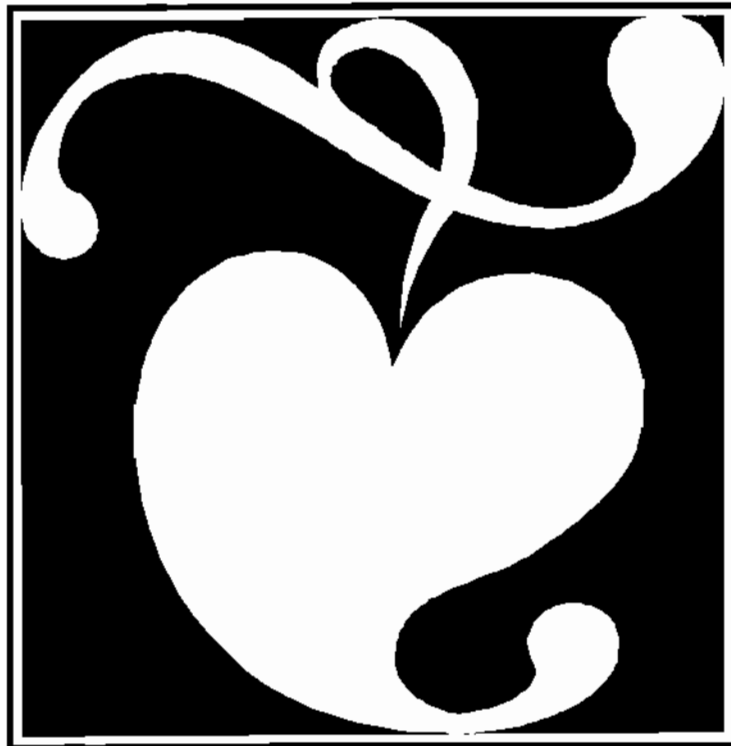


SUCCESSFULLY SINGLE

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INTRODUCTION

Why read this book?

If you are single and unsure of how to meet people or scared to meet new people, this book is for you. In this book, you will learn how to meet people in different situations and you will learn how to enjoy being single. There are many people out in the world who are single and have little or no idea of how to meet others. This book will provide several methods designed to help you introduce yourself and actually make a meaningful connection with someone you would genuinely like to meet.

This book will also help you to resolve some of those inner questions and conflicts that can inhibit you from meeting new and interesting friends. It will hopefully give you a boost so that you can have the confidence to go out there and meet people at singles events and functions.

This book was written by two psychologists, one male and one female, who have been out there in the single world themselves. They have used the techniques described in this book and would like to share these helpful tools with others. Please see 'About the authors' for further details.

Thank you for taking the time to read this book. We truly hope you get a lot out of it.



CHAPTER ONE

What is 'being single?'

How do you feel about being single? Do you like being single or is it something that you hate? Does it feel like a stigma attached to you that you want to get rid of? Are you desperate to become part of a couple so that you can feel 'complete'? Is your goal to be involved in a relationship and eventually get married? There is a wide variety of people who are single and some are comfortable and happy with being single, while others are miserable. Part of how you feel about being single has to do with how you feel about yourself.

What percentage of the population is single do you think? Do you ever feel like you are the only one without a mate? Do you ever look around and only see couples, and feel that you are one of the few that doesn't have someone?

Would it surprise you to know that approximately one out of every three adults in the United States, some fifty million people between the ages of 20 and 55, are in fact single? So actually, you are not as alone as you can sometimes feel you are. There are many single people all around you, in your town, city and country. However, many people can feel 'alone' and being lonely can be a difficult state of mind to be in.

Why do you feel that you are single? The reason you feel you are probably has a significant impact on how you feel about being single. There are actually many sub-categories to being single. Perhaps you have never been married. That would put you in one category of being single. Perhaps you are recently divorced. That would put you in another. Additionally, if you are struggling with the break up of a relationship, this can affect how you feel about being single. If you felt abandoned by your partner, you can be suffering from feelings of low self worth. If you left your partner, perhaps you are dealing with guilt. Perhaps your partner died, which can leave you feeling that you will never have that same kind of partnership again. All these feelings can affect how you see yourself and how you view being single.

Being single can be an adjustment. Sometimes, it is not a stage that one chose to be in. However, being single can be an adventurous and exciting place to be and it can be a chance to get to know yourself and feel comfortable with yourself before you connect with someone else. In terms of meeting someone else, it is an advantage to feel good about yourself and comfortable with who you are as you project this image to others. It is possible to feel good about being single and to feel complete within yourself while still single.

