



THE 85% MAN
and Lessons from Lucille

BOB MACK PEAK

THE 85% MAN
and Lessons from Lucille

The Ultimate Guide to Love Long and Prosper

Author
Bob Mack Peak

COPYRIGHTS

Copyright © 2013 Bob Mack Peak

All rights reserved.

ISBN: 1489553401

ISBN 13: 9781489553409

Library of Congress Control Number: 2013909948

CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform

North Charleston, SC

This literary work is registered with the Writer's Guild of America West, Registered WGAw #1643534

The 85% Man™ is a trademark owned by Bob Mack Peak.

www.85percentman.com is registered to Bob Mack Peak

REVIEWS

"I loved this book. If I read this story when I was in my twenties, it would have saved me tremendous pain and a lot of money. I'll make sure to give my grandson a copy, so he's prepared for his love life. It made me wish I was at the family dinner table with Lucille. Very educational and funny."

—Robert Cronin

Nationally recognized artist/painter

"We loved the story of Bob's family. His dating experiences, supported by Lucille's guidance, made us laugh, and we related to many of his men-versus-women anecdotes. We enjoyed the journey of Lucille and Pops and truly felt the pain of their tragic losses. We highly recommend this book for couples to read together."

—Leighs Church and Dr. Sharon Cantor

Church Silicon Valley retired executive and
acclaimed psychologist

"It grabbed me right away, and it was an easy read. I learned a lot that will help me be more successful in addressing the challenges in my marriage. This is a book any man or woman can relate to, and Bob's sense of humor kept a tragic family journey heartfelt! I love the intrigue of the Old West

and adventure novels, and this was a fascinating, unique voyage. This is a must-have guide for every adult male.”

—Deano Lovecchio

Chef, entrepreneur, everyman, married for
ten years

“This book changed my relationship thinking. I was entertained and engaged the entire way, and it really helped me evaluate what I want in a man. I highly recommend this book to all women trying to understand the man they’re with or seeking. It made me laugh, cry, and think deeply. I’m an avid romance and relationship book reader, and I’ve put this at the top of my ‘favorites’ list.”

—Dina Kelley

Business executive, entrepreneur, divorcee



*Dedicated to the first woman I ever loved.
My mother,
Lucille Elizabeth Peak.*

My first birthday on the farm in Butler, Missouri, with Lucille

CONTENTS

PREFACExi
INTRODUCTION	xv
BEFORE WE GO ONxxiii
I. UNDERSTANDING AND FINDING GOOD RELATIONSHIPS	
<i>A general synopsis of men and women:</i>	
<i>What makes them tick... and tock.</i>	
1. WHOA...DIFFERENCES	27
2. FIRST LOVE.	29
3. BREAKING BARRIERS.	41
4. ONE UNHAPPY PERSON IS OKAY	47
5. WHERE ARE YOU?	55
6. LIFE FOUNDATIONS AND ELEMENTS	61
II. THE 85% MAN AND WOMAN	
<i>Fifteen lessons to guide you</i>	
7. LESSON 1: THE UNCONDITIONAL ABYSS	105
8. LESSON 2: IT BEGINS WITH A KISS	107
9. LESSON 3: FORGET ABOUT IT	125

10. LESSON 4: BUILDING A COMBO MAN 143

11. LESSON 5: BASIC TIPS FOR DATING. 157

12. LESSON 6: OH, BOB! 167

13. LESSON 7: DON'T HOLD A GRUDGE 177

14. LESSON 8: YES, DEAR 185

15. LESSON 9: YOUR LIFE'S A FIRST DATE. 191

16. LESSON 10: GET A PERSPECTIVE YESTERDAY . . . 203

17. LESSON 11: I'M WITH DUMMY. 217

18. LESSON 12: IT'S A MARATHON 225

19. LESSON 13: RULES VS. GUIDELINES. 237

20. LESSON 14: LOOK INSIDE FOR A GOOD ONE . . . 247

21. LESSON 15: EXPLORE THE WORLD,
PICK A COUNTRY 253

III. YOUR PLAN

How to Cross the Abyss and Prosper with The 85% Man . . . 261

22. A WORD OF CAUTION 263

23. MEMORABLE MOVIES 269

24. PIECES TO THE PUZZLE 275

25. CROSSING THE ABYSS 281

EPILOGUE 287

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS 299

BIBLIOGRAPHY 301

PREFACE

*Everything my mother told me about women is true...
and I can prove it.*

NO ONE IS SMARTER OR COOLER THAN A MOM, and my mother, Lucille Elizabeth Peak, was no exception. Lucille's Lessons may have originated from reading books and magazines, watching TV, listening to the radio, or from her fondness for talking to everyone like they were her best friend. But much of her genius was instilled from her childhood at the elbow of a wise father, the arms of a loving mother, and her life experiences at a very young age. Every event was absorbed and distilled for wisdom on demand.

The 85% Man and Lessons from Lucille is about prospering through every possible phase of dating, marriage and divorce, children, and romance in the Internet age. And, most importantly, confronting the truth about yourself. Whether in casual afterschool chats or questions about topics I couldn't decipher on my own, Lucille delivered up pearls of wisdom that would resonate with me all of my life. Regardless of their derivation, to me, Lucille's Lessons were sage original wisdoms to guide me on my life's journey.

In my youth, I did not take parental advice to heart. After all, what your parents told you not to do—drinking, smoking, having sex, partying after midnight, driving too fast, dating the wrong person—was always so much fun. Why listen to them? Time would answer that question.

My quest for a relationship like my parents' has spanned three decades with a couple of marriages, several long-term romances, hundreds of online

introductions, many fix-ups via friends, chance encounters, and dating service introductions. During my searches, either early on, during, or at the end of a connection, Lucille's words would bubble up in my brain. When I started online dating, I began to document each meeting. Initially it was to remember introductory phone conversations or information women had posted in their profiles. Later, my notes became required reading to track preliminary information versus actual meetings. In the absence of a second date or at the end of any extended connection, my choice or theirs, Lucille's observations started to form a pattern. Mom's tutelage became a serious guide for nipping dating disasters in the bud. In the worst cases, her lessons became hindsight regrets for *I should have listened to my mother*.

DON'T GO DOWN ALONE



YOU'RE A CHARACTER IN A SCARY MOVIE. You find yourself at the top of the stairway to the basement. The camera perspective looks

up from a pitch black. You flick the light switch up and down as the dark void remains unchanged. The creepy music intensifies. You look down and hesitate before taking a first step. Your mother yells out from the audience, "Don't go down there!" But...you go down.

With your trusty flashlight in hand, you head down the stairway. Halfway down, your old friend flickers and dies. You're forced to feel your way through the dark. You push through the cobwebs and spiders, creaking noises, and the obligatory cat jumping and screeching. Where the hell did that cat come from? As you arrive at the bottom of the stairs, there's a dim light from the tiny window up in the corner. You turn... and out of the shadows...YIKES! There's the monster your mother tried to warn you about. There's no escape. If only you'd listened to Mom.

