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DATING

The Thinking Man's Guide to Success with Women

Alex Benzer, MD, MPHIL

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With Women

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About the author

Dr Alex holds an undergraduate degree from Harvard, an M.D. from the University of California, and an M.Phil. in Enterprise from Cambridge University. He is a Certified Clinical Hypnotherapist and NLP Master Practitioner. He has consulted for Fortune 100 companies and maintains a hypnotherapy and personal coaching practice in Los Angeles, California. He is committed to helping you succeed.

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Introduction to The Tao

Nature understands no jesting; she is always true, always serious, always severe; she is always right, and the errors and faults are always those of man. The man incapable of appreciating her, she despises and only to the apt, the pure, and the true, does she resign herself and reveal her secrets.

– Johann Wolfgang von Goethe (1749-1832)

This book was created in response to a need. A few years ago, when I was an advisor to undergraduates, I noticed that my friends and advisees were in a particular quandary. Even though they were young, good-looking, intelligent, talented, funny guys at one of the best universities in the world, their dating lives were terrible. Some of these guys spent months, even *years* going without a date or romantic prospect in sight. Even when they got the date, they didn't know how to make it progress to the next level. And they were *surrounded* by young, single, beautiful, intelligent women who went to class with them every day, ate meals with them every day, lived literally *right next door* to them. And these women *wanted* to date them. So why wasn't anything happening? The truth of the matter was simple. While these men had extensive training in how to do well at school, they hadn't had any in how to deal with women. Even a task as simple as driving can't be done well without some instruction, let alone the immensely complex task of navigating human relations.

Then I realized that I had once been in their shoes, and probably even more clueless than all of them. It had taken me years of work, dozens of books, seminars, tapes, observing other men, going out, talking to hundreds of women, falling down and getting up

again to figure out how to deal with women. And my journey was nowhere close to being done. But I felt that I was in a position to convey some pivotal information to these young men to save them a lot of the pain and effort that I had to go through. So I put the word out that I was doing an underground dating seminar. On one April afternoon, fifteen men gathered in a dorm room and listened to what I had to say. And what happened was that they started to get results *overnight*. Literally the next day.

From that underground gathering came the first *Tao of Dating* seminar open to the public. This book before you is a highly concentrated, summarized version of that seminar. It is a collection of what I consider to be the best practices for dealing with women in a dating context. It is a synthesis of real-world experience of what works combined with the ideas behind why they work. For the conceptual part, I have drawn upon my formal education as a scientist, physician, and businessman at the world's best universities to bring you the most powerful and effective ideas for dating success. Concepts from psychology, evolutionary biology, economics and marketing illustrate the various points and are then turned into practical techniques which you can use immediately. For the practical part, I have drawn upon my studies of men who are highly successful with women and my own dealings (a.k.a 'research') with women. I have seen and experienced what works, and boiled it down to generally applicable principles that you can use yourself, regardless of your age, height, weight, or socioeconomic status. To all this I have added the timeless philosophical and spiritual principles of Eastern thought that I have studied on my own for twenty years. All of this comes together in a comprehensive system for success in dealing with women which I call *The Tao of Dating*. It wasn't easy for me. But I want it to be easy for you.

Every idea in this book has been tested and proven to work repeatedly by my students, my friends and myself. Nothing is speculative. This is partially why it is called *The Tao of Dating*. *Tao* (pronounced *dao*) is a Chinese word roughly translated as 'the way.' The idea is that there is a way that things unfold naturally in the universe. Water flows downhill. Trees grow upwards. Stars shine outwards. If you align yourself with this Tao, this *way*, then the universe aids you on your journey. Swimming downstream is easier than swimming upstream – that's just the way things work. Similarly, there are ways things work in your dealings with women. Science and wisdom have given us hints as to what these ways are. Some of these ways are counterintuitive and paradoxical (e.g. people like you better when you have them do favors for *you*, not the other way around – see Chapter 8). Some of them are utterly obvious yet elude notice. All of them are worth implementing consciously and actively. The *Tao Te Ching* of Lao Tzu, or The Book of the Way, is a profound book embodying that counterintuitive mode of working with the world: *When nothing is done, nothing is left undone*. Its enduring relevance over the past 2500 years is testimony to the power of its precepts. Relevant quotes from that book are interweaved into the text to illuminate concepts further.

Some of you will find *The Tao of Dating* highly applicable to where you are and where you want to be, and some perhaps less so. I have been through 21 years of formal education, attended countless lectures and gone through thousands of books in my lifetime. It's safe to say that I have not used 100% of everything that I have learned. But I still seek out new sources of information, sit through weekend-long seminars and sift through new

books. The way I think about it is that even if I get one new idea, one mental shift to see something in a new way, one re-iteration of a key concept that I had forgotten, one new application of a concept, then that book or lecture or seminar has been worthwhile. I urge you to look at any learning experience in that way. One spark is sometimes all it takes to start a raging fire, and I hope that you will find many sparks in the time you spend with this book. I would like to congratulate you on making the decision to bring the Tao into your life today. When you allow it, you will find that it will empower you and change your life in ways you had not imagined before.

The three themes of this book

The Tao of Dating is organized around three overarching themes. We will go over each one in detail in the book, but I want to prime your mind so you pay closer attention each time they appear:

- The first is *wealth-consciousness*, or the mindset of abundance. There is enough of everything to go around for everyone.
- The second is the *Be-Do-Have mentality*, which relates to Napoleon Hill's famous saying from *Think and Grow Rich*: "Whatever the mind of man can conceive and believe, it can achieve."
- The third is *enlightened self-interest*, which is about acting with integrity.

How to use this book

The purpose of *The Tao of Dating* is not just to give you some tricks and hints for you to scrape by on, but rather to turn you into the most effective, powerful version of you possible. As such, this book is equal parts about *transformation* as it is about information. In order to effect that transformation, you have to apply the principles in your book to your life. To facilitate that, there are 18 exercises. Now if you're like most people, your tendency will be to skip those exercises and go straight to the juicy parts about tips and tricks. And I recommend that you do exactly that. Skim the book once from beginning to end. Then go back and *do the exercises*. That is where the transformation occurs (and where some of the tips and tricks are hidden in the first place).

The Tao of Dating contains a lot of information. If you attempt to remember and try out every idea at once, you *will* get overwhelmed. That is why the book is organized in a linear fashion. Start from the beginning, from the work that you will do on the inside on values, beliefs, attitudes and what you want. Once you have that mastered, move on to the section on how to find desirable women. Progress stepwise to meeting, attracting, and perpetuating. Think of it as baking bread. If you've never done it before, you start by thinking about a recipe. You then sequentially go through each step of making the bread: go to store, buy ingredients, mix them, make dough, bake, eat. If you try to do everything at once, you're more likely to end up with a mess in the kitchen than an edible loaf of bread. But if you go sequentially, at every step of the way you just have to remember what

the next step is. As Lao Tzu says, “The journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step.” Go easy, and good fortune.

Final thoughts before you begin

The exercises require time, effort and introspection. Commit the time to do them -- they may be the most rewarding part of this book. You have taken the first step in commitment by getting this book for yourself. You have taken the second step by reading this far. Congratulations on that. You will take more steps by answering questions that are difficult to answer or have never been posed to you before.

One of my teachers once said, “The easy road leads to the hard life; the hard road leads to the easy life.” This book is an embodiment of that precept. If you are willing to put in the time and energy to build a more powerful and effective you, then you will repeatedly reap its benefits throughout the years with little additional effort, just as a fruit tree, once planted and tended to, will continue to bear fruit with little additional attention. Decide to plant that tree now. At the same time, Rome wasn't built in a day, and you're probably not going to read and internalize this book in one sitting. Do a little bit at a time, perhaps one exercise a day, and watch your life change.

I'm very interested in your comments, ideas, thoughts and feedback about this book, so do me a favor and drop a line sometime. If you have nice things to say, I'd like to hear that, too. Just put 'testimonial' in the subject line of your email, and I'll send you a special gift as a token of my appreciation. You can write to me personally at:

DrAlex@thetaoofdating.com.

Part I The Way



Chapter 1

Attraction and Fulfillment: An Introduction

Most people are intuitively skilled at evoking a given emotion in another person. You probably have reliable ways of making someone feel anger, surprise, fear, sadness or mirth. But how do you create the feeling of attraction in another person?

To answer that question, first we will develop a working definition of attraction. I think of attraction as *spontaneous movement towards* an object. Iron filings are *attracted* towards a magnet. Rainwater is *attracted* to a valley, a river, and ultimately the sea. And women are *attracted* to men who are strong, funny and romantic, flowing towards them. The purpose of this book is to show you how to get that flow moving towards you, just as water naturally flows down into the valley.

Attraction occurs along a gradient. Generally, women tend to be attracted to men higher than themselves on the social hierarchy. Therefore, if you convey higher social status than a given woman, there is a better chance that she will be attracted to you. You can either have the real determinants of social status – power, wealth and looks – or you can successfully convey the *indicators* of status. For men, some of these are relaxed body language, deep tone of voice, measured pace of speech, economy of movement, wit, and general excellence. The importance of these indicators cannot be overstressed. There are many men out there with real status – businessmen, politicians – who cannot create attraction because of their lack of awareness of these indicators. Conversely, there are men with little or no status who create massive attraction with women by virtue of their mastery of these outward indicators.

Generally speaking, the highest status (or dominant) male in a gathering will be the most attractive, and humans are innately programmed to know who this person is. At work, it's the boss. At a restaurant, it's the manager. At a speech, it's the speaker. At bars, it's the bartender or bouncer. At a concert, it's the performer. Notice how status

depends on location: bouncers and musicians are often poorly compensated and have little power outside of their milieu. They are what I call a *local maximum* – a big fish in a little pond. You don't have to be President of the Universe – a *global maximum* – to have this work for you. So seek or create situations in which you can be the dominant male. One of the easiest ways of doing that is to throw a party. When you are the host, you know all the guests and are controlling the environment. As the center of power and attention, you are the local maximum. For more on this topic, see the bonus booklet, *The Tao of Social Networking: How to Develop a World-Class Social Network and Become a Social Maestro in Any City*, a \$24.95 value.

A wise man once said, "You can only improve what you can measure." In your quest to become an even more attractive man, it helps to know where you stand now and where you would like to be. If attraction involves movement of two people, then the two can advance, retreat or stay put in relation to each other. From this, seven categories of attractiveness emerge:

TYPE	YOU...	SHE...	MEANS SHE IS...
7. Star	Stand	Advances	Into you <i>a priori</i> ; you're famous, rich or damn good-looking
6. Stud	Advance	Advances	Really into you as a result of your interaction
5. Good guy	Retreat	Advances	Into you
4. Average	Advance	Stands	Tolerating you and may like you a little bit
3. Bland	Retreat/stand	Stands	Indifferent about you
2. Irrelevant	Advance	Retreats	Not into you
1. Noxious	Stand/retreat	Retreats	Finding your company bothersome

By applying some of the principles and techniques in this book, you can easily get yourself to Type 5, Good Guy. If you apply yourself to all or nearly all the principles of this book, especially the early chapters, you can firmly establish yourself as a Type 6, Stud. Type 7 (the Star) is out of reach for most but can be attained with tremendous application of will. This book is about getting you to Type 5 (Good Guy) or better.

Vocal attractiveness

When I first started on my path of learning this stuff, I made a very interesting realization. Before, I had thought that what really mattered was *what* I said to a woman; I had no shortage of poems, interesting stories and fascinating facts to recount for them. But one day after a hypnosis training session in which we had been working on our voices, just as a joke I used my 'hypnotic' voice when ordering at a coffee shop. What I got was *attention*: the eyes of the cute girl behind the counter got wide and she said, "Wow, that's some voice! Do you sing?"

I started to notice that in creating attraction, *what* you say often matters less than *how* you say it. Two aspects of your communication that convey dominance and create attraction are a richly resonant voice and slow, measured speech. You may not possess a Barry White *basso profundo*, but you can still make the vocal instrument you have a much more effective one. The following two drills will help get you started. For further

instruction on improving your vocal technique (a valuable life skill in its own right), consult the excellent audio program *The Sound of Your Voice* by Dr. Carol Fleming.

Exercise 1. How to have a low, deep, resonant voice that instantly catches attention

Start humming. First, do it in a way that makes your lips vibrate. Then move it inside such that you are humming mostly from the mouth. Then move the humming sensation to the back of the throat. From there move it on down to the middle of the throat, and then your chest, and finally all the way down to your abdomen. Sitting up straight will help the resonance. Now that you have the humming coming all the way from the diaphragm, practice projecting your voice from there by reading the preceding paragraph. Practice it enough such that you are comfortable speaking this way regularly.

When you first start to change something as distinctive as your vocal habits, it may feel weird to you and sound strange to your friends. This is perfectly normal. In order to make the transition to more effective vocal habits, first practice by yourself where nobody can hear you. It is particularly useful to practice into a recording device, listen back to your own voice, then make incremental improvements. After you're comfortable doing this by yourself, then do it with strangers who don't know the way you used to sound. After you have done that, move to incorporating your new habits in your everyday conversations. After a short while, everyone will come to recognize you with your new voice and won't remember the way you used to sound.

Exercise 2. How to use pauses and tempo to make your speech almost hypnotic

While you read a passage out loud, insert one pause per sentence. Make each pause for the count of one second by saying 'one one thousand' to yourself. Now read the paragraph again, this time inserting two pauses, each of them one second long. Then do it again, this time adding three pauses. Add to that the vocal resonance you practiced in Drill 1. Practice regularly such that speaking in a slow, measured manner becomes a habit. Start by doing it alone, then on the phone, then in everyday conversation. Notice how people respond to you differently.

Principles of attractive body language

There have been dozens of books written about body language, and most of them are not very good. When it comes to body language, observation is your best tool. Without needing to refer to a book, you can notice the general body language associated with a desirable state in someone else, and then mimic it in your own fashion.

Two adjectives characterize the body language of a dominant, attractive male: *relaxed* and *calm*. As you make a mental picture of a strong, self-sufficient, dominant male, notice how calm and relaxed he is. There is little tension or agitation. Movements

are slow, smooth and deliberate, not jerky and fidgety. One of the best ways to truly internalize attractive body language is by watching movies of actors who exhibit it. Gary Cooper in *High Noon*, John Wayne in *Red River* and Clark Gable in *Gone With the Wind* are good models to emulate.

Exercise 3. The body language of the attractive male

Pick someone whom you think has strong, attractive body language. This could be someone you know or someone famous whose appearance you're familiar with. Now close your eyes and visualize this person vividly. Notice the way he stands, walks, sits down, orders a drink, talks to men, talks to women. Now drop yourself into that person's body and see through his eyes. Now do all the things that he was doing: stand, walk, sit, order a drink, talk to a woman. First do it mentally, then actually engage in the motions and notice how it feels. Notice the differences between how this feels and how you used to feel. Henceforth, any time you want to get the strong body language, briefly close your eyes, imagine that person, and drop into his body. Enjoy practicing this drill at least three times a day: in the morning as you leave the house, midday as you're going to lunch, and in the evening on your way back home. Doing this exercise will feel so good that you may be surprised to find yourself adopting the strong, attractive body language permanently.

There are infinite body postures and ways of modifying them, and a lengthy discussion of body language is outside the scope of this book. However, I would like to give you two specific hints and one generalized method for making your body language even more attractive. The first is becoming aware of whether you are *leaning in* or *leaning out* with respect to your interlocutor. Leaning in generally conveys subordination and neediness; leaning out, on the other hand, conveys strength, dominance and calm. The person who leans in is generally using more muscles and creating more tension in his own body compared to the one who is not. Since the socially dominant position is the one associated with less effort, the person who leans in comes off as having lower status. Every once in a while, it's okay to lean in to listen better, and by all means it's all right to lean in when intimacy builds and she is leaning in also. Just become aware of your leaning behavior overall, and begin to lean away whenever possible.

The second thing to be aware of when creating powerful body language is *head-torso alignment*. Ideally, you want your head and body be pointing in the same direction as much as possible, as opposed to having your head swivel from side to side (also known as 'rubbernecking'). If you observe people at a social gathering, you'll notice that the men who are constantly moving their head from side to side – constantly checking things out – look unsettled, needy and weak. Some may even say they look untrustworthy. Avoid this behavior by looking mostly straight ahead and moving your whole body (or just your eyes) to survey a scene.

As there are infinite gestures associated with each body part, you may think it is difficult to know when you are doing the right thing. A simple solution to this problem is to pose yourself this question whenever in doubt about a certain aspect of your body

language: “Would X do that?,” X being your model of strong, attractive male body language: John Wayne, Clark Gable, Marlon Brando. If the answer is no, stop doing whatever you were doing; if the answer is yes, continue doing it.

The map vs. the territory: On being fulfillment-centered

Imagine that you’re hungry right now, and you’re at a burger shop. If they offered you just the menu, would you settle for that? Or would you demand actual food? In real life people sometimes operate as if they don’t know the correct answer. If you want to buy a piece of land, would you settle for the map? Or would you want the territory? Often in our lives we chase down the symbol or map representing what we want – e.g. money, titles – instead of the actual thing that we want. A hundred dollar bill – basically a scrap of cotton – is intrinsically worthless. So are labels and titles. The money and the titles are only good for the feelings and experiences they can get for us.

When it comes to relationships, what you are actually seeking are *feelings* such as fulfillment, peace and contentment. Perhaps you thought that what you wanted was a particular person. Or a particular kind of person, with a certain kind of face and body. I am here to tell you that fulfillment is never a person – it is a feeling. And you may not even need a person to have that feeling.

One sure way to chase away your own fulfillment is to compare yourself to others. Joe Bloggs has slept with this many hot women, he has his own harem, I wish that I had Jesse’s girl, and so on. Comparison gets you in trouble because if you compare yourself to those you perceive as better off than yourself, you become bitter. If you compare to those you perceive as worse off than yourself, you become vain. And frankly, bitter and vain people are not much fun to be around. If you’re ever going to compare, compare yourself to your former self, and notice how far you have come along. Comparison with others is an externalized operation which is antithetical to the deeply internalized, abiding, self-contained feeling which is fulfillment.

Know where your fulfillment lies. Some argue that the ultimate aim of everything we do in life is to get more love. You could be reading this book because you want more love from women, more love from your friends (in the form of approval), or more love from yourself. Of those three, only one is directly under your control – the love you have for yourself. And generally speaking, having greater success with women won’t make your friends like you any better (not the good friends in any case). And chances are that if you are not happy with yourself right now, no amount of success with women will ever make up for that. In fact, it only gets harder when you *have* what you *thought* would make you happy and still find happiness elusive. So make a decision *right now* to be comfortable in your own skin and to *accept yourself completely exactly as you are right now*. Why? Because there is no time when it’s not right now. Now is the only time. And true fulfillment can only come from sharing your joy, contentment and self-sufficiency with the rest of the world. Decide it, claim it and be it.

*...If you look to others for fulfillment,
you will never truly be fulfilled.
If your happiness depends on money,*

you will never be happy with yourself.

*Be content with what you have;
rejoice in the way things are.
When you realize there is nothing lacking,
the whole world belongs to you.*

– Lao Tzu, Tao Te Ching, Ch. 44 (transl. Stephen Mitchell)

If you're perfectly OK right where you are, why would you need this book? The fact is that in order to reach your goals in dating or anything else in life, you have to believe that at every point along your journey of growth, you are complete. A sequoia seedling is always a sequoia at every point along its path to becoming a towering tree. You are always signaling to the universe "I am okay", and the universe will agree with you. If you signal "Well, I'll be okay if I just get this little part fixed, but I'm not quite okay right now," then the universe will agree with you also.

Exercise 4. Your highest vision of yourself

Take a deep breath and close your eyes. Imagine yourself as a child, maybe 7 years old. Remember then how badly you wanted to grow up, be tall, go places like the grownups, reach high shelves, drive a car. Remember that feeling of inadequacy that you had then and how you just couldn't wait for all this to happen. Now bring a picture of your current adult self into the scene, and give your child self a big hug saying, "Hey, told you it was all going to be all right." Now imagine a third version of yourself – a version from the future that embodies all the accomplishments and goals you are seeking right now. What does that person look like? Notice his voice, his gait, his demeanor. How does he look and sound? How does it feel to be him? Now have that future you come in and give the present you a big hug, saying "It's all going to be all right." Now let the three pictures of you from the past, present and the future merge into one another, leaving an image of that highest vision of yourself, and realize that that is you, right now. When you feel the empowering feelings that brings, squeeze your left fist twice. From now on, all you have to do to bring that empowering feeling back is to repeat that double squeeze.

Chapter 2

What You Want and How to Get it

What do you want from your dating life?

Most people out there don't have a concrete answer to that question. The people who think they know what they want sometimes end up getting it, only to realize it's not quite what they expected. I would like to suggest that there is a simple answer to that question. What we want from a relationship (and almost everything else in life) is *feelings*. And the feeling that is worth pursuing is *fulfillment*. Once you think of it that way, you realize that you're not looking for a particular kind of person, of a certain height or hair color or socioeconomic status, but rather the feelings that person evokes in you. You also realize that fulfillment is more of an internal phenomenon than an external one, depending on yourself more than anything. It's not about what your parents or friends think. It's not about how strangers look at the two of you together. It's about how your values are fulfilled on the inside.

At any point in life, what you *think* you want may vary. And often what we think we want doesn't really fulfill us when we get it. Daniel Gilbert, a psychology professor at Harvard, studies the phenomenon of *affective forecasting*: how happy (or sad) we *think* something will make us once we get it, versus how much happiness (or sadness) it actually brings to our lives. As it turns out, we're quite bad at affective forecasting, always overestimating how much things will make us happy (or unhappy) in the long term. However, your *values* tend to remain constant. That's because values are deep, unconscious motivators that give the general sense of purpose and direction to your life. Although values are the strongest drivers of our overall behavior, we often don't know about them until they are violated, much like how we only notice the stomach when we have a stomach ache. There are two more ways of figuring out what your values are. One is by noticing events that fulfill them, and the other is through conscious inner exploration.

The next exercise will get you started on that exploration. For further resources on figuring out your values, I recommend the book *NLP: The New Technology of Achievement*, which has a series of drills in the chapter entitled ‘Discovering Your Mission,’ from which the following list of values was adapted.

Exercise 5. Empower yourself by figuring out your core values

What are your values in life? From the list below, pick ten values that you feel are most important to you. If there’s a value that is important to you that you do not see on the list, add it on.

autonomy
courage
excellence
fulfillment
harmony
innovation
love
playfulness
self-actualization
solving problems
uniqueness

beauty
creativity
excitement
fun
helping
joy
mastery
revolution
self-reliance
stimulating change
vitality

caring
dignity
fairness
grace
honesty
justice
order
safety
service
synergy
wisdom

challenge
elegance
freedom
happiness
humor
learning
perseverance
security
simplicity
truth
zest

Write down your ten values. Now, if you could have one and only one of these, which one would it be? Mark it “1.” Now, from the remaining nine values, if you could have one and just one, which one would it be? Mark it “2.” Continue this process until you have your top 5 values.

Let’s revisit the question from the beginning of the chapter. What do you want from your dating life? The answer is you want from your dating life the same things you want from your life in general. Values affect all areas of your life, so your overall values for life tend to be the same ones as your values for relationships. Once you know what your values are, you can decide how you’d like to fulfill them. It’s best to fulfill your values in a way that creates the least amount of conflict amongst your top values. Let’s say one of your values is adventure. You can experience that in the context of having one adventure with several women, or several adventures with one woman. If another one of your values is variety, then you will probably choose the former option. If one of your values is stability, then perhaps you will choose the latter option.

