



Principles *of* Heart Dating™



Navigate *from the Heart*
with Coach Mara Castello

w o r k b o o k

Welcome

Thank you for purchasing the accompanying workbook to **The 7 Principles of Heart Dating™** — **Discover the Secret to Finding True Love After 40** course. The principles you will learn have delivered tremendous happiness to me, enabling me to find my true love after the age of 40. It brings me great joy to share this knowledge with you.

Have you ever found yourself thinking....

I'll never meet anyone.

All the good ones are taken.

What's wrong with me?

As a single woman over 40 whose tombstone will read, "Tried everything!," I know, first hand, the emotional rollercoaster of frustration and infatuation while being "out there" on the dating scene searching for my ideal partner. I feel your pain!

Finally, at the age of 44, after years of having tried what seemed like every dating service, social group and Internet dating site, I met my true love and we are engaged to be married next year. I now know the joy of soul mate love and I want you to know this depth of happiness, too.

You are about to take an in-depth look at the 7 Principles of Heart Dating™ that single women over 40 must embrace in order to find and develop a successful life partnership. These self-guiding principles will allow you to be the captain of your heart as you navigate your relationship journey and connect with your ideal loving partner.

I honor you for beginning this journey and appreciate the opportunity to support and guide you to have the life and relationship that you really want.

With love and wholeness,



Mara Castello, CEC

Relationship Empowerment Expert for Single Women Over 40

Navigate From the Heart Coaching

Introduction

The pivotal point in my life, when I finally understood the “key” to relationship success, occurred while sailing. This moment of realization provided the foundation for my **Heart Dating™ Navigation System: Chart Your Unique Course to True & Lasting Love.**



Several years ago when I was in my early 40's, I took sailing lessons for the first time. At first I thought, “I’m too old, I’m too this, I’m too that.” Doubts about my capabilities filled my head and my confidence was shaken. But I did it anyway. I stepped through the fear.

There was one time in particular, out on the water alone, that I call my “perfect moment.” I was on Boston Harbor in a tiller-operated sailboat. It was with only one finger—my index finger—that I was navigating that sailboat.

The sails of the boat were perfectly trimmed, maximizing the wind. The sun was setting and the weather was beautiful. It was a postcard moment. I realized, with just one finger and the lightest touch, I was perfectly aligned with the universe.

I felt so empowered, so aligned, so abundant. There were no stories going on in my head. No one was around to influence my thoughts. At that moment, I was completely myself, living from my heart, and experiencing life to the max. I thought, “Wow. Why can’t I do this all the time?”

That’s the way the sailing metaphor came about. The perfect moment for me was when I was sailing effortlessly, listening to my heart, and expressing my truest self. For the first time, I felt the freedom to be me. I was truly empowered. I knew I could now take action from an abundant place toward what I most wanted... a deeply connected relationship with a loving partner.



As women, we are socialized to please everyone else first and then ourselves. Our lives are filled with multiple tasks—a family, job/career, volunteer and other commitments—everything imaginable. So many depend on us that to “navigate from the heart” may create self-doubt in our ability to fulfill our responsibilities.

In truth, when a woman is operating from her heart, life becomes easier because she just flows with who she really is. This requires relatively little or no energy because, after all, who expends energy to be herself?

Navigate from the Heart™ is exactly what it says.



After years of soul searching, wondering, “*Why is it that I’m having so much trouble finding the man of my dreams?*” I called a dear friend of mine who, at the time, was going to school to become a life coach.

I said, “Marianne, I’m tired of the same old thing. Another boyfriend broke up with me and you won’t believe this, the reason he gave is that I am too nice.”



I continued, "I need a new approach to my life and you're always on the cutting edge. Do you have any thoughts?"

She said, "Well, Mara, I know of a woman who is a relationship coach."

"Why don't you give her a call?"

I thought, "Well, okay. Since you're recommending it, Marianne, I'll give it a try."

I called the relationship coach soon after. After working with her only a short time, my internal growth increased exponentially. The amount of self-awareness that previously had taken 20 years to achieve, was now surpassed in just a few sessions.

I immediately started to move forward and make changes in my life that would truly benefit me, as well as empower me to attract the man of my dreams. All of a sudden, voila, the man appeared.



Heart Dating™ is a process created as a result of my own experiences. It encompasses seven principles I now know to be key to having a successful date and ultimately a successful relationship.

Whether you are dating different people or one particular person, by applying these principles, your awareness and knowledge of that person and of yourself deepens. You are growing. When you are growing, everything around you grows as well. The process is like an upward spiral because you continue to grow. You are never back at your original starting point.

Heart Dating™ works by challenging the stories you tell yourself that get in the way of understanding who you really are. It lifts the limitations you've experienced trying to be someone you are not. As you uncover who you really are, what you truly feel and what you truly think, you become free to live from your heart.

