

1

Setting the Stage



You're pushing your shopping cart through the grocery store. You stop, look up from perusing the vegetables, and you see . . . her. She's attractive and she's not wearing a ring. You want to approach her, but how? What do you say? How do you ask for her phone number? How do you connect?



It's your fourth date with Mr. Right. Everything seems to be clicking for you both, but you've felt this way before. This time, you don't want to find yourself empty-handed in a few weeks or months. How can you be sure he's ready for a real relationship, before you risk your heart? How do you talk about this without scaring him off?



You've been dating for six weeks, and so far, it's been perfection. All of a sudden, you're arguing about things that you were totally in sync about just last week. How do you make the transition from blissful love to the harsh reality that your needs may clash from time to time? How do you talk about these difficult issues?



You're in a two-year relationship, and it's time to make a commitment: You either move forward or you break up. How do you talk about this without issuing ultimatums or sweeping everything under the rug?



From the very first encounter, today's relationships present us all with incredible challenges, and at the heart of every one of them is the *quality of our connection*. Sometimes we click, and then suddenly we clash.

How it all happens seems to be a great mystery. What we know is that it all comes to light through the magic of conversation. Perpetually, we struggle with finding the right words. About virtually every circumstance we wonder

- What to say
- How to say it
- When to say it

We worry that we'll

- Hurt someone's feelings
- Hurt ourselves
- Damage the relationship

These concerns we have are realistic, because the truth is,

The heart and soul of relationships is COMMUNICATION.

When we communicate effectively, love thrives and grows and knows no bounds. Listening to each other, talking about our cares and pains, desires and dreams, we are transported to a place that is far more fulfilling than simply talking in our own heads. Sharing feelings with a loving partner is one of life's deepest satisfactions. In fact, it is so wonderful that we are motivated to do almost anything in order to find someone with whom to share this experience.

When communication breaks down, the relationship itself deteriorates, and if the trend isn't reversed quickly, heartache is inevitable. The problems can begin with the *very first encounter*. Witness Tom and Mona on their first date:

TOM: I'm really glad to finally meet you, after hearing about you from my friend Nancy for so long.

MONA: Yeah, well, it's amazing how you can live in this town and never meet anyone new for months at a time.

TOM: That's true, but I've found that if you make an effort, it's not that difficult. After all, here we are!

MONA: And then there's the kind of people you meet in this city. Even when I do meet someone new, it's usually someone who's either out of work or unstable. The last guy I went out with still lives with his mother, and he's forty-two years old!

TOM: That's too bad. Uh, maybe we could decide what to order. This is one of my favorite restaurants, and the food's always great.

MONA: Well, I'm starving. As usual, my boss threw a pile of work on my desk just as I was getting ready to leave for lunch and announced that I had to finish it before the end of the day, so I missed lunch. What a jerk.

As you can imagine, the date went downhill from there. Mona's negative conversation didn't stop, and the result was uncomfortable feelings that grew as the date went on. Tom's efforts to distract her from negativity went nowhere, and any romantic sparks that might have been ignited were lost forever.

Setting the Stage

From the very first encounter with a potential romantic partner, the stage for your future relationship is being set, and you are the set designer! The kind and quality of communication that occurs at the outset determines everything. You are either headed for an unhappy, draining relationship, or you are paving the way for a joyful, fulfilling one.

Let's replay Tom and Mona's first-date conversation:

TOM: I'm really glad to meet you, after hearing about you from my friend Nancy for so long.

MONA: You know, I've noticed that if I'm not really careful, I can fall into the same old dull routine and not meet anyone new for months at a time.

TOM: Me, too. But with some effort, it's not too difficult. After all, here we are!

MONA: Yes, and it's so refreshing to meet someone I like. I've had a few dates that didn't exactly go the way I wanted them to go (smiles and laughs a little, catching Tom's eye).

TOM: Yeah, dating can be a challenge (smiling in return). Are you ready to order? This is one of my favorite restaurants, and the food's always terrific.

MONA: The sooner the better—I'm starving! My work kind of piled up today, so I didn't get a chance to eat lunch. I hope you like someone with a healthy appetite!

TOM: Absolutely. In fact, why don't we begin right away with this wonderful appetizer. . . .

And they're off and running. A connection is made, and rapport naturally builds. Notice that this conversation contains essentially the same information as the first one. Mona doesn't have to lie about her past experiences, nor does she have to lie about not eating lunch. The difference is in her attitude and the way she chooses her words. By being positive and speaking effectively, Mona is setting the stage for a spark and a connection to occur with Tom. Regular practice of open and honest, yet uplifting, conversation like this will give them the opportunity to develop and maintain a fulfilling romance.

