# SINGLE

There Is No Shame
In Your Name

# TE-ERIKA PATTERSON

Includes the bonus chapter

31 Days & 31 Ways To Chase Away The "I'm Still Single" Blues

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# Written by Te-Erika Patterson

Author of the eBooks:

Small Steps to Achieve Big Dreams

The UnLoveables

How To Train Your Man

Get Over Him!

# About the Author

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Te-Erika has been single for 9 years.

# Acknowledgments

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And finally...to the man whose life, spirit and music inspires me to keep pushing and keep dreaming, my most sincere appreciation is extended to my inspiration, Kanye West.

Many blessings to you all!

Te-Erika

# How to Use This Book

It's Not A Sin To Be Single was created to inspire you to examine your attitude about your relationship status and make peace with it. This book contains multiple chapters on a variety of subjects that may speak to your heart at various times throughout your life as a single person. You may read this book from cover to cover or out of sequence, but I would suggest taking small bites of each chapter and meditating on the messages presented.

This book includes creative exercises which will help guide you into a different frame of mind concerning your past relationships and your current relationship status. At times you will be asked to answer various questions or record insights. Please take the time to purchase a separate journal for those exercises or use the space at the back of the book to record your entries.

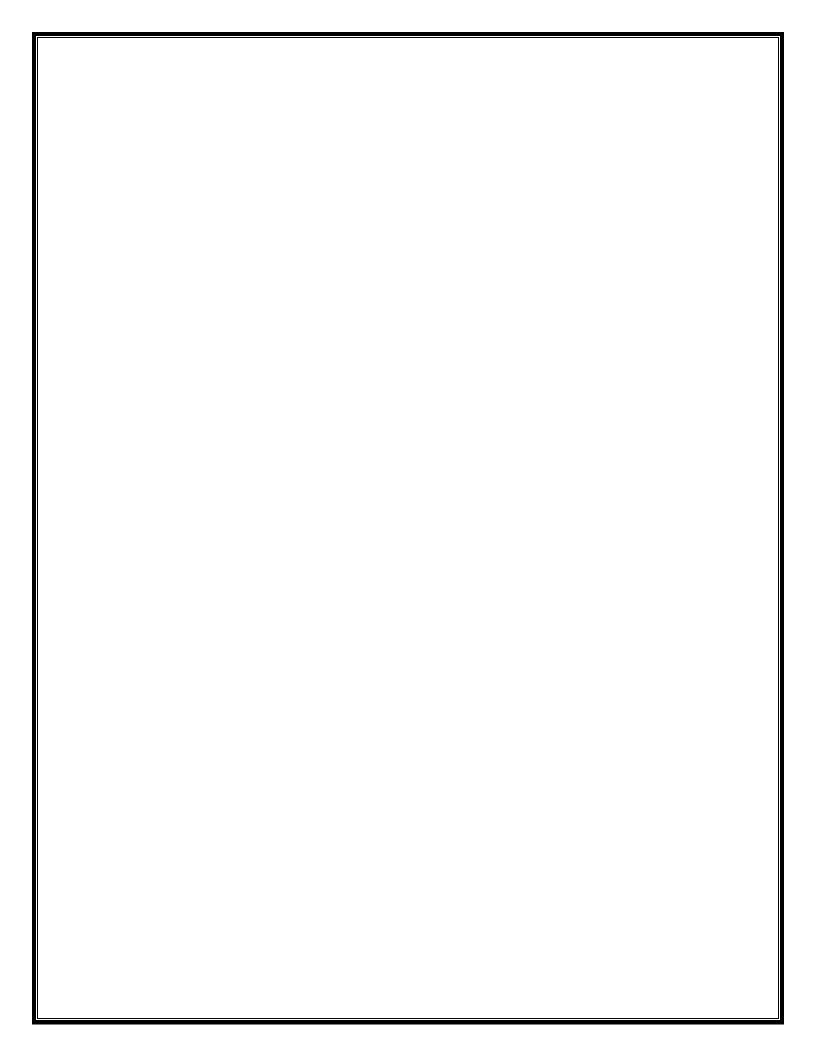
The bonus chapter of this book is called \*\*31 Days and 31 Ways to Chase Away The "I'm Still Single" Blues. It offers 31 different self empowering activities that you can do on those days when you are sitting at home feeling bored and sad. These exercises, both introspective and silly will guide you into a more loving relationship with yourself.

Above all, lighten up and enjoy this work of art, divinely inspired from my fingertips to yours.

\*\*THE BONUS CHAPTER IS ONLY AVAILABLE IN THE PRINT VERSION OF THIS BOOK.

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### Introduction

There is nothing wrong with you.

That's right. Take a moment to allow those words to sink in.

There is nothing wrong with you.

Your parents may think so, your ex may disagree, and your friends may be wondering what's going on with you but the truth is this season of your life is a necessary time of growth and priceless experiences that you will treasure for the rest of your life.

You are single. This means that you are not in a committed romantic relationship with anyone. Being single does not mean that you are standing alone; it simply means that you have yet to commit to a romantic partner.

It is perfectly acceptable and normal to have an intense desire to share your life with someone. Whether we admit it to ourselves or not, every single person on this planet has an inherent desire to love and be loved. You are not alone.

There is nothing wrong with me.

There is nothing wrong with you.

I am not an expert. I am a real woman who has faced real issues and I have a God-given gift of inspiration and writing. I wrote this book so that you would learn how to recognize how wonderful and special you are right now. Yes, even while you are single.

I chose the title It's Not A Sin To Be Single because I believe that this statement is the antithesis of how society views the single adult. We are treated as though we have committed a moral crime if we aren't coupled off as soon as we finish school.

Every word in this book was written as an encouraging word for myself. I have been single for 9 years. I've been through it all: abusive relationships, low self esteem, single parenthood, going to events alone, witnessing my little sister get married before me- you name it, I've been there. I know what it feels like to be miserable and not believe that good things will come into my life. I also know how great it feels when you reach that moment of clarity as you realize that who you and where you are in life isn't such a bad place to be. Life is an adventure that you create and my adventure is bold and strong. It tastes like hot sausages and chocolate cake. It feels like a roller coaster ride into the unknown.

You can take my advice or not, it's completely up to you. At best you will walk away armed with a more in-depth knowledge of who you are, what you deserve and the tools you need to have a

more positive outlook on this period in your life. At worst you will enjoy a good laugh as I attempt to help you to see that the 'curse of being single' is not that serious and you have permission to laugh at yourself.

I do not claim to be a representative of any religion; I don't like labels anyway. I use the terms God, Our Creator, The Universe and Source interchangeably to represent the power that fuels your faith in good.

If there is no other message that I want you to grasp from this book, I want you to understand and believe that it is perfectly acceptable to be who you are at this very moment.

It's not a sin to be single and you'll soon learn why.

### Chapter 1- It's Not a Sin To Be...

### Single

So, why are you single?

Do you even have a clue? This chapter illustrates the various reasons, on a superficial level, why a variety of people believe they are single. You may even recognize yourself in one of these 'single life' stories.

You may be single because...

### You're Focused On Your Career

You're on the grind, working 14 hours a day building your reputation as an expert in your field. You have a plan and that plan most definitely includes TOTAL WORLD DOMINATION. You're serious about your profession and you have a stellar resume to back up your claims that you are indeed a force to be reckoned with.

You have a 6-month, 12-month, 3-year and 5-year plan and you're conscientiously upgrading your lifestyle as you achieve each of your goals. Sometimes you wonder if you're missing out on something when you watch a romantic comedy or receive an invitation to a friend's engagement party but then your iPhone rings and that notion disappears like fresh pastries in a coffee shop.

Someday you'd like to have a family, complete with an ocean-side mansion with a four- car garage and a live-in nanny, but today you're setting the foundation for that dream by earnestly securing your financial future. Your nest egg is growing steadily and you're proud when you can help your friends and family during their times of need.

You're single and focused on your career and there's nothing wrong with that.

### You Enjoy Your Freedom

"Wait a minute," you mutter under your breath as you move the milk carton to the left side of the refrigerator. There's the orange juice, the half gallon of sweet tea and the leftover shrimp pasta from last night's dinner. You frown and look over your shoulder.

"Who drank the last of my pineapple soda?"

Your insides rage as you inspect the spotless kitchen, then you smile and relax when you realize that you finished it two days ago and the container is sitting next to the garbage bin.

You relax and pour yourself a glass of orange juice instead. There's only a swallow left after you pour a full glass and you grin and drink the juice straight from the carton.

Ahhh...The joy of living alone. You don't have to wrestle with anyone about dirty dishes being left in the sink overnight. You don't have to compromise during primetime television and you can wear your pajamas from sunrise to sunset without anyone chastising you for it.

If the doorbell rings and you aren't expecting company, you can just go in your room and ignore it. All of your money is YOUR money. You don't have to buy gifts, pay bills or compromise for anyone.

"Oh yeah!" You nod your head as you flip through the channels. There's a Sponge Bob Squarepants marathon on TV. You pick up your cell phone, press the red button and enjoy your day of solitude.

You're single and it's all about you and there's nothing wrong with that.

### You Are Allowing Your Past To Haunt You

Back when you were in high school you made a few bad decisions. You slept with a few too many boys and your name was tossed around the boy's locker room like a stained jock strap.

Even though you've decided that your body isn't public property anymore, those who knew you won't allow you to forget. You're trying to move on and claim a new life for yourself. You're well out of college, you have a nice job and you drive a decent car. Your parents are proud of your accomplishments but when you look in the mirror all you can see is that scared little girl who couldn't say no when pressured to have sex.

Every time you meet a man, you are disgusted by the way he lusts after you. You've concluded that every man wants you for sex and any attempts you've had at relationships have failed because you are afraid to show him who you really are, fearing that he'll hate you if he ever knew the truth.

This cycle of self hatred intensifies over the years causing you to reject the idea that any man will ever love you. You throw yourself headfirst into your work and friendships, living vicariously through your friends and their romantic adventures because you don't believe you will ever have the chance to experience it for yourself.

One morning you wake up shaking uncontrollably, reliving the night you were left on the side of the road by the one guy you said no to. A feeling of dread courses through your body and is soon replaced by the strangest sense of peace. You decide that you are going to get help with dealing with the emotions associated with these memories. You then call up a friend that you trust and ask for her help, "Can you recommend a good therapist for me?"

You're well on your way to identifying and restructuring the limiting beliefs that have created your dismal existence.

You're single and you're working through issues from your past. There's nothing wrong with that.

### You Don't Feel Worthy

You've stood by your friends in more than a handful of weddings and have even caught the garter belt on two occasions. After the festivities have come to an end you walk slowly to your car with your head hanging low. A quick glimpse into the rearview mirror confirms your repetitive thought. "No wonder no woman wanted to dance with me," you speak softly. "I wouldn't come near me if I were any of them either."

Sometime in your past, you began to compare yourself to your friends. They were taller than you are, more athletic and they didn't have the weight problem that you have been struggling with for years. When women look at you, you're sure they're disgusted and you affirm their disgust by being a jerk to them because you don't want them to have the chance to reject you first.

You drive over to the 24-hour diner to grab a late night snack. As you enter the restaurant a cute redhead catches your eye. She must have sensed you looking at her because she glances over at you and smiles. You stand frozen for a few seconds before heading to the counter, sitting as far away from her as possible.

Suddenly you feel a tap on your shoulder. When you turn around you see that it's the redhead. A quick once-over and you notice that she's about 5'5" with sparkling green eyes and a petite figure.

"Do I know you from somewhere?" she asks with a grin. It's obvious that she is flirting.

"No, I don't think so," you stammer and turn away from her.

"I think I do. Did you go to Central?" she asks trying to coax you into a conversation.

"No. I didn't," you reply abruptly.

"Sorry," she says and walks away, out of the diner and your life.

Over the years you have internalized the belief that you are not worthy of anyone's love. Even if it presents itself, you won't recognize it or accept it until you can believe you deserve it.

You're single and you're unsure about your ability to be loved. Keep working on you, there's nothing wrong with that.

### You Are Bitter

"No," you sigh and speak slowly into your cell phone as you exit the train station. "I am not seeing Rick anymore. I told you that he had the nerve to arrive 20 minutes late to my last dinner party. That is so disrespectful and I'm not having it."

You pause as your friend tells you that you are way too hard on men. "Don't turn into one of those Tyler Perry lead characters," she warns you.

"No I'm not," you counter. "I'm just careful. I will never allow what happened with Marcus again. I was so easy going and sweet and eager to please that he did what he pleased because he knew I always accepted him completely as he was. I'm not doing that anymore."

Your friend is frustrated after having had far too many conversations with this same theme. You both hang up and you make your way back to your tiny apartment, enjoying the bright sunlight bathing your face as you finagle your way through the crowd on this beautiful Saturday afternoon.

There's a feeling of relief that has invaded your body. With Rick out of the picture you don't have to worry about wondering when he will try to hurt you. You caught him before he got a chance to treat you like all the men in your past. You will never make the mistake again of loving someone so freely.

"Excuse me," you say as you attempt to brush past a tall gentlemen standing on the sidewalk outside a small café. The man does not move and you tilt your head back to get a better look at his face.

Your gaze seems to float up and up forever until your eyes finally meet his. When they do you notice the most inviting eyes and smile that you have ever seen.

"Well, hello," you smile coyly. "How tall are you?"

The man laughs as he takes your hand and pulls you out of the stream of sidewalk traffic. Your body is suddenly pressed against his as the crowd swells and pushes you forward. Strong hands on your back as he holds you tightly make your knees go weak. Mmm. He smells so good. What is that scent?

