

Jerry: *I love you. You... complete me.*

Dorothy: *Shut up. Just shut up. You had me at "hello."*-Movie, Jerry Maguire

There was this girl I should have dated. At work, we were having a good conversation about spouses. Somehow the conversation turned to love and gifts. I was the only guy talking. Go figure I like relationship talk. Anyways, this one nice girl mentioned getting flowers. I jokingly said I had never received them either. She quizzingly asked "you want flowers?" I said sure why not. The next day she brought me flowers at my desk. I was stunned.

I'm sure I blushed. I'm sure I said thank you and all those nice platitudes. Yet, we never dated. She probably was a catch. I mention this because sometimes we are chasing a relationship and other times we are not. I wonder if I was looking but missed the boat completely on that one. It's like I had horse blinders on. We only see what we want or desire. Mr. or Mrs. Right might be sitting right beside us and were oblivious.

What is the grand scheme of life? Is it to find a mate? I have struggled with this chapter. I do believe we chase relationships. Most people want someone to love. We chase dreams too. People want to be good at something. Don't athletes chase the dream? It's all about being in relationship with the things you love. Then we have people. A person is not a thing. A relationship is not a thing. Do we chase things, people, or what?

I was having a conversation with my autistic daughter. She wanted to know if she will marry. We pondered that. She believes that she is a-sexual. I looked up the term and found that, in their mindset, a-sexual people know where their heart lies. It's not in bed. It's not to have babies. They will chase a relationship but they do it for the purist of reasons: friendship.

A nun has dreams, talents, and desires. We often think just because they are a nun that these devoted ladies are void of passion and love. Why do I say that? It's because people have attached sex, touching, and body connections to relationships. We search for the right mate. Again, I turn to the dictionary for help. The word "mate" is defined with other words like romantic, procreate, and breeding. Yet, there are ship mates, work mates, and class mates. Why is the chase for companionship or relationship always tied to sex? For a nun, it's a relationship devoted to God.

I wonder if the a-sexual people have it right. Sex is not the most important point of a relationship. Being a friend and doing things together is. These lovely people say that sex is not off the menu half as much as you think. An A-sexual person finds more satisfaction being together with someone as a friend than involving sex. I do believe we were meant to chase relationships. I just wonder if our reasons are twisted. Maybe it should be the chase of friends first and lovers second. I'm betting more marriages would survive.

The BBC show called the "*The Last Kingdom*" fits the chase. I suppose an old show like *Three's company* does too. In the Last Kingdom we have women being betrothed to men of high esteem. Yet, we have those same women falling in love with another. What I love is the eye acting. The actors are averting their eyes to what they really want. Yes, it's a show. However, it's reality to me. Tell me you don't see what you want. How often are we mentality driven to have what we desire? In *Three is company* it's all they ever did. Each character was constantly looking for something better than they had.

It connects so well to my last chapter. Is a relationship dumb luck? Possibly, it's a yes and no answer. I think most people are relationship driven. Sociologists have reported that we want at least three close people in our lives. Are they all human? Maybe our relationship is found alone

in seclusion while writing. It's your love to write that drives you. Have you ever heard of a seaman saying the ocean is the love of his or her life? The sea rocks their world. Relationships come in many forms but we are chasing something. Maybe were just chasing what we love?

The a-sexual person loves a great many things. The rest of us seem to describe a relationship containing sex, fun, babies, and living together possibly in marriage. Yet, what are we chasing? Is it more sex? Is it security in love? Some people, like my daughter, just like living and existing. I know one or two single people who just hate living alone. To them it's so humiliating. I think many of us miss out on life because we too busy chasing things associated with it.

To me, God set it up. Generally speaking, no matter what you believe, we started with two people somewhere and somehow. Since then we have been expanding our variety of the chase. There are more hobbies, women, men, and animals to have a relationship with. In the beginning of the Bible we are introduced to Adam. He is alone with God. Yet, God recognizes that his creation needs more than he has. This God gives the man animals and a garden to tend to. It's not enough. So, God creates an opposite sex. I say then all hell broke loose after that.

My point is not sex or gender. It's that, if we read between the lines, there is desire for relationships yearning within us. A desire to not do life alone. It's not that Adam asked. It's more that God noticed. Maybe Adam was bored. He walked around aimlessly moping. Possible his work ethic dropped. I don't know, but God noticed. Humans need fire. They need goals, dreams, and challenges. Relationships do that. We struggle in marriage when it becomes mundane. Somewhere along the way in relationship history, we have struggled with mundane. Maybe we should be focused on conquering a mountain; rather than, what wrong in a relationship. You know, spice things up. Life is a chase to achieve.

