to commit to a woman is a big deal for any man. He may love her deeply and feel incredibly attached, but something in him resists giving up his freedom.



He's suffering from what I call *commitment resistance*.

His commitment switch is stuck in the *off* position, and he can't/won't switch it on.

As much as he loves you, as happy as he is with you, there's a powerful force inside him cautioning him against committing his life to one woman.

And Mother Nature put it there.

Sneaky old Mother Nature. Just when you thought she was on the side of Love, she pulls another trick from her sleeve.

Mother Nature wants men and women to stay together long enough to ensure their child's survival. But that's only about 4 years, tops. (That number comes from work done by evolutionary biologist Dr. Helen Fisher.¹⁰)

After that, Mother Nature is perfectly happy for her lovebirds to find different partners. In fact, the more female partners a man can have, the greater the chances his genes will survive in future generations.

So he feels strongly driven to keep searching. He might stay with a woman for a certain period of time and then end it, only to start another long-term relationship with someone else.

That's called *serial monogamy*, and it matches what actually happens in human relationships better than non-monogamy or lifetime monogamy. (One survey found that the average relationship lasts 2 years and 9 months—nowhere near a lifetime.¹¹)

Great. So you might get a man to commit to you for a few years, but after that it's a gamble.

His natural instincts aren't going to help. Surely there must be some other way to wedge his commitment switch into the *on* position.

There is. And it's one of the few exceptions to the Pleasure Principle.

¹⁰ <http://health.howstuffworks.com/relationships/marriage/seven-year-itch1.htm>

¹¹ <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/femail/article-2551615/Death-seven-year-itch-Average-relationship-just-2-years-9-months-social-media-blame.html>



Y HARNESSING THE POWER OF PAIN

“ It is not the threat of death, illness, hardship or poverty that crushes the human spirit; it is the fear of being alone and unloved in the universe.”

Anthony Welsh

Normally, I don't recommend using pain as a form of motivation.

Threatening negative consequences tends to backfire, while promising pleasurable rewards drums up greater enthusiasm.

But there are a few cases where resistance is *so* overwhelming that you need every tool you've got.

This is one of those cases.

He already associates pleasure with being with you. His life is better with you in it. He feels close to you. Attached to you. Loved by you.

But that's not enough. He's got a deeply seated biological drive to keep his options open.

How can you overcome it?

By positioning yourself as the only person who can help him overcome his deepest fear.

I discovered this principle as a result of dating bachelors in their late 30s and early 40s.

These men had a number of failed relationships under their belts. They weren't waiting around for a woman anymore. They'd arranged their lives exactly to their liking. They enjoyed having complete control over everything they did.

They were wary of women. They believed that having a girlfriend would force them to change how they lived their lives. Nevertheless, they were still dating. They were still open to the idea of a relationship.

Why?



Because they were afraid.

These men had one fear in common. The first time I heard it, I laughed. I didn't understand how serious it was. Now I respect it. I can see how it would drive even the most committed bachelor to reconsider his solitude.

It was this:

None of these men wanted to die alone.

They were getting to the age where mortality began to matter. They were starting to look further into the future. They couldn't afford to keep taking their health or income for granted. They had to start thinking about retirement and choosing a healthier lifestyle.

They also had to re-think their relationships.

Mindless fun was great in their twenties, but things had changed. They were looking for someone who'd be there for them in 20 years. Someone who'd fit into their lives like a glove. Someone they could count on. Someone much like a wife.

At some point in a man's life, he realizes he *needs* a woman.

Not just for fun and companionship, but for emotional support.

He can't keep dating women who come and go. He needs someone who loves him unconditionally. Someone who won't leave him if he gets sick, gains weight, or loses his job.

He's also aware that he may not always have the advantages he has now. He'd better lock in a wife while the dating odds are in his favor. If he waits too long, he may grow too old or unfit to attract the kind of wife he wants. Worst case scenario, he'll end up in a one-bedroom apartment somewhere, watching television, eating microwave dinners, and living out his retirement alone.

Pain is a powerful motivator. In order to avoid that future, he'll do *anything*.

Even face his fear of commitment.



Y THE COUNTERFORCE TO COMMITMENT RESISTANCE

Men are much less likely to spend their golden years alone than women.

The Census Bureau found that fewer than 1 in 5 retired men are still single, compared to nearly 1 in 2 retired women.¹²

Are so many retired men in relationships because they're hot property ... or because they can't live without a woman?

Are so many retired women single because they can't find a guy ... or are they single by choice?

Here's what we know.

We know that single women often thrive without a husband. They experience less frailty, less depression, and more satisfying working lives. Freed from the burden of caring for an aging spouse, they're free to enjoy their golden years exactly as they choose, surrounded by friends.

For retired single men, it's a different story.

Men don't do well without wives.

The clearest example is what happens during divorce. Women get through divorce by relying on their social network for support. Men, on the other hand, often go through divorce alone. They pretend to be fine, unwilling to admit to anyone what they're really going through. The result can be substance abuse, depression, stroke, or heart disease.

Conclusion?

There *is* a counterforce driving men into committed relationships with women.

That force comes from a man's logical, thinking brain.

¹² http://www.huffingtonpost.com/jacob-gold/single-in-retirement-a-fi_b_5537626.html



It's activated when a man projects himself into the future.

He imagines what his future will be like if he continues the course he's on.

Can he see himself alone? Can he see himself with you? How do those alternate futures stack up? How do they make him feel? Which is worse: growing old on his own or growing old in a relationship that isn't quite perfect but still perfectly adequate?

In most cases, the answer is clear. Being with someone who's committed to him is much better than being alone.

No matter how uncomfortable he feels about making the leap to marry, it's minimal compared to his fear of ending up old and unloved.

PHRASES THAT HELP HIM CHOOSE YOU

In the end, Mother Nature doesn't have the last word.

Although neurochemicals like oxytocin and vasopressin affect our feelings of attachment, their effects wear off.

Although the 4-year-itch pushes us to move on, we can make a conscious decision to stay.

Any one of us can override our programming at any time with a single decision:

The conscious, considered, deliberate choice to be with a certain person for life.

That's the power of the *cerebral cortex*, the part of your brain that's rational and forward-thinking. It's the center of free will. It considers pros and cons. It looks at the consequences.

So give his rational brain a reason to choose you. Appeal to the part of him that knows life is too hard to go at it alone. We were made for companionship. We were made to go through life two by two.

How?



By letting him know that he's not alone in this.

No matter what life throws at you, you'll make it through together. You're a team.

You want him to have the kind of future he wants to have. You'll help him every step of the way. You'll be there when he stumbles. You'll cheer for him when he flies. And *nothing* will diminish your love for him.

There's an easy way to communicate all that.

Use *commitment phrases*.

These are phrases that help to shift his thinking from "lone man going at it alone" to someone who relies on his partner's support in more ways than he can express.

