

The
GAME
of
DESIRE



*5 Surprising Secrets to Dating with
Dominance—and Getting What You Want*

SHAN BOODRAM

This is a work of nonfiction. Some names and other identifying characteristics have been changed to protect the privacy of the individuals involved.

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Phase One. **KNOW** who you've become by identifying the core traits of your intimate self. This includes being fully aware of your strengths, weaknesses, blind spots and patterns. This knowledge also needs to be supplemented with advanced feedback from others who know you intimately—be they close friends or exes.

Phase Two. **CHANGE** the habits and perceptions that are holding you back. This includes changing your appearance, your mind about your limits, faults and even your traumas. Learn the art of seduction, anti-seduction and the habits that may be preventing you from making powerful connections where it matters most. You can become whoever you consistently choose to be. If a component of your reality does not serve your vision of your highest self, it is no longer you.

Phase Three. **LEARN** from a series of experts (don't worry, I've done a lot of the work here for you!) to fine-tune your external and internal game. Become a master at approaching, attracting, flirting and influencing. Decide who you want to attract and learn how to find and entice them.

Phase Four. **PRACTICE** what you've learned thus far in low-risk environments, including at work, among friends and on casual dates. In addition, test out new hypotheses so you can create your own unique toolbox for making connections at will. Flirting, seducing and influencing should not be reserved for "the one." These are skills that will transform all of your relationships, including the one you have with yourself.

Phase Five. **BE** the person you've always wanted to be. Enjoy the company of people who better you and bring you joy. Join the feast and empower others, through your exceptional transformation, to do the same. Finally, revisit the other four phases periodically because this work is never done. And once you get into the swing of things where it starts getting *really* fun, you'll realize how great that news is!

The Scientific Method for the Game of Desire

QUESTION

Can someone learn how to be attractive?

HYPOTHESIS

If I expose a group of struggling daters to my five-phase program, then they will become expert seducers and leave my program with the power to attract the love life of their dreams.

TERMINOLOGY

Playmate—a person who you want to have fun with through flirting, seducing and rapport-building.

Low-interest playmate—a person who is missing too many key qualities to be considered a contender for a long-term connection. However, you still enjoy their company and wish to ensure they enjoy yours.

High-interest playmate—a person that qualifies against your frozen five and is a contender for a long-term connection.

Frozen five—five standards that a person must meet in order to be considered a high-interest playmate.

APPARATUS

Phase One—KNOW

1. Have the participants complete a self-summary workbook that will give them the self-insight and language to describe their intimate needs to others.
2. Have the participants reach out to their exes in order to illuminate any problematic behaviors they may not be aware of. Self-insight is an incomplete system without feedback from others and it's best to go to a source who knows you but who you truly believe has no stake in deluding you or seeking revenge.

Phase Two—CHANGE

1. Teach the participants, with the help of experts, to maximize and, if necessary, play up their look.
2. Teach the group about seduction and anti-seduction so that they will understand what transformations must come next.
3. Reveal through one-on-one sessions what each of their self-sabotaging qualities are.

Phase Three—LEARN

1. Teach the group what to look for in their search for a long-term lover and how to find that person, especially using online dating.
2. Expose the group to a series of experts who will teach them how to attract, flirt, seduce and protect themselves.

Phase Four—PRACTICE

1. Practice what we've learned thus far in group settings, plus conduct four group experiments that could reveal new tools not currently utilized by the general population.
2. Have participants go on solo dates with a low-interest playmate to continue practicing old techniques while testing out five unique ones.

Phase Five—BE

Participants will choose a high-interest playmate to go on a first date with. They will be coached for the first date but must secure a second on their own without coaching.

MEASUREMENT OF SUCCESS

Their success or failure on the second date with a high-interest playmate will partially serve as their results marker but the overall final goal is in how they feel as opposed to who they're with. Does each woman now feel she has or is highly capable of achieving her dream love life? Dream life?

