

## **Dating for Women After Divorce**

*Gail Buckley*

[www.PLRContentSource.com](http://www.PLRContentSource.com)

You're single again – congratulations! You might not hear that from most people. Most will give you a sorrowful look and then say, "I'm so sorry." But whether you decided to move forward with a divorce, or your ex-husband did – one thing we know for sure – it wasn't the right match.

Now you're free to find your one true, real soul mate in life. Or – maybe you don't even want anything that serious. Maybe you've decided you love being single, but you'd like to have a man (or several) to date now that you're free.

Either way, this is all going to be done on your terms now. You have racked up some life experience and you're able to weed out the kinds of men who don't suit your needs.

How soon should you start dating after your divorce? Well that kind of depends on whether or not there are kids involved. Kids can be sensitive and even if you've known the marriage was over for a decade, to them it will be new.

You can date soon after, but don't have seven different men picking you up at your door every week immediately after the divorce. Even one is too many if the kids are struggling with the separation – so it's best to take your dating outside of their world.

If there are no kids involved, then there's no set time. You can give yourself time to grieve the loss of your marriage or jump right into the dating scene – whatever works for you!

Just don't sit on the sidelines too long out of fear. There are millions of people in the same situation as you – and they, too didn't find their soul mate on the first try – so your perfect match might be out there waiting.

## **Figure Out What Kind of Dating You Want to Do**

What kind of mindset are you in right now? Are you in a man-hating mode where you are taking everything your ex ever did to you out on every man that exists? That's understandable, but it's not fair – so find a way to let go of that anger and wait until you do before you hit the dating scene.

Maybe you're not angry with all men, but you can't see yourself back in a relationship right now. That's okay! You can have fun, casual companionship with one or more men that doesn't require you to make a commitment.

Or, you might really miss marriage and want to find someone who you can have that kind of connection with. Whatever choice you make – there are men out there searching for the exact same thing.

## **Who's Your Mr. Right?**

Some men and women get a divorce and start dating each other all over again. You sometimes hear about them getting back together and living happily ever after.

But this isn't usually the case. You don't want to make the same mistakes a second time. Spend some time before you start dating to really figure out what it is you want out of your dates.

If you want to, start with what you hated about your ex! Was he a couch potato and you wanted to get out and see the world? Was it impossible for him to crack a smile while you wanted to be silly and fun? Was he always spending while you wanted to be smart with your money?

Narrowing it down this way will help you flip those "dislikes" around and discover what kind of man you *do* really want. For example, you might find out that one of these is most important to you – based on what your last experience was like:

- Appearances – because your ex never cared about his
- Sense of Humor – because your ex was always too serious
- Financial Security – because your ex blew through money and created debt
- Respectful – because your ex treated you without any
- Adventurous – because your ex preferred a boring life, and you didn't

Or, if you want to leave your ex out of the equation and just create your own list of “deal breakers” (things you can't do without), that's fine, too!

As you grow older, things might have changed about what you want in a man that you date. Maybe before (in your 20s) it was all about looks. Now, in your 40s, maybe it's all about financial security and a sense of humor.

Don't let other people's ideal vision of your date influence your decision. Divorce is a heartbreaking event to go through and you want to make sure that this choice is all about you and your needs – not your best friend or parent.

### **Get Prepared So You Feel Strong and in Control**

Divorce can leave you feeling so drained – emotionally and even physically. You might have a lower self esteem when you emerge, or maybe you're the type of person who comes out of it stronger than ever!

Either way, you want to get prepared before you hit the dating scene so that you can find someone who suits your needs. Sometimes we stifle who we are in a marriage.

Maybe your ex was a couch potato, so you were too – when what you really wanted to do was be outdoors and active (and that's the kind of man you're looking for now).

Maybe that caused you to gain a lot of weight and you want someone fit and healthy. There's nothing wrong with making an effort to look the way you want to look and feel the way you want to feel.

Do things you've never done before but always wanted to do – get your mental spirit back in the game so that you're not just a bystander in the life you want to live, but a participant!

If your ex always liked you with long hair, but you wanted it short – and want to find a man to date who doesn't mind short hair, then go ahead and cut it now! There's no one to answer to now – no one to “make happy” except yourself.