Example

Gary is 28 and works as an investment banker. It is Saturday night and he is choosing between going to a singles event by himself (his friend is ill) or renting an action adventure video he has wanted to see. Gary tries to avoid singles events and when he does go, he usually ends up talking to his friend, leaving early and going home to order a pizza. He really doesn't want to go to this event, but he keeps thinking 'what if I meet someone really great there?'

Being single does not have to mean being alone. Just because you are single does not mean that you cannot be involved in many meaningful relationships with friends and family and even a significant other. Many people feel that being single is the same as being isolated. It does not have to be like this. Many people are single by choice, and feel that they have many positive connections with others.

It is important when you are single, to have a strong support system in place. There are many kinds of support systems. You can have your family, friends, special interest groups and religious groups. A professional who assists you in your personal or business life can give you the support system you need also.

In conclusion, how you feel about yourself is the key to feeling okay with either being single or meeting someone.

Imagery Exercise



In this exercise, you are asked to use your subconscious mind to imagine a situation and how you would act within that situation. As your subconscious mind cannot differentiate between what is and is not real, this is a good way to help you 'reprogram' your thinking so that you have a more positive approach.

Imagine being Gary, the guy who is struggling between going to a singles event or staying at home. Try to go through the evening in your mind. Go to the singles event and imagine meeting someone great. Try to picture it as clearly as you can in your head. For example picture Gary standing by the bar with a martini in his hand. He sees a lovely brunette walk past. She looks directly at him and smiles. He says 'hello, my name is Gary'. She stops to talk to him. Take it from there.

NOTES



CHAPTER TWO

Social Masks

What makes someone really attractive? Have you ever, for instance, noticed a beautiful woman walk into a room and turn heads all around her? Have you ever seen someone like that who had a particular mannerism or behavior that turned you off when you talked to them? Sometimes that outward beauty can be extremely transitory. When you take a look in the mirror, it is important to look on the inside as well as the outside.

When you take a look in the mirror, what do you see? Do you see someone who is attractive? Do you see someone who is well put together? Do you see someone desirable? Do you see someone who feels good about him or herself? Do you see someone who exudes confidence?

When you are looking in the mirror, you either see something attractive that projects itself onto others in a positive way, or you may see something that you hide or cover up. This defensive position is like wearing a 'social mask'. You need to ask yourself why you wear this armour or mask when you meet other people. After all, if you are hiding behind a disguise, then chances are that people will not get to know the real you. Try to have the courage to take down that mask and let other people 'see' you.

Many people carry defences that have become protective layering from past hurts and pains. If you think literally, of a soldier wearing armour, you can see that it is almost impossible to actually see him beneath it.

Example

Tom is 32 and is a salesman at a men's store. He is very good at his job, makes good money but feels he 'does miserably' with women. He initially presents himself well and is well dressed, but for some reason just turns women off. He cannot understand it. He doesn't realize that after a few words have been said, he becomes very negative and critical in his conversation. For example, he criticises whatever the woman is wearing or how her hair looks.

Social masks and defences affect how available you can be to other people. They limit your flexibility and capacity to reach out to and meet other people. You should try to take a look at the armour that you are wearing, and break it down so that the real, beautiful you can shine.

You need to gather the courage to shed the armour, layer by layer, so that others can see who you genuinely are and what draws others to you. Just by letting others see you, you will achieve great results wherever you go...singles parties and everywhere else.

I am sure that you have met people at parties and events, and you feel some kind of warmth towards them or connection with them. You think to yourself that you would like to get to know them better. Have you ever sensed the energy of another person, in the way they moved or spoke, their body language or the confidence they exuded? Wasn't that attractive to you? Isn't it attractive to you and a turn on?!

When you can learn to take off your mask and let others see you, they will feel your energy in the same positive way. Your confidence will attract them and turn them on.

Exercise

Look in the mirror for a full three minutes. Time it to make sure that you have truly looked for that long. Look at your face and hair only and try to find all the things that you like about yourself. When you have finished, write down five things that are attractive about your face and your hair. Then write down two things you would like to improve and two ways you could do that.

NOTES



CHAPTER THREE

Fears

When taking a look at your idea of being single, you must feel okay about being single. If you are feeling desperate and hopeless, it will show through. The desperation may be from your anxieties at meeting new people, but this insecurity will affect your presentation.

