

# The Tao of Steve

(Comedy) (2000)

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## Major Characters

- Dex.....Donald Logue  
 A 32 year old school teacher's assistant from Santa Fe, New Mexico, who is lazy, over-weight and certainly not handsome. Still, he is highly educated and philosophical, and has mastered "Taoist philosophy" to seduce women.
- Syd.....Greer Goodman  
 An attractive stage designer for operas and plays who meets Dex at their 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary college reunion, and who, against her better judgement, becomes romantically involved with him.
- Dave.....Kimo Wills  
 Dex's young and innocent roommate, who tries to learn the Taoist philosophy from Dex in order to be more successful with women.
- Beth.....Ayalet Kaznelson  
 A married woman who is having an affair with Dex.
- Ed.....John Hines  
 Beth's husband.
- Rick.....David Baker  
 A good friend of Dex.
- Maggie.....Nina Jaroslaw  
 Rick's wife, who is also friends with Dex.

## Plot Summary

This is the story of Dex, an over-weight, lazy, 32 year old elementary school teacher's assistant who lives in Santa Fe, New Mexico, with several roommates. Dex is not wealthy or good-looking, and given his life in general, most people would think he would have lots of trouble being successful with women. In fact, though, Dex is extremely successful, because he is intelligent and philosophical, and he has mastered what he calls "Taoist philosophy" (See below). Women find him charming, and some find him irresistible.

One day Dex goes to his 10<sup>th</sup> year college reunion, where he sees many of the women he had slept with as a student, including an attractive stage designer named Syd. In Syd's case, though, he doesn't remember ever having been with

her. Still, he finds himself instantly attracted, and even though he is already having an affair with Beth (who is married to Ed), he soon finds himself falling in love. Of course, this is very much against the Taoist philosophy he strictly tries to follow....

### A Note on Dex, Women and “the Tao of Steve”:

Taoism (pronounced Daoism) is one of the great Eastern religions, which originated in China around 500 BC. It is based on the writings of the philosopher Lao-tse. Like Buddhism, there is a heavy emphasis on being “one with the universe,” and of trying to control one’s own physical desires in order to find true happiness or wisdom. Dex applies this philosophy as a method of attracting women, and calls it the Tao of Steve, because for Dex, three of the “coolest” men ever are the actor Steve McQueen, and the TV characters Steve McGarrett (from the 1960s show Hawaii 5-0), and Steve Austin (from the 1970s show The Six Million Dollar Man). Dex feels all three could easily attract women because they clearly understood the Tao.

Specifically, Dex expertly attracts women by applying three “Taoist rules:”

- 1) Eliminate your desire (Do not “want” sex, and do not try to get it).
- 2) Be excellent in their presence (Show women just one thing that you are very good at it, even if it’s just throwing a frisbee or baseball).
- 3) Withdraw (Just when women become a little interested in you, retreat from them, so that they will become even more attracted).

True Taoists would probably argue that Taoist philosophy has nothing to do with any of this, but for Dex, it seems to work....

### **Some Words and Expressions that You May not Know**

***Dex goes to his 10<sup>th</sup> year college reunion, sees a lot of women he slept with, and then goes home to tell Dave about sex.***

Do you remember Bill, back at the seminar?

A class in which a few students seriously study an academic subject, such as the works of just one philosopher.

Looks like you put on one or two pounds.

“To put on” pounds is to gain weight.

Wow! It’s cool that you became a priest.

“Wow” is a common way to express surprise or excitement. “Cool” is a common colloquial way of saying good, excellent or perhaps young and fashionable in attitude.

I thought about being a priest...like Episcopalian.

A division of the Christian Church (but Priests are only Catholic).

I think it's cool that you get to hang out with God all day.

To "hang out" with a person is to spend time with them.

I teach, I counsel. I work with the homeless.

"To counsel" a person is to advise them, usually on a serious subject.

Moral turpitude?

"Turpitude" is an educated word for horribly immoral, unethical or vile (and is most often used in the phrase above).

Actually, I was accepted to divinity school.

The school that one goes to in order to become a priest, rabbi or other type of religious leader.

"Lord, give me chastity and virtue, but not just yet."

"Lord" is another word for God. "Chastity" is the practice of not having sex, and "virtue" is the quality of being a good and moral person.

Take care. :: All right.

A colloquial way of simply saying goodbye.

I can't believe how much weight he's gained.

:: I can't believe you went out with him.

"To go out" with a person is to see them in a romantic way, often by going on dates to restaurants, concerts or movies.

You slept with him, didn't you? :: I might have.

"To sleep with" a person is to have sex with them.

I have a confession to make.

A "confession" is the act of admitting to a crime, sin or something embarrassing (In this case, having slept with Dex many years earlier).

A Long Island ice tea is like a survey course in world religions.

"A Long Island ice tea" is a popular type of alcoholic drink.

A "survey course" is a class in college that introduces students to a large general topic such as philosophy or history.

Hinduism. Taoism. Buddhism. Confucianism. Zorastorianism.

Islam...and the sweet twins of Judaism and Christianity.

The names of the world's major religions.

Then we come to the lone contribution of Western Civilization.

"Lone" is another word for only or single.