You now have an internal compass for knowing when a given relationship is aligned with your values. If your values are being matched, the relationship will naturally flourish. If not, the relationship will falter and you will want to move on.

What you have to offer

Would you date yourself? This is not a frivolous question. For a moment, take the perspective of a woman who is actually interested in you. Perhaps you have even been on a couple of dates together. Now, ask yourself these questions: “What draws me to this man? Why do I want to see him again?” Take a look at the inventory of values that you came up with in the previous exercise (and if you didn’t do the exercise, go back and do it – the rest of the book hinges upon that information). How many of those would you be able to fulfill in a relationship with a woman?

Exercise 6. Walking the walk

Determine how many of the values you came up with in Exercise 5 are ones you can actually provide in a relationship.

It’s very important to be honest with yourself in this exercise. No one is looking over your shoulder, and all of this information is for your benefit alone, so it is to your advantage to provide the most accurate information possible. Now look at that list of values again. If you feel that you can provide all of those values in a relationship, great. If not, perhaps you have some work to do in those departments. For example, let’s say ‘spontaneity’ and ‘honesty’ are two values that you cherish in a relationship, yet you tend to shy away from new activities, or be very secretive about your thoughts and feelings. Since this is clearly not compatible with your stated values of ‘spontaneity’ and ‘honesty’, you must either change your behavior to become consistent with your values, or change your values to become consistent with your behavior. You can’t demand standards from your partner that you cannot meet yourself.

Exercise 7. Take stock of your relationship assets

Write down everything about you that is interesting and attractive. What reasons would a woman have to see you again, or to stay with you in a relationship?

This exercise is an honest assessment of your value on the relationship marketplace. What do you have to offer? Are you funny? Affluent? Exceptionally generous and kind? Do you provide witty conversation? Can you stimulate her mind? Her body? Do you have exceptional sexual expertise? Do you have an infectious sense of adventure and wonder? Write down every reason that a woman would want to spend time with you, from the most trivial to the most important. Having done that, let’s take a brutally honest look at this list to find out which of the items would actually *matter* to a woman. For example, you may have an exceptional collection of GI Joe action figures, or be able to quote extensively from *Animal House* and *Monty Python’s Holy Grail*. But will she necessarily care about that? You want to assess what *she* (not your buddies) will see as an asset.

But how do you make this assessment? What do women really want? The broad answer to that is that women (and men) seek things that makes them feel good. Your

mastery of baseball statistics is probably not one of those things. Your gourmet cooking ability and sappy love poems, on the other hand, are much better bets. My research indicates that consciously or unconsciously, women seem to look for three chief qualities in a man:

1. Status and Strength
2. Humor
3. Romance

Once again, each one of them ties back to the feelings they evoke in a woman. Strength and status in a man make her feel safe and well-provided. Humor makes her feel alive and happy. Romance makes her feel cherished and loved. We will discuss each of these components in detail in future chapters. Now look at your list of relationship assets from Exercise 7, and determine how many of them fit under these three categories. Some of you may have only a few, and that's fine. Others may have more but wish to increase that number. Either way, that's partially why you are reading *The Tao of Dating*. This book is not about gimmicks to get the girl, or an easy Band-Aid solution to your dating woes. It is not about 'being yourself' either, especially if that's what's gotten you in your current predicament. Being yourself is just a euphemism for being lazy. You would not 'be yourself' for a job interview and neglect to prepare. Rather, you would do everything in your power to be the most attractive candidate for the job, paying close attention to your wardrobe, grooming, demeanor and speech. Similarly, *The Tao of Dating* is about growing into the new, more powerful and effective you that optimally attracts what truly fulfills you as a man. It is about taking stock of where you are, determining where you want to be, and doing what it takes to forge the person who will successfully undertake that journey. So ultimately, yes, you *will* be yourself, but *the best possible version* of yourself. Let's begin.

Chapter 3

The Be-Do-Have Paradigm of Success

Most people are seeking some kind of result in their lives, and believe that success means having that result, be it wealth, status, relationships. As such, they're often looking for the shortcut, the quick and dirty solution, the overnight scheme. The overnight scheme exists; the problem is that it also tends to last only overnight. Easy come, easy go. **True success, on the other hand, is not an accident; it is a habit.** Most lottery winners go back to the same or lower level of wealth as before they started just two years after winning all that money; many go bankrupt. True success only comes from embarking on a path of mastery, which takes time and effort. By purchasing this book and reading this far, you have taken the first and second steps on that path. For that I congratulate you. Seventy percent of people don't even make it Chapter 3. Keep up the good work.

Most people think of success in terms of possession: in order to *be* someone, you must *have* something. If you have money and spend lots of it, you are rich. If you have an attractive mate, you are successful in dating. The truth is that the *reverse* of this mindset is the true key to success. **All great works of spirituality from the *Tao Te Ching* to the Bible emphasize that the first step of success is to embody the vision of the success you want to have: "As you believe, so it is done unto you."** A simple and powerful articulation of this is the Be-Do-Have paradigm, in which success comes from possessing the mindset, "I am a successful person." This in turn leads to actions. The actions then manifest the signs that people commonly refer to as success.

Let's use the example of money. In order to be wealthy, first you must *be* a wealthy person, with the attendant mindsets and beliefs. Once you have convinced your brain that you are a wealthy person, then you will naturally *do* what a wealthy person does. And, as a result, you will effortlessly *have* what a wealthy person possesses. This is true of any sphere of endeavor.

You rise to a higher level of consciousness by taking your attention away from your present limitations and placing it upon that which you desire to be. Do not attempt this in day-dreaming or wishful thinking but in a positive manner. Claim yourself to be the thing desired. I AM that; no sacrifice, no diet, no human tricks. All that is asked of you is to accept your desire. If you dare claim it, you will express it.
– Neville, *Your Faith Is Your Fortune*, p. 33

Albert Einstein was always the brilliant Nobel-winning physicist, even when he was a daydreaming 25-year old working in a Swiss patent office. In retrospect it seems strange to think of Einstein any other way but *the* Einstein. When he inhabited that 25-year old mind and body without access to knowledge of his future, he may have never imagined turning into one of the most influential thinkers in history. And yet, to us, he still was Einstein. You can apply that example to the young versions of any great person in history. The young Gandhi, Roosevelt, Dickens, Lincoln, Patton, Faulkner all probably harbored self-doubt in their development towards greatness. Yet, in retrospect, they were great to us even as young men on the journey. Recognize that you are on that same journey of mastery, and that it takes a little bit of time for the greatness to fully manifest.

So now I invite you to envision the most brilliant vision of your future. Where do you see yourself in 10 years? In twenty? What will you accomplish? How do you want to be remembered? What kind of relationships will you have? With what kind of people? Make that vision as grand as possible, and then start to embody it immediately. Re-read the quote from Neville above. Is there a guarantee that all the details of your vision will come true? Perhaps not 100%. But *without* the vision, there is hardly any chance of ever achieving the goal. So dare to think and imagine. No one has access to your thoughts, so make it as big and brilliant and inspiring as possible. Great thoughts cost as much as mediocre ones, so might as well go big. Revisit Exercise 4 from the prior chapter if you wish.

In this chapter, we will break down the Be-Do-Have paradigm into four practical components: right beliefs, leading to right attitudes, leading to right behaviors, which in turn naturally flow into right results. The steps go from the more hidden to the more manifest. Beliefs and attitudes are the *be* phase; attitudes and behaviors are the *do* phase; results are the *have* phase.

Beliefs are completely hidden, not even manifest to the trained eye. Sometimes beliefs can be extrapolated from actions, but not very accurately. Since your beliefs are yours to know alone, it makes sense to have the most effective beliefs possible, as grandiose or foolhardy as they may sound. Strong, empowering beliefs cost as much as mediocre, ineffective ones: *they're all free*. So use the beliefs that serve you best.

An *attitude* is the first-level manifestation of a belief, hardly detectable even to a trained observer. Sometimes it is expressed verbally or in body language; other times it manifests itself as the subtext of behavior. People tend to respond not to your hidden thoughts or to your manifest behavior, but rather to your overall attitude. Your attitude is the meta-message and meaning of your behavior.

Behavior is what you do, which is easy to observe. The range of possible behaviors is infinite, yet most of us operate within a narrow envelope of behavior which our friends call our personality. When we do something that seems to breach that narrow envelope, they say that we are behaving ‘out of character.’ Behavioral range is determined by attitudes and beliefs. It is also possible to change attitudes and beliefs by regularly engaging in new behaviors consistent with those new beliefs.

Results are the most manifest component of the process. Results practically broadcast themselves yet reveal little useful information regarding how to achieve them. Knowing how much wealth someone has does not help you get rich like them; nor does seeing that someone has a beautiful companion tell you how that came about. This may seem obvious, but most people find themselves motivated by observing the results and not the process by which they came into being. So henceforth, in all spheres of life, wherever you observe success, look at the *process*. That is where the true wealth resides.

The soft overcomes the hard.

The slow overcomes the fast.

Let your workings remain a mystery.

Just show people the results.

– Lao Tzu, Tao Te Ching, Ch. 36 (transl. Stephen Mitchell)

Part II

Be



Chapter 4

Be, Part I: Beliefs

Beliefs are completely hidden from view but are the chief determinants of your performance. Useful, effective beliefs cost the same as bad ones, so why not use ones that serve you best? Since no one has access to your beliefs but yourself, feel free to play with them. Pick outrageous, ostentatious, grandiose ones, even if they initially don't resonate with your personality. Think of them as a strategy. If they give you good results, keep them. If not, try new ones until you get the results you want.

Exercise 8. Experience how beliefs set the limits of your behavior

Stand up and hold your arms out horizontally. Now twist around in a counterclockwise direction until you can't twist any further. Note exactly how far you have twisted by remembering where your right middle finger is pointing. Now untwist your body, stand straight, close your eyes and take a deep breath. In your mind's eye, imagine yourself twisting again with your arms outstretched, only this time imagine that you continue to twist, all the way around, 360 degrees, and then one more time, as if your waist was a swivel and you could keep on doing this for three, four full turns. Now open your eyes again and hold your arms out, and twist again until you can twist no further. Notice how far you have turned. Is it further than before or less? By how much? What is different this time?

Beliefs determine the range of your existence and the limits of your performance. Before you can accomplish something, you must believe that it can be done. Most beliefs that we have regarding our world and our abilities are products of accident or childhood indoctrination by parents or peers. Some of these beliefs still serve us well. But, as almost all of them were patterns laid down accidentally (as opposed to deliberately), many do not. In this chapter, we invite you to take control of your own beliefs and deliberately instill ones that serve you in your goals in the most effective manner possible. Feel free to expand on the ones presented here, or to come up with brand new ones that suit you even better. As for the old beliefs – do not give them too much heed any more. The more energy you focus on the new, more effective, more fun beliefs, the more the brain will automatically allow the tired old beliefs to wither on their own.

This chapter has two parts to it: *content* and *process*. First, we will make suggestions for new beliefs to make you more powerful and effective. Then we will give you methods for instilling those beliefs such that they become a part of your everyday mental makeup.

The Content of Beliefs I: The World

These are global beliefs about how the world works. They are the underpinning of the Taoist way of thinking. Take these to heart, and everything else in the course will follow and flow effortlessly.

1. I believe in the abundance of the universe. Look around you. There is matter, substance, stuff. It is everywhere. There is no vacuum, no void, no antimatter, no non-being – only being. There are over 6.2 billion people on earth, half of whom are of the opposite sex, a good number of whom would make a suitable companion – millions upon millions of possibilities. There are more women than you could date in two thousand lifetimes. In fact, there are more women than men, so even if every other guy hooks up with a woman, many more remain for you. So relax. Expand your mind to wealth-consciousness and the abundance of possibility, and notice how that brings a calmer, more joyous and more powerful demeanor to you. If you know that the store will always have an unlimited supply of cereal for you, would you ever get anxious about running out? Become aware of your prior patterns of poverty-consciousness, and deliberately replace them with wealth-consciousness. Poverty-consciousness leads to a perception of lack of choice, which leads to being desperate or stuck: “I’ll never find another one like her again.” **Consciously choose wealth-consciousness, and know in your heart of hearts that whatever it was, there’s more where that came from. Do that especially when all signs seem to point to the contrary. Abundance is simply the way of the universe.** If this is the only thing you take away from this course, I’ll be happy.

2. The universe is a reflection of me. If you encounter the universe with the attitude of ‘Give me’, then the universe will respond in kind: ‘Give me.’ If you meet the universe with the attitude ‘How can I serve,’ then the universe will respond likewise: ‘How can I serve?’ Through this subtle but powerful mental shift, you have in effect turned the universe into your most reliable partner. The Hindus call it *karma*: in essence, **you get back**

out of the world what you put into it. Put in positivity and abundance, and that's what you get back. Put in neediness and negativity, and that's exactly what you get back, too. A simple way of thinking about this is that you can't give what you don't have. So if you're giving away friendship, love, and positivity, that means you must have a lot of it in store. Since the choice is yours, may I suggest that you believe that the universe truly reflects you and bring an attitude of serving and sharing to whatever you do, and watch the miracles that follow.

3. The world is complete exactly as it is, and I am grateful for it. My definition of pain is 'wishing the world to be different than it is.' In metaphysical terms, asking the world to be different (e.g. asking for something in your life) does not serve you because it affirms to the universe the lack of that something in your life. If the universe is a reflection of you, then it's going to come right back to you and say, "You're absolutely right; that's lacking from your life." So affirming the lack of something has the effect of driving it further away out of your life.

But if we still want such things as companionship, intimacy, and sex, how do we approach them if not with desire? The solution is to replace desire with *gratitude* – and, by extension, hope with *positive expectation*. Hope is needy; positive expectation is affirming. When you have gratitude for something, you are accepting its presence in your life and affirming it to the universe. In return, the universe will do the same and manifest that object in your life. So you say, "Thank you, world, for bringing so many fabulous, beautiful, intelligent, caring women into my life" – even if you're on an oil platform on the North Sea with no woman in sight for hundreds of miles and you haven't had a date for months. And the world will say, "Why yes, you're quite welcome," and good things will happen.

The Content of Beliefs II: The Self

1. Upholding my own importance is a waste of energy. People expend most of their energy to prove to others that they are important, cool and therefore worthy of love and admiration. Since this feeding of the ego rarely enhances any kind of real connection or love, the energy is wholly wasted. Relinquishing the need to uphold your own importance frees up an enormous amount of energy towards useful action, harnessing your personal power and catching a glimpse of the true majesty of the universe. All that freed-up energy can now serve you to observe and act more effectively.

Most of our energy goes into upholding our own importance ...If we were capable of losing some of that importance, two extraordinary things would happen to us. One, we would free our energy of trying to maintain the illusory idea of our grandeur; and two, we would provide ourselves with enough energy to ... catch a glimpse of the actual grandeur of the universe.

– Carlos Castañeda, The Art of Dreaming

Exercise 9. The Ultimate Freedom Exercise

Think of your day yesterday, and remember the instances in which you did something to uphold your own importance. Did you belittle someone to prop yourself up? Did you get angry at someone or something? Did you brag, complain, or defend yourself? Become more and more aware of these behaviors on a daily basis, and recognize their folly. And when you recognize their folly, smile and find something to be grateful about – for example, the ability to smile and laugh at yourself. With conscious practice, these behaviors will fall away like dead leaves, leaving you more empowered and free.

Assiduous practice of this belief underpins many of the skills in *The Tao of Dating*. Lack of investment in the ego cultivates a calm, silently powerful presence that is immune to the fluctuations of feminine energy, which is the hallmark of true masculinity.

2. I am complete exactly as I am. This belief is corollary to the one above about accepting the universe (since you are, after all, part of it). But it deserves special emphasis, because it would seem that fully accepting yourself is not consistent with reading a self-improvement book. This is not necessarily the case. What this belief emphasizes is that, at any point in your life, you are fully accepting of who you are *right at that moment*. It's not as if right now you're not okay, and there is some point at which you will be okay. You are okay at every point in the process, because you are a creature of never-ending growth and improvement. There is no endpoint, because the only endpoint is now, and there is no time when it is not now. Be comfortable in your skin *always*; it is the most fundamental aspect of attractiveness. And although you may just be the seedling for a great redwood now, you are still that big tree in essence, at every point along the way. It's just that you keep on growing. And just as the redwood needs water and nutrients to grow, so do you – and you're doing that right now, feeding yourself with the mental nutrients of this book.

*...The giant pine tree
grows from a tiny sprout.
The journey of a thousand miles
starts from beneath your feet.*

*Rushing into action, you fail.
Trying to grasp things, you lose them.
Forcing a project to completion,
you ruin what was almost ripe...*

– Lao Tzu, Tao Te Ching, Ch. 64 (transl. Stephen Mitchell)

A great part of this belief is accepting yourself for your animal nature and for what you may perceive as faults. No one brings home a perfect report card and neither will you. Human imperfection is not a bug – it's a feature. So let go of that false need. Perfectionism is just another form of self-pity and low esteem. Throw it aside. Relax and

realize that everyone is lonely and has failed at some point, so it's normal. Be comfortable in your own skin. Which brings us to the next belief...

3. *Being with attractive women is my birthright as a man.* Another major aspect of being comfortable in your own skin is being aware and accepting of your sexuality. By virtue of the way we came into being, we are all sexual beings, so deal with it. As a result of that, perhaps you have a raging libido and want to have sex with every attractive woman you meet. Or maybe you have a tendency to fall madly in love with young women. Whatever you feel, recognize that 3 million years of evolution has designed you to find young, pretty, healthy women attractive, and that's quite all right. It means that all systems are working, and some may say it's the chief purpose of life. In evolutionary terms, attractiveness is just a proxy for the ability to bear healthy children. Prettiness propagates procreation – it's why it's there. So embrace your sexual energy. Don't demonize it and never apologize for it as long as your intentions remain good. You're a man, and it's just the way things are. You are one half of the procreation puzzle.

Some men find it particularly troubling that they are attracted to more than one woman at time, or that they want to date multiple women simultaneously. This is normal male *Homo sapiens sapiens* behavior, especially if you're single and not in love. Primatologists have studied various determinants of sexual behavior – e.g., testicle size relative to body weight – and concluded that human male sexual proclivities fall somewhere in between those of chimpanzees, who have multitudes of partners, and gorillas, who maintain a harem restricted to a few females. According to this theory, human males, although not designed to have multiple partners on a daily basis, certainly aren't designed for strict monogamy either. Monogamy with occasional excursions seems to be the norm. Since it's the way you're built, there's really nothing to be ashamed of as long as you're not breaking any promises. So acknowledge your sexuality, embrace it, and bring its power into your service. For more on this topic, consult *The Anatomy of Love* by Helen Fisher or *The Red Queen* by Matthew Ridley.

4. *I provide the best experience a woman could possibly have.* Perhaps you think this particular belief a bit outlandish and not an exact fit for your personality. If that is the case, good: this means we are running up against tired old beliefs that need replacement. Remember: we don't care as much about the absolute truth value of a belief as much as we do about its usefulness. Right now, chances are that the old belief expresses itself through this whiny voice in the back of your head saying, "Well, *maybe* I'm kind of fun to be around." The fact is that neither your version nor this new version of the belief can be proven or disproven, so why not utilize the belief that will *serve you best*. Additionally, I want you to really think you provide the *best* experience, not just a good one. That way, when another guy comes along to chat up the object of your affection, you won't think, "Well, I'm good but he's probably more interesting, so I'll just let her have him." The fact is, *there's no way for you to know that*. And when in doubt, might as well assume that you have the upper hand.

The beliefs that last longest are those that have strong support not just in your head but also in the real world. So as you go through this book and incorporate its principles into your life, you will give this and other beliefs strong legs to stand on.

5. I am the more important person in the relationship. This particular belief is not about selfishness but rather about practicality. If there are two people in a relationship, then you have a choice of either making yourself or your companion the more important one. If you choose yourself, then you more or less know what you want, and you can handle that. On the other hand, if you make your companion the most important person in the relationship, then you have to figure out what she wants. You can do this by asking, or by guessing. If you guess, you're very likely to get it wrong (trust me on this). And if you ask, you're *still* likely to get it wrong since people are notoriously inaccurate in reporting their unconscious needs and desires. So your best solution is to stick with what you know, i.e. what you want in the relationship, and take care of that first while remaining your kind and considerate self.

Do you remember the safety announcement that we all ignore at the beginning of an airplane flight? It says that in the case of a drop in cabin pressure, oxygen masks will automatically fall from the ceiling. It then says that if you're with a child, put on your *own* mask first, *then* attend to the child. The reasoning is that if you do it the other way around, you are likely to both perish, which makes for an unhappy ending. This book is about happy endings (and many of them), so please do yourself a favor and take care of you first.

This belief applies as soon as you have a relationship with someone, and that happens as soon as you start to relate to someone, i.e. at the moment you say 'Hi.' It's about taking a strong lead from the very outset and setting the tone of the relationship, of being *dominant*, which is part of the masculine essence. We will discuss that extensively later in the book.

6. I am inherently desirable. There are people who don't like champagne. Is that the champagne's fault? Does it make the champagne bad? Similarly, you are desirable. Your company is something that all sensible people should seek out. There will be some people who don't quite perceive that yet, and that's okay. That does not change your intrinsic nature which is desirable.

The process of belief

The foregoing nine principles were the *content* of your beliefs. Nine is about the right number because the conscious mind can attend to 7 ± 2 items at a time (from Miller's classic 1956 paper). For these to affect your life and bring you closer to fulfillment, you must internalize them such that they become a part of your everyday mental makeup. For that, you need *processes* for internalizing and instilling beliefs. In my experience, one of the most powerful techniques for creating new beliefs and behavior patterns is hypnosis. As a scientist and skeptic who once sat in on a clinical hypnosis class in medical school to heckle it, I have become more and more convinced of the power of hypnosis to effect lasting change and create new beliefs. Hypnosis works best when done by an expert who custom designs a session for you. As this option may be costly or not available to most

people, I have created audio files of hypnotic scripts relating to the material in *The Tao of Dating*. The next best thing is self-hypnosis. A reasonably good primer on this is *Hypnosis for Change*. More advanced techniques can be found in *NLP: The New Technology of Achievement*. In the meantime, the following three techniques are easy to implement and require minimal effort and time commitment. These are the three that personal development expert Brian Tracy recommends for himself and his students in *Maximum Achievement* and the companion audio course, *The Psychology of Achievement*:

Affirmations. Tracy speaks of the law of subconscious activity: whatever the conscious mind accepts and believes, the unconscious mind immediately puts into effect. So for affirmations to be effective, they must speak the language of the unconscious mind. This means they must have the three P's: they must be *positive*, they must be *personal*, and they must be *present-tense*. As it turns out, the unconscious cannot process a negative. For example, if I told you, "Don't imagine a pink polka-dotted elephant running down the highway," what happens? Did you just visualize the elephant? Exactly. So you must tell the unconscious what you *want* it to do, not what you don't. Tell it, "I am massively successful with women" as opposed to "I don't want to screw up anymore." The unconscious also tends to be better at accepting statements in the present tense and first-person singular. Say "I am successful" instead of "You will be successful." Writing affirmations every morning in the first minutes after you get up has the magical effect of hard-wiring them into your brain. Make your list of affirmations (perhaps some derived from the beliefs and attitudes we discuss here in *The Tao of Dating*) and commit to writing them down in the morning for 90 days. Brian Tracy writes down his goals and affirmations *every single morning*, and he's been doing it for decades, and he is a very successful man.