Repeat these phrases often. Make it clear that you're there for him, and you're not going anywhere.

- **"I'm here for you, if you ever need me."**
- **"I've got you covered."**
- **"I've got your back."**
- **"I believe in you."**
- **"I like you just the way you are. I never want to change you."**
- **"I'm so glad for you. You deserve it."**
- **"We're a team, and we'll get through this."**
- **"It's not your problem. It's *our* problem."**
- **"You're not alone in this."**
- **"We're in this together."**
- **"Tell me if there's anything I can do."**
- **"I support you completely, if that's what you want to do."**



You can probably think of some others, too!

These phrases send a clear message to him:

With you at his side, he no longer has to worry about growing old alone.

He could live without you, but why would he choose to?

He could keep skipping from relationship to relationship, but why would he?

He has all that he needs in you.

Your presence in his life isn't optional. It's essential.

You're part of who he is. You're part of everything that matters to him. You know his family, his friends, his work colleagues. You're the only one he trusts with his secrets, his dreams, and his fears. You're his biggest fan and cheerleader. With you, he can feel good about growing old.



Learn More about Triggering His Commitment Switch

I've got to make a shameless plug here for my colleague James Bauer's course, *His Secret Obsession*.

James has an entire course that builds on the concepts you've learned in this chapter. You'll find out how to turn on his commitment switch by tapping into his *hero instinct*. You'll learn a number of concrete strategies that you can put to use immediately on the man in your life.

Learn more here.

<http://yourbrilliance.org/hso>



Y WHEN HE STILL WON'T BUDGE

And yet...

Some men are stubborn.

Nothing is worse than finally finding the man you love, only to discover that he's not sure if he wants the same thing you do ... and nothing you can do will make him budge.

At that point, you have two options.

1. *You can deal with this situation as a team.*
2. *You can deal with this situation as adversaries.*

I'll be frank. Most women choose the second option.

They want to know how to *make* him commit. He's got what they want, and they'll do whatever it takes to get it.

Their perspective is understandable.

After all, when you're in love and you want nothing more than a lifetime with your guy, you can get pretty angry at him for dragging his heels. You want to get started on your future *today*. You're ready to start planning that wedding or buying a house. But he's resisting.

Why? What's wrong with him?

You could have a wonderful life together, but he won't do anything. It's all his fault. *He's* the bad guy. You've got to find some way to get it through his thick skull that he should marry you.

It's frustrating when the man you love isn't on the same wavelength as you. It's easy to label him a commitment-phobe or accuse him of stringing you along. Your girlfriends will agree. *He's a jerk, he's not worth it, get a ring or dump him.*



That's dangerous ground.

Earlier, I told you that **getting him to commit requires a shift in perspective.**

He has to stop seeing himself as a lone guy, tackling the forces of evil single-handedly. He's got to start seeing himself as two people, not just one. He's got to believe that you and he could fight off the zombie invasion standing back to back, with only a pair of toothpicks for self-defense.

But that shift won't happen if he feels like he's being pushed for commitment.

If he feels that you're trying to get something from him, then you're not really on his side. You don't want for him what he wants for himself. You're trying to use him to get what you want, and he doesn't like that.

Worst case scenario, he starts to treat you as the enemy—the enemy of his freedom—and the relationship breaks down.

But what if you really *were* a team?

Then how would you deal with that situation?

Imagine you've got a team member at work who doesn't agree on the direction the project is going. He's got serious doubts about it. You just want to get the project over and done with, but you can't do it without him. How do you move forward?

Do you shame him in front of the entire team for holding you up?

Do you dismiss his doubts as ridiculous and try to make him see your point of view?

Do you try to do the project yourself, cutting him out entirely?

Those are all options. Not very successful options, but possible.

But, if you really were a team, then you couldn't dismiss him. His problem is your problem. You have to acknowledge his concerns, even though you wish he didn't have them. You have to see the validity in what he's saying. You've got to work together.



That goes for guys with doubts about commitment, too.

It's okay if he has doubts. Every man does. Having doubts doesn't make him a bad person. It makes him human.

Not wanting the same thing you do doesn't make him your adversary. You're still on the same side. Ultimately, you *do* want the same things: love and happiness. You just disagree about how to get there.

So work with him. Tackle these issues together. Make sure he knows you're not moving forward without him. Use commitment phrases. Stay connected.

Here's one more commitment phrase that I hope you commit to memory. It's incredibly powerful. You could do worse than use it in every single argument you have from now unto eternity.

“Help me understand you.”

If you don't know why he's so resistant to moving in together or talking about marriage, then ask him. Ask him to help you understand where he's coming from. Ask him to help you see the situation through his eyes.

You might be the very first woman who's ever asked him that question ... or ever wanted to hear the answer.

HELP COMMITMENT GROW

Perhaps you can see now why I shake my head when women ask, “How can I get him to commit?”

You don't want to *get* commitment from a man, especially if he's unwilling to give it to you.

Rather, what you want to do is plant the seeds of commitment. Create the perfect environment for commitment to flourish.



That's why experienced women ask:

"How can I make our relationship stronger?"

They know that developing a deep, enduring bond (through oxytocin-boosting activities) and learning to work as a team (through using commitment phrases) create the kind of relationship in which commitment evolves naturally.

Or, as I like to say:

"As your relationship grows, commitment flows."



Chapter 6. Toughing Out the Turbulence

Debbie couldn't take it anymore.

"I still love you," she told Scott. "But I can't live like this. We're killing each other. We need help."

She braced for his reply. Her heart thudded in her ears. She couldn't look at him.

Scott coughed. He said nothing for a moment, considering.

"You're right. What do you think we should do?"

Two weeks later, they were sitting in a therapy room. Their counselor was a middle-aged woman with plain features and a kind smile. She explained the process and gave them some papers to sign. For the first time in a long time, Debbie felt hope.

It's every couple's worst nightmare.

Getting to the point where they can't do it anymore.

Can't do the fighting. The heartache. The loneliness.

As much as we believe we're in control of our relationships, dark forces tug at even the most loving couples.

If you're not prepared, then that first fight can knock you over. By the tenth fight, you're swinging at each other like boxers. You're immune to the pain.



Relationships start unraveling well before we notice what's happening. By the time we notice, it's often too late.

Think back to your relationship history. Do your relationships tend to start out happy and keep getting happier? Or is the happiest time in your relationship always at the beginning?

Then, irrevocably, all that wonderful happiness slips away. It gets unhappier and unhappier until you can't take it anymore. You love him, but being together is killing you. So you end it and start over with someone else. And the same thing happens.

Again and again and again.

In this chapter, I want to show you a way to stop that downhill slide.

By applying the Pleasure Principle, you can keep your relationships from unraveling. You won't have to mourn the love you felt in the beginning. You'll know how to get it back and make things right again. You'll still have ups and downs, but you'll know how to ride them out.

A relationship that grows in happiness could be yours, if you understand and use Pleasure Power.

