

# All the Single Ladies

Too fabulous to settle

By Mandy Hale

When did our relationship status become symbolic of our status in life? When did someone decide it takes "putting a ring on it" to give a woman value and worth? And when did *single* become synonymous with *desperate*? It seems that although women have had the right to vote for decades, we still get strange looks when we choose *single* over *settling* on the ballots of our own lives.

So, for all my ladies out there who are brave enough to go against the grain and choose what kind of life they're going to lead instead of having it handed to them, this one's for you.

This one's for the girls who believe in love, but also believe in themselves. It's for the girls who have looked settling in the eye and walked away. This one's for the girls who know their worth better than to accept a life less than the one they deserve, and those who prefer registering for spin class to registering for china. The ones who know they don't need a ring to sing or a mate to be great. The girls who know that a secure *me* has to come before a healthy *we*.

So how can you be sure you're on the right track?

## A Self-Checkpoint for the Single Woman

- Am I complete in my own life, even if no one ever joins me on my journey?
- Have I built a healthy network of friends and family who love me the way I am, and do I maintain those relationships even when I'm dating someone?
- Am I ignoring my dreams to pursue a relationship, or am I pursuing my dreams and letting love find me?
- Have I learned to love myself, even if I choose to be home alone on a Saturday night?

Once you've made sure you're emotionally strong and secure with who you are, you'll come to realize that late-blooming roses are often the sweetest. You'll realize how much you actually like owning your own schedule, weekends, and independence. You will be brave enough to boldly chart your own path, even if it doesn't include a white picket fence. You'll hope for romance, but with or without it, you'll crank up the music and dance. And when you look in the mirror, you'll see a woman who doesn't let go of her joy simply because love hasn't yet arrived.

Singleness is a choice, not a lack of options.

The next time you check the box "S" for single, remember this: singleness is no longer a lack of options but a *choice*—a choice to refuse to let your life be defined by your relationship status, and to live every day happily, to let your "Ever After" work itself out. Whether or not you have someone in the passenger seat, you are still the driver of your own life, and can take whatever road you choose. So the next time you hit a speed bump—otherwise known as the ages-old question, "Why are you still single?"—look 'em in the eye and say, "Because I'm too strong, too smart, and too fabulous to settle."

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