

He's Just Not That Into You, Part One

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If you are single, you have probably heard about this book. I just started reading it. Two people who helped produce the HBO show, *Sex and the City* are the authors. Its purpose is to help girls understand and interpret the language and behavior of guys, most of whom, according to the authors, are "just not that into them." The authors believe many girls needlessly struggle in relationships and stay with guys who are really not that interested.

Basically, the book is a series of vignettes and "letters" asking the authors for advice. This leads to a review of the litany of "lines and excuses" guys apparently use to either get the girl to do all the work or to covertly communicate, "I'm just not that into you." Herein is the authors stated purpose for writing the book, "...a man would rather be trampled by elephants that are on fire than tell you that he's just not into you"; "We wanted to get the excuses out of the closet..." (p.7). I have not yet finished the book, so I am going to reserve recommendation.

What concerns me as I read this book, and others, on relationships is the unfortunate lack of honesty and the need to learn how to "decipher" the words and behavior of another so as to not get hurt.

I can see why so many of the singles (divorced and never married) that I talk to shy away from relationships. Yet, I believe we were created for relationships by a God who is relational. Consequently, we have relational needs. These needs draw us into relationships, which we hope will be mutual and healthy. Unfortunately, due to past experiences, many of us are emotionally and spiritually wounded and have difficulty with intimacy. We have a hard time trusting - -so we keep our guard up. Since intimacy requires vulnerability and disclosure (trust words), our tendency to self-protect actually prevents the very thing we want. So we move toward one another with the hope that we may actually find someone who accepts us for who are, while at the same time, hiding at least part of our true self for fear of being hurt (again). Many of us settle for something less than true intimacy, which is ultimately unfulfilling.

Unless we come to grips with this dilemma, we will choose the same types of unhealthy partners, over and over, with the same outcomes.

Dating, as it seems to be portrayed in this and other books, encourages the use of a self-protective "false-self" which means we may achieve a form of approval from someone, but never likely have our deep intimacy needs met. Unmet needs lead to relationship failures.

I believe we need to develop healthy friendships that can evolve into healthy relationships. The goal is not to find the right person, but the right relationship.

Ultimately, we must learn how to trust, and allow others to love us. Without trust we cannot be loved. Without trust we hide our real selves and project a false self that we hope (but doubt) will be accepted (loved). **Jeff Parziale Ph.D., M.Div. is the Director of InStep Ministries.**