Visualization. See a clear, precise picture of your ideal result. The mind cannot distinguish between what is real and what is vividly imagined. Add in all five senses. Go back to Exercise 4 for an example of this technique. Whatever picture you can hold in your mind on a sustained basis, you can achieve.

Acting the part. Some people call this technique *fake it until you make it*. The fact is that beliefs and behaviors are a two-way street: one can create the other. Every time you do something you didn't think you could, your beliefs expand. As your beliefs expand, so does your envelope of behavior. Sometimes behaviors can create new global beliefs. For example, when you jump out of a plane or walk on hot coals and had never imagined you could, you may come back from that experience with the feeling that a lot of limitation has been removed from your life. In the case of dating, act the part that you are incredibly good at meeting and attracting women. Do it as a joke first, and notice any changes over time. Remember that if you feel that you're not good with women now, it's probably because you pretended that you weren't good with them long enough to turn that into a belief. The good news is that you can use the same process to your advantage and replace that useless belief with a more useful one. You are what you pretend to be, so pretend to be the best you can be.

Chapter 5

Be, Part II: Attitudes

The six rules of attitude

Attitudes are the next phase in our movement from the more hidden aspects of personal power to the more manifest. Attitudes are somewhat more overt than beliefs, but still quite hidden from view. They straddle the space between belief and behavior. To use a computer metaphor, if beliefs are the operating system, then attitudes are the application software and behaviors are how you use the applications.

I find that there are two powerful ways of expressing attitudes. The first is to articulate them as *rules*. Keeping the rules in mind creates the right behaviors which lead to the right results. The other is to think of them as behavioral modes, or *roles* to play. The role has the attitude built in. By naturally falling into that role, you have no choice but to manifest the behaviors that go along with it. Here are the rules:

1. I will not give excess importance to what someone else thinks or says. This rule is about having an internal frame of reference. Many men try to behave in a way to conform to what a woman may think. “Will she like this shirt? Does she think my job is cool? Is she going to think I’m cheesy if I say that?” This is a waste of time and a squandering of your masculine power. You have no idea what she is thinking, and even if you did, it’s a poor guide for your behavior. Much better to know what you want, and have her wonder what you think of her. Always assume the position of the buyer. Words can also be deceptive. How many times have you heard ‘Yeah, sure’ when it meant ‘No’, and how

many times have you heard ‘I don’t think so’ only to find out later that it meant ‘Yes please please please’? Or a woman is seemingly mad at you, but ends up dating you for six months? This happens over and over again, so **it’s important to have a more reliable signal than speech.** Which brings us to the next rule.

2. I will cue my behavior to what she does, not what she says. In a social interaction, watch women like a hawk. Not only is it flattering to pay her attention, but the information you glean will be invaluable. **Everybody, male or female, needs companionship and likes to have fun, but often women have been trained to behave as if they are above it all – for fear of appearing too easy or being labeled. So watch for mismatches in her speech and behavior. Is she saying she’s not interested while hovering around you the whole time? Does she make the effort of calling or writing you first? Is she making frequent eye contact, twirling her hair, buying you a drink? Nonverbal behavior is much harder to fake than verbal pronouncement, so treat the information you get from nonverbal behavior as gold.** We’ll go into more detail about nonverbal communication in a later section.

3. I am the only person allowed to declare me a failure, and I refuse to do so. For better or for worse, rejection hurts, and this pain seems to have been embedded deep into the tribal mind of man. Fear of rejection gets in the way of many a man’s romantic success, so we should do something to handle it more effectively. But how do you know when you have been rejected? Where is that rule written? Chances are it’s not written anywhere, and even now, if I were to ask you to explicitly what constitutes rejection, you wouldn’t know. Are you rejected if she doesn’t return your phone call? If she doesn’t show up for a date? What if she really liked you and was too shy to call back? What if she was really bad for you and did you a favor by staying out of your life? What I suggest here is that you craft your personal rule for rejection, and do it in such a way such that it’s effectively impossible to be rejected. **My personal rule for rejection is: “I know I have been rejected when someone proves unequivocally that I have behaved in a malicious way.” And since I generally don’t behave maliciously, it’s very difficult for me to ever feel rejected.** Feel free to adopt my rule for yourself, or to make one that suits you even better.

On a more metaphysical note, if you have a habit of self-deprecation, stop it. Now. There are enough forces in the world trying to bring you down, and they don’t need your help. Be your own best advocate. Build yourself up instead of bringing yourself down; err on the side of mild cockiness if you must. Which brings us to the next rule...

4. I’m not attached to any particular result, so I will tease and play with her just for fun. If you were to remember just one rule when you’re going out into social situations, it should be this one. **It embodies two key principles: the mindset that you are the prize, and an attitude of detachment.** In the movie *The Tao of Steve* (highly recommended), the lead character, Dex, who is very successful with ladies in spite of being overweight and underemployed, has three simple rules: **Be excellent, be desireless, be gone. Being desireless and detached from results is the key to effectiveness.** We will go into more detail on teasing in later chapters.

5. I will positively reinforce the behaviors that I like in other people and neglect the behaviors that I don't like. In behavioral psychology, a reinforcer is something that increases the likelihood of a behavior happening in the future (see *Don't Shoot the Dog* by Karen Pryor). Animal trainers use food rewards to train dolphins, dogs, primates, etc. Luckily, people are much smarter than animals, so you don't need to carry a cod or banana to parties to implement this rule. For people, *praise* and *attention* work just as well. Conveniently, they can also be used immediately after or during the desirable behavior, which is the way a positive reinforcer is most effective. For example, if she gets you a drink or holds your seat for you, look directly into her eyes and enthusiastically say, "Thank you SO much, that was so sweet of you." For behaviors that you'd like to see less of, withdraw your attention: look to the side, look bored, or turn your body away from her. This is the opposite of getting angry: anger is an unmistakable sign of *attention* and therefore another positive reinforcer. The law of extinction says that a behavior that is not positively reinforced will decay and disappear over time, so just coolly ignore what you don't like and make a big fuss about the things she does that you do like.

6. I will always leave her wanting more. Let's say you were at a theater watching a movie preview, and the preview had all the highlights of the movie. It told you what happens in the beginning, in the middle, and how the movie ends. How compelled would you be to see that movie now? Probably not very. Similarly, in your interactions with women, you don't want to give away the store. You want to give a preview, a taste of who you are, with the implication that there's a lot more where that came from. For example, if you can do an excellent palm reading, just do part of one hand, say "So many interesting things here," and move on to the next topic of conversation. Don't tell them too much about your job, your background, or where you're from. Think appetizers, not full courses. The rule applies to physical interactions as well as information. If you're giving her a handrub, just do one hand. If you're kissing her, be the first to stop. We will discuss this rule more extensively in a future chapter.

A note on games and manipulation

When I first embarked on the path to improving my dating life, I was highly sensitive to the notion of playing games. The idea of playing hard to get or being manipulative to get what I wanted seemed wrong. I was a nice guy and didn't want any of that. I also wasn't having any dates. Over time, I have realized that there is a structure to success, and sometimes the structure seems manipulative. The fact of the matter is there are at least two meanings to the verb *manipulate*. According to Merriam-Webster, one is 'to manage and utilize skillfully.' The other is 'to control or play upon by artful, unfair or insidious means, especially to one's own advantage.' The difference between the two is your *intention*. If your intention is to insidiously control people to get what you want, then that is not in your enlightened self-interest. On the other hand, let's say you don't use the rules enumerated above, and as a result of using the same old ineffective behaviors you preclude the possibility of you and a wonderful woman having a beautiful connection together. Is that in your enlightened self-interest? Who wins there? The fact is that little bits of manipulation are happening all the time: Makeup. Tight or slimming clothes.

Push-up bras. High heels. Underestimating one's age and weight. Overestimating one's height and income. As long as the *overall* goal isn't to manipulate people against their will and pull a fast one on them, then it makes sense to use a technique that works instead of one that doesn't. My definition of a game is playing by a set of agreed-upon rules towards an achievable outcome. Everybody plays; you just have to ask yourself whether you prefer to play to win or to have moral superiority. May I suggest that the need to have moral superiority is just another form of upholding your own importance – and we already know how far that gets you in life. So maintain a positive powerful intention and be committed to doing what works (especially if you've been doing a lot of what doesn't).

On being a man

We talked about the rules of attitude, and now it's time to discuss the roles of attitude. The simple-sounding role that I'd like to suggest is that of being a *man*.

What does it mean to be a man in today's world? Since the beginning of time, tribes and cultures have had initiation rituals to mark the passage of girls into womanhood and boys into manhood. Although some of these rites of passage persist – bar/bat mitzvah in Judaism, confirmation in Catholicism – they have mostly lost their cultural significance. As such, there is no clear line of demarcation for today's males between boyhood and manhood. Does it happen when he graduates from high school? When he has his first beer? The first time he has sex? It seems that nowadays adolescence continues through the college years and beyond. When does manhood truly begin?

This confusion, whether or not men are aware of it, deeply permeates their psyche, making them unsure of their role and position in society. The messages they receive are multitudinous and contradictory: *Be strong. Don't cry in public.* Be sensitive. Get in touch with your feminine side. *Be a stud – sleep with lots of women.* Don't be a player. *Be a man's man – don't take crap from women.* Don't be a male chauvinist pig. *Be a gentleman – open doors for women.* Acknowledge women's sovereignty and strength. *Be sexually aggressive.* Don't offend a woman or make her uncomfortable.

I would like to propose that you get rid of all the mental clutter and realize that you need only three things to be a man: *total self-acceptance, an internal frame of reference, and leadership.*

Total self-acceptance is simple. It means accepting and embracing yourself exactly as you are right now. Not tomorrow, not next week. *Right now.* The boy is always wondering when he'll be able to reach the high shelf, when he'll be able to lift the heavy weights, when he'll finally get there. Realize that you are already there. The work is already done.

Having an internal frame of reference means taking your own counsel at all times. This means that in all matters pertaining to your life, *you* are the final authority. You will not wait to follow the counsel of friends, family members, society or culture. You will not do things in order to gain approval. You will do what is right according to your own principles.

Finally, *leadership* means that especially in your dealings with women, you will always take the lead. Does that mean you always have to be in the driver's seat? Not necessarily. A relationship is a partnership, and sometimes she will be in the driver's seat,

and that's fine. However, even when she is the driver's seat, you must know exactly where you are going, why you are going there, and how to get there. Because if you get lost, it's not her fault – you're still responsible. No giving up of initiative; no laziness. Do your due diligence. This is hard work. But it is your *duty* in the relationship. Regardless of the progress of gender equality, it is always a good idea to be aware and in control of your own fate, especially when others are involved in it.

Think of ballroom dancing. Is there any point at which it is appropriate for the woman to lead the man? It is a partnership, yet one in which one party is clearly taking initiative. Yet taking the lead need not mean being a tyrant. The balancing act is to *control without being controlling*. Taking the lead means knowing what you want and doing the right thing every time. Even though you may not be in complete control of every situation in your life, you always have the choice to act within your own integrity and take your own counsel, and that is true leadership.

Your own rite of passage

Regardless of your age, chances are you haven't had a true rite of passage. So feel free to design one for yourself. It can be as simple as closing your eyes right now, imagining your highest vision of yourself as a man, and deciding that you are that, and bidding the boy inside a fond farewell. I propose that you take a good block of time – a whole day, if possible – and go somewhere where you can be alone, in silence, away from distractions. No phone, no email – just commune with yourself. Acknowledge your total self-acceptance, internal frame of reference and leadership. Walk with your mind focused on that highest vision of yourself. Realize that there is nothing missing. Mark the day on your calendar, and know that from that day on, everything will be different, because you decided that it would be so.

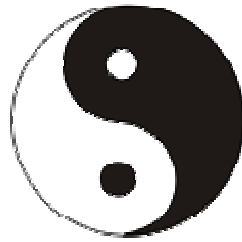
*If you look to others for fulfillment,
you will never truly be fulfilled.
If your happiness depends on money,
you will never be happy with yourself.*

*Be content with what you have;
rejoice in the way things are.
When you realize there is nothing lacking,
the whole world belongs to you.*

– Lao Tzu, Tao Te Ching, Ch. 44 (transl. Stephen Mitchell)

Part III

Do



Chapter 6

Do, Part I: Find

Now that we have established the mental framework for success – the *Be* phase – we can attend to the practical details of *The Tao of Dating* – the *Do* phase. A logical sequence for that is to find the woman you’re interested in, meet her, attract her, and then perpetuate that relationship through time. This sequence is true of a relationship of any duration, from a one-night stand to a decades-long marriage. Each of the five stages has a particular set of skills to be mastered. First is the finding.

The good news is that there are over 6.2 billion people on this earth as of the writing of this book, and over half of them are women. Eliminating all the women who are too old, too young, taken or not your type and assuming that only one tenth of one percent of all women are single and interesting to you, this means that you have your pick from among 3.1 million women. That means if you met 100 of them every day for the rest of your life, there would be 1.3 million left unmet the day you die. It is estimated that in the U.S. alone, there are 50 million single women. Think abundance – incredible abundance. Eligible women are everywhere.

The other news is that most of us do not meet a new woman every day, let alone one hundred of them. Unless you are meeting new women on a regular basis, your chances of finding one that is to your liking is slim. There is an old Persian saying that says, “From you, action; from god, blessings.” So take action. And the first step of the action is – you guessed it – mental preparation. Look around you at all the man-made objects around you – stapler, computer, desk, building, monument. There is nothing in this world that did not start out as an idea in someone’s head before manifesting in the world as a tangible object. Now, what if that were also true of your ideal companion? What if by taking a minute of your time to imagine her vividly, you doubled your chances of meeting her? It sounds a little farfetched, but what do you have to lose? What if it actually works? What will you gain if it does? If you’re a bit of a skeptic, that’s fine. I am, too, so I understand if you just wanted to skip the ‘Ideal Woman’ exercise below. But take a

minute and do the exercise preceding it – the famous ‘Quarters’ exercise of Robert Anton Wilson, first published in his utterly fascinating book *Prometheus Rising*, which remains to this day the most stimulating book I have ever read in my life. Done correctly, the quarters exercise will make you look at the world in a very different way.

Exercise 10. The Quarters Exercise.

Visualize a quarter vividly – shape, size, shininess, texture – and imagine that you are going to find this quarter on the street, on the sidewalk, etc. Then look for the quarter every time you go for a walk, continuing to visualize it vividly. Notice how many quarters you find during the course of the week.

The first time I heard about this exercise, I laughed. But I had nothing to lose, and it seemed like a fun exercise, so I thought, what the hell, let's try it. And then something bizarre happened: quarters started popping up *everywhere*. On the sidewalk. Next to my car. Under the desk. For a week, I didn't have to worry about finding quarters for doing the laundry, because *the quarters found me*. When you do this exercise (assuming that you get the same results as myself and everyone else I know who's done it), something very unusual happens: *you, too, start to find a lot more quarters*. Now the question becomes: is it because the quarters were there all along and now you're paying more attention, or is it because the mind is forging new quarters out of sheer nothing? And the follow-up question to that is: does it matter as long as you're finding the quarters you want? After having done the quarters exercise, you may wish to go back to the Ideal Woman exercise if you skipped it, because who knows -- it just might work the same way. Whether you create her out of sheer nothing or merely start to notice her when you hadn't before, the result will be the same: her presence where there was absence.

Exercise 11. The Ideal Woman.

Describe your ideal woman in detail (or ideal women, if there are several types you're open to). What is she like? Go into as much detail as possible – the way she looks, sounds, feels, smells etc. Go into even greater detail – the way she smiles, the books she reads, the way she talks – and make a vivid mental picture of her, with sight, sound, feeling and even smell. Now close your eyes and visualize a picture of you and her together, holding hands and gazing into each others' eyes, as if you are already lovers. How do you feel about her? How does she feel about you? Summon the picture and the feeling, and express gratitude for her presence in your life. Keep that picture in your head and fully expect to meet her the next time you go out. Report back on your findings.

The goal of the preceding two exercises is to effect a mental shift in you towards abundance and wealth-consciousness. Let me use another example. Let's say you go to the supermarket because you need some fruit, and you have money in your pocket. Which one of the following describes your mindset when you arrive at the fruit section?

A) “Oh, look, here’s the fruit I was looking for. It’s here for me and I can have as much as I need, and there’s no reason for me to pick anything but the ripest fruit in the best condition.”

B) “Oh wow, look at all that beautiful fruit! What an incredible accident! Will I be able to have any? Will they be willing to sell me some? Maybe if I just settle for the unripe or damaged ones they’ll give me a little bit.”

Chances are your attitude is closer to scenario A than to B. And yet, in the relationship marketplace, an overwhelming majority of people approach a social setting with attitude B in place, even though they are in an identical position. Luckily, you can decide to stop this type B counterproductive thinking *right now* and adopt the abundance mentality. The world is already your supermarket, and every time you go out, there are attractive women *specifically* there for you to meet. It’s almost as if the universe has special-ordered them, just for you. You have inexhaustible money in your pocket in the form of your attractive qualities, and therefore you need not settle for anything but the best. Notice that this is not about haughtiness or arrogance. Are you being arrogant when you pick the best fruit and leave the bruised and unripe ones behind, or merely being sensible? Decide to *make this mental shift now*, and notice how dramatically more willing you are to meet women in social situations with this attitude in place.

The three-step process for finding desirable women

Now that you have done the mental preparation, it is time for some real-world technique. There are three steps to the *find* process:

- 1) Figure out what kind of woman you’d like to meet.
- 2) Go to where she is likely to be found.
- 3) Have a simple plan for opening and continuing an interaction with her.

Step 1: Figure out what you want. You went into this step a little when you did the Ideal Woman exercise. Figure out what you’re looking for. You’re not likely to find coffee beans in the dairy section of the supermarket, and you usually won’t find 30-year old professional women in the same place that 19-year old college girls hang out. Knowing what you want makes it easier to spot it when you see it. Being completely open to meeting any woman as long as she’s attractive will paradoxically diminish your results. The pickier you are, the better you’ll do.

Step 2: Go to the source. Now that you’ve figured out the kind of woman you’d like to meet, you need to figure out where to find her and to *go to the source*. Again, the more specific you get, the more likely you are to find her. For example, let’s say you want to find the kind of woman who goes running across the Brooklyn Bridge at 5.30 am. Now all you have to do is simply show up at the Brooklyn Bridge at 5.30 am for a week, and you’re likely to meet several women who fit that description. If you want to meet a woman who likes classical music, go to a chamber concert. If you want to find an artist, go to a gallery

opening. If you like Dutch women, go to Holland. If you're interested in someone who cooks, go to a cooking class or fancy supermarkets. Even though this seems utterly obvious, I belabor this point because so many people get it wrong. I often hear men complaining that they're not meeting the right kind of woman, only to find out that most of their opportunities for social interaction come from bars, nightclubs and the workplace. These are nonspecific, unfiltered venues, and as such there is no compelling reason for the women there to be your type. Get picky, get specific, and go to the source. Nonspecific venues are, more often than not, a waste of your time when it comes to meeting quality people and treated as such by members of the opposite sex. That means that even if you do meet the woman of your dreams at a bar, she will think of you as "that bar guy," with all the lovely positive connotations that come with that.

Step 3: Be prepared. The most important technique is to *be prepared*. In a world where women are everywhere, you should be prepared to meet them everywhere. **Luck is the intersection of opportunity and preparation – "Fortune favors the well-prepared mind," as Louis Pasteur famously remarked. The best way to be prepared is to have a protocol for meeting a woman in any situation, such that you know what to do with minimal hesitation.** I will give you two methods for doing that in Chapter 7, "Meet."

Below I have compiled a list of 11 different types of women that you may find attractive, and the likely venues for meeting them. Some of it may seem obvious, and I repeat it because the obvious is what we are most likely to overlook. As you go through this list, you may see opportunities for improving your own 'find' strategy and realize why you haven't been meeting too many artistically-inclined women at the gym or rock-climbing women at church. A big part of this strategy involves getting involved and developing your interests.

Type of woman...	Can be found at...
Artistic	art gallery openings, art classes, museum lectures, acting class
Literate	book readings, poetry readings, literature night classes
Cultured	classical concerts, opera, ballet, book readings, gallery openings
Intellectual	university coffee shops, on-campus lectures, bookstores, book readings, book conventions
Adventurous	Sierra Club meetings, scuba classes, motorcycle lessons, rock climbing gyms, adventure outings
Athletic	yoga classes, spin classes, fitness conventions, classes at your local gym, races (runs, triathlons, bike races, etc), running clubs
Spiritual	yoga retreats, special classes at yoga studios, holistic events, Amnesty International meetings
Sexually adventurous	gay bars, raves, fetish clubs, outdoor festivals (e.g. Burning Man)
Particular nationality	the country in question, local events put on by that country's consulate, foreign movies from that country
Particular ethnicity	ethnic neighborhoods, ethnic restaurants, holiday festivals
Single and looking	anyone who is ringless and unattached on Valentine's Day, New Year's Eve, at church or at a wedding

Bars, nightclubs and supermarkets don't do well on the 3C scale (about to be discussed), which means that optimally, you should not *plan* to spend time there. However, if you find yourself already in a bar, club or supermarket, by all means use *The Tao of Dating* system. You have nothing to lose, and practice makes perfect.

The three C's of optimal venues

Three cardinal characteristics determine whether or not a venue is optimal for meeting women (and by extension, people in general):

Conversation-friendliness: Your main tool of contact and communication is your voice. So ask yourself whether a particular venue is suitable for carrying on a conversation.

Quieter places are generally better. Loud clubs and bars generally are not, but sometimes their quieter patios or balconies can work. Bookstores and coffee shops are much better.

Community: There is pre-existing rapport when some common thread of interest connects a group together. The more specific the thread and the greater effort people have made to come to the venue, the stronger the rapport, and the easier time you will have making contact. Talking to people watching a game at a bar is likely to be a fleeting interaction, whereas the people you meet at a conference in Buenos Aires on emperor penguins may become lifelong friends.

Continuity: Stationary people are easier to meet than those in motion. The longer people tend to stay at a given venue, the easier it is to meet them. Continuity can also develop over longer periods of time. There is built-in familiarity with someone whom you see three times a week at the gym which makes it easier to meet her.

Apply the 3 C's to the various places you spend time over the course of a week, and then decide to spend more of your time at the places that score higher on this scale. Every minute of your life that you spend doing one thing is to the exclusion of something else that could be more rewarding. Economists call this *opportunity cost*. You want to minimize your opportunity cost by making sure you spend time in places that optimize your meeting potential. This means fewer bars and nightclubs (low on all three C's) and more book readings (high on all three) and coffee houses. You will develop skills over time to be have some measure of success at noisy, hectic venues as well, but on the balance you are better served by places that facilitate the connection process, not hinder it. Using the foregoing standard, you can assess how worthwhile a given venue is and apportion your time accordingly.

The nine top-secret goldmines for meeting quality women

Unusual success means taking unusual measures. A line or herd is tantamount to a big neon sign saying '*there is a better way – look for it.*' Nowhere is this more true than where you plan to go to meet dating prospects. As such, I have drawn upon my personal experience of hundreds of outings to bring to you this information on where best to meet women. Almost none of these places have lines or doormen, and the average man tends to overlook these venues. As such, the female-to-male ratio tends to be in your favor; women

are actually likely to approach *you* at these 9 secret goldmines. If you are already familiar with some of them, good for you; now go out and try the rest at least once. And they are:

Gallery openings. Every week, local publications like the *LA Weekly* or *Village Voice* (NYC) list several gallery openings ranging from avant-garde to traditional art. These events rate high on all three C's, are usually free, and often have free drinks and food. Young, intelligent, artistically-inclined women frequent these openings, and discussing the art is a natural way to get the interaction started.