Once you're able to come from that place, your internal energy increases exponentially. You are happier and start to attract people who appreciate you for who you truly are. That appreciation, in turn, supports you as you continue to grow... and the process repeats itself.

Eventually, the old way of being disappears. You realize it takes too much energy to try to please everyone else. You finally let yourself ask, "Why don't I just be myself and let life happen as it will?" It is at that point you know you have made a significant internal shift.

I want to share with you and other women the benefits of relationship coaching. I teach, from experience, how embracing an internal shift can create a domino effect in the world around each one of us that ultimately creates deep connection and love with another person.

Sounds simple, doesn't it? But we both know it is not!

I'm here to help you move smoothly and systematically through The **7 Principles of Heart Dating™**. If you stick with it, even when the boat starts to rock, you will experience a significant shift.

Let's get started.



Principle #1:

Listen to Your Heart

You may find this principle particularly helpful if you identified with any or all of the following statements from the "Determine Your Dating Point of Sail Quiz:"

- I can't afford to be so picky. At my age, all the good ones are taken.*
- I must be realistic in my expectations and settle for less than what I want.*
- Maybe I am being too sensitive to his comments. After all, I have to take what I can get or be alone.*



How many times has your heart known that he wasn't right for you from day one, yet you didn't listen to your heart and let your head lead? You knew something wasn't quite right, yet you ignored it and were sorry afterwards.

You may ignore these warning signals, because your "want" to have a relationship and not be alone outweighs all other realities. When this happens, your head is "navigating your boat."

I used to live my life not trusting what my heart knew, for fear of ending up alone. I now know first hand that it doesn't work and it has made me so unhappy in the process.

Make no mistake. Your head has the best of intentions; to keep you "safe." But your head often sees through the eyes of "fear," in that it operates to avoid the pain of being alone. When your head is in control, you don't feel. When you don't feel, you don't get hurt. That protection is only temporary; if the relationship is not a good fit, it will not last.

Listening to your heart is about letting go of the fear that so often comes up when we go on that first date.

A woman often wonders, "What does he think? What if he doesn't like me? What if he doesn't ask me out again? What if he thinks I'm this? What if he thinks I'm that?"

It's more important for me to be who I really am than worry about whatever he may think about me. A relationship will end in disaster if I try to be who I'm not. If I am true to who I really am, I will ultimately attract the one who is right for me.

Listening to your heart is about letting go of those stories that you tell yourself for whatever reason you have believed until this point. It's time to shake them because they're not serving you. You're an adult woman who knows who she is; someone who can bravely listen to her heart, and take the next steps necessary to find a mate.

Who is your true love?

Remember, your true love is really yourself.

As I started to trust in my inner wisdom and "navigate from the heart," my life, particularly my dating life, completely changed for the better. I now know that my heart sees through the eyes of "love," most importantly, the love that I have for myself.

When you're coming from a place of "want" and not a place of "need," life just changes because you're no



longer in a desperate situation. You fall passionately in love with yourself and allow that love to exude from within. You live from a place of abundance.

With this new paradigm, when you encounter a first date, you will find yourself feeling in your heart: "I want to share my abundance, and if you want to get on the boat, then please join me. If you don't, it's sailing without you." [I do love my metaphor!]

As cultivation of awareness and trust in your inner wisdom becomes natural, you will discover the voice of your heart. As you discover the voice of your heart, you will discover who you really are. The voice of your heart is direct and its messages are based on a sense of acceptance and love, for others and for yourself. You will ultimately choose more easily and know your heart speaks your truth.

In my **Heart Dating™ Navigation System: Chart Your Unique Course to True & Lasting Love**, we explore ways to access and connect to the voice of your heart—the intuitive part of you that "always knows"—so that it can express itself outwardly.

Exercise

Take a piece of paper and write at the top:

"The reason I can't meet my ideal partner is..."

Then immediately begin to write a list of any and all thoughts that come into your head to complete the sentence. Don't take too much time to write your answers, and don't take it too seriously. Just quickly write down about 20 or 30 things that come to you... even if they may seem silly.

Now try the same exercise again, only this time, actually name the phrase describing the most typical statement the voice in your head tells you. For me it used to sound something like:

"The reason I can't meet my ideal partner is, at my age, I must be realistic and settle for less than I really want."

After you've made your list, sit quietly for a few minutes and feel whether any of the thoughts you've written down ring true for you... whether in some way or to some degree you truly believe them. Just get a sense of what kind of thoughts serve as blocks for getting all that you want in life.

Notice which of these ideas may consciously or unconsciously hold emotional power over you. When you feel an emotion come up, just stay with it and allow yourself to experience it as much as possible, with total acceptance... understanding it, too, is a part of you.

When you feel complete with this process, simply tear up your list and throw it away. This will symbolize the process of releasing those negative beliefs you hold in your head that you used to believe kept you "safe."

