



by Susan Havens

Do I have to? “Yes,” according to my girlfriends, if I ever want to meet that special someone. I’m talking about re-entering the dating (game) scene. I am nearly three years into my life as a single mom, and up until recently I really hadn’t put myself out there, nor had I found anyone who remotely resembles a boyfriend, let alone a lifelong mate.

To Date or Not to Date: That is the Question

No magic here—at least not on my lips.

until the kids are grown and out of the house.

Gulp! That’s a tough one to swallow—at least for me.

After all, my daughter is only three-years-old. You do the math! I do believe there is some good sense behind Dr. Laura’s logic however. Is it realistic, perhaps with extraordinary resolve and selflessness?

On the extreme opposite end of the spectrum, there’s the view that says you are only human; you need to take care of yourself too, and live not only for your children. (We all know that when mom is happy and fulfilled, so is the household.) I find myself somewhere in between. As I’ve said before, my daughter is an absolute priority in my life and she always will be.

It’s unfortunate that we are a fatherless household (because of my poor choice I might add), and it pains me to think

friend so cheerfully pointed out, was that my “picker” was broken. While pretty elementary, that unyielding and profound statement stuck with me. I’d love to tell you I simply brushed off my “picker” and got a Jiffy Lube fix, but it’s taken a lot of time doing some deep self-examination. Like peeling back the layers of an onion, the deeper I went, the more raw (and tearful) it got.

The most captivating and enlightening lesson I had came from Dr. Henry Cloud while listening to a taped seminar titled “Picking Friends & Lovers.” Among other things, I discovered the origin of my unhealthy lifelong pattern of choosing the wrong frogs. (You know, those are the men I thought I could change with a kiss!) No magic here—at least not on my lips.

All joking (and reluctance) aside, I have cautiously re-entered the dating scene albeit with a renewed attitude and thankful departure from my typical

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Before I delve into that bewildering saga, let’s consider the whole single-mom dating conundrum that begins with a debate: to date or not to date. Everyone seems to have an opinion. I’ve even come across the inexperienced who feel confident in sharing their humbling views. But before I offer my position, let me just say that (#1) I know I may be wrong, and (#2) I recognize this is an individual decision. Now if you’ve ever listened to radio talk-show host Dr. Laura, you know where she’s coming from. Single moms (or dads for that matter) should absolutely not date or be involved on any level of intimacy

about the impact it’s having on her life. But honestly I cannot see myself being single for the next 15 years. (That IS my answer.) Not because I need a man in my life—I am pretty self sufficient and I do enjoy being by myself—but because I have a deep yearning to give and receive unconditional love, to share life’s ups and downs and to intimately know and be known by another human being. Now let me qualify that: I’m not about to make the same mistake again. Over the past couple of years in my singlehood as a mom, I’ve had some very tender and revealing moments. The first one, as a close

archetype. Not only am I attracted to, but I am attracting a different kind of man. (I have yet to find out if that’s a good thing or not!) Yes, the bar has risen. And this time around, it’s on an entirely different playing field where I’ve firmly placed rules and limits based on new values involving my daughter’s needs as well as my time and energy constraints. No it’s not easy balancing my priorities by any means; I’m taking it slow as I’m in no rush. (Just ask the date that saw me take an elegant curbside plunge as I dashed into Starbucks to meet him!) I know it’s simply a numbers game. (One