

Description

In this episode of the Dating Transformation Podcast, host and dating coach Connell Barrett welcomes award-winning writer Alex Manley, author of the groundbreaking new book, "The New Masculinity: A Roadmap for a 21st-Century Definition of Manhood."

A longtime dating editor for AskMen, Manley wrote "The New Masculinity" to give today's men a blueprint to become more evolved, forward-thinking and progressive.

And take it from Connell: Women LOVE evolved, progressive men.

In this lively conversation, Alex shares a host of tips and insights on the art of being a better man, including...

- ✓ How to escape toxicity and anger, so you can be masculine as well as kind and open-hearted
- ✓ Why you WANT to be "friend-zoned" by women (That's correct! It can be a good thing.)
- ✓ Three game-changing dating tips you can apply now, for stronger, more genuine connections
- ✓ Why pretending to be an "alpha male" can hurt your dating prospects
- ✓ Why you should NOT cold-approach random women (the rules have changed!), and what to do instead.

Listen now, so that Alex Manley can help you go from fearful and confused about your sense of self, to awakening a true, fulfilling new masculinity.

Quotes

"Being mysterious and being withholding and not communicating with your partner is not a winning strategy. It might work on people who have certain self-esteem issues, but for a healthy relationship, you need to be open, honest, and communicative.".. -Alex Manley

"It's important to remember that everyone has something to offer and something that makes them unique. You just have to be willing to look for it and appreciate it." - Connell Barrett

"Friendships between men and women can be incredibly valuable and rewarding, and can teach us a lot about ourselves and each other." - Alex Manley

Featured in the episode

Connell Barrett

Founder and Executive Coach of Dating Transformation

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Alex Manley

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Transcript

Connell Barrett:

Looks just don't matter. I mean, I look like one of the Lost. Weasley brothers from Harry Potter, and I've done pretty well. So if I can do it with my ginger hair and average looks, so can you.

Connell Barrett:

Welcome to the dating transformation podcast. Here's your host dating Coach Connell Barrett

Connell Barrett:

You're all right. Welcome back to the dating transformation podcast. I'm your host, Dating Coach Connell Barrett, helping you gain confidence, learn to flirt, and get a great girlfriend, all by being

authentic, the real best. You no pickup artist, B. S. And you're in for a treat today, because in just a few minutes, I'm going to be talking to author Alex Manley who's got a brand new book out called *The New Masculinity a Roadmap for a 21st Century Definition of Manhood*. And Alex is so great. Alex is going to give you some dating tips. Alex is going to talk about essentially, here's a roadmap to make you a more attractive, more dateable, more authentic, more amazing man. And we're going to have a great conversation. I'm sure of it, so stick around for that. Plus, Alex is going to give you his top three favorite game changing tips. These are tips that Alex has thought about, because Alex is the dating editor at AskMen, and Alex has literally written or edited thousands and thousands of tips, and they're going to share the top three. So stick around. You're going to get some great practical tips from Alex. And I just want to do a quick little five minute, quick mini dating lesson for you here, because a lot of guys say, connell, what do you hear most often from men who need help with dating? What are they struggling with? What do they want to fix? What outcomes do they want? And I think the thing I hear more than anything else is, what do I say? How do I flirt? What is the art of creating sparks and a connection with your words? And my answer to that is pretty simple. It's not what you say. It's not the words. It's how you say it. Essentially, we want to. So I teach something called man to woman communication. There's not a silver bullet. There's not a magic trick that fixes every dating problem. But the closest thing there is to a quick fix or a magic bullet is getting on this wavelength of what I call man to woman communication on a date or when you're talking to a woman or a girl you're interested in. And essentially, man to woman communication is talking in a more communicative way, not in a logical, informational way, but in an emotionally, emotionally evocative way. Essentially. I forget who said this. I'm quoting another coach. I'm going to see if I can remember her name by the end of this podcast. But a really smart dating expert said that attraction comes down to emotion. I think the exact quote is, logic is the opposite of romance. So when you're going on a date or when you're just talking to a woman who you're interested in romantically, it's very easy to get stuck in that logical mode where you only talk about information and you only ask logical informational questions. And you only say things like, hey, where are you from? What do you do? How long have you lived here? Here's how long I've lived here. Here's what I do. Here's my name, here's my age. And if you get stuck in the information and logic land, you're going to make it a lot more difficult for you and the woman you're attracted to to create a spark. Because we're people, we're wired to be more emotionally connected. That just feels better than pure logic and information. So I want to give you a couple quick tools. You can use that on your next date or your next conversation at a party or a social situation with a woman you're interested in. Here's how to communicate in a more man to woman, meaning emotionally resonant way while also being authentic. Of course, it always comes back to being truly yourself, the real best you. So it all starts with that. But assuming you're showing your personality, your real you, here are a couple training wheels. Let's call them two things you can do. One thing you can do is when you're communicating on this date or with this woman, you can play a game of what I call love hate. Feel free to have strong opinions about the topic of your conversation and either love the thing you're talking about or hate it. And you can actually use the words love hate. So, for example, if you are on a first date and you and your date are talking about TV shows, movies you've been watching, TV shows you've been watching, where you've lived, where you've traveled, let her know that you loved that TV show, you loved your trip to Italy, you loved the finale of succession. Or maybe you hated the last episode of whatever

