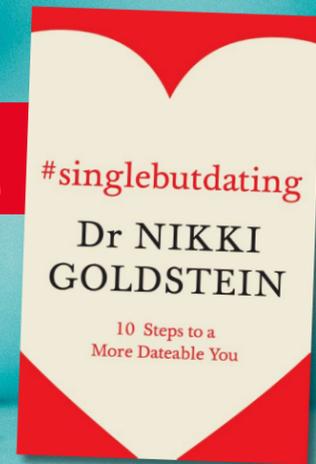


NIKKI IS AUSTRALIA'S MODERN-DAY EXPERT ON RELATIONSHIPS, SEX AND EVERYTHING IN BETWEEN. AND, YES, SHE IS #SINGLEBUTDATING - AND PROUD OF IT.



IF YOU'RE SINGLE, READY TO MINGLE, BUT DON'T KNOW WHERE TO START, DR NIKKI GOLDSTEIN HAS YOU COVERED IN HER NEW BOOK #SINGLEBUTDATING. COZ IT'S A JUNGLE OUT THERE...

The

It's tough on the dating scene, ladies. And why wouldn't it be? We're all looking for different things in the perfect partner these days – and not everyone wants to trot down the aisle just yet. But that doesn't mean it shouldn't be fun.

So how exactly does a gal in the modern world navigate meeting Mr Right? What about enjoying a love affair, casual fling, or cheeky booty call for what it is? And then there are the pitfalls of online dating to figure out...

FAMOUS quizzed Dr Nikki Goldstein, author of *#singlebutdating: 10 Steps To A More Dateable You*, about the tools you need to survive and thrive in the dating jungle – and how to have fun while you're at it.

Let's get down to brass tacks, Nikki. Was there a tipping point in your single life that made you sit up and say, "I need to write this book"?

I guess I was pushed over the edge when I realised most of the dating books out there were teaching women how to trap a man or find a husband, and putting a lot of importance on that as a life goal. None of them seemed to be empowering women. It's really that simple.

So what advice would you give someone who's looking to get out there and start dating?

Take the time to work on yourself and become the most dateable version of you that you can. This way, you're choosing dates from a confident place, not one that needs validation

from the opposite sex, or needs to be with someone to feel worthy. Dating should be about a choice, not a need.

Any topics you should never discuss on a date?

The rule of thumb used to be don't discuss sex, money, religion or politics. But, these days, sex and religion can be terribly interesting topics to discuss! I guess it's best to remember that, no matter what you talk about, you should always keep the conversation positive (people are attracted to positive people), and don't give everything away on the first date. Also, when you ask questions, make sure it doesn't sound like you're interviewing someone for the position of husband or future father of your children. (Just sayin'.)

If you're not giving it all away on date number one, what sort of things should you keep to yourself?

I think it's all about testing the waters and being perceptive. If you say something and his body language shows he might be a bit uncomfortable, or even bored, subtly change the topic. Men tend to get freaked out by questions about children and marriage, or anything to do with commitment too early on.

You've probably been asked a hundred times, but we need to know: Should a girl go halves on a date, or expect the guy to pay?

This can be an awkward dance sometimes. If a guy's a gentleman, he won't let you pay, but you should always offer to. It's also a nice gesture to

DATING GAME

“THINK WITH YOUR BRAIN BEFORE YOUR VAGINA.”



is nothing wrong with wanting to find a partner and wanting to do it online. It does not mean you are desperate; it's just something that is done these days. Once upon a time, internet dating was for those who didn't get out much or who were shy. These days, it's the norm, and we need to accept that and eliminate any shaming.

Online dating can attract its fair share of nuts, though...

Dating in general can attract nuts! You do need to be careful in the online world as a false connection can occur. We can “fairytale” the situation and want them to be Mr Right. It's always important to remember, even if you've been texting or chatting to someone online for some time, a first date is still a first date, and they are technically still a stranger.