Communication: The Essentials

Communication is made up of two main parts:

- Listening (the most important)
- Speaking

In Chapter Four we'll go into much greater detail about these two all-important aspects of communication. Throughout the book, we'll look at both the listening and the speaking parts of each new level of conversation between you and your partner, from the first encounter all the way through discussing marriage. Always, the focus will be on setting the stage for a loving, lasting relationship.

Listening is at the top of this section for a very good reason: It's the most vitally important part of communication, and the most often overlooked. Listening is much more than just having your ears open and not being distracted by television or the newspaper. Listening is

- Being fully focused on your partner
- Working to understand him/her

and much more that we'll discuss later.

Listening begins long before someone begins speaking. It begins with an *attitude* and a *focus*, even before you have someone with whom to talk! In the search for a partner, meeting effectively has everything to do with setting the stage for a great relationship. Bringing the right *vision* and *focus* into the meeting game can make all the difference in determining who you come across and notice. Think of the rest of this chapter as a guide to *tuning in your ears to listen* for the partner you will soon meet, which will prime you for your opening conversations.

A New Vision and a Shift in Focus

The other day I was walking into a restaurant, when I almost collided with an attractive man coming out of the same door. We dodged each other, smiled, laughed, and made eye contact. A few minutes later I left the restaurant to get something from my car and the same guy was coming back. I looked up in surprise, and he said, a bit self-consciously, "I came back because I really wanted to meet you. You look like an interesting person, and I was wondering: Are you married? Are you engaged? Are you available? And would you like to go to lunch sometime?"

I was flattered, but my answer was a disappointment to him. "No, I'm not married or engaged, but I am in a relationship, so I'm not available." He looked deflated, and I said to him, "But, you know what? Congratulations to you for doing what most people only think about doing! You saw an opportunity and you took a chance, and I think that's wonderful."

In my workshops, I tell this story, as well as the one about the man I saw one day at the gas station. We were standing about six feet apart, and I kept waiting for him to look up. He was so intent on putting the gas in his car that he never even saw me. And I'll bet he tells people in his life that he never meets anyone great to date, never knowing that

he was standing just a few feet away from someone who might have been a potential partner!

Everywhere I go, the complaint from singles is the same: "Where, oh where, are all the great people to date?"

The answer is obvious: They're everywhere! The problem isn't lack of people, it's our own difficulty with being open and actually seeing them. It's easy to realize how this happens.

Most singles I know have experienced what I did a number of years ago. I was stuck in what I call "The Singles Rut": You know, your life! You get up each day, go to work, after work you go to the grocery store and buy your dinner, go home, watch a little TV while eating dinner, maybe read a book, walk the dog, and go to bed. Get up the next day and do what? The same thing, of course! And the next day? Why, the exact same thing.

Many of us do this, day after day, week after week, month after month. In my workshops, I say "Day after . . ." with a pause, and someone usually yells out, "Year!"

After a few months of this rut, I eventually got tired of it and resolved to take some action. So, I would call up a friend and we'd go to the next big singles dance or party that we could find, even though our belief was that those events usually did not work.

As I tell this story in my workshops, I get lots of heads nodding and sheepish grins. Back in those days, I chose the most strategically comfortable place in the room to stand. Yes, you guessed it—that happened to be in the back, along a wall, preferably in the dark! From this vantage point, my friend and I would check out the other people and quickly conclude that most of them just weren't our kind of folks!

However, there was usually one guy that we would spot, who looked very attractive and interesting, but it didn't take long to see that he was—you guessed it again—*already taken!* Of course.

Eventually, we became offended, because no one was coming up to us to make us feel warm and welcome. What kind of people were these singles anyway?! I guess we thought we were the only ones who were shy and needed an extra smile and friendly hello. As you can imagine, we soon left the party and said to ourselves, "See, once again,

we have proven it. *There just aren't any great people to date out there!*" Of course, our next step was to go right back into The Singles Rut.

I ask my workshop participants what the problems are with this scenario, figuring they're a lot smarter than I was back then, and I get these answers:

- Our attitude going into the event was negative ("We just know this won't work—these things never do!"), so of course that's what happened. It is what is known as a self-fulfilling prophecy. We got exactly what we expected.

- We made ourselves unavailable by standing in the back in the dark. Our body language screamed "stay away!", so of course people did just that.