Start living the life you've always wanted so that when you do find the man you want, he'll see you in your preferred environment. If you stay the same way you always have been (when you did it to please someone else), then you'll attract the same type of men and probably go through a similar relationship as you did before.

What kind of preparation do you need to go through? It will differ for everyone, but here are a few things you might consider:

- Counseling – if you feel a lot of emotional turmoil from your last marriage, then you might want to go through this cleansing process to let go of past hurts and get ready to embrace a happy future.
- A diet and fitness regimen – if you gained weight out of depression during a tumultuous marriage, then you might want to get fit and look great before you hit the dating scene.
- A makeover – take a look at yourself and see if you've let yourself go during the marriage. Are your clothes outdated or not fitting right? Is your hairstyle fresh and trendy? Don't be afraid to make changes to be the woman you want to be.

## **Where You'll Find Prospective Dates**

Once you decide what it is you want and you're in a good place where you feel strong and powerful and in control, you can start looking for the right kind of men that you want to date.

How can you find him? In today's world, it's okay to approach men or set yourself up so that they can approach you. You'll find more opportunities now that your eyes are open to them.

Meeting men online can have its pros and cons. On the good side, you're keeping them at a safe distance and able to be picky and "vet" them along the way.

On the other hand, there are many liars out there who might be married, using a phony picture, fibbing about whatever they discuss with you, etc. This isn't always the case.

There are many wonderful men out there who are looking for a great, honest woman. You have to be 100% honest in your online dating profile and discussions.

What's the point of lying about your appearance or interests, etc.? All that does is ensure that you'll meet someone who's not completely happy with the real you – and then you're setting both yourself and him up for a disappointment later. It's a waste of time.

If you decide to go with the online dating route, it's okay to start off free, but much better if you take a paid membership where you're able to get matched up with the right men and find out more about them before you begin discussions with them.

How about matchmakers in real life offline? That can be your Mom, friends, coworkers, or even a professional matchmaker in your city. These work well many times because these people know you best – and they

see two people who would be so right for each other and can simply arrange an introduction.

It doesn't have to be a "blind date" per se. You can always attend a dinner party or backyard bar-b-q where the other person happens to be, too. Then your friends can introduce you in a relaxed setting and see where it leads!

Events that men go to are another good place to meet some great guys. Sporting events (if you like them) can be good. Lots of discussions take place at ball games in the stands or outside in the parking lot while tailgating.

Do you want to date one person at a time, or play the field a bit and see what all is out there? Either way is okay. You can be honest upfront and let your dates know that you're dating several people at once – if you want to at all.

### **Making Sure Your Dates Are a Great Experience**

When you first start dating someone, you want to be very careful. Safety is a real concern in the dating world when you're a woman and you're meeting strangers – especially if it's someone you met online who none of your friends or family knows.

Make sure you tell someone or leave a note about where you went, what time and day, and who you went to meet. Don't let anyone you don't know pick you up at your home.

He may not be a serial killer, but he might be clingy and stalker-ish – two things you don't want or need in your life if you decide to part ways with him. Meet at a public place, too – not at his apartment or anywhere that you have to be alone.

Drive yourself to and from the date. You want to remain alert and not drink too much, so driving will ensure you stay sober and have an easy way to leave if the date's not going well.

On your first date, make sure you pick a fun activity – but one where the two of you will be able to talk to one another! A movie isn't really conducive to good conversation, so try something else.

What if it's not a great date? What if he turns out to be everything you *don't* want in a guy? There's no harm in forming new friendships – even if it can't turn romantic.

But if you don't even want to go that far, then you can end the date early and move on to the next opportunity. Don't make a phony excuse – he'll know and it makes everyone uncomfortable.

You can say something like, "I'm really glad we got to meet, but I don't feel there's much of a connection between us. I think I'm going to head on home – but I appreciate the opportunity to get to know you!"

Lastly, don't worry for a single second what your ex will think of the new men that you're dating. This is none of his business – so if he makes snide remarks about your new guy, just smile and be thankful you're not with him anymore!



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