

How To Get The Most Out Of Your Internet Dating Experience

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“Internet Dating: How to Get the Most out of Your Online Experience”
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What Do We (i.e., Singles) Want?

- **To Find...**
 - A Partner, Friendship, Companionship
 - Love
 - The “Right One”
 - All the great “stuff” that goes along with these
- **To Enjoy The Process**
- **To Feel Safe and Secure**

What Do We Want (Cont'd)?

- A. An introduction**—naturally, the more people you meet the better your chance of meeting the person who's right for you;*
- B. A way to find the common ground you share** with the people to whom you're introduced—you want to get to know them and you want them to get to know you;*
- C. The ability to smoothly and politely disengage** from an interaction when you're ready, with no hurt feelings on either side.*

What Do We *Not* Want?

- **To Feel...**
 - Frustrated
 - Overwhelmed
 - Threatened
 - Like we wasted our time & money
 - Helpless
 - As though nothing counts

What Is This Course?

- It is NOT...

- A How-To manual for “picking up chicks,” or for “reeling in a Sugar Daddy.”

What’s more,

THERE ARE ABSOLUTELY NO GUARANTEES!

- Is IS...

- A How-To Manual for *improving your odds* of meeting someone whose company you can enjoy, and who just *may* be the “Right One.”

Remember,

NOTHING VENTURED, NOTHING GAINED!

What Do You Need In Order To Get Value From This Course?

- **Desire, Determination, Self-Confidence, and Self-Honesty**
 - You have to *want* this in a positive, affirmative way, and you must *not* be afraid to present yourself *exactly* as you are!
- **Stamina**
 - The tips given here are not intended for, nor will they work, over a short period of time.
- **Courage**
 - You must *not* be afraid to take a *reasonable* risk (see also: Stamina).

What *Else* Do You Need?

- A dedication of time to sit and write a **dynamite** profile description of yourself
- A dedication of time to sit and read the profiles of other singles
- A minimum of one **good** photo of yourself (more is always better)
 - If you lack this, don't worry—we'll take care of the deficit here.
- An internet connection, and familiarity with using a web browser
- \$\$\$ to spend on membership*

Advantages of On-Line Dating

- **Concentration of Resources**

- More people available to engage, less time required to engage them

- **Anonymity**

- *You* control when, where, and how you reveal details of any kind about yourself. You control if, when, and where you meet face-to-face.

Disadvantages of On-Line Dating

- **Concentration of Resources**

- More people to engage, less time available *per person* to engage them

- **Anonymity**

- *Anyone* can claim to do or to be pretty much anything they wish, with no guarantee of truthfulness.

- Recently, some singles web sites have considered requiring every member to take a pledge of honesty. We'll see...!

So, Why Use On-Line Dating...?

- **Gals:**

- **Concentration of Resources** improves the odds, even though you still may have to KAFF (Kiss A Few Frogs).

- **Guys:**

- **Concentration of Resources** improves the odds, even though you still may have to BN2AFB (Be Nice To A Few Bricks).

So, Why Use On-Line Dating...?

- **Everyone (Bottom Line):**
 - **Anonymity** is a conservative tool.
 - Provided it is used *correctly*, it protects far better than it threatens.
 - As we'll discuss a bit later, a face-to-face meeting is your goal, but the anonymity shield is what gives you control over the process.

Dating Horror Stories...

- Seems as though everyone has at least a few, some have a lot; *no one* has *fewer* horror stories than they have happy outcomes...ever wonder why...?
- ***It's because...***

Dating Horror Stories (Cont'd)...

- ...once they meet somebody nice, they stop, for a time at least, trying to meet other people, and therefore, **they...STOP MEETING LOSERS!!** (DUH!!)
- So, chances are, the number of people you meet who are **not** the “Right One” will *vastly* exceed the number who **are**...it's inevitable, unless you strike gold on the first bounce (which is **not** likely—simple odds).

Headaches...

- **Women:**

- Any woman who even remotely fits the ordinary, conventional definition of “attractive” and who posts a photo can expect to be *deluged* with messages.