Book readings. High on all three C's. Well-known fact in the publishing industry is that women read twice as many books as men. Easiest way to make a new friend of the opposite sex is to sit next to her during the reading. Find the listings in your local paper or get them from your local bookstore.

Yoga and pilates classes. The female-to-male ratio at these classes is about 3:1, and the women are usually fit, health-conscious and sometimes spiritually-inclined. They are also very interested in meeting straight men who are conscious and healthy enough of mind and body to regularly attend a yoga class. Because of the silence and discipline involved in a yoga class, the best time to strike up a conversation is *before* class, so show up 15 minutes early. After class, women are self-conscious about the post-exercise sweatiness and in a hurry to go back home, so it is not as good a time for making initial contact. People tend to frequent the same teachers and time slots; do the same, and you can naturally and easily build a network of yoga friends.

Gay bars. Although the female-to-male ratio may not *seem* as favorable as that of a yoga class, it may actually be better: most of the men present at the bar are simply not interested in the women. There are *always* straight women at gay bars, either hanging out with their gay friends or enjoying watching stylish, handsome gay men while taking refuge from being interminably approached. Due to the atmosphere of the venue, which tends to be much more open, festive and sexually charged than that of a standard bar, these women are much easier to approach and are usually more open to having fun. They probably also assume that you are gay, further lowering their guard and facilitating the interaction. They also tend to be more sexually adventurous than the average. If you're willing to expand your comfort zone and check out one of these venues (which is a novel and fun thing to do in its own right), you will open your eyes to new possibilities which you had previously overlooked.

Community service interest groups. Scores very high on all three C's, and more than half the people involved in local service organizations are women. They are often young, professional, and kind. If they are meaningful to you, consider joining the Sierra Club and Amnesty International. The former even has a singles chapter. Organizations catering to children tend to be very rewarding; there should be dozens of volunteer opportunities in your city.

Church services. Scores high on all three C's. If a woman is wearing no ring while unaccompanied and dressed in her Sunday best for a service, chances are very good that she is single and looking. Church services are ideal places to make new connections because of the sense of warmth, community and spirituality that the experience engenders. If you are not particularly religious, consider attending a non-denominational, spiritually-oriented service like those of the Unitarian Universalists, or get recommendations from friends.

Night school. Scores incredibly high on all three C's. Quantity and quality of women will vary depending on the topic of class. Poetry or cooking is bound to attract more women than welding class.

Running clubs and races. If you're already the running type, these events will expose you to a host of new people; if you are not, they will also get you in shape. Running clubs are particularly good for continuity and establishing a network. Examples include Leukemia Team-in-Training, marathon clubs, triathlon clubs, and your local chapter of the Hash House Harriers.

Long-distance transportation. We all have to travel at some point, so why not use this as an opportunity to make new friends? Most of us have heard stories of happy couples who met on a plane, train or bus, which means that there is a structure here that is worth emulating. Planes, trains and buses are outstanding venues for meeting women because of the built-in community (you're both on a journey with the same beginning and end), conversation-friendliness (people are generally bored and welcome good company) and continuity (you're stuck on the bus for the duration of the trip). The key action you have to take is *sit next to her* for the trip, and the best way to ensure that is to *show up early and strike up a conversation*. That way, even if there's assigned seating (as in most flights), you potentially have an opportunity to move and sit next to each other, which is the natural thing to do to continue the conversation. When there's no assigned seating, just go ahead and take a seat next to whomever interests you. Don't be shy – the seat is yours for the taking, and you'll be doing the service of providing your good company instead of some deathly dull or smelly person who could be taking the seat.

If you feel that some of these venues are outside of your comfort zone, that is a good sign. Because *everything that you want is outside of your comfort zone* by definition. If it wasn't outside of your comfort zone, you'd already have it, and you don't want what you already have. However, by purchasing this book, you have already ventured outside of your comfort zone. So continue this positive trend of enlarging your envelope of existence. Old ways will merely bring old results; there is no evolution in that. To bring into your life new women and new joy, you will use new ways. Embrace novelty and development. Leave the past behind. This is the way of the Tao.

Chapter 7

Do, Part II: Meet

The importance of intention

A key aspect of moving with the Tao and having the Tao help you along in your quest is *intention*. Most of the techniques in this book will work regardless of your intention vis-à-vis the women you meet – anywhere from “I want to meet the love of my life” to “I want to have a one-night stand.” However, *The Tao of Dating* will work most effectively when you have a strong *positive* intention which incorporates the beliefs we discussed in Chapter 4, the most important of which being *The universe is a reflection of me*. So if you approach the dating arena with the attitude “What’s in it for me? What can I get out of this?,” the universe will respond by saying right back to you, “What’s in it for me?,” and you will encounter scarcity (or meet women who share the ‘taking’ mindset with you). You will be much more effective if you approach with an attitude of *giving and sharing*: “How can I serve? How can I enrich my environment? How can I bring something to this woman’s world that was missing before?” The fact is that you *are* bringing something valuable to a woman’s life – your charm, your wit, your humor, your interest, your *presence*. One friend of mine had the attitude, “When I meet a woman, I just want to put a smile on her face.” Notice how that intention is different from “Let’s go pick up some chicks” or “I just want to get her number to hook up later.” The more positive your intent, the less energy you have to expend hiding it, and the more energy you have freed up to be more effective and have more fun.

You may think of a powerful positive intent (PPI) as a noble stance and a way to be good. But that is not necessarily the way of the Tao: the Tao finds all enforced nobility and goodness suspect:

*The Master doesn't try to be powerful;
Thus he is truly powerful.
The ordinary man keeps reaching for power;
Thus he never has enough.*

*The Master does nothing,
Yet he leaves nothing undone.
The ordinary man is always doing things,
Yet many more are left to be done.*

*The kind man does something,
Yet something remains undone.
The just man does something,
And leaves many things to be done.
The moral man does something,
And when no one responds
He rolls up his sleeves and uses force.*

*When the Tao is lost, there is goodness.
When goodness is lost, there is morality.
When morality is lost, there is ritual.
Ritual is the husk of true faith,
The beginning of chaos.*

-- Lao Tzu, Tao Te Ching, Ch. 38

Rather, think of the PPI as another manifestation of enlightened self-interest: this is the way because it is more *effective*. The Tao would much rather have you be effective than good. The following exercise demonstrates how powerful positive intent empowers you.

Exercise 12. Powerful Positive Intent (PPI)

Imagine that you are on a sidewalk and you see an unusually beautiful woman. You find her very attractive, and would like to speak to her. Notice how you feel about approaching her. Do you go right up and speak to her, or is there some hesitation? Are you certain that she will immediately like you, or is there some doubt? Now imagine that a crazed cyclist is coming behind her and is clearly about to hit her. Now how much hesitation do you have to yell “*Watch out lady!*” at the top of your lungs and move her out of harm’s way? How much doubt do you have? What is different from the first scenario? What if you were to bring the same powerful positive intent as in the second scenario every time you meet a woman? How would that change your behavior? How much more effective would you be in your interactions with women?

Below are some more examples of PPI statements from other men who are highly successful with women. Notice how they all have *sharing* as an explicit or implicit theme. Use them as suggestions to craft your own PPI:

“I want to celebrate beauty wherever I find it.”

“I want to help women overcome their inner blocks and achieve their full sexual potential.”

“I want to share my relentless positivity and bring joy to women’s lives.”

“I love women and want to express my deep appreciation of them.”

Exercise 13. Craft your own PPI to act with greater authority and integrity

Write your very own PPI. It should start with “I ...”, be brief, and easy to remember. Make it big and bold. Make sure it resonates deeply with who you are and what you believe. Stick a little clause about sharing if you can. You know you have a good one if it leaves the world a better place when applied universally (i.e. it fits Kant’s categorical imperative). Remember it every time you are out meeting women – maybe even keep a copy of it in your wallet.

From reading the previous chapter, you now have a sense of the kind of woman you’d like to meet and where she is likely to be found. But before we go into further detail on where to meet women, we will go over one of the most pivotal concepts in *The Tao of Dating*: the Pipeline of Abundance. The most important mindset in *The Tao of Dating* is that of wealth-consciousness – noticing the sheer abundance surrounding you at all times. The mental exercises provide the foundation for the mindset; validating it in the real world cements it in, making it permanent. You validate the mindset by meeting women all the time. The more quality women you know, the more options you will have for dating, and the less hungry (or scarcity-conscious) you will be about women. So celebrate abundance and always welcome new women into your life.

Exercise 14. The Cookies Experiment

Let’s say you have twenty cookies right now. Would you give me one if I asked for it? Chances are you would. What if I asked for two? For three? Twenty cookies are far more than you can eat, so unless you’re unusually greedy, even three you would be willing to part with. Now let’s say for some reason you lose 19 of your cookies and you’re left with one. Now how do you feel about giving me that last cookie? How is your attitude different?

The initial contact

Many men say that making that first contact with a woman is the most difficult part of the entire dating process. There is good reason for that. Zoologists know that for any animal, meeting a new member of the same species is an anxiety-inducing event. Luckily, we have bigger brains than the average animal and can figure out ways around this. If you’re already comfortable approaching people, great, but if you don’t, the *two-hit*

technique is the foolproof method for making that initial contact simple, anxiety-free, and effective. It works best in environments where people are stationary. My students and I have used it hundreds of times to great effect, and I can't recall a single time it didn't work. The two steps of the technique are the *quick opener* and the *extended second contact*:

1. Quick opener: Position yourself near the woman in question, and at the opportune moment (sooner rather than later) make a quick casual comment about something neutral in the environment – e.g. “How’s the drink/food/game/book/shopping” etc. Nothing complicated. Now excuse yourself and close the interaction: “Hey, nice talking to you, I’m Joe-Bob”. Exchange names and then physically remove yourself for a while. Make sure you remember her name – let’s say it’s Martha for illustrative purposes.

2. Extended second contact: A few minutes later – 5-10 should suffice – as you come back into her space to get a drink, order food, talk to a friend who is standing there or any other reason, you can now naturally approach and say something along the lines of, “Hey, Martha, how are you? It’s been so long... did you miss me? Awww, that’s nice...” 95% of the time they will play along and say they missed you, and the other 5% they will feistily say they didn’t, which is an even better sign and a more useful opening for conversation. From this point, you can carry on the banter as if you’re old friends.

This technique works so well because it accomplishes five useful tasks at once. First, it quickly establishes familiarity. The human mind is sensitized to the number of times you meet someone to establish familiarity. Think about the times you’ve met someone in one place, then accidentally bumped into him or her at another (“Hey, aren’t you Larry from the plumbing convention?”). Can you recall how much more rapport there was between you the second time even though objectively you really didn’t know each other any better than when you first met? Familiarity is created by repeated contact. By making a brief initial contact with a woman and then stepping away – opening and closing one interaction before starting a second one – you are effectively duplicating that phenomenon, only in a much shorter time span.

Second, by stepping away and saying “Nice meeting you,” you are establishing that you are not needy. The hungry do not get fed, and this keeps you from becoming hungry. Third, by walking away so soon, especially in a social situation where you’re expected to meet new people, you are planting a tiny seed of doubt in her mind – “What, didn’t he like me? Was there something wrong with me?” – which will awaken an inkling of desire to actually see you again. You have created a brief artificial scarcity. As Robert Cialdini discusses in his classic book *Influence: The Psychology of Persuasion*, human beings are hard-wired to perceive scarce things as more valuable. Fourth, it completely removes any anxiety or concern on your part about having your initial approach rejected because you are the first one to leave – you’re *planning* on it. Fifth, it puts you ahead of the competition, because by having spoken to her even briefly before, *she now has more familiarity with you than all the other strangers at the venue* by a small but significant margin.

Often on that first contact, the woman will be so receptive to your approach that she will start the conversation on her own. By all means continue that conversation. I recommend that you still walk away at some point in the conversation to put into action all the principles enumerated above. We will discuss this more fully in the section on the take-away technique in Chapter 8, Attract.

The two-hit technique on the macroscale

What we just discussed works for interactions occurring over the course of an event. However, it works equally well for events with long-term temporal continuity (the third C from the previous chapter). For example, if there's someone you'd like to meet in yoga class, don't feel as if you have to establish rapport and have a full conversation with beginning, middle and end right then and there the first time you see her. This will only increase your anxiety and reduce your likelihood of making meaningful contact with her. *Avoid the struggle.* Instead, do a quick opener with introduction, e.g. "Is this your regular class? So nice to meet you, I'm Joe-Bob, enjoy the class." Then, the next time you bump into each other, you have built-in familiarity and can effortlessly start the conversation. Avoiding struggle is the way of the Tao.

Handling rejection

If it weren't for men's fear of rejection, there would hardly be a need for this or any other book on how to meet women. You would simply walk up to enough of the 3.1 billion women on the planet and ask for what you want (whatever it is) until you gather enough satisfactory answers. For better or for worse, the fear of rejection is a powerful force operating in the social lives of men and women. There are deep-seated evolutionary reasons for this. Anthropologists hypothesize that our built-in aversion to social rejection has to do with our history as hominids evolving in savannah-dwelling tribes. Over the course of several hundred thousand years, the social unit of the tribe was about 100-150 people, and everyone knew each other (for a fascinating discussion of tribe size and the 'Rule of 150', see Chapter 5 of Malcolm Gladwell's *The Tipping Point*). In such a small social unit, there was a very high premium put on social harmony. As such, social rejection was tantamount to a death sentence, since ejection from the tribe meant a cutting off of resources and reproduction opportunities. The next tribe was usually too far away and unlikely to accept a stranger. Even if the rejected party survived, his chances of passing on his genes to the next generation diminished rapidly. Therefore social disharmony was selected against, and social harmonization and rejection avoidance, which bore distinct survival advantages, were passed down the generations.

It is this inborn legacy of once-useful adaptations to conditions that no longer exist in today's multimillion-inhabitant metropolises that so sensitize us to rejection. Without it, we significantly increase our opportunities for meeting potential companions. Luckily, with some determination, practice and clever techniques, this impediment can be removed.

Becoming Rejection-Proof I: Re-writing your rule

How do you know for sure when a given woman has rejected you? Is it a particular sequence of words that she says, or some facial gesture of hers? Or maybe it's a feeling

you get – where does it start? Can you describe it? Most people don't really have a concrete answer when posed this question. And each man I've met can come up with examples of when he *thought* he was being rejected but really wasn't. My point is this: you probably don't have a hard-and-fast rule for knowing when you've been rejected. And if there are some criteria for rejection, it has more to do with the behavior of the woman than it does with some internal criterion. So I suggest that right now we establish your rule for rejection which establishes when you know beyond any doubt that you have been rejected. And since you're the one writing it, may I suggest that you make the rule such that a) it is decided by *your* behavior, not by external events and b) you effectively make it impossible to be rejected. For example, my personal rule for rejection is this: "I know I am rejected if I convince myself unequivocally that I acted maliciously towards someone." Since I generally don't act maliciously and have the final say on whether I have done so or not, I have effectively made it impossible for me to reject myself.

Exercise 15. Write your personal rule to make rejection an impossibility

Write your rule for rejection, starting with the statement "I know I am rejected if...". Then put in there the action *you* have to take in order to know that you have been rejected. Feel free to use variations on the example used above.

Becoming Rejection-Proof II: Re-framing

One very useful technique in hypnosis and neuro-linguistic programming (NLP) is *re-framing*. It revolves around the fact that since we have considerable latitude in interpreting the meaning of events – free to pick positive, neutral or negative ones – we should pick meanings that are most useful to us. The useful interpretations will tend to make us feel better and be more effective, while the negative ones have the opposite effect. For example, you can interpret a police car on the side of the road as "He's there to get me," or "He's there to keep the neighborhood safe", and you will have different feelings associated with each interpretation.

When it comes to approaching women, if you feel that your approach may have been rejected, instead of thinking "That girl must not really like me" or "I must be an awful person", try thinking this: "I never get rejected – I only find out which women have excellent taste. And if she says no, she has done me a great service by saving me time and effort." Notice how with this re-frame, you can actually *feel good* about rejection and use the event as a positive impetus to meet even more women.

The other powerful reframe you can use is to imagine each approach not as an opportunity for success or failure, but as a chance to *see what happens*. Approach the situation not with a do-or-die mentality, but rather with endless *curiosity*. A time-honored saying in NLP is that there is no failure – only feedback. And since *something* is going to happen 100% of the time, you are *guaranteed* feedback and cannot possibly fail! I find this reframe to be one of the most powerful in making meeting women (or doing anything else in life, for that matter) incredibly fun and exciting. It provides the motivation to open

yourself up to wonder and to imagine what that gift-wrapped box of possibility holds as you just wait to see what happens next.

In *The Tao of Dating* seminar, we go through dozens of such rejection-proofing techniques in a short amount of time. By the end, your previous concept of rejection has been blown to smithereens and replaced by much more effective and powerful mental constructs.

Becoming Rejection-Proof III: Desensitization training

This technique, borrowed from cognitive behavioral therapy, is incredibly powerful because it works directly on your neurology. It involves approaching every woman you encounter in your daily activities and making some kind of positive comment, then immediately giving yourself positive reinforcement for having done so. The comment can be a compliment, or a simple ‘Nice day today, isn’t it’ – whatever you feel comfortable with. After you give her the compliment, hear a big orchestral fanfare inside your head and do some kind of celebratory gesture – put your hands up in the air, pump your fist, say ‘Yessss’ or whatever else works for you – regardless of what happens. The sillier the victory gesture, the better. This exercise accomplishes many constructive things at once. First, it gets you used to approaching women rather than avoiding them. Second, it proves to you once and for all that there’s nothing scary about approaching a woman and nothing bad ever happens; if anything, you are always the one who is bigger and stronger, and she has reason to be afraid of *you*. Third, and most important, it associates a good feeling with the act of approaching women, creating positive reinforcement for doing it on a regular basis.

If you’re not already used to doing this, you may find the first five approaches challenging. To make the task easier, you may want to give your first five compliments to women whom you do not find intimidating. But after those five, you will be on such a high from your results that you will start to do it all the time. The ultimate goal of this exercise is to *be utterly fearless* when approaching any woman and to *do it automatically* all the time, because you will have a deep, gut-level realization that it’s all right to be generous and friendly. You also realize that you can’t lose what you don’t have. Once you know what happens on the other end of your actions *and* replace anxiety with a flood of good feeling, you will *be unstoppable*. Knowledge and experience are the best tools for conquering fear.

Chapter 8

Do, Part III: Attract, or How to Communicate With Women

This chapter will be devoted to discussing the things you should be doing in your interactions with women – and some of the things you should definitely *not* be doing. The overarching theme of all the recommended behaviors is *leading*; that for the avoidable behaviors is *following*. In the metaphorical dance between male and female, as in real dancing, there is no point at which it is appropriate for the man to follow. He is always leading. Know that, accept it, internalize it, and make no excuses for it – it is your job.

Your overall goal when in the presence of a woman is to create attraction between the two of you. Attraction is a *feeling*. Therefore, in order to create attraction, you must make a woman *feel*. As obvious as this may sound, many a man (including myself) has attempted to make a woman like him by talking about the weather, his job, the news, and other utterly dull topics that stimulate no emotion at all – and we wondered why the woman didn't want to make out or go on a second date. So let me repeat that: if you want a woman to be attracted to you, you have to make her *feel*. And making her *feel* is different from making her *think*.

To do this correctly, it is important that you feel something yourself as well. It is possible to use the following techniques to make a given woman for whom you feel little attraction to start liking you. But the techniques are orders of magnitude more effective when you feel attraction for the woman as well. Using techniques to attract a woman that you don't actually like is irresponsible and not consonant with enlightened self-interest.

The obvious next question is this: what should I make her feel, and how do I go about doing it? The answer is simple: ***be compelling***. When you are compelling, people are *compelled* to react in response to you, almost without choice. Witty people are *compelling* because they make people laugh. Deep, philosophical people are *compelling* because people have to think in response to their questions. Poets and orators are

compelling because they move people. Mysterious people are *compelling* because people want to ask questions and find out more. People who describe their hometown and boring 9-5 jobs are generally *not* compelling, because they do not evoke in their interlocutors a response other than “Uh-huh” or “That’s nice.”

Exercise 16. Use compelling role models to make yourself compelling

Think of five people you know who are compelling. What is it about them that makes them compelling? Are there any aspects of them that you can emulate? Now think of five people who are not compelling. What do they do? What are some non-compelling things about their behavior that you can avoid?

There are effective ways of being compelling, and then there are more effective ones. But before I discuss specific strategies, I want to talk about the one overarching strategy that most men overlook in their interactions with women that even precedes being compelling: *frame-setting*.

Frame-setting: The Undercurrent of Attraction

In any interaction between two people who know each other, there is an invisible frame that we subconsciously accept and follow: boss-employee, parent-child, friend-friend, buyer-seller. We are socially conditioned to recognize these frames and follow their scripts. We are particularly sensitive to the notion of whether the interaction is with a dominant, subordinate or equal individual. But what about interactions between strangers? In these cases, participants assume a position and allow the remainder of the interaction to carry on accordingly; rarely do the positions change once the interaction has begun.

He who controls the frame controls the interaction.

This brings us to a very important insight: *in the beginning of every interaction with a stranger, there is an opportunity to assume the most favorable social stance – the dominant one.* We tend to be attracted to people *higher* on the social gradient than us. You don’t seek out women whom you perceive as less attractive or interesting than yourself; women behave the same way towards men. We’re usually looking for someone cooler than we are (but not so cool as to seem out of reach). So simply *assume* that you are cooler. No one is likely to come along and challenge you with a Cool-o-Meter. If you simply maintain the stance, then it’s as good as true.

Now that you have assumed the dominant social stance, you must also *convey* it effectively. You do this through a technique I call *conversational scaling*. Women are generally not attracted to men they can dominate. So demonstrate that you have the upper hand in conversation by keeping her challenged while remaining calm. The ultimate hallmark of dominance is *imperturbability*. So while maintaining utter calm, practice these

three excellent techniques: *the picky buyer stance*, *playful teasing*, and *active challenging*. Let's discuss each of these techniques in turn.

Use conversational scaling to establish and maintain dominance.

First off, you want to always *establish yourself as the buyer*, as we discussed in Chapter 5. You are here to evaluate *her*, not the other way around. Is she good-looking enough for you? Fun enough? Cool and adventurous enough? When you're doing this, the last thing on your mind is her approval. If you're at a car dealership, do you worry about what the salesman thinks of you? Do you worry what the car thinks of you? People clearly aren't cars, but the point is this: if you're too busy evaluating something, you won't have time to worry about *being* evaluated. Also remember that evaluation is a dispassionate, somewhat detached activity, which is not the same as judgment. Evaluate carefully while avoiding judgment.

There's a philosophical reason why assuming the buyer stance works so well. To paraphrase Albert Einstein, no problem can be solved at the same logical level at which it was generated. When you assume the buyer's stance, you are at a *meta-position* to whatever she is doing – observing her and evaluating her actions (versus responding to them). This increases your chances of success in solving the problem of creating attraction, as compared to responding to her at *her* level, or even worse, trying to win her over. Another useful way to think about this is that you are *helping* her discover her attraction to you (assuming that it exists). You can't help from the same position as the person who's being helped, so assume that meta-position of guide/helper.