ATTACHMENT STYLE

Why are some people clingy and super-jealous? Why are some ghosters? How come certain people want you until they have you? How do some people manage to be pretty chill about the whole attaching thing? And most important, which of those labels would other people describe you as? Attachment theory is an area of psychology first coined by John Bowlby that seeks to explain attachment styles by identifying four different ways people behave in intimate relationships: secure, anxious-preoccupied, dismissive-avoidant and fearful-avoidant.⁶ Take the quiz found on the enhancement to get a loose idea of your attachment style in romantic relationships. Try your hardest to answer realistically and not idealistically. Sure, everyone wants to be secure, but in truth anxious people tend to work well together and avoidant types like Steve Jobs can become mega rich and successful *because* they are undistracted by emotional ties. In addition if you're honest and discover something you don't like, that puts you on the path to self-improvement. So, worry less about proving your ex wrong and more about circling what truly sounds right to you in each of the scenarios listed in the quiz.

You are having a rough day so you reach out to your romantic interest to get comfort, but you can't get ahold of them. So you:

- a. Move on and try to get ahold of another close ally.
- b. Get more upset that not only are you having a rough day but now you also don't know where/what your interest is doing.
- c. You don't reach out at all. If you're having a rough day that means you need to work extra hard on your own to fix it.
- d. You send a follow-up text to your interest that says, "Hey, never mind my missed call, I figured it out and have a pretty busy day so don't worry about calling back."

You and your romantic interest get into a heated argument and they announce that they are going out for a bit to clear their head. So you:

- a. Get upset that they would leave before things have gotten resolved but you let them go anyway so you can also calm down.
- b. Block the doorway/chase after them/hold them back so they can't leave until you feel like the issue has been resolved.
- c. You're usually the one who leaves the situation.
- d. You let them go but as soon as they're gone, you leave as well because you refuse to be there waiting when they get back.

Your romantic interest tells you the two of you should take a break to reassess the relationship. So you:

- a. Express how you really feel about it, but encourage them to honor their feelings to part ways if that's what they feel is best.
- b. Get angry because you feel like they led you on all this time. You then let them know that deep down you always knew they would leave you as soon as things got tough.
- c. You're usually the one who pumps the brakes on relationships to reassess if they're no longer meeting your expectations.
- d. You tell them there is no point to a break. You won't want them when they come back, so you think it's best to end the relationship immediately.

Your romantic interest tells you that someone they dated five years ago is in town and they're going to meet up with them. So you:

- a. Thank them for informing you, ask them to keep you updated, then go about your day.
- b. Stress out about why they would be interested in seeing an ex again, then immediately search that person online.
- c. Tell them you really couldn't care less because you couldn't.
- d. Tell them you don't care, then make a mental note to start keeping your distance since they're clearly keeping their options open.

Your romantic interest has a close friend's wedding to attend, but they didn't invite you to join them. So you:

- a. Ask them if they were allowed to bring a plus one and leave it alone from there.
- b. Immediately start combing through their social media accounts to see who else they're apparently dating too.
- c. You fist pump because now you have a day to yourself uninterrupted.
- d. You plan to do something incredibly cool for the entire weekend and make a note not to invite them to any of it.

Answer Key

If you answered mostly *A's*
your attachment style might be securely attached.

This is the ideal way to attach to others, and the good news is roughly half of the population is securely attached. People with secure attachment freely display interest and affection toward others, but are also comfortable being alone. They make boundaries and they stick to them; they aren't possessive nor are they passive or dismissive. They're capable of accepting rejection and have little trouble trusting people.

As a child a securely attached person probably had attentive parent(s) who were consistent and nurturing but also left a healthy amount of space for them to explore, make mistakes and learn from them.

If you answered mostly *B*'s
your attachment style might be anxious-preoccupied.

Twenty percent of the population are said to be anxious-preoccupied, meaning people who are often nervous and stressed about their relationships.⁷ They crave intimacy, but they lack confidence that anyone will truly love them. They worry a lot that someone will lose interest in them and choose someone else. They have a hard time trusting people but also have an even harder time letting go.

People who are anxious-preoccupied need plenty of affirmation from others, so they have trouble being alone, and thus often find themselves in unhealthy relationships long after the red flags start waving.

A major drawback of this attachment style is the obsessive preoccupation with relationships. This can cause an inability to concentrate on anything else.

