

# Go F\*\*\* Someone

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From Tokyo to TriBeCa, people are increasingly alone. People go on fewer dates, marry less and later, have smaller families if at all. People are having less sex, especially young people. The common complaint: *it's just too hard*. Dating is hard, intimacy is hard, relationships are hard. *I'm not ready to play on hard mode yet, I'll do the relationship thing when I level up*.

And simultaneously, a cottage industry sprung up extolling the virtue of loneliness. Self-care, self-development, self-love. Travel solo, live solo, *you do you*. Wait, doesn't that last one literally mean "go fuck yourself"?

This essay is to tell you: go fuck someone else. Ask someone on a date. At the very least, invite someone to hang out and ask them what they're struggling with. This essay is not about *how* to make friends and lovers (a topic I'll come back to), but an exhortation *to actually go and do that*. Now instead of later, directly instead of ass-backwards, seek relationships instead of seeking to be deemed worthy of relationships. If you think this is all too obvious to mention, reread the first two paragraphs again.

My argument doesn't hinge on specific data relating to the intimacy recession and whether the survey counting sex dolls adjusted for inflation. If you're reading Putanumonit as a brief escape from all the loving relationships smothering you, congrats! If you're trying as hard as you can to connect and the world isn't reciprocating, consider this essay as written for those you seek to connect with instead. Reverse all advice as necessary.

This essay's epistemic status is whatever The Last Psychiatrist was drinking.

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Wherefore all this aloneness? The pink-hairs blame the red-pills who blame the pink-hairs. But really, they're both in agreement that men and women are natural enemies and any interactions between the two are zero-sum. If you're stuck in zero-sum thinking you're probably on the wrong blog, but take this as a first dose of medicine and then go give someone a hug.

One level up from the gender war is the class war. Leftists blame loneliness on capitalism — single people buy twice as many toasters, sex toys, and Netflix subscriptions. Rightists blame socialism — for the state to be your daddy it must first destroy the family. I won't spend much time on this. If your ability to connect with people depends more than zero on the GDP composition that's the problem right there. *"But in this economy..."* Listen, if you're struggling to build financial capital, maybe now is the time to invest in relationship capital instead?

The famous Atlantic article on *The Sex Recession* starts by noting that sex is now more accepted than ever:

If hookups are your thing, Grindr and Tinder offer the prospect of casual sex within the hour. The phrase *If something exists, there is porn of it* used to be a clever internet meme; now it's a truism. BDSM plays at the local multiplex—but why bother going? Sex is portrayed, often graphically and sometimes gorgeously, on prime-time cable. Sexting is, statistically speaking, normal.

*Polyamory* is a household word. Shame-laden terms like *perversion* have given way to cheerful-sounding ones like *kink*. Anal sex has gone from final taboo to “fifth base”—*Teen Vogue* (yes, *Teen Vogue*) even ran a guide to it. With the exception of perhaps incest and bestiality—and of course nonconsensual sex more generally—our culture has never been more tolerant of sex in just about every permutation.

[...] These should be boom times for sex.

So why, in the words of philosopher Julia Kristeva, “everything is permitted and nothing is possible”?

I don't think there's a contradiction here. Everything is hard *because* it's permitted.

There used to be no shortage of people who would judge you for having sex. Parents, peers, teachers, pastors, even the same media outlets that now claims to be “sex positive”. And when you had to escape surveillance and risk judgment just to make out with someone, it was HOT. The illicit is sexy. Sneaking around created a bond based on a shared secret and merely having sex in the face of restriction was an achievement to be proud of. Having *good* sex was gravy.

If “the culture” no longer judges you for getting naked, who will? Your partner might. They'll think you're inexperienced, or too experienced, or too frigid or horny or vanilla or too weird. This can be a problem, but it's ameliorated by your partner repeatedly telling you that *no, it was good, you're just what they wanted*. You should believe them. If they didn't like you they'd make like Hamlet and ghost.

The big problem is when you start judging yourself. You can hide from your parents. You can find a partner who doesn't judge your shortcomings. But you can't outrun your own insecurities.

It starts by comparing yourself to the internet. Everyone's dick is bigger in porn, the tits are perkier. Everyone's dates are more romantic on Instagram, their vacations sexier. People who suck at relationships are a lot less visible online.

It also turns out that society *will* judge you for looking for romance if your perceived status isn't up to snuff. Try to date “out of your league” and you'll be labeled a creep or a thot, depending on gender<sup>1</sup>. People who seek help with dating can run into this

judgment and begin to internalize their perceived inadequacy. They start diverting all their energy into acquiring status markers, into being perceived as relationship-worthy by the real or imagined crowd of observers.

There's no natural end to this process. As people spend more effort on status-climbing and self-improvement they spend less time in actual relationships. Unfortunately, you don't get better at dating by learning to meditate or doing pushups alone in your room. When people who are obsessed with self-improvement have a miserable time on apps and first dates, they often conclude that problem is lack of self-improvement — surely when two well-developed high-status people effortless love will spark by itself! And so people keep chasing the next personal milestone. Get that degree, lose 10 pounds, learn that skill, read that book...

It's important to distinguish between life's necessities and extras. If you've just lost your job, are dealing with a health crisis, or moved to a new city where you have no friends then you should probably stabilize these issues before dating. Dating is hard, and acute crises should be solved directly and not by looking for salvation in a partner. But most self-development isn't addressing real crises even if it pretends to.

