

I Wish
I Knew
This
Earlier

Lessons on Love

Toni Tone

I Wish

I Knew

This

Earlier

Lessons on Love

Toni Tone

4th ESTATE • *London*

Copyright

4th Estate
An imprint of HarperCollins*Publishers*
1 London Bridge Street
London SE1 9GF

www.4thEstate.co.uk

HarperCollins*Publishers*
1st Floor, Watermarque Building, Ringsend Road
Dublin 4, Ireland

This eBook first published in Great Britain by 4th Estate in 2021

Copyright © Toni Tone 2021

Toni Tone asserts the moral right to be identified as the author of this work

A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

All rights reserved under International and Pan-American Copyright Conventions. By payment of the required fees, you have been granted the non-exclusive, non-transferable right to access and read the text of this e-book on-screen. No part of this text may be reproduced, transmitted, down-loaded, decompiled, reverse engineered, or stored in or introduced into any information storage and retrieval system, in any form or by any means, whether electronic or mechanical, now known or hereinafter invented, without the express written permission of HarperCollins.

Source ISBN: 9780008458249
Ebook Edition © October 2021 ISBN: 9780008458263
Version: 2021-08-31

Dedication

For Simon Adenle, Catherine Adenle, Tomi Adenle and Tara Adenle. Thank you for being the most loving and supportive family.

To all the young women who are learning as they love, this book is also dedicated to you.

Contents

Cover

Title Page

Copyright

Dedication

Foreword

Section 1: The Dating Stage

Section 2: The Loving Stage

Section 3: The Healing Stage

Conclusion

About the Author

About the Publisher

Foreword

One question I'm asked a lot is what advice would I give to my younger self? In truth, I'd tell my younger self to just keep going, because everything I've done has led me to this moment. It has led me to writing this book for you. But let's pretend for a moment that I would still have written this book regardless of the choices I made when I was younger. In that case, I would most certainly give myself advice about love; this book is a manifestation of that. Why love? Love ties all of us together. Despite what some people might say, I believe we all crave it, we all want it, and we all love how love can make us feel. I love talking about love and reading about love, so it only makes sense for me to write about it too.

This book contains the lessons that would have been very useful to the younger me – lessons I wish I knew earlier. I want to be the big sister I didn't get access to. I want to introduce lessons from my past, which might help to shape your future for the better. These lessons were picked up in various ways: some through observing others, some through reading, some through listening, some through feeling and many through making my own mistakes.

In this book I want to share these learnings with you, in the hope that it may change your life. I'm sure many of the lessons I've included are things you've read or heard before, but I know how easy it is to forget the valuable nuggets and gems we pick up throughout life. Sometimes we just need to be reminded of things we already know. Sometimes we need to bring those things to the forefront of our mind and alight our subconscious. Sometimes we need a nudge and that's how we change our life. My hope is that you finish this book feeling like you will navigate relationships in a healthier, wiser and happier way.

This book is made up of three key sections: the dating stage, the loving stage and the healing stage. 'The dating stage' covers the lessons I learned

about getting to know people romantically. ‘The loving stage’ explores being in love with someone and the lessons I picked up about developing a healthy and happy relationship. ‘The healing stage’ touches on the painful topic of heartbreak and breakups.

One thing I want you to know is that you can read this book in the order that feels most relevant to your story and journey right now. Some of you will be experiencing post-breakup blues, so it only makes sense for you to want to jump straight into ‘the healing stage’. Do it. Read the section that you want to read right now, and the others can follow. Similarly, if you’re in a relationship and want to know more about what I learned from my own, feel free to start with ‘the loving stage’, and if you think you’ve just met the potential love of your life, get stuck into ‘the dating stage’. I want my book to work for you, so read it in the order that makes the most sense to you.

Lastly, I want to stress something before you begin reading some of these lessons. I often hear people say, ‘life is a journey, not a race’, and it’s true. Life is not something people just ‘figure out’. We are constantly growing, learning, adapting and changing, and because of that we can never have all the answers at once. I for one don’t have all the answers and I’m on this journey called life with you. The lessons in this book reflect the person I am today and the experiences I have had to date. You may read certain lessons and love them. You may read other lessons and disagree with them. I expect that. I want this book to generate open and honest conversations. So if you love something you read, talk about it. If you don’t like something you read, talk about it. As I type this now, I’m open to learning more with you, so being the digitally savvy writer that I am, talk to me – *#IWIKTE*.

Section 1: The Dating Stage

Dating isn't something that is taught to us formally and many of us have 'learned' how to date from watching television, speaking to friends or simply just figuring it out as we go along. For the majority of people, the latter is most true. This is my story. I had no big sister or brother at home to talk me through the complexities of getting to know people on a romantic level, so as the oldest child, I had to figure things out by myself.

I started dating at sixteen, and, like me, many people first jump into the dating scene as teenagers and their experience during this time is largely based on trial and error. This trial and error period comes with making many mistakes – some of which we carry on into adulthood. Many of these mistakes are shaped by society and how the world views the roles of women and men, coupled with how we view ourselves.

In this section of my book, I'm going to share several lessons I picked up through making my own mistakes, doing things right and watching people navigate their own dating lives. My hope is that after reading these lessons, you will reflect on your own dating life and you will consider some of the things you do well, do badly and should probably change. I want this section of the book to help you make better decisions for yourself. I made a few wrong decisions growing up, and many of these lessons are lessons I wish I knew earlier.

Date people who want the same things as you

Dating is easier to navigate when we know what we want to get out of the process. When we have a better understanding of what we're looking for, we have a better understanding of what we will and won't accept. We also do a better job of communicating our needs and wants to people.

One mistake I made in the past was dating people without really understanding what I genuinely wanted. At times I would find myself in relationships with people not because I truly wanted to be with them, but because everything around me suggested I should have a relationship. I would end up with people not because they possessed the characteristics I deeply desired in a partner, but because they were persistent, and I was single. Suddenly I'd be in a relationship and I'd find myself thinking, 'is this what you *really* want?'. Another mistake I made was knowing what I wanted, but dating people who wanted a completely different type of relationship to me. I went along with their vision, and I only realised their vision wouldn't work with mine when it was too late.

We can sometimes underestimate the value of having some direction before dating. Having direction doesn't mean we know exactly where we will end up at all times. Having direction is about knowing where we *want* to go, which often leads to us taking helpful steps towards getting there. This doesn't mean you have to enter the dating world with a very serious plan mapped out. Just consider what is driving you. Prior to dating a person, it's helpful to have a good understanding of what exactly it is you're trying to get out of it. Do you want something casual? Are you looking for a monogamous relationship? Would you prefer an open relationship? Do you want to date someone who is ready to find a life partner? Do you want to