

Dear God,
SEND ME A
SOUL
MATE

*Eight steps for finding
a spouse... God's way*



ROSE SWEET

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Foreword

What does a long-dead, French mathematician have to do with finding your soul mate?

Georges Comte de Buffon, a young aristocratic genius born in 1707 was only twenty years old when he discovered the binomial theorem (whatever that is?). My research on the Internet shows that he is most remembered in mathematics for a probability experiment in which he calculated π by throwing sticks over his shoulder onto a tiled floor and counting the number of times the sticks fell across the lines between the tiles. The poor guy kept trying over and over to get the right result. Sounds terribly mundane, repetitive, and frustrating—like the singles dating scene.

Georges Buffon's experiment stimulated scientific discussions and further discovery about understanding probability. Today you might want to know what the probability is that you will *ever* find your soul mate. Like Buffon, you may be spending what seems like an eternity waiting for the result you want. *When will my soul mate arrive? Where will I find him or her? Will this person be "The One?"*

Well, Buffon gives us wise advice. Smart scientists have always known that God is in the equation, and that He is waiting patiently for us to discover His hand in things. So in your search for a soul mate, never doubt that even in this numbers game of love and romance God's delays are not God's denials.

“Never think that God's delays are God's denials. Hold on; hold fast; hold out. Patience is genius.” —Georges Louis-Leclerc, Comte de Buffon (1707–1788)

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My friends, family, and especially my "boys," Mike and Joe, who someday will be looking for *their* soul mate.

You are all loved and deeply appreciated.

Introduction

“**T**here’s something very mysterious about him,” confided my girlfriend between bites of her curried shrimp salad. Shirley and I were enjoying a late afternoon lunch on the pretty vine-covered patio at Tommy Bahama’s Restaurant, and she was describing the man with whom she was trying to fix me up.

“Like what?” I asked, slowly stirring my iced tea. My friends were always intent on playing matchmaker, and Shirley was no exception.

“Well,” Shirley said, “He was raised on the islands, and I think his parents were royalty or something.”

“Yeah, right,” I rolled my eyes.

“He doesn’t have any kids, but he’s got a lot of money. We’ve known him for years and, he’s not only the nicest guy, he’s smart. Somebody needs to snag him. He’s got a huge mansion, an expensive car, and I think he works for a secret government agency. He may even be a spy!”

“Oh, for crying out loud, Shirley!” I spat out in disbelief, shaking my head.

Shirley pursed her lips and glared at me. I knew that my matchmaker friend would not give up until I gave in.

“Okay,” I said, “*Okay!* I’ll go out with him. Shee-sh!”

Then I smiled. “I admit I like the royalty part, and the rich thing is cool, but honey, let’s get down to what’s really important. Can the guy keep up with me *eight hours in a mall?*”

Shirley’s shrimp flew out of her mouth, and we both howled with laughter so loud that our waiter jumped, dropping the dessert tray. While the poor guy was wiping up whipped cream, Shirley and I raised our glasses, clinked, and toasted to serious shoppers everywhere.

I did go out with Secret Agent Man, but it was a disaster, as usual. He was dull, boring, and could barely carry on a conversation. His pants were too short, his hair was too long, and he smelled like he’d washed his clothes in bacon fat. We had nothing in common, and I am trying to be kind in describing him as slightly, well, ugly. When he picked me up for our date, I wanted to cry, scream, and run away, but I knew that Shirley would never forgive me.

Since I’ve been divorced, my friends feel obliged to marry me off, so I can better fit into their social circles. I admit, in the past I’ve asked them to help me find a nice man. I’ve since learned two important things:

(1) I want a lot more than just “nice.” My list is very specific.

(2) Whoever assists my search for a soul mate needs to know me, understand what I need and want, and not be compelled to match me with just anyone. They also need to understand what God wants for me.

We're Doing It All Wrong

Have you ever gone to dating school? Neither have I. No one ever taught me the right way to date or the right things to look for in a mate. I learned about dating and relationships from television, movies, magazines, and those foolish romance novels. Guys usually learn about dating in the proverbial locker room, not a place most distinguished for its wise counselors. Looking back, everything I ever tried ultimately failed. As a result, I have made poor choices in partners and had my heart broken more times than I care to count. I also have deeply hurt some very good men.

