FOREWORD REVIEWS THE INDIE WE LOVE.

Family & Relationships

Older Women Younger Men: New Options for Love and Romance
Felicia Brings
Susan Winter
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Here's a book for women of a certain age who know they aren't just cars whose "end value [is] based on an odometer reading." Brings and Winter disarmingly and persuasively contend that a woman has the right to be openly and lovingly involved with a man at least a decade younger regardless of the "ignorance, myths and false beliefs" of a society that sees such relationships as less than "A-list."

Engagingly written by two successful career women, the book is based upon interviews with older women, younger men, their families, and experts in psychology, psychotherapy, social work, and relationship counseling. Based upon the premise that women have more choices today than in the past, the book argues that what was once mandatory, such as marrying for status or security, is now optional. As a result, new "relationship archetypes" are emerging, this being one of the more viable and exciting ones, owing to its "wonderful mystical quality and powerful dynamism." That a manual now exists for such "relationship pioneers" is an acknowledgment that iconoclasm is often necessary, but rarely easy.

Delivering on its promise to provide guidance on both the perks and pitfalls of such a union, the book provides convincing examples and anecdotes showing that a young man's exuberance may provide the "high voltage charge that can jump-start a woman's otherwise very orderly, settled and structured life." Most of the chapters, however, address the pitfalls, but not the reasons for them, other than briefly attributing them to society's benightedness or to cultural patriarchy. The book looks unsparingly at ways to work with the problems of financial disparity in the relationship, the awkwardness of social gatherings, and what obstacles to expect in dealing with the younger man's family, especially his mother who can often be a pit bull in disguise. Especially good are the bulleted lists of recommendations on how to react when judged by others, and tipsheets on interpreting and answering peoples' comments.

What the book lacks is more information about the couples interviewed. The research tends to support financially successful career woman and well-centered young men whose intentions exist somewhere in the rarefied air of the ideal. Not all women are more successful than younger men, and while bad boys are discussed, the book won't entertain the idea of there being any Mrs. Robinsons.

Overall, the book handles a timely, yet touchy, subject in a tasteful manner. Besides, since love is blind, who's to argue that "when it's the right match, age is not an issue"?

Judy Hopkins