

Singleship

Imperfect Happiness
Theory and Practice

by
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\$10.99 USA/ \$13.99 Canada

for my friends

Everyone thinks of changing the world, but no one thinks of changing himself.

-Leo Tolstoy, Writer

In the beginning... there was pain.

You have the bad news now. You are in the midst of a storm a break-up a romantic partner. It would seem there is no rhyme or reason to any break-up. The big question for is simply this: will you let it define your life or control your actions or your future?

This world has a rhythm of ups and downs, high and lows and sometimes the lows seem lower than the highs have could ever be again. Low points in life are like loud and windy thunderstorms: they do pass over you eventually.

You are not alone in your current storm of despair. No one I know has ever made it through life without loss and some sadness. It is simply a part of being a human being and have choices. Soon, after some grief and tears you will need to challenge yourself to fill that empty space with something and be ready to reach for the sunshine and green landscapes beyond the storm. Take some time to cry and begin to feel the empty space that is created by your break-up.

All too often, the hardest part of the storm is filled with a singular notion of “why”

Why is this happening to me?

Why is my life this way?

Why am I feeling like this?

Why am I really here?

After experiencing a rough a break up with a long-term partner, singles will naturally consider a long weekend in Las Vegas or some other retreat. Las Vegas is great place to get your mind off your emotions, but quick carnal indulgence is not always a very good solution to occupy your mind or time.

We can try to escape from our friends, family and careers to search out the “Whys,” but these obligations always come back later. Escape is never a long-term solution and really sort of an illusion. That’ is why Las Vegas thrives today.

We need a more practical and responsible approach to getting to the next is step in life.

If you want a better life after a failure or break-up, honoring your obligations to your friends and family is a really good start.

This book is perhaps the shortest course available in learning to do just that.

We must accept that the great “Whys” of life are the ultimate questions. No human being has really answered them yet, though many try desperately to do so.

To move past failures and any break-up move on to something else.

So forget these...

Why am I here?

Why is this happening to me?

Why is my life this way?

Challenge yourself with these instead...

How do I keep up my obligations?

How do get a handle on my emotions?

How do I move on?

Where do I want to be in a month? A year?

What about my next five years?

In the weeks right after a break up, that empty place in the heart still needs something to fill it up. It needs some practical wisdom and some new tools. All the great wisdom surrounding relationships can be really boiled down to a very short sentence. It's about "How," not "Why."

"How" protects us and gives us power. It keeps us from being overwhelmed by emotions of the "Whys." This book will help anyone focus on the strength of "How."

Modern western culture seeks a "quick fix" or shortcut for everything. This book is no different.

My Story

For me being single rocks. It gets me up early in morning and keeps me curious about life and new people. Being a

single Dad (I am divorced, and I have my son twelve days and nights a month), gives me a feeling of accomplishment and purpose. I felt the need not pursue another long-term relationship until he is launched. It is an *imperfect situation*, to be sure. I call it Singleship.

Life is tricky business. We never can know the future. We all learn one day that being in love with a very special someone feels amazing and beautiful and productive all at the same time, but does not ever make life absolutely perfect.

If you examine any past relationship closely, you can always find a flaw. Nothing is really so perfect as to cause you to spend the rest of your life dwelling on its loss. Everyone has to come to the realization that when you commit to a relationship, you must expect few bumps along the way.

Your Story

Probably the most difficult thing one can do in at the end of a break-up is to try to see world the eyes of the other person. That person should not be the focus in your new story. That empty space in our hearts hurts us and even blinds us other points of view. If we stare into the empty space too long, we can fall into it forever.

The first purpose of this book: to help divorced people and young adults understand their own story after a break-up and get a grip on it and then move on and complete some goal. Completing goals will you a better mate too when cupid finds his mark again.

Emotional health is key component to a good life. When a

weird pain pops up in your body, you go to see a doctor about it. At this checkup a doctor will examine you. Doctors are obligated to examine you and then deliver an objective professional assessment. The Singleship Challenge gives you that objectivity too.

The second purpose of this book is to explain why “pre-martial” Singleship is a practical life-planning tool for young adults and students who might be losing themselves to very strong feelings of love. It may also help a parent stop their teen before they act on those feelings. Parents who understand Singleship, will be better prepared to get their kids help with these strong feelings without destroying their relationship with their kid.

