

**THE 8 WORDS**

*single girls never*

**WANT TO HEAR.**

**EVER.**

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*Want your on-the-prowl pal to maim you? Just say  
this one sentence to her, writes Emma Markezic*

Dear married and coupled-up friends,

Do you know what makes me want to punch you in the arm to the point you're going to have to hire someone to carry your groceries for you? Telling me, "It will happen when you least expect it." A phrase best applied to unpleasanties like having a pigeon poop in your hair while you're on the toilet, or having your dress ripped off by a giant roaming vacuum cleaner. Now these would be reasonably surprising events.

Meeting a man, however, isn't altogether unforeseeable. I'm looking for one, after all – The One, if you will – but I doubt he's coming along when I'm trying to squeeze myself into shapewear in the David Jones changeroom. If he did show up then, I wouldn't be expecting it one little bit. If he does, I owe you a Coke. Yours, Emma

## Sticks and stones...

If you're currently coupled up, I'm not picking on you, truly I'm not. I know you want to punch *me* in the arm when I overanalyse first dates and follow-up texts in all their excruciating detail – but on behalf of singles the world over, please quit using the "It will happen when you least expect it" line.

Olivia, 22, reckons she's heard it more times than Delta's pressed a big red button: "It must be inscribed in the couples' manual: 'I must remind single people that a) they are single b) they are to be pitied c) I am a patronising jerk d) all of the above.'"

We get that you're trying to be helpful but it's like saying, "It's always in the last place you look!" when you've lost something. Of course it is, because when you find it you stop looking. Just like you stopped looking for a boyfriend after you found one.

We'd rather you tell us there are plenty more fish in the sea, it's his loss – anything but this torturous nugget. In fact, nine out of 10 experts agree. OK, so I only asked one professional – but he agreed. Psychotherapist Cyan von Gija ([alburycounselling.com.au](http://alburycounselling.com.au)) says, "It is minimising of other people's experiences and feelings. I imagine for many singles hearing this might bring on a sense of shame, even rejection."

It's also telling someone not to look out for something they have been taught to anticipate their whole lives.

"It makes me feel I'm somehow a lesser person because I'm single; they think I need reassurance my life won't be this awful forever," says Claire, 29.

Von Gija adds, "There's a belief that it's our destiny, or responsibility, to couple-up. Terms such as 'other half' reinforce the belief that we're not whole unless we're with someone."

## Something nice to say

It's hard *not* to have expectations about meeting a guy. "I'd like to think 'It will happen when you least expect it' *is* true so that I'll think less about how single I am and how awesome cats are," says Mel, 25. "But surely the number of people who do put themselves out there to find someone is similar to the number who sit back and wait for it to happen."

So we're in agreement then: this expression is pretty much awkwardness in a nutshell. But I totally get it – people who are in relationships need a response to fire off when your single friend is whining about how you can't whip a hair extension back and forth in this country without hitting a douchebag.

"Rather than being focused on what you need to say, show your friend a little curiosity, interest and genuine concern," recommends von Gija.

"Don't just assume that because they're single, they're desperate. Offer them support if they want it – but you don't have to attempt to offer advice or force them to change."

## The advice bit

Von Gija has some useful counsel for the singles. "Although I'm not a huge fan of clichés, there is an underlying truth [to 'It will happen when you least expect it'] that's useful. When we invest a lot of psychological and emotional energy into the search we exude an air of desperation that tends to turn off potential mates.

"If we relax, get in touch with our patience, and be OK with being single for now, then lo and behold it *is* more likely to happen."

And my two cents' worth? If you ask me, making time to meet someone, get to know them then prioritise your relationship, doesn't happen without a little emotional elbow grease.

Happiness in life is never a given, regardless of whether you're single or hooked-up. It needs a bit of hard work. And none of us are more or less perfect than anyone else. Unless, of course, you happen to be Ryan Gosling. In that case carry on just as you are. **COSMO**

## Ladies, start your responses

*Things we wish we could say when you tell us love will happen when we least expect it:*

"RIGHT... SO A BIT LIKE GETTING PREGNANT BY ACCIDENT?" "THAT'S THE IDEAL EXCUSE TO SPEND THE WEEKEND IN MY SNUGGIE WATCHING A GIRLS MARATHON! OH, YOU HAVE TO WATCH THE V8 SUPERCARS WITH TOM? THAT'S TOO BAD." "YOU KNOW, THAT'S WHAT THEY SAY ABOUT BREAKUPS."