If you're like me, the older you get, the smarter you hope to become. A few years ago, I celebrated a significant birthday and realized that my life thus far had not fulfilled my dreams as a young woman. Up to that point, I'd tried doing everything my way, or the way my friends or those magazines told me, and I finally had to admit it wasn't working. In fact, it had never worked! Then as I looked around at the unhappy relationships, unfaithful

marriages, and high rate of divorce, I realized that many were failing miserably or doomed to fail somewhere down the road.

Something inside me clicked that year. I felt sick of doing the same thing over and over and expecting different results. I was ready for something new. Thankfully, I have a loving God. When I'd had enough of failed relationships and heartache and was finally ready to listen, He gently tapped me on the shoulder and pointed me to a precious gift He'd given long ago—His Word. Scripture offers direction and wisdom for every problem in the world—every obstacle, even how to date and how to find your soul mate.

That's when I read the Old Testament story of Isaac and Rebecca with new insight. Isaac wanted a soul mate, and God brought him the perfect partner. If God did that then, why couldn't He do that now? Couldn't He bring *me* the right mate?

You and I Are Not Alone

I frequently speak to teens, and I also run a DivorceCare group in my city. Week after week, I hear the stories of men and women, young and old, never married or recently divorced, who desperately long for a soul mate. So I decided to send out a “Soul-Mate Survey” to see what

people were looking for and just how they thought they were going to find it. Some of their answers surprised me because, despite their age, education, or experience, many remain incredibly naïve. No wonder the divorce rate keeps skyrocketing. This book grew out of their stories and my own experiences of looking for love.

Perhaps you're ready to throw in the towel on dating. Maybe your head is spinning with the dating-waiting-dating-waiting-dating game, and you want to climb off the carousel. Are you ready for something new? Do you want to find the perfect partner? Help is here. God is still the Almighty—He can move heaven and earth. But right now I have a much smaller request; possibly, the same one you have, too. I simply would like Him to bring me a soul mate with whom I can grow, someone who will love me and not leave me. If not, I would like Him to help me delight in my singleness.

In the Old Testament story of Isaac and Rebekah, you'll find *eight specific steps* to finding a soul mate God's way. The rest is up to Him. His divine wisdom was around a long time before *Glamour*, *Esquire*, or *Cosmopolitan*. He can give you your heart's desire. You've got His Word on it!

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A Hope and a Plan

“Who killed my sister?” sneered the Wicked Witch of the West. “Was it you?”

When Dorothy Gale’s house slammed down onto the Wicked Witch of the East, Dorothy found herself feeling quite alone, until Glinda, the good witch, came to her rescue. Sometimes being a single adult is like falling out of the sky into a foreign land. We grew up in homes with parents, siblings, and friends, with lots of conversation, activity, and a feeling of connectedness. Now we’re alone, and we want to again belong to someone.

Glinda gave Dorothy the hope that the Wizard could help solve her problems, and the Munchkins gave her the plan: follow the yellow brick road. Along the way, Dorothy enlisted the help of friends who pointed her in the right direction and helped her watch for certain signs. Not unlike dating, Dorothy learned she had to follow the

rules to avoid harmful creatures like talking trees and flying monkeys (some of whom I think I dated last year). Finally, before she could approach the Wizard, she had to spend time in preparation at the Emerald City Beauty Salon to become her most beautiful self.

Our story as singles is not so different. To find our soul mate we need to have a plan, get some friends to help, be willing to watch for signs of trouble, endure some nasty creatures, and trust that when things get rough, we'll be lovingly watched and carefully protected. Unfortunately, we don't want to wait, follow rules, or prepare our best. All we want to do is click our heels three times and have everything turn out all right.

Did you know that according to the fast-growing singles web site, *www.eharmony.com*, you are one of between eighty-five and one hundred million singles in America searching for a soul mate? You're certainly not alone!

Today singles search for love in lots of places, some good, some not so good. You may be spending Friday nights at the local grille, signing up with different match-making services, or suffering through blind, boring, or belligerent dates. You follow dating rules, breaking the rules, and making up the rules as you go along, usually with heartbreaking results. Some of you try hiding the fact that you're on a frantic mission. Others retreat nobly into work, school, church, or even parenting to hide from the pain of loneliness. You may take various paths to uncover

that special someone, but you and I are on the same journey . . . to find love.

Some people have happily settled into their singleness, yet they are still searching. In a turbulent world with deep-felt social issues, is desiring a soul mate something frivolous, shallow, needy, or even desperate? Not at all!

God wired us for love; I don't think He intends for us to go through life without giving or receiving it. The love we experience in our individual lives is meant to grow and reach bigger circles of influence. I believe God has always wanted to help us find love, but we've been trying to do it all by ourselves.