Teasing a woman immediately implies that you are coming from a higher social position than her. Tease her about everything – her clothes, her job, the fact that she's single, her hair, her make-up. Always do this playfully, never maliciously. If done in a playful and humorous enough manner, you can pretty much make fun of anything about her. If her jaw drops, she says something like "I can't *believe* you said that!" or she punches you in the arm, it means you're on the right track – carry on, mate. Whatever you do, don't back down. Done correctly, this can regress you both to a playful and childlike mood, which is an excellent position to be in. Childlike play is the gateway to adult play.

Here are some examples of teasing lines to illustrate the point and get you started. Remarks you make up right on the spot, in response to what's happening at the moment, are even better. If they're not working, that means you're being *too serious* – lighten up and have fun with them:

- "Are you single?" (she answers yes) "Why, is there something wrong with you?"
- If her hair is obviously dyed and the roots are showing: "Wow, it must take incredible skill just to dye just the roots of your hair."
- If you've been talking for a few minutes but not exchanged names: "Do you realize you haven't even introduced yourself yet? You call these manners?"
- If she's having more than one drink: "Does your AA sponsor know about this?"

- If she's wearing unusually tight or low-cut clothing: "Did you shrink the clothes in the dryer *again*?"
- If she's a lawyer, investment banker or some other corporate type: "So I guess Mother Teresa was your role model when you grew up, huh?"

Challenging a woman immediately establishes you as the evaluator, placing you higher on the social gradient. Disagree with her actively. "No" is a great line to practice early and often. A good structure to use is "Are you _____ enough?" Fill in the blank with all the qualities you expect from a companion: funny, spontaneous, adventurous, sexual, wealthy. Again, levity makes it all go down easier. Another useful structure is "What is the _____est thing you've done?" Expect this one to come right back at you, so be prepared with your own answer.

You can also prime the pump for attraction by asking for small favors. Psychologists have observed that one of the most reliable ways of making someone like you is not to do things for her, but to *have her do things for you*. As counterintuitive as this may sound, there is sound (albeit twisted) logic behind it. People try to avoid cognitive dissonance as much as possible. When someone does you a favor, unconsciously they're thinking, "Well, if I did that for him, it must mean I like him, otherwise I would not have done it." (See Chapter 2 of Cialdini's *Influence*). Action precedes and creates the feeling. There are myriad opportunities for doing this:

- At a beach or cafe: "Would you mind keeping an eye on my double bass?"
- At a concert or book reading: "Could you be kind enough to hold this seat for me?"
- At a bar or party: "Do you think you could pass me a napkin?" or "Could you hold this drink for me for a second while I adjust my turban?"
- At a supermarket: "Would you know how to pick a good kumquat?"
- On the street: "Do you know where I can find Krusty's Klown Kollege?"
- Anywhere else: "Do you have the time?"

Once you have asked for a small favor, it's a little-known but well-documented aspect of human behavior that now *you have opened the door to asking even bigger favors*. Psychological research has shown that people are up to 70% more likely to comply with a big request after having complied with a much smaller one (Freedman and Fraser, 1966). And of course, complying with the bigger request (e.g. buying you a drink after she has agreed to hold your drink) will activate her unconscious mechanisms to *make her like you even more*.

The other useful aspect of this technique is that it opens up the flow of positive energy between you. Once she has done you a small favor, it is perfectly OK for you to reciprocate without her thinking that you have ulterior motives. When you do something for a stranger out of the blue, you usually evoke distrust, especially if the stranger is a woman. For better or for worse, people are conditioned to believe that there is no such thing as a free lunch, and so immediately assume that you *want* something from them.

This is one of the reasons why “Can I buy you a drink?” is a *terrible* opening line and *should be avoided always*. Henceforth, you will *never* offer to buy drinks for women you do not know (unless you’ve got money to burn and it’s something you already do for fun). But I digress: the point here is that once she has done a small favor for you, it’s all right for you to do nice little things for her, because you’re now doing it as *friends*. You are no longer trying to *buy* into her favor or impress her – you’re merely being friendly. As a rule, it’s best that you let her do more favors for you than you do for her – a 2:1 ratio is a good general guideline. And, whatever you do, don’t take the reciprocal kindness as an excuse to turn into a wimpy, needy pleaser.

Notice how the same behavior can have completely different meanings and resultant effects just because of *the way it is framed*. Become more and more aware of frames of interaction and use them to your advantage.

Challenge and tease a woman regularly.

Be the buyer.

Ask for small favors early and often, then leverage them into bigger ones.

Avoid compliance whenever possible.

Attraction-reducing behavior: five to avoid

In addition to knowing which behaviors to engage in to engender and enhance attraction, it is also useful to recognize prior patterns of behavior that have hampered your progress. Instead of obsessively avoiding the following behaviors at all cost, causing you to behave in newly weird and unattractive ways, simply become more aware of their occurrence in your everyday life and gradually phase them out, allowing them to be replaced by more effective behaviors. The following technique will help you get rid of these and other behaviors with remarkable efficiency.

Exercise 17. Use the rubber band technique to modify behaviors rapidly

To dispatch any negative behavior that you’re simply through with, use this technique which gives near-miraculous results. Wear a relatively wide rubber band that fits loosely around your wrist. Now every time you engage in an undesirable thought or behavior for any reason, simply pull on the rubber band and give yourself a good snap. Make sure that you snap yourself *during or immediately after* the occurrence of the negative thought or behavior. Even if it’s just 15 seconds later, it won’t work, so let it pass and wait for the next occurrence. Never snap yourself frivolously; just do it when you’ve actually earned it. What will happen is that initially, you’ll be snapping yourself left and right – 10-20 times a day even. But very quickly, the frequency of the snapping decreases and at the end of 2 weeks, you’ll hardly ever snap yourself. This is the fastest, most effective self-improvement technique I have ever encountered.

And now, the behaviors to avoid:

Compliance. Every act of compliance on your part shifts the attraction gradient in your disfavor, because when you comply you are *following*, not leading. Notice all the little ways that women ask you to comply, and graciously sidestep most of them or ask the woman to *earn* the favor. One of my techniques is to ask playfully, “What’s the magic word?” or “I don’t know, have you been a good girl today?” whenever a woman asks for something, even it’s as trivial as the time of day or wanting to pass. The most pervasive act of compliance is *answering questions*. The way to avoid that (without sounding like a complete psychopath) is to be humorously evasive *most* of the time – especially when it comes to hackneyed small-talk questions like “What do you do?” and “How old are you?” A good non-linear response makes her laugh and piques her curiosity even further, tilting the attraction gradient in your favor. Have an arsenal of non-standard responses handy – the more outrageous the better. Be a rivet designer, stunt double, mattress tester, retired stripper, undercover reporter or spelunker – anything but what you actually do for a living (unless your job is already sufficiently outlandish). Every once in a while, switch to earnest mode and actually give a straight answer when you see she’s suffered enough, but only when you feel like it and she’s earned it.

Neediness. Another form of following. This doesn’t require too much explanation – it’s the opposite of self-sufficiency. Run it through your own neurology, and you’ll know exactly what I’m talking about here: needy people can be spotted from miles away and are simply not attractive. When in doubt, being wanted is much more attractive than being needed.

Clinginess and possessiveness. Again, the antithesis of self-sufficiency, and a covert way of following. It unequivocally broadcasts inner weakness. Avoid always, *especially* when you feel you might be losing a woman. Spend time with another woman, your buddies, or even alone to avoid this plague.

Pleaser behavior. Remember that you are evaluating her, so if anything, she should be trying to please you, not the other way around. Doing things to *make* her like you is tantamount to an abdication of your personal power. If you feel like doing something nice for her, by all means go ahead – generosity of spirit is always commendable. But remember the motivation: you do it because it feels good to you, not because you’re hoping that she’ll like you for it.

Demonstrating more interest than her. By definition, the gradient of attraction only exists in your favor when she remains slightly more interested in you than you in her. Be attentive and interested, but never overwhelmingly so. If you must make a positive comment, “You’re all right” or “You’re kind of a cool girl” are orders of magnitude better than “You’re really wonderful” or “You’re the most beautiful woman I’ve ever been out with.” Never gush, even though you may feel the urge to do so sometimes. Not only is it

self-indulgent and weak, but it evinces a lack of discipline. And it's an example of following, not leading.

Most of these avoidable behaviors arise when we're not sure where we stand with a woman we like. The behaviors are particularly pervasive when we fear that we are *about to lose her*. In that sense, they are all *fear-based responses*, which are not constructive. You can't really help feeling fear every once in a while, so that's OK. Never demonize the feeling. What you *can* control, however, is whether or not you choose to do something silly while you're experiencing the fear. Better to sit still and do nothing than to do something that will only aggravate whatever problem you think you're having.

Never do anything out of fear – the result will be counterproductive. Wait for the fear to subside, take stock, and take effective action from a position of calm strength.

If all that we have discussed so far seems a bit counterintuitive, that's okay. The wisdom of the Tao is often counterintuitive and paradoxical, and so is the Tao of social interaction. Just remember to keep an open mind and try everything out to see how well it works for you – without *a priori* judgment as to how things *should* work.

*When a superior man hears of the Tao,
He immediately begins to embody it.
When an average man hears of the Tao,
He half believes it, half doubts it.
When a foolish man hears of the Tao,
He laughs out loud.
If he didn't laugh,
It wouldn't be the Tao.*

*Thus it is said:
The path into the light seems dark,
The path forward seems to go back,
The direct path seems long,
True power seems weak,
True purity seems tarnished,
True steadfastness seems changeable,
True clarity seems obscure,
The greatest art seems unsophisticated,
The greatest love seems indifferent,
The greatest wisdom seems childish.*

The Tao is nowhere to be found.

Yet it nourishes and completes all things.

-- Lao Tzu, Tao Te Ching, Ch. 41 (transl. Stephen Mitchell)

In this particular case, the counterintuitive wisdom is that a mildly antagonistic stance can lead to familiarity much faster than a blandly pleasant stance. The scientific explanation behind it is that mild antagonism causes the secretion of adrenaline, which mediates arousal and rapid attraction (Fisher, 2004). I don't necessarily advocate starting a fistfight when you first meet a woman (if you do, feel free to report back on its effectiveness), but it's a safe bet that a challenging attitude will evoke more emotion in her than simply being nice.

How to be compelling, continued: The five methods

Let's get back to the discussion of how to be compelling. There are as many ways of being compelling as there are people on this planet. When you are being compelling, you are rapidly differentiating yourself from the masses and creating a spark of interest. Here I will describe five different strategies for being compelling – five ways in which you can evoke curiosity, wonder, awe, excitement, intrigue and other emotions that create energy flow, drawing people towards you.

Mystery. Mystery is simply *missing information*. Most men tend to talk about themselves endlessly, throwing around facts and knowledge and telling their interlocutor everything they want to know about him and then some: work, house, car, education, pet names, etc. Not only is this poor conversational manners, but it is also patently ineffective (unless you're some showoff rich or famous guy, in which case you wouldn't need this book in the first place). What actually draws people to you is *missing* information. So refuse to give out standard facts like what you do or how old you are. Then tell stories that hint at an exciting life and a breadth of interests, and wait for the woman to draw you out instead of just reciting your resume unbidden. Telling a story that begins "The other day I was flying my Cessna to Napa Valley" is much more effective than saying "I know how to fly and like wine – please like me." The more you can maintain the suspense of missing information, the better. Do not relent if the woman seems to get mad or impatient – this is actually part of the attraction process. Recognize it, enjoy it, and don't give in.

Another simple, incredibly effective way to evoke an aura of mystery is by *doing magic tricks*. There are dozens of incredibly simple tricks that you can learn in a matter of minutes; your local bookstore will have several books to help you with that, or you can just find some online. The key is not to do it as an entertainer clamoring for her attention and approval, but rather in a casual, matter-of-fact "hey, want to see something cool" manner. You are entertaining yourself first, everyone else second. All you need is three good tricks (never repeat one), and you have set the stage for greatly amplified attraction.

Outlandishness. For the most part, people lead boring lives, and so any kind of outlandishness will create a spark of interest. The easiest way to do this is by having an unusual item of clothing. Women are incredibly quick to pick up on these things. I have a

big red ring that I wear every so often. Girls will spot it from across the room and come over to inspect it, or use it as an excuse to start a conversation. Networking experts call these items ‘whatsits’ – things that compel people to come over and ask. Funky hats, jewelry, unusual shoes, interesting pants – these are all good starts. You need not get a massive tattoo of Mickey Mouse on your forehead or put a railroad bolt through your nose to get attention – just a little \$2 ring from a costume shop can be enough. For the truly daring, try the technique proposed in a men’s magazine a few years ago and show up to a bar or social event in pajamas. Have a good story ready, because you are guaranteed to be the center of attention.

Outlandishness and outrageousness can also be conveyed through personality, speech and writing, but that’s the topic for a different course. If you wish to make that your angle of approach, I suggest studying the comedy of George Carlin.

Also take note of what outlandishness is not. If you go too overboard, you’ll just be seen as a curiosity and a freak, not someone worth connecting with. The extreme manifestation of any trait turns into its opposite. Looking like all the other rebels is the same as being ordinary. All things in moderation is the way of the Tao.

Excellence. Any kind of excellence is a great prelude to attraction. In the movie *The Tao of Steve*, the protagonist Dex had the protocol ‘Be excellent, be detached, be gone’ in his dealings with women. He demonstrated excellence through his wit, erudition, cooking and musical ability. If you have a talent, by all means grasp the opportunity to display it. Quote poetry as part of your conversation, or even better, write your own and recite it. Invite your date to your musical performance or a showing of your paintings. If you believe you are utterly devoid of talent, think harder – everybody has some talent. Or even better, *develop* one. Even Mozart had to learn how to play the piano and compose; he wasn’t born with it.

Research has shown that women across all cultures respond very strongly to male displays of talent. There seems to be a strong evolutionary reason for this drive. In fact, in his book *The Mating Mind*, Geoffrey Miller argues persuasively that the incredible complexity of the human brain evolved not for surviving on the savannah (which chimps manage just fine with a much simpler brain), but rather for wooing potential mates. It is no coincidence that great musicians, writers, singers, orators and statesmen have also tended to be highly successful with women. Make no mistake: excellence requires effort, and almost everything that *The Tao of Dating* asks you to do requires taking action. But excellence also has unmistakable rewards.

Intensely focussed attention. One of the most powerfully seductive things you can do with a woman is to *give her your full attention*. You’d be surprised and shocked at how rarely men do it. Frank Sinatra’s laserlike attention reputedly made women swoon (he was also a rich, famous and good-looking singer, but the technique’s still a good one). This means you are completely focussed on her, listening to every word she says, asking her questions and following up on what she just said. It does not mean saying “What?” every two minutes, craning your neck or shifting your gaze to check out the waitress walking behind your date. Women are very finely attuned to where your attention is and notice

immediately when it's not on the one in front of you. There is a time and place for being a little aloof, but every once in a while, bestow your full attention on her.

There are tools for facilitating this. A wise man once said, "A bad conversationalist talks about himself. A good conversationalist lets you talk. A *great* conversationalist talks about you." Little pop-psychology personality games provide a nice conversation-in-a-can and help you pay full attention to her, especially if you're the distractable type – and they're *all* about her. The one I recommend is a game called The Cube. The book describing it is out of print, but can be bought online: *The Secrets of the Cube*, by Annie Gottlieb and Slobodan Pestic. You may also be able to find most of its contents online. I like to shorten the game to three questions in the interest of time: the cube, the ladder and the horse, representing her self, friends and mate, respectively. It does the job without taking too long. I've found the Cube to be highly accurate, while things like palm-reading tend to be more fun and entertaining. Other good pop-psychology games:

- *Animal, color, water*: Ask her for three ways in which she would describe her favorite animal, favorite color, and water. Respectively, they are supposed to represent her ideal companion, her self, and her attitude towards sex. Opens up the conversation to a whole new realm of possibilities.
- *The Forest and the Bear*: Ask her to imagine that she's in a forest. Ask her to describe the forest. Now she encounters a bear. What happens and how does she get past? As she gets to the edge of the forest, there is a body of water. How does she describe it and how does she cross it? On the other side of the body of water, there is a home. Describe the home. The forest is how she sees life in general; the bear represents challenges and difficulties; the body of water represents her attitude and behavior towards sex; and the home represents her future self.
- *Strawberry Fields*: This game cuts directly to sex without other superfluous distractions like bears, cubes and forests. First question: there is a strawberry field in the distance. How does she feel about it? This is supposed to reflect her attitude towards sex. Now you say that there is a barrier between her and the field – what's the barrier, and how does she get past it? This is supposed to reflect her internal barriers to sexual experience. Now she is in the field – how much does she partake of the strawberries? This is, shockingly enough, supposed to reflect the size of her sexual appetite. Now you say that the strawberry field belongs to a farmer – how would that change her behavior? This reflects her attitudes towards sexual boundaries and restrictions. Very fun, very revealing game.

Fun. People tend to move towards pleasure and move away from pain. This simple model can explain 99+% of all human behavior. If you are a source of pleasure and amusement, people will naturally gravitate towards you. There are some people who are just the life of the party, and they create an aura of attraction around themselves. Not everyone is that type, but you can certainly make a conscious choice to be more oriented towards fun and less towards seriousness. Funny stories to tell and an open, friendly attitude towards all are good starting points. Once again, all in moderation: the life of the party is attractive, while the clown of the party is less so.

Moderation is the key to making all of these techniques work and is one of the overarching themes of Eastern philosophy. The extreme manifestation of any trait has the opposite effect than that intended (and is often just plain creepy). The rule to follow so you never go overboard is simple: always leave her wanting more. We already mentioned this in an earlier chapter, and it deserves repetition. If she's wanting more, great – you've reached a good waystation. We'll elaborate even more on this rule in the section on take-aways.

Always leave her wanting more.

The fail-safe technique for being compelling

We've gone through a fair amount of material here, and frankly it's a lot to remember. And maybe none of these ideas for being compelling fit well with your personality. You're just not the extrovert, the showman, the enigma. Or maybe you are, but for some reason you're having an off night, or you're tired. Is there another way of still being compelling? Luckily, there is. And this technique of last resort may actually be the most potent of the lot. It is also the most counterintuitive and the most obvious. It's called *listening*. That's right – just letting her talk and listening to what she has to say.

A few times in my life someone has told me in the course of a conversation, "You are the most interesting person I have ever met." All of these encounters had one thing in common: *I was hardly saying a word*. It's safe to say that of 30 minutes of conversation, I had at most a minute of airtime. I had learned all kinds of things about their lives, and they hardly knew a thing about me. And yet they said I was the most interesting person they had ever met. Why? Because the most interesting person to you in the world is *yourself*. When you look at a group snapshot, what's the first thing you look for? People's brains are tuned to WII-FM – What's In It For Me radio, 24 hours a day. And if you tune in to that station, too, they have no choice but to find you utterly fascinating.

There is a bit of an art to this. It's helpful to repeat verbatim part of what your interlocutor is saying to you. Don't paraphrase – repeat *verbatim*. Continue doing the rest of the rapport techniques as well, which we are about to go over. It also helps if you have genuine interest in what she's talking about and ask for more in-depth information. The best question I have come across is *what's important to you about that?* That way, each time you ask the question, you're getting higher and higher level information about the true motivations behind a person's inclinations and actions. It is also less harsh and confrontational than repeatedly asking *why*, as in *why did you do that*.

Asking "what's important to you" has many magical effects, amongst which is making you quite interesting to the person you're asking questions from. A good follow-up question to that is *how does that make you feel*. For example, let's say she says she

likes to go to the Caribbean because she enjoys scuba diving. A good question to ask now is, “Wow, scuba – how does it make you feel when you’re scuba diving?” This opens up the door to more feelings-related questions, which is what you should be talking about in the first place.

The foolproof internal guide for your actions

There are so many ways to behave in response to women. How to know when you’re doing the right thing? I am now going to give you a *foolproof* tool for testing every possible action you could take in your interactions with a woman to see whether or not it is creating attraction. It’s called *running it through your own neurology*. You’re wondering whether you should send her a particular email? Send it to yourself first and see how it makes you feel. You want to ask her out the day after you’ve met her? Imagine *her* asking you out, and notice how it makes you feel. You’re wondering whether it’s the right time to kiss her? Imagine her making a move on you at that moment, and use that as a gauge for your action. Or even better, imagine that you are the girl, and notice how you’d feel if a guy tried (or didn’t try) to kiss you at that moment. Generally, if you run a particular scenario through your own neurology and it feels in any way needy, boring, desperate, wimpy or non-compelling, it probably is. You’re better off doing something else or nothing at all.

When you’re unsure of whether or not to take a particular course of action, do an internal check by running it through your own neurology.

The physiology of attraction

On a fundamental level, feelings are created by neurotransmitters. In her book *Why We Love*, Helen Fisher divides love feelings into three categories: lust, romance, and long-term attachment. Romance can trigger lust; lust can also trigger romance, but to a lesser extent. Attachment is a byproduct of lust and romance over the long term. The hormone primarily responsible for lust is testosterone; adrenaline is also involved in mediating lust and short-term attraction. Romance (a.k.a ‘being in love’) is mediated by dopamine and norepinephrine. Attachment is mediated by oxytocin in women and vasopressin in men. The table below summarizes the various hormones and neurotransmitters involved in love feelings and how each one is evoked. Don’t worry too much about which action evokes which substance; just know that all of the substances in the end increase attraction in some way.

<i>Substance</i>	<i>Evoked by...</i>	<i>Extra features</i>
dopamine	novelty	can increase testosterone levels
adrenaline	danger, excitement	thought to mediate love at first sight
norepinephrine	stimulants, novelty	
oxytocin (in women)	nipple & genital stimulation, orgasm, touch	creates long-term bonding
vasopressin (in men)	genital stimulation, touch, dehydration	
PEA	direct eye-gazing	mediates rapid attraction

Phenylethanolamine (PEA) is a particularly interesting chemical stimulated by looking directly into the eyes of another person. One study showed that looking directly into the eyes of a member of the opposite sex *for just two minutes* engendered passionate feelings in both people (Kellerman et al., 1989).

Without getting into too much scientific detail (for that I highly recommend Helen Fisher's books), just by looking at the table above we can reach some powerful conclusions. Dopamine, adrenaline, norepinephrine, oxytocin and PEA mediate attraction-related feelings. So to evoke those feelings, you want to engage in *novel, exciting, physically and emotionally arousing activities*, and pepper those activities with *touch* and *direct eye-gazing*. If you try to do those all at the same time, you may feel overwhelmed and look silly to boot. Better just to know that these are the things that you should be doing, and do them regularly until they are second nature.

Rapport

One of my hypnosis teachers once said about personal interactions, "Inside of rapport, anything is possible; outside, nothing is possible." In sales, persuasion, relationships, or any kind of human transaction, rapport is *the* key to effective communication. If you learn nothing from this book except for how to establish and maintain rapport, you will be miles ahead of the rest of the pack.

Everyone knows what rapport is but finds it difficult to describe. I think of it as that familiar feeling of standing next to someone looking out at the rest of the world together, versus sitting facing one another, each with your own point of view. When you are in rapport, you become like the other person, and people tend to like people who are like themselves. Entire books have been written on this subject alone, but the essence of them can be conveyed in a small space. In this section, I will give you a triple treat: the traditional tools for rapport (which you should use regularly), the three secret techniques for rapport, and one counterintuitive method.

