



## **It's Not You: 27 (Wrong) Reasons You're Single**

*Sara Eckel*

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If you're single but searching, there's no end of explanations, excuses, and criticism you'll hear to explain why you're single. Even the most self-possessed singleton may come to doubt herself. ?

"You're too picky. Just find a good-enough guy and you'll be fine."

"You're too desperate. If men think you need them, they'll run scared."

"You're too independent. Smart, ambitious women always have a harder time finding mates."

"You have low self-esteem. You can't love someone else until you've learned to love yourself."

"You're too needy. You can't be happy in a relationship until you've learned to be happy on your own."

It's Not You is structured around the many messages that singles, especially single women, get about who they are and who they're supposed to be. Supported by the latest psychological and sociological research, as well as interviews with single women, Eckel creates a strong argument for why you should love yourself as you are--no change necessary. By debunking the myths that have kept single women doubting themselves, Eckel encourages singles to stop picking apart their personalities and to start tapping into their own wisdom about who and what is right for them, as they begin to understand and accept there's no one reason they're single--they just are.

## **It's Not You: 27 (Wrong) Reasons You're Single Details**

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# From Reader Review It's Not You: 27 (Wrong) Reasons You're Single for online ebook

## Becky says

Fair warning for my friends who care: there is some limited swearing in this book. But let's be honest, involuntary singlehood after a certain age deserves at least some profanity.

I read, loved, and shared with a number of friends Sara Eckel's NYTimes 2011 essay that formed a starting point for this book. The last line of that essay especially resonated with me "What's wrong with me? Plenty. But that was never the point." Here she continues the conversation, setting up and knocking down some of the many reasons people tend to offer in their attempts to answer the unanswerable question of why (fill in the blank with the name of the nearest perfectly attractive, intelligent and socially acceptable woman) is still single. The insidious thing about this list of reasons (27 of them and yet they all manage to hit home!) is that so many of us find ourselves bouncing back and forth between beating ourselves over the head with them and going on the defensive against them. Or rather, I find myself doing that. I probably shouldn't try to speak for my single friends.

Eckel does a nice job of debunking the presumptions, using logic, scientific studies and entertaining anecdotes. And if some of the logic and studies are strained a bit in their relevance, I think the overall point still hits home. The trite explanations for a woman's single status are usually wrong, and almost always unhelpful.

The one fly in the ointment is the last section where she gets into a bit of hindsight rambling, talking about the good things she failed to acknowledge in her single life and including this passage:

Happiness was there the whole time. The problem was, I was so specific about the *type* of happiness I wanted that I far too often ruined a good thing. I wanted the sort of happiness that made me feel normal. I wanted romantic love, yes, but I also wanted the security and social status that surrounds it.

With this, Eckel dips her toes, or maybe even both feet, into smug married territory. I have had the conversation many times, including with two different friends in just the last 24 hours. My friends and I (squarely in this book's demographic) know we have great lives. We are happy and grateful for them. We have a tendency to feel guilty for wanting more when we are already so blessed. That guilt puts us right back into the territory of beating ourselves up over the 27 (wrong) reasons we're single. The desire for romantic love is real and human of us. The guilt is damaging. Ending the book this way felt pat and a bit patronizing, trying too hard to wrap it all up in a happy bow: see you're actually happy, no need to fuss about being alone!

I can imagine myself rereading this book when I find myself off balance in my thinking about my single status again. I'll just skip that last chapter.

A few passages I liked:

"Humans beings are not houses - you don't walk in and say, "Well, so long as we gut the kitchen and add a third bathroom, this could work," or, "It has no charm, but it's close to work

and it's all I can afford." No. You love them as they are."

"The Buddhists say, "Of the two witnesses, hold the principle one." Meaning: You're the only one who knows your experience. As imperfect as our analyses may be - as clouded as they are by judgments, worries, and fantasies - they're still the best we have."

"Why are you single? Maybe there are many reasons, maybe there are no reasons. The real question is, why are near strangers so often compelled to demand answers?"

"I think the very act of being single provides enough hard-core strength training to put anyone's psyche into fighting shape."

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### **Sonya says**

Yep, read it. Only discovered Sara Eckel's Modern Love column recently, so I was interested in what she had to say over the span of 200+ pages, which, basically, is what I wish people could say on a regular basis: friends, family, the magazines I don't even read but I know are out there and spew dating advice BS. People will say that we don't need books like this to know that what Eckel says is true, but we do need more voices saying that being single is not some sort of deficiency. Eckel's voice is realistic but comforting. She's definitely someone who "gets it."