Voila, Long Island ice tea.

This is a popular French word that basically means “and there it is.”

We were in Bennet’s Kierkegaard class.

A well known German philosopher.

Must have made a big impression on you.

“To make a big impression on” a person is to act in such a way that they will not easily forget them (Note that the pronoun “I” is dropped from the beginning of the sentence, which is a common practice).

I’m getting a refresher; Anyone want anything? :: I’m cool.

“To refresh” a drink is to fill up the glass again, and thus a “refresher” is another glass (though this is rare). In this case, “I’m cool” is a way of saying “No thank you, I’m not thirsty.”

Why did I come? :: You’ll live to tell.

If a person “lives to tell,” they survive something horrible or dangerous (In this case, the reunion).

Are you Speaker of the House yet? :: I’m a forensic anthropologist.

A “Speaker of the House” is the leader of the House of Representatives in the US Congress or other political body. “Forensic” refers to the application of science or knowledge that can be legally used in court, and an “anthropologist” studies different civilizations.

You kissed that like you kiss your mama. :: Very Steve.

“Mama” is a very old-fashioned word for mother. In this film, if something is “very Steve,” it is excellent, or more colloquially, cool.

It’s got a broken infarculator. :: I hate when that happens.

A nonsense word that Dex invents for a part on his motorcycle.

“I hate when that happens” is a funny thing to say when something happens that is extremely rare, or in fact never happened before.

Dave, I heard you got a honey lined up for the weekend.

In this case, “a honey” is a girl, but this is rare and silly. If someone is “lined up,” they are ready to go (In this case, ready to go out with Dave).

Bro, I’m so full-on amped about this chick, man. :: You’re already dead in the water.

“Bro” is short for brother, and a way friends may refer to each other.

“Full-on amped” is a very slangy way of saying extremely excited (An “amp” is a unit of sound). A “chick” is a slang word for a young woman, and “man” is a very common and slangy filler word that has no real meaning. If a person is “dead in the water,” they are probably going to fail at what they wanted to do.

You're road kill. :: What are you guys talking about?

If a person is "road kill," they are like an animal about to be killed by a car (which is to say they are almost for sure going to fail).

You're violating the first rule of being Steve; Learn to eliminate your desire.

"To violate" a rule is to break or ignore it.

It's Buddhist. :: I think the Taoists said it first.

Buddhism and Taoism are separate religions or philosophies.

Just a short seminar on the elimination of desire.

"To eliminate" something is to destroy it, or get rid of it.

If you're out with this girl and even thinking about getting laid, you're finished.

To "get laid" is a common, slangy and crude way of saying to have sex.

Women can smell an agenda like shit on a shoe.

An "agenda" is a particular goal, and often one that is not spoken.

It's kind of like a Zen Koan.

These are ancient philosophical stories about spiritual understanding.

Technically, I shouldn't be getting laid, but I do.

An important word that generally is used to mean "in theory."

When I'm hanging out with a women, that's all I'm doing. Hanging out.

"To "hang out" with a person is to spend or pass time with them.

This completely confuses them because they're saying "I'm so much better looking than this guy; Isn't he attracted to me?"

"Good looking" is perhaps the most common alternative to pretty or handsome.

The basic principle: We pursue that which retreats from us.

A "principle" is a general rule or standard. "To pursue" something is to chase it, or try and capture it. "To retreat" is to move back or escape.

It's from Heidigger. :: Groucho Marx said the same thing.

The former is a well known German philosopher and the latter is a well known American comedian.

Act like a woman can't join your club, and she'll do almost anything to get in.

This is another way of saying people want what they can't have.

You got so many great books. :: All the better to seduce you with.

"To seduce" a person is try and attract them, usually in a romantic or sexual way.

All the better to deduce the truth with.

“To deduce” is to determine or try to solve, from general principles.

Those were great margaritas. My last date, we had pizza and a six-pack.

A “margarita” is a sweet alcoholic drink made with lots of crushed ice.

A “six pack” usually refers to six bottles of beer or coke.

Dating is so tricky...I just don't want to mess up our friendship.

If something is tricky, it is difficult, misleading or perhaps hard to understand. “To mess up” something is to hurt, damage or dirty it.

Better safe than sorry.

An expression which says you should be cautious and take less risk.

*Dex and Syd share a car for work, and slowly get to know each other...*

OK, what are you gluing. :: I'm going to have to go with cardboard.

“To glue” two things together is to stick them together with glue, or white paste. “Cardboard” is the brown material used to make boxes.

Do the glue and cardboard together have a larger purpose?

In this case, “a larger purpose” means a reason for being, or a general goal.

It's a model of a set I'm doing.

A “model” is a small version of something to see what the real one will look like. A “set” refers to what is put on stage for a play or opera.

You're the set designer for the opera.

A “set designer” helps to decorate the stage for a play, opera or concert.

I made a schedule on my computer. :: How Marcia Brady of you.

A character on an old TV show (This is a grammatically clever way of saying “You are just like Marcia Brady”).

You go to work at 7:45 and get off at 3:00, correct? :: Aye, Captain.

“To get off” work means to be done or leave. “Aye Captain” is the way a 17<sup>th</sup> century British sailor might speak to the captain of a ship.