Self-development is riskless. Progress is slow but assured, and every step towards your personal goal is rewarded with likes and favs on social media. The pursuit itself raises one's status. Opening up for connection, on the other hand, is scary. The rewards are great but so is the risk of failure. And real affection is the one thing you can't brag about in an Instagram story. Intimacy for external consumption is not intimacy.

And so, as the great guru put it: ***people want to be fuckable more than they want to fuck.***

Fuckability is capital. We seek to accumulate capital. Fucking is labor. We seek to avoid labor. And so people are more fuckable than ever, and do ever less fucking.

It gets worse.

The pathological case of becoming obsessed with status and perception is when relationships themselves are subjugated to this end. When the main measure of a relationship is in how it makes you appear. Narcissism.

I see it in rich women who refuse to date a man who makes less money than they do, no matter how severely it limits their mating pool, because it would be beneath them to have a poorer boyfriend. I see it men who refuse to date a woman who is a year older or an inch taller than they are.

It's looking at accomplished women dropping out of demanding careers to raise kids as sexism. Could it be that someone may prefer to raise a family to grinding 70 hours a week at the office once they don't need to worry about money? I certainly would! But if the only thing you count is personal status<sup>2</sup> then it would seem to you that these women are being cheated out of something by the evil patriarchy.

Narcissists ask: *How does this relationship reinforce my ~~ego-narrative~~ brand? How worthy does it make me seem?* Ego-poisoned people who are short of narcissism merely ask: *Would I be judged of a relationship?* These questions are self-focused, and intimacy requires that you relinquish them entirely. Instead, the question that starts all good relationships is: *Can I make someone happy?*<sup>23</sup>

Making someone happy doesn't imply *forever*, or *as happy as they can be*, or *happier than anyone else could make them*. A compliment makes a person happy. A text where you share something fun. Being a good listener on a date even if you didn't blow their mind with electric conversation. A cuddle makes a person happy even if it stays a cuddle. Sex makes people happy even if it's not PornHub-grade.

Romance is the most complex and rewarding multi-player game that humanity has invented. There are many romantic interactions that are short of your wildest dreams that are still worth having, that make two people happier than they would have been alone. And if you're starting out, that's where you should aim for.

Dating and sex and relationships are all trainable skills. You learn by doing. To learn painting you start by making 100 paintings. To get good at tennis you start by playing 100 matches. The first 100 will be mostly mediocre and some will be outright bad, but the 101st one has the chance to be good.

To go on a great date, you have to go on 100 mediocre dates. Or at least, put yourself in the mindset where that is your goal. That is how you learn to date and make people happy to be dating you. You learn how to deal with rejection and breakups and how to bounce back. Just as importantly, that's where you learn to enjoy dating (see rule 97).

What if you're not enjoying it? There are bad dates out there, people who are selfish and manipulative and dangerous or who just don't show up. This sucks, and the only consolation is that with dating experience you get better at spotting them earlier.

But perhaps you are going on dates with lovely people but the dates aren't going exactly according to the script you envisioned. Or the people who flirt and match with you are not quite what someone with your degrees and BMI and yoga skill deserves. In this case you *should* go back to self-development: fix your narcissism and figure out what value you actually provide to a romantic partner besides imagining that you raise their status through mere association.

How to tell if you're in the latter category? If you get a lot of "*I can't believe a great guy/gal like you can't find a girlfriend/boyfriend*" from your friends, that's a sign. Your friends saying that is not a compliment, it's a mockery of your misguided self-focus. They're saying that you have the resources to make someone happy, and that you're failing to do so.

Unfortunately, dating is a matter of luck and circumstance. All you can do is be proactive and open. There's no guarantee that you'll meet the partners you want in a given time frame or for a given amount of mating effort. Exponential distributions are

tough: you go through one mediocre match after another, and there's no way to predict when the positive outlier comes. But still, you'll always do better the earlier you start.

Perhaps there was a hidden benefit to the premodern mating context when you had roughly one shot at a successful partnering — all you could do is invest in the one relationship you're given. But now that the option to date without lifelong commitment exists it affects your dating life even if you don't plan on it. The option is always there for you and your partners. Waiting until you hit some life marker to start dating just means that you miss out on years of learning what other people are looking for, and what you yourself are looking for in a relationship.

And if you're too busy for dating, actually busy with something that's more important to you than romance, consider that dating doesn't have to be a sink of time and energy. A casual date can be invigorating, and a partner can provide the support you need in your struggles.

So go out there and make some people mildly happy by going on mediocre dates<sup>4</sup> and having mediocre sex and learning to connect with people romantically instead of having your head up your own ass. There are more interesting things to put in there with a partner.

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## Footnotes

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[1]

Men get the worst of it, especially those on the bottom of status ladder. Punching down at low-status people is generally contemptible and so people convince themselves that all incels are violent misogynists to justify it. I see having compassion for incels as a good litmus test of basic human decency.

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[2]

I consider it quite unfortunate that being a middle manager (which entails a lot of personal benefits) is considered higher status than being a good parent or partner (which entails a lot of benefits for other people).

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[3]

In case people are confused, the whole business with decision matrices is about choosing a partner (or a house). Once you've chosen, the only thing that counts is investing in the relationship, not scoring or comparing it.

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[4]

If you don't know who to go on a mediocre date with, I'm always available to deliver mediocre romantic satisfaction in person.

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