TV show you watched. Or maybe you loved the trip to Italy, but you hated the airline that took you there. So feel free to amplify your point of view, have a strong, sharp point of view and a cheat code to get there is just saying I love, love, love a lot. Or saying I love often, or even saying I hate or dislike. Now, one little caveat. You don't want to be Mr. Negative and hate everything. You should be a lot more positive on dates than negative. And I'm not saying present a negative energy. I'm just saying feel free to be really genuine and say, you know what I hate? I hate blanks. And it can be with a smile on your face. So, for example, my girlfriend and I actually talk about this, or I talk about this with her. I love traveling. I love the trips that she and I take together. But you know what I hate on the flight, on the airline, when we get a pilot who cracks jokes when he's making his on air pilot announcements. I hate that because I think a pilot should be focused on flying the plane, not being a stand up comedian. So you can express that sort of hate with a small h. That's a good way to put it. It's a small hate. It's not an actual negative hate. So you want to say I love often, and you want to even say I hate or I really don't dislike occasionally, too, because that shows her that you are willing and able to be unfiltered or to be less filtered and more expressive. Okay. By the way, this is what the bad boys do. If you've ever wondered why, quote unquote, bad boys can have a lot of success with dating, it's because they're just very unfiltered. They just say what's on their mind. And this is a way for you to be a lot less filtered, but still be genuine, still tell the truth, still be authentic. Another little training wheel here is to start off a lot of sentences on dates or when talking to women with the words I feel, I feel this. How do you feel about simply starting sentences? My old coach Anthony gave me this tip many, many years ago because I'm a very logical, analytical guy, and I used to make a lot of factual statements. And his tip to me back in the day was, say, I feel more often. I feel this bar is really cool. Oh, I'm feeling amazing tonight. I'm feeling so great because spring is here. I'm feeling amazing because it's summer. Or on the date, if a woman is telling you a story and you just share how you feel about the story, oh, I totally feel what you're saying with that, Emily. I feel the same way. And then share your feelings. And so you can use the I feel technique and also to ask her questions and find out how she feels about something. So, for example, I was once on a date, and the woman on my date was talking very logically about her trip to Europe. I forget where she was going, somewhere in Europe. And she was speaking about it in a very analytical, logical way. And I said to her, I had that little coach in my brain say, find out how she feels, how she felt about her trip. And I said, well, how did it feel to be exploring southern France? What was the highlight? What felt the best? And just asking a question, asking her about feelings, she got this big smile on her face and she said, oh, well, it felt amazing. When I was stomping on grapes at the vineyard, that felt so fantastic. And I said, How'd that feel between your toes? And she started laughing, saying, oh, it felt so great. My feet were all purple, and it just became a really fun, playful date with good emotions, as opposed to just logical facts and figures. So that's my kind of quick tip opener here today. If you want to get more of that emotional connection going on dates, say, I love or even occasionally I hate, tell the truth. Amplify your true opinions with some certainty and some real commitment, and then start off a lot of sentences with I feel, and then ask her how she feels sometimes just by starting off sentences with, well, here's how I feel, you're actually tapping into and channeling your more emotional side, and you're tamping down the logical informational side. And it's that more emotionally expressive side of you that will make you more magnetic to women and make you feel more charismatic. So this is not just about creating sparks on a date or, quote unquote,

creating attraction. It's a nice bonus. But really, this is about you channeling your true, authentic, real self and being expressive and more magnetic. And this also will help you become more charismatic, naturally charismatic, as you so those are the tips. Okay, stick around, because I'm coming right back with Alex Manley who's going to give us some fantastic tips about how to date with this roadmap of the new masculinity. Stick around.

Connell Barrett:

I'm going to read your mind. Ready? I'll bet that you would love to confidently approach women, get great matches on the dating apps, flirt with charm, and attract your dream girlfriend, right? But fear keeps you from approaching you're. Not sure how to flirt? You struggle on the apps, and desirable women just don't seem into you. Well, I have great news. Dating Coach Connell Barrett can help. He's guided thousands of men like you to more confidence and helped them attract their dream girlfriends. So book a free strategy call today to see if Connell's coaching is right for you. On your call, Connell or a team member will give you personalized advice to help you have more confidence, more dates, and more fun. Oh, and you'll be dating women as your best self, a charming gentleman. That's because Connell does not teach creepy pickup artist tricks. He unlocks your most confident self so you can make authentic romantic connections. Your next steps? Book your free call today@datingtransformation.com. Contact, and grab a time that works for you. Then you'll be on your way to more confidence, better results, and attracting bright, beautiful women. Oh. So you know soon Connell will stop taking on new clients. So book a call today while you still can. Go to datingtransformation.com contact and transform your love life. Bye.

Connell Barrett:

All right, we are back, and I'm really psyched for today's guest. We're going to have a great conversation with Alex Manley And let me tell you a little bit about Alex. Alex is a year old nonbinary writer, editor, and translator based in Montreal, Canada, and they are a senior editor@askmen.com and the author of a really great book that I just read last night called The New Masculinity a Roadmap for a st Century Definition of Manhood. We're going to talk all about that, and if you want to learn more about Alex or if you want to get their new book, you can go to Alexmanly.com. And that's Alexmanley.com. And you can also get the new Masculinity on Amazon. That's how I got it pretty much wherever books are sold. And also, you can also go to AskMen.com and just read a ton of tips and articles that Alex has written. Alex, thank you so much for being here today on the Dating Transformation podcast.

Alex Manley:

It's absolutely a pleasure. Connell our professional relationship now goes back many years, and it's been nothing but a pleasure to work with you. So I'm feeling really honored to be a guest on your podcast.

Connell Barrett:

The pleasure is mine. Absolutely. And let's start with your book, which I only learned about yesterday, but I started thumbing through it, got it on the Kindle last night, and I just was totally knocked out. So my four word book review is, this fucking rocks hard there. That's four. It's vulnerable. It's powerful. It's practical. It's incredible. Yeah. So when I was reading your book last night, what I kept thinking to myself was, this feels like a book that Alex had to write. Like, it was just like something you had to get out into the world. It felt urgent. It felt like it was just dying to get out. Two part question: am I right about that? And then the second question is simply, why did you write *The New Masculinity*?