- We judged people from afar, not realizing that from across the room we weren't seeing people, we were seeing

1. Bodies
2. Clothing
3. Hairstyles
4. Shoes

Eventually, I discovered that people aren't people until I approach them and talk to them. I discovered that even if I found myself in a room full of two hundred strangers, I could walk up, introduce myself, and chat with just a handful of them, and my experience of that gathering was transformed! This enabled me to make the huge leap from Stranger to Acquaintance with a number of people. Suddenly, I was no longer looking at bodies, clothing, hairstyles, and shoes. I was connecting with *real people*, most of whom, I discovered, *were my kind of folks!*

- We were being completely passive, waiting and hoping for someone to talk to us, leaving us with a powerless feeling that culminated in a huge sense of disappointment at the end of the evening.

- We were entirely too focused on finding Prince Charming, right then and there!

As you can see, our vision was narrow and limited, and the inevitable outcome drove us right back into The Singles Rut. After analyzing the scene, it's understandable that our focus became so off base, as well. The pressure of trying to find Prince Charming was just too difficult and made us feel way too anxious to mingle. We fell into that trap, like so many singles do, because we live in a society that pressures us to focus on the bottom line: Did we meet someone new, did we get a date, was it a "love connection," are we going to fall head over heels, get married, have 2.5 children, and live happily ever after?

How often have we had friends and family ask us, "Well, have you met anyone new lately?" If we dare to answer in the positive, and say good things about the new romance, the next thing we hear is something along the lines of: "Oh, this sounds like a good one! You'd better hang on and don't let him/her get away!" As if you are so desperate that you had better grab onto the first warm body that comes along and hang on for dear life! As if being single is some dreaded affliction that you must be cured of as quickly as possible by finding a partner.

To all of this is added the pressure we put on ourselves. A long time ago, on my good days, I said things to myself and to my friends like: "Well, I don't need a relationship! After all, I have my career, my friends, and my cat. What else do I need?" For me, this was partly true, but it was also my defense against the pain of being without an intimate love relationship.

I knew this to be the case because on my bad days, I said things like, "What's wrong with me? Why can't I connect with someone in a healthy relationship?" With all this pressure, from without and from within, it's no wonder that we search desperately for Prince or Princess Charming, often overlooking the perfectly wonderful *real people* standing right in front of us!

As you can see from my story, that is what I was doing. I desperately needed a new vision and a drastic shift in focus. I eventually did look at my situation and my mind-set and came to understand the true purpose of those evenings with other singles: *to expand my social circle and to practice my relationship skills*. Once I came to that new realization my attitude and experience changed remarkably.

Expanded Vision and a New Focus

Trying to find the perfect partner is a goal that is far too limiting, and isn't likely to yield results. If I'm scanning the room looking for Prince Charming, the odds are I won't see him. After all, most really good people don't fit the images of idealized partners we carry around in our heads. Thus, when I look out into a room full of available men, I see ordinary guys who are not carrying glass slippers and I'm disappointed and frustrated. Plus, I remain separate and apart, since the purpose of my being there is to find *him*.

After years of searching in this way, I took a few steps back, did some introspection, and came up with the following:

- *I can't control this process.* Contrary to popular belief, you can't make someone like you, you can't force someone to fall in love with you, and even if you do meet someone and have a great relationship, there's no guarantee that it will last forever. The sobering reality is that *love can't be forced*—it either happens or it doesn't, and it lasts as long as it lasts.

- *Love is an energy that occurs between two people.* We have influence over that energy, either positively or negatively, but we have no direct control over the nature of the energy itself.

- Given that the first two conclusions are true, it seems I'm stuck with the process for the time being. So, since I'm here anyway, maybe I can use my time of being single in a positive way. Maybe I can use it to make some discoveries about myself, about men and women and relationships, about communication, and about healthy love.

- Instead of focusing on the end result of finding Prince Charming, I can *focus on my own process of learning and growth*. In so doing, I can develop the kind of skills I need to learn to have a great relationship, such as the art of rapport and communication. It is not a science. No matter how many books I read, I can only really learn about communication by doing it.

- I compared this process to that of working out to build the muscle in my body—which I do in order to be stronger, to breathe better, to move around with more ease, and to feel better about myself. In the same way, I began to practice relationship skills (rapport,

connection, communication) to build *emotional muscle*, which enhances the overall quality of my life, and is valuable in and of itself.