"Are you okay?" he whispers in your ear.

"I sure am," you flirt with him, wishing the crowd would somehow sweep the both of you away. "What's your name?"

His brown eyes shine as he pushes your hair out of your face. "I'm Marcus."

You gasp. Oh no! Your shining eyes cloud over as your ex's name slides from this man's lips. You're not going through this again. You push Marcus away and compose yourself.

"Bye!" you throw over your shoulder as Marcus stares after your retreating figure with a puzzled expression.

One Marcus was quite enough. Never again will you fall for that stupid love stuff that makes you feel so good that you get a tattoo of his name on your pelvis fully believing that the ink will fade long before the love does. Then you're left crying on your knees on the bathroom floor wishing you had never been born.

"Not interested," You tell yourself firmly as your quick steps become a trot.

You're bitter and you feel safe guarding against the pain. It's your choice. There's nothing wrong with that.

### You're Having Too Much Fun

It's your junior year of high school and your life couldn't be better. On your sixteenth birthday your parents gave you your very first car and that same summer your baby fat mysteriously melted away. You're looking great and feeling great and you've just been upgraded to the varsity basketball team. Finally, everything seems to be coming together for you.

Life is hectic as you prepare for the SAT's and make your plans to visit colleges over spring break. On a few occasions you've managed to pull yourself away from your studies and sports practice and noticed that most of your friends are busy with their relationships.

You wonder if you'll ever have a boyfriend in your life but right now you don't want to be tied down in a relationship because you feel that it may affect the accomplishment of your goals.

You're single and you're having fun. There's nothing wrong with that.

### **Your Family Comes First**

It's 8 pm and you finally coaxed your kids into bed. As you head into the kitchen to wash dishes and clean up, you roll your eyes at the pile of laundry peeking at you from inside the washroom.

Two hours later you're finally done washing, folding the clothes and mopping the kitchen and dining room floors. You relax into a nice bubble bath before throwing on your favorite PJ's and slipping into bed with a novel your girlfriend recommended.

Before you know it you're all wrapped up in the romantic tale. Your knees are pressed together and your face is flushed. "Why can't I have some of that?" you mutter as you close your eyes and grip your pillow, the book falling carelessly to the floor.

A relationship would be nice, that is, if you didn't have so much to do. You can't imagine having the time to fit in a romantic encounter along with the demands of being a single mom, full-time executive assistant, taking care of your ailing mother and maintaining your own sanity.

Maybe when your kids are older, your Mom will feel better and you will meet a nice man. But for right now, you're not pressed about it.

You're single and you're devoted to your family. There's nothing wrong with that.

### You're Stuck

"Thanks babe," you say and smile as you glance across the dinner table. Your live-in girlfriend and the mother of your child smiles back but there is no spark behind the lifeless grin.

You're going through the motions with her and you both know it. Something is better than nothing, isn't it? You stare down at your plate; fried chicken and mashed potatoes again. You begin to rock back and forth like Sophia did in the movie The Color Purple when Celie announced she was leaving Mister.

Fried chicken.

Fried chicken.

Can this chick cook anything else?

Every week it's the same old thing. She's in the kitchen with her raggedy old sweat pants and faded sorority t-shirt. She's standing there with her hair tied up, one leg on up on the bar stool and she's shaking the hell out of that plastic bag of flour, carefully removing each chicken drumstick and placing it in the frying pan.

I hate the way she smiles. I hate the way she smells. I hate the way she plucks the hairs out of her chin every morning. I wish she would DIE so I could take my son and leave. But I can't. I can't do that to my son. I can't do that to her. I can tell she doesn't want to be here either but we've both said we are committed to our family. We're together but we're not. We're connected physically but not mentally and that's no good.

Even though she's not really what I wanted, she's what I have right now and it's not so bad.

It's not so bad.

Yes it is, but I created it so here I am. Stuck.

You feel obligated to your relationship. You're not exactly single, but you feel like you are. Until you decide what you are going to do, all I can say is, there's nothing wrong with that.

### You Know Your Worth

There's always a variety of men vying for a place in your life. They should be: you know you're hotter than every woman you've ever met. You pick and choose sparingly, testing them out like cars on a car lot. He's not the right color. He needs an attitude alignment. Isn't there a newer model than this one?

With each visit you walk away, sometimes pleased but not completely satisfied. You begin to think something is wrong with you. Is finding a good man supposed to be this tough?

You take very good care of yourself. You work out 3 times a week, practice yoga and are even taking evening classes to brush up on your Spanish. You put a lot of effort into growing spiritually and mentally and all you want is someone who loves themselves as much as you do.

"You're too picky," your friends say after you give them yet another reason why your last date won't be getting another call from you. You sigh and think to yourself, "I know what I'm worth and he's not it."

You're single and you love yourself too much to settle for less than what you really deserve. There's nothing wrong with that.

### You Can't Choose

Your friend Mark calls you up, he wants to hit the bowling alley and then go on to your favorite bar for some drinks. That sounds appealing so you tell him you'll call him back once you decide what you want to do.

You already have plans with Cynthia. She's the only woman you can spend time with without watching the clock. When you're with her, you feel funny inside. You don't know what that means because it has never happened before. When she looks at you with those awesome gray eyes you make up all kinds of stories to tell her, just to keep her attention focused on you.

But Mark, he's been your one of your best friends since high school. Lately things have changed between you two. It started when he got back from his stint in the Navy. He'd come over with a case of beer and you'd both play Playstation and chug beer like you did back in college, eventually passing out on the couch together.

To your surprise one morning you woke up and noticed his arm wrapped around you. At first you were alarmed but then you looked down at your friend and realized that it was just an unconscious hug. That hug turned into a make out session which led to more make out sessions as the line between friends and lovers became blurred.

You can't decide what to do. You don't want to upset your parents or anyone else for that matter but you also learned the importance of being true to yourself and you can't deny the strong attraction that you have to both of them.

You try to keep it light and friendly when you're hanging out, but lately the pressure is mounting. You can feel it the way steam stifles the cool air in the bathroom after a long hot shower. They are both demanding more of your time and you just can't decide if you should choose one over the other.

Who makes you happier? Is it Cynthia with those amazing dimples and the toned legs that just won't quit? Or is it Mark, who has proven time and time again that he is loyal and highly compatible?

"Not tonight," you mutter and decide to send them both a quick text.

Hey. I'm staying in tonight. Not feeling well. TTYL.

It's a lie but they'll get over it. Maybe you won't have to choose. You sigh. It's not easy being in love with two people.

You're single because you can't choose who you want to be with and there's nothing wrong with that.

## Chapter 2- It's Not A Sin To...

# Change Your Perception About Being Single

I'm a loser. I'm a failure. Nobody wants me. Nobody loves me. No one will ever want to marry me. I'm ugly. I'm stupid. I'm fat. I'm worthless. I don't make enough money. My sister is cuter than I am. My brother gets all the girls. My ex is with someone else and I'm still all alone. I am going to die lonely and penniless on the side of the road where a homeless man will piss on me and steal my shoes.

Does this sound familiar?

Read it again and if you so choose, continue to have your pity party. I'll wait until you're done but, you only get 15 more minutes.

OK. Time's up. From now on if you choose to have a pity party for yourself, please limit it to 15 minutes. When that beast called Despair takes over your brain, take note of the time and you have my permission to go ahead and cry, scream and be depressed all you want to. There is a catch; when your 15 minutes are over you must stop the madness.

OK. Are you alright? Blow your nose. Get it all out. Yeah, that felt good didn't it? Guess what? You'll feel even better once you learn to take these simple truths to heart.

### **Being Single Is A Choice**

There is no need to explain to anyone why you are single because romantic relationships are an option; they are not required. Whether you ever get married or not, you can still be happy. You were not forced to be single, you chose to be single at this time. At any given moment there is someone out there who would love to be with you. There are so many people who would marry you in a minute to get their green card. You could be with any one of them. You aren't interested in settling for less than what you believe you deserve and that is truly why you are single.

You could go out and place an ad for a mate or marry someone who is desperate for a partner but that won't bring happiness and you know it. You aren't desperate, you aren't foolish and you aren't a failure for not being in a relationship that is less than your ideal.

Since you chose to be single you can also choose to accept that your time for romantic companionship has not arrived yet. There's nothing wrong with developing patience as you

learn to better define your beliefs about your life. Your beliefs determine the outcome of your life so it is wise to develop positive beliefs.

You do not have to get married if you don't want to. No one will throw you into a pit of fire for all eternity just because you haven't met anyone to partner with. If you don't want a commitment, you don't have to have one. It is your life, friend. There is probably a very good reason why you didn't end up with any of those love prospects from your past.

When situations do not occur as you have planned, it is best to believe that it is for your best interest. You're still learning and growing and evolving into the person you are meant to be. The person you were 10 years ago is vastly different from the person you are today. If you had gotten married when you first wanted to, there is no guarantee that the person you loved would have been following the same path that you are so many years later.

Relax into the knowledge that you are on the right path. There is nothing wrong with where you are and you will have every desire of your heart, when the time is right.

### **Happiness Is Your Choice**

"There she goes again," you mutter. "That chick is always bouncing around this office grinning like she just won the lottery. I wonder what her deal is. Doesn't she have any problems like normal people?"

I bet you've run into one of them before. You know, the ones who are always in an upbeat state of mind, seeming to float through life without a care. Those people who walk around with a genuine smile on their faces everyday know the secret of happiness. They know that happiness is a choice.

How do you choose happiness? It's all about choosing where you place your focus. Your bills may be due, your boyfriend may be ignoring you and you may be on the verge of getting fired from your job, but even with all of that there are other things going on in your life that are more positive that you can choose to focus on.

### **Choose Happiness**

You're healthy. You drive the car of your dreams. Your have close friends that you can trust. Those are all excellent indications that your life is on the right track, why not focus on those things? When you choose to see the upside to every situation you will experience a bliss that is unmatchable.

I may be a difficult person for my friends to call upon during a crisis because I always remind them that any shift in circumstances is a sign that they are moving on to an even greater phase in life.

"They raised my rent," my friend admits nervously. "I don't know what to do."

"REJOICE!" I'll say.

"Huh?"

"Girl, you have to know that if your rent is going to be raised, then your income is about to be raised too! God won't leave you by the wayside homeless and hungry! Get excited! I wonder how God is going to bless you!"

"David just broke up with me," my friend tells me with a sigh.

"Great!" I encourage her, reframing the definition of the break up. "This means you're about to meet someone even more wonderful! I wonder who it will be."

You have to believe it. You have to make a conscious decision to live your life as though every blessing that you desire is promised to you and every transition you faced is forcing you toward the delivery of that promise. If you don't expect it and believe it with all of your heart, it can not be revealed to you. You will miss all the signs that lead to your blessing because you are so focused on the tragedy. Make the decision today to recognize and believe that you can be happy when you decide that your life can be nothing short of miraculous.

Do you remember that time you lost your job, only to find a better job with better pay a month later? How did you spend that month out of work? Did you stress everyday causing yourself to be sick?

What if you expected that nothing but blessings could come into your life? What if during that time of uneasiness you chose to wait in eager anticipation of something even more wonderful than you have ever experienced before? You would have taken advantage of your time off and truly enjoyed yourself.

If only we had a bird's eye view of our difficult situations, we would stress less, laugh more and know that everything always works out much better than we could expect.

### You're Writing Your Own Story

Believe for a moment that your past is the first part of the brilliant story of your life. Your happy ending will be one that you choose. Where you are right now is the new starting place, regardless of your past.

First, begin by deciding what your happy ending will be. Do you see yourself enjoying your retirement on a yacht? Do you see yourself with your family enjoying a reunion? What do you see? How does it make you feel?

If the feeling is joyful and expectant then it's a great ending and you can go ahead and enjoy the beauty of it right now. By delighting yourself in the promise of your happy ending, you will experience the wonder of it today.

After you have thoroughly enjoyed the vision of your happy ending, you're free to go about your daily life seeking adventure, growth and blissful moments that will help to create your ending. How do you know which steps to take to create your happy ending? Trust yourself. You already know. There are no mistakes. You know the way.

Even when your situation seems to spiral downhill, you can hold firm to the knowledge that your happy ending is coming. You should never worry about a circumstance if you already know that you will make it out even better than when you came in.

Your life is a steady climb. Your life is your creation. Create the story that you want and choose to live it by figuring out how to get there and then doing what it takes.

### You Already Have Love

Just because you are single doesn't mean you are unloved. So often we sit and long for this perfect romantic relationship, the kind of relationship that is based on loyalty, honesty, mutual interests and unconditional love. We search high and low, hoping for this type of love but it often eludes us.

Do you want to know why? It's simple. We can't see it because we already have the type of love we desire. If we can't recognize these traits when they are right in front of us how can we be confident that we can recognize them when they present themselves in a romantic partner?

Consider the many people that you have in your life; your parents, your children or your close friends. If you are blessed like I am, you enjoy emotional intimacy in each of these different relationships.

My parents are loyal to me. I am their daughter and nothing can change that. My sister is always a source of an honest opinion that I can trust. My friends and I share common interests

like uplifting others and raising positive children. My sons have taught me the true definition of unconditional love.

How could I ever stand up and say that I am missing out on my ideal relationship when I already experience those same benefits through a multitude of sources? The problem is we tend to place more value on romantic relationships than we do on the relationships that are more platonic. This practice causes us to miss out on the joy that life brings because if we can't recognize the love we already have, we will never fully appreciate the love we will receive from a romantic partner.

