

FROM THE AUTHOR OF THE RUNAWAY BESTSELLER
ACT LIKE A LADY, THINK LIKE A MAN

STRAIGHT TALK

No
CHASER

HOW TO FIND,
KEEP, AND
UNDERSTAND
A MAN

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STEVE HARVEY

Straight Talk, No Chaser

*How to Find, Keep, and Understand
a Man*

STEVE HARVEY

with Denene Millner

 HarperCollins e-books

Dedication

*This book is dedicated to the memory of my beloved mother,
ELOISE VERA HARVEY,
who taught me my love and faith in GOD,
and to my father,
JESSE "SLICK" HARVEY,
whose sole purpose seemed to be to teach me how to be a man.
That combination has kept me moving forward even in my darkest days. . . .
I miss them so much. I hope I'm making them proud.*

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Introduction

I can hear her heels clicking on the cement, coming faster and faster, louder and louder. She was working her way up three levels of the circular parking lot—she’s skipped the elevators altogether and is running in the middle of the road trying to run me down before I make it to my car or to stop me if I start to drive away. Just as I am about to duck into the backseat, she catches me: “Steve Harvey! Steve Harvey! I . . . got . . . the . . . ring,” she says, waving her left hand in my face while trying to catch her breath from the impromptu workout. She swallows hard, takes another breath, and then starts in again. “You said to make marriage a requirement and tell him if he wanted to continue our relationship he needed to give me a ring. I did what you said to do and I got it, Steve Harvey. I got my ring!”

I hear stories like hers practically every day: some women send me letters, telling me they wish they’d had my first book, *Act Like a Lady, Think Like a Man*, on their bookshelves when they were wasting time with a good-for-nothing guy; some women e-mail me stories about how they would have better recognized the guy worth holding on to if they had known in advance what motivates men, which I shared in that book; still others call into *The Steve Harvey Morning Show* or show up to my book signings, relationship panels, and television appearances, or send questions

to my online dating site, thanking me for the insight and vowing to keep my advice in mind as they look for, get into, and forge relationships with the opposite sex. With more than two million books sold worldwide and translated into a myriad of languages in over thirty different countries, I'm proud to know that which I spoke about so passionately in *Act Like a Lady, Think Like a Man* was digested, considered, discussed, and ultimately applauded all around the world. I'm also grateful for the doors it opened for me. I have been labeled a relationship expert on a national morning show and in one of the most well-read and respected women's magazines in the world (though I will maintain that I am merely an expert on the mind-set of men in terms of how we think and why we do what we do).

I'll be honest. I did not see this coming. When I set out to write my first book, I did it only intending to share with women who send in questions to the "Strawberry Letter" segment of my radio program and show up to my comedy shows nodding in agreement about my observations on love and relationships, a no-holds-barred guide to understanding what men think about love, sex, dating, and marriage. My sole hope was that it would help women get beyond the myths, stereotypes, and general chatter that puts a stranglehold on the way they conduct themselves in relationships with us; my intention was to inform them about who we really are and what it takes to win in love with us when playing the "dating game."

My intentions were pure: I care deeply about these things because I am a husband, a son, a radio personality who speaks to millions of women daily via my radio show, and, most important of all, the father of four girls—beautiful young women who deserve good men who will love them, respect them, and treat them the way they want to be loved, respected, and treated.

What I found, though, was that *Act Like a Lady, Think Like a Man* simply wasn't enough. As I hosted relationship seminars across the country, I discovered that no matter how thoroughly I thought I'd explained what motivates men, women still had innumerable questions about why we men

act and react the way we do in various romantic situations. If I told a group of women that men are driven solely by what they do for a living, how much they make, and who they are, women wanted to know why stability is more important to men than falling in love. If I said men show their love by providing for, professing to, and protecting their significant other, my audience wanted to know why men can't love the way women love—by leading with their hearts. For every question I answered in the chapter, “Quick Answers to the Questions You've Always Wanted to Ask”—from “What do men find sexy?” and “Do you mind if your woman doesn't work?” to “Are men okay with their women having male friends?” and “Is getting on his mom's side important?”—there were fifty more topics I hadn't addressed.