Either you drop me off at 7:30, in which case

I have to wait around for half an hour...

“To drop off” a person is to drive them to a location and let them out.

I suggest we alternate every other day to be fair.

“To alternate” is to go back and forth between two things (Here, days).

Great, now that that it's settled...

"To settle" a problem is to solve it.

When did you start banging on the old skins?

"To bang on" something is to keep on hitting it (Here, "old skins" is referring to the drums, but this is rarely used).

Tricked you! I had Josie and the Pussycats stickers on my lunch box! :: No way!

"To trick" a person is to cheat or fool them. "Josie and the Pussycats" were a pop group popular with children. A "sticker" is a sign that is stuck on a surface. "No way" is a common and colloquial way to say that you don't believe what has just been said.

Nobody I know remembers the Bugaloos! :: How can you not like a British rock band consisting of four teenage bumble bees?

"To consist of" something is to be made of it. A "bumble bee" is a large and fuzzy bee that you probably want to avoid.

Mango mahi-mahi?

Mango is a tropical fruit. Mahi-Mahi is a popular type of Hawaiian fish.

I'm blanching the butter. :: OK, Martha Stewart....

"To blanch" butter is to melt or cook it, though this verb is rare (Martha Stewart is famous for her TV shows on cooking, gardening and other areas of house keeping).

Your life isn't complicated enough sleeping with a married woman, and now you got to start hitting on my wife's friend?

"To hit on" a woman is an interesting colloquial phrasal verb meaning to try and attract or seduce her.

Come on, man, so this is about you and your comfort level?

"Come on" is the most versatile phrasal verb in English, meaning everything from "be serious" (in this case), to hurry up or stop. A person's "comfort level" refers to the extent or limit of things that they feel comfortable doing (This is an increasingly popular expression).

Dude, I came over to make a schedule!

An over-used slang word that is an alternative to guy.

Look, just don't pull a Steve on Syd. :: Don't worry about it, man.

In this film, "to pull a Steve on" a person is a slangy way of saying to seduce or attract them by using Dex's Taoist principles or philosophy.

Most people want a composite of the opposite sex.

A "composite" is a detailed description made up from different parts or materials, or perhaps a description based on the average of a group.

You gals aren't ever going to find Antonio Banderas with the personality of Fred McMurray....

"Gals" is the female equivalent of guys (Antonio Banderas is a handsome actor and Fred McMurray was a very charming actor).

....and I'm never going to find Raquel Welsh with the personality of Lucille Ball.

Raquel Welsh is a very sexy actress, and Lucille Ball was a famous and very funny TV comic.

Amen! My biggest fear is that I'm going to marry the woman that I really want to hang out with in my golden years....

"Amen" is a religious word that is said after a prayer, or in this case, after something that the speaker enthusiastically agrees with.

...but I die in some fiery car crash when I'm 40.

"Fiery" is a dramatic word meaning made of fire, or hot and violent.

Barring some terrific advance in medical science that would allow you to splice Lucille Ball with Raquel Welsh, what do you look for in a woman?

Here, "barring" is a way of saying "without the possibility of..."

"Terrific" is a good alternative to excellent or fantastic. "To splice" two things together is to attach them at the ends (such as 2 strips of film).

She has to be thin!

A word that means slender, and is much more positive than skinny.

I admit it. I'm a fat faddist! :: Scandalous!

A "faddist" is simply a person who follows fads, which are popular trends or fashions (It's possible that a "fattist" is a person who dislikes fat people). If something is "scandalous," it is shocking or offensive.

I rest my case!

The words that a person says when they think they have made a powerful argument, and it has been made even stronger by the words of the other person talking (Here, a "case" is a court room argument).

That's male insanity syndrome; You're with a woman, and no matter how cool she is, you're always thinking "Maybe I could do a little better..."

"Insanity" is the condition of being crazy, and a syndrome is some type of medical condition (This syndrome is probably made up by Dex).

Or I could trade up, somehow.

"To trade up" is to get a better version of something, but it usually refers to cars, hotel rooms or other things one buys, and not girlfriends!

Dex is just bitter because he's never been in love.

If a person is "bitter," they are angry or even hateful.

I'll pick you up at 7:30 sharp.

In this case, to “pick up” a person is to drive to where they are in order to give them a ride. Here, “sharp” means exactly at that time.

Come kick back in here. I'm just going to change real quick.

“To kick back” is a very slangy way of saying to relax.

Hell no! Usually I spend this time cross training.

“Hell no” is a very direct or enthusiastic way of saying you disagree with what was just said. To “cross train” is to exercise in preparation for a major sporting event such as a long-distance race.

So you smoke pot for breakfast, you work part time, and you have..... :: Limited potential?

“Pot” is a common slang word for the drug marijuana.

“Potential” is a key word meaning future possibilities, often based on the intelligence, skills or resources that a person has.

It's none of my business. :: Really, don't I ever what?

If some piece of information is “none of your business,” it is private and you should not ask about it.

Doing stuff is overrated. Like Hitler, he did a lot, but don't we all wish he would have stayed home and gotten stoned?