I know someone who made a list. A list of traits' he wanted in a relationship? No, a list of girls he liked. One by one he tried every girl on the list. Number seven lasted around seven years. Yet, the list was girls. It was not a list of the best qualities in a woman. I will even say it was not a list of the best qualities he possessed. Putting that all together he was chasing the wind. He was chasing the perfect relationship. Yet, the list he was chasing was all wrong.

Ecclesiastics 6:9 "Better what the eye sees than the roving of the appetite. This too is meaningless, a chasing after the wind."

What drives us? Is it a list? How about the eye? I agree with Solomon that they eye is practically meaningless. I know a girl who looked like a boy when she was 15. She had no body so to speak. Toady she is a budding woman. A stoner in high school is now a lawyer. You can never really tell who people are early on. We need to give them a chance to shine. It's hard to peg the perfect relationship from a list or our eye test. To only chase qualities, when the qualities are always changing, is a bad idea. We need to chase more in a person than what they have or represent.

Those two people above could have been judged by their looks or actions. It's like Dr. Seuss. Would you, could you be with them? Should you, could you run away from that type of relationship? Fine I'm not Dr. Seuss. Still, some look like green eggs and ham and are not on your list. How do you rate a potential mate? All of my chapters before discussed various types of people. We have the hot mess, good, bad, and stupid people. How you begin is not always how you end up. People can change. A list is a terrible way to chase a potential mate.

I wonder if the chase of a relationship is based on the invasion of our soul? We are the sum of those around us. The sum of experiences. A heard this statement on TV last night. "you

can't choose your parents, but you can choose how you feel about them." Many people have lived terrible lives. Yet, so many have risen out of the ashes like a phoenix. Which one are you? I just refuse to believe there are doomed lives. Yet, at times, it seems we're chasing the same things we have experienced. Those types of people and experiences that have invaded our soul.

I read this story called Gulag archipelago. It's a story about the horrific Stalin years in Russian work camps. They all seemed doomed. Yet, we know about those camps because some survived. Were they affected? Sure, but these individuals chose to rise out of these interrogation camps as best they could.

Still, they are molded by the things they experienced. Possibly these people chose to make the world a better place. I do know that in some prisons people don't want to leave. It's like the chase to find life had been torn out of them. However, I do believe they want to live normal lives in normal relationships. It's just not that easy to say "you survived." Bad experiences bend the chase for good relationships. We become a little cautious.

What has happened to you in the past? Do you chase life, relationships, and success? I said many chapters before that some people are dream killers. They love to crush what makes them look inferior. Chasing success is good. Yet, crushing other people's dreams to be successful is not. Certainly, some people stumble in success. We should race to win. I believe we were meant to. They say that depression is huge. I believe we all have it to some degree. Don't let it ruin your life. We need to treat depression beyond the victim status.

I also believe that God allows depression for a good reason. Depression will make us stop. It will put humbleness in our soul. Maybe we will become more compassionate, kind, and giving because depression puts a damper on cockiness. I know so many people that use fear and

depression to fight back. Why go on a rollercoaster? Is there fear? How will you react? I know this. If your scared, you won't be after the first time. I jumped off a cliff into the ocean faster the second time. Depression is either friend or foe. I believe we can't choose our depression or fear. Yet, how we feel about it is our choice. What we do with it is our choice too.

People hide from relationships because they fear the results of a chase. They get moody directly because they ignore our human calling. Some people just get bitter. I feel it's because they refuse to chase life. They fear failing in a relationship. I know someone who wants to write. Yet, they fear never finishing. They fear writers block. They refuse to chase the dream of writing a book. I fear people not having something to read by me. I chase ideas every hour. In fear? Yes!

After my divorce, I had a choice. One night I was going to buy porn at a store (being honest here). I also felt a need to smoke. Yet, I feared what would happen if I gave in to those things. Would I lose the chase of life? Would I be reduced to smoking and porn? Possibly, I would never leave my room. The fear of being hurt again so was so big. Somewhere deep inside, I decided to do the opposite. I joined a couple's group. I added relationships that could hurt me. It turned out to be a much better choice.

I put two pillows on my single bed. A friend and I prayed for a list of qualities in a woman. Then I dated myself to know me better. Was I afraid, terrified, and shy? Absolutely! Yet, I loved being married. I desired to be put in harms way. The chase for a relationship became a challenge. People can hurt us. Better yet, people will hurt us. However, many will love, hug, and admire us.