To finish this exercise, sit quietly, relax, and speak some affirmations to replace the negative thoughts coming from your head about finding your ideal mate with more open, constructive, and positive ones emanating from your heart.

A possible affirmation could be:

I am now releasing all barriers to my full expression and enjoyment of life. Life is a beautiful and precious gift and because the universe always provides... I can find my ideal mate.



Principle #2:

Speak Your Truth

You may find this principle particularly helpful if you identified with any or all of the following statements from the "Determine Your Dating Point of Sail Quiz:"

- If I let him see the real me, he won't like me anymore.*
- If I let him know how successful and powerful I am, then he may feel threatened and not want to be with me.*



Many times in a dating relationship, you may find yourself withholding "your truth," resulting in giving up your own wants and desires in order to please the other person. When developing the principle of speaking your truth, it is critical to explore the development of your "heart space" also referred to as your "core self."

What is your "core self?"

This is the part of you that truly knows who you are in the world, and more specifically, who you are in a dating relationship.

You have truly arrived when you can expose your "core self" to others with no risk of having their reactions define you. You can speak your truth and others' responses cannot erode the sanctity of who you truly are. There is a secure inner safety that remains constant. Once you have developed your relationship with your "core self" in such a way that it provides priceless inner security, you can risk being vulnerable in your personal relations by "speaking your truth." By having the inner confidence to direct your experiences from the inside out, you continue to strengthen your "core self" to emerge more and more into the person you are meant to be.

In strengthening your "core self," it is necessary to be aware of and live in alignment with your values. Values are defined as who you are, not who you would like to be. They are deeply rooted and drive many of your choices. To experience relationship fulfillment by making the best choice for a life partner, you must choose to live in alignment with your values.

I invite you to say what you mean, and mean what you say. Take full responsibility for your thoughts, words, and actions, and most importantly, ... be true to yourself. Buddha once said, "Speak and act with a pure mind and happiness will follow."

How Does My Truth Affect Others?

With these values in mind, the reality is that what you think, say, and do affects others. When all of your communication pieces don't quite fit together (when the content of what you say does not fully match what you feel or think), something unsettling happens on another level. An invisible barrier is created between you and the other person. As time goes on, it becomes visible. When you strive to establish alignment in all areas of your communication, or "speak your truth," you will discover an energetic channel between you and your date that creates the space for lasting connection.

"Speak your truth" grows from "listen to your heart," because speaking your truth is about expressing to others what's actually in your heart. First you live from your heart and then you communicate that to others.



You no longer try to please others. That's not to say you don't want to do things that are nice for other people. It's not really about changing what you've been doing at all. It's about understanding the reasons behind your actions.

Are you saying things because you think other people want to hear them? Are you saying things with a self-serving agenda in your head that isn't representative of who you really are? Do you have to pretend when you're saying it?

If you are, I invite you to stop, because ultimately you won't be able to live up to what's not true for you. No matter whether it takes two weeks, two years or 20 years, you can't live what is not true for you.

When I say, "Speak your truth," it doesn't mean be hurtful. It means say what you mean, mean what you say, and don't be mean when you say it.

Concession vs. Collaboration

There is nothing wrong with considering your partner, but it must be on a mutual basis. Rather than "concession," practice "collaboration." It does not mean giving up what you want entirely, but rather modifying what you want in order to mesh with your partner's wants. It can then become what you truly want in the context of the relationship. Collaboration is a conscious choice that does not come from fear, but rather comes from love of yourself, and love for the other person.

Human nature is such that the easier something is to have, the less it is appreciated. Although your partner may think he wants it his way, when you become selfless and pleasing by not "speaking your truth," you inadvertently place yourself in a subordinate position. Your partner really does not want that because then he has nothing to learn or accomplish with regard to your acceptance of him. You are ultimately not appreciated.

So "speaking your truth" is not always the opposite of lying, but rather respecting and listening to yourself. If you do not respect and listen to yourself, you can't expect others to do so.

I invite you to open more fully to receive the understanding of the gift that you are and learn to express yourself from that fullness.

Exercise

The following exercise will assist you to identify your values, strengthen your "core self," and ultimately to "speak your truth:"

- ♥ Choose your top five most important personal values. Prioritize them so that your most important value is first and so on.
- ♥ In thinking about your values, what would you want your family and friends to say about you when they toast your 80th birthday? What would they say about how they appreciate you, what you have meant to them, how you have inspired them, and why they love and respect you so much?
- ♥ Choose the top five values that are most important for you to share with your life partner. (Note: Your shared values do not need to be the same as your personal values.) Now prioritize these values.

Hopefully, this exercise has helped to bring forth the qualities and/or characteristics that describe who you truly are.