In *The 85% Man and Lessons from Lucille*, I've shared Lucille's wisdom to keep you from going into that scary basement defenseless. Men are dumb enough to go into the gloom against all advice. Women are much smarter, and they only go into the basement because it's part of a romance novel lodged in their imaginations. Their prince is down there, and venturing into the dark holds the fantasy of living happily ever after.

When the dead light switch and the creepy music don't alarm you then perhaps sharing my conversations with Lucille, and my missteps, can keep you from going down those dark stairs alone. If you do go, you may be better equipped to handle what's in the basement. If you find you are the monster below, maybe we can keep you from dispatching the less-than-perfect person who stumbles down to meet you.

INTRODUCTION

LUCILLE WAS BORN in the small farming town of Butler, Missouri, on March 19, 1918. Her parents, Mack and Ruth, were fifth-generation Danish farmers whose families came to America in the mid-1800s. During The Great Depression, Lucille and her older sister, Maxine, never felt the national destitution. The farm offered food and a roof over their heads. It was a great farm with several hundred head of Black Angus cattle, hogs, chickens, two barns, wheat and corn fields, and a catfish pond. Lucille and Maxine rode to school together on a horse that carried them through the heat, the rain, and the ice and snow of Missouri weather.

Chasing down a chicken from the coop for that night's dinner or milking the dairy cow for breakfast, both girls learned to work hard without complaint. Their Midwestern values were instilled by loving parents. Mack was a strong male role model who tutored his girls in how to respect and love a man. Ruth was a loving mother who nurtured her girls and taught them the rewards of unselfish love. The girls developed internal fortitude to support the future hardships they would face. They acquired a strong work-reward ethic coupled with a naiveté and vulnerability, which made them incredibly beautiful women.

LUCILLE WAS DECLARED DEAD WHEN SHE WAS EIGHT YEARS OLD. She contracted scarlet fever, and, before the availability of antibiotics in 1935, it was a major cause of death. Lucille succumbed to

the disease and stopped breathing. The country doctor had been called to the farm, and he declared her dead. Placed on a stretcher and covered, Lucille was being carried to the ambulance when Maxine ran from the house and started screaming, “She’s not dead. She’s not dead. You can’t take her. Lucy, don’t go. Don’t go. Come back!”

Lucille sat up on the stretcher and took a huge breath like a drowning victim breaching the surface. Maxine rushed to Lucille and hugged her with an embrace that Superman couldn’t pry apart.

When she first told me this, I jokingly asked the obvious question, “Did you see the light?”

“Yes,” she responded with a bright-eyed recall. “It was just like they say. There was Grandpa, Grandma, and Great Aunt Gertie smiling and waving for me to come to them. Then I heard Maxine’s voice calling, ‘Don’t go. Come back.’ I opened my eyes, and she was hugging me.”

This explained a lot about Lucille’s incredible strength and attitude toward life’s challenges. If you survive death, you get a second chance. Lucille treated every day like it was her last. At age forty, she contracted bronchiectasis and had her right lung removed in a near-fatal operation in Wiesbaden, Germany. She lived the next half of her life with one lung and it never slowed her down. She didn’t complain. She barely mentioned it, except for one time. She showed me the scar that ran down her back from her shoulder to her waist. It made me shiver. She smiled and said, “I have one to match in the front.” This was her third chance at life.

When Lucille left the farm in 1941, she became a legal secretary in Kansas City, Kansas. She also competed in big city beauty contests. She met my father, Robert Weldon Peak—or Pops—at a USO dance in Kansas City. They were married in 1943 before Pops went off to World War II. After he returned home, they had six children and a great life together.

I was the oldest of their six children and benefited from a lot of time with Mom and Pops before my brothers and sisters started arriving. The first came when I was five years old; followed by four more in the next five years. When anyone asked Pops how his children all spawned so quickly, he would recall the old Groucho Marx TV show, *You Bet Your Life*.

Groucho asked a contestant if she was married and had kids.

“Yes, Groucho, I have eleven children,” the contestant replied.

“Eleven. Did you say eleven kids?” Groucho asked.

“Well, I love my husband.”

Groucho took his trademark cigar from his mouth and said, “Lady, I love my cigar, but I take it out of my mouth once in a while.”

This was early in Groucho’s career, and censors did not let the exchange get on air. Fortunately it was recorded and played in later years. Pops loved Groucho, Sid Caesar, and Victor Borge. Pops was a great storyteller and audience. Everyone in the family learned to use laughter for the household medicine.

Mom’s day started making breakfast for the mob, shipping us off to school and work, shopping and housework, then dinner and bedtime. Every day she’d listen to the radio, have the TV on, and read magazines and the newspaper while doing chores. In the evenings, she shared any knowledge she’d obtained that day. She could carry on an informed discussion with anyone about anything in any setting.

I had a morning paper route from age fourteen to eighteen in El Paso, Texas. I got up at 3:00 a.m. to roll eleven hundred daily papers. Lucille would drive me through the neighborhood at 6:00 a.m., going forty miles per hour in our Plymouth station wagon as *The El Paso Times* spewed out of the back.

I was a major night owl during high school. When I got my first car, I would come home around 11:00 p.m. during the week. Lucille would often get out of bed and ask if I wanted anything to eat. She'd prepare food, sit and talk with me, then go back to sleep. When I went into my room, on my bed were articles cut from the newspaper, *Life*, *Look*, *National Geographic*, *Boy's Life*, or other magazines. These were items Mom thought I should read. I'd climb into bed, read, and then go to sleep. Only years later with my own kids could I appreciate the tireless work she put in to keep everyone fed and well-read.

Lucille never had a bad word to say about anyone, saw the best in people she met, and learned everything about that person so she could understand how to relate to them. On a business trip one year I brought my employee and friend Larry to the house to stay for a few days. Lucille struck up a conversation with Larry for about an hour before we went to a meeting in town. Over the next few days, we ate breakfast and dinner with my family. Larry was very picky when it came to his diet. When we left for California, Larry remarked, "Your mom served my favorite foods at every meal. Was that a coincidence? And how did she know my favorite TV shows? I don't remember telling her that."

It was no coincidence if Lucille treated you like family, and her recall was incredible. In high school, if I liked a girl, I brought her home for dinner. That was the way to seal the deal. If we broke up, chances were I'd see the old flame at the dinner table sitting with Lucille like one of her girlfriends. It was embarrassing with new potential sweethearts, but they understood after meeting Lucille.