“Stuff” is a general word that means things in general. If something is “overrated,” people think more highly of it than it really deserves. To “get stoned” is to feel the effects of a drug like marijuana.

So your only options are to get stoned or commit genocide?

“Options” are possibilities or choices. “Genocide” is the murder of an entire nation, ethnicity or other group of people

Lao-tse said “The sage, because he does nothing, never ruins anything...”

Lau-Tse was the great Chinese philosopher who wrote on Taoism.

A “sage” is an intelligent, wise or great person. “To ruin” something is to destroy it.

That sounds like a life full of passion and excitement.

“Passion” is great emotion or feeling, such as love or anger.

Buddha said passionlessness is the best virtue.

“Passionlessness” is the absence of passion, though it's not clear this is a real word. “Virtue” is moral goodness, such as courage or honesty.

And the Pillsbury Dough Boy said “Eat me when you're ready.”

A well-known character from an advertisement that promotes Pillsbury bread products (Dough is the flour to make bread).

I wanted to see.....if you're giving me some **bullshit slacker routine**.

“Bullshit” is a classic but somewhat crude word for lies, half-truths or nonsense (and in this case, is used as an adjective). A “slacker” is a great slang word for a lazy person, and here, a “routine” is a long and involved story or lie.

Why does the good old-fashioned American slacker get no respect for his detachment, but the Buddhist monk does?

Here, “detachment” refers to the decision to not be attached, or a part of, the mainstream society (with its emphasis on making money). This is Dex’s way of saying he’s not lazy, but just thoughtful, like Buddha.

I don’t think this detachment is the same self-willed, self-disciplined detachment of the Buddhist monk.

A person who is “self-disciplined” (or self-willed) sets goals for themselves and tries to reach them. This is Syd’s way of saying that real Buddhists are reflective or spiritual, but Dex is just lazy.

You think all Buddhist monks are like the Dahli Lahma?

The spiritual leader of Tibet.

Should I carry packs of heavy shit for Westerners to the base camp of Everest, or should I just stay here down in Katmandu and chant all day....

In this case, “shit” is a crude slang word for things. A “base camp” is a camp set up for climbers on the side or near the bottom of a mountain. Katmandu is the capital of Nepal (where Mt. Everest is located) “To chant” is to sing while repeating the same words over and over again.

...and check out chicks and pretend to be holy?

“To check out” women is to watch or look at them. If something is “holy,” it is sacred, or connected to God or religion.

Would you like to rub the Buddha’s belly?

“To rub” something is to move one’s hand over its surface. A person’s “belly” is their stomach.

***Dex explains the Tao to Dave, and Syd explains opera to Dex.***

What phrase? Making love? :: It reminds me of the incense you buy at convenience stores with this airbrushed couples.

A “phrase” is an expression or set group of words. “Incense” are thin candles that smell good, that are popular with hippies. “Convenience stores” are those food stores that are fairly small and often open 24 hours. If people are “airbrushed” in a photograph, they’re made to look prettier than they really are.

Your sisters don't count! :: Very funny, man.  
If something “doesn't count,” it can't  
be considered as important or relevant.

If you hang out with women as friends, you're  
doing your research in the wrong library.  
Dex's poetic way of saying that if guys become friends with women, it  
will be hard to later become romantically involved with them.

Getting out of that category of “friend” is harder than getting out of Alcatraz.  
Alcatraz is a well known prison on a small island in the  
San Francisco Bay that was nearly impossible to escape from.

You told me not to be lustful.  
If a person is “lustful,” they have a strong sexual desire.

I'm not supposed to come on to a girl,  
but I'm not supposed to be her friend either?  
An excellent phrasal verb which means  
to try and seduce or sexually attract a person.

Back up! In this particular instance, were you  
desireless? :: Man, I tried, but she was just so hot.  
In this case, “back up” is a way of telling a person to think about what  
they just said. “Instance” is another word for case or event. “Hot” is a very  
slangy but common way of saying good looking or sexy.

Dude, you didn't make a pass at her,  
did you?! :: Sort of. I sort of made a move.  
“To make a pass” at a girl is to act in such a way as to suggest that you are  
sexually interested in her. “To make a move on her” is to do the same  
thing.

You've got to learn to hang out with a woman  
without gropeing her within the first 10 minutes.  
“To grope” a person is to feel them with your hands in such a  
way that it appears that you are blindly looking for something.

The second rule of being Steve: You have to do something excellent  
in her presence, thus demonstrating your sexual worthiness.  
“Worthiness” is the condition of being deserving of something  
(If a person is worthy, they merit or deserve to get something).

You can't just say...I like reading the sports page on the john.  
“The John” is a very slangy way of referring to a toilet.

You got a big problem, picking up women.  
“To pick up” a women is to seduce or attract her,  
usually by acting in a charming or seductive way.

Just **figure out** what you're excellent at.

To "figure out" the solution to a question or problem is to solve it.

These cards **suck**.

A crude but common slang verb which means to be bad, or worse.

How are you doing, **buddy**? Got something **up you're sleeve**?

"Buddy" is a common way of saying friend or pal. If a person has "something up their sleeve," they have a secret, or something useful that may be able to help them (A sleeve is the part of a shirt that covers your arm).

Crayons.

