

— MEIRAV ROSENBERG —

DATING BACK TO LOVE

A FUNNY, HONEST JOURNEY THROUGH DIVORCE
AND MODERN DATING, BREAKING OLD PATTERNS
AND FINDING YOUR WAY BACK TO LOVE.



TRUE
STORY

Dear Universe,
Did You Get My Order?

INTRODUCTION

DEAR UNIVERSE, DID YOU GET MY ORDER?

Most women don't stay single because they don't want love. They stay single because they're afraid of betraying themselves again. Afraid of choosing wrong. Afraid of settling. Afraid that wanting more means asking for too much. That they are too much.

This book is for women right there: not fully healed, not entirely confident, but done abandoning themselves just to be chosen. I'm Meirav. A mother of three: Shaked, Yonatan, and Yuval. A business owner. And a woman who went on sixty-one dates after leaving a twelve-year marriage that broke more than just vows.

I didn't start this journey loving myself completely, but I was honest, curious, and willing to take some chances. I learned self-trust through dating. Clarity through not compromising. And wholeness by telling the truth to myself first.

I dated with strategy and soul. I built a dating funnel like a CEO and healed like a mystic, with spreadsheets in one hand and a journal full of prayers and thank-you notes to the Universe in the other. I stopped performing. I stopped chasing. I stopped asking the Universe for "*the one*" and started asking it to show me *me*.

And yes (spoiler alert), I did find love. Real, grounded, safe love with a wonderful man. But this book isn't about him.

It's about the road I walked with myself. It wasn't short. It wasn't sweet. But it was exactly what I needed. Yes, I did find "the one," but I also found my true, authentic self along the way.

Because the Universe always does, in fact, get your order.

The real question is: are you ready to receive it?

CHAPTER 17

THE SIMPLE, HONKING CFO

While still buzzing from the high-gloss hollowness of my first date with The Executive, I decided I didn't need to reach a final verdict on a man before trying out someone else. This wasn't just to collect options, but to collect data. I was experimenting. I wanted to notice patterns faster. To understand how different men made me feel in my body, not just how impressive they seemed on paper.

The next contender was The CFO. After he popped up as a match in my inbox, we moved quickly from the app to Instagram, my new preferred vetting and communication system. The CFO's first message? "I'm a simple guy. You don't seem simple." Honestly? Kind of sexy.

Coming off a date with a guy who probably polished his watch more than his soul, "simple" sounded like relief. Especially with a title like CFO. I have a thing for numbers. Men who understand money. Order. Logic. Structure. Give me someone who builds spreadsheets and stability? I swoon.

Remember The Carpenter? How I was attracted to his Bruce Willis aesthetic? The CFO had a similar look, but younger. Tall. Bald. Blue eyes. A calm, masculine presence. Two kids. Co-parenting actively. All "green flags." No red flags here. I was intrigued.

We planned a lunch date. He offered to pick me up but asked first, with gentleness. That little thing? That mattered. Like he

knew that maybe not all women want to be picked up. He was attentive without being overbearing. Confident without being performative. So far, so good.

When he arrived to pick me up for our first date, he texted, “I’m downstairs in the circle.” When I got outside, there was a gorgeous black Mercedes Jeep waiting, the only car there. Naturally, I started walking toward it.

Then came the honk. Literally.

It filled the air and my eardrums. Loud. Obnoxious. Aggressive. Repeated. Someone was laying into their horn like they were trying to communicate through rage.

WTF? I thought. Why is someone honking like that? There’s no traffic. No one’s blocked. What kind of jerk is ruining my peaceful pickup like this?

Then I realized. The Mercedes was inching forward, trying to make space for the honker behind him. And the honker? That was my date!

He wasn’t in the circle yet. He was in a different car, up the road, still pulling in.

And that honking? That was from him. Calling me over like my pizza order was ready at the counter.

I laughed. To myself, mostly. Because it was funny. He *had* said he was simple.

Now I wondered: *Is this what he meant?*

When I got to his car, he looked slightly embarrassed. I pretended not to notice. I still appreciated that he came, that he showed up, even if his entrance was... sonically dramatic.