Many times you may feel that this desperation does not show through, that you can cover it up, but the opposite sex can sense it. If the person you are talking to is interested in having a relationship, and you are presenting yourself as desperate to be in one, this is a turn off. You need to ask yourself if you are feeling desperation. Where would that feeling be coming from and what might it take to let go of it? If you should be feeling that way, there is a variety of ways and techniques that you can use to help you let go of your desperation and your armour. There are ways to reprogram your thinking patterns and your feelings. That is what professionals can teach you...ways to reprogram those internal tapes.

How you feel about yourself can make all the difference in being able to make better connections and easier contact with others. One thing to keep in mind is that everyone feels some kind of insecurity and fear when approaching the opposite sex.

Fears can be a very negative influence, although fear can also produce some anxiety, which can be helpful. However, for the most part, in terms of learning how to meet people and be in social situations, fear can serve to dissuade, sabotage and basically destroy any chance that one might have of making an initial connection. The three biggest fears are those of rejection, inadequacy and failure. These fears can be manifested in a variety of ways. Fear is most commonly shown through anxiety, withdrawal, nervousness and agitation.

When feeling anxious, some people withdraw while others tend to talk more, perhaps inappropriately. One thing to ask yourself is what you are afraid of. At the base of a lot of people's fears, is the fear of not being liked. Do you feel the need to be liked by everyone that you meet? Once you begin to realize that the reality is that not everyone likes everyone else, then you can begin to take things less personally. It is important to not personalize it when someone says 'no' to you. Someone might say 'no' for a variety of reasons and the great majority of those reasons might have nothing to do with you. Perhaps those reasons have to do with what is going on in that person's life currently. Perhaps that person is involved with another? Perhaps they are

not ready to be involved. Perhaps they are too afraid to get involved themselves.

What we are saying is that you have to be very aware of how the other person is reacting and feeling. This must be a clear objective in your developing a perspective towards meeting people. You need to take into account your fears and try to understand where those fears come from so that they will not influence and negatively impact not only your daily life, but your engagements and chances to make a connection. Many times, fears originate from when we were small children. You might want to remember what you were taught as a child. Were you told that you were pretty or handsome? Or were you told that you were unattractive in some way?

Was your mother always fussing with you and trying to change your appearance in some way?

Fear may reflect your self esteem and self confidence. You may feel inadequate or inferior to someone else because of your lack of confidence. This lack of confidence shows through to others and can certainly be projected in social situations.



James is 28 and a pretty decent guy with a good job as Vice President of Finance for a medium sized company. However he has always been afraid of social encounters with women and has always found excuses when friends have asked him to parties or tried to hook him up on a blind date. He also has a difficult time talking to female co-workers. On the weekends he usually enjoys renting multiple videos and ordering in pizzas. He tries to avoid most social functions, including family holiday get-togethers.

Fear usually comes from past experiences. Fears emerge from what is called your family of origin, or some other experiences that you may have had later in life. It is common that once we have had an unpleasant experience, encounter or an unsuccessful relationship or marriage, that we are so afraid of repeating past mistakes that we keep ourselves from reaching out and making that connection.

Many people will not venture out into the single world or try to meet people because they do not want to get hurt again. Usually there is an individual reason why a person will stop themselves from making a connection and this

may take some exploration and some in-depth probing to find out why this person is so scared to reach out.

There are a variety of ways of dealing with your fears. One is perhaps to go to a group where other people talk about their fears. Knowing that other people feel the same way as you do can help. You could also go to a professional therapist. One method to use may concern using imagery or hypnosis to visualize yourself where you want to be. You can also reprogram your subconscious mind to get beyond the fears and give yourself, through imagery, a successful experience. Imagine walking into a social event with confidence, having it go well for you and making a connection with somebody. Your subconscious mind does not know the difference between doing this in imagery or reality. It still lives the same experience in both arenas.

Some fears are very difficult to deal with and manage. Upon occasion, some fears that are getting in the way of social situations may need to be dealt with on a very professional basis. There are many professionals who work with individuals to help them gain more assertiveness, more self-regard and a more positive self image and higher self esteem. It is suggested that in such cases, those people do seek out and use professional help although it may not be needed on a long-term basis.

Exercise

Try to remember a negative message you might have been told as a young child that affects how you act and feel today. What is that message and where does it come from? Who gave you that message and why? Do you think it is true?