As a child this person may have had an inconsistent parent or guardian who at times smothered them and encouraged dependency while at other times was too caught up in their own emotions to be emotionally available at all.

If you answered mostly *C*'s
your attachment style might be dismissive-avoidant.

People who avoid attachment are super-independent and often uncomfortable with too much intimacy. They're the kind of people who require a lot of space and a lot of alone time. They're also afraid of commitment but unlike anxious people it isn't because they fear they won't get enough love, but fear they will get more than they can manage. A dismissive-avoidant person may regularly complain about feeling "crowded" or "suffocated" when people try to get close to them. They tend to be hyper-focused on individual achievement and see romantic connections as a distraction.

In childhood, people who are dismissive-avoidant often had some of their needs met while the rest were neglected. For instance, the child may have gotten fed regularly, but was not held enough. Or there was a lot of attention on scholastic achievement but none on emotional security.

If you answered mostly D's
your attachment style might be fearful-avoidant.

This is a combination of dismissive-avoidant and anxious-preoccupied. These are the people who push others away not because they want space, but because they fear once you get too close you will want space from them. They are torn between fearing and craving a level of commitment they don't think anyone can provide. Relationships with fearful-avoidants can best be described as hot and cold with plenty of tests that their partner will likely fail.

As a child the fearful avoidant may have had a parent or guardian who was manic or possibly had issues with substance abuse, creating a literal day-and-night effect. They were never given the luxury of being completely vulnerable and thus as adults, avoid opportunities to do so.

THE BIG FIVE PERSONALITY TRAITS

The Big Five is by far my favorite character assessment method, and the fave of many credible psychologists as well. Big Five theory suggests there are five major traits that all characteristics fall under: agreeableness, extraversion, openness, conscientiousness and neuroticism.⁸ It's easy to remember by using the acronym OCEAN. A lot of people's strengths and weaknesses can be boiled down to where they rank high and low on this system. In addition, certain pairings can tell you a lot about someone's tendencies. For example, in Dr. Ty Tashiro's *The Science of Happily Ever After* he notes that people low in conscientiousness and high in openness are more likely to cheat on their significant other!⁹

In order to assess where you are on the Big Five scale, answer *A*, *B*, or *C* to the following hypothetical questions found on the enhancement.

You are the kind of person who:

- a.** Loves to try new places/travel, is accepting of different lifestyles and is always open to new ways of looking at the world.
- b.** Is open to different kinds of people and their needs but has a firm grasp of what works for them and prefers to stick to that.
- c.** Loves routine, enjoys familiar settings and is skeptical of change/new ideas.

If right now, I walked into the space you spend the most time in, I'd probably think:

- a.** This person is organized, clean, on the ball and has a good eye for detail.
- b.** This person isn't dirty, but I wouldn't say they're organized either.
- c.** This person is either extremely lazy, extremely busy or a mix of both.

If we went out for a night on the town, you'd be the one:

- a.** Talking to new people and making connections at every turn.

- b.** Talking to familiar people and making some new connections for the first hour then be inexplicably MIA for the rest of the night.
- c.** Looking for someone familiar to engage in a private, in-depth conversation with before heading out.

If someone suggests an idea that you're not really keen on, but they seem very excited about you are likely to:

- a.** Go along with their idea since there's a possibility it could be better than yours; plus, your main objective is to have a good time, not to have your way.
- b.** Go along with their idea reluctantly and inevitably say "I told you so" at some point in the night.
- c.** Try to convince them that your idea is better and if that fails, suggest you do things independently.

If you went out to dinner with a romantic partner and they weren't speaking much, you'd probably think to yourself:

- a.** I guess something happened before they got here. I'll give them more time, then ask if they want to talk about it.
- b.** If they don't want to talk to me that's fine, I'll just go on my phone and keep myself busy until they notice me.
- c.** They probably don't like me anymore.

Answer Key

- a:** You are open. **b:** You are moderately open. **c:** You are not very open.
- a:** You are conscientious. **b:** You are moderately conscientious. **c:** You are not very conscientious.
- a:** You are an extrovert. **b:** You are an ambivert. **c:** You are an introvert.
- a:** You are agreeable. **b:** You are moderately agreeable. **c:** You are disagreeable.
- a:** You are emotionally stable. **b:** You are not very emotionally stable.
c: You are neurotic.