Dinner could have a dozen people at the table, including Lucille, Pops, my siblings, and other guests of honor. There were extra chairs for anyone who might join the "more-the-merrier party." Manners be

damned, it was our job was to make Hamm's Beer come out of Pops' nose. A request to pass the baked potatoes would produce a hot spud flying through the air to the other end of the table, speared by the requester's fork. With dogs and cats under the table, family and good friends next to you, dinner was a major social event we anticipated nightly. Conversation was a competition, and Pops was our jovial judge.

The later stages of Pops and Lucille's life would bring unbearable tragedy, but their young lives, and their children's lives, were filled with joy and love. They were known by their kids as Mom and Pops, Bob and Lucille, The Head Baboon and Momma Monkey, or other endearments we would concoct. It may seem disingenuous to call your mother by her first name, but we did it with great affection. B.B. King named his guitar Lucille. Little Richard sold millions with his hit "Lucille." Lucille Ball was one of the funniest women on the planet. Everyone loved the name and the woman.

Pops was an air force officer and pilot. Lucille and Pops were part of *The Greatest Generation*, as described by Tom Brokaw. During WWII Pops was stationed on Okinawa, the site of one of the bloodiest battles of the Pacific. Life for him was also a second chance. He survived WWII but lost many friends. With Lucille and Pops, we lived in ten different US states and overseas in Germany. We learned about the world, people, races, religions, and different cultures firsthand. Pops retired at Biggs AFB in El Paso as a colonel and commander of the 95th Field Maintenance Squadron. Later, they moved to Houston, Texas, for the duration of their lives.

It's not like Pops didn't give me advice. He taught me how to fish and clean a bass, hunt and dress a quail, and how to rebuild a Chevrolet engine. Pops took me flying on my first birthday, and according to Lucille, I cried from takeoff to touchdown. By age ten, he'd taught me to

do touch-and-go landings in a single-engine plane. Like most men, he didn't talk about it, he just showed you.

One day I was rebuilding the heads on my 1957 Chevy 283 motor. The manual called for seventy-five foot-pounds of torque on the headbolts. Pops worked on B-52 bombers and fighter jets, and it was done by the book, to military specs. As he came into the garage, I was tightening a headbolt and decided that if seventy-five pounds was good then ninety pounds would be better. SNAP! The bolt head cracked off in the torque wrench. Pops leaned over and asked what happened.

I said, "I gave it a few extra pounds of torque for good measure."

Pops looked at the engine build specs sitting on the fender. "They train and pay engineers at GM to write those manuals to exact specifications, you know?"

"Well, we learn by screwing up," I responded.

Pops took a drag off his Camel cigarette, a swig of Hamm's Beer, and said, "In that case, I guess you'll be a genius one day."

Pops' examples are something he handed down to me, and, along with Lucille's Lessons, it's my inherent task to share those with my kids. Experiencing my mistakes and taking mental notes along the way, my children should achieve semi-genius status much earlier than I did. But there's that ignoring-your-parents thing so maybe not. Hopefully, you will benefit from *The 85% Man and Lessons from Lucille* and become a genius without screwing up more than necessary.



Lessons from Lucille and advice from Pops; every kid should be lucky enough to have shared my childhood.



ABOUT THE 85% MAN

Tracing back to Neanderthals living in cave dwellings, men have been imperfect creatures. A typical caveman left his area of the cave a mess, he painted on the walls, and he threw his bones on the floor at dinner. When he left home to go hunting dressed in ragged animal skin attire, I'm sure that his cavewoman grunted something like, "Are you going to go out dressed like that?" But he killed their dinner and brought it home for her approval.

He wasn't perfect, but he was a good hunter and protector. His cavewoman appreciated her man's efforts and gave him the occasional pat on his hairy back. She was happy when he brought home food, but I'm sure there were the intermittent complaints about all the bison meat versus the occasional rabbit. He was doing his best, but she might grumble and shake her head indicating something like "I should never send you shopping for food alone."

On occasion he dragged her by the hair, but he would be lost without her. He could never remember where he put his club and spear after the last hunting trip. When queried about the location of his hunting gear, she would tell him it was where it belonged, then reluctantly retrieve it for him. More grunting and grumbling would ensue. And so the earliest relationships began...coping with the conflicts between men and women.

Throughout time we've heard the stories of heroes and villains. Sirs Galahad and Lancelot on white horses are the substance of amorous legends. Portrayed in romance novels with cover illustrations of Fabios sheltering their beautiful lovers, these flawless men exist in fiction. In reality, there is no perfect man. Antiheroes like Attila the Hun, Ivan the Terrible, and Pontius Pilate are certainly not people we would want to be in a relationship with. But in-between the knight in shining armor and the dastardly villain lies the good guy...the everyday man...The 85% Man.

The 85% Man and Lessons from Lucille is about the reality of modern relationships, acceptance of each other's imperfections, and the pursuit of unconditional love. Great relationships may be found with the most unlikely of people, sometimes right under our noses. Whether you're straight, gay, single, married, in a relationship, or just searching for better friendships, *Lessons from Lucille* will help you discover how to be a better companion and learn how to accept and love people for who they really are. And for a few lucky explorers, unbounded love may be discovered for lifelong fulfillment.

BEFORE WE GO ON

I'M NOT A RELATIONSHIP EXPERT, psychologist, or doctor, nor do I hold a PhD in human behavior. There are many good books reflecting extensive couples' counseling and individual analyses. I've benefited from therapy, and there are learned professionals with the training and experience that can help you. *The 85% Man and Lessons from Lucille* is not about couples' research or advice; rather, it is my shared personal experiences reflecting upon Lucille's words that may become teachable or "a-ha!" moments.

After a painful divorce, I tried to find books to understand my situation. There just weren't any written for men because men don't buy these books. The most helpful book I read was the bestseller by Gail Sheehy, *Passages: Predictable Crises of Adult Life*, first published in 1976. Others, like *Smart Women/Foolish Choices: Finding the Right Man, Avoiding the Wrong One* by Dr. Connell Cowan and Dr. Melvyn Kinder (1986), *Women Who Love Too Much* by Robin Norwood (1985), and *Men Are from Mars, Women Are from Venus* by John Gray, PhD (1992) were written primarily for women.

They're good opposite team playbooks, but there was sparse self-help for men. Professional, personal Jungian-based psychology was most helpful to me personally. My goal with *The 85% Man and Lessons from Lucille* is to take a man's perspective on relationships—mine and my male friends'—supported by findings of my chief relationship officer, Lucille, and offer our views on men and women equally.

I haven't had a thirty-year marriage that uncovered some secret formula for success. Long-term relationships are as much luck of the draw as any recipe for success. Contrasting Pops and Lucille's marriage and my own multifaceted relationship experiences, you may be able to gain insights to get more out of any personal or romantic relationship.