NOTES



CHAPTER FOUR

Singles Events and Functions

There are many singles events and functions available to you throughout the city in which you live. Attitude is the key when you attend a singles event. It may be the worst or best singles event in the world, but if you maintain a certain attitude and express yourself in a positive way, you are going to successfully meet people.

Once you have the right attitude and you are ready to go out and meet people, you must have some idea of where to go. There are a variety of potential places for meeting other singles. In fact with the right attitude, you can meet single people, or even that man or woman of your dreams, just about anywhere. For instance, you could meet someone at the supermarket, in a bookstore, sitting by a public pool, in an elevator or at the gym.

You really can meet someone anywhere. It is your receptivity level that counts. However, it is also important to select a singles events that meets your needs and interests, so as to improve the chances of your meeting someone interesting to you. Also, going to singles events puts you in an arena with lots of other single people, so your chances are automatically greatly increased of meeting someone else single and interesting to you.

So you have to make an individual assessment of yourself in terms of what is interesting as well as comfortable for you. There are many different types of singles events available, such as non-sectarian events, sectarian events, interest groups, specific activity groups, sports activity groups and singles clubs. You should choose something that is appropriate for you and your interests. If you have not played tennis before, it probably would not be a good idea for you to join a tennis club, as chances are most members will have experience of the game and you will be trying to keep up. You want to be able to concentrate on meeting someone as well as enjoying the activity you are doing. If you choose something that you are truly interested in, then you will be meeting other people who already have two things in common with you. They are single like you, and they have the same interests.



Example

Valerie enjoys reading. She especially enjoys mysteries. She decides to 'try on' a new attitude. She goes to her favorite bookstore and decides that she will be friendly and receptive. While looking for a new book to read by her favorite author, she sees a well-groomed man browsing in the mysteries section. He smiles at her and she smiles back. They begin talking and he tells her that he enjoys attending the book reading club and he suggests that Valerie come to the next meeting. Now they are dating and Valerie finds him quite interesting.

Some people prefer not to attend events slated just for singles, and that is fine too. You can meet other single people at any event. If you feel pressured by going to an event specifically designed for singles, then go to one that is designed for anyone seeking to enjoy a certain activity. It can be hard to go to events such as a cocktail party or a dance, where the main objective is to pair off. This can be intimidating sometimes. Some people are happier with activities such as going to the museum, or going horse back riding, where meeting someone could be a by-product of the adventure, but it is not essential.

It is also important again to enjoy what you are doing when you go to a singles or other event. If you do not meet someone there, then at least you know you have enjoyed yourself doing that activity and developing that interest. Plus if you are enjoying something, you are much more likely to feel at ease and comfortable with yourself, which of course is one of the keys to meeting someone. If you stop for a moment, sit down and ask yourself how you are feeling, you may decide that tonight is the night to go because you are in the mood for it. On the other hand, if you do not feel up to going, then it is best that you stay home as it is very important that you go when it is right for you so that you can achieve what you want to achieve. To know when it is the right time, you must accurately assess your own feelings.

Being in the mood to go somewhere and meet people is very important. Your receptivity to meeting others is also a key to your success at it. You have to feel okay about yourself and also be receptive to others, because if you are not receptive, chances are people will not approach you and you will not approach them. People can pick up on these emotions and they will react to them. If you see someone who is not smiling, sitting in a corner, not making any kind of eye contact, you are less likely to approach them to talk, as

opposed to someone who smiles back when you smile at them or even initiates eye contact with you.

Aside from being in the mood, you have to be available and be in a position where others can approach you. Instead of sitting in a corner, it would be more prudent to circulate the room. You can also circulate as a single person, meaning that you are available to go to parties and events when asked, and you are willing to go out there and enjoy yourself. It is of course, very hard to do this if you are breaking up from a relationship or getting divorced and it may take some time. You can build up your 'availability status' over time. As more and more people, friends and family learn that you are single and willing to meet new people, you will be asked to attend parties and functions which will increase your chances of meeting someone. Perhaps you will be set up on blind dates, if that is something you are interested in. You can tell your friends, co-workers and family that you are single and looking to meet someone interesting. That means if they should know of someone that they think might be suitable for you, you would be receptive to meeting with them. Do not feel pressured into doing something that you are scared of or threatened by. Work up to doing things slowly so that you can adjust yourself along the way. If you are feeling pressured by friends and family to find a partner, tell them to back off a little.

