

DISHING OUT TIPS for the lovelorn with their book are medical students (from top) Eugene Tan, Chelestar Kong and Chung Pin Soon, who believe their research and combined experiences make up for their lack of credentials in matters of the heart.



PHOTO: WANG HUI FEN

## Facing heartship? See the

# LOVE DOCTORS

Three medical students have written a book and set up a website dispensing dating strategies

► Melissa Sim

GEEKS at first sight? Perhaps, but do not be mistaken.

These young men may not look like love gods, but they reckon they know a thing or two about the subject.

Medical students Eugene Tan, 26, Chelestar Kong Jing Wen and Chung Pin Soon, both 25, are the authors of *Love Clinic: How To Lose Your Bachelor's Degree*, a book that dispenses dating strategies and promises to reveal the elusive secrets of a happy relationship.

They even have a website — [www.love-clinic.com](http://www.love-clinic.com) — providing romantic ideas and an "Ask Dr Love" section for the lovelorn. Described by friends as "hard-working", they seem unlikely love gurus. One of them — Mr Kong — has never even had a girlfriend.

So what credibility do these self-proclaimed love doctors have?

"We talked to over 100 people about their relationships and read works of authors like Barbara De Angelis in preparation for the

book," said Mr Tan, the group's founder, who believes their research and combined experiences make up for their lack of credentials.

Ms Anna Goh, deputy director of the Social Development Unit, which supports the books, said it gives informal, personal and relevant examples young people can identify with.

But Mr C.K. Goh, 25, who is doing national service, says he would not use the book as a guide.

He said: "It's too clean and unrealistic. Relationships are a lot more complex than that. It's a good laugh but I wouldn't refer to it."

The young men say they have been gathering examples since their secondary school days at Raffles Institution.

When other friends started dating, they geared up for D-day by reading relationship gurus' books and talking to friends about their relationship problems.

When they started meeting girls, they would consult each other on how best to approach

those they liked.

"We always thought it would be good to organise our ideas and share the formula with others," said Mr Tan, who shares some of his experiences in the book, which took about a year to complete. So far, 1,000 copies have been sold.

For example, chapter one on "Setting Your Criteria" is literally a page out of his own life.

"The first thing I did was to seriously think about the top 15 criteria for my dream girlfriend. I even published them on my personal homepage for everyone to see, so that other people would know what kind of a girl to introduce to me," he said.

In the book, there is also a section of suggested love messages for Romantics with writer's block.

One of Mr Tan's favourites: "You can fall from the tree or fall from the sky, but the best place to fall, is in love with me. I love you."

He composed that one himself. "It's so sweet and innovative," swooned Mr Tan's 23-year-old accountant girlfriend Andrea Soh. "And I don't find it cheesy because I know he really means it."

For those who want to keep their relationship happy and healthy, there is a "renewal strategies" section.

You might also like to try a couple of the suggested "looks". There is the "always fresh" look, in which you gaze at your girlfriend like you are dating her for the first time.

Alternatively, adopt the "forever most beautiful" look, which will, apparently, make her feel like she is the most beautiful woman in the world.

Mr Tan sportingly demonstrated both looks, which, to these untrained eyes, looked exactly the same.

But even with all this formidable romantic ammunition at his disposal, Mr Kong has managed to slip through the jaws of love. Has he chosen the wrong approach?

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