Alex Manley:

First part. You're absolutely right, and I'd be lying if I said I didn't get into arguments behind the scenes with the people at my publisher, where I was like, please, can we publish this as soon as humanly possible? So I want this to be out in the world rather than sitting on it, because I feel like the world I don't know, there's a place for a book like this in the world. And as far as I can tell and correct me if I'm wrong, but there's not this kind of book exactly sort of anywhere else right now. So much of the reading I did around this kind of stuff was I don't know, the books were a lot more kind of like trying to diagnose what's going on with men today rather than setting out a Kind. A guide for how to be a man in a world where so much of the gender conversation has changed in the past decade or so. It feels like the ground is kind of moving under our feet, and that can be very scary for a lot of people. And I think a lot of the I don't know, the culture war conversations that you sort of see people having online, that's an outcrop of that fear and that uncertainty. But I felt like there needed to be a book that kind of addressed all this stuff in a way that was accessible to the average guy from a forward-thinking perspective of like, where are we? Where are we going now? If we're not clawing our way back to the s and sort of like patriarch and housewife and kids going insane in the suburbs model. What does that look like?

Connell Barrett:

My quick follow up to what you just said is *Moving forward*. What is this book a Roadmap to? Where is this taking your reader?

Alex Manley:

Ideally, to be the best version of themselves, I think is my hope. For me, it feels like a guidebook for unlocking a version of yourself, for young guys who aren't scared all the time or sort of not measuring up to an unreachable sort of masculine ideal or sort of like trying to fit into a model that doesn't really make sense anymore. I think that's one of the things that a lot of people maybe don't get is that a lot of men are scared. And a lot of the time, I don't know, especially when women are sort of sensing, like, why are men acting like this? Why are they behaving badly? Or whatever. It's like a lot of the time, guys are scared and they don't necessarily have the tools to admit that to themselves or other people. But there's a lot of fear, I think, of sort of trying to be something that you're not or trying to fit in, that kind of stuff. And so what I'm hoping

for with this book is to help guys kind of grow past that fear and get out of these kinds of boxes that they feel other people are imposing on them or that they're imposing on themselves, and to become sort of fuller, more human versions of who they could be.

Connell Barrett:

I love it.

Alex Manley:

Yeah.

Connell Barrett:

And that aligns with what I am all about teaching my clients and my audience, which is how to be the best, most authentic version of yourself and at the same time being true to yourself and being very respectful and empathetic to other people. People in general, obviously, women in particular, for guys who are looking to date. So I want to read a couple of quotes from your book that I really liked, and then maybe you can elaborate.

Alex Manley:

Yeah, please do.

Connell Barrett:

Here's one I really liked. Quote, quote I've written and edited for a men's website for close to a decade now, and I've seen how angry, scared, and lonely men feel. What this book contains is a guide for unlearning. What do men need to unlearn?

Alex Manley:

What don't men need to unlearn? Connell, that's how I feel sometimes. I just feel like when you're growing up being socialized male in sort of North American or Western culture, as I was and as I imagine the bulk of your listeners were, it feels like every single thing you're taught about how to act and how to be later turns out to be sort of either completely false in terms of for instance? I don't know. Pardon me, what women are looking for in bed or whatever. And it's like you're taught, like, oh, you need to have a big dick to satisfy her, and then it's like, oh, that actually produces very few orgasms. Like penetrative sex is really not the big driver of female pleasure at all. That's categorically false. And then a lot of the stuff, if it's not categorically false, is just really toxic and problematic and just leads to all these negative outcomes, I guess, like sort of the guys need to be tough or can't show vulnerability. That kind of stuff leads to them kind of presenting a certain persona in a dating context that women are actually not that interested in and if not turned off by in some cases, like actively terrified of. And it just feels like it's time for us

kind of as a society, to wake up to just all the bad advice that guys have been taught from so young, that whether it's coming from a dad or an older brother or an uncle or a teacher or your friends, or the media, movies, TV, music. Just like there's so much messaging, I feel like that every guy has kind of absorbed that's just really harmful both directly to him and then to the people in his life in terms of how he ends up acting and who he ends up being. So I'm just sort of like, okay, we need a bit of a reset button here.

Connell Barrett:

Yeah, I can't agree more about bad lessons. Learning the wrong things. I remember when I was on my own five- or six-year journey, trying to work on my confidence and my dating success. I was struggling at one point, and one of the coaches said, oh, well, you're too nice. Go out for a month and just be a dick to women. Just show them you're a bad boy, you're a boss. And it felt so inauthentic. I remember I was at a club and the women were dancing, and I would walk over and kind of wag my finger and say, no dancing. No dancing unless I say it's okay. And they looked at me like I was an alien. And at one point, I was hitting on a woman's friend poorly, and her friend came up behind me and poured a pitcher of ice water down my shirt. And I was like, okay, not only does this feel awful, but it doesn't work right? And anyway, it was well deserved. By the way, I deserve that ice water. Anyway, So I hear you. There's so much bad advice out there.

Alex Manley:

Oh, I was just going to say it's fascinating because it feels like there are so many people out there who basically make careers out of giving bad advice. And it's like because they're telling people sort of what they want to hear, they get away with it, and they're able to be successful even if their advice is bad on almost every level. And any success that people sort of have with it is, like, sort of success that they're having despite the advice that they've been given. Basically, lots of guys are dateable, even if they're acting out sort of bad advice in a dating context. And it's just like, oh, you would be more dateable if you weren't doing this, but you don't realize that, and you're taking maybe the little bits of success you're getting, and you're going like, oh, this is due to the bad advice I got. I better keep following that. And it's like, no.