The key techniques of nonverbal rapport are *mirroring and matching*. If you watch two people in deep conversation, you may notice something eerie: their body postures tend to become very similar to one another. The image to keep in mind is that of the *tête-à-tête*: two people hunched over at a table at the same angle, talking in conspiratorial tones. Basically, you are mimicking the body language of your interlocutor as closely as possible, either by being the mirror-image (i.e. mirroring) or matching the motion body part for body part (e.g. she moves her left hand, you move your left hand). You want to do this as

closely as possible. Hardly anyone ever notices when she is being mirrored or matched, because almost all body language is *unconscious*, which by definition is what we are not consciously aware of.

Which movements of the body are more important? Where to start? The proper technique is to match from the macro to the micro. Start with general body posture, the position of limbs in space, and then move on to motion of hands, feet, fingers, neck angle and facial muscles. Once you've mastered that, you can start to mirror vocal tone, volume and tempo as well. And finally, for achieving ultra-deep rapport, you want to mirror diction by repeating *verbatim* what the person just said. This is not active listening – this is *word-for-word* repetition of what you just heard.

One of the reasons why these techniques are so useful is that in order to do them right, you must pay complete attention to your companion. This in itself is enough to engender attraction. And now here comes the really powerful part: when you start out mirroring and matching, you first follow your interlocutor's behaviors. This is called *pacing*. What truly deepens rapport is to shift subtly from pacing to *leading*: you start doing things and see if *she* follows *you*. Some people understand and use mirroring, matching, pacing and leading almost instantly. Others may take more time. Just doing the pacing part is a big step forward, so focus on that first.

Ideally, the nonverbal rapport protocol becomes a habit so ingrained that you use it unconsciously and all the time. In any case, you should still use the following three secret techniques for creating and enhancing rapport, especially in interactions with less time to establish pacing and leading:

- 1) *Assume rapport*. Imagine that the person you're speaking to is an old friend that you've known for at least three years. The attitude is more along the lines of "Hey, good to see you again, buddy" than "How do you do, ma'am."
- 2) *Go into the emotional state of the bond*. What would it *feel* like if right now you were to bump into your long-lost buddy that you haven't seen in three years? How thrilled would you be? How eager would you be to talk to him? Summon that same feeling and bring it to the interaction at hand.
- 3) *Share a secret*. Preface your statement with "Can I tell you a secret?," then go ahead and share. It need not be something earth-shattering or embarrassing; it need not even be about you: "I just really appreciate your style" works, as does "I just can't stand mosquitoes." The fact that you prefaced it as being a secret is enough.

To really grasp rapport, think of your best friend and how you interact with him. How do you greet each other? What sort of things do you talk about? How do you bring up a topic of conversation? In deep rapport, you're not afraid of losing your audience – you've been friends for years, for example – and so you are more willing to antagonize each other, tease one another or be slightly rude. This brings us to the covert technique which I call the *rapport of anti-rapport*. If right from the outset of an interaction you start playfully teasing someone, the implication is that rapport is already so deep as to permit this. Paradoxically, this *creates* rapport. Two caveats: first, it's important to do this *playfully* and not too seriously. Do it wrong, and you'll come off as a presumptuous jerk. Second, follow up the anti-rapport with the usual rapport techniques, using it as the spice rather

than the main course. Every time you do something to deliberately break rapport without actually breaking it, you *strengthen* rapport.

How to create passion

Obstacles are the key to creating passion. That which is gained with little effort is lost without much regret – easy come, easy go. Passion is like water building up behind a dam: the more it builds up, the more urgent it becomes to break through and express itself. You don't get that kind of intensity, the rush of water rolling over things wild and uncontrolled, unless the dam had held it back first. So in order to create passion, you must do two things: *plant the seed*, then *create obstacles*, even if they don't really exist. Planting the seed means giving her something to think about. Ideally you want it to be something that runs in her head over and over again while you're not around. A poem or well-placed compliment is good for that. Then create obstacles. Play up the distance between you. Set up dates two weeks to a month in advance while building up anticipation for them in the interim. Or, if you feel particularly daring and dastardly, do all of the above – then postpone the date at the last minute for an extra day or two (more than that and the date may never happen). Which would you prefer – a mediocre date tonight, or one next month that's guaranteed to go extremely well? Think of the great love stories of history. The idea of star-crossed lovers is as old as time, and it is precisely because of the seemingly insurmountable barriers between the lovers that the passion intensifies.

To create passion, plant the seed and create obstacles.

Success and integrity

These and other techniques may seem calculated, and to a certain extent they are. In the mating game, all the parties involved are doing what they can to improve their chances of success: makeup and clothing to enhance the appearance. Fancy restaurants to create the ambience. As much as we may dislike playing games, we have little choice in the matter. So instead of fighting the game, why not play *to win*. Most people do not play to win. Rather, they play to remain in their comfort zone while maintaining moral superiority. They will disparage Bill Gates as a filthy rich jerk and Hugh Hefner as a lecherous old man while being happy to switch places with them given the opportunity. Do not be one of those hypocrites. Play to win. As long as you're not intentionally hurting anyone (including yourself) in the process, it's the right thing to do.

To have these techniques work optimally, you have to find your own comfort level with them. If you know your intentions are good and there is a win for both parties, then by all means forge ahead. Also, ask yourself this: if being slightly more deliberate and disciplined than usual in dating means that both you and your date get to have a rockin'

good time and a memorable experience, who loses? The idea is not to resort exclusively to manipulative tactics to get what you want, but rather to recognize the structure of human interactions and the effective steps required to achieve a certain outcome. The Tao merely shows you the way the world works, without strict judgment about right or wrong. However, when you are aligned with your own inner feeling and integrity, you tend to become much more effective, and that is what I recommend. Enlightened self-interest is the way of the Tao.

Getting contact information from women: theory and practice

Sometimes it happens that you meet a fabulous woman, you have an engaging conversation together and for some reason you part without being able to get in touch again. This section is devoted to capturing the value you have created in your interaction. You've created attraction, she's into you, you're into her; now make sure you can follow up. The first rule is simple: do all the things already mentioned in this chapter. Make getting the contact information a foregone conclusion. If you've been teasing her, making her laugh and making her feel close to you, she'll be more worried about you taking her number than the other way around. The Tao Te Ching has something to say about this:

*If you want to shrink something,
You must first allow it to expand.
If you want to get rid of something,
you must first allow it to flourish.
If you want to take something,
You must first allow it to be given.
This is called the subtle perception
Of the way things are.*

– Lao Tzu, Tao Te Ching, Ch. 36 (transl. Stephen Mitchell)

Before you can take something, you must allow it to be given. Before you can get her number, you must allow it to be given to you by creating the circumstances that make her willing to see you again. Not coincidentally, this is true of every phase of the relationship, so keep these words in mind.

When to get the contact information

Most people wait until departure time to exchange information. There are several pitfalls to this. First, you're not taking the lead. Half the time she will be the one leaving first, and you'll be the one chasing her down. This diminishes attraction. Second, you never know what might happen at the last minute – you could be in a rush to catch a ride, she could be in a hurry, and there may be no practical, elegant way of exchanging information. Don't let circumstance get in the way of a potentially good connection – take matters into your own hands. Third, there is an ebb and flow to any interaction, and by the end you may be at an ebb, when she's less enthusiastic about the exchange. Capture the value of the interaction at the peak of interest.

What I recommend is to get contact information in the *middle* of your interaction, and *as early as possible*. There are many good reasons for this. As I just mentioned, there will be peaks and valleys of interest, and when rapport is deep and interest is high, it just follows naturally that you will want to exchange contact information. At these times, a simple “Hey, do you have a card?” (followed up by, “Well, here’s mine; why don’t you write down your information” if she doesn’t have one) is all it takes to make sure that the avenue for future contact is open. You can also create a pseudo-departure by saying, “Hey, I’ve got to get back to my friends now – why don’t we exchange info before I forget,” thus creating a natural juncture at which you can exchange contact information. The great thing about getting the information early is that, having done that, she has taken action indicating interest in you (and complied with your request for a small favor – see above), thereby increasing attraction and rapport at an unconscious level. In a way, you two are now in the next phase of the relationship. You are also ahead of every other guy in the room.

Keep in mind is that your goal is not getting a phone number, but rather spending time with a person you find interesting. This may seem trivial, but I cannot emphasize it enough: you’re looking for *company*, not digits. Too often men get caught up in getting phone numbers and forgetting the person right in front of them. Women know this, recognize this and are annoyed by it. Give your full attention to a woman that you’re interested in, and she will likely reciprocate. If there’s more than one woman in the room that interests you, by all means speak to them all, but give each your full attention when you do so. They are also there to meet new people and know the score; it’s okay to talk to several people in a social gathering. They also know that your initial interaction is a microcosm of your future relationship, and if you’re rubbernecking the first time you speak to her, she knows exactly what to expect further down the road.

How to get the contact information

One of the time-honored techniques in hypnosis is to arrange circumstances such that your intended outcome emerges naturally and effortlessly. This is also the way of the Tao. The best way to get contact information from a woman you’re with is to make a date with her right there on the spot. That way, the contact information is a foregone conclusion; after all, you’ll need a way to get in touch with each other.

There are two principles at work here. One is that by setting your goal far beyond (e.g. date or make-out session) of what you’re actually willing to settle for (e.g. getting contact information), you’re much more likely to achieve that proximate goal. This embodies the Italian saying, “Shoot for the moon and settle for the stars.” Do this all the time with your interactions with women, and you will get some surprising results. One fun mental gambit I like is to imagine running off with her to Las Vegas to get married at the end of the night. That way, everything up to that point is completely presupposed in my mind and therefore much more likely to happen.

The second principle at work is the *power of because*, or what I call the copy machine effect. Ellen Langer, a social psychologist at Harvard, performed a now-classic experiment involving cutting in line to make copies. When the researcher approached the line and said, “I have five sheets. Can I cut in front of you?” he got a 50-60% compliance rate. However, when he changed the request to “I have five sheets. Can I cut in front of

you because I'm late for an important job interview?" the compliance rate jumped to 94%. But wait – it gets better. When the researcher asked "Can I cut in front of you because I need to make some copies?" the compliance rate was 93% – statistically *identical* to the preceding scenario, even though the reason was completely meaningless. This means that you are almost twice as likely to get compliance from an interaction when you offer a reason – *any* reason. So give the woman a reason why she is giving you her email and phone number, and she is much more likely to give it to you in the first place and then follow through with the date.

Use the persuasive power of *because* whenever making a request.

The way to have reasons is to be prepared, as discussed earlier. Have a mental list of interesting events around town. Ideally, you'd have a regular one for every day of the week. That way, if it comes up in conversation that you both like to dance, you say, "By the way, what are you doing next Monday? I know this great little salsa place which has the best live band and great Cuban food." If this is too much effort, then master the art of the obvious reason, as in the Langer copy machine experiment. Here are three examples, from neutral to funny to ballsy. Pick a template that you're comfortable with, then make your own variations on that theme:

- I'd like to continue this conversation later.
- What are you doing on Wednesday? If you're free, I thought we could elope to Vegas together.
- Let's get together sometime, since you seem to appreciate the company of fine men.

Preface with or add the request "Why don't you write down your information (because)..." A few points about this formulation: it's phrased as a command, which is much stronger and more effective than a simple request (e.g. "Can I have your number please?"). It softens the command with the phrase *why don't you*, so it doesn't sound too harsh. It avoids the words *give me your number*, which she may associate with any number of unsavory yahoos who have hit on her in the past, thus avoiding having you thrown in that bin as well.

Striking while the iron is hot: when to call or write

Here's something very important to remember: men and women are different from each other. And one way in which they differ is in the way they feel. Women tend to cycle through feelings more rapidly and more intensely than men. That means that if she feels great about you right now, there is no guarantee that she will feel that way tomorrow,

or the day after. Men are often surprised that they can have a massively positive experience with a woman one day, and a few days later have her seem cold and uncommunicative. Because men don't operate this way, it's hard for them to understand this, but you don't have to understand it – you just have to accept it, and make allowances for it. That's the way of the Tao. Most of the time, it's not about you, so never take it personally. It's not a bug; it's a feature.

Since both men and women tend to make decisions based on feelings and then justify them later rationally, capitalize on the good feeling you have created with a woman *immediately*. Don't wait too long to ask her out after you first meet her – do it the next day, or at the very latest the day after that. More than one woman has told me that she will not call a man back if he takes more than a day to call her for the first time, because this means that he's not really that interested. Remember that. Call or write the next day, or the day after next. Never take more than three days if you're interested in her.

Strike while the iron is hot. Write or call a woman you're interested in within 24-72 hours of first meeting her.

Redundancy and quality control

I recommend that you get *both* the phone number and the email address when getting contact information and that you *verify* them. These are the principles of redundancy and quality control, borrowed from good business practice. Redundancy means that if the phone number is illegible, you have the email as backup (and vice versa). Quality control means that you look at the information handed to you and make sure you can decipher it. Ask her to read back the number and email, or read them back to her and ask her to correct you. The best way to verify a cell phone number is to enter it into your cell phone and call it right away – ostensibly so she has your phone number via caller ID, and also to make sure you got it right. The foolproof way is to call your own number from her phone and have her number appear on your caller ID. You can even use this opportunity to get a chuckle by having a lighthearted phone conversation right as you're standing in front of her (and also getting her used to the idea that talking to you on the phone is a natural thing). If she's passing a fake number to you, you'll know immediately. Cut your losses and move on, since that's not exactly the harbinger to fulfilling companionship. The only flakes you need in your life should be in a cereal bowl.

Between phone number and email address, I find the latter to be the more important piece of information. Email is asynchronous and discretionary: you can read and respond when you want to, if you want to. This is more convenient for you and her, especially if she's had bad experiences with undesirable men abusing her phone number. Think of email as a filter and a test for *your* benefit as well. Remember who's the prize here. Does she respond in a timely, enthusiastic manner? Can she write coherently? Is she interesting

and humorous in her letters? If not, then perhaps your time and energy is better spent elsewhere.

Flake insurance

For whatever reason, the correspondence between words and actions seems to be in decline in the Western world. And often a woman who is not tremendously interested in you, just to be polite, will not only give you her contact information but also go along and make a date with you. However, when the appointed hour arrives, she'll cancel at the last minute or just not show up. The best way to prevent this from happening in the first place is to do all the things you've read about up to this point: be so compelling such that it's equal parts her idea (or more) to see you again as it is yours. Have such deep rapport that you're now acting as a *team*, not two people at contrary purposes to one another. Without the deep rapport, you're just asking her for something, as opposed to having her give it to you. Just put yourself in her position and imagine: how enthusiastic would *you* feel about keeping a date for a woman who's showing interest in you whom you're not attracted to very much? Create the attraction first, and create so much of it that you can spot it from across town: before you can take something, you must wait for it to be given. But still, on occasion you just don't have enough time to create the attraction and you want to do it at a later date. For these situations, do a little due diligence: a five-minute phone call the night before can save you much time and disappointment. When you call her, commend her on her ability to pick you up and get a date with you. Also commend her excellent taste in men. Having established the lighthearted tone, now say something along these lines: "Listen, I just wanted to let you know that if you're so into me that you may be too shy to actually see me, that's totally cool, but I'd rather know now than tomorrow night after waiting in the cold rain for two hours with a wilted rose in my hand. So you think you can handle it and show up?" If you get anything but laughter and an overwhelmingly positive response, consider rescheduling or cancelling altogether. I'm sure you can do better than those exact words, but the concept is this: you're being funny; you're turning the tables on her; you're being a gentleman by taking her feelings and doubts into consideration; and at the same time, you're making sure that you don't waste your time.

Technique vs. non-action: The principle of *wu wu-wei*

We have gotten into a lot of detailed technique here, right down to the proper phrasing of your requests, and we'll be getting into some more of that. What you have to keep in mind that it is *always* a good idea to practice proper technique. Maintain that discipline. You should use proper technique *especially* when you think a certain woman is 'different' or 'not like the rest of them.' Never cut corners. Over time, the technique dissolves and becomes a part of you. It is no longer something that you do, but rather *who you are*. You will find that as you internalize the principles of the preceding chapters more and more and become the archetype of the attractive man, you will worry less and less about technique and find that things flow their own way. Remember that the best way to create attraction is to *be attractive*, and that is what will occur. This is the way of the Tao:

*In pursuit of knowledge,
every day something is added.
In the practice of the Tao,
every day something is dropped.
Less and less do you need to force things,
until finally you arrive at non-action.
When nothing is done,
nothing is left undone.*

*True mastery can be gained
by letting things go their own way.
It can't be gained by interfering.*

– Lao Tzu, Tao Te Ching, Ch. 48 (transl. Stephen Mitchell)

The Taoists call this *wu-wei* -- not doing. Or more accurately, *wu wu-wei* – doing not doing. Recall the time when you were first learning to ride a bicycle. There was a lot of struggle and doing involved. But now that you know how to ride a bike, it seems effortless to you. It doesn't feel like you're doing anything – you're just being a bike rider. Likewise, many of the concepts and techniques of The Tao of Dating may seem foreign to you at first. There seem to be a lot of little things to remember to do, phrases to get right. Isn't the Tao the path of simplicity? It is – and after you use the techniques for a while, you will recognize the source that they must come from. And when you become the source, you no longer have to worry about the right actions, because they will flow from you and be who you are. You won't be doing something. You will *be someone* – someone who is ultimately successful in life and with women. All the action will ultimately lead to non-action, until you're getting results feeling as if you're doing nothing at all.

Chapter 9

Do, Part IV: Romance, or Advanced Techniques for Attraction

What Women Want

Time and time again, surveys have been published about what women want. The main flaw with these surveys is that they try to make women explicitly state what fulfills their *unconscious* needs. Since by definition they are not conscious of these needs, the answers to these surveys don't always translate to useful information for the thinking man. However, from looking at the ensemble of dozens of such surveys, a pattern emerges. From these and from my experience, I conclude that women above all are looking for three things in a man, whether they are aware of it or not: *strength*, *humour* and *romance*. Women have been known to settle for men who possess just one of these three traits, so if you're working on having all three, you're in excellent shape. Let's look at each one in turn and see how we can turn you into an irresistibly funny, strong and romantic powerhouse.

Strength. We have talked about this before, and it bears repeating: women are hard-wired to be attracted to strong, dominant men of high status. Re-read the chapters on attitude and attraction and Miller's *The Mating Mind* to fully internalize this if you haven't already.

Humour. It feels good to laugh, so if you are the one making women laugh, they will associate those good feelings with you. Laughing gets the hormones of attraction and endogenous opioids rolling in the body. Be more the man who sprinkles his interactions

with a little bit of edgy humour and less the class clown or entertainer is less attractive. Go back and re-read the section on teasing. Humour is an excellent vehicle for delivering all kinds of innuendo, having the power to render the raunchy downright charming. As long as she's laughing, you can get away with almost anything.

Romance. Every woman will tell you that she's looking for a romantic guy. But no woman can tell you exactly what that is, or what specific actions a man can take to be romantic. A few years ago, I came up with a definition of romance which not only made a lot of sense to me and my students, but also lent itself well to being deployed in the real world. And here it is:

Dr Alex's Secret Formula for Romance

Romance = Mystery + Excitement + Consideration

If you have any two of the three, you're doing reasonably well. However, consideration had better be one of them, otherwise you're just another hyperactive, careless weirdo. All three would be an irresistible combination. A mnemonic to remember this is MEC, which happens to be French for 'guy'.

We've already talked about mystery in the section on how to be compelling. Remember that mystery is missing information. Make the word 'maybe' a mainstay of your vocabulary, and surprise her when possible. Surprise also feeds into excitement. Create excitement by engaging in activities that are novel and physically arousing. A flying lesson, a hike that ends in a breathtaking vista, an exercise or martial arts class, an impromptu road trip – these are all excellent ways of creating excitement.

Consideration is simply demonstrating that you have her well-being in mind. You can manifest it both on the large scale and the small scale. Bringing a small present when you first meet her is a good start. A single flower picked on the way to her apartment is the right idea; two dozen long-stem red roses are too much. Pick nice places to spend time with her, and take her needs and dietary requirements into account. Surprise is great, but make sure she's not a vegetarian before taking her to a steak house, and think twice about going to the monster truck rally with her if she's more of the ballet type. Gentlemanly behavior always conveys the right message of consideration. Always open doors for her, especially car doors. When she's getting in your car, open her door and close it after she's in and only then go to your side. Pull her chair out for her, take her coat, help her put it back on, order for both of you at the restaurant. Remember to maintain balance here: you're taking care of her, which is different from trying to impress her or gain her favor. All in moderation. The mixture of excitement and caring is the irresistible combination of masculine and feminine, yang and yin energy.

The four phases of romance: the practical viewpoint

By knowing the overall structure of a romantic encounter with a woman, you can assess where you are in the process and what you need to do to advance to the next phase. The phases are:

Total stranger → Sexy stranger → Sexy, safe stranger → Sexy partner

When you first meet a woman, she doesn't know you from Adam. At this point, you are a *total stranger*. You are an unknown quantity, and as you are male, bigger and stronger than her, you are a physical threat. After the initial contact, because of your irresistible wit, charm and playful teasing, you become the *sexy stranger*. She already likes you at this point. However, you're still a threat. Until you establish strong rapport and develop trust with her, she's not going to become intimate with you. After you establish that you're not a psychopath and gain her trust, you become a *sexy, safe stranger* (safe here does not mean nice or wimpy; it simply means you're not a threat to her well-being). Now that she does not feel physically threatened by you, she can express her feelings for you and explore her desires. As you deepen rapport and convey information about yourself such that she feels she knows you well (and you know her), the two of you become part of the same team. She's also participating in the courtship equally: teasing you, touching you, maybe even kissing you. You are now the *sexy partner*. For the purposes of a one-night stand or fling, the sexy, safe stranger phase is often enough. For the purposes of having a relationship of longer duration, the sexy partner phase is where you want to end up. Once you've established that you're the sexy partner, stay sexy by adding back a little danger. In the context of partnership, danger is exciting, while before it, danger is simply dangerous. Don't ever let yourself become safe, which is the prelude to predictable, boring and bye-bye.

How to know which phase you are in

You are a stranger until you open your mouth. If you do so and she starts laughing (or even better, hits you playfully) you are now the sexy stranger. If you ask her to come with you to be alone in a different part of the venue (party, bar, etc.) without leaving the venue, then you're sexy and safe. If she's willing to leave the venue with you to go anywhere else (not necessarily your place or hers), then you are partners.

Establishing trust and safety

In a moment, we are going to go through an outline of the steps you have to take to transition through the four phases of courtship. Note that once you have the part about being compelling down (all the material from Chapter 8), the main things you have to establish are trust and safety. Here are some techniques for doing precisely that. Some are obvious; others are completely counterintuitive.

Trust. My definition of trust is the ability to predict someone's behavior. As such, it has less to do with *what* you do and more with *how* you do it. Women will hook up with dangerous, roguish, outwardly untrustworthy men – bikers, players, tough guys – partially

because they know what to expect from them. It's the namby-pamby, passive-aggressive guy that they can't trust. And so the most potent way of establishing trust in woman's mind is trusting yourself and being comfortable with who you are. This reminds me of Nathaniel Branden's definition of self-esteem: "To trust yourself and know that you are deserving of happiness." This all goes back to our discussion of being a man. Re-read that section. In the meantime, what communicates your total self-acceptance is *congruence* – a total alignment of thought and physiology. That means that if you're attracted to a woman, you project that and are comfortable with it. If you're happy, you laugh. If you're not, you frown. You are what you are, and you expend no energy misrepresenting yourself or your emotions. That's all you really need to establish trust and convey that solid, unchanging core of you. On the way there, we can also use the following guidelines.