Principle #3:

Maintain Your Boundaries

You may find this principle particularly helpful if you identified with any or all of the following statements from the "Determine Your Dating Point of Sail Quiz:"

- I have to give myself up to make him happy, or he won't love me.*
- If I love someone, I am responsible for his happiness.*
- It is not possible to maintain both love and personal freedom.*



Saying "No" to Him by Saying "Yes" to You

Boundaries are critical for a successful relationship. Contrary to the implication of the word, when it comes to healthy intimate relationships, having good boundaries will ultimately bring your partner closer rather than keep him away.

Failure to set boundaries results in trying to please everyone and allowing people to tell you what you want to do.

How many times have you found yourself saying, "Oh, whatever you want to do, dear," or, "Oh, okay. If you want to go to a motorcycle rally—I love motorcycles—they're my favorite thing in the whole world," when I really have never even been on a motorcycle and have always told myself that I would never go on one.

"No" isn't a bad word, believe it or not. Many women have difficulty with that. But the exciting news is that saying "No" actually means saying "Yes" to yourself.

Human nature is such that if everything is easy and no one is required to make an effort to be with another person or exchange preferences for doing activities, men will eventually lose interest. What they really want is an equal partner.

Healthy boundaries show that you respect yourself which makes it much easier for the other person to respect you. It also takes the subliminal pressure off the other person to "watch out" for your welfare. He learns you can take care of yourself. It also reinforces the fact that you are complete within yourself and that you are with this other person because you "want" to be, and not because you "need" to be. You are more of an equal partner.

Not respecting your boundaries leads to giving yourself away, by putting what you want and need below the needs and desires of the other person. You eventually end up living a life that is not your own. It's much healthier to collaborate: "We'll do this that you like, then we'll do what I like."

When someone has consistently exhibited a wobbly backbone—always giving in to other people and not standing up for themselves—it can be a little unsettling for the people around them when they start to change.

Although the transition may seem unsettling, it really results in such a wonderful transformation for everybody concerned. It doesn't take that much to shift everything around you.



This doesn't have to be a dramatic process where one day you're agreeable and the next day you're not. It's a transitional space. Whenever a change is occurring, it is never a straight shot up a mountain. You always have to stumble a little bit. But the encouraging aspect is you won't slide back to where you started.

If you experience weak boundaries, please don't be discouraged. You are not alone. Most women have been trained by society to deny their own wants and needs, and instead take care of everyone else.

Thankfully, the strength that gives you the ability to take care of everyone else often at your own expense, also gives you the strength to retrain yourself to adopt more loving and appropriate beliefs and behaviors toward yourself.

Just because you no longer agree on everything does not mean that you will move away from each other. Contrary to what the word implies, a positive "No" enables you to have a closer and more authentic relationship with the other person. Ideally, the relationship will become strengthened, not strained. The challenge is to keep the relationship cordial while you continue to have your differences.

Remember that if you do not love yourself, no one else will. It is up to you to protect your "heart space" or "core self" so that you may "reap your own harvest." Once you can find peace and protection within yourself, you can count on yourself anytime you choose for nurturing and rejuvenation.

How empowering!

Exercise

When strengthening your ability to adopt more loving and appropriate beliefs toward yourself, it is important to maintain your boundaries by saying, "No." William Ury, negotiator, mediator, and author of, *The Power of a Positive No*, offers three steps to assist with saying, "No."

As an exercise, I invite you observe your personal interactions with others over the next several days, and record your thoughts and feelings around the results:

Uncover the "Yes" that lies behind your "No." This may be achieved by asking yourself what you value most that you are protecting by saying "No." The deeper you go into your core motivation, the more powerful your "Yes" will be and as a result, the more powerful your "No."

Deliver a respectful "No." You don't want to attack the requestor but rather, you want to reflect that your "No" is a matter of honoring that which is most important to you. The secret to a harmonious outcome with the other person is not to reject him, but rather to respect him. Respect does not mean being accommodating and losing yourself, but rather, conveying your own wants and needs from a place of conviction and strength. Treat the other person with the sense of dignity with which you would like to be treated.

Negotiate to a healthy "Yes." The goal is a positive outcome, one that protects your core values. You may choose to make a positive request to consider another solution. Regardless of the form it takes, what counts is that the other person genuinely accepts your "No."



Principle #4:

Take Responsibility for Your Own Happiness

You may find this principle particularly helpful if you identified with any or all of the following statements from the "Determine Your Dating Point of Sail Quiz:"

- I don't deserve to be happy.*
- If I do what I need to do for myself to make myself happy, the other person will leave me.*
- My life would be perfect if only I had a loving partner.*



Unrealistic Expectations

"Being happy" is not something to put off "into the future" by waiting to meet your ideal partner. When you look to another person to make you happy, it creates a set of expectations for that other person. When you approach a dating relationship in this way, it is a recipe for failure.

It is impossible for the other person to meet those expectations because they are not based on reality. It's too much responsibility for another person. It puts such a strain on everybody concerned. Being responsible for your own happiness is just a no-brainer—it has to be.