Connell Barrett:

Right. One other quote of yours I'd like to read early on. I think it's chapter one, you say this, you write this. The enemy isn't men. It's the toxicity that exists within traditional masculinity. Your family members dating app matches classmates and coworkers who don't want eunuchs. They just want considerate, caring humans. Such a beautiful, simple message. Can you elaborate on the consideration and caring part? Because I think a lot of men might feel, especially men who are dating or trying to date, think, well, don't be too considerate or too caring. That can come across as weak. You're saying that's actually what a lot of singles and women want?

Alex Manley:

Yeah, absolutely. I got that messaging, too, when I was younger, like, oh, nice guys finish last. Be the alpha male, be the asshole, whatever. And it feels like it's just a really simple kind of misunderstanding that confidence and charisma are sexy, but you can be confident and charismatic and also kind and courteous and polite. Those things are not at odds with each other. And the idea that they're somehow, like, polar opposites is complete nonsense. It's true. Yeah, you can be very nice and also kind of self effacing and I don't know, apologizing for yourself. And someone who doesn't take themselves seriously and as such is not very attractive. But that's not because you're nice. It's because of the second part of that sentence. It's because you don't see yourself as being worth the other person's time. And we're social creatures. We pick up on stuff. When you meet someone, who doesn't seem to respect themselves, doesn't seem to value themselves, you can kind of tell that. And that's not the most attractive trait for most people. I mean, it's a very attractive trait for sociopaths who want to manipulate someone. But if you're an emotionally healthy or normal person, you're looking for someone who doesn't need to be picked up and reassured constantly. And I think that's true regardless of gender.

Connell Barrett:

Yeah, it's okay to be kind. It's okay to be nice. Hopefully you already are that. And it's not a weakness. It can be a strength.

Alex Manley:

Right, exactly. I think we're all sort of initially kind. I feel like babies are kind, toddlers are kind. And I feel like anyone who's kind of a jerk as an adult is someone who's lost that. And it's like, I think you can get it back if you sort of get to a place where I don't know, where you love yourself and you can sort of extend the kindness that you're giving to yourself to other people. But, yeah, I don't know, every really nice, kind guy I know is in a happy, loving relationship. I feel like kindness and generosity and the ability to be loving and giving with your time and with yourself is a highly successful predictor of romantic happiness.

Connell Barrett:

Absolutely. And you can have layers. Right? You can be a nice, kind guy who can flirt, who has self confidence, who can joke, maybe even tease a woman or who or a person. It doesn't mean you're not nice. It's just layers. Right. We all contain multitudes, as women say.

Alex Manley:

True. It's true. I think that's very accurate. And yeah, I don't know, the idea that I don't know, that kindness and flirtatiousness are somehow diametrically opposed just sort of pardon me is very inaccurate, I think. I don't know. I try to conceive of the mentality of someone who thinks you can't be both flirtatious and kind or you can't be sexy and kind or whatever, and I'm like, you

have a really narrow-minded view of the world if you think that those things cannot coexist in a person. People are miracles. People are contained in multitudes. Every person alive is a fascinating creature if you look at them from a certain angle. And I don't know, I feel like so much of the kind of unhealthy aspects of dating advice conversation or gender conversation is people just being like, no, we're all robots, we're all animals. We're all kind of hard coded to be a certain way. And I'm just like that's so depressing. That's such a depressing way to think of people.

Connell Barrett:

Right? We're complex, we're watercolors. I have my masculine side, which certainly comes out in the dating world. But I've approached women by saying, hey, your hair looks fantastic today. I've approached women like her best gay friend because that's what I wanted to say at that moment. And I've been vulnerable on dates. I've been sort of, like, even emotional. And as long as the overall picture is presenting a true version of myself, that is the kind of guy she might be interested in. Nothing wrong with that, I would think.

Alex Manley:

No, yeah. I mean, obviously it's possible to be.

Connell Barrett:

It'S not a sign of weakness.

Alex Manley:

No, exactly. I mean, it's possible to be too vulnerable on dates, but it's also possible and easy to be too confident on dates. I don't know. That kind of stuff. Whether a date is successful or fun or worth anyone's time or not is so much more around, just like whether two people are clicking and sort of picking up what the other is putting down, as opposed to, did you hit X? Emotional note or not kind of thing.

Connell Barrett:

Let's get back to your book because I love how you create the chapter titles. So most of your chapters are a prescription of sorts, a practical command. But you do this really clever thing where you have a command, but then you have part of it Xed out. So, for example, chapter one, I read this and I was like, damn it, I wish I had done this for my book. Damn you, Alex. But chapter one of your book is called A Real Man Doesn't Get Friend Zoned, but you X out the A real man doesn't. So really what you're saying is get friend zoned. And here's a quote from that chapter, which I love and I'd love for you to elaborate on. Quote, most men are missing the kinds of things you learn about women only when you are friends with them, only when you treat them as people, as equals, as peers, not as problems to be solved, rulers to be dethroned,

locks to slide keys into and open. Awesome. Elaborate on that. The importance that it's okay to get, quote, unquote, friend zone and actually you should be friends with women. Please talk about that.

Alex Manley:

Yeah. I mean, I think so much of who I am and I explore this in the chapter, but so much of who I am as a person and so many of the good things that have happened to me. In my life, I can trace, either directly or indirectly, to friendships I've had with women and in terms of them helping me sort of learn who I am, in terms of them helping me learn things about women and about gender and about the world, in terms of, I don't know, just kind of broadening my moral and, I don't know, philosophical. Compass. And often things that sort of happen in kind of a very sort of female friendship kind of coded way, which is not something that can't happen in friendships between guys, but it's stuff that often doesn't happen in friendships. Between guys in terms of being able to get vulnerable with each other, being able to talk to each other about sort of the real stuff that you're struggling with being able to talk to each other about the friendship itself. And like, hey, it makes me feel like X when you do this thing. Or like, I wish we hung out a little bit more, stuff like that. And that's hard to do because we're taught not to do that. If you're a socialized male, if you grow up as a guy, you are taught at every turn, don't do things like that. Don't sort of allow other guys to see you being vulnerable. And that's all well and good if all you want to do is just grow down with people, but it does really hamper you if you ever want to have a more meaningful friendship. So there's another chapter specifically about male friendships. But this one, I think I feel like if I could give any piece of advice to young guys or teens or tweens even, it's like, don't be afraid of being friends with women because that will teach you so much about the world that you're just not going to get from only having male friendships, per your podcast. It'll just legitimately give you a leg up in the dating world because you'll understand women better, you'll understand why they're acting the way they are better, and you'll understand what they want better. And frankly, you'll be someone that they will want more because you have those understandings.

