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How Not to Marry the Wrong Guy: Is He "the One" or Should You Run? A Guide to Living Happily Ever After

By Anne Milford, Jennifer Gauvain



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Don't walk down that aisle until you read this book! Whether you're engaged, in a serious relationship, or looking for Mr. Right, How Not to Marry the Wrong Guy can help you decide to take the plunge or run in the opposite direction.

Anne Milford canceled her wedding five months before the big day. It was a heart-wrenching decision, but one she has never regretted as she is now happily married with three children. On telling her story, she realized her qualms were remarkably common. That too many brides – she learned later from hundreds of interviews - were staying in mediocre or bad relationships for all the wrong reasons. Women who felt they'd already “put in too much time to quit now,” or that if they got married, “he'd change.” Co-author and social worker Jennifer Gauvain has counseled too many women to count who are in the same awful predicament.

How Not to Marry the Wrong Guy will help readers listen to their guts, pay attention to those red flags, and get out before saying “I do,” when their heart is screaming “I don't!”



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Editorial Review

About the Author

ANNE MILFORD has been a freelance writer and editor for over 20 years. In 1992 she canceled her wedding, but has never looked back. She now has three children and has been happily married for 15 years.

JENNIFER GAUVAIN is a licensed clinical social worker whose primary focus is working with couples and families. She is married to a great guy and the mother of 8-year-old twins.

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PREFACE

It was 5 p.m. on a warm Sunday in July and my fiancé was scolding me for being late. He was upset that I was not going to have time to pack our picnic dinner for the concert that night. He stood there in a bathrobe, unshaved and unshowered, after a full day spent in front of the television. Time slowed while I reflected on my day of travel: two hours in the car to the Orlando airport, rental car return, baggage check, tedious tram ride and the cattle call for the wide-body L-1011 aircraft jam-packed with 250 passengers. Then the whole process in reverse when I arrived in Chicago, including an hour in traffic getting back to his house. (Note to self: Don't most couples in love pick each other up at the airport?) I can still picture him lecturing me about how I "would never have time to go to the store and get what we need for dinner." The whole situation was so crazy that I didn't bother to mention three key things that seemed to escape him: There are no stores at 35,000 feet; there was nothing I could have done to make the plane fly faster; and what the hell had he been doing all day?

I once heard a therapist use the analogy of a beach ball. She said your problems are like a beach ball that you keep trying to hold under water. You can try to ignore them, but eventually those problems, just like a beach ball, are going to pop up out of the water. This was the day that my beach ball finally popped out of the water. Five days later, I called off the engagement and moved back home. It was the Fourth of July — Independence Day.

When I was 28, I became engaged to a man who was completely and utterly wrong for me. For reasons that remain unclear, I fully participated in a relationship that was doomed from the start, contrary to all my gut feelings, and covered with red flags. Fortunately, I found the courage to call off the wedding before I got myself into a bigger mess.

After I called off the wedding, I moved back to my hometown, found a new job, and got an apartment. My sweet friends were worried about me and went out of their way to make sure I was doing okay. While I felt somewhat embarrassed by my poor judgment, I was so happy to be free that my joy at being back home and out of that unhealthy relationship outweighed any shame or sadness. The hardest part was facing up to the situation and making the tough call to get out.

As I talked to other women about my unfortunate engagement, I started hearing the same comments over and over. First, I was surprised by the number of women who admitted they wished they had the courage to call off their own wedding. I even had several women (and men!) admit to short-lived first marriages that no one knew about. I also began to see a pattern develop as they started to ask me the same questions about my relationship. *What were the signs? How did I feel? How did I have the courage to call it off? How did my*

fiance react? I quickly realized that in many cases, they were really questioning their own relationship or pending marriage. After a while, I had mentally catalogued a collection of personal stories about doomed-from-the-start marriages and faced another gut feeling — this needs to be a book. As a freelance writer, an avid reader, and a person who spends hours in bookstores and libraries, I couldn't help but notice shelves filled with rows and rows of books about how to plan a successful wedding. Countless books promise to help women “hook a man,” or “find your soulmate in thirty days.” It drove me crazy to see some of these books — women are so much smarter than this! They deserve better. What they really need is a book that helps them step back and evaluate what they want and need in their relationship.

I could have used such a book; it would have saved me a lot of heartache. That's when I had my epiphany. Who better to tell you how to extricate yourself from a dead-end relationship than a woman who has done time in one? *No one* is better informed about unhealthy relationships than a woman who has learned the hard way. That was it! I realized that my experience of calling off a wedding could really help other women. And I could uncover what a woman needs to know about marrying the *right* guy by talking to women who had married the *wrong* one! So I set out to find answers to the following:

- **Why do women stay in relationships that they know are all wrong for them?**
- **Why do smart, talented, successful, worthy women *consciously* get engaged to the wrong guy?**
- **Why do they walk down that aisle even though they *already* know it is a mistake?**

The first step was finding women to interview. Each woman I talked to had to meet one standard prior to being interviewed: Did she know she was making a mistake BEFORE she walked down the aisle? That way I knew I would be interviewing women who:

- 1. Settled for a ho-hum (or even destructive), less-than-fulfilling relationship, and then . . .**
- 2. Went through with her wedding even though she knew it was a mistake.**

It didn't take long to find the first 30 women who fit the profile. I sent out a mass e-mail to my friends, relatives, neighbors, and colleagues explaining this project along with a questionnaire. I got a big response and started receiving completed questionnaires or e-mails indicating that a person was willing to be interviewed. I got even more responses from those I sent the e-mails to saying they knew someone who fit the criteria, but were afraid to contact them for fear of prying or being insensitive.

