



DATING 101

DATING WITH CONFIDENCE



W O R K B O O K

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ABOUT RENEE SLANSKY

Renee Slansky is an Australian TV presenter, writer and motivational speaker, and whose love for romance and heart for women has compelled her to start The Dating Directory. From a young age she started leading and counselling women and was often called on by strangers and friends for relationship advice. She now writes for some of the largest online dating sites and magazines in the world including The Huffington Post, The Good Men Project, Your Tango, Plenty Of Fish, eHarmony and more. She can be heard on the radio or seen on TV regularly, sharing her tips and teachings. Her writings offer a witty and relative outlook with practical advice on life and romance in the 21st century.

“I was born a romantic, always envisioning my perfect Mr Darcy riding in on a white horse with his top 3 buttons undone revealing a bronzed chest. Oh, I had it all planned out, and of course when you do that, nothing actually ever goes to plan and all of a sudden you’re flat on your bum in your skinny jeans that cut off the circulation, thinking what the hell went wrong?!”

I’ve visited “Square 1” enough times to consider building a home on it, I’ve climbed ex-boyfriends fences and cried on bathroom floors at popular night clubs (for embarrassment purposes we shall bleep the names!) I’ve been loved, hated, revered and ostracized. I’ve been at the top of Success Mountain and tumbled down to the bottom again and again. I’ve dated men with children, men who carry baggage, and men who...well...- just aren’t man enough.”

Renee Slansky, Author – The Dating Directory

INTRODUCTION

Hi I'm Renee Slansky your professional dating and relationship coach. And I am here to make love a whole lot less complicated and dating a whole lot less confusing. My guess is that you have chosen to do this course for 1 of two reasons (or maybe both). The first is that you have had some negative experiences with dating and as a result have lost the confidence, because you feel like you just keep getting the same disappointing results.

Or secondly, you have begun dating again after coming out of a marriage or long-term relationship and don't know where to start. Maybe you feel a little rusty and out of practice and are a bit wary of all the new ways in which people are connecting.

In this course, we will be covering everything from working out if you are dateable to being able to paint a clear picture of what you are looking for and how to make dating a whole lot easier. These key elements will help to boost your self-esteem and get you off to a strong start.

SHORT TERM NEGATIVE:

If we don't have the confidence to date or relish who we are, then we are bound to hit some roadblocks. When our self-esteem suffers, we become even more vulnerable to the wrong habits, people and situations. Having lower confidence usually comes from having less self-love for ourselves. And when that foundation isn't strong we find it harder to date the right type of people. Because we forget where to put boundaries and what self-love also looks like reflected in another person.

LONG TERM NEGATIVE:

If we don't tackle these things early on then we risk the chance of setting ourselves up for heartache. Beating ourselves up or never feeling like we are good enough or ready also means that we might isolate ourselves or miss out on great opportunities to meet amazing people to date.

The relationship that you have with yourself sets the tone for every other relationship that you have in your life. That's why it's important to understand that confidence isn't just about bravado or feeling good in a dress, it is about knowing your worth so that you can align your heart with someone who knows it as well.

SHORT TERM POSITIVE:

Having confidence also means being able to bounce back from rejection and step up to the right opportunities. It means that you can approach dating without fear and actually learn to enjoy the process as well. It not only makes the whole journey of finding love more enjoyable but it also makes it less complicated and confusing, simply because you are able to make more confident decisions as they are based on a strong foundation of self-love.

LONG TERM POSITIVE:

When we increase our confidence we not only expand our potential but also invite bigger and better outcomes into our love life. Being confident in who you are and in love will give you a better chance of being able to cultivate healthy relationships into your life and find someone to build a future with.



LESSON 1

ARE YOU DATEABLE?

ARE YOU DATEABLE

The first part of boosting your confidence is getting a clear picture of who you are, and the relationship you have with yourself and others. If you think that you actually do have a strong foundation of self-love, but still aren't getting results then it's time to check to see if you are a 'dateable' person.

Now this isn't about me condemning you or saying you aren't enough, this is about keeping you accountable and moulding you into the best version of yourself. Because the truth is there are things that we do, (without even realising it) until it's too late. So, it's always good to have a little checklist that keeps us on track and helps us work out where we are going strong and where we need to improve.

Becoming 'dateable' is basically putting your best foot forward when you start getting out there. It's knowing that you are doing everything you possibly can to give yourself the head start and attract the right type of person.