Over the following pages, we'll keep checking in with Debbie and Scott. How did their relationship end up in such a state? What could they have done differently? Will counseling keep them together?

And we'll find out why you and I don't have to suffer the same fate.

Knowledge is power. This chapter will give you power you didn't have before. It's power that many couples don't have. Share it with your loved one. It could just save your relationship.



Y THE LIFE CYCLE OF AN ORDINARY RELATIONSHIP

In the beginning, it's always so amazing.

All you want to do is feel like this forever. You're thrilled when you finally become boyfriend and girlfriend. You can't wait until you're husband and wife. Commitment promises a future of bliss, with this extraordinary person by your side.

But there comes a point when everything starts to slide downhill.

It's hard to pinpoint. It's rarely a specific event, but more a change in mood. Your heart doesn't jump at the sight of him anymore. If anything, it falls. You're reminded of the chores he hasn't done, the way he's ignored you lately, the expectation that he'll fail you yet again.

You love him, but he irritates you. Sometimes, his mere existence is enough to annoy you. You nitpick, nag, and make hurtful remarks—and he does the same. You don't know the last time you felt really happy.

How could this happen, when you used to be so good together? Will those good times ever come back?

When the pain of a relationship outweighs the pleasure, the clock starts ticking.

A relationship can't survive when neither person is happy. Let those unhappy feelings linger too long, and the embers of love go cold.

Many couples believe they can avoid this, if only they pick the right person.

If you're with the right person, then surely you'll never fall out of love. It will always be easy, fun and passionate.

But falling in love is only a temporary state at best. The euphoria and joy of a new love affair invariably give way to routine. You can't float in the clouds forever; you have to come back to earth.



Back on earth, your ideal man has flaws. He's not perfect. Neither are you. Commitment keeps you together while you work through the things that aggravate you about one another. Maybe you learn to accept each other as you are, or maybe you learn to compromise. Maybe you settle for what you have, even if it's not what you want.

THE FOUNDATION OF PLEASURE

If you're going to master the Pleasure Principle in a long-term relationship, you need to have one foundational idea in place.

Loving actions are the foundation of your relationship, not the love you feel for one another.

If you're waiting to feel loving towards him before acting lovingly, then you'll be waiting a long time. Feelings follow actions, not the other way around.

Act lovingly, even if you don't feel like it. Act lovingly, and your love will grow. Love needs loving actions to flourish. He can't see how you feel, but he can see how you act towards him.

There's no pleasure on earth better than being thoroughly loved by another. Children know this. A child can lack for material things, but as long as that child is loved, he or she will flourish. Love is better than chocolate, fast cars, or big houses. It's the only thing we can take with us when we die.

But many couples let loving actions slide. They've already demonstrated their love by choosing to be together. What more can the other person want?

It's even harder to act lovingly when a couple is at odds.

Even though Debbie loved Scott, she knew they didn't treat each other very lovingly. She tried, but she found it hard to be the "better person." Why act lovingly towards him, when he'd just said something rude to her? So she gave him a dose of his own medicine. She treated him just like he treated her.



And their relationship was paying for it.

They fought all the time. Their lives were increasingly separate. She preferred to be with her girlfriends instead of him. She loved the uncomplicated nature of her friendships. Everything was a power struggle with Scott.

But what could she do? She felt helpless to change it.

All relationships go through rough patches. When couples are young and inexperienced, they don't have faith they can make it out the other side. They split up, because it's too hard. They don't see any way to fix what's broken.

Over time, you come to see that rough patches come with the territory. They even make you stronger. A couple who's gone through a lot together is more resilient in the face of life's challenges.

What distinguishes couples who make it from couples who don't?

They focus on pleasure instead of pain.

Successful couples see pleasure at the end of the tunnel. They're willing to go through the pain of facing their issues, because they believe their love will be stronger as a result. Being loved by one another is a reward worth any sacrifice.

Less successful couples see only pain ahead. They look into the future and see more of the same: more fighting, more unhappiness. Why stick together, if the tough times never end?

What they need is Pleasure Power.

Y THE PLEASURE MUST OUTWEIGH THE PAIN

From the time we're born until the time we die, we move *towards pleasure* and *away from pain*.

But pleasure isn't always free. Sometimes, it comes at a cost.



For the pleasure of having a family, most of us are willing to go through a great deal of pain. For the pleasure of getting a degree, we're willing to go through the pain of studying. For the pleasure of buying our own home, we're willing to go through the pain of saving.

We know that the pain is only temporary, while the pleasure of achievement will be worth it.

However, if there's no pleasure at the end of the tunnel, there's no point in enduring pain. Why torment yourself any more than you have to? (If you've ever exercised for weeks and saw no change on the scales, you know what I mean!)

Couples stay in relationships when they believe the pain is only temporary. They bear the pain because they believe better times are ahead. Being together, even if it's rocky, is better than being apart.

Couples leave relationships when they believe nothing will ever change. They don't want a future where they'll only experience more pain. They prefer to choose a future where there's the promise of pleasure.

Someone with this mindset believes that separating will bring them more pleasure than staying together. They'll have the chance to fall in love again—this time, with someone more compatible. Giving up on their painful relationship is a no-brainer when compared to the anticipation of falling in love again.

No wonder Debbie was so relieved when Scott agreed to couples counseling. It showed that he believed their relationship could be good again. Both of them knew that counseling would be hard. But the reward of getting back their happy relationship was worth it.

KEEP HIM FIGHTING FOR YOUR RELATIONSHIP

When your relationship gets rocky, do you ever start to wonder whether or not the universe is telling you something?



Maybe it's a sign. Maybe you're more incompatible than you thought. Maybe you should cut your losses now.

He could very well be thinking the same thing.

When times get tough, you need the Pleasure Principle. You need to reassure him (and yourself) that the pleasure of being loved by one another is worth the short-term pain you're experiencing.

How do you do that?

You ask yourself two questions:

How can I minimize the pain we're experiencing?

How can I get us moving towards pleasure again?

Those two questions are incredibly powerful.

They draw him closer to you. They keep him from backing away. They make your relationship stronger, no matter what you're dealing with.

Many women do the exact opposite.

They use pain to motivate their man to do what they want. They get grumpy, pull back, clam up, or stop doing nice things. They're hoping their displeasure will get him back in line.

It doesn't work.

Pain causes him to move away from you. If you withdraw your affection and support, he won't redouble his efforts to win you back. He'll just withdraw, too.

Pleasure has the opposite effect. Entice him with pleasure, and you'll pull him closer. He'll want to do what you ask if he gets loved even more thoroughly as a reward.

The purest form of pleasure is feeling loved. A man will do anything for a woman who makes him feel loved, honored, appreciated, and respected.



So find out what makes him feel amazing.

Maybe he needs to hear you tell him how much you appreciate him. Maybe he needs a hug or kiss. Maybe he feels loved when you do something thoughtful for him or spend a fabulous weekend together. Know your man.

