Hand Shui –What the Ring Placement on Your Fingers
Tells about You and Relationships

By Barbara A. Berg

In today’s world, so many women, (including myself), have found themselves continually striving to become what they believe to be “their true selves” on their own in an “insistently independent way.” While this can be an invigorating (and at times scary, frustrating, and add your own words, experience), it can also become confusing as you go to re-merge in new intimate relationships. This can also be challenging to say the least, when you are “renegotiating” how to move forward in long standing relationships, as for example, you possibly go back to school or start up a new business.

Looking back, when I left my husband of over 17 years at approximately 44 years of age, I remember telling myself, “I am going to learn how to be married to myself at least for a while.” This seemed to feel good for a time. I also remember wearing a ring on my middle finger.

One day, during an appointment, my chiropractor, who was a very wise man in many ways, told me that wearing the ring on my middle finger was actually inviting more conflict in my relationships. He said it would be more helpful in terms of “connecting harmoniously” if I wore it on my pointer finger or even on my fourth finger on my right hand.

In that moment, I thought inside myself, about how I was actually getting to the point where I wanted to start considering letting new love into my life, but I just felt conflicted about how to be with all that. (Should I come off like I just don’t care? Would it be a good idea to just say on a first or third date that I’m tired of all this dating, and I just want to pretend that we’ve known each other for a million years and just be happy? Would I feel like I would lose all the progress I felt I made if I let someone in? Do I say I don’t really need anyone?) All that.

I decided I really wasn’t satisfied about how my life was going and I was willing to consider another angle. I took off my ring and put it on my pointer finger.

Soon after that, my attitude toward dating and possibly loving and being loved by someone again, seemed to shift into being more “willing to see it all in a new and gentler way.” I began to be willing to say, “I need someone in my life.” I began to ask for help sooner rather than later like I usually did. I started to believe there was love available to me, and if it didn’t work out with one person, I would be willing to wait for the next person who seemed to have “real possibilities” or keep myself available to something new. It all reminded me of the quote from Marcel Proust, “The real voyage of discovery consists not in seeking new landscapes, but in having new eyes.”
And then, one day, I met George. - That was in 2002. It’s now 2008 and we just celebrated our first wedding anniversary. – I’m learning how to “do relationship” in a whole new way. That is, “interdependently” asking for what I need and actively pursuing the direction I want to take with my life, and how it is happily and fully intertwined with his. I’m actually letting love lead the way. It’s not like the “chokehold” I used to think putting a relationship first would be, but a dance that I’m truly enjoying.

I’m learning when to “nurture the relationship and when to attend to me.” I see life as “us” and not “me.” (This is definitely new for me. It didn’t come naturally, to say the least. It was like I had to relearn how to stop limping when I walked, insisting that it was all more important to “do it my way,” even if it didn’t work.)

Meanwhile, over the last decade, I found myself observing the “ring wearing habits” of men and women, and began to see patterns in the relationship behaviors of people to the point that I could notice the positions where they wore their rings, and get insights about their attitudes about relationships both at work, at home, and out in the world.

I’ve also noticed a lot more rings being worn on the middle finger and the thumb, over the past few years especially. While it is trendy and “in” to do so “on one hand,”(no pun intended), what if, without discussing it, there is just a group “subconscious consensus” that relationships are difficult (middle finger), and you can only really count on yourself in the long run (thumb)? It seems as if we are “saying without saying,” “as much as I want to be with Mr. or Ms. Right, all I really have is me.”

“Having yourself” is certainly “enough” and definitely important. However, unless you genuinely want to take the route of doing it all yourself and being alone, there really are people who really do want to be available to be in your life. However, it may require you to look for them and “be” in a way that has a willingness to see things differently or more open-mindedly than you had been thinking you were up for in your past. It’s understandable that at times, it just may seem “safer” to be independent and at too much trouble to be interdependent or partnered.

Is it possible we really are getting quite afraid there are no more “good people out there,” subconsciously, when perhaps we’re all just getting too scared to fully trust the process of “going all out again?” Is it possible we are expressing this is some way in our ring wearing patterns without realizing it?