Appreciation is the key to unlock our heart's desires. When we appreciate what is right in front of us, our Creator hears our praise and gratitude and sends more beautiful blessings our way. Whatever it is that we do not appreciate will find it's a way to remove itself from our lives.

You are already loved. You are already honored. You are already favored. Act like it. Walk in it and receive more than you could have ever imagined.

### The Present Is Most Important

We all have memories from our past that affect our present day. We also have hopes for our future that drive us to move forward. The practice of reliving bad memories or worrying about the future is a self-defeating attitude that costs us more than we realize.

When you retell a painful memory from your past you are in fact reactivating the pain of that moment. It is understandable that you may need to vent and release those toxic emotions but I will warn you not to make this a habit. If you do, you give power to the situation that has hurt you and you will not recover as long as you continue to relive it.

Fretting about your future causes a similar defeated mind state. If you are worried about being homeless or lonely or sick your worry actually attracts the emotions of the situation into your present.

Think about it. If you knew you were going to still be single in 20 years how do you imagine that you will you feel at that time? Sad. Depressed. Hopeless. Confused. When you worry about it today how do you feel? Sad. Depressed. Hopeless. Confused. Wow! You didn't even have to wait the entire 20 years. You are already experiencing the pain right now.

Stop that. Let your future worry about itself. Rejoice in the fact that today you are well fed, you have great friends and you have a family that truly loves you. Be grateful for your present and deal with the future when it gets here.

### You Are Perfect

No, I'm not talking to the man sitting behind you; I am talking to you. You are so splendid and gorgeous that the trees sway as you walk by just to be closer to you. You don't have to change a thing about yourself to receive the love you desire because you ARE love. You are the definition of love as you are today.

This revelation changed my perspective when I decided to stop trying to improve myself and start appreciating who I am instead. I began to approach my life differently. Instead of trying to impress people, I didn't give a damn what they thought. This wreaked havoc on my social life because my circle of friends became smaller and the people who discovered that I wasn't trying to win their loyalty became more vicious, but I didn't care. I don't NEED anyone to like me.

I love who I am and every day I am proud to be me. I let go of the need to change or transform so that someone would love me. Sure, no one has ever loved me to my bones and appreciated everything about me, but I can. I am witty. I am pretty. I have anxiety. I am messy. Yet, when I think about the best of me, I include those things too.

You don't have to change your hair, your car or your eye color. You don't have to spend any more money on weight loss courses or liposuction. You are who you are because that is who you were designed you to be. You are not a mistake. Every fiber of your being was crafted especially to make a divine wonder like you.

I want you to walk out the door and revel in your power. Your spirit is as bright as the sun and just as heartwarming. There is nothing wrong with you, your tastes or your desires. Every intimate yearning that you have is perfectly okay. You are allowed to dream your dreams, think your thoughts and walk your walk.

Activate your swagger. Go ahead and let it show. You are sexy like no other. You have a style that is glorious and you have the brilliance of a precious diamond so feel free to show the world what you're working with.

You have been perfectly made and there will never be another like you.

### You Are Flowing Toward Your Destiny

Stop pushing and pulling and fighting against what life has to offer. Anything that comes your way you can handle. Since you're single and you're busy learning to appreciate yourself, enjoy this time of self discovery and make it memorable.

There is nothing to fight against if you know that you are a walking miracle. Every obstacle will be removed, every blow from your enemies will be repelled and every choice you make will be the right one.

You always make the right decision; it doesn't matter what the outcome is. As long as you have the breath of life you are still moving forward. You can detach yourself from any and all desired outcomes which can cause resentment and worry if things don't pan out the way you imagined. Trust that you are being guided toward your greatest good at every given moment and you'll soon learn that life is as easy, breezy as the fallen leaves.

### There Will Never Be Another Today

If you don't use it, you lose it.

That's what my high school teacher used to say. She often encouraged us to utilize the gifts that we had been given. Today is a gift. You wouldn't want to give that away by worrying about what you don't have or where you are trying to be.

There will never be another today. To show appreciation for this daily miracle, you should go out and celebrate who you are at this moment. Who you are at this moment is setting the stage for the dynamic person that you are destined to become. Don't wait until the fans are crowding around your hotel door to celebrate who you are. Who you are now is just as important as the vision of the person you carry near your heart.

There will never be another today. Jump on the chance to do something that you never thought you would get the chance to do. Make today memorable. Make this entire season of your life as memorable as you can. Live your life for passion and do the things you love. No one is certain whether we get another round at life.

On the eve of your last day on earth, you should be able to smile and say, "My life was a marvelous adventure!"

### Chapter 3- It's Not A Sin to...

Scream: Stop Sweatin' Me

Even when you're joyfully living the single life there are going to be people who cross your path, eyes narrowed as they examine your face. They will softly pose the loaded question, "Why are you still single?"

This query will cause you to flinch as you fight to regain your composure. "I haven't found the right person," you reply politely and make a quick exit, hoping to save face.

Of course there will be those people who mean well while others are only trying to get all up in your business. But why, oh why do we feel so much pressure to partner or get married?

### It Is Expected

Social constructionism is a concept that describes how as a society we all agree to agree on social norms and expectations for our lives. A major focus of studying social constructionism is to expose the ways in which individuals and groups participate in the creation of their perceived social reality. It involves looking at the ways social phenomena like marriage and the idea of legalized partnering are created, institutionalized and made into tradition by our society.

Social constructionism rears its head most arrogantly when it comes to idea of marriage. The life transition of partnering in American society is seen as a natural part of human development that is nearly as important as birth and death. After birth, you are expected to go to school, get a job, get married, reproduce, retire and then die. Once an individual has surpassed the first few major life transitions, marriage is the next expected step in life.

This expectation can cause major unrest for the individual who has other goals or desires for their life. On any given day, a person who is fresh out of college could be questioned repeatedly about their relationship status as a means to gauge whether or not they are successful in the progress of the supposed "natural" evolution of life.

### **Playing Catch Up With Friends**

Pressure from society is just one of the ways that a single individual can feel as though they aren't measuring up to society's expectations. Often, the individual will gauge their own success

by using society's standards as a measuring stick which causes disappointment and lack of confidence if they find that they aren't moving at the same pace that others are.

We see it all the time. Our friends get married one by one and we attend their wedding showers, bachelor or bachelorette parties and then moon over their newborns shortly thereafter. By the time we're done celebrating our friends' accomplishments, it's no wonder we are left feeling disappointed by our own.

This should not be the case. No one can set the rules or the path for your life. Everyone's journey is different and should be treated as a unique adventure. We can celebrate our friends' journey while still appreciating who we are and where we are. We are not in a race against time. Things will happen just as they are supposed to and we should use our time of development to become better acquainted with who we are, define what we believe and enjoy our lives.

### **People Want To See You Happy**

People want to see you happy. That is why they inquire about your relationship status consistently. Most people equate being in a relationship with being happy and well taken care of.

Those who love you don't want to watch the years roll by without knowing that you have someone to share your joys and successes with. They understand that we need that heart connection, that constant companion to support our decisions and stand beside us during our darker days. It is sometimes an overwhelming duty to assure your loved ones that you are doing fine. They want you to find the right person who will eventually become our life partner so that they will worry about you less.

Our parents are a consistent source of pressure when it comes to marriage. They have good intentions when they ask about your relationship status as they silently hope to see you partnered. They want you to be taken care of. They understand the need to have a companion and they don't want you to be lonely for the rest of your life. Although you are an adult, most parents still worry about you as much as they did when you were a toddler.

Their worries can be soothed by the fact that you now have someone in your life that loves you and will be there for you in your times of need, triumphs and transitions. It's really about their level of care and concern for your life. If you have a parent who doesn't ask about your love life, you should be concerned.

### We Want You To Join Us

While we're pressuring ourselves to play catch up with our friends, those same people will sometimes add to the fire of desire by constantly asking us when we are going to join them in wedded bliss. For the most part, our friends don't mean any harm by it. They have simply moved on to another phase in life and want us to join them as they share new life milestones and experiences.

Of course there are those people we can only call associates who use the 'Why are you still single?' question as a way to show off or brag about their seeming success. These individuals may be nervous about their decision to make such a solid commitment and they want you to join them during this life transition so that they won't be alone as they go through brand new challenges.

### It's the Moral Thing To Do

We can't forget the fact that as a society we have adopted certain beliefs that determine which behaviors are acceptable and which are unacceptable. These beliefs translate into what we call morals. Most religions encourage individuals to enter into the sanctity of marriage as a symbol of honor to God and God's gift of procreation.

Since we are expected to procreate, the "right" thing to do would be to procreate in a committed, monogamous relationship. There are unlimited benefits to starting a family in this way which some believe helps to decrease the obstacles that will hinder us from operating as a healthy, stable family unit.

### **Legal Relationships Create Security**

If you decide not to get married, you can be in love for years and do not reap the legal benefits of being with your loved one. If your partner dies and has not prepared a will, you are not entitled to any of their assets and you are not eligible to make decisions on their behalf if they become unable to do so themselves. People want to see us married so that they feel secure about our future.

### **People Are Nosey**

Let's be honest, some people don't really care about our welfare, all they want to do is entertain themselves by meddling in our personal affairs. As evidenced by the popularity of reality television, life is more exciting than structured entertainment. If a person can find dysfunction in your life development, it makes them feel much better about the dysfunction in theirs. That is why they are inclined to ask you the age old question, "Why are you still single?"

Although this question may raise goose bumps all over your body when asked by a curious family member or friend, you don't owe anyone an answer. You have the choice to respond truthfully, if you even know the answer, or you can brush them off with one of these excuses:

# 101 Smart-Ass Responses to the Question "Why Are You Still Single?"

- 1. That's the same answer I want to know.
- 2. My man has 15 more years left on his sentence.
- 3. My husband hasn't found me yet.
- 4. Nobody wants me.
- 5. My husband hasn't been born yet.
- 6. It's not a part of my 5 year plan.
- 7. My brother didn't want to marry me.
- 8. My boyfriend's already married.
- 9. I like being stalked better.
- 10. It's against my religion.
- 11. My kids have too many Daddies, I couldn't choose.
- 12. All the hot guys are gay.
- 13. Marriage is illegal in my state.
- 14. Angelina won't leave Brad Pitt.
- 15. I haven't won the lotto yet.
- 16. I don't want to be barefoot and pregnant for the rest of my life.

- 17. My blow up doll hasn't popped yet.
- 18. My Baby Mama won't let me.
- 19. I heard the third time's a charm. I just got rid of number two.
- 20. My Daddy won't let me.
- 21. I'm in love with two people.
- 22. I like to sleep on both sides of the bed.
- 23. I haven't made my first million.
- 24. I haven't met anyone who deserves me.
- 25. I haven't finished my 12 step program yet.
- 26. God hasn't revealed my mate yet.
- 27. Just because it's socially acceptable, doesn't mean that I have to conform.
- 28. We're still arguing over the pre-nup.
- 29. My bed isn't big enough.
- 30. You don't need a ring to be a wife.
- 31. I don't believe in marriage.
- 32. I didn't do anything wrong.
- 33. I haven't established myself yet.
- 34. I can't. I'm an illegal alien.
- 35. I like my freedom.
- 36. I'm already somebody.
- 37. I don't like sex.
- 38. I don't need another parent.
- 39. I already have children; I don't need another mouth to feed.
- 40. Lance doesn't have a job yet.
- 41. I love my life the way it is.

- 42. I don't want to lose my sexiness.
- 43. You mean, I have to have sex with the same woman forever?
- 44. She got a restraining order against me.
- 45. My car note is due.
- 46. I can't find the courthouse.
- 47. He won't accept me and my girlfriend.
- 48. It's not on my To-Do List.
- 49. Why are you married?
- 50. Because I like sex.
- 51. I'm not ready.
- 52. You haven't proposed yet.
- 53. The ring's not big enough.
- 54. He can't afford me.
- 55. I don't want to do charity work.
- 56. We're waiting on his settlement check.
- 57. I have bad credit.
- 58. I'm in love with you.
- 59. I don't even have my driver's license yet.
- 60. I'm waiting to get my braces off.
- 61. I have too many student loans to pay off.
- 62. I'm waiting to catch the garter.
- 63. I need 3 more diet shakes before I can fit into the dress.
- 64. I don't have to, I'm a celebrity.
- 65. He asked but he won't get down on one knee.
- 66. I enjoy having wild, freaky sex with random men.

- 67. Que? No hablo ingles.
- 68. I didn't get 3 degrees to be a caregiver.
- 69. I don't even want to smell my own breath in the morning.
- 70. Look at me! I'm too beautiful to be with one person.
- 71. Gas prices are too high.
- 72. Gay marriage hasn't been approved in my state yet.
- 73. I don't speak that language.
- 74. He can't beat me in NBA Live.
- 75. She deleted me as a friend on Facebook.
- 76. Oprah isn't even married.
- 77. Maury said, "He's not the father!"
- 78. I'm waiting for the war to be over.
- 79. Do I look like the marrying type?
- 80. I don't want to be another Elizabeth Taylor.
- 81. I like condoms.
- 82. Look what happened to Ike & Tina.
- 83. She changed her number.
- 84. Women my age are still giving it away for free.
- 85. It's too much of a risk.
- 86. I recycle men.
- 87. I'm not in love.
- 88. Shacking is the new marriage.
- 89. There are too many women.
- 90. I would be married by now except, he's from Texas.
- 91. My life is already fulfilling.

