Clarion Review

Self-Help

Dating Basics 101: What Every Guy Should Know But Often Doesn't
David Linares
Trafford Publishing
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Three Stars (out of Five)

The only thing more awkward for a guy than the uncomfortable conversation with dad about how to talk to women is reaching adulthood without dad's sage advice. So many dangers mine the road to romance. If the movies can teach a young Lothario anything about male-female communication, it's that one wrong word will bounce a man into the dreaded "let's just be friends" zone. For the guy who didn't get the lowdown from his dad, or doesn't trust the wisdom shared in that inner sanctum of masculinity, the locker room, David Linares offers *Dating Basics 1*01: What Every Guy Should Know But Often Doesn't*.

Despite having bachelor degrees in history and psychology and a masters in professional counseling, Linares's book is anything but academic. Through first and second person narration, he attempts to create a conversational tone while guiding readers through the hazards of meeting women, getting numbers, and planning that magic night. As a therapist who focuses on dating and relationships, Linares knows the importance of reinforcement, which he does through a series of "Homework Assignments" at the end of each chapter.

Linares covers a lot of information in relatively few pages. After an introductory chapter explaining why he wrote his book, he uses the next three chapters to help readers form an honest understanding of how they present themselves and how to alter aspects of that presentation. Accompanying assignments include confidence building exercises, like listing strengths and achievements, as well as asking out people to see how this new understanding affects the way others see the reader. Chapters five through eight explore communication. This includes an introduction to the basic listening skills and picking up of key words, to the proper usage of lines like, "Hi, I lost my number. Can I borrow yours?"

*Dating Basics 1*01* is at its best when instructing guys on how to make the actual date and handle any resulting romance. Linares covers all the rudimentary details. From making sure

the car has enough gas to knowing the driving directions beforehand, he underscores the importance of small things. Once that's down, he tackles more advanced issues like how to make out. He suggests, "Start small. Think bird kisses." He also leaves his readers with a game plan for turning that good night kiss into something more.

There are hundreds of dating guides for men on the market. Each one offers something unique. Some go for a purely psychological approach, others apply slick cover designs. But only *Dating Basics 1*01* comes with the familiar feel of a father's advice. Right or wrong, it's delivered man-to-man from a guy who's giving it his best.

Joseph Thompson