The amazing thing is that I didn't have to travel more than a few “degrees of separation” to find qualified candidates to interview. This told me I was on to something. In all cases, these women agreed to revisit these very personal and often painful memories to help someone else. Every single woman said something to the effect of, “If I can help prevent someone else from making the same mistake, it is worth reliving these painful memories.”

At this point in the research, I had the great fortune to begin my collaboration with Jennifer K. Gauvain, MSW, LCSW. Jennifer is a licensed therapist whose primary focus is helping couples and families. With over 15 years' experience in private practice, she helped me interpret the stories I gathered and address the issues revealed by those who forged ahead with a mistaken marriage. She also shared the wisdom she and her husband of 15 years gained while on the marriage prep team at St. Francis Xavier College Church.

After conducting the interviews and poring over the data, something remarkable occurred. No matter what the women's background, age, education level, or religious affiliation, they all gave startlingly similar reasons for why they remained in their unfulfilling relationship or went ahead with a mistaken marriage. While they were very different in many ways, they all echoed the same advice: “Listen to your gut,” or “Pay

attention to that little voice inside of you.” They talked about their gut feelings over and over so we decided to look further into this concept of gut feelings.

Jennifer and I also decided to track down women who *did* listen to their gut — women who had canceled a wedding and ended a dead-end relationship. When we set out to find them, something interesting occurred as well. We quickly realized that it was *much harder* to find women who had called off a wedding. And many people that we did find ultimately declined to speak about this time in their life. They did not want to “go there” again and dredge up all of those painful memories. It took us a while, but we eventually conducted interviews and again found common themes and patterns in their stories. The difference was that they were somehow able to dial in to their inner wisdom and find the courage to act on these feelings. *They called it off.*

By presenting real-life stories, coupled with research and professional insight, we hope that a potential bride who is headed down the aisle to disaster will recognize herself in one of these stories and stop short before she makes a life-altering mistake. We also want to reach the woman who is enmeshed in an unhappy relationship simply because she doesn’t want to be alone. As one woman said about her 26-year-old assistant, “I wish I could bottle up all the feelings I had during my mistaken marriage and give them to her so she could see where she is headed in her own unhealthy relationship. I have talked to her until I am blue in the face about how wrong her fiancé is for her but she doesn’t want to ‘waste the six years’ invested in the relationship!”

The good news is that everyone in this book went on to a happy and fulfilling Act II — after they ended their marriage or engagement. It wasn’t the lonely and dismal future they envisioned when they were in the middle of the storm. By sharing these real stories, we hope to spare others the anguish, guilt, and sadness of a failed marriage.

We also hope that someone who is in a potentially unhealthy or unfulfilling relationship identifies what it is she is really looking for and establishes a way to find it. As Robert Frost eloquently said, “The best way out is always through.” The stories you are about to read are true. Our hope is that by reading them, a part of you will recognize yourself and be triggered to act. That part of you that has been *longing* to be heard. This is your opportunity to finally listen to what you *already* know is true. Through these stories, you will find your way out.

Users Review

From reader reviews:

James Jackson:

Hey guys, do you really wants to finds a new book to read? May be the book with the subject How Not to Marry the Wrong Guy: Is He "the One" or Should You Run? A Guide to Living Happily Ever After suitable to you? Often the book was written by famous writer in this era. The book untitled How Not to Marry the Wrong Guy: Is He "the One" or Should You Run? A Guide to Living Happily Ever After is the main one of several books that everyone read now. This particular book was inspired a lot of people in the world. When you read this e-book you will enter the new shape that you ever know previous to. The author explained their thought in the simple way, thus all of people can easily to recognise the core of this e-book. This book will give you a large amount of information about this world now. In order to see the represented of the world with this book.

Brandon Jenkins:

Spent a free time and energy to be fun activity to complete! A lot of people spent their free time with their family, or their own friends. Usually they carrying out activity like watching television, likely to beach, or picnic within the park. They actually doing same task every week. Do you feel it? Would you like to something different to fill your free time/ holiday? Can be reading a book can be option to fill your no cost time/ holiday. The first thing that you will ask may be what kinds of book that you should read. If you want to try out look for book, may be the reserve untitled How Not to Marry the Wrong Guy: Is He "the One" or Should You Run? A Guide to Living Happily Ever After can be excellent book to read. May be it can be best activity to you.

Ronnie Correa:

Reading a book to become new life style in this 12 months; every people loves to go through a book. When you go through a book you can get a lot of benefit. When you read books, you can improve your knowledge, since book has a lot of information on it. The information that you will get depend on what kinds of book that you have read. If you wish to get information about your study, you can read education books, but if you act like you want to entertain yourself look for a fiction books, such us novel, comics, and soon. The How Not to Marry the Wrong Guy: Is He "the One" or Should You Run? A Guide to Living Happily Ever After provide you with new experience in reading through a book.

Gloria Engstrom:

You could spend your free time you just read this book this book. This How Not to Marry the Wrong Guy: Is He "the One" or Should You Run? A Guide to Living Happily Ever After is simple to deliver you can read it in the playground, in the beach, train in addition to soon. If you did not have much space to bring the particular printed book, you can buy typically the e-book. It is make you simpler to read it. You can save the actual book in your smart phone. Consequently there are a lot of benefits that you will get when one buys this book.

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