You can meet someone anywhere at any time if you just have the right attitude. You could be walking around the block, down a supermarket aisle or checking out the latest paperback and you could run into someone that you would want to get to know or get to know better.

If you are sitting alone in your living room, chances are unless the pizza delivery man or woman is 'the one', that you are not going to meet anyone interesting. But if you just go out there and either do something you enjoy or take a risk and attend an event for other singles, then you are greatly increasing your chances of meeting someone. If you try to carry the attitude that you are receptive to meeting someone, that you are hopeful of meeting someone interesting, then chances are that you will.

Exercise

List three activities that you might enjoy. Perhaps these are activities you have attended previously. Perhaps these are activities you have always wanted to attend. Focus on the enjoyment of the activity itself. Attempt to be open to initiating conversation with some of the people attending these events.

NOTES



CHAPTER FIVE

Presenting Yourself

When you attend singles event or other functions, you give out a first impression whether intentional or not. It is important to know what impression you are giving and whether or not you wish to give a different one.

What are you saying to others with your body language? The way you dress? And the expression on your face? As any good retailer can tell you, window dressing is one of the most important things in drawing customers into a shop.

How you present yourself is key to how others see you at first. People will 'size you up' depending on how you choose to present yourself to them. Of course it is more important for them to see what is on the inside and you may say to yourself that you don't care how you appear on the outside as the inside is all that counts. However, I think that it is wise and also important to put your best foot forward in all regards, including how you appear. If anything, the way you present yourself says volumes on how you feel about yourself. Plus, you are more likely to be noticed and be approached if you are looking your best and feeling your best.

Example

Vanessa is beautiful and wears expensive clothes, but men do not seem to approach her. Vanessa's friends tell her that she is really attractive and that men might be intimidated by her looks. Vanessa finds that when she puts on a 'friendly air', that men are more inclined to come up to her and talk. When she takes the initiative at a singles event, and asks a man to dance, he readily accepts her invitation.

When presenting yourself, go for what you think is your best. If it is your style to dress formally, then do so. If it is your style to dress casually, then do that. It doesn't matter necessarily what you are wearing, but how you wear it. If you put effort into your appearance, it will be noticed. You can wear a formal dress and still look 'scruffy', but you can be wearing a pair of ripped jeans and look well put together.

You might want to ask your friends how they experience you. What impression do they have when they look at you. What was their first impression of you?

Based on this feedback, you can decide if there is anything you wish to change about your presentation. You should remain consistent with your individual style so as to feel comfortable. But that style may change week to week, depending on what mood you are in. It is most important to feel comfortable with what you look like and feel good about how you are presenting yourself to others.

You will also want to keep in mind what is appropriate to wear to the occasion you are attending. If you are wearing a formal dinner jacket to a softball game, chances are you may get a few stares and some questions. The jacket may not be appropriate for the occasion, particularly if you are sliding into home base.

You should also present yourself in a realistic way. You must remain approachable to others. If you appear 'untouchable' and flawless, you may not be approached. Many beautiful women report that men do not come up to them as they are intimidated by their appearance.

When you feel that you are presenting yourself in your best light, then you need to make sure that you are being receptive to others. Are you being expressive? Do you make eye contact when someone is talking to you? Do you think others feel comfortable talking to you? You can ask your friends how they see this side of you too. Do they find you warm and receptive when they want to talk to you? Do they think you are giving off the right signals that you are interested in meeting and talking to other people?

Once you get the answers to all these questions, you can begin preparing your exterior package to present to the world. Once you feel happy about how you are presenting yourself, then you can meet people and let them experience the inner you.



Exercise

What are your strengths in terms of presenting yourself? Name the areas of presentation that might need improvement, for example grooming, dress, personality characteristics such as friendliness, etc. Ask a good friend for some honest feedback. Can you make some adjustments accordingly?

NOTES



CHAPTER SIX

Attraction

It is important to remember that everybody is not attracted to everyone else. Attraction is a very individual thing and if someone does not happen to find you attractive, it only means that you are not their type. It does not mean that you are not an attractive person to many other people. You have to learn not to take that kind of response personally. Not everyone in the room will be attracted to you and that is okay.

But it is important for you to know what you are attracted to, and what your goals and expectations are. What traits in the opposite sex are important to you? What attracts you to someone?

Example

William only likes women that are taller than 5 feet, eight inches with reddish hair, green eyes and an almost perfect body. He tends to turn away most women who are nice and friendly as they do match up to his expectations. He says he cannot seem to find the right woman.