- **Men:**

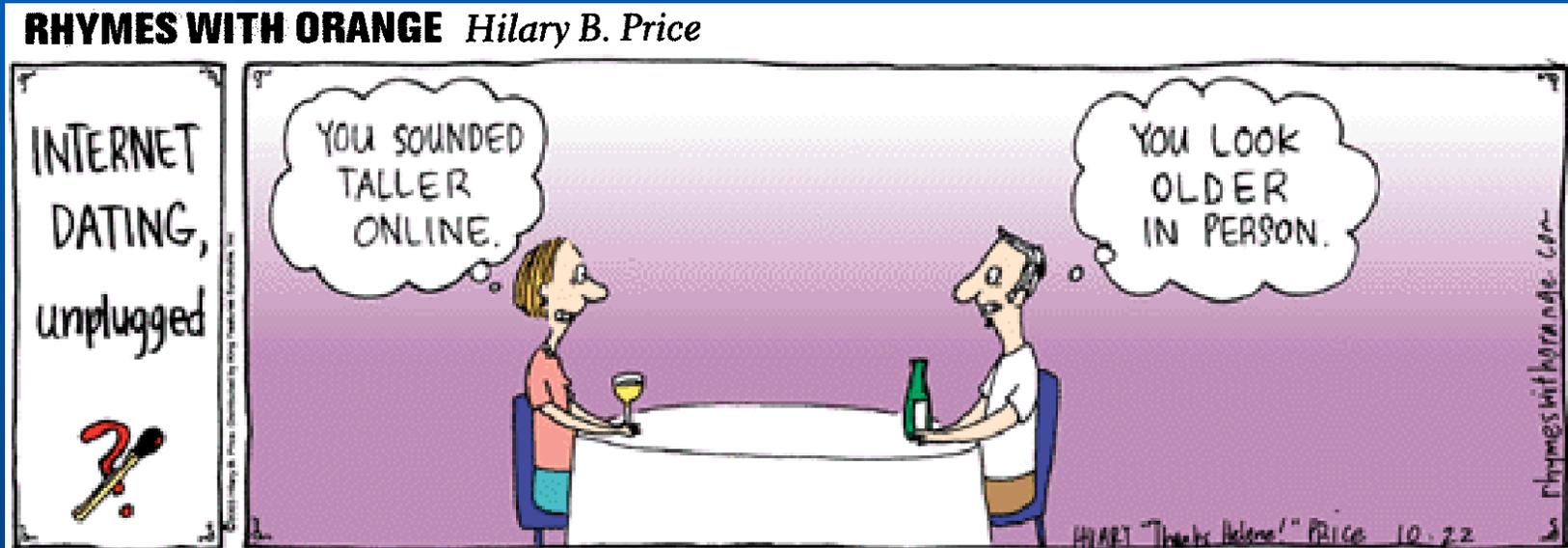
- Women who get deluged quickly become frustrated and stop replying to all messages. As a “nice guy,” you thereby get lost against the background noise, and you’re left wondering why you get no replies.

More Headaches...

- **BE VERY WARY** of solicitations to “...contact me at my regular email address, EyemaFakir@hotmail.com.”
 - Spammers use online meeting places to harvest valid email addresses, which are the gold bouillon of their trade.
 - Anyone to whom you send a regular email automatically has your (return) email address. Viagra, anyone?

The Single Biggest Complaint Is...

- The gap between what the profile says...



Hilary Price's "Rhymes With Orange" cartoon, October 22, 2003

...and reality!

So, Don't Expect Honesty...

Require It!

- Make certain you understand this critical difference:
 - ***Not expecting*** honesty means: allowing yourself *not* to be disappointed when dishonesty arises—trust me, it *will!*
 - ***Requiring*** honesty means: allowing yourself to drop him-or-her like a hot potato at the *first sign* of dishonesty, with no regrets.

THE Single Most Important Tool In Your Kit...

- Your **INTUITION**.

- *Your gut feeling. **TRUST IT.*** It will speak to you, quietly, and with no uncertainty.
- Ignore it, or evade it with “wishful” thinking, at your peril.
 - Example: “Oh, maybe if I give him the benefit of the doubt he’ll quit smoking.” (He **WON’T!**)

Of Course, This Also Means...

- You **MUST** be as scrupulously honest concerning everything you present about yourself as is humanly possible. If you aren't, if you hide something, or misrepresent a facet of yourself or what it is you're looking for, then trust me, it *will come out* (usually, when it is absolutely the *least convenient* for it to do so...)!

On The Other Hand...

- By making it clear who and what you are, and what it is you seek, you create a natural filter that will automatically weed out people you wouldn't care to meet—this is your real goal in the on-line arena—not *meeting* people, but *weeding them out!*

Is it “Fair” that you have to do this?

- **No**, in the sense that there are always going to be people who will attempt to benefit in some way by being dishonest, which increases your workload, and...
- **Yes**, very much so in the sense that in the long run, those who *are* dishonest won't enjoy the pleasure of getting to know you—THEY LOSE!

So, Actually Meeting Someone...

- ...is what you aim to do with those who are left *after* you've weeded out the undesirables.
- There is (very nearly) *nothing* you will obtain through an on-line service that will tell you, "This is the 'Right One.'"
- What you *can* learn with reasonable certainty on-line is, "This is the 'Wrong One,'" and then...weed them out!

Your On-Line Profile...