10 THINGS THAT WILL MAKE YOU AN AWESOME DATE:

YOU ARE PUNCTUAL!

Unless your car has broken down, the world has exploded or you were saving someone's life, there really is no excuse for being late on a first date. Punctuality shows that you are effectively prioritising the person you are courting and it also shows you have good manners and respect their time. If you think you are going to be late, don't text, call to explain your situation and give them an estimated time of arrival. Better yet always leave an extra bit of time just in case something out of your control happens.

YOU HAVE GOOD MANNERS.

This extends past arriving on time and saying please and thank you; it's also about respecting the person in front of you, making eye contact and listening to them attentively. Manners are the most underestimated way to show someone that you appreciate them. It's also a sure way to add an extra notch of class and romance to your night.

YOU DON'T SET EXPECTATIONS TOO HIGH.

It's important to go into a first date with realistic expectations and a positive mind set. Whilst having certain standards is important, try not to raise the bar so high that you overlook the Clark Kent sitting in front of you in search for the Superman.

YOU DRESS TO IMPRESS.

By taking the time to look after your appearance and look nice you are effectively sending the message to your date that this is a special occasion and they are a special person. It also shows that you respect both yourself and them.

YOU DON'T JUST TALK ABOUT YOURSELF.

There is nothing worse than a one-sided conversation (even awkward silences are better!) Be sure to ask your date questions about themselves and listen carefully to each answer, don't hijack the conversation, it's not about who has the more interesting stories to tell but rather having the chance to get to know each other equally.

YOU DON'T PLAY WITH YOUR MOBILE PHONE CONSTANTLY.

This is a big no no! Put your phone away and out of reach, make your date the priority not your Facebook status.

YOU STAY SOBER... (MOSTLY)

There is a difference between both having a few drinks and getting tipsy and getting totally blind drunk. By keeping control of your drinks, composure and actions it shows that you are aware of the company and want to honour that time with them by acting responsibly.

YOUR BEHAVIOUR AND PERSONALITY IS CONSISTENT.

This means they won't be getting any nasty surprises along the way. By being honest with yourself and your date right from the beginning you are setting yourself up for not having to cover up, justify or lie to them. Let your words and actions line up with each other.

YOU KNOW YOUR OWN VALUE.

There is nothing more attractive in someone than seeing that they have a healthy love and self-respect for themselves, because this in turn means that they will be better equipped to give love. This isn't about being conceited and boasting about who you are, but rather humbleness, confidence and knowing where to set boundaries.

YOU AREN'T TOO SERIOUS.

Dating should be fun! The moment we turn it into an interview or interrogation session is the moment we might as well just give up and go live with 50 cats! Make sure that you decide before you go on a date that the aim is to enjoy the time, get to know new people and take everything as it comes.

THE EFFECTS:

When we can really master ourselves and the role in which play on a date, it gives us more clarity about the person we are dating. It also helps us become more confident in our decisions and actions. Why? Because we have direction and a certain standard. Successful dating isn't about being perfect. It's about just trying your best and being authentic at the same time.

THE SOLUTION:

If you can start to work on who you are as a person, not because you want to please someone else, but because you want to expand and live in your full potential, then you set yourself up for a more fulfilling life. We get so focused on trying to find the right person rather than first becoming the right person ourselves. Who you are is also a big contributor to who you attract.

EXERCISE

Score yourself from 1-5 (1 being very poor, and 5 being excellent) on each checklist point and the in the last column write a few practical ways in which you can improve (if needed).

DATEABLE CHECKLIST ACTION	SCORE 1-5	ACTION NEEDED FOR IMPROVEMENT
Punctuality		
Good manners		
Expectation levels		
Appearance		
Engaging conversation		
No phones		
Social etiquette / alcohol consumption		
Consistency in character		
Self-love and self-worth		
Not being too serious		

Q: What other areas can you add to this table to make you the best version of yourself



LESSON 2

**WORKING OUT WHAT
YOU WANT AND NEED**

WORKING OUT WHAT YOU WANT AND NEED

We often have loose footing in the dating world when we don't know two things: 1) who we are and what we have to offer and 2) what it is that we are looking for. Confidence comes when we have a deep sense of identity and also when we have clarity on what and who we want to attract into our life.