Then find every opportunity to bring more pleasure to your lives.

Give him a warm kiss for taking out the garbage. Let him know how much you appreciate him taking the car in for a service with a special dinner. If money is tight, talk about what you'll do someday. Describe in detail your dream vacation or your dream house. Incredibly, just talking about pleasure is nearly as good as experiencing it.

Y USING THE PLEASURE PRINCIPLE IN A FIGHT

Adding more pleasure to your everyday life is easy ... until things get rocky.

Pleasure and anger don't exactly go hand in hand. When you're irritated at him, you don't feel loving. You certainly don't feel like acting lovingly.

That's why it's so important to commit to *loving actions*, regardless of how you feel at any particular moment.

You can act lovingly even if you're really angry at him. Try it. It may feel fake at first, but you can learn how to do it. Responding to anger with love is a habit, just like anything else.

If you find it hard to keep your angry emotions from spilling over, imagine him as a little 3-year-old boy. Small children don't have the emotional control that adults do, so their parents have to model calm behavior for them. Yelling at a screaming toddler just makes things worse. Holding out your arms for a cuddle often makes things better.

Stay calm, contain the unacceptable behavior, and act lovingly, even if you don't feel it.

Commit to finding ways you can express and resolve disagreements without hurting each other so badly. The less pain you inflict on one another, the less you'll drive one another



away. You might replace “you” statements with “I” statements, or take a breather when things get heated. Practice empathetic listening, even if you don’t like what he’s saying.

Keep your fights constructive. Stay focused on how to make things better rather than airing your grievances. He’s not the enemy; the issue is. Treat him as if he’s on your side.

Stay connected. Don’t be afraid to make a joke to lighten up the mood when it gets too tense. Arguments don’t always have to be heavy and grim. You can proceed gently and carefully, choosing your words wisely.

Don’t use your words as a sledgehammer. Use them as a scalpel, precisely dealing with the issue at hand and nothing else. Think of yourself as a surgeon, carefully healing the hurt without disturbing the rest of your “relationship body.”

KEEP ASKING THE PLEASURE PRINCIPLE QUESTIONS

Have you ever actually seen a couple argue like that? Carefully and respectfully navigating their disagreement?

Perhaps not. A lot of couples focus on inflicting pain when they fight. They’re not interested in containing the damage.

Think about what *really* happens when you argue.

Do you get caught up in how badly his words hurt you? Do you lash back, intending to cause him just as much pain? Does any criticism of your position make you defensive and even more stubborn? Do you find yourself trying to argue over him, rather than listen to what he’s saying?

If so, don’t worry. Learning how to disagree constructively is tough. You might understand the Pleasure Principle and agree with it wholeheartedly, but that doesn’t mean you’ll remember to apply it in the heat of the moment.



Most of us fight the way we've always fought. We don't consciously think about how we're doing it. We just do it.

So how can you remember the Pleasure Principle when things get tense?

One idea is to wave a white flag in your mind's eye the moment you feel a disagreement about to erupt. (In my imagination, the white flag is emblazoned with "PP" for Pleasure Principle.)

Then ask yourself the Pleasure Principle questions:

How can I minimize the pain we're experiencing?

How can I get us moving towards pleasure?

Take the first answer that comes to your mind and do it.

Maybe you can make a joke to get him to laugh. Laughter is one form of pleasure you can always count on.

Maybe you can touch his arm. It's hard to be unkind to someone who's physically connecting with you in a loving way.

Maybe you can agree with him on some level. Even if you disagree with most of what he's saying, starting out your response with some level of agreement helps him feel that you understand him.

Maybe you can ask him a few questions. This is a great way to give yourself a chance to cool down. If what he said makes you so mad you can barely think straight, think of something to ask him until you feel capable of speaking your mind in a respectful way.

Maybe you can bite your tongue. Sometimes our partners say rude things without thinking. If he didn't mean to hurt you, maybe you can let the comment pass.

Maybe you can change the subject. You can try this during phone calls. If you sense that your partner is about to say something horrid to you, something that's going to spark a huge argument, quickly tell him you've got to go. A swift "Love ya, bye!" can prevent a lot of regret over hasty words.



Incidentally, I used to feel conflicted about using this tactic. Wasn't it stonewalling to refuse to engage in a fight?

Then I saw that constructive arguments don't happen when you're both feeling triggered. If he's about to say something nasty (or you're about to say something nasty), it's better to end the conversation and take up the topic at a later time, when you're both in a less volatile frame of mind.

So...

Can you do that?

Minimize pain and move towards pleasure?

Arguing doesn't have to destroy what you have together, as long as you're willing to act with love.



USING THE PLEASURE PRINCIPLE TO RESTORE BALANCE

You're not always going to be able to keep the pain of fighting to a minimum.

Sometimes, we end up in horrible fights despite ourselves.

Maybe you're under a lot of stress, have a cold, or are hungry or tired. Those factors make everyone more easily triggered.

The worse the fight, the more distant you'll be feeling afterwards. You have to do something to bring you back together again. Otherwise, the silence and awkwardness will do more damage than the fight itself.

It's those first few days after a bad fight when couples are most likely to entertain thoughts of breaking up. If this isn't their first fight about the issue (and they're getting no closer to resolving it), they'll both be wondering how much longer they can live like this.



Are you up to practicing the Pleasure Principle?

Great! But be aware that you will be accepting the responsibility of making the first move towards reconciliation.

The sooner you do it, the better. You can't afford to wait for him. You've got to restore the pleasure in your relationship before the pain drives you apart for good.

Before we look at what the Pleasure Principle has to say about restoring harmony after a fight, let's look at the most common strategies couples use.

What do you do when you fight? Do you:

1. *Pretend it never happened?*
2. *Mull over it for weeks, feeling angrier and angrier at what he did/said?*
3. *Try to talk about what happened when you're both feeling calmer?*
4. *Have amazing make-up sex, vow to never do that again, and feel closer than ever?*

Strategy #1 doesn't work. If fighting has driven you apart, you need to address it.

Strategy #2 makes the situation worse. Dwell on the pain, and you'll move further away from one another.

Strategy #3 is the therapist's favorite answer. Talking about how you fight (once you've cooled off, of course) helps you break down what happened and what you could do differently next time. It gives you hope for a future in which you can disagree respectfully.

Imagine having a relationship where, instead of shouting or accusing, you're both committed to creating a safe space for disagreements. That's pleasure worth enduring a little pain for!

Strategy #4 offers a shortcut back to intimacy. But make-up sex isn't a long-term solution for conflict, because it doesn't stop the fighting. You may vow right now to never fight again, but try remembering *that* the next time you're angry.



Here's a strategy that's not on the list:

Do something pleasurable ASAP.

Go out to the movies. Visit friends. Enjoy a spur-of-the-moment game of mini-golf. Spend the day at an amusement park. Go hiking.

