

## **THE CHASE; If It Were Raining Men, She Would Forgo the Umbrella**

By NOMI PRINS (NYT) 952 words

Published: July 10, 2005

MY friend Melanie Rosenthal, a smoldering brunette in a short black dress, looked troubled as we drank tequila shots one Friday night at the club PM in the meatpacking district. "Is it just me, or does everyone wonder why I'm still single?" she asked.

"It's because you're not diversifying your dating risk," I replied, sounding like the corporate banker I once was.

She rolled her eyes. She had heard my dating theories before, but seemed willing to listen anyway, knowing that I never complained about men.

"You're selling yourself short," I continued, "by not optimizing different types of men for your portfolio."

Let me explain. In a chaotic environment like New York, searching for just one partner is too limiting. How do you know if your next object of desire is stuck in the Holland Tunnel, leafleting for Greenpeace at Union Square, or instantly accessible on Craigslist? And so, enter what I call portfolio dating.

Portfolio dating, my system for personal fulfillment, entails collecting people, not eliminating them. The point is to assemble an array of relationships with people who possess all the qualities you need, much like assembling a diverse stock portfolio maximizes long-term gain.

I separate my portfolio into three main categories. Type I, the Hookup Pal; Type II, the Platonic Boyfriend or Girlfriend; and Type III, the Motivator. In a perfect day, you have brunch with your Type II, and an afternoon date with your Type I, and you discuss book-jacket designs over late cappuccinos with your Type III. You can also have hybrid Type I/III relationships that satisfy both carnal and cerebral desires.

Karen Meola, another friend who was with me that Friday night, is a burgeoning portfolio-dating disciple, eager to learn who belongs in what category. "Alex, your trainer, is your Type III, right?" she asked me earnestly.

Indeed. Alex Romero is my favorite Type III. For years, he has been both my fitness drill sergeant and my shoulder to lean on, all with the understanding that our relationship was not sexual. He portfolio-dates too, and lets women know that. "If I'm upfront with women about what type they are to me and me to them," he told me, "it keeps things real."

But Melanie would prove hard to convince. "I barely have time to sleep," she said. "Where am I supposed to meet this portfolio of men? Besides, I have a soul-mate-finding system."

Her system was obviously not working, I told her. I urged her to open herself to alternatives, to ask a Type II to introduce his friends. "Your soul mate may appear when you're least expecting it," I said.

After several hours at PM, the three of us headed to the roof of the Gansevoort Hotel, where the skyline twinkled and women in citrus-hued sundresses mingled over \$12 fresh-mint mojitos with men in khakis. Melanie and I fell into a discussion with a group of Chicago traders in town for a Yankees-Cubs game. After they left, she turned to me. "They were too sweet," she said, noting that sex hadn't seemed to be on their agenda. "Type II's?"

"Bingo," I replied.

Later, as an indigo dawn streaked the sky, the three of us hungrily inhaled a breakfast of mozzarella sticks and pancakes at the Chelsea Diner. Soon, Saturday night beckoned, and my protégées and I began the evening at Bounce, a vibrant sports bar on the Upper East Side.

My friend Donna Battista wore her lucky top, a plunging black and pink halter. She was still brooding over the handsome Brit who had broken her heart by shooting her an abrupt "it's-been-nice" e-mail message.

"We just saw each other," she sighed. "Who breaks up over the Internet?"

"Type I's," I replied matter-of-factly. "You misclassified him. You can't make a tech stock a blue chip, and you can't expect a Type I to be faithful."

I recommended we migrate to my favorite dance club, Marquee, a den of old-style French elegance on Tenth Avenue and 27th Street that is outfitted with a sparkling chandelier and plush velvet divans. While my friends hit the dance floor, I received a text message from a prospective Type I, an easygoing bar manager whom I had met earlier in the evening, inviting me to join him at One, a club on Little West 12th Street.

When I arrived, he handed me a vodka cranberry and complimented my outfit. "That dress is hot," he said suggestively. "And it matches this drink." He was adorable, and a kiss sealed the deal. I added him to my portfolio.

Another friend observing from the sidelines, Cindy Casucci, a doctor and a hopeless romantic, whispered in my ear. "You guys have chemistry," she said.

"Type I," I agreed.

"No, beyond that," she said, grinning.

Photos: A "portfolio dater's" perfect weekend: Working out with a Type III; dining at Felix Restaurant in SoHo with a Type II; and dancing at Marquee with a Type I. (Photos by Left, Jennifer S. Altman for The New York Times; center and right, Diane Bondareff for The New York Times)

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