If you ask a dozen people to define what a soul mate is, you'll get a dozen different definitions. Most likely all will agree that a soul mate is a person who knows you, understands you, and shares with you many levels of intimacy (which perhaps no one else can share). A soul mate connects with you mentally, emotionally, and spiritually, hence the word "soul." While you long for such a close connection, are your expectations for such intimacy too high? Does the term soul mate set you up for relationship failure? Maybe, but I think if you read through this book you'll begin to understand, as I have, that marvelous possibilities await you.

Does finding a soul mate really still happen? Absolutely. Will it happen to you? I don't know, but I have hope that great love awaits every single person. And I wrote this book to give you hope.

P lanning for Love

Searching for your dream mate doesn't have to be a nightmare, but it can be if you don't have a plan. Many don't plan for anything romantic and feel it will just happen. Young singles hope "Someday my prince will come." Even older singles still cling to the childish fantasy that one day their true love will float down from the heavens. But dreams need to have a practical side. Today's singles would just as soon skip the steps—skip the preparation—skip the work. I can almost hear them thinking: *Just give me the final product. I like the illusion.*

The major reason there are so many failed relationships, broken hearts, divorces, and pregnancies outside marriage today is that people don't wisely or carefully plan. Choices are made based on fantasies, falsehoods, and fairy tales. And, like spoiled little children, people want it easy, and they want it now. Today's society doesn't want to follow the yellow brick road. They don't want others telling them what to do and where to go. They want the feel-good of life, but not the hard-work part. So, some of us wish and wait and foolishly hope our romances will last. Whether we are nineteen or fifty-nine, our hearts get broken, or maybe hardened, and then we start that sickening cycle all over again.

Think about it. For everything important in life, you have a plan, either in your head or on paper. Plans get you

where you want to go. You start a savings account, fill out questionnaires, and plan for just the right college. You follow maps to get to your vacation spot, and you plan for retirement. You plan a ski trip to the mountains; you make lists of what you'll need to bring to the party. Your new diet plan will help you reach your goal of losing weight this year. Plans. Lists. Schedules. Steps. So why not have a plan to find your soul mate? It may not be romantic, but it works.

Men and Directions

Asking for directions is part of a good plan. I hate all those stupid jokes about men and directions. I used to laugh, especially at the one about why Moses wandered in the desert for forty years (like all men, silly, he didn't want to ask for directions). But I don't anymore. Girls, for centuries we, too, have failed to ask for directions. Women have refused to ask directions for the right way to live, to love, and to find our soul mates. Women as well as men sleepwalk through life—going to school or work, watching TV at night, shopping on weekends, and doing the same things year after year—wondering why nothing changes and why we're not happy. Both men and women refuse to read books, listen to tapes, take classes, and “ask for directions” about the inner life—the spiritual side of us that will remain when everything else is gone. We never let go, open up, or fully surrender.

In the past few years, though, the media has reported society's increased sensitivity to, and search for the spiritual.

Apparently we have begun to admit that we need God in our lives, yet we still don't ask Him for directions because we want to do it our own way. Many of us have bought into the postmodernist philosophy that our inner voices will tell us what to do and how to do it, so we don't need to ask God or anyone. Consulting our inner voices sounds deeply spiritual, but more often than not the voice we hear is nothing more than our own greedy, scared, hungry, self-centered emotions. Like Dorothy Gale of Kansas, we need two things: real heavenly-based spiritual direction and community support. We can't do it alone.

Faith Versus Fear

Okay, so you agree with the need for a practical plan, but you still have concerns. Will it work? Will I find my true love? Will I be successful? What if I get hurt (again)? Will it be hard? Will it take a long time? So many fears! Let's take it one step at a time. First, we'll define soul mate as offered by different sources, including singles who responded to the soul-mate survey. Then, through the rest of this book, we'll follow the story of Isaac and Rebekah and discover *eight steps* to take in our journey to find true love.

Fears about relationships, or the lack of a having a relationship, are normal. When I'm troubled, one of the easiest and most profound spiritual practices I use is to quickly identify my underlying emotional *fear* and contrast it with *faith*. Sometimes I'm afraid of being alone too

long, of having to work too hard, of not having fun, of not being loved. Inwardly, I laugh at the way I think, because if I boiled down every thought, each would begin with: *I want* (companionship), *I want* (security), *I want* (love). Even when I want things that seem good, fear of not getting what “I want” can make me crabby, angry, or depressed, and can even keep me addicted to the bed, the bakery, or the mall.

