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40 Unforgettable Dates with Your Mate

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~ Chapter One ~

Sweaty Palms and Butterflies— Going on a Date!

You remember what it was like, don't you—way back when. Back when you were in high school or college and “dating” was what you did as a social activity and as a way to discover that “special person.” Back when your inexperience and immaturity made for all kinds of difficulty in going through the dating rituals.

Guys, remember how it was? You spotted that girl and were keeping an eye on her for some time. You watched her at school, in class, in other activities. You thought her hair and clothes were really nice; she had a pretty face; she seemed friendly. Your radar was tuned to her frequency. When she entered a room, you just *knew* it and would turn to notice, and watch. You began to move in a bit closer. Sat at the same table. Tried for a bit of conversation. You battled with all the inner doubts and questions. Would she even give you the time of day? Would she think you were a geek? Did you look (and smell) all right? Then you decided to ask her out. Your palms sweat. How were you going to make sure she would say yes? Or, if she said no, how would you make sure it caused minimal damage to your fragile self-esteem?

In the meantime, over at another table, another young lady had her radar set on *your* frequency. She began watching

you—at lunch, at the games, in the classroom, with your friends. She moved in closer—dying for a look from you, a brief exchange of words with you so that she could say she made contact. She was hoping you would ask her out!

Women, do you remember being in one of those positions? Perhaps you never saw the guy coming—and suddenly he was right in front of you, sweaty palms and all. Maybe he wasn't your type, so you said no and walked away, leaving a shattered self-esteem littered over the school hallway. Maybe he seemed interesting, and you said yes—with trepidation. Or maybe that dreamboat actually *did* make his way down the hall and ask you out. In your stomach you felt butterflies that threatened to actually take you off the ground in flight with them when you said yes to a *date* with the man of your dreams!

And we haven't even started talking about the night of the date yet! You thought your palms were sweating or your stomach had no more room for butterflies *before*. But remember what happened on those dates? We do.

I can still remember the first time I saw Barb. And I still get light-headed with the memory. I was standing at the front door of her sorority at Drake University to recruit volunteers for a project (someone had to do it), and she had just run up the walk. I recall thinking, *Where did she come from?* I thought I knew every pretty student on campus. Little did I know she had recently transferred into Drake.

In one phrase, my reaction to her was, *Yippie kae yae yay!* She knocked me out!

A few days later we were set up on a blind date, and as they say, "the rest is history." We spent our first few dates going to college basketball games and the pancake house, and we talked endless hours on the phone. We courted at the mall where Barb sold jewelry and china in a fine shop and where I was a longhaired shoe salesman in a hip clothing store. I was attracted to her outer beauty (and still am), then her personal-

ity and character. Ultimately I was drawn to her spiritual life as she, along with a Campus Crusade for Christ guy, led me to Christ. I'll let Barb tell you about the first time I asked her out . . . without the revisionist history side.



It was a cold February night, and I was out of breath when I arrived at the front door of my sorority house, late—again—for a house meeting. And there he stood.

“I’m here to speak to the women and recruit volunteers for a juvenile delinquency project,” he said nervously.

My eyes locked on the most handsome man I had ever seen. His long brown hair framed magnificent warm eyes that somehow pulled me in. For a moment I got light-headed.

“Come on in!” I responded.

The meeting was already in session. I nestled into the group of young women on the floor, and the guy began talking to the group.

“Pssst, do you know who that is?” My friend said and nudged me. “That’s Gary Rosberg, the guy we’ve been dying to set you up with!”

My heart beat a little faster, and I felt flushed. My sorority sisters had been talking to me for months about a guy on campus, but I wasn’t exactly interested. Until then he was just a name without a face.

That night the face became a reality, and I would never forget it. I was enchanted by his good looks.

But it was more than his looks. Gary was commanding as a speaker. He was funny, informative, and deliberate. Glancing around the room, I saw a group of women mesmerized as he expressed his passion for kids.

I didn’t sign up that night as a volunteer, but looking back, it’s clear that I got recruited all right. I was captivated by this man’s charisma.

A week later my friends cajoled me into “just meeting him.”