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### **Megan says**

This book makes me supremely happy. Sara Eckel's *It's Not You: 27 (Wrong) Reasons You're Single* is both an uplifting and amusing breaking apart of the reasons a woman past her mid-twenties might still be single. She approaches a very sensitive topic with grace and honesty listing twenty-seven different reasons that she was over the years and tearing them down.

I appreciated the fact that this book isn't just Eckel's opinions written down either. The book is full stories of other women and snippets from other books dealing with the topic of being older and still single. What I found most profound was the many discussions of the way Eckel's personally changed her thinking about being single and life in general. The Buddhist practices and proverbs she shared were very intriguing and though I have no intention of taking up Buddhism I am very interested to train myself in some of those practices- lovingkindness and self-compassion as specific examples.

The last thing that I greatly appreciated about Eckel's book is that she explains and helps the reader see just how beneficial a single person is: to her friends, to her family, to the world. In the end the best lesson gleaned is that the time and energy a single woman is able to devote to the people and causes that are important to her is significant and should be celebrated, not shamed. Or and of course: Enjoy life! Don't

settle or live waiting for the future.

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### **Tori says**

Reading this book made me feel better.

Most of the time I would say I am happy being single. I'm not going out of my way to meet a life partner, so even the times I do feel sad about it, I tell myself, well, these are the choices you've made.

This book isn't really a how-to or even self help. It's more a series of essays about the challenges of being single--emotionally, financially, familial--and how to navigate the minefield that is modern society as an unattached woman. For that reason, a lot of the ideas presented weren't new to me, but they weren't things I'd ever had laid out so succinctly, or ever spent a lot of time contemplating. Reading it made me feel better about my own choices.

One thing that really stuck out for me was the idea of "self-compassion." We can't always have good self-esteem, Eckel tells us, but we can always strive for self compassion. To treat ourselves with kindness and care. And again, it's not a new idea--you wouldn't talk about your friends the way we often talk about ourselves--but seeing it spelled out like that really struck a cord with me.

I wouldn't go so far to say that reading this book changed my life, but it did help me to come to terms with the idea that I do have love in my life, all different kinds of love, and that the life I'm living right now, is indeed my real life. It's happening and I'm living it. I may never fully move on from the want or desire to find a partner, but that's okay, just as it will be okay if I never do find them.

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### **Katie says**

Mmmmm. Some mixed feelings about this one. For one thing, I DID feel a little betrayed that the author is married. No, she is not one of us. And I've never been one who takes comfort from other people who have defeated the same challenges I face. We might both be/have been single, but I have other reasons for being that way.

The other thing is . . . It didn't entirely fit the single person I am. Nobody asks me why I'm single. I think some of that is just regional. The Pacific Northwest is pretty "live and let live" or at least "live and silently judge." And I'm not out there, I've never really been out there, so, yeah, a guy is going to have to drop in my lap and even then, I'd probably be too scared to do anything about it.

But . . .

I did really like the descriptions of single life. How it's hard because you have to do everything yourself. A lot of times at work, I just find myself really wishing I had someone I could call and ask to run to the store for me. And heavy groceries like kitty litter often sit in my car for WEEKS. (I think I have some laundry detergent in my trunk now, if anyone wants to go grab that?)

But then there are the positive sides of being single. I spent the last two weeks in Disney World and New

York City. It was nice to be able to do that without consulting anyone. I get to make all my decisions myself.

Oh, and I know I also said I resented that the author was married, but I did appreciate her talking about how, actually, it wasn't that hard to transition to life as a couple! I've certainly felt that feeling she talks about, that I am just doomed because I missed out on learning how to be a couple when I was in high school or college or whenever.

(And I don't know if I want to get married. I certainly used to and I don't know if I've given up or simply changed my mind.)

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### **Wendy says**

An excellent, intelligent, often funny book. Like Bridget Jones in non-fiction form, the author points out how contradictory all the conventional things people and books say are ("you're too independent" / "you're too needy") and ultimately how pointless they all are anyway. Most self-help books will start out by telling you that all the other self-help books are wrong, but then go on to tell you why you should believe or do this other thing instead. This book tells you all the other books are wrong and the other things are also wrong. No facile answers to a question she shows, over and over, is stupid in the first place.

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### **Catherine says**

When you are dying to vent to a single friend, but there are no single friends left, read this book.