He drove us to a Thai place for lunch, his pick. Great choice. Daytime date. Smart move. Everything felt light, warm, grounded. He didn't drink. (I still wasn't sure what I thought about that.)

But he smiled easily. He talked about his kids. He had substance. And most importantly, he asked questions. Not small talk. Not one-upmanship. Real questions. He wasn't performing. He didn't sell himself. After the absurdity of The Executive's fancy flexes, this date felt refreshing. Normal. Engaged. Human.

And then came a second moment, the kind you only clock *after* the fact. When we left the restaurant, we headed back to the parking lot. He pulled the ticket from the meter. Inserted his credit card. Nothing. Tried again. Still nothing. Then came the voice from the speaker: "Sir, your credit card was declined." He insisted that wasn't possible. Got flustered. Red in the face. When I offered to pay, he waved me off with an awkward smile. Eventually, it worked. At the time, I brushed past it. But looking back, I realize he was embarrassed. And I didn't really *see* it. Not yet. Because I was still high off the fact that this date was... lovely.

It was only my third real date since my divorce. And for the first time, I thought:

Maybe this is someone I'd actually want to see again.

We kissed in the car on the way back. And it wasn't just a kiss. It was my first real kiss on a real date where I actually felt desire, attraction, and emotional stimulation for the first time in almost fourteen years. It was a moment to remember. I was excited. Plus, he was actually a good kisser. Strong. Present. A little tentative, which made it better. Like he was aware of the moment. Like he understood what it meant. And I? I melted just a little.

That night, I thought about The Executive again. Not because I missed him, but because part of me still wondered: *What if I was being too quick to judge?* I was still learning the difference between trusting my gut and judging too quickly. And sometimes, we just don't want to miss out on a possibility.

So yes, after my first date with The CFO, I went out with The Executive again. To double-check. To make sure. The second date indeed confirmed it: The guy was good on paper; bad in the emotional connection department. I could have felt disappointed, but I felt surprisingly light. No drama. No spiral. Just a clear no. He wasn't right for me. Moving on...

Noticing the contrast between The Executive and The CFO was a turning point. This was when I discovered that substance trumps sparkle. That being seen is better than being sized. I was starting to internalize what mattered most: how I wanted to be listened to. What it felt like to be asked real questions. How respect can show up quietly, without a wine list or a private jet.

Despite his dramatic entrance, or perhaps because of it, my lunch date with The CFO had stayed with me. I clung to the notion that perhaps he was simple after all. Maybe that's exactly what I needed. Because for the first time in over a decade, I felt something real: Hope. Maybe simple wasn't such a bad start after all.

CHAPTER 18

THE AFTER-DIVORCE DICTIONARY

I was happy when The CFO, yes, the honking one with blue eyes and calm energy, asked me to meet again. This time, for coffee. When I told him it was a “kid weekend,” he mentioned that we were “compatible.” Newly divorced and still decoding post-marriage language and logistics, I didn’t quite understand what that meant at the time.

What he meant was that our schedules were aligned. We had the same weekends “off” (i.e., when our kids were with our exes instead of us), which was a big deal in the world of co-parenting. It’s a thing. A spreadsheet-worthy, date-blocking, emotionally loaded kind of thing. And yet, he knew. He’d done this before. I hadn’t. So when he said, “We’re compatible,” what he was really saying was: there’s space in our lives to see each other.

Let me explain what I eventually learned about the mental gymnastics and pure luck of dating while co-parenting. You basically need a flowchart to map out not just your own custody schedules, but those in the orbit around you. You see, if two people with kids and exes in the picture want to date each other but their parenting times don’t match up, you might never actually get a full weekend with someone new. In other words, when you meet someone with kids, you have to hope and pray that the puzzle pieces will fit together just to even have a chance at a new relationship.

It's worse if your ex isn't interested in doing you any favors. Maybe they're inflexible about their days with the kids. Maybe they're stubborn and vindictive just for the hell of it. Beyond that, what if your ex has their own romantic partner who has their own ex, children, and parenting times to maneuver around? Maybe you're fortunate to have an ex who's willing to switch days with you, but their new partner or that partner's ex won't budge... You're kind of fucked. This is why finding someone whose schedule already aligns with yours feels a bit like winning the lottery, even before you have the slightest clue if you're a match romantically.