Connell Barrett:

Absolutely. One of the things I help men with is stay out of the quote, friend zone when they really want to date a woman and make some sparks happen on a date at the same time. If that doesn't happen, then it's not a consolation prize. It can be a gift to have that woman become a friend or an acquaintance because guess what? She has single friends. Guess what? And if you're a young man, I know your book is aimed more at younger men. And if you don't have a lot of experience with female friends, that's going to be way more valuable than a bunch of bros probably being able to connect with a woman as a friend. Even if she doesn't want to be your girlfriend, she's going to have single friends. You're going to be able to connect with the feminine energy that women tend to put out in the world. And the friend zone is nothing to be afraid of.

Alex Manley:

Yeah, I think it's one of those things where if you have this perspective, like, oh, someone wanted to be friends with me when I am attracted to them is like an insult to me. It makes me look weak and pathetic or whatever, you're coming at it from a totally unhealthy angle. The idea basically the underlying assumption there is like the only thing that a woman is good for is as a sexual sort of conquest or whatnot? Or a romantic one. But regardless, it completely devalues their personhood. And then, yeah, if all your friends are guys, I feel like people make a lot of noise about, I don't know, echo chambers or whatever. If all your friends are guys, you're going to be hearing very similar perspectives on dating stuff. And if you're a straight guy, you're sort of in an echo chamber, you're going to be missing out on a lot.

Connell Barrett:

Rejection, ghosting, loneliness, lack of dates, and lack of confidence. For many men, dating just sucks. But it doesn't have to. There's a simple yet powerful way to gain instant confidence and attract a great girlfriend: be radically authentic. It's all laid out in the number one Amazon bestselling book *Dating Sucks, But You don't*. Your step by step Guide to Attracting wonderful women and Doing it with total authenticity. Author and dating coach Connell Barrett has had and fixed all the dating problems that you struggle with. He's also helped thousands of men gain confidence and find love. He's put his best tips and strategies into *Dating Sucks, But You Don't* so that you can confidently approach women and get dates. Become magnetic and attractive. Even if you're not tall or great looking, always know what to say to make sparks fly. Get lots of great matches and dates on the dating apps and attract your dream woman. You can find *Dating Sucks, But You don't*. On Amazon or wherever books are sold in paperback, kindle and Audiobook get *Dating Sucks, But You Don't* today to transform your confidence and find your dream girl.

Connell Barrett:

Yeah, one of my best friends, her name is Becky. We've been great friends for over ten years. We met on a dating app, and we basically friend-zoned each other after one or two dates, and we said, I think we're like brother and sister, right?

Alex Manley:

Yeah.

Connell Barrett:

And she's been one of the most important people in my life, and me and hers. I'm glad we are friends.

Alex Manley:

Right, exactly. Congratulations. No, I had a similar experience on a dating app last year where I met someone, went on a few dates, we really clicked, but I was just like, this is not a romantic sexual thing at all. We're just pals. And since then, she's met my partner and I'm in an open relationship. She's met my partner and they've hung out, and now we're all friends. And it's just like this is a really nice I don't know, it's a really nice way for that story to end or whatever. So it's a wonderful addition to our lives that only can happen if you're capable of cool.

Connell Barrett:

There's one more chapter I want to ask you about. I love this chapter title, a lot of really fun counterintuitive chapter titles, and one of the last chapters is you're not a real man if you act like a woman. But again, you're not the quote. You're not a real man if you are Xed out. So really you're saying acting like a woman is not something you hear very often in the world of advice for men in the area of women dating or just self development as a person. What do you mean by that, act like a woman?

Alex Manley:

Well, that chapter specifically is talking more about the professional world, I guess, and the way that a lot of what we're seeing in recent years in academia especially, and now it's sort of getting into the professional world, is that women are the go-getters. Women are sort of the driven, sort of successful ones, and a lot of men are just kind of like, not and people are scratching their heads about it. People who research into this kind of stuff are like, what's going on with guys? Why don't they care about being successful? Why don't they care about being invested? Why don't they care about sort of going the extra mile and getting promoted and that kind of stuff. And I feel like we've done a little flip around here in gender terms, in terms of like, now it's very natural for women to be bosses. And I don't know, one of the people I quote in the book basically said, men are a gender that has I don't remember the exact phrasing, but they no longer sort of associate themselves with success and with effort and with striving, which isn't true across the board. But it's shocking to hear anyone even say that after looking at some data on the situation. So my sense is like, look, if being successful and working hard and trying to get promoted or going after your dreams or whatever is now a sort of somewhat feminine coded trait, then many stop shying away from it, basically.

Connell Barrett:

Yeah. Be a girl boss boy. Awaken your inner girl boss.

Alex Manley:

I was just going to say a sentence I never thought I'd hear in this context.

