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Title: Master the art of being single: Know yourself
Author: Laura Baron
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You've been kicked to the proverbial curb and suddenly thrown into the World of Singledom.

By no choice of your own, your reality is dominated by the impersonal universe of cosmos and sushi. As a flood of uniformed men in denim and women in more denim pass by your pathetic "I just got out of a relationship, please don't hurt me; I'm trying to look confident here" mug, you begin to wonder how you will get back into the dating game.

Mastering the Art of Singledom is all about moving onward and upward. Once you've sealed your past, there's no looking back.

Own your last relationship. Take responsibility for it and learn from it. Determine when you saw the writing on the wall. Examine what felt wrong and why you stayed. No excuses here. You jacked up something, somehow. Take the nod from it. Despite your mom's repeated voice mails, you're not perfect; she's just trying to motivate you to get her some grandchildren already.

Learn from your past

The stench from old relationships lingers as a hint of desperation and a splash of fear. Both are terrible aphrodisiacs. It's too much responsibility to expect your Next to mend your wounds. Admit you have them. And do your own work. It's you that has that power, my friend.

Determine the kind of partner you've been. In between expletives, did your Ex leave you with any constructive insight? Take this opportunity to figure out what you're like to date and what you bring to the table.

Find the areas in which you can improve. If you demand more from yourself, you can expect more from your Next. A simple warm body can satisfy only so many needs. Imagine your ultimate fantasy mate, then determine what the 3-D person is really like. No cardboard cutouts. Don't go Hollywood on me.

What moves you? What lights your fire? Determine your list of non-negotiables and stick to it. Honor your choices. If it matters to you, it matters. You're shallow? Fine. Admit it. Then don't waste someone's time who has a soul.

Know what you want

Be honest with who you are and accept yourself. Again, no excuses. No need for masks and games. Own who you are and bring that to the plate. Without apology this time,

introduce yourself, your cracked up house and your crazy family. Whatever your situation, whoever you are right now, introduce that.

What is the worst your Next could do? Walk away? Good, less filtering to do. Besides, you might just be hiding the very characteristic your Next could adore. Invite in only those ready to embrace you now.

Ultimately, determine what you want. A relationship, a one-night stand, what is it? Knowing what you want will help you attract others with like goals. If it's just plain companionship you need, get a dog, it's easier. Granted you have to train it, pick up after it, let it sleep with you even when you want your space ... wait a minute ...

Start taking risks. Get out of your comfort zone. Become the person you've always wanted to be. You want to go to the poetry slam; your friends want to watch the game. Go alone. Take the funky tripped-out dance class, clean out the travel section of a bookstore. Determine your own path.

Most important, stay open. In line at the grocery store, say hello. Waiting for your espresso, talk about the latest news story or your favorite coffee. Bond, somehow with someone.

Hey, you never know who'll catch your vibe when you throw it out there.

Author: Laura Baron. REDEYE SPECIAL CONTRIBUTOR LAURA BARON IS A RELATIONSHIP COACH BASED IN CHICAGO. SHE CAN BE SEEN THURSDAYS ON "WGN MORNING NEWS."

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