Okay, now back to The CFO, the one who pointed out our calendar compatibility. It was time to plan our next date. He told me he had some business guests flying in from China that day, but he still wanted to see me. Just for a quick morning coffee. And I'll be honest. That made me smile. Because even squeezing in a quick coffee, after years of someone not making time for me, felt like something special.

We met for coffee and had a really good time. Like, *really* good. The conversation flowed, the chemistry was there, and it felt easy, but not boring. There was electricity, but also safety. And for the first time in what felt like forever, I walked into a "kid weekend" with butterflies in my stomach. I couldn't even remember the last time I felt that way.

After coffee, he walked me back home, literally across the street. A small gesture. But meaningful. No assumptions. No pressure. Just presence.

Later that night, he sent me a quote by Osho. I can't remember exactly what it said, but I remember how it made me feel: soft.

Noticed. Like he was still thinking about me, even after we said goodbye.

We seemed to genuinely like each other, but I didn't know the standard operating procedures of dating after divorce. Were we supposed to talk every day? Text at night? Was that too much? Too soon? We weren't on that level yet. But this was the first time I was dating someone I could maybe even... love? Question mark. But also, period. I was so confused, I couldn't even settle on punctuation, let alone decide what moves to make next.

So I followed his lead. The weekend rolled in, and to my surprise, he asked if I wanted to meet again, even during "kid time." It was my weekend with them, but my kids had plans that day with their grandmother, which meant I had a few hours to squeeze in a casual meet-up. Saturday lunchtime. Not a full date. Not a production. Just a walk. Which felt romantic in a very grown-up way. So we went. A simple walk on a Saturday afternoon. No pressure. No heels. Just two people, trying something real. Or so I thought.

Because that simple walk? It turned into a full-blown make-out fest on a bridge, eating a sandwich, and talking about sex. Openly. Maybe a little *too* openly. But something about it felt both disarming and thrilling. Like I was being invited into a deeper layer of him, maybe sooner than expected. And I didn't stop it. Because part of me was curious and still feeling butterflies.

And then, as I was midway through chewing my sandwich and waiting to hear where the conversation would go next, he blurted out:

"You know I'm not that into you, right?"

WHAT?!?!

I froze.

I didn't speak for a few seconds. Everything rewound itself, like a highlight reel in reverse: the sweet lunch date. The morning coffee. The Osho quote. The kiss in the car. The walk on a "kid weekend." The hand that reached for mine. The mouth that had just kissed me like a man with sincere intentions.

I stood there stunned, trying to gather the crumbs of my ego and my half-eaten lunch. Once I could form actual words again, I said, "No... I didn't notice you weren't into me." Because, honestly, I didn't.

I had followed his lead. Every. Single. Step. And now I was standing there, sandwich mid-bite, half-chewed lettuce threatening to fall out of my mouth, trying to make sense of how his words didn't match his actions. Not even close. This was emotional whiplash.

From there, the date wrapped up as if nothing awkward or earth-shattering had happened. He was still warm, attentive, and kind on our walk back home. Even though his words had stung, it didn't feel like he was rejecting me. *What in the world was going on?*

So, when I got home, I did what any logical, grounded, and slightly unhinged woman would do: I called my brother. Now, my brother is one of the few people who actually understands dating in the modern world. He got married in his late thirties to my amazing sister-in-law, who, I'll remind you, found him on her third dating app date. Me? I was also on date number three. But instead of a soulmate, I got a CFO who honks, kisses, quotes Osho, and then tells me mid-bite that he's not that into me.

On the phone with my brother, I explained everything that had happened, probably too loudly, pacing with a vengeance, and ended the whole rant with:

“What the FUCKITY-FUCK just happened?”

And my brother, in his annoyingly calm, recently married wisdom, said the thing I’ll never forget: “Don’t listen to what he says. Listen to what he does.”