If you have worked out who you are and what you have to offer in a relationship then you are off to a strong start. Now it's time to really discern what it is you want and need in a partner so that you know where to start looking and be able to recognise him when he comes along.

There is a big difference between what we need and what we actually want. Need means that it is essential to our happiness and the health of our relationship, whereas want is all about what we desire (or the extra bits!).

THE EFFECTS:

Not knowing what to look for, gives 'blind dating' a whole new meaning and it will hinder you from being able to date effectively, which in time will give you negative results, which take a toll on your confidence levels. So needless to say, it's pretty important to get a clear picture of what it is that you should be looking for in your dates. Most of the time we have a general idea and so start dating off this list we have in our head. But what usually happens is, is that we get need and want mixed up and end up dating someone who isn't write for us.

THE SOLUTION:

It is extremely important to work out why the two are different and which should come first. Not only will it mean that you are able to cut some of the confusion out with dating and focus on only the men who meet your standards, but it also means you will have more confidence to do so. Simply because you have clarity on what you are searching for and you know it comes from a stable place of a deeper understanding of yourself and healthy relationships.

Need is about the qualities that are essential to creating compatibility in your relationship, and for making a relationship healthy and functional. Want is about all those extra things you would like, but they aren't necessary to the bigger (or even smaller) picture.

EXERCISE

Task 1: Write a list of everything you want, desire and hope for in a relationship and partner. Now divide it into two columns like below:

NEED (ESSENTIAL)	WANT (ADDED EXTRAS)

Task 2: What does compatibility look like for you? Where do you think you need balance in your areas of your personality and character traits?

LESSON 3

HOW TO BOOST YOUR CONFIDENCE



HOW TO BOOST YOUR CONFIDENCE

We often have loose footing in the dating world when we don't know two things: 1) who we are and 2) how we can start to feel better about ourselves in the inside as well as the outside. This section is all about working out how you can start to feel better about yourself in the inside as well as the outside. How you can really own who you are and work confidence into your life daily through simple lifestyle, mental and physical choices. Because confidence starts with us and the belief that who we are is enough and that what we have to give is valuable. But we all know how much our self-esteem levels can be affected by our appearance, health and other people's opinions or treatment of us. So, let's look at a few areas in which we can start to help you improve so you can feel more confident:

6 WAYS TO GIVE YOUR CONFIDENCE A BOOST:

LOOKING AFTER YOUR HEALTH

When our insides function better we automatically have more energy and put out a more positive vibe. Your health, whether it's mental, emotional or physical always needs to be a priority. Simply because it reflects your self-love levels and it affects every other aspect of the quality of life you have.

LOOKING AFTER YOUR APPEARANCE

When we feel that we look good we instantly have more confidence. Keeping in shape, taking care of your skin and hair might seem trivial but it will give you an instant self-esteem lift. Men just like us women are attracted to someone because of the way they look and look after themselves.

DRESSING TO GIVE YOU CONFIDENCE

What makes you feel and look beautiful or handsome? Is it a certain colour or style or outfit? Learning to dress for your shape and size is going to make you look and feel good, which is going to help give you more confidence.

EMBRACING WHO YOU ARE AT EVERY SEASON

Sometimes we can lose our confidence because we aren't where we want to be ideally, whether it's physically, financially or emotionally. We assume that because we don't love ourselves as much as we want to that others won't either. Own who you are, no matter where you are at. The more you embrace who you are, the more someone else will as well.

REMEMBERING WHO YOU ARE AND WHAT YOU HAVE TO OFFER

Being rejected a few times or coming out of a broken relationship or marriage can leave us feeling like we failed, or that we aren't enough. Start reminding yourself everyday just who you are as a person and what you have to offer. The right person is looking for someone exactly like you.

PRACTICING YOUR SOCIAL SKILLS

If talking to strangers makes you nervous then it's time to get some practice in. Try and invest in more social time and groups so that you can strengthen your conversational skills and become more confident with initiating talks.

THE EFFECTS

We often think that having the level of confidence that we think we need to attract the right person, means that we have to be this almost perfect version of who we think they want. We become so focused on our faults that we forget what our strengths are and what is awesome about us. We assume that people expect more of us and that we can never reach that expectation let alone our own. Or we start to worry about making mistakes and getting it wrong instead of understanding that finding love is a journey.