With these realizations came an *expanded vision* of being single and dating, and with it an *entirely new focus*. No longer did I attend parties and dances looking for Mr. Right, being passive and standing in the back. I saw the value of *enlarging my social circle*, inviting lots and lots of new people into my life. I attended these events in order to meet new people.

I made the shift from a narrow, *I have to find Prince Charming* vision to an expanded *who looks like an interesting person* view. I shifted from a restricted, *I have to meet "the one" today* to a much larger *what am I learning in this process* focus. I realized:

- Being open to lots of different people expands my world and gives me lots of opportunity to practice my relationship skills. It fills me with a sense of abundance, which empowers me to stay in the meeting and dating game, rather than retreating in frustration because I can't find the right man now.

- I never know where my connection with a new man will lead. Maybe we'll do some kind of business together, maybe we'll have a date and it won't go anywhere, maybe we'll become buddies, maybe we'll be friends for life. Perhaps one day he'll invite me to his house for a party and I'll meet the love of my life through his social circle!

Bill, one of my workshop participants, expressed it this way:

"You're really asking us to make a 'paradigm shift,' Nina, a whole new way of looking at being single. I've been able to make that shift, and since I did, wow, have things changed! I'm a lot more relaxed, having a lot more fun, and the women are attracted to me like crazy! I think it's because I'm no longer the desperate, anxious person I used to be. I now know that I will naturally find Ms. Right, and that I don't have to try so hard."

Making the Most of Everyday Opportunities

So, what does all of this have to do with communication? Everything! In order to have someone with whom to talk, you must meet someone, and how you go about it determines your future success. With an expanded vision, you are open to all kinds of opportunities, and with a correct focus, you are more relaxed and able to create and maintain rapport with lots of different kinds of people.

In one of my workshops, I take singles through an exercise to bring into focus the abundance of opportunities to meet others that we naturally encounter. We take several different areas of life (i.e., work, home, recreation, organizations, religious, and so on) and generate ideas about how and where to meet other singles and potential dating partners. This is the list that one workshop generated:

Home

- Play an instrument on your front porch/patio/front yard
- Hang out at your neighborhood or apartment pool
- Attend crime-watch meetings
- Do some kind of outdoor hobby
- Do yard work and talk to passersby
- Wash your car and make it a point to talk to passersby
- Go introduce yourself to your neighbors
- Throw a party; invite singles and couples, and ask them all to bring single people with them

Work

- Join volunteer groups
- Participate in social groups or happy hour meetings after work
- Introduce yourself to one person outside your immediate work group each day
- Talk to people in the elevator
- Join a Toastmasters group (speakers club)
- Start your own club
- Hang around the copier/coffee machine/break room
- Talk to people on the way in from the parking lot

- Go to office parties
- Invite others to lunch/happy hour with customers or coworkers

Shopping

- Grocery store: ask or offer advice about certain foods
- Clothing stores: ask or offer advice about choosing colors, etc.
- Larger bookstores: hang out in coffee shops
- Video stores: ask about movies you haven't seen
- In general, look for opportunities to chat with people in public places

Errands: Talk to people

- At the car wash
- In bank-teller lines
- On driver's-license lines
- At the dry cleaners
- In the laundry room (take extra change/detergent/fabric softener)
- On post office lines

Recreation

- Get involved in volunteer work
- Join special interest groups (i.e., skiing, boating, cycling, tennis, softball, in-line skating, book-of-the-month clubs, and so on)
- Join bowling/pool leagues
- Take dance classes
- Go to a park
- Go to sporting events
- Attend concerts
- Attend plays and mingle during the intermissions
- Go to festivals, street fairs, flea markets
- Check out the clubs that feature your hobby

Health/exercise

- Talk to people at your gym/health club
- Chat in the waiting room of your doctor/chiropractor/acupuncturist/nutritionist

- Indulge in any sports you love (i.e., sky diving, bungee cord jumping, running in marathons, power walking in parks, and so on)

Education

- Take adult education classes
- Attend craft classes at craft fairs
- Go to wine tastings
- Sign up for professional continuing education
- Check out offerings at public libraries
- Attend lectures at large bookstores
- Look for how-to seminars featured by retail stores
- Start training for a specific sport (i.e., scuba diving, tennis)
- Go to personal growth workshops

Organizations: Join and show up early, help out, become a part of the leadership, and invite others to attend

- E-Quest
- Sierra Club
- Habitat for Humanity
- Big Brothers/Big Sisters
- ASPCA

Religious: Attend

- Church/synagogue
- Singles parties
- Dinners and luncheons
- Singles Sunday school classes

Travel

- Go on Club Med singles trips
- Take singles cruises
- Attend traveling classes sponsored by adult education facilities

Singles Watering Holes and Functions: Find the newspaper in your town with a listing of local events, including those for singles and seek out

- Wine tastings
- Jazz and rock clubs
- Dance clubs
- Charity events that cater to singles
- For Jewish singles, join Profiles, a singles dating service provided by the community centers

Other Opportunities

- Network with friends (See *Be Your Own Dating Service*, Chapter Six)
- Go to your high school reunion
- Create your own!

