Book Review: Act Like a Lady, Think Like a Man

April 20, 2011 By Jeff Carroll

Since this is my first book review I decided to take on the King of the Hill of relationship advice, Steve Harvey and review his best seller “Act Like a Lady, Think Like a Man.” He and his book had a big impact on what I do. Now I started being interested in giving dating advice in 2002 a year after I got married. I wrote my first book in 2004 “20 Soul Questions for a Better Relationship.” I even started speaking at colleges as a dating coach in 2006 but when Steve’s book hit the shelves the fires turned up. “Act Like a Lady, Think Like a Man” crossed over from the African American community to the mainstream white community. That meant race didn’t matter and advice was advice. My goal with being a dating coach is to reach everybody Black, White, Latino or whatever; that’s why I call myself a Hip Hop dating coach. This book helped me a lot so that’s why I chose it to start off my books reviews.

Now the main reason why I decided to add dating book reviews to my blog postings is because books are very helpful with personal improvement. Books are also hard to produce and they take time to write. In my workshops and in working with my clients I reference and suggest subjects and areas people need help with because no one person could address them all in one book. So books are a valuable tool in solving our relationship problems.

I will select books I think will help people address their problems or help them deal with the world full of people with problems. I will also review books which everybody else thinks are useful or helpful. I will use my condom rating system to give you my opinion. I choose to use condoms because condoms symbolize safe sex by protecting against STDs and providing birth control. My motto is, the safest place to have sex is in a relationship, so since I will be rating these books on how well they help you find a relationship, condoms are perfect.

Zero condoms A book which is a waste of paper and may make your life worse if you read it.

One condom means this is a book which may help you get laid or have a one night stand or catch an STD but it won’t help you find a loving relationship.

A three pack of condoms is a book which will help you but you will still need to put work in and have to read other books.

A twelve pack of condoms is a book which will help you find love.

A wedding ring is a book which is so good you need to buy the engagement ring now because this book solves all of your relationship problems.

My Review of “Think Like a Lady Act Like a Man,” by Steve Harvey, published in 2009.

First, I do not separate the lives of authors from the books they write and that goes double for self-help books. That being said I worked at the Apollo Theater for 13 years and with Steve all of the years he hosted Showtime at the Apollo.

Okay, my first thoughts of Act Like a Lady Think Like a Man stem from the title and what I know about the author. The title is good because it is important for a person to have an idea of how the people they are attracted to think. This is universally important for all varieties of people including people who are gay or straight and for both men and women. Not only should you have an idea of how they think but you should let it influence your actions. You should let their thoughts guide your comments and the things you do.

This type of thinking is the basis of consideration and the beginning of the compatibility growth process. I do not believe in soul mates or perfect connections from the beginning. All bonds take time to develop and the best time to start being considerate is before you meet. Since men do most of the approaching in couple formation they are used to factoring in the women they like’s thoughts. It guides their opening comments. But many women don’t always remember to factor in what a man is thinking. Many times women just think about what they want to say and Steve’s book is good for helping women improve their surveying process by revealing to them some basic motives of men.

This brings me to my next second thought of the book. This thought stems from what I know about Steve Harvey. All of the years I’ve known Steve to me he has been a self appointed Alpha male.

Now, let me qualify myself a little bit before I continue so I don’t just come off as an unwarranted hater. In addition to working at the Apollo I ran my own entertainment agency where I booked comedians. This I’ve been doing for over 23 years, since I was in college. I’ve booked and worked closely with Monique, Tracy Morgan, Bill Bellamy, Dave Chapelle, Chris Tucker and just about every black comic. I’ve watched male comics who had absolutely no pull with the ladies go on stage and be funny and then pick up the hottest groupie in the audience. Let me not say groupie (even though they fall into that category) I’ll say humor appreciators or new fans. Few comics were like Bill Bellamy who was able to meet the same women before he performed as he did after. I watched comics use their stand up performance to get girls so often I lost respect for comics who did that. It’s like cheating. If you are proclaiming to be a ladies man or a relationship expert you should be able to meet people without something artificial like an expensive car or flashing your money or a stand up performance. You should simply be able to go up to somebody and gain their interest and respect without telling them you play in the NBA or something. Most of the comics and other entertainers who I worked with at the Apollo used their groupies for sex and messed over them. I remember one comic bragged on how he had sex with 29 different women on a 30 day road trip.