I am the product of marriages and divorces, navigator of the seemingly unending dating gauntlet, and survivor of real love battlefield experiences. In many chapters, I've described a specific woman or relationship that applied to one of Lucille's Lessons. These are real women and real experiences. Their names have been changed to protect the innocent and the guilty. I've described encounters with women who epitomize Lucille's foretelling. These encounters may have been over the phone, online, over coffee or dinner, in long-term relationships, in marriage, or, worst of all, during and after divorce.

For some of my female readers, let me apologize in advance for being a guy, using quotes from macho movies like *The Godfather*, and drawing parallels between business paradigms and relationships. It's not romantic, but this is how a man's brain works. I had to solve my relationship problems using therapy, reading, and Lucille's Lessons. Then I used real-world experiences for validation. Now I'm pleased to share what I've learned. For my male readers, you know what I'm talking about when I say "Leave the gun, take the cannoli."



If you're brave enough to go down into that dark basement alone then Lucille's Lessons can guide you. If you find yourself relating to the monsters in that gloomy cellar, you will have to decide if you want to be a better person or continue to destroy everyone who ventures into the shadows to meet you.



I.
UNDERSTANDING
AND BUILDING GOOD
RELATIONSHIPS

*A general synopsis of men and women:
what makes them tick...and tock*

1.

WHOA...DIFFERENCES

“Men and women aren’t from different planets; they’re from different universes. They have nothing in common, and I’m not sure why they ever get married.”

Lucille

POPS AND LUCILLE WERE MARRIED FOR OVER FIFTY YEARS. During this period there were many moments when Mom just shook her head in wonder at heterosexual marriage.

On one occasion, Pops had come home from hunting. There were dead ducks, blood, and feathers all over the kitchen. Looking at the macho carnage, Lucille commented, “I’m not sure why men and women get married to each other. If men married men and women married women, this mess would never happen.” She meant that literally and figuratively. “They don’t need to have sex, just get married and live peacefully ever after.”

Once when the family was watching an episode of *Star Trek*, my sister Debbie marveled about marrying someone from another planet. Lucille quipped, “They tried that with men and women on earth, and it didn’t work. It’s a good thing *Star Trek* is exploring other universes. They might solve the mysteries of marriage.”

Lucille loved Pops and kidded him a lot. These comments never fazed him, and we usually had a good laugh at his expense. Pops knew he was a better man for being with Lucille. There were a lot of things that they never had to discuss because it was understood. They were both from small towns in Missouri, had simple expectations of marriage, and lived full lives together and apart when Pops was away on duty. You could say it was a simpler time because it was. Lucille expected to shop, cook dinner, raise the kids, do laundry, and pay the bills. Like life on the farm, she worked hard and never complained.

Pops did his part by being the breadwinner and a good father. He smoked when it was socially acceptable and cool, à la *Mad Men*, and because they issued him Camels in his military rations. He tipped his ashes in his pants cuffs when there was no ashtray. He was a great pilot but a terrible driver who scared Lucille half to death. Pops never changed a poopy diaper, and he left a mess when he repaired anything in the house. Overall, he was Lucille's 85% Man. Gender roles have changed as the world has become more complex, but men and women will always have basic differences.

Following is what Lucille knew earlier than me and what I've learned over three decades of relationships and friendships.

MEN VERSUS WOMEN: THE BASICS

These are some of my observations of things that men and women say and do differently. They are basic reflections gleaned from therapy, reading relationship books and articles, listening to Lucille, and living through these diversities. I've outlined some basic Relationship 101 annotations before we begin our journey with Lucille. Printing a complete list would require decimating the Redwood Forests of the Pacific Northwest.

MAIN DIFFERENCE

Men are morons.

Women are smarter.

There's one thing we can all agree on: men, in general, are morons. They start all the wars, run and ruin countries, commit most of the murders, refuse to ask for directions, and never admit they're wrong. It comes with owning a penis. I'm sure our first female president will be proof of this conclusion. Until then we'll assume this as our base disparity.

Lucille asked me if I knew why men named their penises. I shrugged.

"Because if someone is going to be making most of your decisions, you want to be on a first-name basis," she said.

CONFLICTS

Men change partners.

Women change their men.

Men hate conflict in relationships. Her four words, "We need to talk," are scarier than any *Friday the 13th* and *Nightmare on Elm Street* movies combined. Men take conflict as complaining or criticism and withdraw. Men want to solve problems versus listening, learning, and growing. It's easier to change partners and hope the new person won't complain or "need to talk." Women want to fix their man and get him to change to make her happy, which is impossible on both counts.

My friend Charlie got divorced five years ago. He left a twenty-five-year marriage he characterized as nothing but nagging and complaining. Shortly thereafter, he met a woman fifteen years younger, had a hot romance, and remarried. I saw him a few years after the second marriage was in full swing, and the passion had died a bit. I asked Charlie, "How's the new marriage going?"

He groaned and replied, "Ahhh, you know."

That's guy code for, "I changed partners but not problems." Women are smart enough to stick around and try to fix the existing relationship but not quite smart enough to recognize when the man can't be fixed. But, women are still smarter than the average man.

COMMUNICATION

Men feel she's overreacting.

Women feel he's not listening.

Men will dismiss women as overreacting when they communicate harshly or protest. Women are sure men aren't listening because they're not agreeing with them. When men and women talk, it is tough for each party to hear the same thing. This lack of comprehension leads to arguments. And then it can take about three minutes for a couple to start arguing about how they're arguing.

Men are very literal and will try to be direct in problem solving to end a discussion. Women are indirect in communications, and men are left to guess what is wrong because he should know, or be sensitive to, her needs. A woman's dialogue often includes words like "never" and "always" to dramatize the exchange. Women want to be right, and men want to win and have a beer.

Men are consummate salesmen. One year, when I was managing a large sales staff, I handed out gag-gift awards. Nick was a great salesman, but he didn't listen very well. I awarded him a pair of rubber *Star Trek* Spock ears in recognition of his inability to listen or respond logically. We dubbed it the "Transmit Only" award. He was not atypical of the successful sales team members.

For men, their business communication and sales training are taken into romantic relationships. Sales training shows men how to overcome objections, make your ideas the customer's ideas, and get the customer

to keep saying yes. You keep transmitting and never accept incoming messages. Women are tough customers, and they want to be heard, not managed or controlled, and they're not buying the nonsense men are selling.

A classic example is the Kurt Russell movie *Used Cars*. Kurt trains his burly mechanic, Jim, to sell cars, telling him it's easy: just get the prospective buyer to sit in the car. The next day a meek customer is approached by Jim, who asks him if he likes the car, the color, and the size to get him to repeatedly say, "Yes." When Jim tries to get the customer to sit in the car, the old man resists and says he's just looking. Frustrated, Jim grabs him and shoves him into the car, telling him, "Just get in the damn car."