I invite you to consider the following thoughts, and let me know how it’s going with you. The bottom line to remember here is: if you are wearing your rings on the fingers I suggest you don’t, and you are truly happy with how your life is going right now, by all means leave them there and enjoy!

However, if you sense that life is too frustrating, angry making, or leaves you wanting…. just consider the possibility of trying out some new “ring positions” for a couple of days and even longer, and see what happens. (It just demonstrates a willingness to restake a claim for love.)

If perchance you find yourself not so quick to want to make any changes, I so understand!! There is a lot of emotion tied in with where we place our rings and what feels comfortable to us! I remember not feeling so sure about all of this when I first moved my ring when my chiropractor first asked me to!

If you do go to move your rings, be sure to get them sized or wear ring guards first so you don’t lose them. Very important!! In any event, I hope you enjoy reading through all of this, and “more empowerment to you” whichever way you go!
So here it is:

1. **Middle finger**: It may not surprise you to read that it is apparently not such a good idea to wear rings on your middle finger. It could be a sign without your realizing it, that you might be inclined to pick an unnecessary fight or could be feisty at a time where it doesn’t work out so well for you! This does stand to reason when you think about how it’s not such a good idea to stick your middle finger out at someone, as that can bring on a relatively strong negative reaction!

   Especially if you are not happy with some aspect of your life right now, or how you are getting along with someone in particular, it might be advantageous to try taking off your ring from that finger and put it on your pointer finger on any hand or have it sized down to fit on your right fourth finger.

2. **Thumb**: Ah, the thumb. This is perhaps the fastest growing trend today, along with wearing a ring on your middle finger. Look around you. Thumb rings are everywhere!

   If it feels good to you to wear your ring like this and you are married, check in with yourself to see if there may be some feelings of wanting to or needing to “run the show mostly all your way,” or consider doing something on your own and possibly go in your own direction. You may also be feeling somewhere inside, that even though you are “partnered,” you are at time feeling “stuck” taking care of everything, while your partner may feel “stuck” with you in some way too.

   While there’s nothing wrong with all of this “really,” and it just may not be all that close to the surface, I just invite you to consider whether or not you are appreciating the man in your life or you might be taking him for granted. Or, does it feel like he takes you for granted, and on some days you are just sick of the whole thing? This happens so much with couples; and it is actually an opportunity to be open to being willing to let things “turn around” for the better between the two of you. We’ve probably all been there at some point or another!

   If you’re single or separated, perhaps you’ve had it with men and you wonder if you’ll even fall in love again. I do know some women who find themselves starting to wear a thumb ring when they are considering leaving their man or when they have just left one. Others wear it once in a while and enjoy doing so. Still, other women are wearing rings on their thumbs because they’ve seen “everyone else doing it,” which isn’t a bad reason at all. Just think for a moment; are you really happy with the relationships in your life, or are you frustrated and feel alone?

   If you’re just not happy with how your interactions with those who are close to you are going, you might consider wearing your ring on your pointer finger on either hand. That might possibly help your make “an inside transition” to being more open to see another person’s point of view in almost all your encounters, and let them more into your life in a positive way.

3. **Pinkie**: Now this is an interesting finger. Wearing a ring on your pinkie once in a while, especially if it is a fun “dinner ring,” can be fun on occasion. If that is where you wear it all the time, it could be a sign that your are “cavalier” about relationships, or nonchalant or carefree about them and may not take them too seriously. (This may not be such a bad idea, especially if you want to take a break from any heavy romance at this time, and you just want to enjoy having relationships as “an aside.”)

4. **No rings**: This appears to be because you either don’t particularly like wearing rings, (not everyone does), or you are waiting for someone to put a ring on your finger, (which isn’t a bad
way to go at all if you are in the market for a new committed love). When a man sees you with no rings on your fingers at all, it’s a possible sign to him that you are truly available, and are not beholden to anyone else. It could signal him to come forward.

5. One ring on your right hand: This is actually a positive position to take if you are “in the market for a new love,” or just like who you are. What’s nice about this is the size of the stone ring could be a hint to someone who cares, that you’d like an engagement ring this size also!