There was also quite a bit of dissension. Some questioned why I counseled women to hold off sleeping with a man for at least ninety days while she investigated his intentions. Some argued that if they dared institute standards and requirements and tell men up front they were looking for serious relationships, they would run off guys who might be interested in them; others questioned whether I, a twice-divorced comedian, am qualified to give advice to women on how to have a long-term successful relationship.

All of these questions, observations, reservations, and demands for clarification and more answers reminded me that women are absolutely the most inquisitive creatures God has created; and no matter how many ways I explain something to my wife, my daughters, my female friends and colleagues, and especially my *Act Like a Lady, Think Like a Man* readers, women are simply going to want to hear the answers more ways than my first book had to offer, and no matter how often I or any other man says they should maybe think and act a little differently in their dealings with men, they're hesitant. Part of this is because other women, mothers, aunts, older female relatives, girlfriends, and (mostly female) editors of women's

magazines have been the ones primarily to guide and influence the way women conduct themselves in relationships with men. Rare are the times when men offer up their thoughts on dating and commitment, much less tell women how to make a relationship work. Consequently, when a man does speak up and out on the subject, it often seems to go against all of the advice women have previously received. So I understand some women's hesitancy to embrace the tactical advice I offered up—I get the fear it may have induced.

That's to say that your questions, concerns, complaints, and shouts registered with me—let me know that I needed to go deeper into my explanations about why men do the things that we do so that women could get an even broader understanding of how to either find the man of their dreams or tighten the relationships they're already in, and find satisfaction in their own strength, courage, power, and wisdom.

This time around, I get to the bottom of: why men never seem to do what you want them to do when you want them to do it; how to get the most out of your men sexually; and what men think about dating from decade to decade, from ages twenty on up. I also give a more in-depth visit to both the most popular and the more controversial topics sparked by discussions surrounding *Act Like a Lady, Think Like a Man*, including: what men really think about the long-held notion that we're intimidated by strong, independent women; creative ways to get a man to keep honoring your standards and requirements; learning how to ask men the right questions to get their truthful answers; and tested ways to get a real man to commit to you.

My hope is that when you finish reading this book and really think about the information I'm sharing with you, you'll have an even more informed understanding of men, and certainly an appreciation for how incredibly simple we are. We come at every situation from the same angle, using the same principles, seldom deviating. There really is no use applying your

thought process to the relationship equation or expecting your man to adopt your logic when it comes to dating and mating; you can't, after all, change men. I've had countless women ask me, "Steve, when are you going to write a book telling men what they should be doing?" Well, there is no lecture I can give, no panel I can sit on, no television roundtable I can host that will ever make a man pick up a relationship book and dig deep into it. He's simply not going to read it. I can bet you my bottom dollar that even if I were to give this book away, I could count on one hand the number of men likely to pick up a book about how to better get along with women. First off, a man would never allow another man to tell him what he should be doing in his own house with his own woman. Second, I can guarantee you he definitely doesn't want to hear Steve Harvey telling him what to do, not after I gave away the playbook in *Act Like a Lady, Think Like a Man*, and especially after I divulge all of men's relationship secrets here.

Mostly, though, I hope that the women who do choose to read this book find the courage to go against their widely held views on relationships and simply think about and put into practical use the advice I'm giving them in these pages. I understand it's hard to swim in uncharted waters—that it's scary, even. But I encourage you to open your mind and lose the fear. After all, the biggest cause of failure is the fear of failure. If you truly want to change your relationship fortune, why not give change a try? If what you've done up to now hasn't worked, why not try to implement what I've laid out for you in both this book and *Act Like a Lady, Think Like a Man*? Step out—be a risk taker; I'm not telling you to go rock climbing without a safety harness; I'm not saying to go skydiving without a parachute; and I'm not telling you to chain yourself up, submerge yourself in a tank full of water, and try to escape. I'm just asking you to consider thinking about relationships in a different way, based on all of the truths you'll find out about men in the pages of my books.