No matter how hard men try, women are not getting in that used car. Men should switch off transmit only and grow some Spock ears. She may actually want to buy his used car some day without being forced into it.

SCOREKEEPING

Men score sports.

Women score everything, all the time.

There may be exceptions, but I've never met a woman who didn't keep score. A man can only tell you the sports scores. A woman's mental scoreboard tallies with garbage removal, errands, gifts, compliments, favors, or anything on her white knight list. A man may be heavily discounted for things he doesn't do, even when he's not sure what those items are. Men can pay bills, fix the car, mow the lawn, take his wife to dinner or on vacation, and they count for naught. These are things he should do, not things she rates as romantic scoring events.

When a woman says to a man, "I do everything around here," this embellishment tells a man he does nothing. This is because, in her mind, it's not that he does nothing, but rather the score is not even. She took

out the trash last time, so it's his turn now. The score's uneven, and he's done nothing lately. If he hasn't initiated sex in a while, he loses a boatload of points, requiring superhuman effort to get back to a level playing field. That's his job, not hers.

Men only keep score at sporting endeavors, not at home, so they only remember the last thing they did to try to make her happy, like changing the oil in the car. This is a man's thing, so that doesn't count in her scorebook.

I was discussing this observation with my good friend Robert. He'd taken his wife on a well-planned, romantic vacation; the cool thing a man should do. He related this scorekeeping event to me. "We went to Hawaii for a week, stayed at the Halekulani Hotel, did romantic walks on the beach, expensive dinners, a helicopter tour, and a dinner cruise. It cost me about ten thousand dollars. We get home, and the following weekend we're having a quiet, humdrum Saturday evening. She looked at me and said, 'I'm bored. We never go anywhere or do anything.' You could have knocked me over with a hummingbird feather. When I reminded her we just returned from Hawaii, she said that didn't count. I'm not sure how she was keeping score, but that was a thousand points in my book."

A vacation was something he should do as her romantic knight. It was not a chore that scored points. If he'd just taken out the trash three times in a row he'd be ahead in her scorebook, and he would have saved a bushel basket of money. That marriage ended in divorce.

In professional baseball, you can get a box scorebook. It has pages for every seasonal game, including potential playoffs, a grid for your team, boxes for the opposition, innings, players, and a standardized format to score every play and player in each inning, including extra innings. Most men know how to keep score in this book. If women would print up a

"Gamer Babe's Box Scorebook," men would love it. Men know women's rules for scorekeeping are top-secret, and trying to discuss them would surely start another argument. The only solution is for men to help with one of her mundane tasks, like washing the dishes, to get extra credit.

SEX AND ROMANCE

Men need a place.

Women need a reason.

My friend in Texas, Shannon, had his twenty-two-year marriage end for various reasons. But an embitterment his wife had carried for many years came out in the end when she said, "You never romanced me." This was a great couple with three kids, lots of friends, and a pretty good life, but something was missing for her. Men have a limit on the amount of intimacy or romance they can handle. While men decline over time in their need for romance and sex, women remain insatiable.

I was conducting a seminar for sales executives in Atlanta many years ago. Jack, my account manager, was with me. Jack was movie star handsome and he was propositioned by women constantly and dated them by the dozens. There was an attractive woman in the audience, Georgia, who approached me after class to see if I wanted to have drinks and dinner. I try not to read too much into a conversation with a woman, as my guess is as good as the next man's and is usually wrong. I accepted the invite from Georgia. Jack had a few offers as usual, and he disappeared into the Atlanta night with two women.

Georgia and I went to a nice restaurant, enjoyed a lovely dinner, and we discovered we had much in common. The wine and conversation flowed smoothly like spending time with a long-lost buddy. Georgia knew a lot about cars, skiing, movies, and even told a few "walks into a bar" jokes. It was about midnight, and the maître d' was urging us to

leave. We departed the restaurant and went to my hotel for a night cap. Again, conversation was effortless. I mentioned that I had an early flight the next day, probing for a response. It's been said that a woman knows from the first minute of the date whether she's going to have sex, and the man is left to guess.

Georgia smiled and said, "I'm not in the habit of asking men out, but you looked like a nice guy. The other guy in your group had all the women breathing heavy, but he looked like trouble. This is the most fun I've had with a man in years. I'm so glad that sex didn't rear its ugly head."

That caught me off guard, but I had to agree with her. She called Jack on the money. I was thinking of Shannon and his wife, and I had romanced Georgia rather than pushing for sex. I'm sure she gave me bonus points in her scorebook. Georgia gave me a prolonged hug that revealed her satisfaction with the evening. I made a mental note: romance first, sex later. I talked to Georgia a few times after that, but Atlanta was a long haul from San Francisco. I think we both chalked it up to one for the good guys.

SELF-WORTH

Men value accomplishments.

Women value love in their lives.

To be happy in any relationship, you need to be happy with yourself first. How each sex values self-worth is different. Men see their value based on accomplishments. Men feel worthless without accomplishing their goals in life. Women evaluate their worth based on the love in their lives. Love of a spouse, boyfriend, children, and friends all add to a woman's feelings of personal value. Men who climb mountains, set sports records, and build empires can maintain high self-worth without a woman's love. It's more difficult for professional women. Many women who opt for careers

at some point feel low self-esteem without the fulfillment of romantic love. As a woman reaches her financial goals, she can relax, as her next priority will focus on her need for love.

A big difference for men and women is how they build self-worth in their children. I've seen a major change over my life in this area. In the past, a woman nurtured her children telling them she loved them and that they could be anything, and do anything, they wanted. The old-school fathers were stricter, and they never told their kids they loved them verbally. Dads refrained from telling their children they could do or be anything just by wanting it; they had to work for it. Mothers nurtured; fathers disciplined. This is the great balancing act in raising children.

Generations X (born 1966–1976, 41 million), Y (born 1977–1994, 71 million), and Z (born 1995–2012, 30 million) are the spawns of over nurturing and misplaced or nonexistent discipline. Gen X–Z children have been told they can do and be anything they “want,” and the important thing is to be happy. These children are easy to spot, like the recent Stanford graduates with a \$250,000-education majoring in history paid for by Mom and Dad. They're the ones that get your name wrong on your cup at Starbucks.

Pops would tell me if I wanted something, go work for it. “Crap in one hand, wish in another, and see which one weighs more,” Pops said. “You want to be happy? You'll be smiling when you accomplish something by working hard and then get paid for a job well done. Being happy is for women; men need to feel proud.”

I delivered newspapers every day during high school, bought two motorcycles, a cool used '57 Chevy, and put money away for college. During college, I worked at night for GM earning union wages, belonged to a fraternity, played intramural sports, and made the dean's list. I paid

for all my college expenses, and when I graduated, I knew what Pops was talking about. I had a lot of self-pride.