- ...is ***THE MOST EFFECTIVE*** tool you have to attract someone you'll be compatible with—this is where the leverage is.
- 80% to 90% of all profiles out there look and read ***exactly the same!***
- It is worth it to you to spend the time and effort to compose an engaging and unique profile—this is what will make you stand out from the crowd (and it *is* a crowd!).

Your On-Line Profile...

- **By convention, contains *as a bare minimum*:**
 - **Two text sections...**
 - A description of yourself
 - A description of what is is you're looking for in an introduction
 - Depending on the web site, these might actually comprise a single text area
 - **At least one *good* photograph**
 - Make it a “head shot,” or upper torso picture clearly showing your face—and your smile!

Your On-Line Profile...

- **May contain (depending on the particular web site):**
 - Detailed “check-list” information (smoker/non-smoker, etc.)—check “on” all that apply to you
 - Places to answer specific questions about interests, tastes, background, occupation, etc., etc., etc.—***USE THEM!***

Profile Descriptions—You

- This is an opportunity to extol what it is that makes you *unique* and *different* from every other person in your singles category—don't waste it!
- Take time, put thought, and your passion into your self-description.
 - Tip: Add a “filter,” buried down a ways—something that if a suitor happens to make a comment on will tell you they actually *read* your profile!
- Your profile is to on-line dating what a résumé is to a job hunt.*

Profile Descriptions—You (Cont'd)

- **AVOID** adjectives like the plague
 - “I’m thoughtful, sensuous, caring, helpful,...etc., etc., etc....” (Guess what—so is **everybody** else!)
- Try using more of a narrative form
 - “When I stand on Muir Beach at sunset, I get chills up and down my spine!”
 - “I cheer like mad when the Giants win a game.”

“Do’s” and...

- **Do:**

- ***USE A SPELL-CHECKER!***

- There (probably) *won't* be one on the singles web site, but if you have a word processor (MS Word, etc.), copy & paste your text into it (or use it to start with), then copy and paste the text back into the web site profile editing box *after* spell checking.

- **Use your best grammar**

- If you have difficulty with this, *get help!*

“Don’ts”

- **Do NOT use pat, generic phrases:**
 - “I love life, love to laugh, love the finer things in life...!”
These tell the reader absolutely *nothing* about who and what you are—it’s like saying “I enjoy breathing.”
 - Use this yardstick: Ask yourself, “What would be the logical opposite?” (“I *hate* life, I *hate* to laugh...”) If the opposite is clearly never going to be the case, don’t use the direct phrase.
- **Do NOT include information that someone could use to easily identify or communicate with you:**
 - Email address, phone number, etc.
- **Do NOT tell us what your “friends say about you...”**
 - Who *cares* what they think? We’re interested in deciding whether or not to date *you*, not *them*!

“Don’ts” (Cont’d)

- Do NOT be *negative*:
 - “I’m on the rebound from a horrible marriage....”
 - “I’m only here because I hate bars....”
- Do NOT sound like you’re hesitant, or unsure of yourself (*even if you are*):
 - “I never seem to meet the right kind of men....”
 - “I’m not too sure about this online thing, but maybe I’m desperate enough to give it a try....”

On-Line Profile Helpful Hint...

- **...And this course's homework:**
Over the next week, spend a minimum of **two hours** reading profiles **written by the competition...**
 - Example: If you're a thirty-five year old man, read **ALL** the profiles written by thirty to forty-year old men within a 30 mile radius of where you live.
- When you're done, you will know **exactly** what **not** to write!

The Importance of Photographs (Or, Who Would *You* Rather Date...?)



...or...



...or...



Add More Photos...

- Examples of excellent secondary photos...



Profile Descriptions— Whom You Seek

- **This is an opportunity to describe what you believe you want in a prospective partner.**
- **As with the self-description, take time, put some thought, and your passion into your description of who it is you seek.**
- **All the same “Do’s” and “Don’ts” apply.**

Conducting The Chase...

- When you sign up on a singles web site, you agree in principle to make yourself available to respond to communication initiated by others.
- You should **expect** courtesy. And you should deliver courtesy, **in all instances**.
 - The exception to this is if you receive a rude or abusive communication to begin with. The best advice is to delete a rude note and ignore it, or report it to the web site service. They are usually quite aggressive about policing abusive behavior.
- **You must be the judge.**

Conducting The Chase (Cont'd)...

- When you send someone a note, make it brief. Focus on the fact that you're interested...and you hope they are too!
- Tell them what it was that made you want to write to them.
 - Where the profile was your résumé, this is your cover letter.*
- Then...do not harbor **ANY** expectations! Remember—there is **nothing** about an on-line profile that guarantees its accuracy or truthfulness, or that its owner will reply!

Conducting The Chase (Cont'd)...