To *get* trust, *give* trust and get physical confirmation. If you give your trust first, she is much more likely to give you her trust in return through the law of reciprocity (see Cialdini's *Influence*). So share a secret: "Hey, can I tell you a secret? But you have to swear you won't tell anyone – promise?" Then make her do a pinkie swear. As juvenile as that may seem, it is a physical confirmation of verbal action, which strengthens the latter because she has taken action. Trust and rapport are closely related – the more rapport you have, the more that can engender trust.

The flip side of that technique is to *challenge her trustworthiness* in a playful manner. Say things like "I don't know if I can trust you – you just seem way too aggressive for me." That way, you are establishing yourself as the chooser and the one that has something to worry about. Now she has to gain your trust, giving you the latitude to allow her to win you over when the time is appropriate. This is a specific instance of adopting the picky buyer stance. If you're buying, you're the one at risk, so you get to set the rules.

The final trust-establishing technique is an advanced one and an extension of the above. It is to *show genuine emotion*, especially anger and affection. This is tricky and only recommended once you have gotten proficient at everything else. It is also very effective. Showing some anger towards her can paradoxically engender trust, because you are behaving differently from all the other guys who are too busy trying to get into her pants by ingratiating her. Since you are actively antagonizing her, you couldn't possibly be in that camp, and now she can trust you. The more genuine and justified the anger is, the better. Handle with care, because anger can either derail the courtship or massively intensify it, since it's such a powerfully arousing emotion. It's surprisingly common for strangers to make out after having a fight, and we all know about the intensity and passion of make-up sex right after a spat. Showing affection is also a tricky one. It's less tricky to direct it towards a third party, like a child or a pet, rather than the woman you're talking to. This is part of what makes a man with a child or a dog so irresistible to a woman: she is witnessing you in the act of giving affection, being a provider and nurturer. So find a subject that will allow you to demonstrate that intense, genuine emotion. The contrast between the detached, dominant persona – your masculine, yang aspect – and this display of genuine emotion – your feminine, yin aspect – is the perfect balance for creating trust in the context of attraction.

Safety. This is closely related to trust and perhaps has a more physical aspect to it. First establish safety by demonstrating body language that broadcasts “I am not a threat,” and then escalate that to verbal and non-verbal behavior that communicates “I will protect you.” Non-threatening body language consists of an open, relaxed body posture with palms facing upward, leaning away from her, and laughter. Scientists studying the origins of laughter now conclude that its evolutionary purpose is to communicate that danger is past. And so when you are laughing, especially in a group, at a very deep, unconscious level you are feeling the message, “Relax, you’re amongst friends” (see Morreall, *Taking Laughter Seriously*).

You can also utilize the cognitive dissonance technique to increase the feeling of safety. Recall how by having someone do a favor for you, they become more inclined to like you. Likewise, by taking action indicating that she feels safe with you, she can actually start to feel safe around you. The action precedes and creates the emotion. One way to do this is to get her alone with you in the venue, or to move to a different venue altogether. Get her back to her friends at some point when you have her alone – “Hey, let’s go see what your friends are up to” – and then get her alone again to deepen rapport even further. When you do go with her to a different venue, it will almost be as if it’s your first date, since you are now in it together. And togetherness is the first phase of partnership.

The phases: A scientific viewpoint

David Givens, an anthropologist, and Timothy Perper, a biologist, spent hundreds of hours in bars observing singles pick each other up and noticed that human courtship has several distinct stages, each with its own escalation point. The stages are:

1. Attention-getting
2. Recognition
3. Conversation
 - a. approach (opener)
 - b. talk (dialog)
 - c. turn to face
 - d. prolonged eye contact
 - e. touch
 - f. mirroring/body synchrony
4. Sexual intimacy
 - a. first kiss
 - b. serious kissing
 - c. lovemaking

Even though Givens and Perper’s study was done in a bar setting, I find the phases to be applicable overall to any male-female courtship setting. The key point to keep in mind is that there are phases, there are actions appropriate to each one, and there are ways of moving the phases along. By noticing which behaviors the two of you are engaging in,

you can tell roughly which phase you're in. By sensing that you have successfully passed through one phase, you can move on to the next one. In the next section, we will describe some of the go-ahead signals or green lights for advancing along. If you move through the phases too quickly or take the wrong action, the courtship fails. Helen Fisher writes in *Anatomy of Love*:

Men and women who are too aggressive at the beginning of the courting process also suffer unpleasant consequences. If you come too close, touch too soon, or talk too much, you will probably be repelled. Like wooing among wolf spiders, baboons, and other creatures, the human pickup runs on message. At every juncture in the ritual each partner must respond correctly, otherwise the courtship fails.

Green lights, or signs for advancing to the next phase

In courtship, your job as the man is to initiate contact and recognize the signals from the women that allow you to move the courtship through its phases. The woman's job is to observe you and give you the green light to move ahead when you do the correct thing. Get used to the fact that at every point, it is up to you to perform and to screw up. You already know that it's your job as the man to take the lead, and you're comfortable with that. The question is: What are these signs, and how do I notice them? The signs are women's nonverbal behaviors. Remember Rule #2 from the *Attitudes* chapter: *I will cue my behavior to what she does, not what she says*. This rule is paramount especially in this setting. Over time, as you become more and more observant, these nonverbal signals will become a language which you can read like a book, and you will be able to observe the progress of a courtship from across a room, without needing to hear a word. The list is not comprehensive; I urge you to become a student of body language by becoming observant and watching people in social settings. After a while, you will be able to read the whole course of a relationship from a 30-second snippet of their interaction or even just a snapshot. If you wish to become even more proficient at reading body language, I recommend Desmond Morris's excellent, highly readable treatise *Peopewatching*.

Here are some of the green light signals. In addition to these, you want to be asking yourself, "Is she being generally open and friendly towards me?" If the answer is yes, then you're doing well and should consider advancing to the next stage:

- She tilts her head and looks at you coyly
- She arches her back
- She tosses her head and hair, plays with her hair, twirls it, flips it about
- She turns her body to face you
- Her pupils dilate
- She makes prolonged eye contact
- She starts to mirror your actions and exhibit body synchrony
- She touches you

Most of these are unconscious behaviors, and the more unconscious they are, the more reliable they are as a sign that the woman is flirting and interested in you. For example,

the last three items on this list are supposed to be the strongest signs of a woman's interest in you – touching in particular. However, there are some flirtatious women who will touch people early on as part of their charm strategy. The one sign which is virtually impossible to fake from the list above is *pupil dilation*. It is an incontrovertible sign of emotional arousal and attraction, and the only way to observe it is by paying close attention to the woman and looking directly into her eyes.

I like this passage from Helen Fisher summarizing women's flirting signals. Read it, re-read it, remember it:

Women from places as different as the jungles of Amazonia, the salons of Paris, and the highlands of New Guinea apparently flirt with the same sequence of expressions.

First the woman smiles at her admirer and lifts her eyebrows in a swift, jerky motion as she opens her eyes wide to gaze at him. Then she drops her eyelids, tilts her head down and to the side, and looks away. Frequently she also covers her face with her hands, giggling nervously as she retreats behind her palms. This sequential flirting gesture is so distinctive that ethologist Irenaus Eibl-Eibesfeldt is convinced it is innate, a human female courtship ploy that evolved eons ago to signal sexual interest.

Notice how the Givens and Perper phases and the various green lights map onto our four practical phases (stranger, sexy stranger, sexy safe stranger, sexy partner) map. Combine the two for a more comprehensive picture of where you stand and how things are progressing.

Transitioning through the phases: The Date Blueprint

Here's an outline of the things you want to be doing when you first meet a woman. The principles hold for a first date as well. The cardinal rule to keep in mind is *before you can take something, you must wait for it to be given*. This means that before you advance to the next stage, you must wait for permission to be granted – which will be done nonverbally almost always. *Festina lente* – make haste slowly.

*Rushing into action, you fail.
Trying to grasp things, you lose them.
Forcing a project to completion,
you ruin what was almost ripe.*

– Lao Tzu, Tao Te Ching, Ch. 64 (transl. Stephen Mitchell)

To go from Total Stranger to Sexy Stranger: Open the interaction and be compelling, doing the things that we described in the previous chapter. Tease her and get her laughing.

To go from Sexy Stranger to Sexy, Safe Stranger: You must make her feel safe and have her trust you. Establish powerful rapport.

Nonverbal behavior: open body posture; lean away from her; palms facing upwards; look into her eyes as you speak and listen; assume rapport; go into the emotional state of the bond (see *Rapport* section above).

Verbal behavior: share a secret; ask her about things that are important to her; challenge her trustworthiness

To go from Sexy Safe Stranger to Sexy Partner: deepen rapport by doing things together; change venues; use time distortion, anchoring and the take-away (see the next section); start making out

Advancing the phases: The three secret romantic accelerators

Now I'd like to give you three brand-new techniques which I call *accelerators*, because they have the effect of moving the courtship forward very quickly. These are advanced techniques which we discuss and practice extensively in *The Tao of Dating* seminar. With some initiative and practice on your own, you should be able to grasp the essence of these techniques and use them successfully. The three techniques are *anchoring*, *time distortion*, and *the take-away*.

Anchoring. This is a tremendously powerful technique which can emotionally supercharge your encounters with women. As we discussed earlier, the primary thrust of your interactions with women is to make them *feel*, and anchoring is the ultimate technique for making women feel absolutely amazing, again and again. An anchor is simply a stimulus that we link to a particular desired response. In classical conditioning, the anchor is the *marker* – an initially meaningless signal that becomes associated with a particular response. The classic anchor is the bell that Dr. Ivan Pavlovich Pavlov rang right before he fed a dog. After a few times of doing this, the dog would salivate in response to the bell, even when there was no food involved. The principle works even better in people. Human beings learn very quickly – sometimes with just one trial.

For an anchor or marker to work properly, you must get three things right: *specificity*, *uniqueness* and *timing*. *Specificity* simply means that you must use the exact same marker every time – same specific sound or gesture, or as close to it as possible. Think of an environmental anchor, like a stop sign, and how it always looks the same. If it were circular instead of octagonal, its meaning wouldn't be as clear. *Uniqueness* means that this marker is associated only with the desired response and nothing else. For example, using a hand wave as a marker is a bad idea, since it is already associated with other gestures in people's heads. You want there to be a clear, uncluttered connection between your marker and the desired response. Finally, you must *time* the marker so that it occurs right at the peak of your desired emotional response. That way, you are marking the desired response at its maximum.

Now that we have the theory behind anchoring down, let us illustrate the technique with an example. The first step is to *evoke the desired state*. Let's say the desired state is pleasure and incredible fun. So if you are speaking to a woman, you want to ask her something like this: "What do you really like to do for fun? What's the activity that gives you the most enjoyment?" Let's say she likes skydiving. Then you say, "That sounds like a lot of fun. What was it like the last time you were skydiving?" Now she will describe the experience for you, and in the process of describing it, she will go into the emotional state of the experience. Elicit from her all the sensory details – what it looks like, what it sounds like, how it smells and tastes, and most importantly, how it *feels*. You may even want to ask her which part of it is the most intense, the part that feels the best. While she's describing this, you want to pay complete and total attention to her physiological responses. When she is actually going into the emotional state, her breathing will change, the color of her face will change, her pupils will most likely dilate and her general posture will change. With observation and practice, you'll become better and better at noticing these changes. When you recognize that she is at the peak of the desired state, you want to *mark it with an anchor*, which is the second step. Touch anchors are the most reliable. Effective and appropriate touch anchors (which you will always do on neutral body zones) are a quick tap or double tap on the wrist or shoulder or an elbow squeeze. Visual anchors and sound anchors are also effective. A visual anchor can be as simple as a head tilt, or pointing sideways with a forefinger, or a combination of the two. A sound anchor could be an uncommon word (remember the specificity requirement), or a regular word with pronounced in an uncommon way ("wow, that's really in-TENSE"). As you get more practice with this, simultaneously combine a sound and touch anchor for maximum potency. For example, as you do the double wrist-tap, you say, "That's sounds really... in-TENSE."

What's this good for? From that point on, any time you fire off the anchor, she will go into that same emotional state again. Assuming that it was a pleasurable state that you chose, she will then feel good and over time come to associate that good feeling with your company. In *The Tao of Dating* seminar, we extensively demonstrate and practice the anchoring technique such that it becomes second nature, enabling you to use it in day-to-day situations for a variety of purposes. It's an important life skill and an essential part of anyone's persuasion toolkit. In the appendix and bibliography, I recommend some products dealing specifically with anchoring.

Exercise 18. Anchoring: How to evoke an emotion in yourself and others on demand

1. *Elicit* a desirable emotional state.
2. *Mark* the desirable state at the peak of its intensity with a specific, unique anchor. Touch anchors tend to be the most reliable; combine with a vocal anchor when possible.
3. *Fire* the anchor at opportune moments to evoke that same pleasurable state.

Time distortion. In my studies of the art and science of persuasion, this technique is one of the most potent I have ever encountered. Also called *pseudo-orientation in time*, it's equally effective for therapeutic and persuasion purposes. It also happens to be one of the easiest ones to use. The basic idea is to describe what you want to happen as if it has already happened, and you are now looking at those events from a position in the future. Since that probably made no sense at all, let me illustrate with an example. Let's say you've just met a great girl named Kathy, and she's the kind of girl you'd like to date. You want to be saying something like this: "You know what's funny, Kathy? Have you ever asked couples who have been together for a while how they first met? It's always so random. I mean, let's say that you and I actually end up getting along and end up going out together and having a great time. Six months down the road, we'd be sitting at the Omelet Store on Green Street on a Sunday, laughing and having a wonderful time, and we would *look back* at this day, and I'd say, 'Wow, isn't it funny how we met that night at XYZ Gallery, and how I made fun of your hairdo but you were a good sport about it 'cause you really liked me from the start, and then we somehow ended up making out in the car'..." You get the general idea. The key phrase in there is *look back at this day* – notice how it works. The power of this technique comes from *presupposition* and *visualization*. In order for Kathy to understand what you're saying at all, she has to accept the premise that you will have dated for six months, and then to make a picture of that situation in her head, since it hasn't happened yet. And, as you probably know already, the brain cannot tell the difference between reality and what it imagines vividly. So make the picture of the future vivid. Add all kinds of sensory detail to make it real; I have no doubt that with your imagination, you can come up with a far better version of that story up there. And feel free to play with the present, too. By all means add bits and pieces that haven't happened yet but clearly should (e.g. "somehow ended up making out in the car").

The take-away. This third maneuver is devastatingly effective. I find it to be more challenging to use than the other two because it requires more discipline. The idea behind the take-away is best illustrated by the classic scenario of imagining a car salesman who is about to close the sale with a couple in the business office. The couple is obviously interested – after all, they're already in the business office. But they have some last-minute doubts. They're conferring, mulling their choices. Right then, the salesman says, "Look, I understand, you guys probably aren't ready. You probably don't think you deserve this new car yet," grabs the contract, and begins to tear it up right before their eyes. At this moment, the couple cries, "No no no! We're ready! Don't tear it up!," grab the contract back and sign it. I'm dramatizing a bit, but you get the general idea.

People are highly sensitized to *perceived loss*, and are often willing to take immediate action to avoid it. A recent experiment showed that this feature may not be a cultural artifact, but rather an evolutionarily built-in feature of our behavior. Researchers trained capuchin monkeys to use plastic discs ('money') for pieces of apple. One apple vendor gave one piece per disc. The other vendor gave two pieces per disc, but at the very last moment took one piece away. Guess what happened? The monkeys overwhelmingly preferred the *first* vendor. They hated the idea of losing something, even though in reality,

they were getting the exact same thing from both vendors – one piece of apple. They took action to avoid ‘loss’ – and we do, too.

For the take-away maneuver to work in a social setting, you have to do it at the *peak* of interest, or just past when it’s waning a tiny bit. At that very moment when you’ve got her laughing, touching you, and you *know* she’s into you, you must walk: “Hey, gotta go check up on my buddies. See you around.” What?! Besides confusing her – and confusion equals flirtation – the take-away immediately tells you where you stand in relation to her. If she’s into you, she’ll look a little disappointed, she’ll say “don’t leave”, or she’ll pout – and the take-away will only heighten her interest. If she’s not into you, you will know immediately, and you’ve cut your losses and stopped wasting your time. It’s a hallmark *Tao of Dating* maneuver, since regardless of the outcome, you have made progress. And it also requires discipline. Some of you probably noticed that in order for this maneuver to work, you have to overcome *your own* perceived-loss circuitry. And right when you’ve made so much progress! But because you are a student of the Tao, you are detached from your outcome while moving towards it. And you know that what may outwardly seem like taking a step backwards actually moves you closer to your outcome.

*The generals have a saying:
"Rather than make the first move
It is better to wait and see.
Rather than advance an inch
It is better to retreat a yard."*

*This is called
Going forward without advancing,
Pushing back without using weapons...*

*...When two great forces oppose each other,
The victory will go
To the one that knows how to yield.*

– Lao Tzu, Tao Te Ching, Ch. 69 (transl. Stephen Mitchell)

Kissing girls: theory and practice

You know we’re all in trouble when we have to consult books to figure out when to kiss women. But the fact is that it’s not entirely obvious, and there are good ways of doing it and better ways of doing it. Several elements go into a good first kiss: the man appears to be in control, the act seems spontaneous, and the kiss subtly communicates passionate desire. Most importantly, you, the man, must never ask for permission. You gain permission by noticing her green lights and then forging ahead. Before you take something, you must wait for it to be given.

The more relevant question is not how but *when* to kiss a woman. The answer is: as soon as she is ready. First, I suggest not to leave it for the end of your date. Arrange things such that the kissing can occur sometime in the middle of your date. This eliminates

end-of-date pressure and dawdling and catches your companion by surprise – good thing. That's the soon part. Now, how do you know when she's ready? You do this three ways: by gauging rapport, noticing her green lights, and testing.

Gauging rapport. In her well-researched book *How to Make Anyone Fall in Love With You*, Leil (pronounced *leel*) Lowndes talks about the four phases of conversation in courtship: the cliché phase (talking about the weather), the facts phase (events and things), the feelings and personal questions phase, and the we phase. The point is that at the deepest level of rapport, you are at the fourth level of conversation: the *we* phase. You are already in a partnership of sorts, and you are talking about you two together: *we*. Also notice the body language: are you moving together? Is she following your lead? Review the rapport and accelerator techniques from above. If you only take one skill with you into the world from this book, it should be rapport – how to gain it, and how to deepen it. Within rapport, anything is possible; without it, almost nothing is.

Noticing her green lights. Review the section above on green lights. The key to noticing them is observation. Pay total attention to her at all times, which is flattering and attractive in its own right. Look at her directly in the eyes. Catch the go-ahead signals, then actually go ahead.

Testing. Sometimes the signals aren't too clear, or you just want to make sure of where you stand. This is where testing comes into play. This involves touching her casually in her safe zones and noticing how she reacts. For simplicity, let's just say her arm, from the hands up to her shoulders, constitutes the safe zone for touching. During conversation, test her receptiveness to your touch by marking occasional exclamations (yours or hers) with a brief touch. If she is receptive, she will touch you back or at least remain comfortable, in which case you can escalate by increasing the length and frequency of touch and by moving to slightly less neutral zones. If she pulls back, flinches or shows any facial sign of discomfort, that means she wasn't ready. Pull back as well, slightly more than she has, and resume the rapport-building process. Stay calm and forge ahead. A good piece of advice on testing that I have heard from multiple sources is to test by touching her hair. Rapport has to be deep for this to work, and preferably, you have already tested by touching her in the safe zone. Although hair is non-innervated (actually, non-living) tissue, it's an intimate thing to have your hair touched. This combination of it being a relatively safe zone physically but an intimate zone psychologically makes hair a good part of the body for testing purposes.

Once you have gauged rapport, noticed her green lights, touch-tested and know she's ready, go ahead and kiss her. Passing up the opportunity when it's there is tantamount to insulting a woman who is into you, and it could be punished by having that opportunity go away indefinitely. The better you get at these skills, the more you will realize that there are sins of omission in courtship as well as sins of commission. Strike while the iron is hot and fulfill the promise of romance you have created.

Fulfill your promise. Take the next step when you know a woman is ready. It's ungentlemanly to leave her hanging.

The key factor determining whether or not you're going to have sex

Let's say you've done all your homework up to this point. You have solid rapport, she trusts you and feels safe around you. The make-out session has begun in earnest, and both bodies are primed for naturally moving the intimacy forward. The prime determinant of whether or not this happens has little to do with skill and everything to do with *logistics*. In other words, she has to feel *safe* and *comfortable*. There are myriad variables that fit into this – how late it is, how far her place/your place is, whether she has to be somewhere later, time of month, when her/your flight is the next morning, whether her friends know about it, presence of roommates, etc. In the end, they all boil down to her comfort and safety. Recall the principle of arranging the environment such that it facilitates your outcome. Be prepared. Here are some tips to get you started:

- *Start the date early.* This cannot be overemphasized.
- *Have the date close to your or her neighborhood.* Walking distance is ideal.
- *Do not get drunk.* You want to be able to drive yourself and her to wherever you need to get.
- *Have her pick you up.* Not only does this activate the commitment/consistency mechanism, but it also naturally puts you at your place at the end of the date.
- *Be flexible.* If somehow the evening gets rambunctious and she and all her friends get in a cab and invite you to come along, go. You can retrieve your car later, and the story will be worth far more than the return cab fare. You can live with a parking ticket, but you'll never get rid of regret.
- *Have small get-togethers at your place and invite her.* That way she's already at your place in a socially-acceptable context.
- *Cook for her.* Offering food for sex is the oldest ploy in the animal kingdom, and women know it. Make sure there is enough trust and interest before you make this offer, otherwise she might (rightly) suspect that you're trying to pull a fast one. If you wouldn't feel comfortable inviting a new guy friend to your place the first time you hang out, chances are she won't be too keen on showing up to your place on a first date either. Second or third date is a much better bet.
- *Cook at her place.* A variation on the above theme, and she gets to feel safer at her home.
- *Have your place clean and your bed made.* Remember, it's all about her safety and comfort. Keep the bathroom spotlessly clean and well-stocked with toilet paper. Make sure the bed is made. Generally, a woman will *not* willingly crawl into an unmade bed.

- *Have a reason for her coming over.* As a rule, women cannot be jimmied, techniqued, wheedled or cajoled into coming to your place. She will *only* do it if she wants to, and she will *only* want to if she's already really into you and trusts you. That said, make it easy for her to act on her inclinations by providing a reason for her to continue the evening at your pad. That way, not only are you using the power of because (the copy machine principle), but you are also providing her with an excuse such that *she* doesn't seem too aggressive or eager. If it was something interesting you were talking about earlier in the evening – this great bottle of wine you got from Thursday's tasting, a killer dessert, this crazy new astrology book, pictures of your trip to Alaska – so much the better. Remember, the excuse is for her, not for you. As a man, we already discussed that you're comfortable with your desires and no excuses are necessary. And make it fun – less ploy, more joy.
- *Frame her as the aggressor.* Invite her over but put strict conditions on it: "We can chill for a spell, but only for a half hour because I have to get some stuff done/go to work early," or "If you promise to behave, we can continue the conversation for a little while longer over strawberries and wine."
- *Flow with it.* Sometimes the best thing to do is to just forget about all the techniques and rules, and to realize that you've made a real connection with a real person in front of you and to go with the moment. If it's meant to be, it will. Something as simple as, "Hey, I'm having a great time and I'm not quite ready for the evening to end. How about you?" has been the beginning of many a beautiful tale.