Questions to Ask Your Ex

Was I a good listener to you? _____

Did I speak your love language? _____

Did you find me reasonable? _____

Was I too sensitive or emotionally unstable? _____

Was I emotionally unavailable or distant? _____

Did I make an effort to understand and meet your needs? _____

Did I talk too much about myself? _____

Did you find me grim or negative? _____

Did I apologize often and effectively to you if I was in the wrong? _____

Did you consider me an independent person or a needy person? _____

Did I create a good contrast between being your friend and being your sexual partner? _____

Did we have similar values on sex/a similar sex drive? _____

Did I ask for too much too soon? _____

Did I not ask for enough? _____

Do you think I saw you for your highest potential? _____

Where do you think we were incompatible? _____

Do you think that I changed for the worse, at some point in the relationship? _____

•————→ SKIN CARE ←————•

The more hydrating products you can use on the skin the better! The plumper the skin, the easier the makeup will set. So tone, moisturize and prime—every time.

Under the eye you want a BLT skin-care product: something that brightens, lightens and tightens. This allows you to use less concealer and powder in later steps. A lot of people invest more in makeup than skin care; I recommend the reverse.

Laura Jane's Product Recommendations

Before Makeup

- Mario Badescu Vitamin C serum
- GlamGlow Glowstarter Mega Illuminating Moisturizer
- Smashbox Photo Finish Radiance Primer

Body Bonus!

- Kayo body-firming serum
- Mario Badescu Summer Shine Body Lotion
- Jergens in-shower gradual self-tanner

After Makeup

- Estée Lauder Advanced Night Repair

→ FOUNDATION ←

Choose your coverage: light, medium or full. Then use one of these application methods for best results:

For light coverage, use a crosshatch motion to get the product in the pores. This will give the skin a natural look.

For medium, use a sweeping motion to apply so it blends but also distributes evenly.

For heavy coverage, use a dabbing motion so the product builds.

Laura Jane's Product Recommendations:

- NARS Pure Radiant Tinted Moisturizer (sheer-to-light coverage)
- Smashbox Studio Skin Foundation (medium-to-full coverage)
- Mario Badescu facial spray with aloe, herbs and rosewater (can be used as prep or a setting spray)

→ CONCEALER ←

If you need it, start with a color under your eyes to get the skin back to neutral.

If your under eye is purple/blue, peach or orange will neutralize.

If it's red, use a green corrector.

If it's dark brown, use red (some even use red lipstick).

When applying concealer, remember you always want the focus to be on the triangle of the face: top of the brows to the point of your chin. So use your concealer as a guiding light to accomplish that.

Laura Jane's Product Recommendations

- Smashbox BB eye cream
- NARS Radiant Creamy Concealer

—————→ EYES AND BROWS ←————

Most people have a hard time drawing a clean line above the eye. Practice makes perfect, yes, but there's also another option: a tight line. A tight line is a beautiful and easy way to give the eye some oomph. Lift your lid a touch then shade underneath your eyelashes with a black or brown liner. For eye shadow, use three colors: lid (medium shade), eye crease (darker shade) and inner eye/top of brow (a highlighter). Brows are very personal, but the basic rule of thumb is to keep them groomed right above the tear duct and slightly diagonal of the outer eye.

Laura Jane's Product Recommendations

- Shadow: Natasha Denona, NARS or Melt
- Eyeliner: Smashbox Always On waterproof gel liner
- Brows: Glossier Boy Brow or Smashbox Brow Tech To Go

—————→ MASCARA ←————

You're going to want to do the top and bottom (think of it like bra and panties).

Also, don't be shy: the average woman does forty-five strokes of mascara, so this is a place you can go BIG.

