



The Year of Sluttery: Quick Notes to My Many Lovers

Description

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Author's Memo

I didn't realize I'd written an autoethnography until I was reading the definitions in *Autoethnography: An Overview* (Adams, Ellis, & Bochner, 2011). Anyone who's used a dating app has a horror story; there are millions of us according to Pew Research, 30.4 million. That's just the U.S. Projections are over 35 million by 2027 so it ain't slowing down. 55% of online dating users are aged 55 years or older. A full ? of American women have used a dating app.

After 34 years of monogamy I entered the dating app world and began writing the first weekend I was single. I immersed myself into the apps, writing everything I was learning as it was happening. All the stories are true. I have written a memoir of my first year of being single at the age of 54 called *The Year of Sluttery*, that I am querying with agents and publishers. My hero's journey of purposeful sluttery begins after decades in two monogamous relationships as I decide to be a proud slut, reimagining that word as a positive life choice rather than a patriarchal, judgmental slur. My initiation in dating app shenanigans provide an honest and humorous look at GenX mating.





By Kristine Andra for Unsplash

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Dear HUD (Hook-Up Dating)^[1]:

You sent me a dick video. I sent you a video. Then I learned some good lessons. Men can be great liars and some men save dick videos on their phone. When you think each of you is at home sending sexy stuff.. oh no... he's at the bar with his friends... who just saw your cootchie. Glad I didn't have my face in that video....

Dear Einstein:

You sir, though a kind liberal, are an asshole. I STILL see you on the dating apps using the same 10-year-old photos even though you probably have more forehead and less posture. How many second dates have you gotten? Do you still dream of kissing me and touching my nipples in the stairwell? My friend, you got lucky to be my first date in six years. I wouldn't give you the time of day now.

Dear Coach:

You were the first nice guy I met. I looked past your khaki shorts with many pockets, old man socks, and those white Reeboks because you were so funny and sweet. Alas your kissing skills didn't pass muster. It felt like I was kissing a wall. Thank you for the laughter and the delicious Italian dinner at Anthony's^[2]. I have seen you on the apps a few times and wish you the very best.

Dear Sexy Lips:

You're a conundrum, some nice guy, some asshole. I needed a great get back-in-the-saddle-after-my-breakup sex partner and you were gentle. You asked if I'd suck your balls. When I agreed, they just appeared above me, dangling. The asshole part is when you asked if I give BJs without offering what you would do for me. Socks and boxers still on, you just stood there staring at naked me when you knew I was freaked out about being squishy in the middle. You smirked at me when we discussed women's issues. When you came, you sounded like a moose, but each to his own.

Dear Trivia Man:

I used to run past your building and think of you with a bit of longing, and much curiosity. I gave you my number, then learned that many men's texting timeframe is much different than mine. Eventually though, I got to do your hot tub and you back to back. I never heard from you again. That weird laugh you gave when I said no relationship, just fun, makes me think you were looking for more than fun. Although you didn't say that, you just ghosted me. The bit of longing is from was when you pulled my jaw into that kiss. Sighhhhhh. I am glad I met you and would still walk down for the hot tub and sex sesh.

Dear Coffee Meets Bagel:

Wow, you were an experience. My confidence had leveled up with each of the above encounters but with you it went off the charts. I kissed you, talked to you, held your hand and you fell in love with my brain and my body on our first and only date. I, of course, didn't know you were married. You wrote me a love letter that was so passionate I thought about meeting you, for a minute, but then my sister tore me a new asshole for even considering it. Six weeks later you told me you left your wife but I wasn't looking back.

Dear Cranky Narcissist:

It was a definite "love-bomb" when you gave me a key to your place the first weekend we knew each other. While you celebrated some parts of me, you were fucking patriarchal in other areas. And I don't need that kind of daddy. You seem very far away to me now, all the way over there in Overland Park.

My sister knew you were temporary. Your discussion with her at the Fourth of July picnic about kneeling to the Star-Spangled Banner was the death-knell of our relationship. It was hammered in when you full on pouted about having to leave the concert a little early the night before my first day of school. Then you yelled at me about my bathtub cleanliness because if I'd given you a key you'd have cleaned it for me.

