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Don't be a lonely heart on Valentine's Day

BY APRIL MASINI



Valentine's Day is the time of year when singles are hyper aware that they're alone. So, if you're single and you don't want to be, you don't have to be. Ever again. I mean it.

Sure, there are ways to face Valentine's Day without that special someone, and I'll give you pointers to do so, but if I offered you a crash course on dating that would reveal the secrets for your success in a simple strategy that goes beyond winning in love, to include winning in business, and in life, would you try it? Moreover, if I challenged you to examine your concepts of dating and your perception of failure and rejection,

would you accept the challenge?

Let's find out.

Lesson 1: First impressions count.

They are immediate, long lasting, and usually permanent. Regardless of how great you are inside, and no matter how sweet you can be once someone gets to know you, the reality is, your dating success will be based almost entirely upon the other person's initial sense of who and what you are. Do you have a second chance to make a positive first impression? The experts say no.

Lesson 2: If you want the part, look the part.

Statistics show that how we appear speaks more about us, and is more important, than what we say verbally. Moreover, though it may not get you all the way to your objective, it will get your foot in the door. Remember the old adage, "Dress for who you want to be, not who you are." It is as true in love as it is in business.

Lesson 3: Act the part.

It is a fact that in our personal affairs, as in all our business dealings, successful behavior breeds success. If you behave negatively, you're not going to be successful. Remember, we have to sell ourselves first. Poor attitude, image, and behavior will adversely affect your dating business.

Lesson 4: Be the part.

The initial impression you make on a prospective date predicts whether he or she will take the time to get to know you. Dating, as well as business, is all about sales. You must think of yourself as a product and the person you want to date as the buyer.

Lesson 5: Dating is about sales and sales is a numbers game.

You'll love this math: If you want to multiply your success immediately in dating (or



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just about anything else), learn, understand, and embrace the concept behind "the numbers game." It supports the fundamental dynamics of dating. You will save a lot of time and heartache if you are willing to accept, grasp and follow its tenets. They are: You are a product. You are the product's salesperson, its packager and its advertiser. The person you're trying to attract is your customer. Customers make their buying decisions based upon presentation, packaging, and advertising. The world's best salespeople don't have a 100 percent sales rate, a 75 percent rate, a 50 percent, or even a 25 percent rate. The world's best salespeople are lucky to maintain a 10 percent sales rate. Thus, the best of the best put their best product forward and count themselves lucky if one out of every 10 they are interested in is also interested in them. See where I'm going?

Lesson 6: Confidence = Success

The number one quality both men and women seek in a date or a mate is confidence. Confidence is sexy. Confidence is also the key attribute that all professional salesmen must possess in order to be successful. People do not buy products or services from those who have no confidence in themselves or the products they represent.

Lesson 7: Establish a goal.

Find your finish line. Know your goal, and have a plan to get there. For example, suppose your goal is getting a great date for Valentine's Day. Now ask yourself, what steps do you need to take to cross the finish line? Create your to-do list. Then accomplish each item on your list, one-by-one until you reach your goal.

Lesson 8: Know your target market and give them what they want.

Understand to whom you are trying to sell yourself and what they are interested in buying. If you're looking for a Valentine who's sexy and smart, figure out what someone who's sexy and smart wants — and give it to him or her. Then prepare for Cupid's arrow to strike.

Lesson 9: Analyze the competition and do things better than they do.

Just as you would study a competitor in business or a rival sports team, study your dating competition — if you want to win. Don't ignore the fact that dating is competitive. Embrace it. Heart the game to win it.

Lesson 10: Take action and follow through.

Nothing happens until you do something. Wallflowers don't thrive — they hug the wall and aren't noticed. Step away from the wall. Get out there and find your Valentine using these lessons. Do nothing — expect nothing. It's simple.

Lesson 11: Know yourself well enough to get the relationship you want.

If you're reading this story, it's probably because dating hasn't worked for you. You want a better outcome. The reason it hasn't worked is because you don't know yourself well enough to get the relationship you want. Who are you really? I'm not talking about who you want people to think you are, but the you that you actually are. Before you can be ready to be in a relationship with someone else, it's crucial for you to know yourself and what you want.

Lesson 12: Know what kind of person you want to date.

Most people spend more time thinking about the kind of car they want to buy than about the kind of person they want to date. Are you more interested in a high-achieving, big-income earner or do you see yourself with someone who wants quality time with loved ones — and with you, more than bringing home big bucks? Do you want an active person who likes travel, adventure and recreation or do you prefer someone who likes to putter around the house and rent a movie to watch together? If you live in a fast-paced city and you have an urbane, high-powered lifestyle that you enjoy, you probably don't want to date a sculptor who doesn't own a car and lives with his or her parents. Do you like nightlife, clubbing and being seen at the latest hot spots? If the answer is yes, then don't date the quiet, introspective person who prefers a laid-back night at home snuggling on the couch. Feelings come into play the more involved you get, so don't even get started with a someone who doesn't meld with the life you want.

Finally, live as if there may be no tomorrow; realize there are no guarantees, no dress rehearsals and (usually) no second chances. Make each day "your special day," one in which you did all that you could do. You will never look back with regret. ;

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