- 92. Hell hasn't frozen over.
- 93. Craigslist hasn't worked for me.
- 94. Men are intimidated by me.
- 95. Your Mom said No.
- 96. They'll never make me.
- 97. He wears boxers, I like briefs.
- 98. I have yet to audition for American Idol.
- 99. I haven't learned to love myself yet.
- 100. Women don't make that decision, men do.
- 101. It's not a sin to be single.

Whether you found a good excuse on this list or you feel compelled to add a few of your own, be creative and have fun with it. The question is going to come up time and time again so take off the pressure by shocking your interrogators with a jaw dropping response.

### Chapter 4- It's Not A Sin to...

# Be Miserably Single

While everyone has but a single heart, most people thrive in life because they have experienced a heart connection with someone else. It could be a connection to their mother, their siblings, their children or their friends.

A heart connection is important because it helps to validate our existence. One of the major joys of our existence is the opportunity to connect with others physically, mentally and spiritually. If we fail to experience these connections we become prone to physical and mental deterioration. We become what I like to call, Miserably Single. Our entire lives suffer as we roam aimlessly through the world like lost spirits searching for the Light.

No matter what positive message someone tries to convey, we reject it because we believe there is nothing positive about life. We walk around in a cloud of depression and everything our shadow touches turns gray and lifeless.

### Symptoms of a Miserably Single Person

- 1. Irritable for no reason
- 2. Negative and judgmental when it comes to other people's relationships
- 3. Dissatisfied with all areas of life
- 4. Mean-spirited
- 5. Bitter over past relationships
- 6. Jealous of others who are engaged in a relationship
- 7. Feelings of hopelessness about the future
- 8. Consistent self deprecating talk
- 9. Doesn't care about their personal appearance
- 10. Finds complete identity in their career

- 11. Speaks incessantly of other people's romantic escapades
- 12. Believes they are undesirable
- 13. Engages in bad habits to numb the pain
- 14. Disallows forward movement in life
- 15. Sabotages relationships

If you know someone who has many of these qualities, please buy them a copy of this book. If you are reading this and you recognize yourself, please read on. There is hope.

Those who suffer from symptoms associated with being miserably single are dealing with a condition that has been created in their minds. Although they appear not to have formed a heart connection with anyone, they are actually avoiding potential connections because they believe they don't deserve them.

If you meet someone who is miserably single, please don't feel sorry for them. They choose to live in a constant state of misery because it is easier than facing the fact that they are responsible for the life that they are living. They enjoy playing the victim of life. It brings the attention that they desire. They want to live their life in this way and until they choose otherwise, let them be. They will not change until they are fed up and decide that they deserve more.

### **Missed Connections**

Have you ever walked by someone and when they smiled at you, you looked away? Maybe you felt that the smile couldn't be genuine because you weren't looking your best that day or maybe you didn't respond in kind because you were suspicious of their motives. It could be that you felt so badly about yourself that you couldn't force a smile on your face at all. This was an opportunity for a connection that you missed. There are plenty more that float your way but you don't take the time to recognize them.

Maybe you grew up without ever experiencing the safety and comfort of knowing that you were loved. Your Mom may have never told you how special you are and how your role in your family is valued and important. Maybe you were conditioned to believe that no one would ever love you. You could have been told time and time again that you were worthless and stupid and ultimately your circumstances seemed to reinforce these painful statements.

After you have examined the reasons why you don't trust people and are hurting so much that you live a miserable existence you can toss all of those reasons aside because they don't really matter. What matters is what you decide to do with your now.

You're old enough to decide what your life is going to be like and that responsibility is both your privilege and your duty. No one defines your life but you. No one can tell you who you are. No one can slap a label on you that you can not snatch off and throw away. Do not give away your power. You define your life, not their words, not their expectations, not their fears. Your life is your choice. Live it the way you want to.

You woke up this morning which means yesterday is gone. Whatever happened yesterday is a memory. Memories aren't tangible; they can't come up to you and kick you or hurt you. You give life to your negative memories by your focus. Your focus is your choice. If you choose to be miserable today by focusing on negative memories then that's cool.

If for some reason you find comfort in being miserable and lonely and pathetic, that's cool too. I've been there. My misery was my companion. I slept with it, ate it, stroked it, cuddled with it, shampooed with it and marinated in it for years, blaming others for my life and unhappiness. I talked about my misery with anyone who would listen, painting myself as a victim of others and life.

One day I woke up and said NO MORE. I chose life for myself. I chose happiness. I chose love. It is a consistent conscious choice to say NO to the thoughts that do not make me feel good about who I am. When it happens for you, you will recognize and embrace the transition. Until then, don't push yourself to be someone you are not. You're not there yet and that's okay.

### **Emotions: Natural Reactions or Choice?**

You choose how quickly you transition between your emotional states. Emotions seem to be a natural reaction to circumstances but they are actually your choice driven by your perspective on your life. When you experience a life changing situation such as the death of someone close to you, it seems to be a natural reaction to cry, be sad and grieve. Those expressions of your mental state are most definitely acceptable as you meditate on the loss and wonder what you will do now that this person is no longer available to you.

Every strong emotion is a choice. You choose these emotions by deciding which thoughts you allow to linger in your mind. When you want to be happy, you remember all of the funny things your sister said the last time you went shopping. When you want to feel sad, you dwell on thoughts of distressful situations of the past. You evoke these emotions, stirring them up, the longer you focus on the thought behind them. I learned to choose my emotional state by

choosing what I focused on. I always keep a trigger memory handy that makes me laugh. I use it all day, especially when I find myself disappointed or becoming upset.

Imagine for a second that your perception of death was different. Imagine that when someone died, you believed that they moved on to the next thrilling phase of life. Imagine that you held the belief that we are all spirits that are reunited upon the death of our physical bodies. When someone dies you would rejoice, marveling at the mystery of life that they have become a witness to. Do you see how you could perceive the same event differently? It's really up to you to form a more exuberant outlook on the situations that happen to you.

Let's try a few examples.

You have the same four close friends that you have had since high school. Your friendships have stood the test of time, distance and various obstacles. In a flash of an eye, you wake up and realize that every friend you have is in a stable, committed relationship. You are nowhere near anything that resembles a relationship. Which reaction would you have?

- a) You cry and fall to your knees wondering why God would cause such a horrible thing to happen. You walk home and sulk, knowing that you're still single because you are the ugly one and no one would ever want you.
- b) You recognize that there are always signs before the blessing. Your friends are finally moving into a happy place concerning their relationships and this is a sure fire sign that you are on your way too. Good things don't just happen to others, you will get yours too!

There is a rumor going around the office that your boss is about to be fired. Your entire department is grieving because your boss was the most kind-hearted person you ever worked with and anyone else would be a downgrade. Which reaction would you have?

- a) You become angry. You start a petition to save your boss's job so that your team won't have to deal with the change.
- b) Accept that change is inevitable, understanding that when a loss is announced that loss is synonymous with an impending blessing. You rejoice and soon learn that your boss's position is being offered to you.

It's early Saturday morning and you decide to perm your hair. As you comb through your usually manageable tresses, you see chunks and chunks of hair fall over the front of your blouse. Which reaction would you have?

- a) Cancel all plans for the day and head straight to the hairdresser for an emergency appointment. You figure it must be time for a change and you ask the hair dresser for a cute short cut. He obliges and you walk out feeling like a brand new you.
- b) You scream, run and hide in the closet for most of the day. You won't answer the phone or the door because you are so horrified by what just happened. You spend 3 hours on the internet researching hair loss and possible illnesses that this symptom represents. You're dying. You know it. You make out a will and write letters to all of your loved ones explaining how much you loved them.

With each shifting circumstance you are positioned for an even greater circumstance no matter how unappealing it may seem. Your perspective is your choice. You choose to see life's omens as a gift or a curse.

If you are choosing to be miserably single right now, be dramatic with it. You can:

- Wear black everyday with long veils and dark sunglasses.
- Go to see romantic movies and throw empty cans at the screen during love scenes.
- Buy a t-shirt that reads: I HATE YOU in bold letters.
- Write poetry about the dangers of falling in love.

Be bold with your misery. Enjoy it. Live it up. It's only a phase. One day, you will make a different choice for yourself and on that day, you will truly begin to live.

# Chapter 5- It's Not A Sin to...

# **Embrace Yourself**

The single space of your life journey is a very important time of development. It could last 20 years or even 60 years but what matters most is the way in which you decide to use this time. You could wallow in self pity, wishing you had what others have or you can understand that just like finding your One and beginning a new phase of your life, this phase is equally important.

During this time of your life you are afforded the opportunity to discover who you really are and uncover hidden talents that you never knew lived within.

#### Learn To Accept And Appreciate Who You Are

Who are you? No, who are you really?

You are more than just your name, your age, your race, your occupation or the role you play in your family. You aren't your khakis. You aren't your Louis Vuitton handbag. You are not the three letters after your name. You are a vibrant being who is composed of many invisible layers. The layers are comprised of your core beliefs, experiences, disposition, habits, and desires.

When we are able to reach deep inside with a heart that is unafraid of what it will find, we will discover new depths of strength and power. This is the blueprint to uncover the deep reaches of wisdom that lay dormant within our subconscious. Until we are brave enough to search them out, the healing balance and equilibrium needed to usher in our most treasured dreams will be unavailable to us. The awareness of this balance will provoke an unshakable trust in our own inherent abilities to make the best choices which will carry us forward through life.

Take some time to examine these concepts.

1. What are your core beliefs? What do you believe about your life? Which beliefs define who you are?

Example: I am fat. I am happy. I am unable to change. God loves me.

2. What disposition do you hold about your life? What frame of mind do you operate in consistently?

3. What are your most dominant habits and how do these habits affect you?

Example: I seem to sabotage every relationship before it begins. I never last more than a year at any job. I cook a fresh meal every night to please my family.

4. What are your greatest desires? Why do you have them? What will the achievement of these desires bring to your life?

Once you can answer the questions mentioned above, it will enable you to take a long look at where you have been, where you are going and decide if these components serve you well.

Whoever you are, accept the fact that you are who you are and there's nothing wrong with you. The good, the bad and the shameful parts of who you are, are there for a reason. The root of our unhappiness stems from our inability to embrace ourselves. We spend too much time worrying about what others think and wondering if they will accept us as we are. That's a complete waste of time. I've found that even when people are put off by my frankness and independent nature, they respect me for always being true to who I am.

Who are you trying to please anyway? Does it really matter what they think about you? We spend so much of our youth trying to fit in that by the time we are retired all we want to do is break all the rules. Have you ever noticed how obstinate elderly people are? They don't want to take their medicine, they don't want to eat their vegetables and they wear purple socks with sandals and high water pants because they are tired of doing what is socially acceptable. They want to do what makes them happy.

Whatever it is that you are into, go ahead and really get into it. If it doesn't break the law in any way and it is not harmful to others, don't apologize for what you like. Whatever it is that pleases you, find peace in doing that. You are not stupid for having the dreams that you have. You are not crazy for wearing your hair like that. You are not selfish for wanting the things you want.

You are who you are and that should be good enough for those who say they love you. Your tastes and specifications for your life are valuable and should be honored. Who told you that something was wrong with you? Why did you listen to them? There's nothing wrong with who you are and where you are at this very moment.

Whatever it is that you like; My Little Pony dolls, BDSM, sniffing socks, singing in the shower- it doesn't really matter what it is- what matters is that you own that part of you and proclaim, THIS IS ME! I AM!

When you learn to accept and appreciate the hidden parts of your personality, those parts that you feel ashamed of, you can truly begin loving yourself. You have nothing to be ashamed of. There is nothing wrong with you.

Don't think that you are the only one with a particular interest that sets you apart from the rest of the world. For years I could have sworn I was the only Black writer in my age group. Even when I went to college I didn't meet any other Black women who were interested in inspirational writing and sharing life stories like I was. I remember feeling like I was trying to walk a path that no one else dared to explore. I felt lonely and discouraged because there was no one to share my passion with.

I wasn't trying to be a teacher or an accountant like my friends. I had no one to look to for advice or to affirm me and tell me that I could make it as a writer but I walked on continuing to enjoy my special talent alone. One blissful day, the clouds finally parted and the angels rejoiced when I became a blogger.

What an amazing feeling it was to meet others who shared my passion for story telling. I felt like I finally had a family who understood my need to share my life, explore my dreams and fears and exercise my creative abilities. I grew tremendously as a person and as a writer because of that interaction.

The same will happen with you. As soon as you are able to embrace who you really are you will immediately attract others who share your same passions or maybe even those habits or rituals that you were told you should be ashamed of.

Be true to yourself and you will attract others who are being true to themselves. You will also encourage others to step out of the shadows of the people who are supposedly 'living right' by society's standards to follow their own path. Celebrate your uniqueness and don't worry about being accepted. The person who follows the crowd is never remembered, but the one who leads the parade will be.

#### **Learn To Entertain Yourself**

One of the most debilitating factors of your single life could be your inability to entertain yourself. For those who can't seem to stand being alone, there's more to what you're going through than just having an extroverted personality. Being alone forces you to think about where you are in life. This can be a draining task for those who have no clue what to do to change those things that they are dissatisfied with.

Don't fall into the trap of thinking that having these thoughts is a bad thing. It's okay to be disappointed or to be confused, alone or angry. Those emotions indicate that you are living and

breathing and those emotions will point you in the direction of what you can do to change your situation.

You must come to a point where you are not afraid to be alone with your thoughts. That reflective mental state is nothing to be afraid of. You can allow your thoughts into your mind to roam freely and learn not to become emotionally attached to any of them.