Do something that you both enjoy, something that doesn't require conversation or even much one-on-one time. Anything sporty is a great option, because you'll be focused on the physical demands of the activity. Socializing is another great option, because being with friends can remind you of how rich your life is as a couple.

Is he the last person you want to do anything with right now?

Maybe.

But do it anyway.

Even when you're mad, it's hard to resist pleasure. Pleasure brings you back together. A pleasurable experience can override those lingering painful feelings.

Just remember to keep the focus on fun. This isn't an opportunity to talk about things; it's an opportunity to remember why you're together. After you're feeling close again, feel free to have that discussion.

PLEASURE ANYTIME, ANYWHERE

You want to know one reason why relationships are always better in the beginning?

You're focused on F-U-N.

You go out. You do fun things together! You're 100% devoted to pleasure, without a care in the world.

Then it all changes.



You get serious. You plan for the future. You divide up responsibilities and chores. You set out to make a life together, which includes errands and bills and duties.

You stop dating. Oh, sure, you still spend time together. Only now it's spent watching television, eating meals, and working around one another. You've grown past the need for idle pleasure. You're a grown-up couple now.

That's the mistake that so many couples make.

They give up on pleasure, right when they need it the most.

That's what Debbie and Scott did. They dated, got married, and set out to make a life together. They did all the things they thought they were supposed to do. They paid bills, washed dishes, balanced the checkbook, and scheduled errands.

They forgot to schedule in pleasure.

And so, when irritations flared, the tone of their relationship began to change.

They started to keep score.

Debbie knew exactly how much she was contributing to the relationship compared to Scott. She made careful note of how much effort he put into picking out presents for her at Christmas, her birthday, Valentine's Day. She vowed to do no more for him than he did for her.

Score-keeping didn't give them a more equitable relationship. It set them up to lose.

One of the great truths in life is this:

The only thing that matters is how well you loved.

In the end, it doesn't matter how other people treated you. It doesn't matter if things were fair or not. All that matters is whether you shared genuinely of your heart. *You'll* know that you loved. That knowledge will bring you peace.

So see if love can fix what's wrong.



Even if he's been grumpy, even if he doesn't deserve it, even if you don't feel like it ... act lovingly anyway.

Give him a backrub. Bring him a cup of coffee. Make his favorite dinner. Get tickets for the game. Think of things that make you *both* feel loved: companionship, laughter, physical touch, and fun.

Pour pleasure on your wounds, instead of worsening the pain.

A counselor once told me that he gave the couples who came to see him one task. If they could achieve it successfully, then he would work with them.

The task was this:

The couple had to go away for the weekend together. No kids, just the two of them. They had to spend the entire weekend in each other's company.

If they came back refreshed and more connected than before, then their relationship could be saved.

If they argued the whole time and hated every minute of it, the counselor didn't hold out much hope for the relationship.

Pleasure brings you together. Pain drives you apart.

TRUTH-TELLING WITH LOVE

Did Debbie and Scott finally figure it out?

Not at first.

They started off their counseling session with great optimism. But Debbie's heart slowly sunk as she realized what was happening.

Scott had a lot of things to say about her. And they weren't nice.



Even worse, the counselor was nodding and asking him more questions. Debbie felt like she wasn't even in the room.

After the session, Debbie could barely bring herself to talk to Scott. He seemed quite happy on the way home, talking about plans for the upcoming week and a barbecue he wanted to buy. He didn't notice Debbie being quiet.

All that week, Debbie wondered why Scott was still with her. If he thought she was such a terrible person, why did he stay?

Telling the truth feels liberating to the speaker ... and terrifying to the listener.

It's tough to hear the truth. It's uncomfortable to hear what the person you love most thinks about you. It's devastating to realize that the relationship you thought you had ... may never have existed.

Instead of feeling your love, he was noting down every thoughtless thing you ever said or did.

Instead of appreciating the small gestures you made for him, he believed he was doing all the work in the relationship.

How can pleasure deal with a wound running that deep?

It's tempting to interpret the Pleasure Principle as saying that everything should be fun and light-hearted. Don't bring up anything painful. Keep your mouth shut, smile, and focus your entire life on pleasing him. Don't have any needs of your own.

But the Pleasure Principle is wiser than that.

It's not about minimizing *his* pain and maximizing *his* pleasure.

It cares about *your* pain and pleasure, too.

It hurts to be in a relationship where you can't be honest. It hurts to be in a relationship where your needs aren't getting met.



How can you be happy as a couple if you never deal with the things that must be dealt with?

How can you be happy as a couple if he's enjoying himself and you're desperately unhappy?

Sometimes, there are wounds in a relationship that have been picked open so many times that they've grown a thick, hard scab on top. Every time you touch it, it feels sore. It never healed properly. The best you can do is try not to touch it. You work around it as if it's not there.

Healing anything isn't easy. You've got to look at the wound, pull off the scab that's been hiding it, and expose it to the light. That's where couples counseling can help. It's a safe place to look at old hurts.

But what's needed then is not an overanalysis of where you hurt one another. Explaining what happened, examining it, assigning blame.... Many couples get stuck in this phase. They examine their pain as if it holds the answer to happiness.

Pain doesn't hold the answer to happiness.

Pleasure does.

The warmth of your love, not the pain of your hurts, will lead you back to the relationship you once had.

So look at your wound as a couple. See it in the bright light of day. Then let go of the need to pick at it. Soothe it instead. Treat it with care and tenderness. Love it back to health.

When Debbie asked Scott about that day in counseling, he was surprised to find out just how hard she'd taken it. "None of that stuff means I don't love you!" he exclaimed. "I just needed to get it out. I've had so much stuff inside here—" He tapped his chest.

"—And it needed to come out. I'm sorry it hurt you. But I'm not with you because you're perfect. I'm with you because you're the one I've chosen to be with, even when it's hard."



It's amazing how resilient love is.













We underestimate love. We think that a bad argument can kill it. We worry that years of arguing can wear it down to nothing.

But love has roots. Given warmth and attention, it can grow again.

PLEASURE PRINCIPLE SHORTCUTS

If you're finding it hard to think of creative ways to bring more pleasure to your relationship, throw in one of the phrases/questions from the list below.

Getting him thinking about pleasure is as good as doing something pleasurable. And anything can be pleasurable if you express pleasure in it!

-  *"I love you."*
-  *"Can you imagine what it will be like when _____?"*
-  *"I'm so excited about next year."*
-  *"I can't wait until we _____."*
-  *"What would be your perfect day?"*
-  *"What makes you really, really happy?"*
-  *"I'm having so much fun."*
-  *"I enjoy being with you so much."*
-  *"This is great!"*
-  *"Thank you so much for thinking of this."*
-  *"I wouldn't exchange today for anything."*
-  *"I'm so grateful to be with a man like you."*



Saying those things gives you the warm fuzzies, and hearing them makes his heart swell with pride.