Connell Barrett:

Go be a girl boss. That's going to help you in your career. No, there's real truth in that. I love that and to kind of segue back to dating or socializing in general. But having career success is very important for people who want that, of course. And it doesn't hurt on a date to talk about the cool job you have and how much you love it, but to segue a little bit toward dating here. That chapter title really resonated with me because I had a chapter in my book that my editor said, probably don't want to publish this, which was basically what straight men can learn from gay men about how there are really great lessons to learn from women. Or in the last chapter of my book, men Who Identify as Gay. Because I just thought, oh, wow, you know what? I was at the Gay Pride Parade in New York City and I was just looking around and the men marching in it, most of whom were gay, were just so expressive and unstifled and themselves so authentic and really just in touch with who they are. Some of them were actually pretty masculine, although there were also plenty of your more feminine gay men. But anyway, I think there are ways to find some lessons. A straight young man or man of any age can look at women or even gay men and say, hey, what lessons can I learn from this group of people to help me essentially grow as a man? So, I just love that you learn that from women.

Alex Manley:

Yeah, no, I completely agree and I think it comes back to that echo chamber or whatever. One of the other chapters is about the Bro Code and the idea that if you only spend time in all male spaces, sort of only listening to male perspectives and only sort of being close with men, you lose out on stuff. And I think you're totally right. Like we were saying earlier, humans are complex creatures. And I think speaking to that, you have so much to gain from looking around and taking stuff in and being open minded. And I think that kind of guy, the open-minded guy, the thoughtful guy, is very attractive in a dating context.

Connell Barrett:

One of my best friends was years ago, when I first started working on my dating life, my best friend at the time was a gay guy, gay man. And I would bring him up on dates, and I remember talking about him and how we would go on. We called them big gay road trips. It's an inside joke we had. We would go on golf trips together and we called them, quote, big gay road trips. That joke was approved by him anyway. And women would just laugh and crack up. And I could see them, like me talking about that, sharing that part. And it was like, now I'm kind of thinking about that through the lens of your book, thinking maybe that was me showing that, hey, I'm comfortable and confident enough in myself to say, yeah, I hang out. I go on road trips with my gay buddy, but I also do my guy stuff too. It's who I am. Take it or leave it. Does that make sense?

Alex Manley:

Yeah, absolutely. And I think that kind of open mindedness, like I said, is sexy. Not just because, I don't know, being a bigot is not sexy, but also because it projects this confidence. I feel like a lot of the time bigotry is associated with fear or whatever. It's like you're afraid of the other and

you haven't done any research and you have all these preconceptions or whatever. And it's like the open mindedness comes from, I don't know, being unafraid to explore and to look into stuff and to let people be who they are and knowing that that doesn't take anything away from you. And it just feels like it's associated with, I don't know, a much more kind of self confident, self aware worldview that I think is genuinely sexy.

Connell Barrett:

Well said. Okay, a couple final talking points here, and then we can wrap up. I would love to play a fun little game here that we do on the podcast called Factor Fiction. So I'm going to say a dating truism, or at least I've heard many times, and I'd love for you to say, hey, that's a fact, or that's fiction, or maybe it's somewhere in between. And then elaborate, if you would. You game. All right, let's do it. Here's the first one. Single women want to date an alpha male or a, quote, bad boy. Fact or fiction?

Alex Manley:

I would say nuanced. You know, I'd be lying if I said fiction because there are a lot of women who do. Does that mean that it's all women? No. And does it mean that that's the guy, that's the only kind of guy that these women want to date? No. And does that mean that it's the kind of guy that these women want to settle down with? Not necessarily either. So, yes, it's true that that kind of guy can be very attractive, but the idea that that's the only attractive guy out there or that all women are into that guy, that's complete nonsense. And I think a lot of guys get in their heads about this, like, oh, if I'm not that guy, then how am I going to have dating success? And it's completely illogical. It's like saying, if I don't have a submarine, how am I going to get to another country? It's like, yeah, there's planes, there's trains. I guess a submarine could be a way to do it, but that's really not the best one, probably, and far from the only one.

Connell Barrett:

A kernel of truth. Yeah, there's a kernel of truth, absolutely. My view on that is there are certain traits that the, quote, alpha male and bad boy possess that is attractive to a lot of women. And you can be a nice guy. You can be a nontoxic nice guy who can show some of the similar traits and essentially hijack the bad boy moves but still be a good man and still not be somebody you aren't. Leadership, decisiveness, unfiltered. One of the bad boy traits is, oh, he just says whatever he's on his mind. There's a way you can be more unfiltered that can be very attractive to women without being some kind of toxic alpha douchebag.

Alex Manley:

Right. Like, you can be unfiltered and be unafraid to say how you're feeling as opposed to unfiltered and say, like, I think immigrants are bad and evil. Right?

Connell Barrett:

Yeah. In other words, don't go out for a month and be an asshole. Like, I tried once, but it was a good lesson.

Alex Manley:

May find yourself covered in ice water.

Connell Barrett:

Yes. Beware you might get a glass of a pitcher of ice water poured down your back. Okay, next one. Factor fiction. Women generally think it's creepy or weird to be approached by men they don't know. Factor fiction or somewhere in between.

Alex Manley:

I would say closer to fact. I would say definitely not in every context, not every woman. But I think the conversation on approaching people in public if you don't know them and there's not, like, a context for that approach has changed significantly in the past ten years. And I think women are much more likely to be, A, to be on guard, and B, to not be willing to play along if a guy goes up to them and just kind of starts trying to hit on them. I think online dating has kind of replaced that or replaced the need for that entirely. Like, you can meet people now in an explicitly dating context without just sort of randomly going up to someone and being very likely labeled a creep or just annoying, possibly.

Connell Barrett:

Okay, so I would say it's sometimes, often a fact.

Alex Manley:

A strong majority of the time is my sense.

Connell Barrett:

I agree. Women don't want to be approached and hit on by creepy men. I think a reasonable number of single women don't mind being charmingly, flirted with and talked to by men of value who are social and maybe aren't putting some hardcore approach moves on them. And some women might not even want that. And it's a case by case basis. That's my take.