THE SOLUTION:

Confidence usually comes when we first start to change our way of thinking about ourselves. And when we make small improvements to our appearance, daily habits and speech we start to immediately build it into our mind set. Whilst some people are naturally born with confidence and seem to be smooth sailors in the dating seas, others need more time and practice to get to that level. The thing is whatever limits you have, you can do something about them.

We can't always make our situation exactly how we want it to be, but we can make improvements and at least change our attitude about it. The more you start to love yourself and own everything about who you are, the more confidence you will gain as a result.

EXERCISE

Task: Write a list of everything you love about yourself and everything you have to offer

Q: What areas need more attention in your life to boost your confidence?

Task: Set yourself a self-love activity once a week and a larger one once a month. For example, on Monday's you do yoga to improve your health and keep in shape, once a month you get a facial or buy something nice.



LESSON 4

GETTING PRACTICAL ABOUT MEETING SOMEONE

GETTING PRACTICAL ABOUT MEETING SOMEONE

Ok, so you're feeling better about yourself, but just don't know where to go to actually meet someone. If you haven't dated for a long time then chances are there might be a few things to learn. When we are prepared, and educated we often have more confidence and thus get better results.

Finding someone shouldn't be an exhausting process that beats your self-esteem about, so if we can date with clarity on how to practically navigate your way in the dating world then you are going to be able to go forth with probably a lot more assurance.

A FEW KEY AREAS THAT YOU NEED TO GET SAVVY ON:

TACKLING ONLINE DATING

Online dating is a great way to create opportunities to meet someone. It means that you are literally fishing from the dating pool instead of guessing whether or not someone is single. Here a few key tips to keep in mind when choosing to get on board with technology:

- 📍 Choose a site that requires a financial commitment, it means it will attract people who are a little more serious about finding love. Let's face it, if you are willing to pay and invest money then you really want to get serious about finding love.
- 📍 Make sure the site is user friendly and not too hard to work out.
- 📍 A site that also has an online community is a great way to build connections without the pressure of having to date them.
- 📍 Make sure your profile photos are a clear representation of who you are, not from when you were 10 years younger. Own who you are!
- 📍 Don't hide your eyes in the photos, or have 10 other people in there. Make sure they can get a clear idea of which person you are and what you actually look like.
- 📍 Your smile is your best asset, so choose photos that show you happy and relaxed. Steer clear of the ones that are overly sexual or 'modely'.
- 📍 When writing your profile, keep it light hearted and honest. Don't pour out your life story, but don't keep it so brief that people have no idea who you are.

EXPANDING YOUR SOCIAL NETWORK

Most of us want to meet someone in real life or by accident. But if you want this to happen then you need to create opportunities for it to occur. Staying in your safe little circle isn't necessarily going to give you ways to meet new people. Try and expand your social network, whether it's joining community groups or social networking sites like Meetup.com. Or perhaps try to organise a gathering once a month where people are welcome to bring friends. It's time to get out of your comfort zone, even if you don't feel ready. There is no better time than the present to step out and start getting practical on how you can meet someone.

INITIATING CONTACT AND CONVERSATION

Talking to a complete stranger, especially someone that you are attracted to can be a really daunting thing, especially if you don't feel confident in who you are. This is why it's important to do the groundwork first. To start to love who you are no matter where you are at and realising that you have something wonderful to give.

The best way to handle talking to someone new, is to remember that the worst thing that could happen is that they don't feel the same way and say no or walk away. Whilst it means putting yourself out there, you have to remember that someone's acceptance or rejection of you is not a reflection of your worth or your future.

By taking initiative to talk to someone it shows that you are confident in who you are and they will admire and respect that. It's so easy to doubt ourselves or to build everything up in our head and then make it seem worse than what it actually is. Don't feed the fears!

THE EFFECTS:

If we get stuck thinking that we are going to just meet someone on our couch (without going on online dating) then we will never feel like we are getting anywhere. We automatically gain confidence when we see progress in our life, especially our love life.

All experts were once beginners and you need to start somewhere so you can get to where you want to be. Waiting for the perfect timing or becoming a wall flower is not going to get you the progress you desire at the speed you want it.

THE SOLUTION:

By tackling your fears head on with practical solutions then you will feel that you will have more control over the effects. And when we feel in control we automatically have more confidence.

EXERCISE

Task: Join an online dating site that makes you feel comfortable and confident. Stick to just one at a time.

Q: How can you expand your social circle? Make a list of the things you are interested in and then find out how you can become involved with a social group or community circle that does those things.

