

Living Singlish: Your Life, Your Way
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Welcome to **Living Singlish: Your Life, Your Way** - an
'older sister in your pocket' for women making their way
in the world.

This is your free sample.

Following the Singlish principles will give you the
confidence to take on and master new challenges, and
build the life you want and deserve. Before you know it,
you will be the kind of woman that other women look up
to. You will be living your life, your way.

Make your own decisions, create the life you want. Why
wait to get started? Start living the Singlish way!

Thanks for your support, and best Singlish wishes,

Marne

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Introduction

Are you a young woman starting to build your adult life? Are you leaving the safety net of family help? Maybe getting ready for your first home away from family, and the first full-time job to pay for it all? It's scary! There are so many decisions to make, so much advice to consider, and so many ways to go wrong. You have tons of questions, but you're embarrassed to ask them. It seems like all of your friends are more in control of their lives than you are. Some of them are getting married, many have long-term relationships; and maybe that's not for you right now. You want an exciting, independent life – but you're a little afraid that it won't happen. Maybe you want to fast-forward by 20 years or so, just to see that it all turns out OK. Wouldn't that be cool? Unfortunately, that peek into the future isn't possible. But don't worry, wanting it is totally normal!

Living Singlish: Your Life, Your Way is the next best thing. In this book you'll learn 7 simple principles that will help you prioritize, make decisions, and shape your life. They will also help you make decisions that balance needs and wants, fun and responsibility. The principles will help you decide what is important and what you can ignore, so you can focus on building the life you want.

How do I know all of this? Well, not so long ago, I was you! I'd been to college and graduate school, and was starting the career I had always dreamed of. I found a job, a place to live, and started off as a real 'grown-up person.' It looked fabulous from the outside – and in many ways, it was. But I was secretly scared, and I wished desperately that I could look into the future and know what the consequences of some of my decisions would be. I have built a great life, with close friends, exciting vacations, interesting work and tons of fun; it's been worth the moments of inner panic. But I made some mistakes along the way that you don't have to make.

This book grows out of a discussion I had with a younger friend and colleague, who is a lot like you. Let's call her Jillian (it's not her real name). Jillian was looking for her first apartment that she would live in by herself. She had always lived at home, in dorms, or with friends or boyfriends. Now, at 26, it was time to go out on her own. She knew exactly what she wanted in the apartment: location, size, which way the windows should face...but she didn't know anything about her budget, how much things like heat, electricity and internet access would cost,

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or what it would take to furnish her new home. We ended up talking a lot about how you run your life on your own, when there is no one else to look after the bills, plan for the future, or be your 'safe date' for parties and trips. After a while of repeating the same things, I realized that there were just a few basic guidelines that made it easier. The more I talked with friends, the more I realized that we were all following the same 'rules,' without talking about it! Those unwritten rules became the Singlish Principles, and what started as a letter of advice to Jillian became this book.

The Singlish principles will show you how the successful, confident single women you see around you became that way. You'll learn how we prioritize, how we plan, how we present ourselves to the world so that everyone else can see our abilities. You'll learn how we balance work and fun, and how we balance what's important to do now versus what can wait.

When you follow the Singlish principles, you'll become stronger, more confident, and more capable. You will learn from the experiences of other women, some of them famous and some of them just like you and me. And you will begin to build the life you want for yourself, not the life that other people think you should live. Best of all, the book is for you as an individual; the principles can apply to every woman, but I wrote the book with single women in mind.

I promise that if you read this book, you will learn how to use these principles to improve your life. If you follow them, you will find yourself calmly making the decisions that used to intimidate you, taking on and mastering new challenges, and having loads of fun. Before you know it, you will be the kind of woman that other women look up to, because you will be living your life, your way!

Why wait to get started? Sitting and thinking about how scary the future is will never make you stronger. Don't let life get ahead of you. Before other people start making important decisions for you, based on what they think is best, start living the Singlish way. Make your own decisions, create the life you want. Start now...join the Singlish world!

Chapter 1: The Singlish Attitude

You have to face things, have faith in what you do and go for it.
Annie Lennox, Musician

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'My mother told me to be a lady. And for her that meant be your own person, be independent.'

Ruth Bader Ginsburg, US Supreme Court Justice

Two women are having lunch in a café. Although they are different in age, they look very much alike. The older woman, perhaps in her 40s, wears jeans, high-heeled boots, and a cashmere sweater. Her reddish brown hair is cut fashionably short. She speaks confidently, has a broad open smile, and laughs a lot. The younger woman also wears jeans, with low boots and a cotton sweater. Her long brown hair is held back in a single braid. She is full of questions, smiles and laughs but without quite as much flair as her older friend. Still, they seem so much alike, so in tune with one another that you would think they were sisters. Let's hear what they are saying....

