

SMART AND SINGLE

Or why your love life is nowhere

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Scripps-Howard News Service

YOU'RE a smart woman. You're beautiful. You're accomplished. You wear the right clothes. You own an RRSP.

Good grief, you're a woman to die for.

But your love life is nowhere.

So you search for reasons. All the good men are married. All the nice men aren't exciting. Everybody else is possessive or neurotic. You give up.

"Love," you conclude, "just isn't in the cards for me."

You may be a smart woman. But you're making foolish choices, say psychologists Connell Cowan and Melvyn Kinder.

They explain why in their best-selling book, *Smart Women/Foolish Choices — Finding the Right Men, Avoiding the Wrong Ones* (Clarkson N. Potter/Crown Publishers Inc.)

The book, a pop psych runaway hit, reached No. 3 on the New York Times' best-seller list for non-fiction.

That success doesn't surprise Kinder.

"So many women would come to us as patients or at lectures. They were doing wonderful things in their careers. But they were totally frustrated in their relationships. All these women were ask-

ing, 'Where are all the good men?'"

In fact, "There are loads of terrific men all over the place," says Kinder. "And they're looking for commitment."

The trouble is many bright, successful women aren't attracted to these men because they don't seem very exciting. "To these women, nice means nerd," says Kinder. "They think nice is boring and dull or weak."

In fact, a genuinely nice guy is probably kind, dependable and caring — actually not a bad combination, says Kinder.

But in some women's eyes, this man is a loser.

"It's a paradox, but the brighter a woman is, the more likely she is to want (the mysterious) kind of man. She wants to have it all. And to many women, 'having it all' means a man who is exciting and risky and thrilling."

And therein lies the fatal — and foolish — mistake, says Kinder.

One rarely sees that in men, according to Kinder.

"Men don't fantasize about relationships. They fantasize about sex. And as for risk-taking and excitement, they look for that in their work."

In fact, when it comes to relationships, men look for women who are dependable and caring.

But for women the elusive male is a challenge.

"He seems exciting and risky. In fact, he's just fool's gold."

This romantic mess is based on what the authors say is "a confusion between loving and longing."

Kinder explains, "Longing is that elusiveness, that yearning that feels so exciting at first. Loving, on the other hand, is something you can hold. The nice guy is always there, so he doesn't stimulate that longing and that sense of excitement. The problem is, the excite-

ment a woman feels with the risky guy is actually the beginning of a lot of pain."

The nice guy's excitement "comes from having the relationship grow," says Kinder, adding, "It's important to realize that plenty of terrific, nice guys want to grow into a relationship with a woman."

It's not a compromise to settle down with this kind of guy, Kinder says.

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