It may be a bit of a challenge at first if you are just coming out of a relationship and you are not familiar with having to do things alone or you have so many friends that you don't have to do anything alone. It's great to have friends who share your interests but you can create truly priceless experiences when you can have a good time all by yourself.

How can you learn to entertain yourself? Well, there are lots of options. Anything that you can do with someone else is a valid option for you to do without depending on a social interaction with another individual. You can practice by taking the following suggestions over the next week.

- Go shopping
- Take a walk
- Watch TV
- Go to the movies
- Volunteer
- Read a novel
- Fold the laundry
- Sit in silence

While you are enjoying these activities, allow your imagination to roam freely. Think those thoughts that you were afraid to allow to stagnate in your mind. Face those tough questions that you have for yourself. You are allowed to think about anything that you want.

Take note of the energy behind each thought. Does the energy or emotion you are experiencing move you to a mental state of joyful expectancy or does it cause you to have regrets about your life choices? Are your thoughts beating you up or causing you to smile?

Thoughts can't beat you up unless you give them the power to do so. Sure there are some situations where you recognize that you could have made a better choice but then there are situations where you made the right choice and received exactly what you felt you deserved. It is important to learn to recognize both sides of the spectrum of your experiences by balancing your thoughts when you are overwhelmed by critical ones. You balance your thoughts by allowing a critical thought to surface and then adding an affirming thought at the end.

For example: I may not have the job that I want right now but I just lost five pounds.

Both statements are true, however, the first statement causes you to feel badly about your life circumstance while the second statement helps you to feel joyful. By attaching an affirmative statement onto a negative statement you can take the sting out of the critical thought which reduces the impact of the critical thought causing you to feel better about your life as a whole. You will then begin to enjoy the quiet moments alone. You will feel better about being who you are once you realize that your life is balanced.

Challenge yourself to see exactly how much you can enjoy your own company. Learning to enjoy your own company will improve your life in an unprecedented way. Once you accomplish this feat, you will become even more valuable to your future partner because you will allow them the space to enjoy themselves with or without you. This eliminates the pressure to entertain that most people feel when they are in a relationship. They'll find you even more desirable when they can brag to their friends, "Oh, my baby is downtown doing her thing. She doesn't need me in order to have fun."

#### Decide What You Want To Believe About Your Life

Doesn't that concept sound a bit unrealistic when the truth of your situation or circumstance is staring you right in the face?

You say: The truth is, I'm single and I'm unhappy.

I say: The truth is, you're single and you choose to be unhappy.

Everything that we believe about our lives is a choice that we have made for ourselves. The choices we make about our beliefs influence our perception of our reality. Even if someone told you that you were ugly, worthless or stupid you have the choice to believe them or not. You give every circumstance a definition. You decide what is true and what is accurate. You define how who you are and what your life will be like.

When I was a little girl I was fascinated by the teen novel series *The Sweet Valley Twins*. I would devour chapter after chapter as I followed Jessica and Elizabeth Wakefield through middle and high school. Their lives were so charmed. Their problems centered around defeating the tactics of their rivals, running for student council or pining after a guy they liked. They lived in a split

level home and had their own car. Their life was so different from the public housing I lived in and the metro bus passes I cherished.

Even though our life circumstances were opposites I adopted the belief that I too could be pretty and popular and one day become a writer like Elizabeth. I began to dream big dreams. I decided that I was definitely going to college and that I would major in journalism and one day I would even become an author.

By believing that life was about popularity and good grades and that I could have a life like theirs, I created a fantasy world in my mind and it was reflected in my reality. I was always one of the smartest girls in my class and by the time I graduated from high school I enjoyed wearing the title of The Most Popular Girl, Senior Class President and even newspaper Editor.

Because I believed that these things were possible for my life I was not afraid to step out and make them into a reality. When people saw how confidently I approached my goals, they easily believed in them too. When you show confidence in yourself, others will too.

In contrast to believing I was someone special and therefore would accomplish great things, I was also told over and over again that all boys wanted from me was sex and that making a date was in reality, choosing a day to have sex. This theory was ingrained in me over and over again until it became a core belief.

Once I decided to explore romantic relationships, I faltered so many times by becoming promiscuous and giving in to the advances of thirsty young men because I thought that was what dating was about. My heart was broken on many occasions when I learned that just because I gave my body away, that didn't mean that the young man would love me.

Your beliefs do create your reality, or at least your perception of it. Imagine if I had taken a different approach in both of these scenarios. Imagine that, instead of walking in to our newspaper advisor's office and letting her know that I was interested in the editor position, I sat quietly in class and never spoke up.

Imagine what my life would have been like if I had believed that my body was valuable and that men were supposed to honor and cherish me. I could have saved myself years of drama. But you know what? None of this matters right now because if I had not gone through those things I would not be able to write this book. My lessons learned are for your benefit, you have the opportunity today to change your beliefs about your life.

Changing your beliefs about your life will take serious self examination. Once you identify the core beliefs that you have concerning money, dating or even your purpose in life, you are one step away from coasting to exactly where you want to be.

# **Change Your Beliefs About Relationships**

A good friend of mine, who I will call Tara, once believed that all relationships began with a certain amount of drama.

"Tee," she'd say with all the wisdom of a 21-year-old. "Relationships always start out with some kind of mess. The man you are with is involved in something you don't like or he doesn't treat you the way you want him to, but eventually, as he gets older he'll slow down and the drama you went through will have made your relationship stronger."

I thought she was crazy. I'd shrug my shoulders and change the subject. Because my friend believed this, we always had a lot to talk about. Drama, Drama, Drama must have been her daily mantra because every man she met caused her drama and heartache. And no, none of her relationships ever got better like she predicted. She went along year after year putting up with men who didn't deserve her, waiting for things to get better.

What do you believe about the way relationships progress? Does this belief add positivity into your life? Does this belief aid in your imminent participation in the relationship of your dreams?

Before you can have the relationship of your dreams, you must first redefine the relationship of your dreams which begins with changing your beliefs about what you deserve. If you want to gauge what you believe what you deserve you can start by acknowledging what you have accepted in relationships of your past. We only accept what we believe we deserve.

If my friend had the mindset that she would only attract men who loved themselves and others, then she would have been more adept at identifying the men who did not fit into this mold and they could have been easily overlooked saving her years of tears and frustration.

She has since redefined what she believes she deserves but it only came after she experienced situations that she found unacceptable. Those seemingly "bad" situations are actually defining moments which allow you to determine what you do want as well as what you want to believe for your life.

#### **Make Heartfelt Connections With Many People**

Because you are single you have the opportunity to experience heartfelt connections outside of a romantic context. This type of connection is equally as important as any romantic relationship that you will ever have.

Making a heartfelt connection with someone involves opening yourself up, being exactly who you are and allowing the other person to be his or herself, too. You can always find an

admirable quality in anyone that you meet. Look for that quality, amplify it in your mind and help that person to celebrate that quality. This will make the person feel good about themselves and in turn, you will feel better about them too.

If you are consistently looking for the best in people, you will most often receive the best from people. If a person does not return your genuine praise and good will, that is not your problem. It is an indication that that person is having a hard time loving themselves. You can choose to continue to affirm them and remind them of how special they are only if their negative attitude toward life does not affect your attitude.

Every person that I meet is potentially a candidate for my special team. My special team consists of the most brilliant and creative people I know. I'm always learning and growing because of my connections with them and I will carry them with me in spirit throughout life, wherever it may lead me.

The most successful people know that they are only as successful as the people they surround themselves with. I can present myself as knowledgeable about a variety of subjects because I have a wealth of incredibly intelligent people to learn from.

#### Do It For The Story

I'm not sure if you know it or not, but there's a really big world out there that exists beyond your block. The single life is an adventurous one. It's your time to do things you've maybe thought about, but were too afraid to try. You learn more about who you are by being involved in situations where no one around thinks or behaves like you do.

When you are making the next decision try using this motto: Do It For The Story!

Enhance your life by placing yourself in new environments which causes immediate growth. Do it for the fun of it. Do it for the story you'll get to tell. Do it just because you can. You can further your education in a brand new city, take a different route home or move to a country that you've never visited before. There are tons of ways to travel on a budget and it's even more adventurous to do it this way.

In an act of desperation as I reached for my dream of becoming a writer, I knew that if I stayed in my hometown, which offered little opportunity for a beginner, I would never get anywhere. I took off with just my clothes and my car and in one year I lived in three different cities. I found professional jobs and some not so professional jobs in each city and they afforded me the experience I needed to return home and be more respected as a journalist.

Besides the professional connections I made, the people I encountered along my journey taught me so much about myself. Everyone I met was a mirror of a different part of my personality. While working at the *Breakfast Klub* in Houston, Texas I met a young woman and she was just as dreamy and starry eyed as I was. She didn't believe rules applied to her and she just knew she'd one day be a star.

For a few weeks I roomed with a man who was a hermit like I had once been. He spent the entire day sitting in his lounge chair playing around on the internet. By interacting with these people and recognizing that their personalities were closely tied to mine, I was able to understand myself more and also break a few bad habits.

Go do something you've always dreamt of doing. Do it for the story! Satisfy a curiosity that you've always had. Do it for the story! What is it really like to be a stripper? Try it. Do it for the story! What do nights in Paris feel like? Book a flight and go see! Do it for the story! Is it really better in the Bahamas? Let me know. Do it for the story!

This is your chance to create vibrant memories to share with your grandchildren. Follow the wind, discover yourself and ignore all naysayers who wish they had the guts to follow their dream. They don't really care about you with all of their pessimism and criticism. They are miserable and unhappy and they want you to join them. That is the only reason why they try to deter you from taking the path less traveled.

It's not about them. It's about you, your life and your dream. There is nothing stopping you from achieving your heart's desire. Do it for the story! Go on. It's your time. This message is for you.

# **Step Outside of the Box Mentally**

Because you are single, you have the opportunity to not only travel and explore the physical world, but to explore the various realms of your mind.

Did you know that there are thousands of organized religions on this planet? Each group believes that their beliefs are the right way to make the connection with what they believe to be the creator of the universe. There are even people who believe we exist only as some cosmic accident and there is no real purpose for our lives. It is fascinating to learn about others cultures and how they perceive our existence.

What do you believe about the world? How do you view religion or your presence here?

Even if you were raised to believe one thing, this is a good time to examine that belief and decide if others are worth studying. Are you merely following a belief because someone told you to? Is that belief real to you? Does it help you to find the peace you desire?

Remembering that each belief is a personal choice, you can decide which belief makes you feel better about your existence. If it doesn't, throw it out and create a new one.

The choice is really yours. You don't have to live by anyone's rules but your own. You never make the wrong choice unless you allow someone else to choose for you. It's your life; you can and should choose for yourself

# Chapter 6- It's Not A Sin to...

# Be A Single Parent

You are not a failure because you are a single parent. Your children will not be damned to a life of disappointment and heartache just because you are raising them alone. Your children can still lead successful, happy and prosperous lives as long as you teach them how to do so.

One of the biggest obstacles that single parents face is the social stigma that they did something wrong to "end up in the situation that they are in." That doesn't matter. Life is life. Things happen. Whatever your reason for raising your child alone, as long as you are doing it to the best of your ability- you are a good parent.

Repeat after me: I am a good enough parent.

Your success as a parent isn't measured by how long you can hold on to a romantic partner. You were wise enough to let go of a relationship that wasn't trying to hold on to you and that takes a certain strength in its own. Children don't come with instructions, warrantees or guarantees. Even in a two parent household the family can hit bumps in the road as each person goes through their own version of the human development process. Do not think for one second that your family is prone to more obstacles than the next. There are countless happy, well adjusted people who were raised in single parent homes. Your children will be next on that list if you follow these suggestions for Single Parent Success.

#### Single Parents In The Home

There you are, standing strong and proud as you shuttle your kids off to school, go to work, come home, spend time with your children, make dinner, clean your house and then try to find a few moments to replenish yourself. Even if you can't always balance all of those duties, it's quite alright to play catch up the next day.

You are a superstar for taking on this challenge. There is no other more rewarding or challenging job than raising children and you will see the fruit of your labor through your children's success and happiness.

If you are sitting at home frustrated because your relationship did not work out, the child support payments aren't coming in and the family life you envisioned has not come to pass yet, you are doing your children a disservice because they can sense your unrest.

Make peace with the situation at hand and know that you are not being punished. You are blessed to be able to provide a home for your children and watch them grow up everyday. Some parents don't have that opportunity.

If you're struggling to maintain financially and it is causing you to lose sleep it is imperative for you to take control of the situation and remain poised through the uncertainty. There is unmistakable power in poise and you will find yourself able to see your next option clearly when your mind is not clouded by fearful emotions.

It is important that you treat the parent who lives outside of the home with respect and teach your child to honor the other parent regardless of the situation. Your child deserves to know the other parent, do not deny them that opportunity because you are angry that your relationship did not work out. In the long run it will hurt your relationship with that child, just as much as you think you are hoping to damage the relationship with the outside parent.

Allow the other parent the opportunity to contribute to your household. Go through the child support system only if you have to. Do not use child support as a means to punish the other parent. If you do this, you are doing it out of spite and every action garners an equal reaction from the Universe. Be careful what you put out, you will receive it back ten times over.

At some point you may meet someone else to share your life with. Be sure that this person values your child as much as they value their relationship with you. At no point should you place their affection and attention over the needs of your children.

When it comes to the parent who lives outside of the home, show them respect by including them in the activities of your children. Do not allow anyone, not even your romantic partner to come between the relationship that your children have with their other parent. Without this person you would not have conceived the priceless gift of children. Honor that connection and the source of the gift.