Colored thick pencils that children use to draw with.

I hate people who **gloat**, but **whoa**!

"To gloat" is to brag or speak too proudly about your own accomplishments or greatness. "Whoa" is a common way of expressing emotion such as surprise or great respect (pronounced w-o-e).

You don't mind giving Corey a **ride**? :: **Don't be silly**.

A "ride" is a key word for the act of being transported in a car. In this context, "Don't be silly" is a way of saying "of course," or "obviously."

**Baskin-Robins** ice cream.

A well-known chain of stores that sells 31 flavors of ice cream.

You know when she makes **sloppy-joes** and she puts all the **sloppy** stuff in the middle of the bread, and it **spills** out everywhere.

"Sloppy-joes" are a type of hamburger made of meat and beans. "Sloppy" is another word for messy, or perhaps disorganized or dirty. If a liquid "spills," it falls out of its container.

**Do you mind** if I **swing by** so I can pick it up?

"Do you mind" is the most common way of asking a person if something would bother them. "To swing by" a place is to drive by it, on the way to someplace else.

Walk the **plank**! :: Who is that, Cortez?

A "plank" is a piece of wood that sticks out from the side of a ship, that some people were forced to walk out on before being pushed into the ocean (Cortez was a Spanish explorer and conqueror in the 1500s).

That's **Don Giovanni**. :: Ah, **hence** the opera.

Don Giovanni was a famous playboy from a Mozart opera.

"Hence" is another way of saying therefore, or thus.

Did you know Kiekergaard was obsessed with Don Giovanni?

To be “obsessed” with something is to always be thinking about it.

It usually works with a weak-minded woman, but clearly a superior intellect like yours doesn't fall for it.

If a person is “weak-minded,” they are easily convinced or persuaded by others. A person with a “superior intellect” is very intelligent, and if you “fall for” something, you believe it even though it isn't true.

He talked about faith in other people. :: Elaborate.

If you tell a person to “elaborate,” you are asking them to clarify what they have said, or to speak with more detail or analysis.

You know his fiancée? :: He was afraid that once she got to know his dark side, she wouldn't love him anymore.

A person's “fiancée” is the person that they plan to marry. A person's “dark side” is the scary or unpleasant part of their personality.

You have to say “even though I'm afraid, I'm not going to be rejected.

I'm going to make a leap of faith and love this person”---but he couldn't.

In this context, to be “rejected” by another person is to be told that they are not interested in a romantic or sexual relationship. A “leap of faith” is to decide to do something even though the odds of success are not good (To leap is to jump).

Here's a leap of faith; Do you want to go out sometime?

In this case, to “go out” with a person is go out with them romantically, on a date.

***Dex and Dave discuss women, desire and the Tao of Steve.***

Why does he always get a “Hey Steve,” and all I get is a “Hey, guy”? What is this Steve shit, anyways?

Note the grammatically interesting use of ‘shit,’ which functions as a noun meaning nonsense.

Steve is the prototypical American male.

“Prototypical” is an original or classic example, in this case of a cool American male.

Steve McGarrett, Steve Austin, Steve McQueen.

The three “cool Steves:” McGarrett was a police man on the 1960s TV show Hawaii 5-0, Austin was the title character of the 1970s TV show The Six Million Dollar Man, and McQueen was a great American actor (Dex considers all three to be very cool).

“The Great Escape”

McQueen’s best-known movie, about an American soldier fighting the Germans under Hitler (the Nazis).

Steve’s not a man. Steve is a state of mind.

A popular expression that means a certain attitude or way of thinking about life.

James Bond, Spider Man, Michael Jordan....is a Steve. :: Touché.

“Touché” (pronounced Tu-shay) is a French word that is used to mean “well said” or “good point” after something clever or intelligent has been said.

You’re “a Stu.”

For Dex and his friends, Stu is a name for a person who is the opposite of Steve, or the opposite of a person who is cool.

Just think Barney Fife, Gomer Pyle.

Fife and Pyle are two TV characters from the 1960s that were socially awkward, unattractive and the opposite of cool.

Jughead!

A silly insult word (A jug is large glass or cup).

You guys are all Steves and I’m Gomer-fucking-Pyle, man?

Note the inter-syllabic use of the adjective “fucking.”

Very crude, but an interesting example of how grammatically versatile the word ‘fuck’ can be.

Screw you guys, screw you all! :: Come on, Dave...

“Screw you” is a more gentle way of saying “fuck you” (The verb “to screw” means to have sex).

Go to hell, Bro!

Another somewhat gentler way of saying “fuck you.”

What’s that piece of shit there? :: Syd’s under the impression it’s a motorcycle.

A “piece of shit” can refer to anything that is considered bad or of bad quality (from a movie to a house). Crude but common.

She’d rather ride that, than deal with me?

“To deal with” a person is to do business with, pass time with, or talk with them.

Syd just invited us to her opening night. :: Guys don’t do opera.

The “opening night” of a movie or opera is the first night that it is performed in a particular place. Note the slangy use of the verb “to do” in the second sentence (It’s more correct to say “guys don’t like opera).

A, he is, and B, he doesn't.

Dex's way of telling Syd that Jeremy is her boyfriend and that he doesn't like opera (Letters are used instead of numbers to make specific points).