If you look at Steve or listen to his radio show you would think he was always a top dog but I doubt it. I doubt he was ever class President or captain of the football team. His bio says he was once a mailman but now he makes jokes about blue collar men who want to get women. I believe Steve assumed his Alpha dog confidence after his pockets became full. Wealth does build confidence but you gotta keep it real. If you look at Steve's first appearance on Showtime at the Apollo now you will see two different people. He wasn't always the man he acts like now and to me that's a core problem with his advice. He advises women to think like a man but the type of man he is talking to them about is the type of man Steve wants to be. Steve is nothing but a wanna be alpha male to me. Matter-of-fact I don't think he's a natural leader or naturally confident; I think his alpha feelings stem from his success bottom line. All you have to do is look at his first appearance on Showtime at the Apollo as a guest comic and you won't be able to recognize the form fitted suit wearing Steve Harvey you see today. This incidentally is the case for a lot of men who make a lot of money but that's a side point. Anyway, there are a lot of alpha males in the world and his advice works with them but most men aren't alpha males. Matter of fact most of the good, available men aren't alpha male. These men are better listeners and more considerate. They are not the stereotypic type of man you see on TV or in movies. Regular guys are not "dicks", they are also the type of guys who don't always get noticed. This then becomes the monkey wrench in Steve's book and his advice. A perfect example of this is Steve's 90 Day Rule, one of the most popular pieces of advice which came out of the book. The 90 Day Rule was one of the first tips women ran with. Steve was asked about it on talk shows and he flat out told woman to wait 90 days before they sleep with the man they are dating. He calls it the benefit package. This is an easy thing to suggest but I don't find it to be the most effective way to decide when to become sexually active with a person. Just making a guy wait doesn't bring out the commitment in him. If a man is a cheater or bad communicator making him wait doesn't change that. Even if he has an STD or HIV in 90 days he will still have it. Making men wait just because you want to make them wait may turn off a sincere guy. I was celibate for three years and dated women without including the sexual element in my dating process. That was a big mistake. I confused many women on my level of interest in them and mislead them on the value I placed on sex. I found that making sex a part of my regular dating process was not a mistake. I do feel it's important to think about it when you would like to have sex with someone. I suggest not to have sex on the first night but after that it depends on how the person you are interested in having sex with relates to you. I wrote an entire blog on when to have sex in a relationship in December 2010. In my blog I talk about respect and how to determine if a person respects you enough for you to have sex with them. The bottom line with Steve's 90 day rule is it was designed to help women avoid players and meet nice guys and it fails to do that. It fails because players will wait 90 days to have sex with a woman. Also nice guys can have sex with women in the first week and marry them and be committed an entire lifetime.

My other issue with "Act Like a Lady, Think Like a Man" is what made me call Steve a social terrorist. On page 97 of the book Steve answers one of the most popular and dear questions to women which is "Why do men cheat." Steve gave the answer because "they can" as his base answer. I couldn't disagree with this answer more. What his answer infers is that men who don't cheat can't. It also suggests to women that they must do the impossible by eliminating all of their man's opportunities to cheat. That's crazy. If Steve's goal was to help women find men he makes

that impossible with this answer. Some women who feel all men will cheat get so overwhelmed that they give up dating altogether. Now, I covered this in two back-to-back blogs. I wrote a blog explaining why men don't cheat and another blog explaining what's dangerous in believing they do. Both of these blogs are in January 2011. Like I said in my blog "My concern isn't why men cheat just like I don't think worrying about why people steal will solve the problem of stealing. I think what will help more is if women learn how the men who don't cheat avoid the temptation of cheating. This will help women be able to identify these men and date them."

