



*Lesson One:  
Exercises and Worksheets  
from “The Conscious Bride’s  
Wedding Planner”*

## *Table of Contents*

Checklist: Letting Go Of Singlehood .....	3
Worksheet: Distilling False Beliefs .....	7
Exercise: Goodbye Letter to Single Self .....	10
Letting Go of the Past .....	11
Worksheet: Letting Go of the Past .....	14
Dream Log: Partners from the Past .....	15

## *Checklist: Letting go of Singlehood*

The following statements have come directly from my clients.  
Check the boxes that resonate for you:

- I feel envious of younger people in their early twenties. They seem so free and *single*.
- I somehow equate marriage with a big ass and saggy hips—I'm not ready for that!
- I'm scared about not being able to go out to bars and flirt.
- I still want to be attractive to the opposite sex.
- I wish I had the chance to experience some things again, i.e. college, dating, clubbing, traveling.
- I'll miss going to clubs and flirting.
- I'm good at being single. It's comfortable and familiar.
- I don't want to give up my freedom.
- It seems like everything exciting is equated with being single.
- I long to be 21 again.
- I'm scared I won't be able to take trips with my friends.

- I have to change the way I relate to half the people in the world—the opposite sex!
- My life is over.
- I'm afraid I will lose my sexual fire.
- You mean I can never have sex with anyone else... ever again?!
- I feel like I'm losing my youth.
- I can feel my childhood slipping away.
- I have mixed feelings about taking on my husband's last name—it's an honor *and* I feel the loss of the name I've had for \_\_\_ years.
- I am losing my independence.
- When we move in together, will I ever have space and time to myself?
- Is \_\_\_\_\_ going to be the last person I ever sleep with?
- I like my life now. I love living [alone, with my best friend, with my sister]. Why does this have to change?
- I will never be able to travel alone.
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It is important to distinguish between the *true* beliefs and the *false* beliefs. For example, it is true that as a married person you will most likely be changing the way you relate to the opposite sex. But is it true that your life is over and you will never have any fun again? No! And is it true that you will never be able to go away for the weekend with your friends? Not unless you and your future spouse make that agreement. In other words, a lot of the fears that people feel about letting go of singlehood are not based in reality, but they indicate a need to *recognize* that there is a change happening and to allow yourself to grieve this change.

When grieving the loss or change of identity the mind wants to grab onto tangible experiences because it is confusing to grieve something as amorphous as an identity. With most losses in life we can point to the thing that we are leaving or losing—a house, a city, a job, a person—but with a loss of identity there is nothing to point to. The truth is that the loss is less about anything tangible—the loss of last name or one's own apartment—and more about the general sense that you are leaving one *life stage* and moving into a new stage of life. When women say, “I cried all weekend—it was

an unnamed grief,” they are referring to this most difficult to name of losses. The most important step, after distinguishing the true and false beliefs and putting some of the unnecessary fears to rest, is to let the feelings in. You don’t have to understand them. You only have to trust that they are a very important part of your transition, and the more you let yourself feel them, the better off you will be.

## *Worksheet: Distilling False Beliefs*

1. Which of the boxes that you checked are false beliefs?

2. Where do you think these false beliefs came from?

3. How can you find out the truth around these false beliefs?  
i.e. Talk to your fiancé and share your fears; talk to other  
married people; get in touch with your truth about

partnership as opposed to the messages and behaviors that have been modeled for you.

Once you have distilled the false beliefs, you are left with your true grief about saying goodbye to this identity. The next step is to concretize the feelings around this ending. One exercise that clients have found effective is to create a collage of the images that represent your single life. Use personal photographs, magazine cut-outs, old letters, drawings, and any other artifact that symbolizes singlehood to create a visual representation of the identity you are leaving.

Another powerful way to honor the ending is to write a goodbye letter to your single self. Include what you have loved about being single, your fears about this phase of life ending, the important people who have helped shape your

singlehood, and any other thoughts and emotions that will help you let go of attachments to this identity. Use the following page to write the letter. When you are finished, complete the ritual by reading it aloud as you burn or shred an object that represents your singlehood. Burning and cutting are ways to bring the action into your body and let your psyche know that it's time to release the old way and open the space where a new identity can enter.

## *Goodbye Letter to Single Self*

## *Letting go of the Past*

Memories, thoughts, and feelings about ex-partners are inextricably linked to the singlehood identity. For most of us, the single past means a past with men: men we loved, men we loathed, men who adored us, men who enchanted us, men who broke our hearts, men we flirted with, men we left, men who “got away”. Because our culture maintains that once you are engaged you must have eyes and thoughts only for your intended, to admit that exes pop onto your mind may feel taboo. As Rachel said, “I’m getting married. I’ve made my choice. I’m not allowed to think about those other men, those past relationships.” But just as stifling the grief around losses only fans the flame, so attempting to stifle feelings about exes only magnifies their intensity.

For Rachel, committing to her dress activated a series of dreams and thoughts about past boyfriends. As these disturbed her, she chose to ignore them and displaced her difficult feelings onto the dress. Before she knew it, she began doubting her dress of choice and became compulsive about “checking out” as many other dresses as she could.

She would stop at bridal salons, walk through outlets, scroll down countless photos of online gowns, all in an attempt to make sure that she had made the right choice and wasn't missing out on something better. As she spoke, I encouraged her to replace "my dress" with "my fiancé," and she immediately recognized that her obsession was an external manifestation of her inner panic that she was committing to just one man. Marrying Michael meant not marrying all of the others. Once she made this connection, her dress obsession stopped and she was able to process the dreams and address the feelings she was having about her ex-boyfriends.

Nearly every client I have worked with has shared that they have had dreams and thoughts about exes during their engagement. There is the first love who holds that pure space in your heart. There is the crazy artist who never could quite commit but made you feel like you were part of a vibrant, creative world. There is the one who swept you away on never-repeated sexual highs. There is the one who got away, the one who makes you wonder, "Where is he now? Could it have worked?" In the end, the women realize

that the musings about past boyfriends are a normal part of this transition. Once they are validated, the memories are allowed to breathe and move through the body so that an acceptance of the present commitment can arise.

The dress is a metaphor for both the ending of one phase of life and the commitment of the next new phase. Letting go of the phase means accepting that you will never be with another partner. Just as there can only be one dress, so there can only be one husband. By choosing this dress, you are letting go of all the others: you cannot simultaneously wear a strapless gown and a long-sleeved gown. Similarly, by choosing this man, you are letting go of all the others: you cannot simultaneously marry a scattered artist-boy and a stable man. The goal here is not to seek perfection, but to seek what's right for you.



*Dream Log: Partners from the Past*

Use this space to record your dreams about ex-boyfriends/girlfriends as they arise.