"Happiness is like a butterfly. The more you chase it, the more it eludes you. But if you turn your attention to other things, it comes and sits softly on your shoulder." —Henry David Thoreau

Take Responsibility for Your Own Happiness

If you're not responsible for your own happiness, who else is going to be? If you don't take steps to be happy, you can't expect it from the outside.

It is more powerful to respond to life with "want" rather than "need." When you're coming from a place of need, often you're not happy. You feel incomplete. You feel like somebody has to get in your life to fill you and make you complete.

There is a Process of Manifestation, very well known in the field of human potential, which states: thoughts lead to feelings... feelings lead to actions... actions lead to results.

If your choice is to be happy, then you have the ability to have a thought that will lead to the feeling of happiness. Once you feel happy, you have the ability to take action or respond in your life in a way that supports that happiness. Author, Marci Schimoff, refers to this as taking "response-ability," for your own happiness.

You have the choice to respond to life events any way you chose. How empowering!

Happiness Comes From Within

You have the power to create your future through everything you think, feel, say, and do. It is not necessary to rely on a romantic partner in order for you to be happy.



When you are operating more from your head, you are looking to others to fulfill you in some way. There is an underlying desperation to fulfill an underlying agenda. When you are trying to complete yourself with some missing piece, or a lack of something you believe a romantic partner can provide, you are operating more from fear.

When you are satisfied with your life as it is, and when you are content with yourself, you are then more able to encounter life's experiences openly. You can see events more from the place of your heart, operate from love, and make the choice to be happy.

I believe that the deepest yearning of your heart is to be happy. The kind of happiness to which I am referring is solid and anchored in your "heart space" or "core self." No matter what your external circumstances may be, there remains a feeling of unshakable fulfillment, joy, and inner peace. This type of happiness ultimately provides you the freedom to expand into more of life.

It's very important to be anchored in who you really are. When you're coming from that core self, there's an extreme sense of happiness, fulfillment, and inner peace. When that is going on inside, you just can't help but emanate happiness.

Exercise

In order to experience more happiness in your life right now, I invite you to try the following exercise designed to guide you through the process of wishing loving kindness to yourself and others:

Find a quiet place and sit comfortably. Close your eyes.

Take slow, deep breaths, being aware of the breath as it enters and leaves your body. Let your thoughts come and go easily.

Repeat the following phrases silently:

May I be safe.

May I be happy.

May I be healthy.

May I live with ease.

Continue feeling these wishes toward yourself for a minute or two or until you experience a sense of peace inside.

Now, move on to your friends and family. Picture one of them as you send the above "wishes" silently substituting "you" for "I." Continue sending these wishes until you feel a flow of love in your heart.

Now send these wishes to all the living beings around the world, including the man/men you believe contributed to the worst date(s) you ever had (It's okay to laugh, too.). Continue until you feel a sense of expansion in your heart. As you send love into the world, remember you have the power to be happy.

Principle #5:

Remember What You See is What You Get

You may find this principle particularly helpful if you identified with any or all of the following statements from the "Determine Your Dating Point of Sail Quiz:"

- Even though he just told me that he is not looking for a serious relationship, I know he will change his mind once he gets to know me.*
- If only he could _____, then he would be perfect for me.*



When it comes to a dating relationship, we often invade each other's personal space by projecting our ideas of what we imagine or desire to be true about another person. Preconceived judgments about a potential mate often inhibit your potential connection. It limits the possibility of genuine sharing and therefore inhibits your scope of interaction. As a result, your goal of finding an ideal partner is defeated from the start.

Can You Really Change Someone?

You really can't expect to change anyone. So often I have entered a relationship thinking, "Well, if only he did this or if only he were that, or maybe if he loves me enough, he'll do that. Then everything will be wonderful and we'll live happily ever after."

No surprise, but that doesn't work. Nobody can live up to my expectations, because they're unrealistic to begin with—and they're mine.

If I can't accept the person for who he truly is from the beginning, then perhaps I need to look elsewhere. Expectations are the recipe for disappointment.

If he shows up honestly as himself, who am I to say, "Well, that's not good enough for me." I can say, "I honor you for being who you truly are and that's not working for me, so I'm going to move on. You be who you need to be because that's a beautiful thing." Does that make sense?

It is such an energy drain to try to change another person to meet preconceived judgments. It is exhausting. Let go and you will be amazed at how much energy you gain. Instead of focusing your attention on fixing or molding the other person, so that he can be what you need him to be so that you can live "happily ever after," use that energy to assist with your own journey as you define and refine yourself.

What Can You Do, Instead?

I invite you to approach your next date with a genuine curiosity to what they might offer, so they have the freedom to be authentic.

As you release the typical interpersonal struggle for control which attempts to fit the proverbial "round" person into the "square" hole, you can enjoy a more genuine and richer interaction with that person. On a subconscious level, your date will become more honest with his words and actions. You will both be happier in a receptive environment. So release any preconceived notion of how it "should" look or be

expressed, and appreciate each potential relationship for its unique qualities.