When you need a moment of reassurance to remember you're not crazy and you're not doing it all wrong, read this book.

When you think you'll kill the next person that says "It'll happen when you least expect it!" or "You just have to put yourself out there!", read this book.

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### **Diba Ilupi says**

Pas pertama baca judul buku ini, yang terlintas "ah ini pasti buku tentang dating guide yang ngebahas 27 kesalahan mengapa seseorang \*single\* dan BAGAIMANA cara mengatasi problema tersebut khas buku dating guide lainnya"

TAPI ternyata tidak, buku ini berisi 27 poin kausal yang terlintas di pikiran mayoritas orang kalau disuguh kata \*single\* dan masyarakat yang masih bependirian teguh dengan 27 poin tsb atau bahkan lebih. "Menjadi single berarti ada yang tidak beres dengan individu tsb. "

Sara Eckel di buku ini mengutip research dan dialog dengan beberapa sumber yang intinya menjabarkan kalau single bukan melulu tentang "ada yang salah denganmu" melainkan memang individu tersebut belum menemukan counterpart yang cocok dengannya.

mereka mengira :  
ah kamu terlalu pemilih ;  
terlalu desperate ;  
terlalu independent/ ;  
terlalu low self esteem ;  
dst.

Toh bila dua orang individu sudah cocok, 27+ alasan tsb tidak lagi relevan dan mereka pasti saling memaklumi satu sama lain.

Gak rugi kok bacanya karena Sara menghadirkan beberapa +/- menjadi seorang single secara berimbang dan informatif.

Contohnya research yang dilakukan Dana Rotz, Ekonom di Mathematica Policy Research, menemukan jika : Setiap satu tahun seorang wanita menunda pernikahannya, dia menurunkan resiko sebuah perceraian. Seorang wanita yang menikah di akhir usia 20 an (27-29 th) 15% lebih minim perceraian daripada counterpart yang menikah di usia pertengahan usia 20. Dan jika dia menunda pernikahan di umur 30 awal, resiko nya berkurang lagi 15%.

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### **Julie Ehlers says**

I am not normally one for dating books, and I thankfully have friends and family members who actually like and respect me and would never dream of telling me what I'm "doing wrong" (actually, I had one "friend" who did that, and for that reason and a number of others, he's no longer a friend). But I became intrigued by this book after Meghan Daum recommended it in her feature here on Goodreads. I decided to pick it up, and I'm glad I did. I think many people, single or no, would benefit from reading this. Eckel calmly, efficiently, and humorously lays waste to about 100 stupid myths and about 1000 stupid magazine articles. A welcome dose of sanity.

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### **Crystal Velasquez says**

Good grief, it's like this woman took all the thoughts I've ever had about being single--and all the comments friends and family have ever said to me about my being single--and put them in writing. Only, she added in a lot of actually sort of helpful Buddhist ways of looking at it--all of which were much kinder and more hopeful and productive than anything I've read before, without all the usual "Don't worry, you'll find someone" stuff that you'd get from your friends. Not that I make a habit of reading self-help books about singleness, but anything I have picked up was usually very "Here's what you're doing wrong" or "I'm single by choice, and I love it!" Since I didn't feel I was in either camp, I couldn't quite relate. And don't even get me started on pieces written by twenty-somethings complaining about "still" being single. Urgh. It was kind of nice to read something from someone in my age group who didn't love being single but who also didn't find it to be the tragedy that we're often told to believe it is. The fact that the author is now married (Oh no, she's one of THEM!) didn't take anything away from her message, which was heavy on Buddhist teachings about mindfulness and meditation that would be useful for anyone, married or single, combined with some fairly surprising stats and research. I would definitely share this one with other single folks, but I'd be more interested in sharing it with married friends and family since it nicely sums up how I feel every time

someone asks me why I'm not married yet.

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### **Alex Yard says**

This book was, actually, respectably on-point. I heard about it through the "Love Hurts" series of episodes on the "Strangers" podcast, and since that episode series was really insightful, I figured it would be worthwhile to examine more of that in this book. This book might be a bit more pop-psych/relationship advice column-ish, but it definitely doesn't descend into the cliches of supermarket checkout magazines a la "15 Moves In Bed That Will Totally Wow Him."

The premise of the book is taking all the common reasons people attribute to a person being single over a great span of time: you're too picky, you're too available, you're too intimidating, you're too negative, you should have married that guy, etc. There are 27 chapters (each of which take a handful of minutes to read, so it lends itself well to one or two installments at a time, before bed, on the porcelain throne, etc.). Each chapter challenges the validity of these kinds of assessments.