I encourage you to type or write up these lists, adding your own ideas, and using colored pens, make an eye-catching display that you can then place somewhere you see everyday (such as your bathroom mirror, your closet door, your refrigerator door). This primes your unconscious mind each time you see it to be aware and alert and constantly creating new opportunities to meet people.

With expanded awareness day to day, you now begin each morning *looking for opportunities* to meet interesting others. Like my clients and workshop participants, you are *primed for interaction and conversation*, which will naturally lead you into a great relationship. Instead of casting head and eyes down, nose to the grindstone, rushing through your errands just to get to the next item on your “to do” list, you are

- Slowing down so that there’s time to meet people throughout your day
- Open, aware, and noticing people and events around you
- Looking for natural opportunities to connect with others
- Practicing your communication skills at every opportunity, regardless of whether this is a potential Prince/Princess Charming, remembering that you never know where that connection will lead!
- Optimistic and expecting good things to happen

Sam was waiting in line at the post office when a woman walked by and accidentally bumped into him. He saw an opportunity, so he feigned injury saying "Ow!" to which she responded with surprised laughter. "You made my day," she said, and they stood in line and chatted.

Pete got on a crowded, silent elevator and when the doors closed, said to no one in particular, "Isn't it funny how no one talks in the elevator?" Everyone laughed, and he ended up walking off the elevator chatting with one woman.

Anna and Lisa got tired of waiting for the party to pick up, so they took markers and added the letter *a* on the end of everyone's name tags, causing lots of laughter and conversation.

Patsy, in conversation with the manager of her health club one day, revealed that she wasn't having much luck lately meeting men. Immediately, he told her about Jason, who called Patsy within a couple of days and asked her out. They're now engaged and building their dream house together.

Rachel told her computer consultant, Janet, one day that she was looking for a forty-to-fifty-something guy who's into personal growth. Less than a week later, Janet introduced her to Jerry. They're now in love and planning a future together.

The moral of these stories: *Look for opportunities to interact with lots of people, on a day-to-day basis, and in every situation imaginable.* Practice the skills of connection and communication every chance you get, realizing that the person you're having a casual conversation with today may be, or introduce you to, the love of your life tomorrow. With practice you can't fail, and with practice there's always progress!

Getting to the First Conversation

Now that you're looking for these opportunities to meet people, let's suppose that you're eating lunch by yourself, or you're in the video store, or waiting in line at the post office, and you notice across the room *an interesting other, whom you would like to meet*. If you're like most singles, at this point you do what? Naturally, you do absolutely nothing! Why? Very simply: FEAR.

In every workshop I teach, this comes up. Singles want to know, How do I overcome the fear of approaching this stranger? We list the most common fears on the blackboard, and it looks something like this:

1. Fear of rejection.
2. I don't know what to say.
3. I'm not good at "the close"; getting a phone number or date.
4. They might be unavailable.
5. I can't read their body language.
6. I'm afraid of what observers might think.
7. I'm afraid of what my friends will think/say.
8. I'm afraid of what his/her friends will think/say.
9. I'm feeling awkward.
10. I'm afraid of looking desperate.
11. I don't look good enough today.
12. I'd rather just check them out.
13. What if I can't keep their interest?
14. I worry they'll be uncomfortable.
15. What if they're psycho?
16. I'm afraid of success: What if I succeed? Then what?

Given the sheer numbers and magnitude of our fear, it's a wonder anyone ever meets anyone new!

Someone once said that fear stands for *False Evidence Appearing Real*, and nowhere is this more true than in the singles scene. Because we've all had negative experiences, we tend to shy away from anything that has the potential to hurt or embarrass us like it has in the past. Approaching strangers with the hopes of getting a date ranks at the top of anxiety-provoking situations in life, no doubt right behind the fear of public speaking.

