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Family & Relationships

Love At Second Sight: Playing the Midlife Dating Game

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The magic of first-time love is celebrated to no end, but what about the second, or for that matter, third, fourth, or even fifth time around? Surveys say that the majority of the more than forty million American singles age forty and older are eager—even desperate—to find "The One." These singles know and often expect more than they did in their earlier days, so their search for love is often more complicated, realistic, and urgent than it once was.

That's the bad news. The good news, say these authors—one a technology expert and eligible bachelor, the other a writer and expert on women's issues—is that the dating and mating game can be navigated and won by those who thoroughly study the situation "out there" and approach their quest for love with the right attitude.

Based on hundreds of surveys and interviews with single men and women in the trenches, this part-how-to manual, part-glimpse-into-others'-realities offers advice that's heavy on the specific and light on the sugarcoating. Emphasizing that time is of the essence and waiting is a luxury that middle-agers cannot well afford, the authors do a good job of eliminating fluff and using punchy, concise illustrations of what works and why. Getting to the point honestly and without pretense works best, they say, in the quest for love—don't sound needy, do exhibit good manners, do follow up, don't fool yourself that Mr. or Ms. Wrong is capable of becoming Mr. or Ms. Right.

While there is an element of outdated and stereotypical dos and don'ts (telling women to hold off on sex, to smile prettily, and not to "mother" their dates; and reminding men to compliment, not to brag, and to dress well), the book is, overall, chock-full of tips on finding love for those serious about succeeding.

Always stressing that realism and flexibility are as important as closely following their prescription for love, the authors illustrate the narrative with stories of men and women who

found their mates just by making themselves available and remaining open to the unfamiliar or unexpected. Romance, love and, yes, happiness are there for those willing to grab onto this realistic hope and take their chances the second (or fifth) time around.

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