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## Cerny: Use single time to learn about yourself

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By Tasha Cerny

Let me start this article by first saying that when it comes to giving dating and relationship advice, I am about as qualified as Sheldon Cooper. Truth be told, dating is awkward, and



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talking about it is even worse.- However, living in a hall with 47 other women, in addition to my own experiences, I've seen my fair share of triumphs and tragedies, and something must be said about relationships in college.

About a year ago, I had an epiphany about my co-ed friendships.- I had been wondering why, even though I knew I wanted nothing more than friendship, that I was feeling more emotionally attached to my male friends' lives than I was to my female friends' lives.- I realized the problem was in my expectations of my friendships. Being single at the time, I had been unaware that I treated guy friends somewhat like boyfriends (minus the romance) in order to fill the absence of companionship I felt. Expecting my friends to act like this made it difficult for both sides to feel completely comfortable around each other, and left me feeling ignored when my friends would hang out without me, or start seeing someone.

It's kind of embarrassing to admit, but the truth is I see this problem in other women every day.- It doesn't necessarily manifest itself in the same way - some girls are on the perpetual hunt for a man in all the wrong places, others eat their #foreveralone feelings down to the last pint of ice cream and still others allow themselves to be treated poorly in the hopes of finding that special someone.

I realize this makes it sound like every woman on campus is here to get her MRS degree, but that's far from the truth.- The real issue is that there is a lot of societal, and subsequently psychological pressure put on us to find a man and settle down.

Think about it: How many films, TV shows or even books have a strong female character whose life doesn't somewhat center on a love interest?- "Chick-Flicks," as they've so nicely been dubbed, are almost always sappy romantic comedies about two people who, despite making terrible relationship choices, fall in love. Every single Nicholas Sparks novel has taught me that I have the perfect soul mate waiting for me somewhere out there.-- Don't even get me started on Twilight-according to Stephanie Meyer's philosophy, materialism and male-dominance are what my life should be about.- Even Katniss of "The Hunger Games"-as much as I hate to admit it-spends most of her time (particularly in "Catching Fire" and "Mockingjay") worrying about and being torn between Peeta and Gale.

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Needless to say, there are a lot of voices telling women that they need to find love.- However, while dating can be fun, being single isn't a bad thing either. As cliché as it sounds, being independent and learning to really love yourself is absolutely the foundational step to being happy-whether you're with someone or not. Stop worrying about being alone and take some time to learn about yourself.

Appreciate your independence and don't mistreat yourself or allow others to do so.- Take a hint from Ginny Weasley and give up pining away for Mr. Right-Now; love and respect yourself, and whatever happens after that will be Expecto Patrawesome.

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