#### **Single Parents Outside of the Home**

I can personally tell you that I know what you are going through being the parent that lives outside of the child's home. My children have lived with their father for nearly 5 years. He takes excellent care of them yet, it hurts everyday to know that I am not there to help them tie their shoes, drop them off to school or hear about their day over a late afternoon snack. But this is my life and I accept it. I did what is best for my sons.

If you are outside of the home remember that you are not really outside of the home, you have just created an extra home for your children to be cherished, raised and loved. If your relationship with the other parent was not healthy for you or for your children and you parted ways, please do not beat yourself up. It is a better situation for the children to see two happy

parents than it is to see two parents who are unhappy and fighting all the time. If you allow them to witness your tumultuous relationship they will grow up thinking that verbal assaults and discontentment are attributes of a normal relationship.

If you or your partner could not salvage the relationship, you did not do anything wrong. You put your children first with this decision and they will not be harmed by it unless you are absent from their lives.

There is more than one way to be a good parent. You have to understand that. In some cases, you are not the primary caregiver because it is in the child's best interest to be with their other parent. It is very important that you continue to cultivate a relationship with your children. Don't believe for one second that just because you don't have the money to take them to fancy amusement parks or shopping sprees, your children don't value their time with you.

Being an effective parent means imparting positive values into the lives of your children. It means spending time with them doing things that they like to do, listening to their concerns and taking care of them when you can. Remind them how much you love them and you will always be a part of their lives.

Be as diligent as you can about contributing to the household where your children live. It is not the other's parent's responsibility alone. Your children live there, therefore you should be highly concerned with the success of the household. When you make sure that their household is functioning properly, you are ensuring the success of your children. Do not punish your children because you are angry with your ex.

Spend as much time with your children as you can. Be that listening ear, that voice of reason and that calming force. They will remember that you were always a present force in their lives and they will appreciate you for it.

When you are a parent who lives outside of the home, it is very likely that you will have to deal with the fact that your ex may someday have another romantic partner who will play a vital role in the lives of your children. Your presence is still necessary and valuable. You don't have to disappear or shrink back in the shadows because they are there. Be respectful and appreciative of the fact that this person loves your children and remind your children that there is enough love to go around for everyone, including the stepparent. There is no competition. You are the parent and that title will never be taken away.

#### **Teach By Example**

This principle is sometimes difficult to follow since we're the adults and they are the children, which means we have much more freedom than they do and we have been waiting for umpteen years to exercise our right to stay up late, drive and watch R rated movies. It is

important to understand that your children are inclined to mimic your actions, the way you communicate with others and the way you interact with the world. They are smarter than you think they are. They can tell the difference between what you tell them to do and how you react in similar situations.

I remember when I was about 9 years old and I was out with my family shopping in the shoe store. While running my fingers over the rows and rows of shoes I came across a pair that looked exactly like the ones I was wearing. I picked up the shoebox, took off my worn out shoes and replaced them with the shiny new pair. I modeled them for my parents with a questioning look in my eye.

My eyes said, "They look just like what I had on when I came in. There are no tags. I can walk out with these."

My father read my questioning eyes, shook his head and said, "Take those off."

I learned then that even though I could have gotten away with it, wrong is wrong.

What are you doing in front of your children? How do you react to situations? Children learn to react and interact in situations by watching what you do.

Fear is a learned trait. Have you noticed that if you show a fear of airplanes, your children will claim to have the same fear? Children learn how to handle difficult situations by watching you during times of despair. Do you break down and throw things or become depressed at the slightest discomfort of life or are you always smiling no matter what life throws at you? They notice. They practice. They repeat.

If the way you communicate with your family, friends and romantic partners is by using disparaging language and blatant insults, your children will grow up to believe that this is the way they should communicate too. Forget about how your parents interacted and how it impacted you. Show your children, by example, the proper way to show love to someone. This practice will follow them for the rest of their days.

#### Remind Them of Who They Are

In early child development children define the world by the words their parents teach them. From an early age you should form the habit of reminding your children that they are blessed, beautiful, wonderful beings created with a purpose and a promise of a great life.

Whenever you find your child alone, look him in the eye and say, "You are a beautiful creation. You will never have to worry a day in your life. You are loved. You are wonderful. You are destined for greatness."

If you start this at an early enough age, your child may react like my son Sai does, "I know Mommy. You've been telling me that since I was in kindergarten!"

I always laugh at him and gave him a hug. My son believes he can have, do or be anything that he wants and that is because his father and I consistently remind him of that fact.

Once I was volunteering at his school for a day and we were sitting in the library reading a book with his class. He made a great joke while he was reading to me and I laughed and said, "Boy! You're dumb!"

His smile faded. "I am?" he asked solemnly.

I caught myself and quickly recanted my words. "No, baby. Of course you're not dumb. That's just an expression. What I meant to say was 'You're funny'."

"Oh," he said as he smiled and went back to his reading.

I was so relieved.

Your children will believe your words until they develop the confidence to think for themselves. Sow good seeds by giving them the opportunity to believe great things about themselves at an early age. You don't want them to have to grow up and have to go through therapy or years of soul searching just to realize that they aren't worthless or failures. Children can develop this mentality early on which will sabotage their entire lives.

The words you speak are the most powerful prayers for your children. If you constantly tell them they are bad or stupid, they will take those labels as badges and their lives will reflect the words you have spoken. If you truly love your children, give them a gift that money can never buy. Remind them that their life is precious and that they are loved. Those simple words will make the difference between their life's success and failure.

#### Be Honest, But Gentle

Since you're a single parent, it's a fair bet that someone in your past has slighted you and you may be a bit bitter about giving love another chance. If you must be bitter, do it in the privacy of your own bedroom. Do not allow your children to hear you speak poorly of the other parent or of members of the opposite sex. If you allow your children to witness you speaking negatively about others, they will come to expect the trials and tribulations of love that you went through in their own romantic relationships.

What your children expect they will more easily accept. You want them to have a better love life than you did. You want them to make better decisions about love and life. When they are at an age where they can understand you, speak to them about the mistakes you made and

challenge them to steer clear of making the same mistake. Do not place the blame on the other party in your past relationship. Teach them that their life is their responsibility and that they have the choice to make better decisions. Remind your child that you believe that you went through that situation so they won't have to.

Do not teach them to fear relationships or the opposite sex. Do not teach them that women will try to trap them or that all men will leave them. When you plant these seeds of fear your child will grow to expect these fears to materialize in their relationships and will no doubt attract the very people and situations that you have taught them to envision.

If you teach a young boy that all women are out to take away their freedom, they will perceive every woman in this way. Your warning was in fact, a prediction for his future. Your warning was actually an indication of your past experiences and generational fears. No matter how hard you try to set a firm foundation for success, your children will have their own baggage to work through. Please don't add your baggage to theirs.

Your honesty about your past relationship will create awareness in their psyche and when they are faced with a similar situation, they will remember your words of wisdom and they will take heed.

## Don't Apologize

You should never have to expend any extra effort toward making up for the fact that you run a single parent home. Your children will not know they are missing anything unless you make a big deal about it. Sure, they may see that their friends have both Mommy and Daddy living together, but if they don't see Mommy sad and depressed, they won't think anything of it.

You can stop buying the extra clothes and toys, your children don't need it. What they need is for you to remind them of how blessed and special they are. The toys will be thrown in the garbage bin or recycled to the neighborhood children, but your inspiring words will replay themselves over and over again until the day they die.

#### **Live Your Best Life**

As parents we think we have to sacrifice happiness because we have children but that is a myth. One of the best gifts we can give to our children is to allow them to witness our bliss. If there is a goal that you have in your heart, but you are afraid to try, don't stall any longer, go out there and do it. Explain to your children the adjustments that will have to be made and ask them to keep you accountable and motivated. Allow them to become involved in your pursuit of your dream. You will often find that they support your dreams too.

This past New Year's Day as my son's and I sat nibbling on fajitas and burritos, I explained to them that I was having a bit of trouble finding my professional niche in the city we live in. I was worried that they would be upset at the prospect of my having to leave the city again, but my heart was filled with unspeakable joy when they blessed me and said, "Choose another city Mama! We'll visit you in the summers. Choose a good one- Like L.A!"

You may want to have them accompany you on your journey. I loved having my sons in the studio when I hosted my radio talk show and it was so much fun when I allowed them to co host my internet talk show. When I started my first writing projects, my sons would check on me everyday, "How is your writing going, Mommy? How many pages are you up to now?" Even now that I am a professional writer, they often accompany me to interviews and ask me about the progress of my stories.

"Has anyone bought your book yet, Mommy?" my son Solomon would ask.

"Not yet baby, but one day they will."

You have to live your best life, unafraid of the little twists and turns that are often direct guidance for your most magnificent journey. As your children watch you try, rise, fall and try again, they will understand the meaning of the word DRIVEN and they will emulate that at each stage in life, unaware of the meaning of the word failure.

They will grow up thinking, If Mommy and Daddy didn't give up, why should we?

Chapter 7- It's Not A Sin To...

# Walk Away From An Unfulfilling Relationship

It's a pretty safe bet that many of you reading this book can't really consider yourself to be single because you have someone sitting next to you right now. They're probably folding clothes or surfing the internet as you casually glance over at them and sigh. Come on, you can admit it; you're not head over heels in love with that person. You're only with them for companionship while secretly hoping that someone better comes along.

There's this feeling that you always thought you would have when you met your One. You can't quite describe it, but you just know that you'd KNOW and then you'd kiss and then there would be bliss. But then, why does the love you have now feel as enticing as making a peanut butter sandwich? What happened?

Why are you involved in this type of relationship? It may be the fact that you feel like what you have is better than the crap that you had in the past. Or maybe it's the fact that this person adds to your life in some way, yet your heart believes you should have more. It could be that you are afraid to let go of what you have because you don't believe you can have better. You could be involved in your relationship out of obligation or fear. There is a good chance that you've found your safety net; your partner isn't going anywhere and it's easier to love someone if you know being with them isn't a risk.

Whatever the reason you attribute to the situation, you remain physically attached yet emotionally dissatisfied. I can't tell you what to do because only you know what your priorities are for your life. I can tell you that the type of relationship that you truly desire is definitely an option for you. It's up to you whether you have the confidence to take a risk to be able to have what you want but it takes faith and courage to grasp what you desire. Are you up for the challenge?

#### When It Is Best To Let Go

In a healthy relationship you and the person you are interacting with feel good about each other and yourselves. You spend time with one another (and apart) and are comfortable talking about how you feel about each other. There is a mutual respect of ideas and opinions and a loving support of each other's goals and lifestyle.

You might disagree or argue at certain times, but in healthy relationships there is often a compromise met when both people place the success of the relationship above their personal pride.

An unhealthy relationship is one that that is rooted in anything other than a mutual respect and admiration for each other. You spend time together out of obligation or fear of loneliness. That person's opinion or presence in your life takes precedence over your own opinions or contentment with yourself.

When you are involved in an unhealthy relationship at times you feel as though you are still alone. You are afraid to speak your mind because of how it may affect the other person which forces you to hide who you are.

Most unhealthy relationships are about control. The controlling behavior of the dominant party stems from their own insecurity. They don't believe they are worthy to have someone love them of their own free will, so they will force their partner to be with them by using subtle or blatant tactics like these:

- Giving ultimatums
- Extreme pressure to comply
- Denying affection or attention
- Threatening to harm themselves or take away loved ones
- Physical or verbal abuse
- Emotional abuse
- Sexual abuse
- Manipulating by playing the 'victim' so that the partner has to continue to be the savior

There are many signs that might indicate that you are in an abusive or unhealthy relationship.

Your friend or the person you are going out with:

- Tells you what to do, tells you what to wear, who to talk to, where you can go or is violent towards people or animals
- Pressures you to have sex or to do something sexual that you don't want to do
- Tries to pressure you to form harmful habits
- Bosses you around or makes all the decisions
- Degrades you or uses foul language toward you
- Publicly humiliates you
- Punishes you
- Has physically hurt you
- Is possessive of your time and attention
- Tells you that you will never find anyone better
- Intentionally damages your relationships with others
- Tells you that you have to prove your love or loyalty to them

If you are questioning whether or not your relationship is unhealthy, here's your answer: It probably is.

#### **How I Let Go**

I was once involved in an abusive relationship but if you had asked me I would have never categorized it as such. None of my friends liked him. My parents didn't like him. My mentor even told me that I should walk away. I didn't leave because I really believed that it was something in ME that caused him to treat me the way he did. I tried hard to change, to fight for his approval, to win his love.

He often told me that I was disgusting, that I wasn't smart, pretty or good enough for him. Instead of realizing that he was merely projecting his own feelings about himself toward me, I took his words to heart and allowed his opinion to define who I was because I was unaware of my own power to define myself. Even after he broke up with me I still could not break the cycle of his vicious verbal attacks. I regularly had to defend myself as he showed up on my doorstep or sent emails calling me a horrible mother, saying that my womb should have been barren from the day I was born and implying that I may as well kill myself. I couldn't understand what I

had done to make him hate me so much, especially since he was supposedly happily involved with another woman.

I would have nightmares about him trying to kill me and cursing me for being alive. My fear of his abuse transferred toward all men and I began to have anxiety attacks whenever any man would approach me. At one point I even stopped doing my hair and wearing makeup because I didn't want men to try to talk to me. I tried to alter my appearance so that no one would find me attractive because I didn't want to be hurt again. The crazy thing is, I believed that I deserved all that my ex had done despite my friends telling me otherwise. I chose to believe his negative words over the positive words my friends shared.