Laura Jane's Product Recommendations

- Smashbox Photo Finish Lash Primer *Shan's absolute most fave makeup product EVER
- Grande Cosmetics Lash Boosting Mascara
- L'Oréal Voluminous (curved brush)

↔ BLUSH ↔

Contouring is the thing professionals see most applied incorrectly. Yes, some faces can benefit from contouring, but most don't. So instead of focusing on creating a dramatic face shape, try your best to highlight the one you have. Take your right pointer finger and move it along your cheekbone until you find the crease underneath. Below that line is your no-man's-land: never drop your blush below there.

Laura Jane's Product Recommendations

- Bronzer: Becca or Guerlain
- Blush: NARS
- Highlighter: Becca or NARS

↔ BRUSHES ↔

Brushes are your best tool to create a truly natural, blended look. Buy the best you can afford! Brushes are an investment that will pay for themselves eventually since you'll need less product to achieve better results.

Laura Jane's Product Recommendations

- Silver kit = Morphe
- Gold kit = Smashbox
- Platinum kit = Hakuodo

For everyone listening to this book I highly suggest you participate in this activity as well. So go ahead and shuffle this list around until it is arranged from what's most to least important to you in a romantic partnership. You'll find the list reproduced on the enhancement.

Agreeable (easy to get along with)	Wants children
Emotionally stable	Sexually compatible
Securely attached	Financially well off
High novelty seeking (likes to do new things)	Charming/humorous
Supportive/happy for my good news	Trustworthy
Intelligent	Faithful
Physically attractive	Strong leadership skills
Takes responsibility for self	Follows directions/allows others to take the lead
Unlikely to withdraw (not avoidantly attached)	Highly ambitious
Has similar interests	Independent thinker
Has similar values	Compatible with my friends and family
Speaks my love language	Excellent conflict-resolution skills
Good life skills (cooking, cleaning, budgeting, building, etc. . . .)	Has good relationships with others
	Speaks my apology language

Once you have finished ranking, take a second to analyze your Frozen Five. Then look at your bottom five. Do you see any patterns that jump out? Also, try comparing your previous romantic partners against this ranking—would they qualify, if you knew then what you do now? If you need an example of what the finished product of the job listing exercises should look like, Deshawn agreed to share hers with you.

Job title: *A long-term partner/relationship*

Job location/term: *Full-time, L.A. County, 50 miles or closer*

Preferred experience level/age: *25–35, has had at least one long-term relationship*

Basic requirements (the Frozen Five)

1. **Intelligent.** *They need to have expertise in something that they do.*
2. **Has good relationships with others.** *They must know and be committed to a deep, family/family-like bond.*
3. **Sexually compatible.** *I love when someone makes me feel sexy. Seeing and feeling when someone wants me is important. I want to feel seen and be felt.*
4. **Shared politics/outlook on life.** *It's important that people treat people different from them with dignity. I have compassion for others and that is my outlook on life.*
5. **Financially independent.** *You must be able to pay your rent and bills then also have a disposable income.*

Skills of interest *Speaks my apology language, securely attached, physically attractive, speaks my love language, similar interests, wants children, trustworthy, faithful, partnership oriented, takes leadership, knows how to take instructions, high novelty seeking, knowledgeable about black culture/race relations specifically in the U.S.*

Areas of flexibility *Fashion sense, drinking, smoking, living with parents, personal grooming, sexual experience, religion, race.*

Do-not-applies *Trump supporters, narcissists, misogynists, people who are selectively respectful, people who are gym obsessed or diet obsessed, pessimists, people who pressure me to “keep up appearances.”*

Job perks *When you work with Deshawn, you get: an honest person, very loving (I cater to people's specific love language), faith oriented (non-denominational Christian), ambitious, compassionate, intelligent, excellent scrambled eggs with cheese, great blow jobs, skilled gift giver, high novelty seeker, witty, excellent kisser, flexible, easy-going, charismatic.*

Job description *An independent, adventure-loving, intelligent lady in the streets/freak in the sheets is seeking a full-time boyfriend. Successful candidate must be intelligent, family oriented and be well-versed in current*

affairs. This role has flexible hours, lots of making out, hikes and will encourage you to use Uber Eats far more than you probably already do—unless you're in the mood for eggs. Oh, must love dogs and must not be a dog.

If, like Deshawn, you completed this exercise thoroughly, you should start to get a clearer picture of what occupation this person is likely to be in and where they might hang out in their free time.

