

A List is good BUT a ***BE List*** is Better

All women come to the relationship table with expectations. If you say you're completely open to whomever or whatever—you lie! Somewhere in your mind, under your grocery list, behind the memory of your body measurements, your actual weight and dress size, and around your hundred usernames and passwords, in the back of your brain there is a list of expectations of the kind of man you want. Don't think so?

One morning at the bus stop:

Ronald: "Hey miss lady, what's your name?"

Tonya: "My name is Tonya but you can call me T.Baby , I am a Virgo, and I don't have time for no smooth talking, buck teeth, no car having, bus riding, wanna-be baller..trying to holler at me. Okay?"

Oh, yeah there is a list.

Some women have a hard time owning up to this fact because they don't want to seem shallow and vain. Some women have absolutely no problem at all, admitting this fact because they are shallow and vain. Whether you realize it, admit it or not you do have precon-

ceived notions of the type of man you want or maybe more abundantly the type of man you don't want.

Guess what? You should. In fact, you should have two lists; an **A list** and a **BE list**.

The **A LIST**

The *A List* is: **A list of all the stuff you think you want in a man. It's usually filled with a lot of colorful adjectives and descriptions.** The A List is typically jam-packed with phrases that begin with things like, "he gotta have... he better not have... or if he don't have....then he better be..." sound familiar?

If you are still searching your mental rolodex for you're A List, try flipping to the "I" section. Look for things like, "I have to have a man who..., or I definitely don't want a man that..."

Still haven't located it? Try the G's: Good house, Good car, Good credit.

BAMM! There it is.

Now that you've found it, it's time to take a real good look at it.

Where did your A List come from? How did it get so long? How did the ball head and bow-legged item get on there? How did the "7 foot 10 inches tall item get scratched out? These are all valid questions. When you really start to look at your A list you'll probably find yourself amazed at all the things on it. You may even find yourself amused at the type of items on it.

That's just it. The characteristics of the A List are supposed to be fresh, simplistic and practical, even fantasy. The A List is just that—a list.

What My *A List* Should Look Like

Let me start by giving you permission to be obnoxious and candid. YES! Big a Pig! You have my permission to be a girl again, even if it has been a long time, it's okay. Use this as a much needed mental vacation from your everyday relationship work and take a cool dip in the pool of your man fantasies. Describe him to a tee, honey!

If you are single: you're probably thinking "Oooh my A List man is...this or that...**BUT** with the lames I been dealing with I doubt if he really exists.

Girl, keep your **BUT** out the way of having your best relationship!

Just write!

Your *A List* should reflect the kind of man you dream about not the one you're told you should be seeking. It's okay.

If you're married: you might be thinking, "My *A List* man would be**BUT** I might as well stop dreaming cause he ain't nothing like the one I have. Girl, keep your **BUT** out the way of having your best Relationship!

Just write!

Your *A List* should reflect your ideal husband not necessarily the real one you have. It's okay.

If you're almost-married: No doubt you're thinking, "I see the point you're making **BUT** I don't need an *A List*. I have the perfect man already." Girl, keep your **BUT** out the way of making sure you have the ingredients for your best Relationship!

Just write!

Your *A List* will most likely reflect the type of man you think you have now. This is tricky because most almost-married women are saturated with ideals about marriage and are experiencing a time of superficial attraction. I didn't say artificial—superficial. The attraction is not necessarily false or imagined but it is most commonly what is apparent not what is actual. And still, it's okay.

If you're divorced: I know you're saying "I would write about the man of my dreams **BUT** after what I've been through, child please." Girl, if you don't keep that **BUT** out of the way of having your best relationship, yet.

It's okay. Write!

Your *A List* will most likely resemble an indecisive food order. "*No pickles, with lettuce, light on the mayo, freshly toasted bun, no salt, add cheese, with tomatoes, oops sorry no tomatoes, and that's for here...no, you better make that to go. Thank you.*" This comes from the recent or embedded memory of the last Mr. Not so Right. Your list will probably be made up of everything opposite of him.

We will deal with the back story later just ask and write until you're tired or until you visualize the man of your *A List* dreams and drift off into the sunset of your fantasy land together. Which ever comes first.

Life Line: Understand that writing something down makes it real. And most people are afraid of real. Why? because real translates as responsibility. If I acknowledge this is what I really think or want, then I feel automatically obligated to act on it or have to deal with what it says about me. Most people run in the other direction from what's real before realizing the powerful potential it has. I call this subconscious conversation "Do Dialogue" It's the dialogue between your head and your heart that says, "What do I DO now? How can I DO that? I can't DO that. If I DO this, then what?" Be aware that when you begin to

Girl, Keep Your "BUT" Out of Your Relationship

write down your A List you will begin to hear this Do Dialogue in your head, but I want you to ignore it. Keep writing! On each line ask yourself, What kind of man do I want? And write down the first thing that comes to mind. Remember be honest. I'm sure you'll find this list will be longer if you be honest.

Life Lifting Exercise:

Now get pen and paper and take time to write down your A List.

