

# FINDING

# THE

# BLISS

# ATTAINING

# IT

A FORTYSOMETHING WIDOW, A KATRINA SURVIVOR IN HER TWENTIES, A THIRTYISH DIVORCÉE, A SINGER IN HER FIFTIES AND A SEVENTYSOMETHING FASHION DIVA ALL FOUND THEIR SOUL MATES WHEN THEY LEAST EXPECTED IT. AND YOU CAN, TOO!

BY TATSHA ROBERTSON

Lack women across the country are finding true love. The key to getting the love you want, relationship experts say, is to rethink old adages and rules. For starters, that laundry list of required traits you want your mate to have should be flipped on its head, says Nisa I. Muhammad, founder of Wedded Bliss Foundation, a community organization that fosters healthy marriages. "Instead you should have a list of qualities you have to offer. What do we have on that list about ourselves? Think about who you are and what attributes and qualities you have."

Women who love themselves are extremely attractive to others, says Celeste Owens, Ph.D., a motivational speaker and psychologist in Washington, D.C. Think about it: The friend who found the love of her life probably spent a lot of time working on herself. "When I met my husband I wasn't actually looking," says Owens. "During that time I was diligently working on loving and appreciating me." After years of picking the wrong man, she says, she realized the common denominator was herself. "I didn't know my worth, so I would accept anything," she reflects. "I had to slow down and work on me."

To find their soul mate, Muhammad says women of all ages should leverage the one thing no one can change—their age. In other words, they should allow their stage of life to guide the choices they make and the qualities they seek in a life partner.

"In your twenties you are looking to spend the rest of your life with someone," she says. "You do have more leeway. You can have that list of what you want in a mate, but the more important thing should be what you have to offer." She says women in their thirties have more experience and can refine what they want. Do they want a child? Do they want someone who appreciates their career? Women in their forties are very compelling to others because they "are more comfortable with who they are," she says. "They know what they have to offer." And women in their fifties or sixties are generally not worried about childbearing and have seen people come and go, says Muhammad. "This woman's travels in life make her able to better understand a partner's travels," adds Muhammad. "She is more patient and that is very attractive. She has more understanding, and she is looking from a different perspective. That is better than any list." ▽