The fear of not finding a soul mate (or of being hurt in the process) is not cowardly, weak, or wimpy. It’s normal. What is weak and wimpy is to deny the fear, ignore it, give in to it, and wish it would go away. Real courage stops, looks fear right in the face, and counters it with faith. Courage surrenders to truth.

The word “courage” in English has the same root as the French *coeur*, which means “heart.” In Dorothy’s journey to get to the Emerald City, she had three companions, who I think represented parts of her heart or soul—her inner and authentic self. The Scarecrow (her intellect) counseled her with the logical details and information necessary for the trip. The Tin Man (her heart) helped her with the emotional need for, the openness to, and the deep desire for love. And of course, the Cowardly Lion (her will) assisted her as she encountered the facts, the feelings, and the fears, but bravely chose *faith* over *fear*. Remember the frightened feline friend in the enchanted forest when things seemed bleakest? Overwhelmed by fear, he quaked and quivered and wrung his furry tail, but bravely

countered his *fear* with *faith*, repeating, “I *do* believe, I *do* believe, I do, I do, I do!”

The lion’s belief got him out of the woods, and your faith can too. God can bless you, show you the way, and send you help, even in finding a soul mate.

What Does My Fear Say?

Will I really find a soul mate? What if I don’t know where or how to look for love? What if it doesn’t work for me? What if my plan fails?

What Does My Faith Say?

God knows exactly what I need and where I need to go to get it. He promises to guide me along the way; I simply must remember to ask for directions!

What Should I Remember?

- *God wants to help me give and receive love.*
- *If I fail to plan, I plan to fail.*
- *Big fears can be overcome by little expressions of faith.*

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Send Me a Soul Mate!

My stepson, Mike, and my nephew, Joe, both teenagers with bleach-tipped hair and baggy pants, were sprawled across the living room sofa talking with me about sex. For years they'd been listening to locker room logistics on sexual activity, but naturally they wanted to know more. I slipped Pam Stenzel's video, *Sex, Love and Relationships*¹ into the VCR and the boys watched intently, shocked at the epidemic rates of sexually transmitted diseases and other physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual consequences of sex outside marriage. After the video, they couldn't quit asking me questions: How can you get a girl to like you? How can you tell if a girl really loves you? What if you catch a disease? How can you make sure a girl is telling you the truth? What if she lies about her past? If she loved me, would she lie to me? How will you know if she's "the one"?

“I’m never having sex!” Joe said and then laughed. He looked worried as he thought about what that might mean.

“Well, Joe, if you want to do it right, do it God’s way. He’s the one who created sex and relationships; He should know how they work best,” I told my nephew.

Mike looked serious for a moment and then asked, “Does God tell us how to find our soul mate?”

I was surprised and deeply touched at his sincerity. When Mike was an adorable two-year-old, he saw his mother and dad divorce and watched again in sorrow when my marriage to his father failed. At that moment, I was grateful that my ex-husband made sure that over the years Mike and I could continue our loving relationship of stepmother and stepson. Here he was, feeling safe and sitting on my sofa, pouring out his hopes and fears, and asking about soul mates. Like so many of his generation, he’s never been in a home where parents stayed together “in good times and in bad.” In spite of it, and perhaps because of it, Mike still longs for one true love, but he hasn’t a clue how to find it.

Mike Is Not Alone

Singles everywhere, especially young men (like Mike) and young women in their late teens and early twenties, are searching for soul mates. The term soul mate has cropped

up on popular television shows, newspapers, and magazines. A survey from Rutgers University's National Marriage Project² reported that seeking a compatible mate who shares similar values is not new, but what is new and surprising is that the soul mate ideal has become the most desired marital characteristic for this age group—surpassing religion, economics, and even the ability to be a good mother or father.

What is a soul mate? That's like asking a room full of men what was the best automobile ever made. The answers will vary from make to model, but all the cars will be high maintenance, high performance, and feel as if they were made just for their driver.

Currently there is no universally accepted definition, and people continue to argue about whether soul mates are born or made. When I asked singles to describe a soul mate, most of the answers supported a deep inner longing for a sense of perfect union. Despite their ages, their replies show hope, idealism, and some, even childlike naiveté. Most people referred to something spiritual, and many listed specific traits that obviously were missing in their prior relationships. Here are some of the answers I received.

“Someone with the same view of life and who grows with you. Someone that God has planned for you, hence soul Mate.” —*Frances, age forty-one, single mom recently divorced*