Now, at first, that sounded clever. Deep, even. But the problem is, in my marriage, there had been a lot of saying and very little doing. Big dreams. Big statements. Big promises. But the follow-through? Not so big.

So what was I supposed to trust now? The words? The actions? The timing of the actions? The quote he sent on Friday night? The text on Saturday night (after the infamous walking date) asking when he could see me again, after telling me hours earlier he wasn’t into me?

Oh, and let’s not forget the part where on Sunday, he casually mentioned that if I wanted to have sex, he had done recent blood work to prove he was STD-free, followed by, “Maybe Monday could work?”

I wasn’t bitter. Okay, maybe a little. But mostly? I was confused. Really, deeply confused. But also? Super. Fucking. Horny. So... I said yes to Monday.

And let me just say: I’m so glad I said yes to Monday. Because he was hot. Like, *actually* hot. The kind of hot that still lives somewhere in your nervous system long after it ends. The make-out was next-level. The sex? Fantastic.

Yet the fact remained: I still didn't understand anything about anything. His words and actions lived in completely different zip codes.

Here's what I did know:

- I was into him.
- I was finally feeling sexy again.
- And he had the biggest **** of anyone I had ever been with.

So yeah. We had sex. A couple of times that night. And even though I was still trying to mentally sort through all the "I'm not that into you" confusion, it was clear his body was very into me. As for the rest of him? Your guess was as good as mine.

When he arrived (pre-sex), he had brought over two different bottles of wine, not knowing if I preferred white or red. He brought the baguette. The cheese. And yes, he even brought his STD blood work, just in case I needed reassurance. That was considerate. Also? Practical. Also? Kind of hot.

At the time, I felt like he was showing up fully. He asked questions. Lots of them. About my apartment. My lifestyle. How I lived where I lived. How the parenting split worked between my ex and me. He seemed genuinely curious. It felt like intimacy. And I went with it. We saw each other one more time after that... and had sex again... I had to!

He sent a few more Osho quotes. He texted like someone who was still in it for at least a few more days. And then, out of nowhere, came a long text. It contained a full-blown explanation about how he couldn't reach the emotional level he was hoping for with me. No warning. No follow-up.

And with that, it was over.

I was rejected.

It didn't make sense. None of it made sense. But what I did know was this: Simple? He was not.

WHAT IF DATING DOESN'T HAVE TO SUCK?

After a 12-year marriage, Meirav Rosenberg found herself newly divorced, with three children, a business to run, a heart to heal, and absolutely no idea what modern dating had become.

She went on 61 app dates.

There were men. There was sex. There were heartbreaks, red flags, spectacular disasters, unexpected teachers, and eventually, love.

But somewhere between the swiping, rejecting, being rejected, laughing, crying, overthinking, recovering, and going on one more date, something changed.

Meirav realized dating wasn't about learning how to get chosen.

It was about learning how to choose.

Instead of asking, *Does he like me? Will he call? Will he choose me?* she started asking different questions: *Do I like him? How do I feel around him? Is this the relationship I actually want?*

She learned to survive rejection without letting it define her, take responsibility for her own happiness, and understand that a date doesn't have to lead to forever to have been worth having. Because dating isn't the waiting room before your life begins. The dates that don't work out aren't wasted time. They're part of the process.

Part memoir, part dating journey, *Dating Back to Love* is a candid, funny, and deeply personal story about divorce, dating, self-love, heartbreak, and refusing to give up on love without giving up yourself. This book offers a fresh perspective on dating: less suffering, more confidence, more self-trust, and a whole lot more joy while looking for love.



Author photo by Liat Federman

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Meirav Rosenberg is an entrepreneur, digital marketing strategist, certified coach, and mother of three. As founder and CEO of Paz Interactive Agency, she has spent more than a two decades helping businesses and organizations turn ideas into brands, stories, and strategies that connect with people.

That same mix of strategy, curiosity, and determination followed her into her personal life. After divorce, 61 app dates became more than a search for love. They became an unexpected education in relationships, rejection, self-worth, and learning how to date without losing yourself in the process.

Meirav isn't a dating expert. She's an experienced dater.

And if you're still dating, this book is for you.