Pops never said anything about my accomplishments until he came to my college graduation and said, “I’m proud of you, son. You did it all on your own.”

Lucille gave me pats on the back every day of my life. Lucille’s approval was presumed. Pops’ delayed admiration was worth its weight in gold as he passed the torch of approval to the new man in the family.

FEELINGS

Men never discuss. Women need to express constantly.

Men don’t discuss their feelings unless they’re in analysis and are questioned in secrecy. Women will let you know indirectly that they’re upset, with nary a clue as to why. This is part of a woman’s need for validation, understanding, and confirmation of love. Men want to be appreciated, needed, and encouraged.

Men sitting around discussing relationships would be like talking to Tony Soprano. Man-to-man relationship talk would have one repeated, consistent response, “Whaddaya gonna do?” The only time men discuss feelings in a relationship would be to discuss a nasty divorce. Those conversations center on money, kids, and pettifogger lawyers, not feelings.

Lucille was a big crime buff and loved Perry Mason. She asked me, “Do you know why women don’t make very good serial killers?”

“No, why?” I asked, anticipating the punch line.

“Because after their first victim, they have to talk about it with everyone.”

When we lived in Germany, Pops learned to speak German. He would take us to visit historic sites on weekends. He’d tell us the stories behind points of interest like The Mouse Tower in Bingen, The Eagle’s Nest in Berchtesgaden, and the prison camp at Dachau.

On one trip, as we approached the Dachau Memorial, he spun me a story, and I bit. “The Germans had captured a downed US Air Force pilot during the war,” Pops said, mixing in a German accent. “Every day they would question this pilot and all he would say was, ‘tick-tick-tick.’ This went on for several weeks. Frustrated, they brought in Hans the Hammer from SS headquarters to do the interrogation. When Hans asked the pilot questions about the Allies and other strategic information, the pilot responded with the familiar, ‘tick-tick-tick.’ Hans flashed an evil grin then told the pilot, ‘Don’t vury, meine freund, ve have vays of makin’ you tock.’” Pops got me on that one, and we laughed together.



Women keep score for everything a man does or doesn’t do. Women will tell their hairdresser, neighbors, all their girlfriends, and the checkout lady at the grocery store exactly how they’re feeling and why, but they’ll make a man guess. Women can get a man to tick, but they’ll never be able to make him tock.



BUILDING GOOD RELATIONSHIPS

Simply put, men and women are different—physically, mentally, and emotionally. I assumed most people understood this until my good friend

Danny read a draft of this book. To say the least he has a challenging marriage. He applied some of Lucille's Lessons and was surprised at how well they worked. "Lucille was right! I really listened to my wife, tried to see her point of view, and didn't try to solve her problems for a whole week," Danny said. "I just listened and agreed. And, I did what I was told without arguing. Man, she was a different person. She made dinner, we had sex, and it was like when we first met. She just handles emotional issues differently. I guess women and men really are different."

The key was not that Danny used any tricks or lessons to improve his marriage, but he accepted their differences. Step one for building a better relationship is to acknowledge and accept someone for who they are. If you can value another person for their differences, then you're on the path to understanding that person and building a better relationship. All the therapy, reading, and counseling in the world will not help your relationship until you start at step one. Danny now lets his wife have the last word in any discussion by saying, "Yes, dear." He knows anything he would say after that might be starting a new argument.



For a woman to make a man happy she must understand him completely and love him a little. For a man to make a woman happy he must abandon trying to understand her at all and love her unconditionally.



2.

FIRST LOVE

"The only difference between love for your mother and your wife is that you don't want to sleep with your mother."

Lucille

FIRST LOVE IS CONFUSING. When I was in ninth grade, I asked Lucille the difference between love for your mother and a girl. Unless you're Oedipus and love your mother and wind up killing your father, you probably don't want to sleep with mom. George Bernard Shaw wrote, "First love is only a little foolishness and a lot of curiosity."

We start out fumbling around with that first romantic encounter as one of the many stages of our lives. It would be nice to jump over this part when you're young, but it's a necessary and fun step for most men. For many women, they've been primed for romance from their first Easy Bake Oven. It's part of their genetic makeup, and they're ready and waiting with very specific expectations. As morons-in-training, young boys are not prepared for early romance. The only thing boys possess is a compass in their pants that points to the girl next door. No expectations, no plans, no clues, just a one-eyed pecker-compass that can't see in the dark.

Since men don't share their feelings, Lucille was the go-to advisor for first love. Her counsel guided me through the basic steps of how to approach young girls: be respectful, always say hello to her parents to impress them with your manners, and learn to dance.

In my junior high years, we lived in military housing near Wiesbaden Air Force Base in Germany. Because Pops was an officer, we had a big, six-bedroom house with maids' quarters. That's where I had my first boy-girl birthday party at age eleven, featuring "spin the bottle." The military base schools were very advanced, like most European educational systems. I had chemistry and algebra in the sixth grade. I also learned to play soccer, which, at that time wasn't popular in the United States. They also offered ballroom dancing, which was unheard of stateside.

Heeding Lucille's advice, I showed up in the gymnasium for the first day of dance class. It was me, my buddy Tex Fehrenbach, and thirteen girls. Pops called that a target-rich environment. We had the pick of the ladies in their poodle skirts, bobby socks, and saddle shoes. I'd just gotten my new pair of white buck shoes that came with their own little white powder bag. When your dad was stationed overseas, you had to order anything hip via the military PX and wait ten to twelve weeks. The first shipments of Levi's sold quickly in those days. Tex went with the blue suede shoes. We were pretty cool dudes.

So we danced.

To this day, I've never met a woman who doesn't like to dance. I've got the white man shuffle, bebop, swing, Western line dance, two-step, and other moves in today's arsenal. If a man knows how to dance then women should learn how to do one of his things, like play golf, tennis or go fishing. Women can learn to like, or pretend to like, football, NASCAR, or Bruce Willis movies. If a woman is keeping score, and she usually is, the dancing man gets extra points, and she just scored big with him for watching Bruce Willis kill the villain while yelling, "Yipee ki yay--"

The girls at the dances were very cute, but they were not first loves. They were sweet preteen girls who liked to dance. Young boys aren't equipped to emote feelings of real love. Puppy love, yes, real love, no. It's all foolishness and curiosity. I thought I was in the groove, and I was starting to understand the boy-girl thing. It was simple at that age. No pressure to get married, no talk of babies, no need to buy a house or go to college. Sex was starting to come into question as my pocket pecker-compass was usually pointing due north.

Bill Cosby is the master of comedy about men, women, and families. One article that stuck with me was in *Playboy Magazine* about his thoughts on sex as a kid. When he was young he thought if he ever had sex that he'd be required to get a pair of bib overalls, a lunch pail, and a job. After all, that's what happened to his dad. That happened to most dads in the old days.