The false evidence is that what we fear is usually not the case, and what we think and surmise on our own is almost always totally off base, blown out of proportion by our fear and anxiety. Are these fears justifiable? Given our past history and the risk we're taking, yes. Are the conclusions we draw accurate? (If I do this, such and such is bound to happen.) Almost always, no. Let's tackle the number one fear, first of all.

How to Overcome the Fear of Rejection

From infancy, we crave attention and love, both of which validate our existence and our value. If we were hungry, tired, or frightened, and someone came, picked us up, held us, and nurtured us, then we felt noticed, cared for, loved, and valued as a worthy being. If not, we felt the rejection at the very core of our selves. Incapable of rational thought ("Mom's just busy right now. She'll be here shortly and I'll be okay."), there was only raw emotion. The terror of being abandoned and rejected translated itself into escalating wails. For most babies, this brought immediate relief as a caretaker or parent came running in response.

But parents and caretakers aren't perfect, so there were times when we didn't get the response we craved, leaving us to experience the emotions of abandonment and/or rejection. Therefore, to some degree, we all carry the pain of not feeling important enough to rate the desired response in another person. As adults, this becomes the fear of rejection, and it is one of our greatest as human beings. If you don't like me or love me, our internal voice says, what does that say about me? Rational or not, the conclusion is that I'm not worthy. As was the case for many of us, these fears were reinforced in adolescence, by not being the prettiest/most handsome one in school, and not always being included in social activities.

In social encounters, we take the risk of rejection each time we approach someone new, not knowing if he will like and accept us, or if we will be left standing there with the echoes of those old emotions from childhood and adolescence resonating within us. How do we separate those old feelings from today's situation so that we can assume the risk of approaching unknown but interesting people?

First of all, take a moment and assume an adult mind-set. You're not at the high school dance with a bad case of acne or new glasses that you think make you look nerdy. Take a brief inventory of your assets and remind yourself that you are, inherently, a worthy and attractive human being.

Second, realize that *attraction is a fluke of nature!* We've been brainwashed in our culture to believe that attraction is determined by hairstyle, clothes, perfume and aftershave, height, weight, body shape,

income, and the kind of car you drive! This belief sells a lot of makeup, blue jeans, and new cars, but it's not grounded in true psychological principle.

The reality is that *attraction comes from internal factors that are beyond our conscious control*. You can't make it happen, nor can you stop it from happening. True attraction, the energy that draws two people together, is caused by a combination of *psychology* (how we think and our perceptions about the world), *personality* (who we are), *emotionality* (how we process emotions), and *personal history* (family of origin, past relationships).

All of these things form what we might think of as a little radar on the inside. We all have one, and when we meet a person, one of three possibilities exists:

1. *Their little radar goes off and ours doesn't.* We have a tendency to believe that if we're not attracted to them, it's because something's wrong with them. They're too tall, too short, too fat, too thin, too old, too young, not pretty/handsome enough. The truth is that we are simply not attracted to this person! If I don't like you, this is no reflection of your value and worth, or your attractiveness, as a human being. You are just *not for me*, and that's all. This is why we sometimes see couples and don't understand what they see in each other. "What is she doing with him?" we wonder. Well, guess what. We don't have to know! They know how they feel about each other, and that's all that matters. Learn to avoid making these judgments about others, and there will be less likelihood of making the same judgment of yourself. Remember that one person's "not for me" is another person's dream come true.

2. *Both of our little radars go off.* Whether it happens instantaneously, as in "love at first sight" or slowly, this is mutual attraction, and, assuming that both people are available and all goes well, a romance is in the making.

3. *My little radar goes off and yours doesn't.* Ouch! This one hurts, but as in the number one scenario (in reverse), it's truly not personal, so learn not to take it as such. The fact that someone else's radar didn't go off with you is no reflection on your value and worth as an individual, or on your attractiveness. You are simply *not for them*, and that's all there is to it.

Remember these principles about attraction, and you will be able to approach interesting others with less fear. Knowing and remembering that whether or not the connection happens is not personal helps you take the steps to get to know someone new, realizing that the attraction will either happen or it won't, and there's very little you can do to influence that. If it doesn't happen, you simply move on! There are lots and lots of other wonderful people to meet, and you don't want to waste your time on someone who doesn't return your feelings.

Now that we've handled the number one fear, we'll move on to the second, third, and fourth fears in our list above. With a plan for initiating conversation, maintaining the connection, and getting to a phone number or date, most singles find that the other fears take care of themselves. Empowered with a plan of action, you are able to approach those people who look interesting to you, and rather than stopping you as it has in the past, fear is merely a passing blip on your emotional screen.