Here's what we were able to determine after examining the group's completed job listings:

Deshawn was looking to date herself: an intelligent, community-focused, family oriented, sexually apt person who cared more about adventure than aesthetics.

Pricilla was in fact looking for someone who was loosely like Matt Barnes.

Stephanie was looking for someone dedicated to the betterment of others—like a teacher or a personal trainer.

Courtney wanted someone brave and strong, with exceptional life skills and a steady paycheck. A firefighter would be the perfect fit.

Maya also wanted to date herself, except she wanted the version that she hadn't quite stepped into yet: outgoing, funny and brave in their pursuit of who and what they loved.

While I think everyone should complete this activity (and I've made it easy for you by giving you a blank template on [TheGameofDesire.com/joblisting](https://www.thegameofdesire.com/joblisting)) I'm going to underline and put a star beside it for anyone who lives in a big city and/or those planning on looking for love online. The women in my group ticked off both of those boxes. So, to make sure they were extra prepared, I called on two professionals whom I admired: Chief Marketing Officer of OkCupid Melissa Hoble, and Meredith Davis, head of communications for the exclusive dating app The League.

Meredith connected with us via Google Hangouts from The League's birthplace and headquarters in San Francisco. She was the second employee to join the company and cited that she knew

it was the job for her when she learned their tagline, “Date intelligently.”

“So how do we do that?” I asked after the introductions. “How do we online date and come up with more than just ridiculous stories to tell our friends?”

“The League earned a reputation for being an elitist Tinder, but in actuality we just saw a market for a dating service that didn’t allow anyone with a phone access. So this is not a plug but honestly, the best thing you can do is use dating apps that have some form of quality control. After you’ve done that, there’s a bunch of other really interesting things you can do with your profile to get the most out of your experience. Should I just list them?”

“Hell yeah!”



How to Make Your Best Dating Profile

by Meredith Davis

Photos

Wardrobe: Wear white or solid bright colors.

Expression: Smile, leave the duckface for Instagram.

Communication: Make sure your pictures aren't just about looking good. They need to tell your story.

Picture 1: a great head shot with eye contact (think of magazine covers)

Picture 2: travel/you doing something out of the ordinary (full body if possible)

Picture 3: you doing something normal that you love (eating, hanging with friends, painting, reading, etc. . . .)

Picture 4: a group shot, because it communicates a lot about who you are, including your height.

Picture 5: your choice (you with an animal, you at a wedding, a professional pic of you, etc.)

Picture 6: Your weed-out photo. If there is something that is an intrinsic part of you that is going to be a make-or-break for others, put it here to save yourself time. (Do you smoke? Are you heavy into politics?)

After you have selected your six photos ask yourself: Can someone come up with three questions per photo? If so, move on to your "about me."

About me

This is a place to give someone a taste of you. This is *not* your biography, so keep it short (fewer than two hundred words) but not too short because that shows low investment. Your "about me" should be regarded as a conversation starter. Here are some rules of thumb:

Do

- Make statements that invite people to start a discussion with you (*I was born in Cali and know where to get the absolute best carnitas*).
- Invite people to ask a question (*Ask me about my second photo . . .*).
- Show your favorite thing about your personality.

Do not

- List your criteria (*must be tall, university educated and love animals*).
- List your weed-out criteria (*Looking for a hookup? Don't waste my time!*).
First, sleazy people don't *read* on dating apps so you're wasting your time and second, when we tell people what we don't want, we indicate what we've already had and we tend to come across as bitter.
- Just put a link to your Instagram. If you're too lazy to write something, what makes you think people won't be too lazy to open an entirely different app to get to know you?

Crafting the First Message

Make it meaningful

Look at a profile and comment on something specific that you like or have a question about. Saying “hey” in a first message is almost equivalent to saying nothing—in fact, the vast majority of “hey” messages never get a response at all.

Make your first message brief, but not short

Messages with the best chance of a reply are between 40 and 100 characters long (again, saying “hey” twenty times isn't going to cut it). Something like, “I see you went to Paris, what was your favorite café?” should suffice.