If you think back to the early days of your relationship, you may find that these are things you said all the time. You were always telling him how much you enjoyed being with him. You were always asking him questions about what he dreamed of in life.

And he responded by feeling incredibly close and connected to you.

The journey of relationships is never easy. There are ups and downs. There are hard times and good times. Sometimes you feel loving; sometimes you don't even like each other.

But we stick with relationships because, ultimately, they bring more pleasure to our lives than pain.

It feels good to rely on a special someone. It feels good to be known by another. It feels good to give and receive love.

When your relationship is hurting, remember that.

Pleasure is just a loving choice away.

The Pleasure Principle



Chapter 7. The Key to Paradise

"PLEASURE IS NATURE'S TEST, HER SIGN OF APPROVAL. WHEN MAN IS HAPPY, HE IS IN HARMONY WITH HIMSELF AND HIS ENVIRONMENT."—**OSCAR WILDE**

*W*e've journeyed far and wide on our quest to understand pleasure.

You've seen what pleasure can do for you. Even if you've only tried a few of the exercises in this book, you've had a taste of what a pleasure-filled life might feel like.

I hope your journey won't end when you close this book.

Understanding your pleasure response can take a lifetime. It takes a daily commitment to self-care. You can't let stress and struggle wrest your attention away from what matters most. Your health and happiness depend on it.

Perhaps you began reading this book in the hope of finding better ways to attract and keep a man. But what you've found is much more than that.

The Pleasure Principle isn't just a man-attraction tool. It's a philosophy for life.

It leads you unerringly towards your highest good. It sets in motion magic, miracles, and manifestations. Pleasure is the language of your heart, leading you home.

But you're not there yet.

I have one final challenge for you.



You weren't ready for it when you started this book, but you are now.

Accept this challenge, practice it diligently, and the benefits you've seen thus far will seem like child's play. It's the Pleasure Principle on steroids. ;-) But it's not for beginners. Only advanced students of the Pleasure Principle need apply.

You see, **pleasure has been hiding some secrets from you**. It's masqueraded as fun. It's pretended to be about nothing heavier than having a good time.

For some people, that's enough. A life of fun is their highest goal.

Others find it too simplistic. Life can't be reduced to pleasure and pain. Life is about being a good person, living a good life, and making the world a better place. What can pleasure do for the world?

You're about to find out.

THE AUDACITY OF PLEASURE



Do I really deserve this pleasure?
This is American, too—the insecurity
about whether we have earned our happiness.”

Elizabeth Gilbert

Committing to pleasure is an act of resistance.

For most of human history, women have been the ones giving pleasure to others. We've served our husbands and our children. We've tended the sick and looked after the elderly. And yet when we become ill, or when we need support, it's often other women who come to our aid.

It takes an incredible amount of courage to break that pattern.

Elizabeth Gilbert did.



She wrote a book about it, which hit the bestseller lists and earned her a spot on Oprah. The book was made into a 2010 film starring Julia Roberts. It was called *Eat, Pray, Love*.

The story follows Gilbert's attempt to find herself in the wake of a devastating divorce. She starts her journey in Italy, where she attempts to learn how to consciously pursue pleasure.

It's not easy. Even surrounded by handsome Italian men and delicious Italian food, Gilbert finds that pleasure doesn't come naturally to her.

She feels guilty about it. Who is she, to be indulging herself like this at her age? She should be bearing down, working hard, saving for retirement ... not doing something foolish just because it gives her pleasure.

Any of those thoughts sound familiar?

As women, we've learned to put our own pleasure last. We don't get to rest until all the jobs are done ... and, thanks to our neverending to-do list, *that* will never happen.

What can we do?

Moving to Italy is out of the question. If we want to consciously pursue pleasure, there's only one way we're allowed by culture, society, and the code of women to do it:

We must fall in love.

Falling in love gives us permission to indulge in pleasures of every kind. We can sit for hours in a restaurant, laughing with a handsome man. Nothing is too foolish for love, not walking in the rain or doing a happy dance.

In the presence of love, you can pursue pleasure all day and all night. You're allowed to. It's *expected* when you're in love.

No wonder romance casts such a spell over women's hearts everywhere.

Romance gives us our only chance to sit back, relax, and be tended to.

Can you see where I'm headed here?



Perhaps we need romance so much because *we're not getting the pleasure we need.*

It's selfish to indulge yourself, but it's not selfish for someone else to indulge you. And it's lovely to be indulged. It's lovely to be looked after. Especially when it's guilt-free.

Perhaps we need to take a page from Elizabeth Gilbert's book.

Perhaps, instead of falling into a relationship, we could learn to hold ourselves more tenderly. We're so good at making others happy. Surely we must know how to make ourselves happy.

After all, no man on earth will ever know what pleases you better than you know yourself.

THE WORLD NEEDS YOUR PLEASURE

Too many hard-working women deny themselves the good things in life because they're waiting for someone else to share it with.

They believe that it's okay for a man to treat them, but not okay for them to treat themselves. You're not supposed to buy flowers for yourself, after all. You have to wait for someone to buy flowers for you.

Besides, they argue, how can you enjoy anything if it's just you? Being alone takes all the pleasure out of it.

With everything you know now, do you think that's true?

What would *you* say to those women?

Maria and Maya Rodale pose an interesting question in their book, *It's My Pleasure*:

“Why [is it] so easy for us as women to say, every day, as we are helping others, ‘*It's my pleasure,*’ but so hard for us to say to ourselves, ‘*It's MY pleasure?*’”

Owning your own pleasure isn't selfish. It's an act of self-love. It's a gift to the world.



The world needs more women who are vibrant, alive, fulfilled, and in touch with what makes them feel good.

Sure, you can keep giving and giving to others until you have nothing left. But why not include yourself in that generosity? Otherwise, you're at risk of burning out. You can end up resenting those you serve for not returning the favor.

But if you learn to give to *yourself*, oh my...

A woman who knows how to charge her own batteries can move mountains.

Let me show how the “trickle-down effect” of pleasure works.

Let's say you decide to treat yourself to something you've been wanting for a while.

You stop by the shop to get it on your way to work. Your enthusiasm as you're paying for your purchase makes the cashier smile, momentarily distracting her from her dark thoughts about whether she should break up with her jerk of a boyfriend.

As you walk out of the shop, bag in hand, a man walking past sees your smile. It makes him smile. He thinks about how much he'd like a woman smiling like that at him. He vows to go home and set up that online dating profile he'd been putting off.

You make your way to work, and everyone notices your happy spirits. “What put that smile on your face?” your colleague asks. You tell her, and she thinks about how nice it would be to do something like that for herself. She makes the decision then and there to treat herself when she gets off work.

You see?

Pleasure has a ripple effect.

Every time you choose pleasure, you put a little more joy into the world around you.

Indulging yourself isn't selfish, and it isn't wrong. It's a way to bring more light and happiness into the world.