My sincere hope is that you'll use this information to empower yourself—to recognize that you hold the key to a successful relationship. I understand that many women don't quite care to embrace the idea that the burden of getting the union they want rests squarely on their shoulders, but it is what it is. You've been blessed with this tremendous skill set that we men do not possess, and it is those skills that you absolutely, unequivocally have to employ to get what you want.

Change your approach, take back your power, and hold your chin up while you're working on getting the love you deserve. Do this, and you'll have very little to lose, but a whole lot more to gain.

Part I

Understanding Men

1

The Making of a Man

I didn't have any business being married at twenty-four.

Yes, I believed wholeheartedly in the idea of marriage; after all, my parents had been married for sixty-four years before my mother passed away. And I had every intention of duplicating what they had: a stable relationship in a home filled with love, strength, perseverance, and wisdom. It was all I knew to do. So it made all the sense in the world to give a ring to the woman I loved and say, "I do."

And that was where the problem began.

In the weeks leading up to my marriage, I didn't have a steady paycheck to support my soon-to-be wife. In my heart of hearts, I knew this wasn't right. I'd even said as much to my mother; I told her I was going to call off the wedding because I wasn't working and it didn't feel right. My mother, being a woman who wanted to see her child married and knew how devastating it would have been to my fiancée to call off her dream wedding,

talked me out of canceling the big day. Invitations had been sent out. People were looking for the show. Who was I to rain on this festive parade?

Years later, my mother apologized and admitted she would never have talked me into getting married if she'd known how unprepared I was to be a good husband. By then, we were able to put our finger on what was missing—what was dooming my first marriage even before the spit on the stamps we put on those invitations was dry: I didn't know who I was, what I would do with my life, and how much I was going to make doing it. As I explained in *Act Like a Lady, Think Like a Man*, everything a man does is filtered through his title (who he is), how he gets that title (what he does), and the reward he gets for the effort (how much he makes). These are the three things every man has to achieve before he feels like he's truly fulfilling his destiny as a man, and if any one of those things is missing, he will be much too busy trying to find it to focus on you. He won't have it in him to settle down, have children, or build a life with anyone.

In my first marriage, I didn't have these things lined up by any stretch. I had dropped out of college and went to work at Ford Motor Company. Later I was laid off and didn't get a job until a month after we married. It was a way to make some cash, but I knew it wasn't what I wanted out of life—that it wasn't my calling. And I was frustrated by it. How could I get a wife to buy into me and my plans for the future when even I wasn't enthused by them myself? How could she know me if I didn't know myself? How could she benefit from what I did and how much I made if I wasn't doing or making anything? I was frustrated, our financial outlook was in shambles, and we were always at it—always fighting about something.

Because I wasn't a man.

Sure, she'd married a member of the male species and I had some good traits. I was kind and trusting; I was a very good protector; and I made no qualms about professing to anybody coming and going that she was mine and I was hers. And some good, a lot of good, came from our union: my

daughters Karli and Brandi and my son Steve. But I wasn't fully a man. And it cost us.

I wish my father would have warned me, would have sat me down and schooled me on the particulars of marriage. Perhaps he could've told me that a time comes when one needs to cut out all the foolishness—the screwing up in school, the fooling around with a bunch of different women. I wish he would've told me that if I didn't stop acting foolish by a certain age, there would be a cost associated with my lack of focus, with deferring my dreams of being an entertainer. Had he done so, a lot of pain would have been spared for everyone all around. He didn't share with me his thoughts on when a boy needs to focus on maturing into a man. He didn't tell me, “Steve, listen: you got a couple years to date a few women while you figure this thing out, and once you decide who you are, what you want to do, and how you want to make your money, go get a partner who can help you accomplish these things.”

That would have been a great lesson for my father to teach his son. But this isn't the way of men.

We are neither the greatest communicators nor sharers of information. There's no manual that says we should know sometime between ages twenty-five and twenty-seven what we want to do with our lives and by ages twenty-eight through thirty, we should be settling down with a woman who is as committed to helping us achieve our goals and dreams as we are to helping her achieve hers. What we constantly hear, instead, is “You're young—sow your oats, enjoy yourself, have a good time, don't get tied down, don't get serious with any girls.” And by the time we finish setting ourselves up financially and convince ourselves we're ready to settle down, we've fumbled through countless “relationships,” leaving women by the wayside, some of them shattered and bitter because we thought it more important to add a notch to our player belts than to act honorably. We've gone for that gold star some men award each other when they have more

than one woman at a time. And for *your* trouble? We get pats on the back—told over and over again that this is what we’re supposed to do if we’re real men.

