

The 85% Man and Lessons from Lucille: The Ultimate Guide to Love Long and Prosper

Bob Mack Peak

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Can't figure out what your spouse is thinking? Well, what would Lucille say? Men and women will find helpful advice here.

From the start of time, men and women have tried to figure one another out. Relationships are complicated. Bob Mack Peak's *The 85% Man and Lessons from Lucille* uses the author's mother as a compass for relationships. Peak uses personal anecdotes, his mother's lessons, and the Depression-era generation to explain how to find unconditional love.

Instead of clear-cut rules, Peak offers guidelines to help couples. More than three decades of relationships—including Peak's own relationship failures and successes, as well as the time line of his parents' long marriage—are chronicled in this book. Peak's parents' meeting at a USO function is described in great detail. When his father leaves to fight in World War II, the reader can imagine the events as if they were on the big screen.

Lucille is ever present in these pages. Each chapter opens with one of her memorable quotations. For example, Peak begins a chapter about first love with Lucille's guiding tenet that "the only difference between love for your mother and your wife is that you don't want to sleep with your mother." These nuggets shed light on Lucille's sharp sense of humor.

The book is divided into three main sections. The first introduces the premise and asks people to reflect on their first love, past relationships, and current situation. The second offers fifteen lessons for creating strong relationships, from the first date and kiss to understanding that relationships are marathons. In the final section, Peak offers solutions for "crossing the abyss," accepting one another's imperfections, and fully prospering with a life partner.

Reflection is integral to this book. People may not always listen to sage advice like Lucille's, but we can all learn from past mistakes. When discussing ex-wives, for example, the author refers to these relationships as experimental flights. He uses the metaphor of Chuck Yeager breaking the sound barrier on the same date as his (Peak's) birthday. Yeager had to use test planes before finding success and reaching new heights. Some of these relationships crashed and burned, whereas others offered rebirth.

Peak's playful cover depicts the lighthearted nature of the book and hints at the theme of helping men find themselves. Many other relationship-focused books are academic in nature and written by psychology or self-help professionals with PhDs. Peak's book focuses more on his personal dating experiences and the sound advice of his mother. The companion website also offers rich resources, like a calculator where users can rate their men as potential partners.

The men-versus-women component of the book might seem slightly dated. Peak writes that men are morons (women are smarter). Gender-specific statements seem confining for people who do not fall cleanly into one category.

Readers will need to keep in mind that the book is based on Lucille's teachings; thus, the guidelines are meant to help people manage conflict, not to present pure fact. These statements are supposed to spark conversation and reflection, so couples can see one another's point of view.

Both men and women will find helpful advice about how to date, communicate, and build a meaningful relationship. Instead of sweating the small stuff, people can sharpen their perspective on relationships. This is a chance to wake up and prosper. When in doubt, people should ask the important question, "What would Lucille say?"

LISA BOWER (January 6, 2014)

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