Since I was not raised with the knowledge that my life was precious and I was a gift from God to this world, I had to learn to shake off the labels cast upon me by my parents, my children's father and even the negative ones I had accepted for myself. Although he had broken up with me many years before, I was still attached to the pain of the relationship and the hope that one day he would change his beliefs about me.

After years of fighting to understand my value as defined by religion, by the status of my career and by the size of my bank account, it wasn't until I was separated from everything that was important to me that I truly learned how valuable I was.

I learned to embrace those parts of my personality that I felt no one understood or weren't acceptable. I learned that who I am isn't really what I see in the mirror. Who I am is this intangible spirit that lives and thrives with or without my body. I am the essence of God's love. I am God's love. I am nothing more or nothing less. I am not a mistake. I am not a misprint. I am exactly who I am supposed to be. There is a purpose for my being who I am.

Anyone who tells you that you are less than God's perfect creation is basically using you as a sounding board to reflect their own beliefs about themselves. People's words or interactions are always a mirror of how they feel about themselves. Anyone who does not recognize God's divine nature reflected in you should be left behind so they can find a better fit for their lifestyle and you can receive even better for your life.

There is a reason why we are attracted to certain types of expressions of love. The Imago Theory explains that we all have an ideal image of love that mirrors the specific expression of love that we received as a child. On a deeper level, the love we experienced from our parents becomes our guiding mark for romance. If someone does not provide us with the type of love that matches our Imago, our ideal image of love, we become bored and unresponsive because we are unable to connect with or believe in the love style being offered.

Allowing someone who hurts you to remain in your life is a form of self abuse. You have to remove yourself from that situation. Your happiness is important too. Waste no time moving away from a relationship that does not reflect the beauty of the essence of who you really are.

If you do not, you will waste valuable years wandering shiftlessly, shackled by the hope of discovering what you already knew when you were born. Don't make this mistake. Stand up and recognize that you are the light, God's love, God's heart.

My life changed when I woke up to the realization that, these men are not more important than I am. I am the most important person here. My opinion matters more than what anyone else says. I am my own Buddha. I am my own North Star. No person defines me but me. I don't have to be a part of someone's life checklist. I never have to be married, if I don't want to be.

Then I challenged myself: How much fun can I have as a single person? I set out to see just what I could do. I dated. I flirted. I had one night stands; many, many one night stands. I had crushes. I had imaginary boyfriends. I dated women and men from so many backgrounds. I broke hearts and had my heart broken. I was vulnerable and I was rigid. I was whatever I wanted to be at any given moment. Sometimes I was strong and at times I was weak. I became an ever evolving version of ME and I am proud to be.

Be who you are with your many faces and attitudes. Show the world your flair. Love whoever you care to. Love how you want to love and don't worry about the other recipient's reaction. As long as you are not overstepping boundaries of personal space and safety, you are free to show love the way you know how. If the recipient doesn't appreciate it then it simply means it was not meant for them to receive.

I know, it's a challenging thought to give up what you have for the uncertainty of what lies ahead. But the thing is, what lies ahead is guaranteed to be greater than what you have now if you are truly unhappy.

## Recognize Your Value In A Relationship

We have done a lot of work so far helping you to understand who you are and help you to redefine what you believe about yourself. Now it is time to recognize and celebrate what you bring to the table.

When considering making a commitment to anyone you should ask yourself: Does this person deserve me?

What are your strengths? Can you cook? Do you own your own home? Are you the most enterprising person that you know? Take a moment to list those qualities that you have that make you unique and valuable.

While recognizing that most of the traits that you listed can be shared by a multitude of people, these traits may be common but no one can present them in the flavorful way that you can. You are all that, and I say that in the most sincere way. No one can bring life to a conversation

in the way that you can. No one can smile the way that you do. No one can put an outfit together like you.

You better recognize your swagger!

If you can not recognize what you bring to the table, no one else will. You do not have to change a thing about yourself, unless you want to. If the person you are with is consistently advising you to change this, be that, work harder to be better and they are not your life coach, it is best to leave them alone.

There is someone who will adore you for exactly who you are at this time, no strings attached. But it will only happen when you believe that it can.

# Chapter 8- It's Not A Sin To...

# Mourn A Lost Love

Dana's heart pounded as she turned the corner, parked her car and walked cautiously up her drive-way. The lights were out and the spot where her boyfriend Adrian's Nissan Altima was usually parked was empty.

She shook her head and sighed as her fingers absently fished around in her purse for the key. As she walked in, she noticed that the house was eerily quiet. She called out Adrian's name, hoping against hope for a warm response. There was none.

"I messed up," Dana whispered as she placed her purse on the coffee table and sank down into the cool leather sofa. Adrian was gone. She knew it was final when he left the key on the kitchen cabinet. She had apologized and asked for his forgiveness but he had still walked out of her life.

In her quest for looking for her Superstar she had overlooked the North Star that was shining right in front of her. Sure Adrian wasn't what she had always imagined she would have but he treated her better than any other man and she knew he loved her with every fiber of his being.

For some reason, she didn't love him back. She cheated on him consistently with other men who had shinier cars, flashier business cards and healthier bank accounts hoping to snare a husband who could provide the lifestyle she saw on TV. The secret trips, couture gifts and saucy escapades all disappeared as quickly as they appeared. She was just a fling for most men, but to Adrian she was the center of his world.

But today he was gone.

And it hurt.

Now she understood what she meant to him. The wounded expression on his face as he gave her back her key, packed his clothes and went back to his apartment spoke volumes. It wasn't the first time he had found a love note from one of her suitors, but it was the last time that he would grin and take it.

#### **The Healing Process**

Dana is at the beginning of her healing process although she may not recognize it. She made a mistake in judgment during her relationship with Adrian and she has learned a powerful lesson from it. Her life is not over and she realizes that. She also knows that it is time to make a change.

So what do you do when you have lost a love and find yourself single again? You can call yourself every rotten name in the book, become depressed or throw yourself into the arms of someone else if you want to. Why not try all three of these suggestions and see what happens. I'm pretty sure you'll find yourself back at square one; alone and unhappy with yourself. A healthier choice would be to skip those three pitfalls and take a more mature approach.

Your relationship ended for a reason. Whether it's your fault or the other person's fault is irrelevant. Your relationship ended. Something about it didn't satisfy your or your partner even when you both tried to make it work out.

It's okay to cry and take the time to mourn your lost love. The feeling is almost as bittersweet as graduating from college. Inside you're sad that that stage of your life is over, but you can also look toward the future with wonder, anticipating even brighter days.

During your healing process you will experience the physical and mental pain of a broken heart connection. Headaches and stomach aches are common side effects of mourning a lost love and so are nausea and mild depression. These emotionally charged symptoms should not be a cause for alarm.

"This doesn't feel right," you'll tell yourself. It shouldn't. You had a mental connection with someone and when that is broken it can affect your entire life. If that's the case, allow it. Don't fight the feeling. It won't last forever.

Give yourself the time to grieve and the space to decide what you learned from that relationship, which of your ex's personality traits you enjoyed and which ones you would rather not experience again.

Yes, it's that simple. You do get to pick and choose. This was not your curtain call. You will have another chance at love.

Eventually you will be able to release the negative emotions associated with the break-up. You will hold firm to the truth that you can never lose what belongs to you and you will never have to hold on to someone who isn't trying to hold on to you.

You will go out with friends more and begin to view your life as positive and rewarding even without someone standing by your side. You will then form new friendships and redefine old ones with people who share similar interests. Before you know it, you will be too busy enjoying life to even care what someone who walked away is thinking or doing.

At that point, when you are healed and healthy and expecting a great love affair, you will receive your heart's desire.

#### What Do You Deserve?

Satisfaction is the key ingredient in most healthy relationships. When you're with someone who satisfies your spirit by keeping your happiness and comfort as a priority in their lives, it allows you to relax and love them back without fear.

Ask yourself:

Was I really in love with this person?

Was I satisfied with how they handled our relationship?

Was this person a friend to me?

Was this the type of person that I truly deserve?

Have you ever given that question any thought? Do you even know what you deserve? I think it is quite sad that for years I attracted men who did not value me and I could not understand why. Each time the fling ended I would ask myself, "What is so wrong with me?"

Now I know that there was nothing "wrong" with me. I believe we position ourselves to receive the type of love we believe we deserve on a subconscious level. Of course there were men who wanted to be with me even after I had my two sons, but those were not the men I was attracted to. I didn't believe I deserved someone who was emotionally stable, faithful and loyal to me. I was attracted to the men who treated me the way I felt I deserved to be treated-like a throw-away grocery bag.

Well, how could I get mad at that? That is who I believed I was in the deepest core of my being. That is the vibe I gave off. That is the treatment I accepted. I even convinced myself that one night stands equaled power; my power. I felt that it gave me the power to leave the other person before they could leave me.

I laugh at my immaturity now, but again, I was only receiving from men the very treatment that I felt that I deserved because I did not know my value or what love really meant. I had no idea that there were men who would cherish me for my intellect and personality instead of ravaging my body and walking away without a backwards glance. I had no clue to even begin to imagine that a man existed that would uplift me instead of trying to dominate and diminish my spirit.

What do you deserve? You can discover how your innate beliefs about what you deserve and what you have received in relationships correlate by considering the following statements.

1. When I am in a relationship I can predict how it will turn out.

Your prediction for your relationship is a direct indication of what you believe you deserve.

2. When I am involved in a relationship I look for clues that my expectations are true.

You always find what you are looking for. What you choose to look for (focus on) is a direct indication of what you believe you deserve.

3. When I am involved in a romantic relationship I often try to work through being disrespected and unappreciated because all relationships have bumps in them.

What you choose to accept and expect during a relationship is a direct indication of what you feel you deserve.

There is no sin in enjoying your singleness until you can identify what you believe you truly deserve. In order to experience the bliss of a healthy relationship, you must change your beliefs about what a healthy relationship is.

A healthy relationship uplifts, empowers and encourages growth. It does not tear down your spirit, break apart your dreams or cause you to pull away from people and activities that you love. A healthy relationship adds to your life in a surprising yet satisfying way. When you are in the midst of this type of happiness you'll think to yourself, "I could die right here with a smile on my face." You will never want the feeling to end.

You deserve a healthy relationship. Go ahead and mourn over your lost love, but get back up and decide for yourself what you deserve and wait until you see evidence of that before you decide to give your heart away.

Just like you deserve the best treatment and support from your partner, there is someone out there who deserves YOU.

#### **Refocus And Look Around**

Some people say that the best way to get over a relationship is to jump into another one. For years I disagreed with this theory due to the fact that I thought this replacement love would only yield the same results as the first one. Now that I have re evaluated my stance and studied more intensely the relationships around me, I can understand that there is an element of truth in this statement.

No, I'm not suggesting that you run out and find someone else to attach yourself to. I believe the reason why I can honestly say I'm over my ex is the fact that I have met many more men who had the qualities that I admired in him, yet they treated me much better.

Open your eyes and take your focus off of the one who walked away and you will begin to see the same thing too. Until you are able to recognize that you have the ability to become involved in another relationship, you will remain stuck in the pain from the last one and you can not receive the person who is truly meant for you.

The reason you may still be attached to the person who left you is because you don't believe that anyone else will arouse those feelings of passion, attraction and love.

Believe me when I tell you, once you are able to understand that your last relationship was NOT your LAST relationship. You can breathe easier knowing that you will have your turn one day.

The person you were with was simply not a good match for you and therefore had to be removed from your life so that you could receive someone who is a better fit. I'm sure this statement doesn't feel all that comforting when you are awake at night and all you want is a hug from someone who cares. During those times I would turn to those things that brought me comfort like writing or reading or talking with my friends. It didn't exactly satisfy me like I imagined a strong hug from a sincere man would have, but those things brought a certain comfort.

It's okay to feel disappointed over a failed relationship but no relationship that ends can be constituted as a failure because during that relationship you grew as a person, you learned how to better define what you do want from a potential life mate and you are now better equipped to recognize the One when you do meet him or her.

If there's nothing else that I want you to understand in this chapter, please consider these three points:

- 1. There is NOTHING wrong with you.
- 2. Your last relationship was NOT your LAST RELATIONSHIP.
- 3. Since you have been freed from being with someone who did not return your same level of commitment and emotion you are now FREE to receive someone who will.

Please don't allow your past to hinder your future. What you are hoping for is right around the corner if you choose to recognize that your best life is never tied to someone who walked away.

You never lose anything that belongs to you. When you think you have "lost" something or someone you have actually just made room for an upgrade to appear.

Believe that. Trust it. I promise you.

# Chapter 9 - It's Not A Sin to...

# Pleasure Yourself

Despite popular opinion, I believe that one of the few things we have dominion over is our bodies and how we perceive them. We can't control others, we can't always please them but we can sure please ourselves. Since we are single and not interested in mingling with just any old body, we can decide to learn to pleasure ourselves.

Who says we have to settle for emotionless lack luster one night stands during our season of singleness? Since we already love ourselves why can't we make sweet love to ourselves? If sexual gratification is on your mind and you have no one to call to help satisfy that desire then by all means, go ahead and touch yourself.

Before you take out a pen and paper to take copious notes, be aware that the following suggestions are merely that, suggestions. You have to decide whether your beliefs line up with the idea of self induced physical pleasure. If you feel that it is wrong then it is probably wrong for you. I caution you to never engage in an activity that you will regret later, on the other hand, I believe there is no sin in exploring the pleasure zones of your body at your leisure. It's your body.