Men hardly get pats on the back when they get married.

Even more, married men, whether they’re happily married or not, are constantly sharing the horrors of marriage with us, forever pointing out that all the freedoms single men enjoy come to a screeching halt when the ol’ “ball and chain” gets attached to a man’s ankle—that marriage is some kind of death sentence. Indeed, among men, conversations related to the ins and outs of marriage become conversations based on bravado and jokes, rather than the truth, which is that a marriage—one built on love, respect, loyalty, and trust—is the best thing that could ever happen to a man. Hill Harper pointed this out on a relationships roundtable we did together on *Nightline*; Hill, an actor who’s written a few outstanding books on communication between men and women, insisted that single men would benefit greatly if married men admitted publicly that behind closed doors, they are saying to themselves and their wives, “Thank God for marriage. Thank God for my family. Thank God somebody supports me and patches me together so I can go to work the next day. This marriage thing is pretty all right.”

It is, for sure, the completion of manhood.

And it’s high time we started teaching this to our young men early. We need to pull them aside and explain that there comes a time in which they need to cut out the foolishness. Because once we do we can get back to the business of finding one another, falling in love, creating a family, and spending a lifetime supporting and dreaming and growing—together. This is not something a woman can teach; a man who is twenty-two or twenty-three years old cannot have his mother sitting him down and talking to him about what it takes to be a man; she has no idea of the competition level on which we operate, what drives us, and what we face every time we head toward the front door and out into the world—no more than a man can

possibly fathom what it means to be a young woman. We love and admire our mothers to death, but they can't walk in our shoes; men and women are much too different, and she will miss the mark—from the simplest things, like how to shake after you pee, to the most complex situations, like how to square off against another man and, without anyone getting hurt in the process, still be able to walk away with your dignity intact.

Of course, I realize that telling women they can't teach boys how to be men isn't helpful; the world is full of single mothers going it alone while the fathers of their children run from the awesome responsibility of raising them. And it seems that many men who commit to their families by staying the course are often psychologically absent, lost as they are in their work. But it's imperative that boys who do not have their fathers around to show them the ropes get acquainted with some positive, smart, strong male role models—an uncle, a counselor, a coach, a teacher, a neighbor—so that they have someone to talk to, and that someone is vested in making sure that our sons learn the most important lessons.

For sure, I've been teaching this to my own sons, Wynton, Jason, and Steve. And that training starts the moment I open my eyes in the morning. Every day, I have my sons wake up the same time as me—no matter what ungodly hour in the morning it is. If I'm hitting the treadmill and weightlifting at 4:30 A.M., so are they. If I'm going into the office at 5:30 A.M. and I'm working by 6:00 A.M., they're dressed and on their way somewhere too. If they've got school or their study workload is a little heavy, they still have to wake up and, before they get themselves ready, text me their plans for the day—what they're working on and what chore they'll be completing before they sit down for breakfast. This is what typical morning texts from my sons look like:

May 22

7:06 AM (JASON): Soon, I will be an official Harvey Academy graduate. I take one more test next week and then I'm off to make you proud of me. Today I will sweep the front courtyard and study. Love you Dad, talk to you later.

7:10 AM (ME): I'm already proud. Just give me something to brag about. Give your dad some great moments for his twilight years.

7:11 AM (JASON): Yes sir. Looking forward to making that happen.

And when they mess up, I bring the pain, too. Like just this morning, all of them were supposed to be front and center down in our family gym at 4:00 A.M. to do a group workout with me. Hey, if I'm going to wake up and get on my grind before the sun rises so that I can provide their lifestyle, the least they can do is keep me company while I'm doing it. Well, 4:10 A.M. rolls around and I'm well into my workout and all of my sons were still knocked out; when I called Steve's cell phone, he told me they'd all "forgotten" the plan. I sent a text to Jason first, reminding him that just like in the jungle, the gorilla (me) is always on top of his game and the gazelles (my boys) aren't swift or strong enough to keep up:

7:59 AM (ME): Gorilla Silverback, 2, Gazelles, 0

8:00 AM (JASON): How'd you score two?