The psychic component of being safe and comfortable is as important if not more so than the physical aspect. The question running in the back of a woman's mind whenever the prospect of sexual activity with a man arises is "How will I be perceived?" In our society, a man who has many sexual partners is called a stud. The female counterpart is labeled a slut. Women will deprive themselves of any amount of pleasure and opportunities for personal growth to avoid that label. So she wonders: How will he perceive me? Will he judge me? How will my friends perceive me? Is there anyone else who will know about this (e.g. roommates)? Address these issues before they arise. The best way to put her at ease is to be at ease with yourself. Recall that total self-acceptance is one of the three pillars of masculinity. People tend to judge and accept others to the same extent that they judge and accept themselves, so accept yourself completely and judge nothing. Be cool with whatever is happening, and she will take her cue from you and be at ease herself.

Prevent trouble before it arises.

Put things in order before they exist...

--Lao Tzu, Tao Te Ching, Ch. 64 (transl. Stephen Mitchell)

Your reputation also comes into play here. Do you tend to kiss and tell, or do you keep your personal life personal? I recommend a policy of complete confidentiality regarding what happens between you and a woman. That means no kiss and tell, ever.

The only reason to recount stories is to uphold your own importance, which we've already established is a waste of energy. Fulfillment is internal, so externalizing it by talking about it generally diminishes its power. Women know an attractive man when they see one, so the more you keep your stories to yourself, the more you cultivate an aura of mystery and silent power, and the more attractive you become.

Part IV

Have



Chapter 10

Have: Making Relationships Last

Your relationship with a woman begins from the moment you say hello. That relationship can last anywhere from a minute to a lifetime. However, a *sexual* relationship with a woman begins when you first engage in sexual activity with her (whatever your personal definition of sexual activity is). The relationship changes significantly after that point. As such, it's important to make it clear to her and to yourself what you want and what you're offering before sexual activity happens.

Representing yourself with integrity

In the early chapters, we discussed taking stock and figuring out what you want from your relationships with women. Now is a good time to revisit that question in light of the three types of love feelings that Helen Fisher enumerated: lust, romance, and long-term attachment. Roughly, those three translate to short-, medium- and long-term relationships. For shorthand, let's call them fling, romance, and partnership.

Consider this situation. Let's say you're at an amusement park, and you're looking for a really fun ride. An attendant approaches you and tells you about this incredibly exciting, borderline dangerous ride. You get very eager to try this ride and stand in line. After an hour's wait, you get on it – and it's mostly a flat, medium-speed ride that barely makes your heart rate rise. How do you feel about the ride? How do you feel about the attendant? Let's consider the reverse scenario, in which you're looking for a fun but mellow ride, and the attendant directs you to The Widowmaker, their steepest, fastest, twistiest ride. How do you feel about that attendant after you get off *that* ride? Perhaps a little angry?

There's an analogy here with the relationship marketplace. If you represent yourself as someone who's looking for serious dating but really just wants to sleep with as many women as possible, you're misrepresenting yourself. This will lead to your unhappiness, as you may get stuck in an arrangement you don't necessarily want; *her* unhappiness, because she's not quite getting what she wants; and once again *your* unhappiness, which will be caused by her unhappiness (count on it). It's also a violation of your integrity, which will always be to your own detriment. Call it karma, call it what comes around goes around, call it having it bite you back in the ass – it's a bad idea. As a man, your word is your honor. Keep it that way. This reminds me of the first of Don Miguel Ruiz's *Four Agreements*, namely: *be impeccable with your word*.

Be impeccable with your word.

Don't take anything personally.

Don't make assumptions.

Always do your best.

– Don Miguel Ruiz, *The Four Agreements*

Now that we've covered how *not* to represent yourself, the question is: how *do* you want to represent yourself? The answer is that you should represent yourself in the manner that is best aligned with your goals and intrinsic nature. On one end of the spectrum is the archetype of the rogue -- the bad boy, the dangerous man. He's in it for the adventure, to play the field and have some fun. He doesn't concern himself too much with the long term. On the other end is the nurturer and potential husband. He's more of a one woman-one guy kind of person. Figure out where you *are* on this continuum now. Also figure out where you *want* to be on this continuum, because you can change your position based on the principles you've read about so far. However, in the end, you'll be most effective and have the greatest fulfillment when you align your external message with your internal nature.

Just as the three brain circuits for lust, romantic love and long-term attachment are interrelated, so are the fling, romance and partnership systems related. Serious long-term relationships (i.e. partnerships) are usually borne of romance. Flings can lead to romance and subsequently even marriage. However, note that you generally cannot move backwards in the sequence:

fling → romance → partnership
rogue → cool guy → husband

If you market yourself as a partner, you will not become fling material. Ever. Even if you market yourself for romance, chances are very small of getting in the fling zone. However, if you start in the fling zone, you have the latitude to move forwards along this one-way street. It follows that the rogue archetype has the greatest freedom when it comes to the type of relationship he wants to have. This makes sense, since the rogue adventurer type is usually successful at creating strong attraction with women. Lest you think that this is an unreserved recommendation of the bad boy lifestyle, be forewarned. If

it does not fit your personality well, you will feel like a phony. And having lots of women around does not necessarily translate into fulfillment. Deep fulfillment comes from deep connections, and the bad boy lifestyle can preclude that. The dirty secret of some of these bad boys who get lots of women is that some of them are profoundly lonely and fundamentally unhappy, trying to fill that void with quantity instead of quality. Find out where *your* fulfillment lies. Pursue that, and not some standard someone else has prescribed for you.

The art of early disclosure

Now that you know what to do regarding marketing yourself with integrity, the question is how you will go about doing it. To that, there are two components: timing and wording. As far as timing is concerned, you should make your terms clear regarding the meaning of your impending intimacy *after* it becomes relevant and *before* sexual activity (however you choose to define it) begins. If you start talking about it at the start of your first date, it will sound presumptuous and just plain weird. If you talk about it after a night of shared passion, you risk coming off as an opportunistic creep. This is another instance of the idea of taking the middle path, a recurrent theme in Eastern thought.

As far as wording is concerned, you should convey in your own way that you don't make any promises you can't keep. Phrased positively, you only make promises you can keep. Honesty is absolutely the best policy here. If you're coming off a difficult relationship and you'd like to have some time to get to know someone before making a commitment, say so. If you're not boyfriend material right now but you really enjoy her company and want to get to know her better, say that. If you are looking for a serious girlfriend, she might be looking for relationship lite, so that's worth mentioning, too (there are two parties involved here, and sometimes *you're* the more vulnerable one). One way to do it is to preface your statement with "I just want to make sure you understand one thing before we go any further..." and end it with "... and if you're not cool with that, I totally understand." Don't worry about 'losing the deal.' This is not a business transaction, but rather a delicate exchange between two emotionally vulnerable beings – you being one of them. Your integrity and the emotional well-being of both of you is worth more than any potential sexual experience. Also, it's in your enlightened self-interest to state where you stand. Complete honesty can only win you points, since it signals comfort with yourself and your desires without apology or excuse. She has probably had experiences with men who have behaved with less integrity at this point, so your candor will be well-received. And if it's not well-received, then you're probably better off without the entanglement that would have ensued had you not made yourself clear. Finally, making yourself clear now gives you greater flexibility in the relationship down the road. If you don't say anything, the woman will make some assumption about the meaning of your interaction, which may not be the same as what *you* want. Regret usually follows. Don't let it.

The importance of sex in relationships

Sex is not everything in a relationship, but it's a big part of it. As we discussed earlier, oxytocin is the hormone chiefly responsible for feelings of long-term attachment in women (in men, it's vasopressin). We also mentioned that oxytocin is produced at the

moment of orgasm and through touch. For this and hundreds of other reasons, good sex plays a big part in starting and maintaining a relationship. This point cannot be overemphasized.

Let's just take it as a given that being good at sex is a good thing, and that you are interested in getting better and better at it. In fact, I can hardly think of a more useful, practical life skill. For whatever reason, sex is caught up in a lot of taboo and restriction in Western society (and just about everywhere else). Robert Anton Wilson observes that there is one rule that every human tribe has in common: *reproductive activity will not go unregulated by the tribe*. The upshot of this all is that if you're like most people, you've probably received little or no instruction regarding good sex. And that's a perfectly acceptable starting point.

Lucky for us, there's a lot of good resources out there to catch up on lost time. Thousands of years ago, there were Chinese emperors and Indian maharajas with lots of money and free time on their hands. Seeing as there was neither cable nor video games then, what these emperors would do in their copious spare time was to have lots of sex with their hundreds of wives and concubines. They also commissioned their philosophers and scientists to figure out novel and exciting ways of enhancing their sexual experiences. Predictably, over hundreds of years, these emperors and philosophers came up with a lot of good stuff. From China came the treatises of the Taoist masters and the Yellow Emperor; from India, the Kama Sutra, the Ananga Ranga, and the works of the yoga masters. What they figured out was not just the incredible variety and intensity of possible sexual practice, but also the potential to use sexual communion as a path to higher consciousness. A good reference for that knowledge is the comprehensive *Sexual Secrets*, by Nik Douglas and Penny Slinger, which covers the traditions of India, China, Nepal, Tibet and Japan.

It's easy to become overwhelmed by the abundance of information on sexuality. Where does one start? How do you separate between what's important and what's less important? In the booklet *The Tao of Sexual Mastery*, I summarize the content of dozens of books on sexuality into practical principles which you can learn and put to use immediately. Instead of burdening you with piles of detail to sift through, the booklet gives you the basic principles of anatomy, physiology and technique that you can then expand upon and adapt to your own needs.

Making relationships last

All relationships are temporary. Even the best ones eventually end in death or divorce. Once you reconcile yourself with that fact, you can focus on being fully present in the relationship at all times and worrying less about how long it will last. I believe that every relationship has an intrinsic length to it. All relationships are equally valid as long as they enrich your life, help you grow as a person and increase your personal freedom. A one-night stand is not any better or worse than a 50-year marriage – it simply is what it is. And trying to make a relationship last longer than its intrinsic length (or cutting it off before its time) will likely cause you pain. In the meantime, if it is in your interest to make a relationship last, there are some things you need to know.

Let's revisit the three kinds of love – lust, romantic love, and long-term attachment (fling, romance and partnership in our parlance). Lust operates on a time frame of hours to

days. Romantic love operates on a time frame of weeks to months. And long-term attachment operates on a time frame of months to years. There are occasional exceptions, but if you expect any one of these things to last longer than they actually do, you will be disappointed. Pain is expecting the world to be different than it is. It's a universally known fact that love fades; and yet, it is a universal phenomenon that when caught in the throes of love, we just *know* that this one's going to last forever.

Here are the facts. Scientists tell us that the average time that 'in love' feeling lasts is 18 months. Four years is about the upper limit. That's also about the peak time for divorce and infidelity. Biologists speculate that it's probably because way back when, it took that long for an infant to become somewhat independent (just over 3 years old) and to free up the woman's hands so she's not completely dependent on the man to provide for her and the child.

The point is this: if you want a relationship to last, be prepared for change. The glue that keeps a romance together is not the same as the one that keeps a partnership in place. The magical brew of neurotransmitters and hormones that sustains that feeling of being in love diminishes over time. Deal with it. What replaces it is a deep feeling of appreciation, trust, respect, and understanding which is less intense but more durable.

We've all heard the saying "Good fences make good neighbors," and the same is true of a relationship. One of the most effective ways of keeping you together is the ability to stay apart. Some of the best advice I've ever heard about making relationships last comes from Kahlil Gibran. In *The Prophet*, one of the townspeople asks the departing Al-Mustapha about marriage, and he responds:

*You were born together, and together you shall be forevermore...
But let there be spaces in your togetherness,
And let the winds of the heavens dance between you.*

*Love one another, but make not a bond of love:
Let it rather be a moving sea between the shores of your souls.
Fill each other's cup but drink not from one cup.
Give one another of your bread but eat not from the same loaf.
Sing and dance together and be joyous, but let each one of you be alone,
Even as the strings of the lute are alone though they quiver with the same music.*

*Give your hearts, but not into each others' keeping.
For only the hand of Life can contain your hearts.
And stand together yet not too near together:
For the pillars of the temple stand apart,
And the oak tree and the cypress grow not in each others' shadow.*

Recall that the universe is a reflection of you. If you hold on too tight to someone, you are in effect saying to the world, "I'm afraid of losing her." The world will then simply affirm your feeling by making you lose her. Instead, celebrate every moment of her presence in your life, knowing full well that her presence is temporary. If you're busy

appreciating her and being exceptionally good to her, you won't have time to think about losing her. Also, leave the cage door open. Men often get so caught up in keeping a woman that they forget that, as wonderful as the other person may be, the relationship itself isn't fulfilling. You don't want to be with someone who doesn't want to be with you, and that's true for both parties.

Of course, the best way not to have to worry about losing her is once again to turn the tables, making sure that she's more worried about losing *you*. If you successfully applied the principles of *The Tao of Dating*, chances are that you became attractive to more than one woman. Women notice this and value it. The next section talks about how to keep that attractiveness going, even after you're in a long-term relationship.

Tightening the helmet

If you've done everything right up to this point, congratulations. You embodied a strong masculine presence, you were compelling, you were romantic, you were an all-around stud, and by golly you got the girl. Now I've got news for you: the work has just begun. As the old samurai proverb goes: *After the victory is won, tighten your helmet*. Right after you've done everything right is when you are most likely to falter. Don't let that happen. Remember that the man's job is to maintain the lead – always. Keep up the good work you've done up to this point and fulfill your promise by maintaining a strong masculine presence (with the internal frame, total self-acceptance and leadership), staying compelling and keeping up the romance. Getting the girl is not a license to backslide into the bad habits of yore. If you do, she *will* notice, and you *will* lose her.

This is also the time to realize that if she has been testing you up to this point, she will test you even more henceforth. Expect that and be prepared for it. One of the things that women will try to do in a long-term relationship is to tame the man. Ironically, if she succeeds, she will have also initiated the demise of the relationship. What she found attractive in the man in the first place was his strength and independence, so taming him quenches the fire of attraction. However, you know this and will prevent its happening by always maintaining some tension in the relationship. Do this in two ways: by maintaining your independence and your aura as a sexual being. Be respectful and considerate, but also make it absolutely clear what your boundaries are and when you must have your own time. If Friday night is your time with the boys, then you state that clearly and stick to it. A pet has no independence and no sexual aura – don't turn into one. Chances are a pet is not what she signed up for, and it's not what she'll stick around for either. She was attracted to you because you were sexually dangerous in some way, so maintain some of that. Again, all things in moderation. A little subdued flirtatiousness with other women, a little “do you think so-and-so is cute” comment every once in a while is all it takes for her to remember that you're still alive, and that's what drew her to you in the first place.

How not to be taken for granted

One of the main factors contributing to the demise of long-term relationships is being taken for granted. All those things that made you wonderful, interesting and special are now simply accepted as standard features. Sometime it reaches a point where just a small lapse from wonderfulness is held against you. This is completely normal and

expected. There's nothing sinister about it. In fact, it's a demonstration of *habituation*, one of the main features of the mammalian nervous system and a cornerstone of adaptability. In other words, it's not a bug, it's a feature, and it's not going away. So learn how to work with it, not against it. Be like water, as the Taoists say. Don't try to topple the obstacle; just figure out a way to go around it.

To optimize survival, the nervous system has evolved to notice change and filter out the background. It happens in all of your five senses: eyes notice moving objects and not static ones; you stop noticing the refrigerator's hum after a few days; you stop smelling something after five minutes. This is called *habituation*, and there are mechanisms operating at the *cellular* level to make this work. In other words, you're better off understanding it and working with it rather than fighting it. And the proper way to circumvent habituation is to deliberately introduce salient, unpredictable stimulus, better known as *change*.

There are infinite ways of being unpredictable, but here I want to give you two techniques derived from behavioral psychology and animal training. The first is deliberate unpredictability, especially when it comes to doing nice things for your partner. Behavioral psychologists and animal trainers call this implementing an *irregular schedule of reinforcement*. Let's say you've been training a dolphin to jump, and you've been rewarding it with a single fish each time. The fish is the *reinforcer* – something that increases the chances of the behavior happening in the future. Now if you keep up the one fish-one jump regimen, after a while the dolphin will stop jumping as high. This is not because the dolphin is temperamental or evil – it's just the way things work neurologically. The way to make sure that the dolphin's response doesn't decay over time is, paradoxically, to withhold the fish for a while. Give it to the dolphin every third or fifth jump. If you withdraw it entirely, the reinforced behavior will stop, so keep up the reinforcer; just give it irregularly. Now a funny thing happens: the dolphin starts to jump *higher* in order to get its reward. On some level, it has realized that just showing up isn't enough; it has to work harder.

If you think you're a lot smarter than a dolphin, let me ask you this: Has your interest in a woman ever increased after she told you she didn't want to see you? Have you ever started calling a woman even more *after* she stops returning your calls in a timely fashion? Have you ever started to put in more hours at work after the regular kudos you were getting stopped? The fact is, people *are* a lot smarter than dolphins, which is why this technique works even *better* for them.

To get you started, think of some behaviors involving reinforcement. We are unconsciously using reinforcers all the time in our relationships: praise, enthusiasm, food, presents, backrubs, sex. Anything that makes someone feel good is potentially a positive reinforcer. Become aware of them. Now think of all the ways that you use those reinforcers in a *habitual* manner, i.e. without thought or variation. Take kissing, for example. Do you kiss her every time you leave for work? Do you kiss her every time you come back? Do you kiss her in the same spot, for the same duration of time? If you do, your kiss no longer conveys any information – it has become meaningless. Stop that. For example, make the standard back-from-work kiss the exception rather than the rule. Then change the way you do it. Kissing is just one example. You have probably fallen into

habit in the way you take her out, initiate sex, buy her presents, or sound happy on the phone. These are all opportunities for introducing variability.

Maybe the last two paragraphs got you down a little bit. You're thinking, "Look, I have a good heart, and I just enjoy doing nice things for my baby." That's perfect. As long as your enjoyment is the *main reason* you're doing it (vs. force of habit or even worse, trying to please), you will be naturally unpredictable and will never be taken for granted. This is an extension of the masculine ideal of following your internal compass. And as long as you're not doing the same thing over and over again, that's a fine policy.

For all the sweet guys out there who really, really want to do nice things for their companions, there's another technique that works. This is called the *jackpot*. A jackpot is a larger than usual reinforcer, usually given for no reason at all. For the dolphin, it would be a big ol' mackerel instead of the little minnow it was regularly getting. Human beings call it a *surprise*. For it to work, the jackpot has to be a reinforcer (i.e. pleasant), bigger than average, and unexpected. A pair of tickets to Paris for the weekend works; a pair to Antarctica work less well. And it's worth repeating that the jackpot works because it's *unexpected*. Twice a year may be all you need for it to be maximally effective. Human beings (especially women) catch on very, very quickly, and if you do a jackpot every month, she'll come to *expect* her monthly surprise, in which case it's not really a surprise any more. Don't let the technique compound the problem. In the *Tao of Dating* seminar, we explain and demonstrate these techniques extensively until you understand them at a gut level. In the meantime, for an in-depth understanding of behavioral techniques, I recommend Karen Pryor's *Don't Shoot the Dog*. It is an interesting read in its own right and tremendously insightful about human nature.

The four horsemen: recognizing problems before they arise

John Gottman, Professor of Psychology at Washington University, has been studying married couples for 25 years and has come up with a lot of interesting, highly accurate ways of evaluating the health of a relationship. In fact, using a 3-minute video of a couple interacting with each other, he can predict the success or failure of a marriage with over 90% accuracy. What he has found is that there are certain styles of interacting that tend to be harbingers of doom for a relationship. The worst four amongst these he calls 'the four horsemen', since they tend to be apocalyptic in their destructiveness. The four are *criticism*, *contempt*, *defensiveness* and *stonewalling*. If you engage in these communication styles on occasion, that's okay -- everybody does them to some extent. The problem arises when they become the principal mode of communication. The worst of these four is contempt -- and it's actually the most easily avoided of the four. There's really no place for it in a loving relationship. So keep your eyes open for unannounced guest appearances of the four horsemen in your relationship, both in yourself and your partner. And if you see criticism, contempt, defensiveness and stonewalling coming up *early* in a relationship, let that be a sign for you to seriously consider whether it is worth your while to keep it going.

Taking your own counsel, again

In the end, there are as many ways of keeping a relationship going as there are relationships. What's important is to be aware of *why* you wish to keep a relationship going. It is one thing to keep it going because it's a source of fulfillment for both of you, and another to keep it going just for the sake of keeping it going. Generally speaking, if something adds to your growth and freedom, you should keep it in your life; if not, you should let it go. That rule applies to relationships as well.

Chapter 11

Conclusion

In *Blink*, Malcolm Gladwell improvisational comedy and how it involves people “making very sophisticated decisions on the spur of the moment, without the benefit of any script or plot.” There are two reasons why they can do that successfully and generate funny shows night after night. The first is that everyone in the troupe has rehearsed their basic skills extensively. The second is that, at the time of the show, they are all operating based on a set of agreed-upon rules. Likewise, *The Tao of Dating* is providing you with the rules to enable you to render those crucial, real-time decisions in the dating arena. Once mastered, you have the freedom to improvise within those rules. As with any other skill, the process of mastery may seem laborious at first. But gradually, you reach the point at which all the rules, attitudes and techniques have been internalized and everything will start to flow. At that point, you won’t be thinking or struggling or even doing. You will have returned to the simple state of being you. That is when you will have reached *wu wei*, not-doing, as in Chapter 3 of the *Tao Te Ching*:

*Practice not-doing,
and everything will fall into place.*

In the end, keep in mind what all of this is about. Ultimately, the secret to a successful, fulfilling life is loving relationships. If the journey is the destination, then let every step of your journey towards relationship mastery be imbued with love. When you encounter obstacles, be like water – soft and yielding:

*Nothing in the world
Is as soft and yielding as water.
Yet for dissolving the hard and inflexible,*

nothing can surpass it.

*When two great forces oppose each other,
The victory will go
To the one that knows how to yield.*

This book is a guide to unleashing your true power. One day you will realize that I haven't talked about anything that you didn't already know. And maybe then you will be reminded of these lines from the concluding stanza of T.S. Eliot's *Four Quartets*:

*We shall not cease from exploration
And the end of all our exploring
Will be to arrive where we started
And know the place for the first time.*

I wish you success in your journey of self-discovery.

Los Angeles, August 2005

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Movies to watch

Movies are highly hypnotic, deeply effective vehicles for learning. Each of the following movies has a male protagonist with attitudes worth emulating.

On being comfortable in your own skin: *When We Were Kings*, a documentary on Muhammad Ali

On being romantic: *Don Juan de Marco*, with Johnny Depp

On having a strong masculine presence: *Bullitt*, with Steve McQueen and *Red River*, with John Wayne; *A Streetcar Named Desire*, with Marlon Brando

On being detached from your outcome: *The Tao of Steve*