The first thing to do is recognize the internal checklist that you carry around with yourself. By that, I mean being honest with yourself and admitting what you do and do not like about a member of the opposite sex. Are you turned off by short men? Do you like balding men? Do you like women with large breasts? Do you only like women with brown eyes? Must he be athletic? Must she be slim? Are you looking for a woman who is career oriented? Are you looking for a man who wants to start a family? All these questions must be carefully considered and evaluated so that you honestly know what you are looking for, both physically and emotionally in a potential mate.

Your expectations should be realistic however. If you are holding unrealistic hopes or idealistic views on what your partner should be like, then chances are that nobody will ever match up to what you want or feel you should have. The longer and more rigid your checklist is, the less likely it is that you will find someone who matches what you want. This is not to say that you should ever settle for someone who does not make you happy or someone you are not attracted to, but keep in mind that nobody is perfect and that everyone has room to improve. The most important thing is initial attraction and a similar set of values.

Remember that Prince and Princess Charming exist only in fairy tales. In real life, people have faults, some fixable, some not. It is most important to recognize what your individual wants and needs are and if you find someone that fulfills them, that that is your dream partner. If you hold unrealistic views about who you want to be with, then you will sabotage yourself and not find that person. If you are willing to accept that you may not find Mr or Mrs All Right, but rather, Mr or Mrs Right For Me, then you will have a much better chance of success.

Exercise

List five traits or qualities that attract you to the opposite sex. Ask yourself if with these qualities, you are asking for too much and you are unlikely to find someone that matches what you are looking for. Can you modify this checklist to make it more realistic and reasonable?

NOTES



CHAPTER SEVEN

Breaking the Ice

When you attend singles events or other functions, or even when you meet someone somewhere like the supermarket, you need to learn how to 'break the ice'. This can be an uncomfortable process and can produce anxiety, but there are ways of doing it that are easy to learn and practice.

One thing to keep in mind is that you are not the only person feeling uncomfortable. It really takes two people to break the ice, and when you are somewhere like a singles event, chances are you are both nervous and uncomfortable. This is a totally natural response.

Breaking the ice does not necessarily mean that a meaningful and successful conversation will follow, but it will help to put you at ease and will be good practice for you in the future.

When you attend an event or function, either with a friend or by yourself, you will assess the situation first. You will scout out the place to see who is there and who looks interesting. You will assess how comfortable you feel in your surroundings and what is going on. You will look to see who you find attractive and who you would be most interested in getting to know. This attraction is the initial helpful tool in breaking the ice.

Example

Mary has always been fearful of social situations and has avoided them. She recently started seeing a therapist and has been practicing role playing to help her engage in conversation with the people she meets. She is doing better in her sessions and she decides to attempt to go to a social event sponsored by her family's synagogue. She ends up meeting Tim there who is also quite shy.

You can actually get yourself mentally prepared to break the ice, before you even leave your house. You can prepare just as a professional athlete does, by practicing and repetition. You might, for instance, as you are getting dressed, look in the mirror and say some things to yourself. This method is called affirmation and can be very helpful. You could say to yourself 'I am the most interesting woman I know', or 'I am the most fascinating man I know'. It may sound a little silly at first, but as you get used to hearing your voice aloud saying this to yourself a few times, a piece of the message will start to stick in your mind. You will start to believe yourself and see yourself that way, and

that increase in confidence is helpful when meeting people and breaking the ice.

You can also break the ice by using your body language. Just a smile can sometimes break the ice between two people making eye contact. A smile can say 'I am interested in meeting you' without your actually using those words. You can break the ice across a crowded room by just smiling or winking.

What to say when you meet someone is another decision to make. For the most part, people generally seem attracted to those who are showing their true selves, rather than trying to put on an act or play a part. For instance, you are more likely to get a positive response by saying something simple and honest, such as 'Hi, are you having a good time? I am a bit nervous but it seems like fun here'. If you come on too strong or try to impress the person you are talking to, chances are he or she will not respond the way you would like them to. Have the courage to be who you really are and let people see you.

Another way to break the ice when someone starts talking to you, is to power listen. Power listening is when you hear and take in what the other person is saying, without thinking about or saying a response just yet. It is also important when listening, to make eye contact. If you are looking at the person who is talking to you, they will feel that you are listening to them. If your eyes are darting around the room, or looking down, they will feel that you are not interested in them and this can be hurtful and discouraging to them.