(don't be afraid to slide onto the back or get extra paper if it gets really BUTTERY!)

Okay stop slobbering. It's time to move on. So you've written your *A List*. Now what? What does it mean? "Girl how is this going to help me have a better relationship? This didn't do anything but make me mad!"

I hear you girlfriend, BUT hold on!

The *A List* is a very powerful tool. But wait before you expect the next line to be a spell that gets you this man, let me bust your bubble, "He doesn't exist."

"What the hell?"

I know, I know you've been good, you give your tithes every week, you even put out some scraps for your neighbor's hungry-looking dog. God could help you out on this one, right? Sorry, you can stop looking for Mr. *A List*, he's not coming. Your *A List* man wont appear out of thin air even if you close your eyes really tight and wish really, really hard. Nope you can't piece him together by dating several different men and getting one different quality from each one. Trust

me it doesn't work, I've tried it. You're *A List* man won't even show up if you pray earnestly and fast until you are near death. I'll say it again. He doesn't exist.

You may be upset right now and I forgive you for your choice words because I made you participate in what seems like and exercise in insanity.

But let me give you the power of the *A List*. The list wasn't about him, it was about you. Look at your list again. Now go through it and circle everything that doesn't pertain to the male body or bank account or shoe size. Whew! Now that that's done, really look at your expectations. Ask yourself where do they truly belong. Should they be on this list or would they be better suited on the back of a movie cover? See most women either can't find what they want in a man or find out what they've got in a man is not what they really want. Why is that? Honestly it's because many of our expectations are not realistic. Think about it, you've chopped and added to that mental list every single time you've had a rotten apple and now your list is made up of leftovers. Then you get all dolled up, put your freak 'em dress on and head out looking for him but that perfect man that you're dreaming of is really left-overs. And when was the last time you went out looking for a man that is left over? Nobody pays attention to the guy who's not so fly or not so paid. The one who is not the most eligible bachelor. Because no woman

wants a man who another woman doesn't already want. Right? So you end up fighting over the type that all the other women are fighting over and meanwhile his ego is going sky-high and instead of him feeling humbled by the attention he can't stay faithful for trying to get more and more of it. Meanwhile the one who will: love you better than chocolate caramel pecan cheesecake, rub your feet after a long days work, call you to pray with you every night just before your head hits the pillow, "Mr. Left-Over" is becoming your leftovers for some other woman to come along and have.

Now go back and edit that list again. Put a line through the wild and crazy things that you know is a fantasy or the depiction of the hero in your last novel read. You can then begin visualizing the type of man he really needs to be. Which brings us to our BE List.

The *BE* List

Your BE List is: **a list of all the things your Mr. Right must *BE* not *have*.** There's an important difference. I'll explain. Your BE List is real. Your BE List will save you from immeasurable heartbreak and headache. It describes who he is. That's what you need. You see who he *is* never changes BUT what he *has* usually does. Now right here is where many of my sister friends will be like, "Bump that, I don't want no lame." You might be tempted to sit down and

map this out but then you begin making excuses like it's too time consuming or too much work. You're right. It is work. Healthy relationships are a lot of hard work and they start with healthy individuals that chose to do that work on themselves long before they found each other. You might even make the list and then look at it and be discouraged because the man it describes seems boring and dull. But I beg to differ. The BE List gives you more possibilities! It's usually the A List men that are all the same. Haven't you ever noticed that when you pick the ones with all the candy and glitter on the outside, when you finally have had enough of his bull, he seems mysteriously a lot like the last dude you let go of? But a BE List man, offers you a chance to see things you've never seen before. He gives you a chance to see inside of himself. See his hopes, see his fears, see his tears—his vulnerabilities, most of which you've never *been allowed* to see in a man.

So you may not want to make the BE List because it's not as fun, you can't call your girlfriends over and drink and dream over it. But you need to make the BE List if you ever plan to have him.

Understand that our minds are programmable machines. Whatever we feed it, it becomes sensitized to and begins searching for that stimulant. So the reason you keep getting the wrong guy is because that's what your brain is programmed to seek for. Change what you get by changing what you are exposed to. Feast your eyes on the man you really need and then you'll better recognize him when he

passes through your life's space. Now if you're feasting your eyes on your neighbor's, best friend's, boss's, or sister's man I want you to stop! Put that back that's not yours. It's okay to model some of his qualities in your BE List man but you can have your own and you deserve your own, not someone else's leftovers.

What My *BE List* Should Look Like

This can be hard to imagine when you've never had anything close to him. But there are some excellent sources to get a picture of the qualities of your BE List man.

❖ **Happily Married Men:** Errrrr! Pump you brakes! Before you go thinking or telling people I told you to check out another woman's husband, let me explain. The married man is not who you want to pay attention to. It's his wife. Pay attention to what she's getting from him, how he treats her. But more importantly how she's getting it from him and what she's giving him in order to get it. You'll find married women aren't as hostile toward single women's questions when they are about her and not her husband. You can learn so much about what a man should BE by being mentored either up close or from a distance. How can you know what to look for if you've never seen it?

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