Finally, I feel Steve's intentions were good in writing his book and it has good information in it. I just believe that he comes from a certain perspective that represents a small group of men. I think his book is good for understanding schmucks and cocky asses but it may confuse or misdirect women who don't mind dating a regular guy. Therefore I give Act Like a Lady, Think Like a Man a Three pack of condoms. It is a book which will help you but you will still need to read other books.

Now most of the time I send my blog posts out to a group of friends to get their opinions before I post them. This time the comments were very colorful and I decided to post them along with the book review. Their names have been changed to keep the focus on me.

Peace Yo Jeff. Please make your own comment or holla at me coachyojeff@gmail.com

Lady P:

I personally think this a great review of how you feel about his book. My personal view is as follows....I was unable to get through his book! I found it centered around how to get a man, how to keep a man and how to be all for your man! Well where does the woman factor in? Listen I believe women know when they sabbotage a relationship. I believe we all know what we need to do and how we need to behave. But I took Steve Harvey's advice with a grain of salt especially since he is not the perfect example of a man who can keep a stable relationship. I also gave him a 3 pack of condoms!!

E W:

I don't think it's too harsh per se; I actually don't think it goes far enough. I REALLY liked your post from last week, by the way. Meant to drop you a note to that effect. I forwarded it to a couple of friends.

Homegirl from the Library:

Yo Jeff! You make some valid points! I gave his book "one condom" because who is he to give advice when he's had a couple of failed marriages. I like your review better! :)

The editor:

Oh, yeah. I did mean to say that I'd heard about Harvey's failed marriages--which had me question his authority to speak. I enjoyed your analysis, however. Fresh!

Mr. S:

Hey Jeff,

The Steve Harvey criticism, I like it! I don't know him personally but there is something about him that is assholish! maybe because he is cocky, I can't pin point it about him but it's something. You know me, controversy is good so let Steve Harvey have It!!

I really like ur review Jeff! I read Steve's book and like u and I discussed before its a "reference" book for me. He has some valid points but others were too far fetched for me! I too disliked the fact that he explained why men cheat by saying "cause they can"...Really? My question then was well what has made my dad not cheat on my mom and stay married for over 30yrs and they love each other dearly! My parents still go out on a date 1x a month :) I will be totally honest and say that Jeff's dating codes have helped me A LOT! I also agree with not having sex on the first date but that's my choice and I don't judge anyone who's done that-to each his/her own. There are nice guys out there and if women take Steve's book as the BIBLE then our society is in more relationship trouble than we thought. I too give it a 3pk of condoms!!

Peace & Love...

Poet Girl:

I do not think the blog is harsh...it very real. I am glad you are challenging his book I heard 50/50 reviews from women who read the book. My personal take on the book was it was ok but still lacked quality. When I say quality I'm referencing a small piece of it relating to the 90 day rule and why men cheat. Once women read those parts they felt..."Oh yea I'm gonna hold out because Steve's book said to" not necessarily because they wanted to. I always challenged that because I said do you ask him if he was ok with the rule or is this just the women putting that in place. He could be sleeping with other women for 90 days & add you to the rotation on day 91. Most of the time the women was just imposing the rule and felt scared to discuss with their friend/ significant other in fear they may be kicked to the curb or called out about reading and following a man's book who has had multiple relationships.

On the second of why men cheat, Steve's answer was a blanket statement as stated below. Growing up I learned some men cheat & some don't. The one who did cheat on girls, I would ask them why and they would say because I just know how to say no or if they blossomed they said because they never had so many women throwing themselves at him sexually and others would say they thought it was apart of being a man based on what they seen being imitated. The ones who did not cheat would say they were taught it was disrespectful & they wouldn't want someone to do that to their female relatives or they had a father that cheat & they seen the household destruction it caused...for whatever reason they knew it wasn't right.

Steve needs to keep it real and talk about his past and not always being wanted to his success and women just throwing themselves at him. Allegedly, I hear his current wife was his groupie... hmmm

Keep one hundred!!!!

I’m out…signed ck

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