I am not a doctor, psychologist, counselor or minister. I am just a writer. I interviewed happy and sad singles for this book. I wrote down some of what happy people said to me. The first basic thing was this: every person must learn what makes them happy and be skilled at creating happiness on their own as a single person before they should ever focus on happiness with a mate.

This is the beginning of Singleship. It is not a new idea and everyone should know it whether you are single or not.

Practicing Singleship for short time has a future value too. It will help anyone find a fall back position if you find yourself without that great loving partner during your life. Like the spare tire in the trunk of a car, one may never ever need to use the concepts in this book, but both are good to have around.

Singleship may also help you make good relationship choices in the future. This is not because you are hardened or

skeptical about love. You will simply have a much better view of love and well developed idea of your personal happiness. Singleship can last short time or a long time. It is your choice.

To read this book in about an hour will not help you travel to a better place, but it will help you get packed for it. The Challenge of Singleship takes only twenty minutes each night for about a month.

May I see a Menu please?

Just as restaurant owners and chefs place a menu in the window of their establishments for prospective patrons, the letters in bold are sort of a menu too. Scan them briefly to get the spirit of the text.

Intimacy for singles?

To get fullness of the human experience we would do well to expand the notion of intimacy. We need to take step back from it and simplify it. To begin, I would assert that all intimacy may be broken down into two categories: positive or negative. Again, I am no expert in intimacy and many other books can put finer point on it. For now, let us keep it very simple.

Negative intimate experiences are bad for you.

Positive ones are good for you.

Coffee shops, meeting people for dinner or watching a movie with friends are mostly positive experiences. While online the social networking sites can go either way. My view is that, is that intimacy of any kind requires you to open your self up to share an experience or thought.

Then you make an exchange. The result of the exchange

between you and another person or of group of people creates a new experience. If you string together a whole bunch of these experiences together, and you start to have a life without romance.

Being alone has a stigma attached to it. For some, being alone is a negative intimate experience with self. This book is design to create a positive exchange with self. Singles need to take as many opportunities for simple, positive social intimacy experiences. After a break up, we need understand our needs and focus on creating a positive self-image.

Negative intimacy experiences can take the form of clinical depression, bullying, constant arguing with a spouse or parent (not for the purposes of problem solving), and at the farther reaches of the spectrum, to spousal and child abuse. Believe it or not, these extremely harmful, intimate events sometimes even create strong bonds.

These bonds are *forced* on people without their consent. Generally, professionals in the mental health field (I am not one) believe that these bonds make people form dysfunctional bonds to others later in life. The solution is professional counseling, diagnoses and therapy. Find a professional to discuss a negative intimate experience in your past.

We learn about social intimacy from birth. Many patterns for behavior are set in childhood when we begin to communicate with other humans. Social intimacy is a very necessary thing for babies and adults. The exchanges between parents and small children, for the most part, seem very simple, but they are critical to help build relationships for the future.

Teens have some special needs in matters of love. The section for teens is letter K. (If you are a teen that argues with your parents all the time you may want to skip ahead to second part of letter **K**).

*Give me six hours to chop down a tree and I
will spend the first four sharpening the axe.
-Abraham Lincoln, U.S. President*

The Instructions

It will take just a few minutes each night to complete all questions in the book. You will put it all into action later.

Your goal is to be open. Then to search out and then understand what really makes you happy when you are alone. Make it a positive exchange with yourself each night.

When you see a pen like this,  answer each question in the space provided or a notebook of some sort. This is the most important function of this book.

If you are in an unsatisfying relationship now and want to restructure it to suit you, this book is not really for you. Couple's counseling is for you. Try that first.

If you are certain you will be single again, begin a dialogue with your partner about your situation. You can start with a little common sense and a simple idea that all happy singles know. You probably heard it before.

Being a single person is better than staying in an unhappy relationship.

If you and your partner can agree on this point, then share the book. Each night you might learn some new ways to express yourself to each other by communicating your partner about the subject for that day. I hope it helps you arrive at a deeper understanding of your current situation.

I personally enjoy and believe in romance and love makes everyone a poet, as Plato said and the earth would be a very dull place if we could create a family and grow our population by swapping our toothbrushes.

The fact is, human beings are, by design, tethered to instinctive needs for connections to others.

Lastly, if you are a religious person, I hope you will find that a twenty-six day study of Singleness will fit into your personal faith, not contradict it.

Some would call it self-help therapy, self-exploration,

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