Y WHERE TO GO FROM HERE

When you learn anything from a book, it's so easy to nod your head, put the book away, and forget everything you just read.

It's not like a course where there's homework and a teacher drumming the information into you. No one's going to make you practice. No one's holding you accountable.

You've got free will. Which means that *you* get to decide what you'll do with the information I've given you.

You can put this book down and go back to your life as normal. Maybe you've enjoyed learning new ideas, but it's too much work to do anything about them. Your life is okay as it is. It only needs a little adjusting.

Or...

You can recognize the opportunity you have right now.

Two roads stretch out in front of you. One circles back to where you were when you started this book. Take that road, and soon it will be as if you'd never read this book. You'll go back to your comfortable life and your familiar habits.

The other road continues on ahead. You can see mountains in the distance, and rocky patches. You can see blue skies and glimpses of lush greenery. You have no idea where this road leads, only that it's going in a different direction than you've ever been before.

Which road calls to you?

Once you take the second road, there's no going back. You'll see things and experience things that will change you. It will become impossible to settle for what you had, when you see what you can become.

In a moment, I'm going to give you a challenge. Accepting it sets you on that road into the future, where who knows what might happen.



Are you ready to find out what it is?

Let me give you some context first. You know that giving someone pleasure is a way to show them love, right?

But did you know that *giving yourself pleasure* is a way of showing yourself love?

Consider those women who give endlessly to others, but never take time for themselves. What they're telling themselves is that they're not as important as other people. Other people's needs take priority. Their value lies in what they can do for others. We call these women "selfless," as if not having a self was a good thing.

Selfless women are at risk of *co-dependence*, relationships characterized by an unhealthy reliance on others.

Contrast this to the woman who makes time for her own pleasure.

With every nice thing she does for herself, she's telling herself that *she matters*. She may not have a relationship, but that doesn't mean she has to go without. She can give herself what she desires, without waiting for a man to do it. She can give herself flowers, chocolates, candlelit dinners, compliments, the whole shebang, without an ounce of guilt. She does nice things for other people, so why not include herself in the list?

An independent woman doesn't need a man to take care of. She doesn't need a man to take care of her. Rather, she invites a man to join in the fun.

That's the foundation for an *interdependent relationship*, a healthy relationship between equals.

How do you become that woman?

You do this one simple thing.

Even if you forget everything else in this book, *this* is what you remember.

This is what you teach your children, if you have daughters.

This is how you become a role model for women everywhere.



Your Final Challenge

TREAT YOURSELF LIKE YOU'D TREAT THE MAN YOU LOVE.

Love yourself like you'd love him.

Every day. In every way.

Make yourself wonderful meals. Take yourself out every so often. Treat yourself to little gifts. Tell yourself how beautiful you are. Show yourself how much you care. See all your best qualities. Forgive everything else.

Don't keep waiting for a man to spoil, when you're right here.

Y THE KEY TO PARADISE

Self-love.

It's such a simple thing.

But it's the key that unlocks your happiest life.

Men will come and go in your life, but self-love means you won't be thrown out of paradise every time a relationship ends.

You don't need his love to feel safe, secure, and content. That's what your relationship with yourself is for. *You* are the ground you stand on. *You* are the foundation that never shifts.

Self-love is tricky. It's more than just warm, fuzzy feelings.

It's how you treat yourself.

You can see how you really feel about yourself by the way you treat yourself in the privacy of your own mind. Feeling confident isn't self-love. Treating yourself tenderly is.



Self-love is rarer than you might think. Most of us don't see ourselves with loving eyes.

In fact, we're more like *critics*.

We criticize everything about ourselves. We see everything that's wrong with who we are. We justify it by believing we're just being realistic. If you don't see where you're going wrong, you can't fix it.

But let's just imagine, for a moment, that everything you say to yourself ... *you're actually saying to the man you love.*

Would you tell him he's not good enough?

Would you tell him he's a mess who never gets anything right?

Would you tell him he looks like a lump in that sweatshirt and he should lose a few pounds?

Of course not! Who would do that to someone they love?

But you probably do that to yourself.

You probably tell yourself a lot of things, in the privacy of your own mind, that you'd never dream of saying to someone else.

I'm not sure where we learned to talk to ourselves that way.

But it stinks.

It stinks because it messes up our relationships.

The way you treat yourself is the way you allow others to treat you.

If you speak harshly to yourself, then you'll listen humbly when others speak harshly to you.

If you're hard on yourself, then you'll accept other people being hard on you.



If you don't feel lovable, then you'll feel comfortable in relationships where the guy doesn't really love you.

(I learned that from hard personal experience. It's a lesson I don't want to repeat!)

Even if you luck out and get into a great relationship, part of you will always be on edge, waiting for the ax to fall.

Even if your boyfriend or husband tells you how beautiful you are and how blessed he is to have you in his life, you'll find it hard to believe him. It will sound too good to be true.

It's difficult to imagine anyone loving you more than you love yourself.

So if you want that great love...

The kind that endures a lifetime...

Build a solid foundation first.

Give *yourself* what you've been saving for the man you love.



List of Love

What you'll need: Notebook or journal, pen

Get out your Pleasure Journal. We're not done with it yet!

Off the top of your head, write down **10 reasons you'd marry yourself**—serious or not. For bonus points, post it on social media with the hashtag [#lovemyself](#).



Y THE PARABLE OF THE TWO WOLVES

I want to finish up this book talking to those of you who aren't convinced that pleasure has the credentials to carry us through a lifetime.

What about being a good person? What about making a positive impact?

Isn't it superficial to focus on pleasure and forget all the pain in the world?

Surely the pursuit of pleasure is nothing more than entertainment. Good for taking your mind off real issues, but amusing only in the shallowest sense. There are bigger things to worry about than whether you love yourself. Like politics, war, and poverty, for starters.

Fair enough.

There's something I haven't told you.

The Pleasure Principle forms the basis of one of the most important spiritual truths of all time.

Far from leading you astray, it calls you to be a better person. Someone who contributes far more to the world than she takes from it.

You see, although philosophers and psychologists have long known that pleasure and pain are the primary ways we motivate ourselves, spiritual teachers have gone deeper.

What is the greatest pleasure of all? they asked.

Love, of course.

What is the greatest pain of all?

Fear.

So, on the surface, we appear to be driven by pleasure and pain.

But beneath our conscious awareness, what's really driving us is *love* and *fear*. The two greatest forces in the universe.



Choose pleasure, and you're making a stand for love.

Shrink back from pain, and you're feeding fear.

In fact, spiritual teachers believe that ALL choices we make in life, from the most mundane to the most significant, come down to just one decision:

The choice to love ... or the choice to fear.

It's the Pleasure Principle, taken to a higher level.

There's a wonderful Native American story that represents this idea. A boy tells his grandfather:

"It feels like I have two wolves inside of me. They're always fighting. One wolf is telling me to fear. The other wolf is telling me to love. Which one will win?"