8:01 AM (ME): Gorilla takes what he wants. I get two points.

8:02 AM (JASON): I'm going to take one back this afternoon. Your Bible is in my room—LOL.

8:02 AM (ME): I told Ms. Anna to put it there. Now you can figure out why. Gorilla 3, Gazelles, 0.

8:06 AM (JASON): Dad how do you keep scoring all the time?

8:15 AM (ME): I never stop coming. This is from your insides, your guts, you hear? Your sinew. Your will to win. Your desire to show up and be counted. Your pride. Where is your pride for doing what you said you're going to do? If I didn't do what I said I was going to do, you all wouldn't respect me. My desire to be respected is so great in me that it pushes me to excel. Where is your pride?

I needed them to know that their father is cranking—that while they were sleeping, I was downstairs doing wind sprints and abs, and then at work earning a solid paycheck so that I could pay our bills to ensure we all have a roof over our heads, beds to lie in, and food on the table—a home. For me. For their mother. For them.

For all of us.

And I talk to them—constantly talk to them—about what it takes to be a real man. If more men truly understood what that means, it would really eradicate so many of the negative relationship issues we grapple with—fatherlessness, low marriage rates, divorce. The list goes on. My dad didn't talk to me a lot, but he showed me by example what it means to be a dedicated father and husband, taught me about hard work and the importance of using it to take care of your family; respecting your significant other and requiring your children to do the same; and being the best father you can be to the babies you make. Did I get it right? Not all the time. I failed at two marriages before I found my relationship stride. That is human. But each time, I drew lessons from the darkness—from the failures. And then I vowed not to let them happen again, not only for the sake of my wife and our marriage, but also to be that example to my children—my sons and my daughters—who are watching me and, like I did with my dad, using

my example to get clues about how they should treat a love interest, and certainly how they should expect to be treated by that love interest.

Topping that list of traits every man should have is “Do What You Say You’re Going to Do.” This is the hallmark of manhood. It’s how people judge you—how others determine which level of respect they’ll give you. We men brag about what we’re going to do all the time—“Oh, don’t worry man, I got your back,” and “No worries, I got you covered,” and “I promise you, I’ll be there”—but unless those words are backed up by actions, they mean nothing. Not to your boys. Not to your children. Not to your friends. And especially not to women.

Women don’t want to hear excuses for why you didn’t follow through on a promise you made, especially when it concerns the well-being of their children. But the man who says he’s going to protect his lady needs to be ready to do what it takes to make her safe. A man who promises to provide for his lady works hard every day to make a decent enough wage so that she and the family they made together can have what they need, and maybe even a little bit of what they want. A man who promises to love his lady doesn’t step out on her or hit her or wear her out emotionally and mentally; instead he loves her the way a woman wants to be loved—by being faithful and respectful and attending to her needs.

Success in doing all these things is based on that simple tenet of manhood: doing what you said you would do. If you’re not doing this, then everyone around you has the right to think that you’re just a raggedy dude—your woman has the right to say, “Girl, he ain’t worth nothing.”

I learned this the first time in my life when I was thirty, after I got kicked out of college and lost my job at the factory and my marriage hit rock bottom. I was living out of my car, driving up and down the road to comedy gigs, trying to establish myself as a comedian, and talking to myself all the way, from city to city, town to town, club to club. I wrote all my jokes out loud; I talked about life and how I got myself into the position

where I didn't have a home to go back to. When you're by yourself, you can really get some stuff worked out. I once went for three weeks without having anything more than a quick "Hello, how are you?" conversation with other human beings. I mean, I'd walk into a club, find the manager, and he would say, "Thank you for coming, buddy. You're on for twenty minutes, you get one drink at the bar," and then I'd go up there, tell my jokes, then the manager would come over to me after I'd go offstage and say, "Here's your money, sir—great job," I'd get back in my car and do it all over again. If I was only making seventy-five dollars per appearance, I couldn't blow my money on a hotel, and I sure couldn't waste it on phone calls to anybody, so I would stash my cash and stay in the car and wait for my next gig. You try going even two days without talking to somebody. I'll bet you can't do it. But I did that for three weeks and started asking myself some questions and answering those questions too. I found out a lot about myself and recognized that I wasn't being the kind of husband my wife needed me to be or the kind of provider I needed to be for her and the kids and even for myself. Simply put: I wasn't doing what I said I was going to do. And until I did that, I couldn't truly be a man.