Once you have accepted that person for who he truly is, you can decide if he possesses the qualities, characteristics, and behaviors you truly want in a mate. If not, that's fine.

Believe it or not, I had been in the dating circuit so long that I actually encountered the same man, not remembering that I had already been out with him two years prior.

I got to test the extent of my self-growth and experiment with a new approach. The first time when I didn't want to see him anymore, I said, "Oh, you know, it's not you. It's me. Maybe I'm just not ready" . . . whatever.

You must take equal responsibility for it not being right. In the first instance of my story, it's from an unhealthy perspective of "I'm sorry." I implied it was my fault.

The second time around I was able to say, "You know, this isn't working for me. You seem impatient. I need somebody calmer. I don't want to mislead you into thinking that this could work because it can't. Take care."

The second time I reflected from a place of inner peace, knowledge, and acceptance. I took responsibility for making a choice that was going to be more appropriate for me.

I had the right to say, "You're not for me." The truth may have been disappointing to hear, but the truth empowered me. Spoken from my heart, it didn't have to hurt his feelings.

My experience with "clunkers" and that of numerous female friends over the decades provide plenty of examples of finding ourselves in inappropriate relationships.

When it is clearly not a good fit, we must disengage. When you listen to your heart and your heart says, "Umm . . . this doesn't feel right," it doesn't serve anyone to pretend a future together is realistic. No matter how hard you try to ignore those feelings, they will always be there. So, the earlier you listen the better.

The beauty of implementing this principle is that both of you have remained authentic and true to yourselves. In the long run, there will be less sadness, resentment, and/or anger. Most important, you both are now free to find the person you truly want and desire to be your ideal romantic partner.

Exercise

To find out how often you are falling into the trap of labeling people as either "good" or "bad," due to your preconceived judgments, I invite you do the following exercise:

Start a two-column journal. In the left column, write any positive judgment you make during the day. In the right column, write any of the negative ones.

Pay attention to all the variants of "good" and "bad" that you may use, such as "hard-working" and "lazy," "valuable" and "worthless," "right" and "wrong." Just observe your own thoughts. Any time you notice you are either praising or ridiculing someone, make a quick note in your journal.

At the end of a month, go back and look over the notes you made in your judgment journal. Notice whether there is a pattern to these preconceived judgments and note any thoughts you have about this pattern. With this new awareness, consider where and when in your life these thoughts may have originated.

Principle #6:

Practice the Art of Monitored Self-Disclosure

You may find this principle particularly helpful if you identified with any or all of the following statements from the "Determine Your Dating Point of Sail Quiz."

- If I tell him everything about myself, then he will feel connected and enjoy being with me more.*
- If I tell him that I really like him, then I know he will ask me on another date.*



When beginning a dating relationship, "self-disclosure" is a critical element to consider. That is, the process of sharing information about yourself with the other person, such as your background, your feelings, attitudes, values and more. You choose how much information to reveal about yourself or not to reveal, and at what pace.

When you tell too much about yourself initially, it can be really scary for the other person. It's not to say that you should be deceitful or hold back your true self. Just go slowly to avoid information overload. Make sure you're being met at least halfway. It's all about balance.

Research studies show that one of the key foundational elements to developing a meaningful and exciting romantic relationship is for each person to maintain a certain level of "mystique" with the other, as they get to know each other. This helps to maintain a stronger interest in each other, and a genuine desire to know more, ultimately leading to a more solid foundation upon which to build. If you tell your date too much about yourself right away, you will lose your "mystique." Enjoy an air of "anticipation" as you learn about each other at a leisurely and pleasurable pace, and let your relationship blossom.

How Do You Know How Much to Reveal About Yourself?

Being vulnerable with another person can be a scary venture. You will know how much information to reveal to keep the potential connection growing, by keeping in mind Principle #1 of *Heart Dating*™ — "*Listen to Your Heart.*" I invite you to check in with yourself and determine your motivation for revealing the specific information you do share about yourself.

When your head is the dominant motivator, you may be trying to manipulate a particular outcome. When I say too much too fast without being met by the other person at least halfway, I usually have an ulterior motive.

Sometimes it's been, "If he knows this much about me, then he couldn't leave me because he'll feel so connected to me. He now knows my deepest most personal truths. How could he leave me once he knows that?"

But it doesn't work that way. Quite the opposite is true. It scares people away, because it shows that you're not listening to them. If you don't allow that dance or flower to blossom, then the foundation becomes rocky.

By giving your potential mate his own space and time to share his information with you, you can more

clearly determine his level of interest in pursuing a relationship with you.

Why Would You Over Self-Disclose in the First Place?

The immediate effect of self-disclosure is to reduce your anxiety, enabling you to relax and take charge of yourself and your feelings. When starting a new relationship, the anxiety stemming from a “need for approval” most typically comes from a lack of “self-approval.”