You were very proud of me and acted like I was the most beautiful girl on earth. Now I think you aren't narcissistic but just a white man with privilege who isn't woke. And pure Boomer. You didn't want me to get tattoos and were really pretty square man. Now I'd try to make you an FWB^[3] to have the D^[4] but not the BS^[5].

Dear Bumble Biker Booty Call:

You are the youngest person I've been with, 22 years younger to be exact. We met for drinks downtown and went to my loft. It was hot as hell but the second time at the damn Holiday Inn at Belton was not. I think you never hit me up again just because I said I didn't want anal. Sorry not sorry?

Dear Prince Albert:

I don't get you at all. You seemed confident, funny, smart, and even gentlemanly. Since you blew me off and then blocked me, I guess you didn't think I could handle whatever truth you had to lay on me. You said yourself that "douchebaggery was afoot." My curiosity is still piqued; that Prince Albert piercing is the stuff of dreams.

Dear Brit:

I smile when I think of you. You are jovial, sweet and honest. We had a kickass first date. You gave me a great story of a lost condom. I hope you are in love and happy.

Dear Baltimore Bartender:

I had an epic night at your bar which consisted of being on two dates at once at one point and being schooled on how to do a hip swing by a granny. Then we had a wild date, that has gone unmatched for

wildness actually. I follow you on the Gram and like seeing your life. Kisses.

Dear Zen Man who wasn't Zen...

You won me over with that photo of your cute dimpled face and that goddamn Festivus pole you made. We had a sweet lovemaking sesh and I kinda fell for you. We even went to a Chiefs game together. Perhaps your meds are off a bit but it wasn't a good ending. You are kind and good, just not a good high, drunk man.

Dear Smart Ass:

I bet you haven't forgotten me as I believe I gave you the best BJ you ever had in your whole life. Did I scare you a little? You dumped me for the Super Bowl and it kinda sucked. You wanted to own my vajajay from the first date but you didn't have enough personality for the down payment.

Dear Gen X Sexy Beast:

Saturday morning I was waiting at the light by Whole Foods heading to the bike trail. You rode by on your bike, messenger bag, black hair with flecks of gray. I bet you live in Brookside, only because you were on the bike with no helmet. You are probably a sexy professor at UMKC. No clue if you are single, nor your name, or if you're even a good guy. Just saw you and my heart went zinggggggg. I must have you. I will be hanging out at this intersection again. At 11 on a Saturday. To see... you know... if you go by again.

Artist Statement

Militantly authentic. Vulnerable. Brave. I have been told I am these things after I share one of my stories, which makes me worry that perhaps I shouldn't be so open with the world. But it is just who I am. I became single in 2019 and began writing about online dating. Oversharer extraordinaire. "The Year of Sluttery: Notes to My Lovers" is a piece from my manuscript titled, you guessed it, *The Year of Sluttery*.

An odyssey of purposeful sluttery begins after decades in two monogamous relationships. I decide to be a proud slut, reimagining that word as a positive life choice rather than a patriarchal, judgmental slur. My initiation into dating app shenanigans provides a candid and humorous look at GenX mating. Shedding the expectations of a married Southern Baptist woman buried in the Ozarks, I become a joyful feminist learning how to manage life solo in Kansas City. I give the men nicknames and don't give identifying information. The story isn't about them; it's about our interactions and what I learned.

In the past I was hired as a freelancer to write other people's stories. I'm pretty good at it. Then I finally started writing stories of my own experience in 2009 when I went through the National Writing Project's Summer Institute. I still like to write about others' journeys too. My favorite subjects right now are sex positivity, body positivity, single life as a woman, and dating as a GenX-er. (Okay, I'm a Boomer by two months but you can't make me claim that.) I have written about escaping many things including southwest Missouri, the Southern Baptist church, a decades-long terrible marriage to The Hillbilly, and six-year guy Hoppy Sporty-Sport (named for his love of TV sports and beer).

Through my writing, I am working on breaking my people-pleasing habit, ignoring the morality mongers, and lifting my voice to proclaim that among other things, sluttiness is a fine choice.

[1] This is an actual dating app.

[2] An infamous old mob hangout

[3] Friends with Benefits.

[4] Dick.

[5] Bullshit.

Credits

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