Should I date a guy who sent me a d* pic? Is it really a big deal?**

Receiving a d*** pic should not be seen as a total deal-breaker, but it should be considered a red flag towards his thoughts about women. Does he really think a d*** pic is all it takes to get you over the line? What ever happened to seduction and

“[Internet dating] is the norm, and we need to accept that and eliminate any shaming.”

a little effort? It also concerns me that, once a guy has sent this, he often feels he has the right to one in return.

How many d* pics do you get sent? Do you have a laugh at them with your girlfriends?**

I get a lot (most of which are not asked for) – and, yes, I have a giggle. A note

for any men reading this: d*** pics are not a turn-on. Sure, they can be a bit of fun if you're seeing someone, but mostly they're just hilarious.

Do shows that perpetuate the “fairytale”, like *The Bachelor*, help or hinder women looking for love?

I think these programs can present us with a negative stereotype of “Prince Charming”, encouraging us to date guys who have a specific set of qualities that we “should” desire in a man. But what happens when you get that guy and still don't feel satisfied? We need to focus on exploring what our own fairytale looks like, and which qualities we desire for our own needs, rather than fitting a mould that society and reality TV give us. Girls on *The Bachelor* are basically fighting

“A d* pic should not be seen as a total deal-breaker, but... a bit of a red flag towards his thoughts about women.”**

for a prize. But will that prize make them happy when all is said and done?

Are women too tough on guys?

They can be. With the rise of the alpha female, women are now taking on qualities once reserved for men, often leaving guys intimidated and scratching their heads. I think women sometimes need to strike the right balance between strength and vulnerability with the opposite sex. And being vulnerable with men does not mean being weak – it just means letting our walls down enough to let them in. We also need to consider how we break-up with and reject them. They are people, too, with emotions and egos just like us, although they don't get the chance to discuss their feelings as much as we do. In this era of recycle dating (where we all date people who have dated our friends), think of it as preserving a guy's

goodness for the next woman, and also ensuring that an ex-boyfriend or date might have something good to say about you to someone else who might be keen.

Plenty of guys love to booty call at 1am. Can a girl do the same?

Of course a girl can booty call! As long as it's a booty call and nothing more. Women often booty call a guy on the way home after a night out when she hasn't had much luck with anyone else and is looking for an ego boost. That's OK. If it's solely about sexual desire and you don't want anything more, go for it. I certainly think it's better for a woman to be the booty caller rather than being booty called. That way she can remain in control and ensure some respect is maintained in the situation.

Can women have f* buddies without developing feelings?**

They can, but I do think women are more likely to get attached than men in these scenarios. Women often cycle between stages where casual sex is all they want, or is all they are capable of. But it's vital to stay in check with your emotions and make sure you're not getting too connected. Women have more choices sexually these days, but they need to be aware of the risks and the possible outcomes. Think with your brain before your vagina.

Girls don't really see one-night stands as taboo anymore. Do guys feel the same way? Should we care what they think?

Women can have one-night stands but, unfortunately, we are still living in a society where women who are seen as

“IT'S BETTER FOR A WOMAN TO BE THE BOOTY CALLER THAN BEING BOOTY CALLED.”

“too sexual” can be punished for acting on their desires. There will always be a risk associated with one-night stands, but as long as you have them because it's the right decision for you at the time, why should you care what others think? A guy who judges you for your choices (as long as they are from a sound mind) is not a guy you should be dating anyway.

Do guys worry as much about dating as girls do?

Men have the same concerns as women. Everyone wants to have fun and find love. Everyone wants to be liked and accepted, and everyone has a fear of being rejected. I think sometimes we struggle with figuring out the opposite sex, but our similarities in the dating arena remain the same. Men can be just as shy and nervous – remember that.

Sum up your book with one great dating tip for single women... Go!

Date the way you want to date, not according to society's influences.

FAMOUS*

#singlebutdating: 10 Steps To A More Dateable You by Dr Nikki Goldstein is out this week.