For women over 40, like me, “self-approval” may have been confused with “self-centeredness.” As a result, you may have learned to play down your brilliance for fear of appearing conceited. You may have been taught to be humble and/or self-deprecating because that was the only way to be well-liked and accepted.

It is now time to give yourself permission to know and be the fantastic person you are and not have the need to seek the other person’s approval, in the first place.

Being able to choose to act differently, even while feeling an old familiar way, will be liberating and empowering.

Exercise

The next time you are feeling anxious and wanting to over self-disclose to win his approval, try the following exercise:

Pause: Before you speak, take time out and breathe deeply to gain perspective. It is important to place distance between your emotion and your automatic reaction.

Become Aware: Take time to experience your feelings and consider your options for response. Be kind to yourself and hold your feelings without judgment. (Feelings just are, there is no right or wrong.)

Choose: By pausing, you take yourself off “automatic pilot,” and can take time to honor yourself and your feelings. Now you can decide on a new course of action. Choose to disclose as much or as little about yourself from a place of love (self-acceptance), rather than fear.

Remember: you are the “captain” of your ship, as you navigate your personal journey.

Principle #7:

Be Open to Possibility

You may find this principle particularly helpful if you identified with any or all of the following statements from the "Determine Your Dating Point of Sail Quiz":

- I can't go out with him, he didn't go to college.*
- My ideal mate must be at least 6 feet tall... I like tall men.*
- He can't have children because that makes him too tied to the "ex."*



Although it is important to enter a dating relationship with a clear idea of those qualities you have determined to be your "requirements" in a mate, it is equally as important to remain open to the person in front of you.

Sometimes you get valuable qualities you didn't even know existed. Often these unexpected qualities become even more important, because they are experienced in the moment and therefore with your "heart." Your "head" hasn't had a chance to interfere.

Try asking, "If I can expand my way of being and am willing to experience life more from my heart, does this person have qualities that I deeply want, but have been too fearful to acknowledge to myself?" -and- "If I open my heart, will I get more than I even dreamed possible?"

When you can release a potential partner from needing to fit your pre-determined requirements, often the person shows up in a way you never dared to imagine, and yet always truly wanted.

But, What About My "Requirements?"

Your "requirements" are still important. Just keep in mind they should emanate from your vision and values, as opposed to some arbitrary list.

Often we show up to a new or potential relationship with a list of things we want, the things we must have, the things we can't live without—our absolutes—"I must have this, I could live without that, etc."

For example, if I had had on my list a requirement that a potential partner must have at least a college education (or I'll cross them off my list), then I would not have had the opportunity to experience the most beautiful relationship I presently have in my life.

That's so limiting. People don't go to college for lots of reasons, but it doesn't have to mean their intellect is lacking. How narrow-minded I would have been to be governed by an original element of my list.

Another limiting requirement could be: "He can't be shorter than I am." It may be you don't want him to be shorter than you because when you're dancing, you don't want to tower over him. I invite you to weigh the importance of height in the larger scheme of life experiences.

If you could find a man that was everything you dreamed and even more on an emotional or connected level, would it really matter that you're taller? If so, how much taller? Viewed in this way, you may be willing to forgo this "requirement."

Once you question the origin of your requirements, you can examine your own personality traits that contributed to your “requirements.” You can then determine whether these personality traits support your requirements in a healthy way or a non-healthy way.

“Being open to possibility” is the key principle that enabled me to be in my present relationship. When we let go of forcing things to be as we imagine they should, we allow them the time and space to evolve freely. When we embrace what might be from our heart, we become more capable of being open to possibility.

Sometimes people will show up in your life with qualities that you didn’t even know existed. Being open to possibility means allowing people to be who they are and be willing to receive it. As we grow and become empowered, relatively superficial items on our lists may in fact disappear.

Exercise

The following exercise may serve to provide awareness around the origin of your relationship “requirements.” Fill in each column to the best of your ability

Once you understand the origin of and motivation for a relationship requirement, you can choose to be “flexible” when it comes to finding that requirement in the other person.

List your relationship requirements	Provide an example of how that requirement would be demonstrated or integrated in your relationship	List your values that support the requirement	List any of your personality traits that support the requirement	Identify any of your personality traits that do not support the requirement

Bonus Exercise

You've done some exceptional work! Let's bring some of it together.

Now that you have begun to examine the importance of who you truly are, what you want, and the choices you can make in the way you "show up" in a dating relationship, I invite you to create a "Relationship Mission Statement." This exercise will support you in your relationship journey.

Draw lines on a piece of paper to divide it into four columns, numbered 1 through 4.

Column 1, write down at least 3 things you want most out of a romantic relationship. What do you want most emotionally, physically, and/or spiritually?

Column 2, write down at least 3 things that you would like to experience during the course of your relationship. What would you like to see happen during the course of your relationship?