The chase for our heart's desire is a good one. Usually people have three good friends' maximum. So, if seven out of ten hurt you, it's natural. The trick is to cut the seven loose. I'm

the total opposite to the relationship norm. I chase what makes me nervous. I think sex should be embraced in a relationship. Try and smash our comfort zone. Apparently, I love chasing things. For one reason only. A rollercoaster is fun. Yes, they are scary and even dangerous. Yet, the feeling after is too great to ignore. Many of us have a chasing desire for recklessness.

I know people who say they don't need relationships. Yet, I know they have them. Most likely, they are hurt or misunderstood people who just don't like talking about it. Many people find it hard to gain good relationships. So, were protective of our own personal bubble. How can we chase someone if their running away faster than us? As humans' relationships are us. It's probably stressful trying to avoid them. Possibly, we have had dreams of a great friendship or romance. Never give up on those dreams. Always be on the lookout for good people and great relationships. I believe relationships make us better people. So, chase the dream. Fight for good relationships.

Is there a fear of being single? I do think people fear being alone too long. There will be those few who embrace being recluse. They are far and few between. Most of us spend some amount of time chasing a mate. The chase of a good relationships appears seemingly impossible. Yet, were built for it. I know a woman who did not sleep with anyone until she got married. This gal was over 30. Then she met him. I know in her story that she never gave up. I bet she feared being single forever, but that did not stop her from chasing the dream.

There was a girl who told me that she doubted that there was anyone for her. She felt that doing missions trips and Bible studies were a "relationship" waste of time. She met the "one" at a church function. Doing and believing the same thing no less. Another man decided to marry the next girl he met after he turned 30. He felt that he was on his last leg. Really? She was 300

pounds. Now, don't get me wrong Very nice girls are over-weight. They would make a great spouse. Yet, he has never really been happy about that choice. That is not what he wanted. It's unfair to her that she is what he settled for. Unhappy relationship to be sure. She deserved better.

So, with that said, be a picky shopper. Is it so hard to wait? Some people decide to let the chase go. They don't feel up to having a relationship anymore. Within that frame of mind, they believe, all of a sudden, that they were destined by God to be single. I fear these individuals quit opening their hearts and eyes. God is the God of relationships. He wants to have a relationship with all of creation. Yet, he desires you to be single by force? I seriously doubt that. Waiting does not mean "no." Be patient with the chase. Be patient with the process.

I chased a relationship with the idea that it would happen. In the mean time I did two things. One is that I lived a life open to adding someone. The second thing is that I lived. Single is not single unless you convince yourself it is. Chase a life full of things to see and do. Your never single if people are around. People always say we should not chase a relationship. I agree to a point. If you have to chase someone, it's probably not worth the chase. Instead, chase good relationships.

It's better to know you first. Fight for what you like and want in life. Then wait for someone that loves those things too. Stop chasing? Absolutely not! Your chasing a dream, not a person. Be open to a change of course. Both of my wives have changed me. I'm cool with that. If the chase was a car, What car? Maybe, become a better driver first. Drive yourself first. Know your own car. It's really about chasing while not chasing. It's a mindset. Believe in the process. A life being patient is a life called: the now but not yet. Practice living and chasing life. When a good relationship does come along, you'll be ready to share "you" with them.



I do believe that we set up our mind. Our mind will look while we're not looking. How often do people find someone when they are not looking? It happens all the time. That's why I am not so sure about dumb luck. It's like shopping for a deal. We always look for a deal. Yet, we find deals all the time we did not expect. Relationships are the same. It's ok to have a list. Yet, being surprised is better. I have read that asexual people are looking, but they remain asexual until such a time. They got it right.

Chasing the right people is good. I read an article that stated we should not chase those who are not interested. Tyler Willis was right in saying so. Pick people that want you. Try those who are interested. Chasing the uninterested is plainly stupid. I wonder if I was living life better all those years ago, I would have noticed that girl who gave me flowers in a different way? It 'not so much about chasing relationships. Rather, it's more about creating a life worth chasing.

We're about to enter the last portion of this book: the relationships we have. Yet, I would love to cover two more topics. The first is murky. I call it *The Swamp*. It's the place where our relationships reside. A swamp of people. I have always felt life is messy. Relationships are a mire of complicated muck. These relationships feel like a swamp to me most of the time. Let's wade in.