

## DAVID CASSIDY & SUSAN DEY

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capable of making little girls feel like women and women feel like little girls.

Up until recently, David had loved every minute of his popularity with the entire female population—his attitude had been, "I don't have a steady girl, and I'm not looking for one. I like to play the field—as a matter of fact, I haven't dated the same girl twice!

"I don't think there's anything wrong with dating a lot of girls. There's no pressure on people—girls or guys—to get seriously involved because they *have* to. And if you're starting a career as an actor, something that will take you on the road a lot and keep you busy all the time, it really isn't the right time to think about it."

There was only one girl whom David dated more than once—Susan Dey, his beautiful co-star on *The Partridge Family*. Reporters tried to convince the public that this was a real hot romance, but those who knew of David's unwillingness to get involved knew differently. David and Susan both insisted that their "dates" were strictly for publicity purposes—Susan was simply the logical choice for David to take to press parties and network functions.

Not that David and Susan weren't close—but their tender feeling for each other was considered by both of them as nothing more than a strong friendship. As Susan once declared, "David and I are good friends. It would ruin the atmosphere of the series if we were madly in love; some of the feeling would seep through. No, we're just awfully good friends." And Susan's parents described it as "a sister-brother relationship."

Besides, as a close friend of David's revealed, "David likes Susan very much, but I don't think he could get too serious about any actress."

For actresses, like long-term romances, were not David's cup of tea. As David himself had once confided, "I don't really like actresses. I don't mean that there aren't some of them who are great, and whom I'd like to go out with, but I mean as a group. I don't have anything against girls who want to become stars, but when I go out on a date, I like to do different things—play pool, go to a quiet dinner someplace—and not have to worry about being "seen" by people and wondering if it will make the columns."

But shortly after he made these comments, he not only began dating actresses—such as Frederika Myers and Robyn Millan—but started seeing them more than once. David was having romances!

Sounding as if he had had a complete change of heart and mind, David confessed that "The thing that would make me most happy would be to find a girl who would really love me and with whom I could spend the rest of my life. That's what I'm looking for—another human being so important to me that I would want to share everything with her . . . to be with her forever.

"Sure, up until now I've played the field. I've dated a lot of different girls. But what I really want is to get involved with someone so special that I wouldn't be able to go through life without her!"

Again many people tried to get something going between David and Susan. Shirley Jones, David's step-mom and co-star, asked him how he felt towards Susan, perhaps trying in her subtle way to encourage a romance. For Shirley, like everyone else who knew Susan, was crazy about her, impressed by her natural charm and deep sincerity. But David still insisted on keeping himself in an older brother role to Susan. Shirley may have been disappointed, but figured that David probably knew what was best for him.

Perhaps he didn't. For lately, ever since the news that Susan has a boyfriend and that they are serious, David has been looking very down-in-the-dumps. And many people—many of them the same people who tried to nudge them into a relationship in the first place—are saying that David is unhappy because he waited so long to tell Susan—and himself—his true feelings for her. And now it may be too late. Susan, who once lamented over and over again that, "At times I go absolutely crazy, I get so lonesome," has finally found her special someone.

His name is Dale McRaven, and he is an associate producer and story consultant of *The Partridge Family*. At thirty-three, he is considerably older than Susan, and has two children, a boy, ten, and a girl, nine, from a previous marriage; however, they live with Dale's wife, so that Susan is not faced with the prospect of playing mother to two kids not that much younger than herself. Like Susan, Dale had a simple, close-knit-family style upbringing, having been born on a Pulaski, Illinois, farm and having been raised in the warmth and comfort of two parents and four brothers and sisters.

From the day that Dale arrived on *The Partridge Family* set, Susan knew he was someone special. But, unfortunately, so did one of her best friends. Dale and Susan's friend started dating, often taking Susan along. But when her friend dropped out of the picture, Dale and Susan were able to admit to each other—and to themselves—that they really liked each other. A lot.

Today, they are inseparable. Susan exclaims joyfully, "It's fantastic, so fantastic that I can't believe it's really happening to me! I love Dale, and I can't imagine ever being without him." Does this mean Susan would like to get married? "I'd love to—but right now I'm just taking each day as it comes, and enjoying every one. I'll tell you, though, that if Dale asked me to marry him today, I would in a minute!"

Besides the happy couple themselves, there are at least two other people who are extremely happy that Dale and Susan have found each other—Susan's parents, to whom she is very close. Although they hope she looks carefully at the relationship before she leaps into marriage, Susan beams that, "They are thrilled!"

It is no wonder that Mr. and Mrs. Dey are so overjoyed. For a long time, they have worried over Susan living and loving in the town Mr. Dey calls "that nutty place," Hollywood.

As Mr. Dey explained it, "We weren't so worried about her safety, per se, as the personal problems this career could bring. I think it's a lonely life for the people who are in it, a very unsettled life. You must be prepared for shattering experiences—not only disappointments in the work, but in the people you meet. The competition is so severe, I don't know how any of those people can relate to each other on a friendly basis. They're all potential cut-throats.

"The whole environment is a make-believe one," Mr. Dey continued, "and everyone is always play-acting. At some point it must get terribly difficult to tell reality from fiction and fiction from your own life, and this makes the life more lonely. We've already seen, with Susan, that it's becoming hard for her to relate to people outside show business because immediately they put her off to one corner, on a pedestal. She's no longer a person, but an image, an actress, something different."

Finally, Mr. Dey told us the question that has plagued him ever since Susan entered the world of show business: "How can you have a normal life, a meaningful relationship, if you have to *perform* constantly—even in an attempt to have a private life?"

Last summer, the Deys and their son Tom, seventeen, and daughter Elizabeth, ten, visited Susan in Hollywood for the first time. They were dismayed to find that Susan spent all her nights at home, alone with her scripts. "She was getting phone calls, but was turning them down," Mrs. Dey reported. "She really wasn't interested, because she hadn't met anyone that she liked well enough."

She had even had the very kind of experience which the Deys had feared she would. "Susan quickly learned about people who use others to get ahead," Mrs. Dey explained. "She met one young man who she thought was nice, and started seeing him, but she began to have doubts about him very soon. I think she was even cautioned that he might be trying to use the name she already had, take advantage of her, because he had nothing at the moment. That planted a doubt in her mind, and I think she had to sit with that for a while, stop dating and come to an answer within herself.

"She realized she would always have to wonder, when meeting a man, 'Is he attracted to me because I'm me, or because I'm Susan Dey, the actress?'"

But in Dale McRaven she has found a man who is already on his way in show business and who, therefore, does not need the publicity his relationship with Susan Dey will bring him. He loves Susan for herself, for the wonderful girl she is.

Where does this leave David? He once said, "I'm so involved with myself and what I'm doing for myself that nothing else really interests me. I don't deny it—I'm selfish." For a long time, his career was all that mattered to David, but lately he has revealed, by deeds as well as words, that he *does* need other people, and that one-night stands do not fulfill this need.

In Susan Dey, David met a girl who, although an actress, possessed the qualities which he admired in a person. He