Younger: Tell me again who you are?

Older: I am you – 25 years older. I'm always with you, because I have always been inside you. I remember what it was like to be you. So you can ask me anything. I'll never make fun of you, or think you are silly, because I had the same fears. I know you can do what it takes to be whoever you want to be, because I did it.

Younger: You seem so confident! What were you ever afraid of?

Older: Well, when I finished school I was afraid that I wouldn't find a job, let alone one that I liked and that would pay enough to do more than just cover the bills. I worried about finding new friends, and about making a life for myself. I didn't really want to get married and I wasn't sure about children, and I was afraid that I couldn't make it on my own.

Younger: That sounds like me! I don't want to get married right away, and I don't even want a boyfriend right now. I wonder if I will be good at my job, I worry about where I will live and how to save money. I worry about how to make friends if I move to a new city. Did you really struggle to do all of that?

Older: Absolutely! That's why I came back to talk to you. I wanted you to know that it's not that hard. There are a few principles you can follow, and if you do that, you will make the best decision you can at the time. If something goes wrong, you will know how to recover. You will

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grow into someone like me – actually you will grow into me – without as much worry and stress as I had.

Younger: Are you the only one like this? I mean, are any of your friends also single and happy? All of my friends seem to want to get married. I feel like I am the only one who thinks it's not for me. I can't really talk with my friends about it; I don't know if they will understand.

Older: There are lots of women like me. They all grew from women like you. At your age it can still be hard to talk about not fitting the traditional mold of wanting the big white wedding. That's fine, don't wish for what you don't really want. You'll see, as we talk I will tell you about lots of my friends, and even some famous women, who decided to live a Singlish life. There are more of us that you realize!

Younger: It's hard to believe that I could ever be like you...

Wouldn't it be great to have your older, more confident self nearby any time you had a question? You could ask her anything, and she would give you a straight answer, without thinking less of you or making you feel embarrassed. She could help you learn how to make decisions, overcome your fears about having an adult life, and enjoy yourself.

Sadly, we can't have that for real. But you can have it in this book. If you are a woman starting your adult life, this book can be your older self. Ask anything and the principles to help you get started are inside.

Who are you right now? You're probably in your twenties, either finishing university or starting your first 'serious' job. Maybe you are ready to set up your first home, with or without roommates. Whether you are partnered or single, wealthy or struggling financially, doesn't matter. All that matters is that you are about to take the big leap into adult life, you have a lot of questions, and you aren't sure where to turn for practical answers to help you build the life you want. Follow the principles in the book. You will develop a Singlish attitude and before you know it, you will be living a Singlish life!

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Why Singlish?

Singlish comes from 2 perspectives: Single and Not Single

Singl- because these are the skills, facts and attitude a single woman needs to look after herself, and not be dependent on anyone else to put a roof over her head, food on the table, and a stimulating challenge in front of her brain. In short, these are the basics for a fulfilling life as a single woman

-Ish because the same skills, facts and attitude give you the same advantages if you are partnered, as well as the confidence to know that you can make it on your own, if you ever have to. They are just as important for partnered women as they are for single women.

What is a Singlish Attitude?

Having a Singlish attitude means taking control of your own life and taking responsibility for how much enjoyment you get out of it. Singlish women choose the life they want, and then take steps to build it. The Singlish woman of any age makes her own decisions, plans her own life, and makes the most of her opportunities. She enjoys the good times, copes with bad times, and lives a full and interesting life as she defines it.

Singlish women don't live their lives on autopilot, letting someone else take the decisions that affect their futures. Remember, you are responsible for how your life turns out. Yes it can be scary. It's also a powerful feeling, knowing that you can make such important decisions for yourself. Who knows your wishes better? No one!

There are millions of Singlish and potential Singlish women in the world. According to the US 2010 Census⁴³, 22.8% of American women over 18 have never married. Another 9.8% are widowed, 11.4% are divorced, 2.7% are separated, and 1.3% describe themselves as 'married with spouse absent' – add it all up and you will find that only 52% of women are married with a spouse present. So you have plenty of company if you are on your own, by chance or by choice.

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As far back as 150 years ago, strong women were pointing out to the rest of us that we created many of our own limitations. The law in those years prevented married women (and we were all supposed to get married) from owning property, entering contracts, and controlling our own money, even if we had earned it ourselves or inherited it from our families.

For many years, in the middle and upper classes, the ideal woman was considered little more than a vessel for producing children. She had no right to own property or sign contracts. Back then, an unmarried woman had to live at home, or with some other ‘protective’ family member(s), living her life in service to their needs as a governess, or as a devoted caregiver to elderly relatives. Women’s brains were considered fragile, easily overexcited, or incapable of making rational judgments.