6. Wedding ring on left hand and ring on your right hand, fourth finger. This appears to be a nice balance. If you are doing this now, keep going. It’s a good sign. This appears to demonstrate a peaceful, happy marriage, especially if the ring you are wearing on your right hand is also from your husband, or he is not feeling threatened in any way by where you did get the ring. If you’re not happy with where you are at in your marriage, do what you can to revitalize it is some way and/or get some help in doing so.

I do advise reconsidering doing what some women do, which is, they wear the wedding and engagement ring from their present husband on their left hand and their engagement ring from another husband on their right hand. While this might be something to do once in a very blue moon, I don’t advise it, as it could throw your present husband’s feelings of security and having “all of you” off for a time and “rock the boat.”

7. Wedding ring on left hand and one ring on your pointer, (either one): This is a lovely, “updated way” of wearing your rings, and shows a creative side about you. It can be helpful in bringing about creativity for you in some form of self expression or a new business venture; or it expresses that you are being creative in how you are being in your marriage or are dealing with some issue or transition. Keep going! – You are on the right track!

8. Wedding ring with engagement ring on left hand only: This is the sign of a woman who still can experience the romance in her marriage with her husband, and is still “engaged in her marriage.” Even as the years have rolled on, marriage still holds a “fresh, loving, and hopeful” feeling for you at least somewhere in all this. It is a sign of “interdependence” and acting in partnership. More power to you! *

9. Wedding band only: You’re married and you know what commitment is about. Keep forging ahead!* 

* If you are wearing anything pertaining to your marriage on your left hand only, and you are not so happy in it all, even if you are wearing it out of habit or perceived “duty,” it could still be a sign that you still believe in love and marriage and have hope for it all somewhere. It may be time to do something to bring a spark back into your marriage and try something new, or even get some professional help, even if it is just for you. (I would suggest this to anyone who feels unhappy in some way and can’t seem to shake off that feeling.)

10. Wearing rings on one or both pointers: This is truly a good place to wear your rings for creative self expression that is much more cooperative and certainly not as competitive as wearing them on the middle finger. It is a good middle ground between “independent” and “interdependent thinking.”

I see it as the creative ring finger for “today’s woman forging ahead with willingness to see and do things creatively and cooperatively, while listening to new ideas with an open mind.”
11. Making the most change in considering moving your “inner thinking in an energetic way,” from “independent thinking” to “interdependent thinking”: (This is really asking a lot and may bring about the most change inside and out.-) If you are wearing a ring on your middle finder and one on your thumb, try to wear one on your ring finger on your right hand and your pointer on either hand instead. If you are married and wear a wedding ring on your left hand, wearing a ring on your pointer finger rather than the middle finger on the same hand is a lovely way to creatively work within the realm of your marriage.

The reason why moving your rings in this way could be so helpful is that it appears that the combination of wearing rings on the middle finger and thumb is actually a “double whammy.” For what it is or isn’t worth, as it appears to me, that while the middle finger invites conflict (picture pointing the middle finger at anyone), wearing the ring on your thumb is stating, “even if I am married to someone else, I can run my own show at any time, and deep down I only really can only really count on myself after all is said and done.” While it is truly important to know you always could depend on yourself if you had to, it truly helps the relationship if that isn’t always held up in the other person’s face as a threat to them, but instead as a way to say you both could take care of yourselves, but you prefer to do it together.

As mentioned before, it is very trendy and in to wear rings on your thumb right now, and fun to do on occasion or if it really does help you feel more empowered, (as long as you don’t confuse empowerment with an attitude that keeps you alone or annoyed).

Thank you so much for reading this. This idea is still evolving, and I appreciate your thoughts and input. This article is in no way telling the readers what is best for them. – These are only suggestions, and they are in no way in lieu of getting professional help for your relationships or your self. I’m mainly asking, “Are you thinking more “independently” or “interdependently” in your relationships, and is it working for you?

Changing the fingers on which I wear my rings has had a positive impact on me. It may be useful to you. More love and empowerment to us all!

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