Would you guys stop flirting? :: We're not flirting. Yuck.

"To flirt" with another person is to act in a playful or seductive way that tries to sexually attract them. "Yuck" is an excellent word to express general disgust or strong disapproval.

I'm going to tell you this one last time, and maybe you should tattoo it on your dick so you don't forget: We pursue that which retreats from us.

"To tattoo" a picture is to draw it on a person's skin in such a way that it will not disappear. "Dick" is a popular slang word for penis.

"To pursue" a person is to chase after them, and to "retreat" from a person is to move away from them.

I don't get the whole retreating thing. :: Chicks are like hunters.

They want to bag a lion or a bear. Something hard to catch.

Here, "to get" something means to understand it (Very common).

"To bag" an animal is a slangy way of saying to capture it.

You're like this affectionate little puppy.

An "affectionate" person is very warm and gives a lot of friendship or love to others.

With chicks, boredom equals death. You can't bore them.

Dex's way of saying that to attract women, you must excite them.

They like chasing rabbits that dart in and out of bushes.

"To dart" is to run or move very quickly.

Now I'm supposed to be like a bunny.

Another word for a rabbit (much used by children).

Part 3 of the Tao of Steve....after you've eliminated desire and been excellent in her presence, then you must retreat, OK?

To do something in a person's "presence" is to do it in front of them.

In this case, to "retreat" from a person is to move away from them.

For great looking guys, they can just slide by on their appearances.

"To slide by on" good looks is to count on those looks to get what you want with other people. A person's "appearances" is how they physically look to others.

Successful hooking up with the ladies requires a little work and a lot of intelligence.

In this case, to "hook up" with a girl is to connect with her, most likely in a sexual or romantic sense.

Thanks for this thing. It's going to come in handy.  
If something "comes in handy," it is practical or useful.

I'm a fairy; Can you put fairy sprinkles in my head?  
A "fairy" is a very small or tiny human-like creature with magical powers.  
"Sprinkles" are very small bits of paper or perhaps candy.

A friend of mine is house-sitting at this big house and it's got this cool pool...  
"To house-sit" is to take care of a house while the owner is away.

Men try and achieve success for one reason; To impress women.  
"To achieve" something is to reach or accomplish it. "To impress"  
a woman is to do something that will cause her to admire you.

If you figure out how you can get laid without achieving  
anything, then you could lose your motivation altogether.  
"To figure out" something is to find the answer or solution to it.  
This is Dex's way of saying that men work hard in order to impress  
women in order to be able to have sex.

***Dex finds himself with too many women at a house party,  
and soon violating Taoist rules as he falls in love with Syd.***

You couldn't resist my powerful, penetrating stare, could you?  
If something is "penetrating," it is forceful or powerful.  
Your "stare" is the act of looking in a fixed manner at something, without  
moving your eyes away.

No, I want to tell you that you have a glob of guacamole on your shirt.  
A "glob" is a large drop, and "guacamole" is a  
green sauce or dip that is made from avocados.

I was going through depression a long time ago, and she was really  
there for me, so I figured, it's payback time. A karmic thing.  
In this case, "depression" refers to psychological or mental depression.  
Here, "to figure" is to think. "Karma" is the belief that what you do now  
(for good or bad) will come back to you later in life.

I'm a non-swimming, non-naked kind of guy.  
:: "Say no to nudity." That's my motto.  
A "motto" is a sentence or a few words that express  
the guiding principles or beliefs of a person.

I would have pegged you for, like, a naked person. ::

Are you **kidding**? I don't even let my cats see me naked.

"To peg" a person is view or think of them in a certain way.

"To kid" is to joke around, or to not be serious.

Really. That's **weird**.

A great word meaning strange or bizarre.

Glitter from school. We were doing collages yesterday.

"Glitter" refers to anything that shines or glows in the dark (In this case, little bits of paper or sprinkles). A "collage" is a piece of art made from paper and other materials that are glued on a surface.

Would it make me a better person if I were to say to her "You know, I would really like to blow you off cause there's a woman I'm falling in love with."

"To blow off" a person is a very slangy way of saying to reject them, or to no longer care about them.

Am I supposed to remain celibate while I bask in the warm glow of your annihilating contempt?

If a person is "celibate," they don't have sex. "To bask in" something is to relax under heat or light. A "glow" is heat or light that reflects off a surface. "Annihilating" is a powerful word meaning very destructive or deadly, and "contempt" is a feeling of complete hatred or disgust.

Am I supposed to find solace in that?

"Solace" is a nice word meaning emotional comfort or reassurance.

I'm not mad! :: You sure seem pissed.

"Pissed" is a colloquial way of saying angry  
(Pissed off is more common).

Was I like a **jerk** to one of your friends in college?

A "jerk" is a good word for an ass, creep, idiot or moron  
(It can imply either mean or abusive like the first two words or stupid and foolish like the last two).

Was I a dick to you in college? :: Not exactly.

A "dick" is also a good word for a jerk, idiot or ass  
(though remember it is also a slang word for penis!)

There's no way! I would have remembered that! :: But you didn't.

"That's not possible!"

For most of college, I was drunk or stoned.