Fortunately, times changed. Single women can now take advantage of all life has to offer. The Singlish woman does it with gusto. She looks after herself, makes her own choices, and lives the life she wants. She doesn’t have to ‘serve’ anyone in order to justify her existence, and doesn’t have to depend on anyone else to make important decisions or provide her with money so she can survive.

Elizabeth Cady Stanton, the famous activist for women’s equality in the 1800s, once wrote about assumptions of female inequality, ‘The worst feature of these assumptions is that women themselves believe them.’ (The Matriarchate, or Mother Age, 1861). To Elizabeth, it was about attitude. When we accept that others know more about what’s better for us than we do, we make ourselves childlike. Letting go of those assumptions makes you stronger, more Singlish. When we let go of the myth that ‘women aren’t good at that’ we take responsibility for ourselves and our own lives. It’s a fundamental part of the Singlish attitude.

Being a Singlish woman can sound a lot like being a stereotypical man. Sure, most men make choices about their lives that consider the needs of their loved ones. But if they choose a job, relationship, or activity based mostly on what’s right for them alone, no one is surprised. Even among highly educated couples, this holds true. A 2014 survey of Harvard MBA graduates ¹⁹

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found that the man's career usually became the lead career, regardless of what each person's original assumption about career precedence would be. That was true even if the couple had agreed at the beginning that it wouldn't be that way! If that's not what you want for your life, you need to follow the Singlish principles. Being Singlish means having the confidence to fulfill your own needs and wishes, and to recognize that as your right.

How is Singlish Different Than Being Single?

Being Singlish is not the same as being single. Being single is the fact of whether or not you are partnered, be that with a spouse, a common-law spouse, a civil partner, or a long term (or short term) informal companion. Single people can live alone, or with someone else: friends, relatives, or children. Most often, though, the single woman who loves her life will, in fact, be Singlish, whether she calls it that or not.

Being single is neither good nor bad, in my eyes, it simply is. To quote Judy Ford, in her book *Single: The Art of Being Satisfied, Fulfilled and Independent*, 'being single is not a condition to be cured.'²¹ I love that line; it really sums up for me that being single is a fact, not a judgment, and it does not give anyone else the right to judge you. It doesn't even have to be permanent; there is no age at which a single woman becomes too old to find a loving partner if she wants one, and is physically and mentally able to engage in a relationship.

Being Singlish is different. Being Singlish means recognizing that, whether you are alone or in a relationship, you are a whole person with valid needs, wishes, skills and abilities, fully capable of making decisions and steering your own life. It actually has very little to do with your romantic status.

Being Singlish doesn't mean giving up on love, or on dating, or on children, or on life. Nor does it mean that you must focus on your career to the exclusion of everything else, or wear those 1980's style suits with enormous shoulder pads. You can be Singlish and single, Singlish and paired or married, or single and not Singlish. Most Singlish women are single, if not for their entire adult lives than for significant stretches of time.

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Being Singlish means getting off the dating treadmill when you don't want to date, and hopping back on if someone interesting comes along. It might mean getting married someday. Or it might mean getting divorced. Either way, it's your life and these are your choices.

For you, living Singlish may mean having a child by yourself by any of the many means available to women these days. Or it may mean for you, as it did for me, acknowledging that children are just not what you are looking for out of life. And again (assuming your biology will cooperate) you can change your mind at any time. Being Singlish is, ultimately, about choice, freedom, and self-determination.

I believe there is a Singlish woman in each woman on the planet. You need only look for her to find her inside you.

There have always been Singlish women in the world. These women broke society's restrictive bonds and carved meaningful lives for themselves. Some were famous women, whose names and lives are well-known. Others were known only to their friends and family. In this book we'll meet a few of them: strong, independent women, living by the basic Singlish principles: know who you are and what you want, make your own decisions, and run your own life. Their experiences can inspire us, instruct us, and give us hope when things are tough. There are Singlish women around you every day, and there's a Singlish woman inside you. All you need to do is let her out!

First let's rejoin our two women in the café.

Younger: OK, I guess I believe you, that you are really me. I still have a hard time believing that I can turn out as confident as you are, but I suppose I can give it a try. I have so much to ask you! First of all, you mentioned easy principles that I can follow. What are they?

Older: I'm so glad you believe me! You'll see, it's really pretty simple. There are 7 basic principles for living a Singlish life. I'll tell you what they are, and each time we work on one of your questions, we'll refer to the most important ones for that situation. The seven principles are....:

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