Alex Manley:

Yeah. It also depends on context. I feel like you can go up to someone at a friend's party or whatever who you never met before and start talking to them. And that's vastly different than

going up to someone at the grocery store. It's like if you're somewhere where your presence there sort of is likely to imply that you've been vouched for or whatever. On some level, that means that the likelihood that you'll come across as creepy is significantly lower. Whereas, like, anyone gets into a grocery store, you could really who knows who you could be.

Connell Barrett:

Very true. Okay, one more factor: fiction. Women tend to be attracted to men of mystery.

Alex Manley:

I would say fiction. I think there is an appeal to a mysterious man for some women in some cases. And I think it's another one of those things where the slight kernel of truth there has led to guys, like going way too far in that direction and purveyors of bad dating advice sort of pushing way too hard on that and being like, oh, you have to be hyper mysterious, or whatever. And it's like, look, it's definitely possible to annoy someone by talking about yourself too much. That's factual. But the idea that you should be intentionally withholding from someone and you should be trying to create an aura of mystery or whatever, that's not going to work on someone who has self respect, and it probably won't work on lots of people, even those who have self esteem issues. Frankly, I don't know. I don't see that as a winning dating strategy to sort of cultivate an aura of mystery. There's definitely instances where you can say, I don't know if I'm comfortable telling you that right now about a very personal thing or whatever, if you're on a first date or pre-first date or whatever. But the idea that intentionally holding stuff back is useful. It's like, okay, well, what if the relationship turns into something? Then you just have this kind of set up where the dynamic is you withhold stuff from someone, whereas a healthy relationship is all about communication and openness and honesty. So, I don't know. I think that's definitely a toxic approach.

Connell Barrett:

I agree. I mean, I think, of course you can overshare. You can be too vulnerable and open on a date. But with men, I think the problem is most of them aren't doing that. They're probably erring more on being safe or possibly following outdated dating advice like play it cool don't give away too much. Make her chase. And my view is we want to be way more toward that open, authentic, more of an open book to see if she likes reading your book and if she likes that first chapter of the first date, she'll probably want to keep reading.

Alex Manley:

There we go.

Connell Barrett:

But only one way to find out. Okay, let's finish with what I call three game changing tips. This is how I've been ending the pod. This might be tough for you. It's tough in the sense that how many dating tips do you think you've written or edited in your life? Is it thousands?

Alex Manley:

That is the question honestly, I think I've edited probably more dating tips than I've written, but definitely I would say more than . Okay, multi hundreds. Very likely.

Connell Barrett:

Yeah, go ahead. Three tips. What do you get?

Alex Manley:

Put your weapons down.

Connell Barrett:

Tell me more about what you mean by that is.

Alex Manley:

I feel like so many guys go into dating with this kind of sense of like this is like a battle of the sex's kind of thing. Like straight guys kind of go into these contexts seeing this as like a fight almost. I don't know, if you grow up as a guy and you are attracted to women, they're often painted as the enemy. And that kind of gives whatever interactions you're having in a dating context, like a kind of potentially toxic quality. Like, if you see them as you sort of quoted me from the book as a problem to solve or whatever, if you see this as an inherently antagonistic activity, you are kind of dooming yourself from the start. So, when I say put your weapons down, I mean, like, go into this in high spirits with a sort of positive frame of mind and sort of treat, I don't know, potential miscommunications with the best pot. Assume good intentions on the part of the other person. Go in as a peaceful mission.

Connell Barrett:

Right.

Alex Manley:

Rather than being on guard immediately for like, oh, this person's trying to screw me over, or I have to act like a dick or whatever. It's sort of like a game theory mentality, almost, where it's like if you trust each other, that's where the best outcomes happen. Don't go in with your no.

Connell Barrett:

I love that. It's been almost years since the book the Game came out, and it's so outdated now, but still there are a lot of men who are still thinking of dating as I have to lower her esteem or win the frame or shoot my weapons at her. And it's just not like that. Unless you're doing paintball as a date, then you do need to use your paintball weapon.

Alex Manley:

But that's the exact yeah, exactly. Don't put your weapon down prematurely, because if she agrees to a paintball date, then she probably is into competitiveness.

Connell Barrett:

I approve of that one. Great. I love that. Cool. What's number two?

Alex Manley:

Tip number two. Your weakness is your strength, by which I mean that the things that are unique about you and that possibly, I don't know, you see as making you less dateable will make you that much more dateable for someone who's right for you. It might make you less dateable for the general population, but you're not trying to date the general population. You want to find the people who are most likely to bring you happiness, whether that's just one person for the rest of your life or you're non-monogamous and you're seeing a handful of people or whatever, it doesn't matter what percent of the population thinks about you in a dating context. You're looking for the people that you will work with, that will work with you, who will be right for you. And for those people, the things that make you unique or weird or less dateable to everyone else will make you that much more dateable to those people. So you need to recognize that whether it's quirks or whether it's, like, niche hobbies or whether it's even a mental illness or whatever, there are other people who also have that mental illness. There are other people who also have those quirks or those hobbies or who are compatible with those things. And so rather than developing a complex where you feel like, oh, no one can possibly like me because I have this whatever trait or whatever going like, someone is going to like me even more because of this trait and having that, I love it.

Connell Barrett:

Can I jump in and ask you, in your dating history, can you give an example of how you applied that idea or how it arose organically in your dating life?

Alex Manley:

Sure, yeah. I don't know. Like, I feel like, you know, a lot of the people, for instance, like, I'm I'm non-binary. And so that means that I have you know, what that means for me anyway, is that I

have a very strong feminine side. A lot of women aren't into people like that. People like me, bisexual women are totally into that. Because if you're capable of being attracted to sort of masculine and feminine traits to begin with, then why wouldn't you be attracted to both of them in the same person? So, recognizing, like, oh, I don't need to hide my feminine aspects. I just need to find the people for whom that's also an attractive feature. And I have been very rarely single for the entirety of my adult life, so I can't complain.