Task: Spend one night or a day a week where you do something new socially.

Q: How can you improve your conversational skills? Write a list to always prepare mentally for conversation tips or starters.

Task: Try and speak to someone new at least once a week or initiate contact with someone at least once a week.

Task: Practice active listening, so you can master having a great engaging conversation.

LESSON 5

FINDING LOVE AND OVERCOMING REJECTION



MASTERING DATING AND THE JOURNEY

It's safe to say that we won't find 'The One' straight off the bat. There will probably be a few frogs along the way and a couple of dates who will break our hearts and definitely impact our confidence levels. That's why we need to be realistic when it comes to the possibility of rejection. Rejection doesn't mean that you aren't good enough, it just means you weren't right for that person, or they weren't right for you. We need to learn to handle being turned away with emotional intelligence so that we don't allow it to destroy our peace or progress.

HOW TO HANDLE REJECTION (AND THOSE FROGS):

DON'T TAKE IT PERSONALLY

The first thing we do is start to question ourselves. We can become self-critical and start to pick apart our appearance, character and everything we are. Focusing on your faults or lack is never going to get you far. Just because you weren't someone's cup of tea, doesn't mean you aren't enough. Stop letting someone else's treatment of you define your worth.

LEARN TO TAKE THE GOOD AND THE BAD IN YOUR STRIDE

When someone rejects us, it's always a good time to step back and do some self-reflecting. This isn't about beating yourself up, but rather taking on board the comments they have said on why they don't want to date you. That being said, make sure you put into perspective their comments. If they are degrading, negative and nasty as opposed to positive and honest feedback, then you will know which to ignore and which to take on board. Try and cultivate the habit of turning negative situations into positive growth.

TAKE CONTROL OF YOUR THOUGHTS

What we think on, controls our life. Just because you were rejected by someone, does not mean you are a failure or not worthy of love.

In a time of rejection, it's easy to feel depressed or defeated and over think everything. Do yourself a favour and become conscious of where your thoughts are leading you. As soon as you start to put yourself down or dwell on the situation, force yourself to stop and think about something else instead.

WRITE A LIST OF ALL YOUR GOOD QUALITIES

What better time than to write a list of why you are awesome and worthy of someone who cherishes you for just who you are?! Start a list that states all your great qualities and put it somewhere where you can see it daily to remind yourself of your value.

KEEP YOUR HEAD UP AND TRY AGAIN

Take it all in your stride, love isn't easy and it's the journey along the way that eventually helps us become the person we need to be to attract the right person for us. Don't just start dating people out of the need to build up your ego, instead take your time and go where you are celebrated not tolerated.

THE EFFECTS:

Finding love isn't about expecting a smooth journey, it's about embracing the process, knowing that the goal is worth every season along the way. We are however in control to a degree of the way in which we can hinder or accelerate the course. Knowing how to effectively bounce back from rejection will help you move forward sooner, keep your self-love tank full and your spirits intact. It's easy to get stuck in the moment, especially when we really felt connected to someone.

THE SOLUTION:

But we have to learn to see the bigger picture especially when the current circumstances are difficult. It's easy to allow our emotions to take control of our thoughts and actions. When you are experiencing rejection, start to remember everything you are and want to be. Bring the focus back to you instead of the other person. No one is perfect and we can't be everyone's cup of tea, and that's OK. It's not about denying that you feel hurt or rejected, but rather it's about not getting lost in that feeling and remembering your worth and the love you are worthy of as well.

EXERCISE

Task: Every time someone rejects you do the following exercise: Write down how they made you feel in one column. In the second column, right a wonderful truth or quality about yourself so you can be reminded of what you have to offer

WHAT YOU ARE FEELING FROM THE REJECTION	QUALITY OR TRUTH ABOUT WHAT AN AWESOME PERSON YOU ARE!

Q: How can you lessen your chances of experiencing rejection?

Q: How can you keep make sure you don't get stuck in the moment?

Q: Why is it OK to be rejected?

MOVING FORWARD

No matter what you have experienced in the past or how you feel right now, you can still learn to date successfully and confidently. That's the great thing about life, we get to choose our attitude, our thoughts and our actions. You can decide today that you are going to start doing little practical things that can start a ripple effect in your love life.

And nothing will ever change the fact that even if you don't have the confidence, you are still worthy of love.

Happy Dating! x