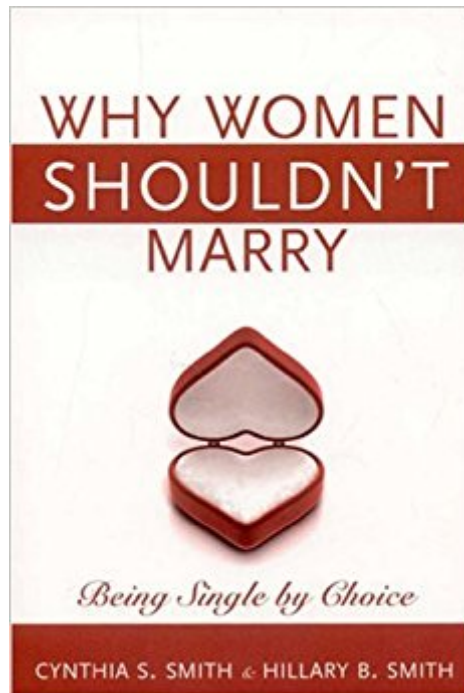




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Why Women Shouldn't Marry: Being Single By Choice



Synopsis

Cynthia and Hillary Smith show how women have long been driven to marriage by fears of their own inadequacies. Today's woman no longer needs to see herself as half of a relationship waiting for Mr. Right to come along and put it together for her. This book is an inspiration for any woman on the brink of giving up her independence to seek the security that the marriage has always promised but seldom provides.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

It can be a frustrating experience to be "a woman alone" in our society today. "Only one?" a restaurant hostess will still ask with a raised eyebrow. Even devoted family and friends may put pressure on us, as they see other members of our generation pair up and ride off into the sunset. Why don't we join the crowd? they wonder. It never occurs to most folks that we've made our lifestyle choices consciously and deliberately. "Why Women Shouldn't Marry" was first released in 1988. This second edition, updated 20 years later, was co-written by the mother-daughter team of Cynthia S. Smith and Hillary B. Smith. Cynthia is a widow; Hillary is a divorced single mom who's raising a son. Certainly both women are thus familiar with singlehood and have opinions and relevant experiences to share on the topic. They are passionate storytellers. They offer real-life examples from myriad women who represent various single situations. They advise female readers, both directly and by implication, to resist the inclination to get married simply because it seems to be the behavior expected of them. The Smiths provide plenty of food for thought for women to chew

on. And yet: there's an undercurrent in their approach that made me uncomfortable as I turned the pages. I felt an ultra-defensive attitude, one that was ready to rise to a challenge at any instant. The stereotype of the bitter, man-hating divorcee is tough enough to live down in person. A book like this may appear to (albeit unwittingly) perpetuate that image. And that's not at all a flattering impression of the single woman. If Cynthia herself harbors personal resentment, she has good reason.

At first I didn't respond positively to this book. I kept comparing it to my favorite book on being single (*Singled Out* by Bella DePaolo.) The book is set up as a series of anecdotes and stories. There's no reference to research. It's like joining the authors for Girls' Night Out, when everybody opens up after a couple of drinks. The Smiths present all the negatives of marriage, using one extreme example after another. Some women sacrificed their careers because they felt they ought to be married. Some stories were scary. For instance, a widow married a man whose daughters saw her as a gold-digging threat. She tolerated insults and humiliations rather than get a divorce and live alone. Single women, the authors say, avoid these messy situations. They don't have to answer to anyone. They create their own economic freedom. They enjoy their own company. Dining alone? No problem. OK, this is pretty strong stuff. It's easy to make counter-arguments. Clearly some marriages bring happiness to both partners. Doctors usually are arrogant, as the authors say, but I've known some happy doctors' wives. And being single isn't exactly a cake walk. DePaolo's book, *Singled Out*, provides some vivid examples. Service providers from restaurant staff to doctors view single people (especially women) as second class citizens. One doctor's receptionist addresses all women as "Mrs.," whether married or single. She refuses to change claiming she'll upset the married women if she uses the correct form of "Ms." Socially, married family and friends talk down to single people. Some singles even get relegated to the kids' table at holiday meals.

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