So I came into the book skeptical because I thought the author would just pat the reader on the back and tell them they're doing nothing wrong because "It's Not You," as the title of the book is. Which I didn't think would be a wise approach because it would enable people who are doing a crummy job at seeking what they seek, making them complacent with their approach and think, "oh, everyone else is wrong when they criticize me, so I'll just keep on doing what I'm doing." However, to the book's credit, it DOES illustrate how each of these criticisms can hold true if your behavior goes too far. For example in the chapter You're Too Picky it validates the practice of holding out and not settling for someone mediocre and seemingly "good enough," but also advises you against ditching someone for something fairly trivial such as, they like the wrong sports team or flavor of latte or whatever.

So, while I wouldn't categorize this as a bible of singlehood, I will say that it successfully and articulately challenges a lot of common ideas that people tend to assume are true without a second thought, ideas that are counterproductive and the dismissal of which would be beneficial. In that way you can sort of think of it as a self-help therapy session or whatever.

I will say that it seemed odd to me that the introduction of the book gives the caveat that "this book has advice/thoughts that can apply to anyone, but it's especially geared toward women." I think that was a boneheaded limitation for the author to put on herself because I read through it and never thought to myself, "Well this chapter was a waste of time because it had stuff that really only pertains to women". What if I had picked up the book in the bookstore, read the introduction and then put it back thinking it was a chick book? It was all reasonably universal. I wonder if the author and the editor went back and forth on how to present this.

Finally, I perused the existing reviews of this book and I am flabbergasted that some people mention that they felt betrayed that the author was in fact married at the time of writing the book. Listen up you boneheads. This is not a book geared toward people who have deliberately chosen the single life, but rather for those who are aiming for lifelong partnership and are stumbling along the way and not getting anywhere. Now, the author got married at FORTY TWO and thus had two decades of floundering singlehood and the fact that she eventually did get married validates a lot of what she discusses, for example about reasonably holding out for the right person and not getting too-too discouraged or giving up because you're still single into your late thirties. This book would be totally weird if she hadn't ended up getting married, because it

would have been a whole book of "You're not doing anything wrong, so just keep it up and eventually you'll find success although I myself haven't but trust me girl you gonna do it." Listen to how dumb that would have sounded.

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### **Cynthia Morris says**

The best book I have ever read about being single/dating.

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### **Sharon McCarthy says**

This is a book for single women who are sick of answering that question: why are you not married. And maybe it's also for all their married friends. It is so American of us to think we are one book away from greatness, so female of us to fall prey to all those self-help books that promise to fix us so that we may be worthy of a relationship. And that's what's so wryly radical about the premise of this book: what if we were enough? Just as we are. I loved this book.

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### **Whitney Atkinson says**

DNF at page 106

I think this might be something I hold onto, but it's not right for me now. I bought this as someone who's single, but I've never dated before, and subsequently, I've never had difficulty with relationships. This book is marketed and geared toward people who have been in relationships that always fail and they want to be reassured that it's not their fault.

Since I've never dated, I felt like the message didn't apply to me, so I never got into it, and it wasn't funny or fast-paced enough for me to read it anyway even though I couldn't gain anything from it.

There were some quotes I liked from it though, and I'm tempted to keep it just because it is feminist and has some great lines in it that I could revisit if I need to in the future.

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### **Carolyn says**

A lot of this book felt like it came out of my own experience. Yes, I am 47 3/4 (my 48th is only 5 weeks away) and single...

My most favorited and relisted list (on BJ Novak's list app) is a list of "Worst Parts of Being Single" with the penultimate item being:

"Asked 'WHY are you single?' [over and over and over again]."

This book is basically an exploration of the things people say to you as a perennially single person...and the

ways they are absolutely wrong in those things even when well-intentioned.

Coincidentally Jessa Crispin (formerly of Bookslut) published an article in the Times today that hit on this topic as well: <http://www.nytimes.com/2016/01/10/opinion/solo.html>...

I love it when coincidences / resonances like this happen in my reading life.

Why four stars instead of five? To hilariously steal from my friend Sean's review of the Ta-Nehisi Coates' book, "The only reason it didn't get five stars is because I didn't feel it offered "a transcendent vision for a way forward." " Maybe it's because I've been reading so much Brene Brown lately but I felt like everything that's suggested as a way to not be despondent about your singleness in this book is stuff I'm already doing.

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