Column 3, write 3 things that make you unique. What are your gifts?

Column 4, list 3 changes/positive actions you can undertake in your life during the next 2 weeks in order to find your ideal relationship. Complete the statement, "I can ..."

Now circle the most important item from each of the four columns that you decide is the most powerful or meaningful to you.

3 things you want most out of a romantic relationship	3 things that you would like to experience during the course of your relationship	3 things that make you unique	3 changes/positive actions you can undertake to find your ideal relationship

Now comes the fun part. Compose your Relationship Mission Statement by completing the following (modify what you write to make it grammatically correct):

♥ "I will..." and add in whatever you circled in Column 4.

♥ Continue the same sentence by writing "using my" and add in whatever you circled in Column 3.

♥ Continue the sentence by writing "to accomplish" and add in whatever you circled in Column 2.

♥ Now finish the sentence by writing "and in doing so, also achieve" and add in whatever you circled in Column 1.

Congratulations! You just wrote a "Relationship Mission Statement."

How do you feel?

Look at your statement, think about what it means on various levels, and appreciate that you have experienced a beginning. You are closer to uncovering what is holding you back and fulfilling your potential for finding true love.

Next Steps

Thank you for the time and energy you committed to work through The 7 Principles of Heart Dating™: Discover the Secret to Finding True Love After 40 and to use this workbook to record your thoughts and actions.

If you've done the exercises in this workbook fully, you should be feeling confident about your ability to find true and lasting love.

Consider determining your level of Relationship Readiness by taking the [Energy Leadership Index Assessment \(E.L.I.\)](#). It is a one-of-a-kind assessment that helps you, as a single woman over 40 identify how your relationship perceptions, attitudes and behaviors may be holding you back from finding your ideal mate. It provides a baseline allowing you to quantify the degree to which you are ready for love.

The assessment is offered on its own, or as the initial launching point for my complete system, **The Heart Dating™ Navigation System: Chart Your Unique Course to True and Lasting Love**. It is a 12-step process that we navigate in a group coaching setting. It allows you to develop new habits, with support and camaraderie to help them stick. You will end up with a customized chart for how to date in a way that maximizes your efforts and minimizes your sorrow.

A beautiful gift of this program—in addition to developing confidence in yourself and empowerment and more love for yourself—is that you will learn to attract supportive people in your life. When you have a vision for yourself, and other people can hear about that vision from your heart, they can't help but want to support you.

It is my heartfelt desire you will allow me to support you as you “sail” further in your relationship journey using your revised “compass.” I want you to experience your highest potential and have all that you desire in your romantic relationship and in your life.

If you are looking for a supportive foundation and a complete system, The Heart Dating™ Navigation System is the answer.

Visit www.navigatefromtheheart.com to learn more.

With love and wholeness,



Mara Castello, CEC

Relationship Empowerment Expert for Single Women Over 40

Navigate From the Heart Coaching

About Mara



As a certified relationship empowerment coach, my passion is supporting women over 40 with their personal journey to live the life they love with the love of their life (read about client success stories).

Coaching from a philosophy that sustainable change occurs from a shift at the "core," my purpose is to empower women as they move toward their goal of self love, emotional fulfillment and authentic connection in their romantic relationships.

Having achieved my ultimate success story, my heartfelt desire is to support women over 40 to prepare for love that is deep and true and will last a lifetime.

As your coach, you can expect me to:

- ♥ Be a partner and support you in your choices.
- ♥ Provide safety, encouragement and support.
- ♥ Expand your view of what is possible and promote discovery of new insights.
- ♥ Listen deeply to what you say and ask questions to draw out the answers within you.
- ♥ Be an on-going resource for you in accomplishing your goals.

In addition to having learned to love myself and my life, I now know the bliss of soul mate love. I want to share with you and support you through this process so that you, too, may know this depth of happiness.



Mara Castello is a Certified Relationship Empowerment Coach specializing in supporting single women over 40, who are tired of the "dating scene" and ready to meet their ideal loving partner.

Once a member of this group of women, herself, Mara understands the challenges of finding true love after 40. By following the steps of what has become her signature coaching program, Mara's succeeded in her personal quest to find her ideal partner and to manifest a mutually fulfilling relationship. Her heartfelt desire is to support other women to be who they truly are rather than whom they think they should be or who others want them to be.

Mara holds a degree in Psychology from Wellesley College, a certification in both Empowerment Coaching and Energy Leadership from the Institute for Professional Empowerment Coaching (IPEC) and has received a certification as a Relationship Coach from the Relationship Coaching Institute. She has completed numerous trainings such as: Women Within, Women Empowering Women, Women In Power, and Empowering Women in Relationship.

To learn more, please visit: www.navigatefromtheheart.com, or email: mara@navigatefromtheheart.com

© 2009 Navigate from the Heart, all rights reserved

Please share with others. Thank you for leaving the contact information and copyright intact.

