

YOU AND WOMEN

Should there be a woman in your life?

Can you survive alone and be happy or do you need a woman in your life to feel complete?

I think it often depends on when you ask yourself the question.

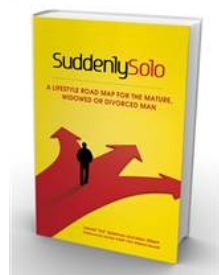
The initial outpouring of support following a divorce or losing a spouse certainly helps to fill the empty spaces that almost invariably occur. This social, kinetic-energy may be sufficient to create a sufficiently warming environment for some. With food coming in and entreaties to join others, there may be more than enough socialization to make it unnecessary for many to affirmatively seek out a new partner. I think we all know people who are perfectly happy living as newly-minted singles.

But as time moves on, even the most loyal of friends and devoted family members return to their own lives and this is when the question of how much you enjoy living as single takes on new gravity. That is why the answer to the question of committed companionship is dependent on where you are on the timeline of singledom.

My research has shown that most Suddenly Solo's (67%) are desirous of finding someone that they could be friends with. This validates that the majority of us are certainly looking for some "connection" that does not necessarily mean a deep relationship. Having the ability to call a woman solely as a dinner companion or as a date for a movie can certainly help you to enjoy female company without the "spectre" of it being anything more than just a date. Of course, sometimes things develop beyond a platonic involvement, but so be it. There definitely are women out there who are open to casual sex without any commitment.

The point is that your new, single life is fluid. You may find yourself moving back and forth between wanting to build a new experiences that are for you and you alone or sharing them with a woman. Both of these scenarios are fine, and with the proliferation of Suddenly Solos, men and women alike, emerging from divorce or widowhood, there are many experiences to be had.

No matter where your heart leads you, it will certainly bring you to a world that will involve being in the company of women. You would be wise to set aside any preconceived notions of what you may have thought are protracted social mourning periods when it comes to entering the dating market. For example, you may think that bitterness over a divorce may make a person less likely (at least initially) to seek a new female companion and conversely, the void created by a spouse's death might push a widower



into starting a relationship hurriedly. Think again. **The research I did shows that 73% of divorced men started dating within 6 months of their divorce while only 27% of widowers had dated in that same period. Fully 46% of widowers waited close to year before dating and 38% of them waited more than a year.** Not understanding what precisely is motivating you to enter the dating scene (or withdrawing from it) can make it difficult to move forward honestly . . . either alone or with someone else. This is where friends, family or support groups can be invaluable in getting in touch with your feelings about your future and if there should be another someone special in it. As I worked my way through the solo-world, I found it especially important to have someone in my life who I could openly communicate my feelings with. In my case, I found that I was able to be most candid and frank with an individual . . . a woman friend . . . who was just that, a friend.

As I have already mentioned, there is an overwhelming societal pressure to be coupled today that is hammered home constantly in the media. This barrage of blissful couples-imagery can make you feel “wrong” for not wanting to be in a relationship. Don’t be manipulated. It is perfectly fine to experiment with a singles lifestyle for whatever period of time you want. I know men who never re-engaged in any type of serious relationship ever again following their becoming suddenly solo. In fact, many of my single, divorced friends are no longer looking for that type of committed partnership. Their reasons for remaining unattached are manifold; financial considerations, family-reaction, emotional vulnerability, you name it. Yet some of these newly minted and apparently die-hard bachelors are the very ones that quickly find new partners! As I’ve conjectured before, perhaps it’s their independence and self-sufficiency that is pheromone-like attractant. Who knows? **Statistically speaking, 42% of the widowed men in my research are “more likely to be in a monogamous relationship” while only 28% of the divorced men were so attached. There is obviously a pronounced desire amongst the divorced men to “play the field” at least for a while.**

The important thing is being comfortable with yourself and understanding that there are no hard and fast rules for what you are going through. If you feel that you are not capable of letting another woman into your life right now, so be it. But whatever you do, don’t shut yourself off to that possibility. **In our survey, both widowed and divorced men gave the following reasons for starting to date:**

Felt it was the right time	79%
Wanted a sexual relationships	76%
Have a lot to share	75%
Tired of being alone	71%

Even if you are not looking for a “serious” relationship right now, it is likely that you enjoy being in the company of friends and that will certainly include being with women. Being unattached does not mean being alone.

HINT: No doubt there will be attempts at “fix-ups” from well meaning friends and family. These should always be handled with tact and an understanding that the motivation for such efforts comes from a desire to see you happy.

And while my research has shown that not every Suddenly Solo man is looking for a monogamous relationship, I did discover what many Suddenly Solo men are looking for physically in a woman irrespective of their willingness to commit to a serious relationship . . . (how’s that for a teaser?)

Read on my fellow traveler . . .