- On the flip side, if you get a note from someone you don't find appealing, do write back and say so...**politely!** (This is much better than just leaving them hanging, and thinking *you're* the rude one.) You will **NOT** hurt their feelings.
 - You can create a “boilerplate” text file, then cut and paste it into the web site reply window...

```
Dear <His-or-Her Handle>,  
Thanks for your note. Unfortunately, I don't  
think we're a match. But I wish you the best  
of luck!  
Sincerely,  
--<Your Handle>
```

- Most important... ***You will preserve your own integrity!***

Conducting The Chase - Chat Rooms

- Some singles web sites include a “live chat” feature, where multiple users can converse in real-time (usually split up into “rooms”).
- Within this context, there may also be a “private chat” feature (similar to Windows Messenger or Yahoo IM).
- Chat rooms are great places to socialize, but individual rooms can (and do) develop unique “atmospheres”—some of them can be just a little bit abrasive* (people with delicate sensibilities... beware!).

Conducting The Chase - Searches

- All singles web sites have search features that allow you to identify a set of members who fit whatever criteria you like.
 - This is the place to make that big initial “cull”—toss out the vast bulk of the membership with whom you have little in common.
- No two of them function exactly the same way, so take some time to learn the specifics of how your site’s search engine works.
 - The sites typically have tutorial pages to lead you by the hand through using this and other features.

Tips & Tricks

- When viewing a profile, look to see how recently the person logged on, and how recently they updated their info (most singles sites show this).
 - If it's been a while since they logged on, it may mean they're dating someone and didn't close or hide their profile; or it may mean their information and photos are out of date (the services call this "dead wood").
- When viewing a list of search results, use the right-click context menu* to open the link to a given profile in a separate browser window.
 - This lets you close the profile when you're done and resume where you left off in the search results list without having to use the browser's [Back] button, which can be slow, depending on your connection.

Remember...

- What you ultimately want is to **meet someone face-to-face**. Why...?
- Because that's the only setting where you can truly get to know a person—claims to the contrary notwithstanding, you **CANNOT** do this on-line.

Meeting Face-To-Face...

- Many experts advise going slow toward a face-to-face meeting.
 - Once you meet in person, you've dropped a portion of your anonymity shield.
- But in person, you can:
 - Read their body language
 - Hear the inflections in their voice
 - See if they actually look like that dynamite photo in their profile
 - **USE YOUR INTUITION**
- So **do** make your intuition your guide as to when and where you meet.
 - To play it safe, select a public place—Starbucks, a restaurant, etc.—any location where lots of people are about.

So...

- **Put in the time...**
 - ...writing & posting your profile & photos,...
 - ...reading other profiles & sending notes,...
 - ...deciding amongst those you respond to, or who respond to you, who you wish to meet, and most of all...
- **ENJOY YOURSELF!!**

Selected Singles Web Site Info

Service	Pics	Es-says	Send				Reply				Monthly Fee	Fee Plans	Notes
			Tease	IM	Chat	Email	Tease	IM	Chat	Email			
Match.com www.match.com	26	2 (+7)	✓	✓M		✓M	✓	✓		✓M	\$19.95	Yes	
American Singles www.americansingles.com	4	5	✓	✓	✓	✓M	✓	✓	✓	✓M	\$24.95	Yes	
Match Doctor www.matchdoctor.com	5	2 (+9)		✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	\$24.99 (3 Mo.)		Some popups
Matchmaker.com www.matchmaker.com	10	14		✓	✓M	✓M		✓	✓M	✓	\$19.95	Yes	

✓ Feature is available ✓M Feature is available to paying members only

NOTE: This list is neither complete nor guaranteed, & is subject to change by the named services at their sole discretion, without prior notice.

Recommended Reading

FOR MORE REALLY GOOD INFO...

- ***“I Can't Believe I'm Buying This Book.” A Commonsense Guide to Successful Internet Dating*** by Evan Marc Katz. © 2003 by Evan Marc Katz. Ten Speed Press. ISBN 1-58008-571-7.
- ***The Five Love Languages*** by Gary Chapman. © 1992, 1995 by Gary D. Chapman. Northfield Publishing. ISBN 1-881273-15-6.
- ***The Mastery of Love: A Practical Guide to the Art of Relationship*** by Don Miguel Ruiz. © 1999. Amber-Allen Publishing. ISBN 1878424424.
- ***Online Dating for Dummies*** by Judith Silverstein, MD, and Michael Lasky, JD. © 2004. Wiley Publishing. ISBN 0-7645-3815-2.

Please note that information sources abound. In 2004, January, an Amazon.com search with the subject words “internet dating” yielded 28 titles. A Google search using the same words yielded so many results, it was like trying to drink from a fire hose.