Connell Barrett:

That's great. I love it. Yeah. I've begun coaching men who identify as bisexual, some identify as non-binary, and I've noticed the power of putting that real self out there, including something that is going to be polarizing. Right. Like, this is me. I'm a very feminine person. I'm XYZ identification. And some people are going to be like, whoa, no thanks. Totally fine. But the people who are going to be really drawn to that, then you're going to hopefully find someone who's a really good fit for you. And they love the fact that you are this thing that's a little bit different than others. And yeah, one of my old coaches used to say, if you can't fix it, feature it. Not that this is something that should be fixed, of course, but you can turn something that you used to think of as a flaw into a feature and really lean into it and it can actually become a great strength.

Alex Manley:

Absolutely. Okay, final tip.

Connell Barrett:

Yes, sir.

Alex Manley:

Go ahead, kick the beauty habit.

Connell Barrett:

Go on, tell me more.

Alex Manley:

I feel like young guys are so socialized to only look for the hottest women out there according to a very narrow spectrum of what is beautiful. And it's just like magazine cover women, women who are in music videos, porn stars, models, that kind of stuff. And it's like that is a very tiny percentage of the population and even those people don't look like that unless they've had a lot of makeup put on them and a lot of photoshop. You've been exposed to all these pictures and videos of completely unattainable standards and it's understandable that that has impacted how

you're attracted to people. But my God, you need to recognize that that is not a realistic goal in a dating context and you need to start looking for, I don't know, the beauty in real people, which I think can take some training to do. It sorts of requires you to unlearn a little bit and to retrain your brain to find the beauty in actual normal people. But I just feel like, I don't know, guys are so kind of taught to go after this extremely small slice of the dating pie and then sort of like, oh, I'm looking for a ten, or whatever. And then they treat anyone who's not that kind of worse as a result and they feel comfortable kind of toppled down to or sort of being a jerk to someone that they see as a seven or whatever. And it's like we're all people. This person is not worth % of that person. Right? And you are doing yourself and everyone else a disservice by kind of over prioritizing this very narrow, very unrealistic beauty standard in a dating context. And it's preventing you from sort of looking for, I don't know, the beauty in people that you can sort of only see when you get to know them a little bit.

Connell Barrett:

And to your point, maybe to, I hope, bring a point back that you make in your book. What I learned when I was out meeting different women is I might have not been as physically attracted to some women, at least when I saw her profile. And then I thought, well, let me go out and meet her and see what the vibe is like. And when I started to really get in touch with my authentic and often feminine side. All of a sudden, that woman became beautiful inside and out to me, and I could so cliché the inner beauty, but I was able to tap in and see that inner beauty because I was more channeled into my feminine side in addition to my masculine side, which is also there. And all of a sudden, I realized, whoa, some scales have fallen from my eyes. There're beautiful women of all shapes and sizes, and essentially, they literally became more physically attractive to me once I saw that inside.

Alex Manley:

Yeah. I don't know. And that's why I say it feels like a habit that you can kick, like you can get out of this mentality and start sort of seeing people differently, but it can require a little bit of work. But I think the potential benefits are that you'll end up having much more satisfying and maybe more in number relationships.

Connell Barrett:

Yeah. I mean, don't get me wrong. Don't get me wrong. It would help if a guy was a ten out of ten stud like me, but not every man is the redheaded Brad like I am. So, keep trying, fellows. Keep trying. I look like the forgotten Weasley brother. That's what I look like anyway.

Alex Manley:

I'm the one, and I just want to add one more yeah. Which is like this over-focus on looks like sort of guys also apply it to themselves and get all in their heads about, like, I'm not attractive enough or whatever, and the intel movement is all like, because I don't have the Brad Pitt chin

or whatever, I don't have a chance. And as a result, they sort of develop unhealthy ideas about women and about relationships. And it's just like, again, when I look at all the people in relationships, I know in hetero relationships, I'm like, the guys who are in happy, loving relationships are the nice guys. It's not the guys with the great bone definition or whatever. You can kind of look like all kinds of different stuff so long as you know how to take care of your body to some degree, you know how to dress to some degree. And the way you look isn't representative of having no self-esteem and no kind of awareness. Whatever you're actually working with, you can make it work in a dating contract. Absolutely.

Connell Barrett:

Last thing I'll say is, to your point, there's an improv coach. I do improv. I love doing improv comedy. And there's an improv coach. I know I won't name him, but he looks exactly like George Costanza from Seinfeld. And if George Costanza from Seinfeld was incredibly confident and comfortable with who he is, and he has a cool, beautiful, inside and out wife, and I'm just thinking, yeah, you don't need to look like Brad Pitt. You can look like Brad Garrett, and it'd be just fine. It's doable. Alex, thank you so much. Well, first of all, thanks. Thank you for writing this book. It's really a great read and I can't compliment it enough. Also, just thanks for coming on and talking again. If you want to learn more about Alex, you can go to alexmanly.com and you can get his book on Amazon. You can get it on his website or be linked to where to get it on Alex's website. And they have a lot of great content and tips on AskMen.com. About a million tips that Alex has written or edited over the years. It's all on AskMen.com. Thank you so much for being here. It was a real treat.

Alex Manley:

Thank you so much, Colonel.

Connell Barrett:

Okay, that's the episode for today. Until next episode, remember, be authentic because women already like you. They just have to meet the real you. Until next time, guys.

Connell Barrett:

Thank you for listening to the Dating Transformation podcast. For lots of free tips, videos and other goodies, go to datingtransformation.com. See you next time.

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