The concept of pleasuring ourselves physically, or masturbation, is not a new subject in any society. From the time we are babies we may explore our bodies and hit the right spot and realize that something feels good down there. When we purposely stimulate our sexual organs for the sake of pleasure we are masturbating. The practice extends far into adulthood where we can enjoy it more because we have more knowledge of what it takes to make us feel good.

Masturbation is one of the best ways to fulfill your sexual desires while safely giving yourself pleasure. Most people admit to masturbating on a regular basis. It is nothing to be ashamed of because it is a natural fact of life and everyone has done it at one point or another. Although it's not a dinner table topic, the act is just as normal as washing your hair.

Some masturbation techniques can involve another person but most people think of it as a private activity. Masturbation allows us a healthy way to explore our bodies and to release sexual tension without having to pay an escort during our time of singleness.

No one masturbates the same way every single time. Everyone has developed a unique technique that suits their body and their lifestyle. Regardless of the method, the goal is always the same, we all want to have an orgasm. An orgasm is a powerful explosion that occurs when

we are at the peak of our sexual experience. I can't be quite accurate in describing the way it feels except to say that it is much like the fulfillment of a long awaited promise.

#### **Weigh Your Options**

There are thousands of toys, pills, movies, creams and other aids that will help you to reach your climax. How do you decide which method is right for you? Well, that's the fun part, you can try them all.

If you have had sex before try to remember which parts of your experience turned you on the most. Was it the ability to watch your partner penetrate you? Was it the feeling of the penetration? Was it the sound of your lover experiencing immense pleasure?

If you were more aroused by the sight of the sexual act you may want to try renting or buying a pornographic video. There are so many options to choose from that your head will spin on your next visit to the sex toy store. Explore and find a video that is similar to what you have experienced.

If you were more turned on by the feeling of penetration you may want to explore buying a toy like a vibrator or for men, a masturbation sleeve. I won't recommend a particular product here because no one is paying me for advertising.

If you were more aroused by the sounds of your lover then you have the option to rent a soft core porn movie and listen to the animated love scenes.

#### **Set The Scene**

Even though there are a variety of options for visual and physically stimulating aids all you really need is a comfortable place to sit or lie down and your own hand.

If this is one of your first experiences try to choose a time when you are home alone and you will not be disturbed. Turn off your phone and close your blinds, you don't want to end up on Youtube.

It may be a good idea to have a hand towel nearby just in case. Take out your toy/aid, if you chose one, and place it nearby. Undress yourself, there is no need for shyness. No one is around to judge you.

#### **Relax And Enjoy**

Successful masturbation is about concentration and your imagination. Your orgasm begins in your imagination first and then your body takes the cue and reacts.

Give yourself time to get used to the sexually stimulating ideas that are floating around in your mind. Enjoy them. Relish each one. Linger over the visions of your fantasy. When you're smiling and biting your lip because of the beauty of the image in your mind you can begin to use your hand to fondle yourself.

For men this is demonstrated by making a fist around your penis and sliding your hand up and down the length of it in a firm yet gentle motion. You can increase the speed and the tightness of your grip to suit your personal tastes.

For women this could take some exploring because there are various erogenous zones in your private areas. You could try to position your hand like a karate chop and begin by gliding the base of your hand over your labia and clitoris until you feel a tingle.

Once that tingle is located, usually around the area of the clitoris, play around a little more until you can feel the intensity of the tingle begin to increase. Use the base of your hand or your entire hand to cause friction.

Be sure to get your hips and your body into the groove. The combination of the mental stimulation and the physical stimulation will have you at your sexual peak in no time. Enjoy what is happening to your body, it is the safest form of sex known to man and there is nothing wrong with it.

Of course there are other tips, tricks and methods but I'll leave the more creative techniques to your imagination. As long as you feel positive about what you are doing, be open to trying different techniques as you explore what makes your body feel best.

It's your body. You own the rights. Enjoy yourself.

# Chapter 10- It's Not A Sin To...

# Believe In Your Perfect Love

You're afraid of this chapter aren't you? Maybe you're ashamed of the fact that you desire love. You've probably been told that no one is perfect and you can't really have what you want. You may feel guilty that you want to be loved because admitting this is sometimes seen as a sign of weakness.

Hogwash, I tell you! Fiddlesticks and pumpernookins! I'm here to say, YES YOU CAN!

Take a moment and spray on your favorite scent, you're about to meet your One.

#### **Defining Your Perfect Love**

Have you ever really thought about what love means to you? Come on, besides the symbols of love like the wedding dress or the all-you-can-take sexual buffet. What does love really mean to you?

Take out your journal, answer the questions and follow my example as I define, refine and manifest my perfect love. You don't have to copy everything I write, your entry should be personal to you.

## Te-Erika's Journal

## 1. What does love mean to me?

Well, I think I view love as an expression of appreciation for being a valuable part of someone's life.

# 2.How do I express love?

I show love by being there when a friend or family member needs me. I go to events, buy gifts or lend a listening ear to their problems or concerns and I help them sift through their options.

## 3.Is a romantic love different from the love I express to my family and friends?

No, not really. Besides the physical expression of love I tend to treat those I care for romantically the same way I treat my friends and family.

# 4. Why is it important to feel loved?

Knowing that I am loved kind of validates my existence. If I didn't feel loved, I'd be miserable. I think one of the greatest things about life is the ability to experience a positive interaction with others. I believe love is the natural essence of be~ing. Anything that separates us from that feeling should not be in our experience.

# 5.Do I have any negative associations with the word LOVE?

Yes, I do. Love sometimes makes me feel queasy as I associate it with heartbreak.

# 6. Have I ever experienced a positive, healthy love?

Sure. Many times with my friends who have been like sisters to me. But when I think of my greatest love, I think of my two sons, Sai and Solomon. That is the purest love I have ever experienced. They love me early in the morning even when my breath stinks. Nothing can taint my love for them.

#### 7. What would a person have to do to show me that they love me?

I think the person would have to accept me as I am and allow me room to grow without speaking to me harshly or criticizing me for not being where they want me to be. I'd also like to be openly appreciated for being who I am. The person can do this by not trying to change me or make me conform to what the world says I should be or do. Let me be free. Let me be me. Allow me to enjoy the boys or the girls if I please.

Take care of me. Well...I'm serious. Growing up, I always watched my Father take complete care of my Mom. She never even had to whisper a word about something she needed. If he thought she needed it, he would go out and get it. My Mom is not one of those lovey, dovey type of women, but when I see her sitting on the bed staring at a new gift he bought for her and sighing because she never had to mention it, I could always feel her gratitude.

I think what he did translates to more than just paying her bills. He made sure she never wanted for anything and that she was always content and pleased. That's the kind of love I want; the kind of love that places my happiness as a priority.

#### 8. How will I show my romantic partner that I love them?

Dang, I thought this was about ME being spoiled! Ok, Ok. I do have a lot of love to give and just like I'm serious and focused when it comes to my goals, when I do meet someone who I feel

deserves my love in a romantic way, I really want to be able to do lots of pampering with nice gifts, unlimited moral support and lots of freaky sex.

### 9. How important is sex in my expression of romantic love?

It's very important to me. I've had a few good experiences, but I'm still waiting to experience the kind of sex my friends talk about, where you feel emotionally safe and completely comfortable with the person you're with and you turn on the lights while you're doing it and you don't even get up to wipe yourself afterwards because all you want to do is feel their energy and heat until you both fall asleep. I think they call it 'Making Love'. I've never done that before.

#### **Refine Your Perfect Love**

# 1. What are the top 5 qualities that I would like to create in my perfect love relationship?

I would like for us to be on the same page spiritually. Although I am not a religious person I respect all paths that lead to a greater thirst for a connection with our Creator and I want my perfect love to reflect a love for our Creator and all of its creations.

I would like for us to have similar goals of using our creative talents to empower others to success which will allow us to leave a positive legacy for our children's children to enjoy.

I would like for both of us to be healthy, intensely and undeniably attracted to each other and compatible sexually.

I would like to be partners in life and in business, with no limits on where our intelligence and ambition can take us.

I would like for us to be best friends, respecting each other and uplifting each other for the rest of our lives.

#### 2. Which qualities do I possess that I would like to see in my ideal partner?

I am extremely ambitious and driven. I don't see limits for myself in life. I believe that I deserve and will have all of the comforts that life has to offer. I am a nerd. I love to learn and share wisdom. I mentor others and sow seeds of positivity into their lives. I am a giver. I like to laugh. I like to make others feel good about themselves. I am honest. I believe that what we give to others will be returned to us without haste so I am careful of how I speak and treat those around me, for the most part.

# 3. Which qualities do I possess that I would like to have my partner help me to improve?

Well, my partner will have to accept the fact that I don't cook or clean. Don't mess with that. But, I really would like to stand up for myself more. I'd also like help with shifting my focus away from so many career pursuits and on to giving more love and being there for my family. I would need a patient partner to balance my impatience and sense of entitlement.

4. Try to balance my image of my ideal partner by identifying 5 ideal characteristics and countering those with 5 characteristics that I may find annoying, but I would be willing to live with.

Good question! Ok, my partner is financially savvy, but also giggles like a schoolgirl when excited.

My partner has an outstanding resume of accomplishments, but also snores louder than a low flying airplane.

My partner is my biggest advocate, cheerleader and protector, but I have to listen to the same boring stories over and over again.

My partner cherishes me and our family, but works late almost every night.

My partner loves to take grand vacations, but always invites friends to tag along.

# 5. Write a prayer of protection for my perfect love.

God, thank you for sending what's-his-name my way. I always knew that there was someone special for me. I love the fact that he wears glasses, is a creative genius and is kinda nerdy yet sexy. You got my order just right. I ask you to keep my perfect love safe and continue to prosper and encourage my perfect love each day. Send an army of angels to protect and guide my perfect love until we become ONE.

#### **Manifest Your Perfect Love**

The definition of manifest is to reveal its presence or make an appearance. In this sense, I am calling on the power of our Creator to allow me to speak into existence the exact type of relationship that I am looking for. Even the Bible says Ask and You Shall Receive.

There have been many books written on the topic of manifestation and I have become very familiar with the topic through the works of Florence Scovel Shinn, Personal Development experts Erin & Steve Pavlina, Law Of Attraction Coach Jennifer Maw as well as Jerry & Esther Hicks and their messages from a source they call Abraham.

Inspired by their message that we can achieve the life we dream of by first believing that it is ours to have and making peace with that belief, I offer the following manifestation techniques to bring to life the dream love you have envisioned.

#### BE THE LOVE YOU DESIRE

You don't have to wait until your perfect love arrives. Celebrate the imminent arrival today by showing the same love and compassion that you would have for your One with everyone you meet. Give as much as you can and hold nothing back. Love fearlessly and without abandon. The love you give will be returned. Your One will be catapulted into your life.

#### PREPARE FOR THE LOVE YOU DESIRE

Is your home in order to receive the wife you have been praying for? Are you in a mental state that will add to the life of the man or woman you most desire? Do you love yourself as much as you hope your perfect love will? If not, it's time actually okay. get moving. Your perfect love is on the way and it is important to understand that even if you do not change a thing about yourself, you can still have the love you desire.

Things will go more smoothly if you can reward that love by making improvements where you can. Focus on the life you want to live with your One and use inspired action to prepare for it. If you need more education, go back to school. If you haven't saved up for the engagement ring, open a savings account. If you want to be able to give stellar massages then sign up for Massage Therapy classes. Whatever you need to do to make life better for your future family and your One, do it now. You must prepare for what you want.

#### BELIEVE IN THE LOVE YOU DESIRE

There is a difference between hope and faith. Hope looks forward to something happening, but absolute faith takes action in perfect belief that it will occur. Show your belief that your One is on the way by getting rid of any obstacles that may hinder their arrival or any bad habits that you believe might slow down your progress as a unit.

Celebrate everyday as though today is the day the One arrives. Live as though you have already received what you have asked for. Don't bother with hope, KNOW, BELIEVE and BEHAVE accordingly.

#### SPEAK ONLY OF THE LOVE YOU DESIRE

You have had quite enough time to whine and complain about the jerks and jerkettes in your past who did not value you. That is old news. Your One is on the way. You need not ever speak of what you considered a 'loss' again. Every seeming 'loss' actually pushed you closer to your One so you can now be grateful that you were cheated on, lied to or disrespected. You can do cartwheels over the memory of the one who walked away without an explanation. Their departure had nothing to do with you. Their departure was merely an orchestration of our Creator to align you with your One.

#### DETACH YOURSELF FROM THE OUTCOME

The best way to bring love in is to release the extreme desire for it. You can still want to be loved, but have a detached desire. This desire says 'Whether I get it or not, I will be okay.' This carefree desire allows you to enjoy the joyful expectation without the pressure of having it now. The tide can't bring in the sail you need unless the waters are calm. The waters represent your emotions, which are churned by your insistent longing. Don't insist in it happening; allow it. Relax and allow it. It's much more sweeter when it comes this way.

Rejoice over what you thought were failures. Rejoice over the decisions you have made. All of the decisions were the right decisions because they have led you to this very moment, this moment of clarity and positive energy where you know that you know that you know that nothing is standing in the way of your love for yourself and your perfect love.

You will receive your perfect love as you practice being your perfect love.

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Notes

# More Inspiration:

MySavvySisters.Com

Embrace Your Fantasy- The Youtube Channel www.youtube.com/embraceyourfantasy

Writing For Your Life www.te-erika.blogspot.com