I am not the only man who thinks this way. Over and over again while I was on tour with *Act Like a Lady, Think Like a Man*, men stood up and repeated the same ideals and sentiments. I'll never forget one man who made his way to the microphone at one of my events; he was bald, had a stylish beard, a nice blazer, and a white shirt. The women in the room took notice of him; he spoke about how in his last relationship, he was ashamed because he hadn't gotten himself together—hadn't achieved the career and financial status that he wanted to achieve. But, he added, he'd been working on himself and understanding what he was capable of and he was in a good place. "I'm a good guy," he said, "but I'm a helluva man. I don't have all the money in the world, but I got all the traits that make for a good husband. If you need protecting, I got you. If you need money, I don't have much but

what I do have, I'll bring it home. I'll give you my last name. I can do most anything with my hands, so if you need something fixed around the house, I got you covered there, too. And I do what I say, and say what I mean." And then he brought it on home: "What I've been missing is the right woman. If I had the right, stabilizing force in my home—the right support system—I would be even better."

That man finally knows what we all eventually come to know: that we have to learn how to be men before we can be anything to anyone who wants to love us—and certainly before we can love them back. But once we get it right? We come to something close to completion, the thing that makes men want to be better, not only for ourselves, but for the people we love. I can't count the many incredible things that have happened to me as a businessman, a provider, a husband, a father, and a man since the right woman came into my life; I've never in my life gotten the kinds of accolades and accomplishments I've achieved since Marjorie and I started our journey together. I've been on *Oprah*, *Ellen*, a correspondent on *Good Morning America*; I've been invited to speak at a church. *A church*. In my life nobody has asked me to be the keynote speaker in a house of the Lord. Ever. These things I've earned come not only from my deciding to do better, but from somebody seeing that there was better in me. People who've known me for years notice it. Hell, I have a picture of myself from 1995 in which I could see it—the physical toll that my lifestyle and choices were taking on my body, from not being the kind of man I needed to be and not having the right woman to complete the cycle of manhood. My face was sagging, I had put on a ton of weight, I just looked done; it was hard to believe I'd been that miserable.

Now I've put my house in order. I cleared my life of all its debris so that when the blessings did come, including first and foremost my relationship with God, my discovery of what makes me happy—success in my career

and a strong, loving woman by my side—I could receive those blessings and start doing right.

And I'm passing that message on to my sons so that they know the secret too: learn how to be a man first. Then find the right woman who can bring out the best in you—make you better. Marriage is not a death sentence. It's a completion.

My sons.

Steve and Jason passed those tests and earned the right to apply to college this past spring. With them, we're going to build a tradition. I was the first one in my family to go to college, but I flunked out. But my sons got accepted into Morehouse. When they got their letters, I sat in the chair in my office and cried; my sons are going to a prestigious college with a rich and proud legacy, and I couldn't be more pleased. When Jason saw me, he got a quizzical look on his face and asked me why I was upset, what they'd done to make me react in that way.

“You don't even know what this means for me, son,” I said simply. “I'm not turning out convicts, there are no babies popping out of the woodwork, and the two of you are going to Morehouse. Give me a moment to celebrate getting it right. This isn't about you.”

I recognize my job isn't over—that Jason and Wynton and Steve have quite a ways to go before they are full-on men. But they're on their way.

And I pray that they take the lessons I'm teaching them, and the lessons they'll learn along the way, and make quick work of being the kind of men capable of making someone—theirself and their intendeds—happy. That said, will they make mistakes? Yes. But my job is to limit them.