When you decide to break the ice with someone is important too. It is best to do so 'while the iron is hot' so to speak. This means that if you see someone whom you think is attractive, the best thing to do is to make your way over there and try to break the ice with them. You could also try to catch their eye and do it that way too. You should keep things simple, such as a smile or a 'hello' and let things go from there.

Exercise

Take three daily situations where you come into contact with strangers, and practice engaging in conversation with them. For example, you could use the grocery store or video shop. Keep a log of your experiences and what responses you get.

NOTES



CHAPTER EIGHT

The Art of Conversation

There are several levels of conversation. The first level is small talk, such as talk about the weather, the party you are at, politics and that sort of thing. The second level is big talk, such as talk about how you are feeling at the party, talk about your personal life and things like that. The third level is in depth talk. This is where you reveal more of yourself and your personal life.

Small talk is a good way to start a conversation with someone that you do not know. It is a non-intrusive way to get to know a little bit about someone, such as their political views or where they have travelled to. When you move onto big talk, you need to pace yourself. It is important not to give too much away too quickly. Do not tell your life story all at once, for instance, as people are not ready to hear all that just yet. It is best to ease gently into a big talk conversation, by telling something a little more personal about yourself and seeing where that leads the conversation. You might want to share the fact that your child just left for college and you are experiencing a little of the 'empty nest' syndrome currently. This admission might lead to the other person sharing a personal story and you are now both relating to each other as the conversation moves along.

Example

Ray was 30 and an attorney. He was a great talker and conversationalist, but felt very disappointed when the 25 year old artist whom his friend Rick had set him up with, did not want to go out with him further after one blind date. The feedback that he received from his friend was that he had 'no depth'. He was shocked by this as he was first in his Law School class and felt that he could talk about anything.

A conversation should be like a see-saw. You should talk, then listen, then talk, then listen. If the conversation seems one-sided and you are either doing all the talking or all the listening, try to change that balance. Likewise, if you are talking about intimate details of your life and the other person is sticking to non personal facts, then the balance is off and needs to be changed.

Once your conversation is up and going, you may lead into in-depth talk, which is where you reveal more of yourself to the other person. You must be comfortable with this person to talk to him or her in this way and the balance between what each of you is saying to the other must be even. If you are relating to each other and communicating on a similar level, listening when

the other is talking and genuinely enjoying the conversation, then it is the perfect time to get to know that person just a little bit better.

You can use body language to assess how the other person is responding to you just as they can sense your body language towards them. If the person you are talking to, takes a step backwards away from you, or is looking around the room while you are talking, then you might want to change your line of conversation or re-evaluate the person you are talking to.

When you are in a conversation, you need to express who you are, you need to contribute to the conversation and listen well. Let the other person know what you are interested in. Tell them some of your beliefs and opinions. Establish your perspective and let them know what your values are. Hopefully the person you are talking to, can share some or all of those values and beliefs and you can feel that you are truly relating to someone, rather than just talking to them.

If it turns out that the other person does share an interest with you, the conversation can take a smooth and natural turn. For instance, the person you are talking to might like to play golf as you do. Now you are talking about golf, and your faces are lighting up and the conversation is really moving along nicely. This can be a truly uplifting experience, when a reactive conversation occurs. You talk about something, then the other person reacts by being excited by what you are saying and then you are off and running.

Something to keep in mind while chatting, is how long you want to talk to the person for. If you are stuck in small talk, and you are not particularly interested in moving the conversation forward, then leave that person and move on. If the person you are talking to is not as responsive as he or she was at first, then leave and talk to someone else. It is important to have a positive first encounter. If on the other hand, you and your new friend are enjoying talking so much that neither wants to stop, then don't. Keep talking. Just make sure that you are aware of your and their body language. Then relax and enjoy the art of conversation.

Exercise

Write down five open-ended questions that could be used in conversation. Try using these questions in your conversations with friends and strangers that you meet. Also write down and try to use two ways you might employ to conclude a conversation.

NOTES



CHAPTER NINE

Closing the Deal

As you are developing the conversation and a connection, it is important to decide whether or not you would like to further the relationship. Is this someone whom you would want to see again?