His grandfather answers:

"The one you feed."

WHAT HAPPENS IF YOU FEED FEAR

Put like that, it sounds so easy.

Of course you'll choose love! Won't everyone?

You may be surprised at how often you choose fear, without even realizing it.

Doctors warn us that if we don't follow their recommendations, we'll get sick. Work colleagues warn us that if we don't do things exactly the way the boss wants, we'll get fired. Teachers warn us that if we don't keep up on our coursework, we'll fail. Marketers warn us that if we don't buy their products, we'll miss out.

Don't we want to know those things?



We don't want to make the wrong choices. We don't want to ignore the warnings. We don't want anything bad to happen.

Fear sounds authoritative. It makes a lot of sense. It's hard to argue with fear, when it claims to be on your side. It's only trying to protect you when it asks questions like:

What if you fall in love with someone ... only to find out he's not who you thought he was?

What if you fall in love with someone ... only for him to break your heart?

What if you fall in love with someone and give him everything ... only for him to leave you?

No wonder there's so much pain wrapped up in love. Fear put it there.

Fear tells you that loving someone is risky. There are too many things that could go wrong. It's better to protect yourself, and keep your heart whole.

You might even feel grateful to that voice of fear. It's only trying to help you.

WHAT HAPPENS IF YOU FEED LOVE

What would your life look like if you chose love instead of fear?

Here are some examples.

You're on a first date. As you sit there, looking across the table at one another, an unwanted thought pops into your head. "He's judging me. He doesn't like me. I just know it."

The wolf of fear tells you to judge him back. "Well, he's not very hot himself. He'll be lucky if he gets a girlfriend."

The wolf of love tells you that you're more alike than different. It urges you to reach out.



Gathering up all your courage, you open your mouth and confess, “I’m feeling a little awkward right now. First dates are so weird. We have this short window of time to figure out whether we like one another. I spend half the time wondering what you’re thinking of me.”

“Same here!” he tells you with a smile.

Just like that, the ice is broken.

What would life be like if you chose love instead of fear?

Your best friend has done something to really irritate you. You’re so mad at her you can’t think straight.

The wolf of fear tells you to cut her off. She should pay for what she did. She’s no true friend at all. Fear is your real friend, because fear always tells you the truth.

The wolf of love whispers that she’s no different than you. You’ve done things to upset her in the past, too. Part of life is learning to reach out instead of shut down when you’re in pain. So talk to her. Be willing to hear her side of the story.

Love is too important to let fear win.

What would life be like if you chose love instead of fear?

You made a mistake. A big, fat, stupid mistake.

You can’t believe you just did that. You wish desperately that you could undo it and go back and try again. Your cheeks are hot with shame.

The wolf of fear tells you that you’ve really done it this time. You’ll be punished. You’ll be rejected. You’ll lose everything that matters. The only way to save yourself is to cover up the evidence. Pretend it never happened. Know that you must never, ever make a mistake again.



The wolf of love tells you to stop protecting yourself. If you hurt someone, then you must speak up, acknowledge what you did, and make amends. That is the loving thing to do.

Then, because you also love yourself, making amends means you can forgive yourself. It's okay to make mistakes, as long as you acknowledge them. Everyone makes mistakes. That doesn't mean we're not lovable.

Love doesn't care about imperfections.

Which wolf have you been feeding? Has its advice been serving you?

Y FEAR IS A FALSE FRIEND

Fear is the enemy of pleasure.

It tells you that you shouldn't be too happy. Everything that goes up must come down. Every pleasure has its price. You'll pay for it somehow, if not today, then tomorrow.

Fear is the enemy of love.

Fear tells you that you can't let anyone too close. He might see who you really are inside and recoil in horror. Fear tells you that you must cover up all your flaws and hide them so well that no one finds out. Fear tells you that the only way you can get a man is to fool him into falling for you.

Fear lies.

When we listen to fear, the real victim is *us*.

We hand over happiness so that we can protect ourselves.



Face the Fear

What you'll need: Notebook or journal, pen

What are you most afraid of, when it comes to relationships?

Write down your top 10 relationship fears. The very worst things you could imagine happening. Like being cheated on or betrayed by the man you love. Or marrying a man only to find out he never loved you in the first place.

Bad things do happen. Of course they do. But most of the pain we go through in relationships is self-inflicted. It's caused by our *thoughts*.

We suffer every time we worry about what he thinks of us, whether he really likes us, and what we'll do if he dumps us. *He's* not putting us through that suffering. We are.

And it's so unnecessary.

What would it feel like if you vowed to stop worrying about those things on your list? Let your journal worry about them. You're not going to concern yourself with things that haven't happened yet. If they do happen, you'll face them, but until then you've got better ways to spend your mental energy.

Like thinking about things that make you feel good.

PLEASURE IS YOUR LIFE PURPOSE

A while back, a friend gave me a beautiful notebook decorated with my name on the front. Underneath, it had the meaning of my name in Latin.

Now, I've never paid a second thought to my name. I was born with it, I answer to it, and that's about it.



But I was fascinated to see that, had I known what my name meant back when I was younger, I might have been able to predict the career I'd eventually end up in.

“Amy” means *beloved* or *dearly loved*.

I was named for love.

Since then, I've come to understand that the love I put out into the world is an important part of my life purpose.

Loving people isn't just a nice thing to do. It's my job. It's why I'm here.

We are all here on this planet, during this lifetime, to love ... starting with ourselves and expanding outwards.

We do it through the giving and receiving of pleasure. Pleasure is *love in action*.

When our lives lack pleasure, we can feel it. When our relationships lack pleasure, they start to crack.

Luckily, it's easy to remedy.

Just ask your [#innerbadgirl](#) what she'd do. :-)

Thank you so much for coming on this journey with me.

I wish you a delicious life, full of delights and possibilities. Keep the conversation going by sharing your [#dailypleasures](#) on social media. Gather together a [#pleasureposse](#) for mutual support and encouragement. Who knows how far your pleasure will go?

Keep shining, and your pleasure might just light up the world.



#BrilliantBabe Badge

It takes guts to do what you've done.

You are one of the few who ever finish a book they started.

That means, just by making it to the finish line, you've earned an elite status.

And to honor your achievement, I award you with this:



Yes, it's a badge.

Not like a Girl Scout badge or a medal of honor. Just a cool design on a piece of paper that you can cut out and stick to your fridge to remind yourself you're brilliant.

You see, the goal behind YourBrilliance.com is to help each woman burnish her inner light. A light that shines from the embers of pleasure and joy. And now, because you've got this book in your hands, you are part of that community.

If you know other women who'd benefit from the message you've read here—women who are tired, worn out, unappreciated, worked to the bone—then spread the word.

Give each other permission to set down that to-do list and do something that feels great. Even if it's just spending a few minutes on a website that makes you smile.

I hope to see you over at YourBrilliance.com!