I don't even remember half of what happened.

If a person is "stoned," they are under the influence of drugs like marijuana.

Look at me. Now I'm a fat fucking pig and the guy that did that to you was a stinking arrogant prick.

A person who is "arrogant" thinks of themselves as very important or superior to others. A "prick" is a crude word for a mean or abusive person, or...a penis.

You're acting like a co-dependent girlfriend.

A person who is "co-dependent" on somebody else needs the other person emotionally in order to function well in life.

It's phony, dishonest and not me.

If something is "phony," it is false, or not what it claims to be.

I think it's more honest than pretending I don't want to get laid!

A common slang phrase for having sex.

That's the whole point! Don't pretend! Just really let go of your desire.

"That is exactly what I am trying to say!"

I want you to be the real you! :: You're so full of it, man!

If you tell a person they are "full of it," you're saying that they are saying a lot of nonsense (or more colloquially, bullshit).

Lao-tse said when the foolish man hears of the Tao, he laughs out loud.

A "foolish" person is one who is always doing silly or stupid things, and does not understand some basic truths.

I swear you just make this stuff up as you go along.

In this case, "to swear" is to believe without hesitation. "To make stuff up" is to create things from your own head, weather true or not.

What is too hard? Not coming on to women?

Trying to be an excellent human being?

"To come on to" a woman is to try and seduce or attract her.

This guy was set...and wandered down the road of enlightenment.

In this case, if a person is "set," his life is going very well. "To wander" is to travel with no particular destination or goal, and "enlightenment" is the condition of having great understanding or wisdom.

***Dex and Syd and Rick and Maggie go camping...***

I'm sorry. I just assume everything you do has an ulterior motive.

An "ulterior motive" is the real or secret goal of a person when doing something, that is usually not spoken or discussed.

We're going camping; I don't suppose you want to come?  
An occasional alternative to think or believe.

Shut the fuck up!  
A very crude way of telling a person to be quiet!

I just stopped to check out this conifer tree.  
"To check out" something is to look at it carefully.

So, what's the deal with you and Beth. :: No deal; we're just friends.  
A slangy way of saying "What's going on with you and Beth?"

I thought I sensed something.  
In this case, "to sense" something is to feel, think or suspect it.

She was tense....because she went to the pound  
and got this puppy and Ed's not a dog person.  
If a person is "tense," they are nervous or anxious.  
The "pound" is a place where dogs and cats are kept.

Women like to save things and men like to draw boundaries.  
Another word for borders or limits.

I can't believe you sold me all that puppy bullshit.  
A classic word for lies and nonsense (Note the use of the verb to sell).

I don't have a lot of hang-ups, but monogamy is one of them.  
A "hang-up" is a moral issue that a person feels very strongly about, such as sex or drugs. "Monogamy" is the practice of having only one sexual partner at a time.

Do you think we ought to leave a trail of bread crumbs?  
A "trail" is a path, or in this case, a line. "Bread crumbs" are tiny pieces of bread, in this case used to help find the people who left them.

Do you guys ever think your marriage is  
an obstacle to you guys reaching enlightenment?  
An "obstacle" is anything that blocks  
or prevents you from reaching a goal.

Face it. Most people feel that their personal relationships are  
more important than their relationships with God.  
"Face it" is a way of telling a person to accept a difficult truth.

Who's snuggling up with God? Who does he partner with?  
"To snuggle up" with a person is to hold them closely, often in bed.  
"To partner" is a much rarer verb than noun, but there it is!

It's either gratitude or groveling.....like "Hey God, could you help me with the Lotto?"

"Gratitude" is appreciation. "To grovel" is to beg in a shameless fashion, perhaps while lying on the ground. The "lotto" is the state lottery in which people gamble on the choosing of numbers.

"Hey God, did you catch Letterman last night?"

In this case, "to catch" is a slangy way of saying to see. David Letterman is a well known TV talk show host.

He says "I saw Letterman and it sucked."

If something "sucks," it is of very poor quality.

You cannot talk about that thing that you have no memory of. :: OK, message received. Zero distortion.

"Distortion" is sound that has been corrupted or made poorer than its original clean quality, so that it difficult to hear and can be annoying.

Why in the world would I lie about a spider?

An interesting addition to WH questions which expresses emotion or shows emphasis.

You lied about the spider so you could get in my tent...so you could make a move on me.

"To make a move on" a women is to try and sexually interest her.

You are such a self-aggrandizing solipsistic ego queen.

If a person is "self-aggrandizing," they think of themselves as very important or special. "Solipsism" is the philosophy that says a person can only know that they themselves exist. If a person has a big "ego," they have a lot of confidence in themselves or think of themselves as important.

I think I'm having a heart attack! :: Is this a trick?

A "trick" is anything that is designed or made to fool somebody else.

You do suffer from gastroesopoger reflux disease, otherwise known as heartburn.

A condition in which people's chest feel hot or uncomfortable after eating (The disease mentioned before is the medical term).

Do I have a tumor or something? :: No, but you're obese. It's a serious risk factor for high blood pressure, heart disease, diabetes.

A "tumor" is a group of diseased cells in the body that often are cancerous. "Obese" is the official medical term for fat. "Diabetes" is a disease in which people don't have the right amount of blood-sugar.