Now, moms are wearing the overalls and working the jobs. Women in college and the workplace have increased dramatically in the last four decades. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, from 1970 to 2010, college-educated women in the labor force increased from 10 to 42 percent, and female high-school dropouts decreased from 34 to 8 percent, respectively. Women have been getting smarter and taking on more outside the home for many decades. Lucille would comment about women after her generation, "You know...modern women are the new men."

SUMMER PUPPY LOVE

FRANCELL WAS THE FIRST GIRL I TRIED TO ROMANCE. She lived three streets up from me in El Paso, Texas. I met her during the summer before our ninth-grade school year. She had beautiful blue eyes and brown hair usually in a ponytail. In El Paso, you had to water your

lawn early in the morning before the hot sun came out. On my paper route on the weekends, I would see Francell watering, and I'd wave to her. I'd just gotten my Cruisair scooter, which was an Italian Vespa sold by Sears.

On that first day of scooter ownership, I drove around Francell's block six or twenty times to see if she'd appear. Finally, she emerged in the front yard and waved to me. I stopped in front of Francell's driveway with Lucille's words prompting me. "Meeting someone special is a random thing. You should talk to everyone you meet to find out about them. They could turn out to be that special someone."

This was to be my first official girlfriend. We'd sit on the hill at night overlooking McRae Boulevard and watch for a padiddle—a car with one headlight. In El Paso, people weren't very affluent, and that yielded several beaten-up cars with padiddles per night. Those sightings were the signal for a kiss, my first real boy-girl kiss. The summer progressed, and the romance was on. Combined with PONY League baseball, my paper route, and swimming at the community pool, that was a great summer.

School was ready to start, and I decided it was time to take it to the next level. I bought a ring from a Mexican street vendor. I think it cost ten dollars. I was going to take her on a scooter ride to the park and ask her to go steady. Before she could get on my scooter, she had to ask her dad. He said, "No. She can't ride on that death trap." Strike one.

That night as we sat on Padiddle Hill, I asked her to go steady. She said she'd have to ask her dad. This was all new for both of us. Strike two, as her Dad repeated with another no. With my heart broken, I went home to discuss this with Lucille. She assured me it was going to be okay when school started.

The summer ended and ninth grade started at Bel Air High School. All my summer friends were there from baseball and the neighborhood. No way was I going to take a third strike now. School was packed with

cute girls, and it looked like it was going to be a great year. It was a new game, and all new at-bats were coming up. Again, everything Mom told me was true.

Men usually remember young love as their first sexual experience, whether it's a simple kiss or a trip to third base. Women may remember young love as their first romantic experience, no matter at what age it occurs. A girl's first love may be a fantasy crush or a teen idol. Girls have their romantic futures planned out, so, for them, it's the start of their romance narrative.

I thought girls were sweet, but no way would I trade a kiss for a Mickey Mantle, Roger Maris, or Bob Feller baseball card. For boys, their first love is something like Little League baseball, and their future includes going into Major League Baseball and eventually the Hall of Fame. If a girl wants to tag along, that would be cool.



Young love reflects the differences between boys and girls, just like mature love between men and women. Self-worth starts with a young boy's accomplishments and a young girl's crushes.



3.

BREAKING BARRIERS

“Women know what type of man they’ll marry when they get their first Barbie doll, including where and how they’ll get married.”

Lucille

HIGH-SCHOOL ROMANCE

The summer before tenth grade, I had a close encounter of the carnal kind in Juarez, Mexico. In those days you could go across the border and not get murdered. I, along with my junior-high buddies Tony and Mike, would hotwire Tony’s dad’s Ford Fairlane on the nights his parents played bridge. We’d drive to the border and walk across the Rio Grande. You had to deposit two cents in the border station turnstile to go over and one cent to return.

I was a rich kid because I had paper-route money. Ten dollars was a fortune, and you could get sloe gin fizzes at the Del Rio Club and adult entertainment at the White Lakes. These trips were like something from a coming-of-age movie. Envision three shrimps sitting low on a bar stool ordering drinks in their prepubescent voices. Off to the White Lakes bordello like lambs to the slaughter. We were childlike in our loss of

innocence and fortunate we lived to tell the tale. The drinks in Juarez were nasty, and so were the bordello babes. There had to be something more to this boy-girl thing. Lucille had offered lessons, but they weren't sticking yet.

RUTHIE WAS MY FIRST HIGH-SCHOOL CRUSH. We met at the beginning of tenth grade at Bel Air High School in El Paso, Texas. There was a new crop of cute girls, but Ruthie stood out. She was the brunette girl next door that came to dinner. Lucille sealed the deal, and we began our journey through high school. Ruthie had a rough childhood with alcoholic parents and dysfunctional siblings. Her father would take her babysitting money and go to the horse track. If he lost, she was beaten for his bad luck. She wanted to date me and be adopted by my family.

She had one clear goal since becoming a teenager: get married to get out of her house. In her head she had already planned the ceremony, the dress, and her vows. The only thing missing was the groom. The age I had attached to even entertaining the marriage option was thirty, minimum. I needed to achieve some goals first: get an education, get a good job, travel, and experience life. Marriage and family were not at the top of my list. I knew I had to sow my oats and then start to build a foundation for my life as a man. I wanted to be a good husband and father, but that would come in a later phase. Ruthie's number-one life goal was stated as, "Get out of the house," followed by number two, "Get married to Bobby."

My '57 Chevy had a huge front seat, and taking it to The Border Town Drive-in was like a mobile motel with entertainment. We rarely saw a movie because the windows were fogged over. My buddy Arturo said

he saw me at the Border Town one night. I asked if he was sure it was me. Arturo said, "Si. It was your '57 Chevy, and there were four little feet waving bye-bye out the window."

One weekend we were on the way to The Border Town and Ruthie broke the news: she was late. Guys usually take this news literally, wondering, *late for what?* That put a damper on the evening as we discussed the options. She envisioned marriage. Thoughts of college, children, manual labor, and poverty flashed before my eyes. I recalled the Bill Cosby story, thinking I could get my bib overalls and a lunch pail at Sears.

Ruthie was the fourth woman I loved. The first three were Lucille and my sisters, Carole Anne and Debra Sue. I knew Ruthie would be a good partner for a life's journey, but we had mapped different routes and destinations. My goals for education and adventure were still my priorities before marriage. I never queried Lucille about this predicament because I was still in shock and unsure of Ruthie's determination. I thought I should join the air force, but that required finishing high school. First love became first crisis.

One morning I got a call from Ruthie, and her Aunt Flow had come to visit! I was relieved, but she was disappointed. After that, things were never the same. We continued to date, but I learned that my actions could have serious consequences.