So in the middle of a social gathering between the Phi Delt's and Alpha Phi's, in the center of a human circle, Gary and I were pushed to be introduced. It was very awkward, so we took off and headed to opposite ends of the room. But I wasn't stupid, so when everyone was distracted, I moseyed through the rooms to find Gary again. And I did.

He seemed a lot more at ease. We talked for quite a while, mostly about kids.

After the gathering I said to my friends, "Wow. He is sharp." And that was the end of that.

Until he called me the next day.

We talked for three hours. He was charming, and I was fascinated by his stories (and I still am). Then toward the end of the conversation he asked me out for a date on the weekend.

Oh no, I thought. I wasn't prepared for him to ask me out. I opened my mouth and blurted out, "I'm sorry, I can't Friday night. I need to break up with someone I've been dating for a while, so that won't work. But I'm open Saturday night."

And that's an entirely *different* story!



Do you remember when you first met the person who would become your husband or wife? Those were exciting times, weren't they? Many of us look back with a certain fondness on those carefree dating days.

Except at the time, they weren't carefree at all! We worried about everything from where the date would be and how to dress, to how to impress the other person. We needed to be intelligent, spiritual, witty, interesting, communicative, accommodating, and an all-around well-balanced and likable person. No problem!

Did we say dating had been carefree? Better take that back. It was a pretty insecure time. As you began dating one person exclusively, you wondered if this person was "the one" for

you. You wondered how and when you would know. Then, for Christian couples, there is the desire to remain pure even though temptation (and hormones) run high. There's so much to talk about and figure out.

If we're honest, many of us would not want to go back and do *that* all over again. Yet many things about our dating experiences were good. And we want to help you recapture the good aspects of the dating experience—the romance, the surprise, the fun, the undivided attention, the discovery—in your marriage.

But here's how it will be different from your earlier dating experiences. The person you're going to date:

- doesn't care how much you spend or how well you dress. He or she is used to you and loves you. Just being alone with you is treat enough!
- has already seen you at your very worst—and loves you anyway.
- doesn't need to be impressed—because he or she loves you already.
- already knows that you're intelligent, spiritual, witty, interesting, communicative, accommodating, well-balanced, and likable—just maybe not all at the same time!

Wow! Who wouldn't want to date *this* person?

You see, that person is your spouse—your mate for life. That person spoke marriage vows with you some years ago and wants to keep them. That person has lived with you through ups and downs, through job success and job loss, through joy and sorrow, and for many of you, through kids and diapers. That person knows you inside out. That person loves you.

And that person would like to have some special time alone—with *you*! That person would like to go on a date.

Make a Date for a Date

Dating your husband or wife will be very different from dating a *potential* husband or wife. Yet it is just as important. When you were single, dating was a time to get away alone, to talk, laugh, and have fun together. You took time to learn more about each other, about your past and your dreams for the future. You gradually felt at ease with each other.

But, you see, even though you're married, the two of you still need the same thing. You need to get away alone and *continue* to talk, laugh, and have fun together. You need to learn *more* about each other, your past and your dreams for the future. You need to feel at ease with each other *as you face new challenges together*.

That's why dating shouldn't stop with marriage. Too often, married couples get settled, caught up in the routine of jobs, church, parenting, and other commitments. Many couples are so busy that they don't take time to nurture the foundation of their family—their marriage and their relationship with each other. As we know all too well, when that marriage foundation begins to crumble, everything else comes down with it.

Your marriage is your most important relationship after your relationship with God. Your marriage needs nurturing. Like a plant needs water or a car needs an oil change, your marriage needs consistent attention. It needs care and nurture every day; it needs a special “tune-up” once in a while. And that's why we wrote this book. Designed to be a companion to our book *The Five Love Needs of Men and Women*, this book will help to jump-start a habit that needs to be a regular part of your marriage. You need to reconnect with your spouse. You need to work at your marriage.

Guys, you wouldn't think of ignoring your car for a year at a time, so why do you think your wife can go for days or weeks at a time without attention from you? Women, you wouldn't think of buying a plant and refusing to water it, so why do you

think your husband can go for days or weeks at a time without some of his most important needs being met?

Keeping a marriage together and the romance alive takes time. It means making one's marriage and spouse a priority and setting aside time for only him or her. In other words, it means planning dates on a regular basis.

This book will give you the motivation and ideas to plan a date for a date with your favorite person—your mate!