Please, be candid.

A good word for very honest or frank.

Do you smoke? :: I'll have the occasional pack a day or so.

A "pack" is a small box that usually has 20 cigarettes.

I lost 25 pounds on my pizza diet and this is going to be easier...more protein.

Along with fat and carbohydrates, one of the key substances in food that help keep the body healthy and strong.

Just tell me why! :: Hello, you're married!

Note that when said with great stress ("hell-OH!"), this expresses the view that the other speaker is being ridiculous or stupid.

Syd who? :: Go to hell.

A strong insult, though not as crude as "fuck you."

Asshole!

A vulgar insult word which is stronger than jerk or creep.

I'm going out with that chick from Kinkos for drinks tonight!

"Chick" is a silly slang word for a young woman.

Kinkos is a well-known print and xerox store.

Both men and women want to have sex...except were on different time tables. Women want to have sex 15 minutes after us.

A different way of saying schedule. This is Dex's theory on why woman and men have so much tension about sex.

If you hold out for 20, she'll be chasing you for 5.

"To hold out" is to wait or survive.

***Syd goes back to New York....and Dex gives up his Taoist philosophy.***

Did you just kiss my boo-boo?

A silly child's word for a small bruise, cut or injury.

Lest you forget, I'm a just-say-no-to-nudity kind of person.

In this case, "lest" is a way of saying "in case..." Note that in this sentence, "just-say-no-to-nudity" functions as an adjective.

Whoa, Speed Racer.

The name of a well known cartoon character who always did things fast. This is Dex's way of telling Syd that she was moving too fast.

Eventually you're going to have to take your clothes off. :: I'm grappling with that moment.

"To grapple" with a difficult issue or situation is to try and deal with it in the best way possible.

Oh God, did I drool or something?

"To drool" is to let liquid run from your mouth, often while you're asleep.

Do you want coffee or cocoa puffs or anything?

A sugary breakfast cereal that is popular with kids.

You knew I was leaving, right? :: I guess I kind of repressed it.

"To repress" a thought or idea to subconsciously try not to think about it because it's emotionally painful.

You're the man! It totally works!

What you would say to a guy who has had great success, or who is seen as an expert at something important (Note the use of the adverb 'totally,' which is very popular with young people).

What works? :: Dex's rules for picking up chicks.

A very slangy way of referring to the art of sexually attracting women.

I made a cheat sheet so I wouldn't forget.

A piece of paper that contains important information, often secretly used by students to cheat with during school exams.

"Be desireless, be excellent and be gone."

Dex's version of "the Taoist strategy" to attract women.

This whole thing is a universal maxim kind of behavior.

A "universal maxim" is a general rule that is valid everywhere.

I'm the special of the day! :: Are you huevos rancheros or something?

The "special of the day" is a meal that is being served for a special price at a restaurant. "Huevos rancheros" is a Spanish expression for eggs served with beans and tortillas (a thin bread made of corn flour).

That pretty much limits the "What can I say now?" option.

In this case, "to limit" something is to prevent or severely restrict it. An "option" is a choice.

I might as well...

A grammatically interesting way of saying "I should..."

Well, actions speak louder than words.

A well known expression which means that it is more important to see what people *do* rather than what they say.

You've been kicking our asses all right.

"To kick a person's ass" is to hurt or beat them, though in this case it is simply to beat them at the game of poker.

He's on a friggin role. :: You guys have no idea.

"To be on a role" is to have several successes in a row.

"Friggin" is a gentle version of the adverb 'fucking.'

Is this a fucking card game or a goddamn sewing circle?

"Goddamn" is a crude filler adjective used to express anger or other emotion. A "sewing circle" is a group of women who get together to sew and talk or gossip.

Cool your jets! :: What's your problem?

A slangy and silly way of saying "calm down!"

Didn't Lao-tse say "If you're attached to nothing, you lose nothing"? :: Why don't you give it a rest?

"To give something a rest" is to stop doing it or talking about it.

Five card draw, suicide kings wild.

If a card is "wild" in any card game, it is worth whatever value you want to give it. The other words are associated with the game of poker.

Hey, what's up? :: You know all that stuff I've been telling you?

A very common way to greet a person or to ask them what's new in their life.

That thing that happened in college; I just left it hanging for 10 years...

"To leave an incident hanging" is to ignore it, or to pretend like it never happened.

...and I didn't want to leave what happened the other day

hanging, so unresolved and everything. Actually, never mind.

If a problem is "unresolved," it has not been solved. "Never mind" is a common way of telling a person to forget about what you just said.

# **The Tao of Steve**

## **Possible Topics for ESL Class Discussion**

1. Do people want things more if they cannot have it?
2. How would you describe Dex?  
What is attractive about him and what is not?
3. In real life, does the Tao of Steve work in seducing women?
4. What other people are cool like "Steve," and what people are the opposite and more like "Stu"?
5. Are you interested in Taoism or Buddhism? What attracts you about them?
6. If you were Syd, would you have been attracted to Dex?
7. Should a guy like Dave try to apply the "rules of Steve," or should he just be himself?
8. What did you like and not like about this movie?