When I was eight years old, we used to steal cigarettes from the local diner and go smoke them by the creek. We tried smoking them through these mossy river reeds. I got so sick that I could never smoke, or smell cigarette smoke, without gagging. That probably saved my life. Ruthie's false pregnancy did the same thing—saved my romantic life. I was determined to do my life's list in the proper order.



Laboring under an adolescent vision of a future relationship or marriage is fated for disappointment. Careless choices during your youth can drastically change your life forever.



UPSIDE DOWN

Living in Nebraska, Pops was stationed at Air Force Strategic Air Command headquarters. There was a special hobby shop hangar for air force personnel to share on off-hours. Pops and a few of his tech sergeants spent a year rebuilding an old T-34 warbird. This aircraft has a clear canopy with front-rear seating, can do fancy aerobatic maneuvers, and was designed to train WWII pilots.

We'd taken her out on the maiden voyage for a flight over Nebraska. Soaring along, Pops said, "Let's test her out." He cut the engine, and we floated over the countryside for a bit. With his usual Camel cigarette hanging from his mouth, he hollered back at me and said, "Tighten your seatbelt, and hold on to your butt." He yelled, "Contact!" switched the ignition on, and the engine roared to life.

The next thing I knew, he did a half roll, and we were flying inverted. His cigarette ashes were now rolling around in the curved canopy over my head as he yelled, "How we doing back there?" We flew upended for about a minute, he chuckled, then rolled us back upright.

If I was in a relationship and things got a little dicey I would recall flying with Pops. Turbulent relationships often yielded the same upside down feelings; I didn't know whether to laugh, cry, or throw up.

Chuck Yeager broke the sound barrier in the Bell X-1, originally designated the XS-1. "X" stands for "experimental" and "S" for "spaceplane" (able to operate both within and outside the atmosphere). He nicknamed all his aircraft *Glamorous Glennis* after his wife. Nothing could mimic a marriage more than the flight of an experimental aircraft, and the X-1 was an example of a successful flight and marriage.

The X-1 was exciting, fast, dangerous, and, at times, extremely temperamental. On flight number fifty, on October 14, 1947, Yeager risked his life recording supersonic flight at Mach 1.06—800 miles per hour. Since my birthday is also October 14, I have often felt like Chuck Yeager when embarking on a long-term relationship, specifically marriage. The only difference between real aircraft and finicky female flight vehicles is a mentally preprogrammed relationship flight plan that renders the pilot clueless. But like Chuck, I loved my experimental aircrafts knowing they could crash with little warning. Regardless, I was getting in the cockpit and taking off into the wild blue yonder.

EXPERIMENTAL FLIGHT EX-000

I've labeled my ex-wives as EX, "E" for "ex-wife" and "X" for experimental since they all failed or crashed due to pilot error, the nature of the aircraft, or a combination of both. My first experimental flight that crashed and burned, EX-000, was more of a wind tunnel test. It never should have been taken out of the hangar.

Ruthie and I had been together since high school. We separated while I finished college in El Paso and she had finished flight attendant school in Chicago. Later we reconnected in Los Angeles where she had been based, and I went to work downtown for a computer company. We were living together in Hermosa Beach, and life was pretty good.

We had discussed marriage in the past, mainly when Ruthie brought it up. We were excited for our first trip to Las Vegas to see Elvis Presley, and we joked about having a drive-thru wedding. We were considering moving away from the beach in Los Angeles so we could afford to buy a home. Work was going well, and I was contemplating my future as a husband and father.

I really wanted to have kids, emulate my childhood, and become Pops to my kids. I had stored up all my witticisms from Pops and Lessons from Lucille, and I was ready to start a family. It was time to pull the trigger. It seemed natural that Ruthie would become my wife.

We took off, headed to the Las Vegas Hilton, and had dinner at Benihana's, followed by great seats down front for Elvis. It started like a Hollywood romcom movie. Ruthie was giddy from Elvis, and I was a little drunk. At 2:00 a.m. we were at The Little White Chapel.

A SHORT, FATED FLIGHT

In my enthusiasm for marriage and a family, I thought Ruthie to be a stable choice. We had been together, off and on, for eight years. Confident in a smooth test flight, I climbed on board and the flight of EX-000 was underway. After our trip to The Little White Chapel, I awoke with a headache, wearing a wedding band. There was no tiger in the bathroom like in *The Hangover*, but something seemed to be missing, and it wasn't Doug. On the way home, we discussed having kids. Rather, I discussed my enthusiasm for children. Ruthie was silent.

Back in Los Angeles, Ruthie said she was taking a trip overseas. As a flight attendant for United this meant flying to the Orient. She returned five days later. I was about to find out what was missing as the movie turned into the theater of the absurd, a regular Greek tragedy. She

announced that she had her tubes tied because she would make a terrible mother, and she didn't want kids.

When Pops did preflight on aircraft, he performed what's called a tech inspect. His military and private aircraft never had a crash, mechanical failure, or forced landing. If the aircraft wasn't stable, it never went up. EX-000 was totally experimental. Like the *Spruce Goose*, it was never meant to fly, and it should have never passed tech inspect. I canceled the EX-000 flight program and left it in the hangar. I could not see my life without children, and I knew there was another flight somewhere for my intended journey.



A huge part of life is family, and that includes children. It should be a conscious choice to have or adopt children or to journey forward without them. It is challenging to lead a fulfilling life if you differ here, and if you move forward together, you may amass huge regret and resentment toward the opposing party.



Pages 54 - End, left blank.

Purchase the book at

Amazon, Audible, iTunes

November 2013



"Everything my mother told me about women is true... and I can prove it." Bob Mack Peak

No one is cooler than a mom, and my mother, Lucille, was no exception. Together with my father, or as we called him, Pops, they were part of the *Greatest Generation*. Raised in a loving home with six siblings, and supported by a large clan of relatives, life as a kid just kept getting better. And then, I grew up.



Venturing into the world looking for unconditional love mirrored by Lucille and Pops, I was confronted with a relationship abyss. Crossing this chasm was daunting. I suffered several failed marriages, and hundreds of dates, while searching in vain. During my many attempted crossings, and with each plummet into the bottomless pit of heartbreak, Lucille's words would ring in my ears. These "Lessons" became sage advice to warn of impending romantic falls. Like most children, I didn't listen to my parents until much later in life. But there is help for you inside *"The 85% Man and Lessons from Lucille."* Come with Lucille and me on a journey of self-awareness and discover how to love long and prosper.

"If I'd read this book in my 20s, it would have saved me tremendous heartache and a lot of money. Every young adult should read this book."

-Robert Cronin, nationally acclaimed artist/painter

"This book changed my relationship thinking. A light bulb came on, and I have a roadmap to my 85% Man. This is a must-have tutorial for kissing the right

-Dina Kelley, entrepreneur, divorcee



ISBN 978-1489553409



9 781489 553409