At the end of the conversation, if it has been a good one and you are both interested in each other, then you must next close the meeting with a view to having further contact and meeting again. If you want to see this person again, you must have a way to contact him or her. One way that is easy to use in order to do this, is to ask the person if he or she has a business card for you to take. Make sure that you have plenty of those yourself. If you are not in a business or profession where you have a business card, then you should think about having a personal card with your name and phone number printed on it. This is a better and easier method than having to find a piece of paper and a pen. Another option would be to ask for one of the person's cards and write your name and number down on the back. Alternatively, if that person does not have a card him or herself, you could offer your card for them to write down their name and number on.

Example

Jim thought he was an interesting person and a good conversationalist. However when it came time to closing the deal, he would freeze up and feel that he needed to leave right away without getting what he wanted out of the meeting. He later would acknowledge that this was due to his fear of rejection.



Though it may be difficult and uncomfortable for you to ask the person for a phone number, it is best to be direct in this kind of a situation. If you enjoyed the conversation and so did they, they will be happy to know that they will most likely see you again. You never want to let an opportunity slip away so that you could regret not having the nerve to ask for that phone number.

In the same respect, you should be direct with someone who wants your number if you do not wish to give it to them. It is best to politely say 'no thank you' rather than give your number to someone you do not wish to see again, as that would be giving mixed messages and is unfair to the other person as well as to yourself.

Exercise

How prepared are you to close the deal? If you have business cards, keep them handy. If you do not have any, make up some personal cards so that people can easily contact you.

NOTES



CHAPTER TEN

Reasonable Excuses

There are a certain number of reasonable excuses that can prevent you from going out and meeting people. Reasonable excuses could include having to work, having something important to do, being sick, wanting to watch a particular movie or tv show or just the fact that you are not feeling up to going out and meeting people. If you are not up for it, then give yourself the permission to stay in. If you are not feeling in the mood, then chances are you will not have a good or successful time anyway, so it is better that you don't go.

However, that said, it is important to recognize at what point your not wanting to go changes from being a valid reason to an increasing pattern of avoidance. You should ask yourself if you are creating excuses so as not to have to attend a function. If every time a social function comes up, you have a reason why not to go, you may be creating a pattern of avoidance and you need to look at why you are doing this. There may be an underlying fear or series of concerns that needs to be addressed.

If you think about it and decide that there is indeed something going on, beyond the surface excuses for being busy and not able to attend a function, then you might want to seek some extra help in finding out what that barrier might be and how to get rid of it.

Example

Betty had some really good friends. However she always cancelled plans with them when they invited her to attend a social event. One day, Betty's friend Wendy confronted her and said that if Betty was going to always reject the invitation, she would no longer ask her to do anything.

You can go into individual counseling which can help you recognize and overcome certain issues that might be blocking you from having positive experiences in your life. Psychotherapy can help you work through fears and anxieties and can help you find the assertiveness you need to make meaningful encounters happen.

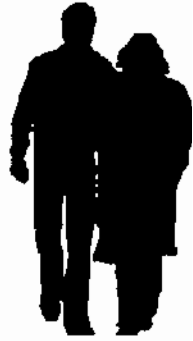
You can also attend group psychotherapy sessions where you will be with others who are struggling with similar problems. This can be an ideal forum for discovering what it is that is holding you back and finding a way to move forward.

Another tool that many people find helpful is getting a friend to attend functions with them. So if there is a function coming up in your future, and you are a little worried about going, and especially about going alone, then call up a friend and ask if he or she would mind accompanying you. Not only could that person give you the support that you need, but also they may encourage you and enable you to feel comfortable enough to go and meet someone new.

Exercise

It is okay to be a couch potato upon occasion but you won't ever meet anyone sitting alone with your VCR for company. Appoint a friend who can act as a coach to encourage you to work through some of the issues that prevent you from going out.

NOTES



CHAPTER ELEVEN

Taking your Tools on the Road

The most important key to going out and meeting people is feel successful and confident. Don't despair if things don't go right all the time. There is inevitably going to be some failure and disappointment along the road as there is in any walk of life. As long as you keep your head up, have confidence in yourself and your abilities then you will be successful in the end.

Now you have read this manual, you are ready to go out there and meet people. You have the tools to be able to decide what kind of event you want to meet people at. You are able to assess what it is that you find attractive about someone. You know how to break the ice and start a conversation with someone who looks interesting. You are aware of yourself and how you present yourself to others. You know that you are not the only single and afraid person out there, and you know that you must try in order to succeed.

Now you have all this information on board, it is time to get psyched up and energized and go out there and meet someone. This is your life, make the most of it. And above all, **HAVE FUN!!!**

