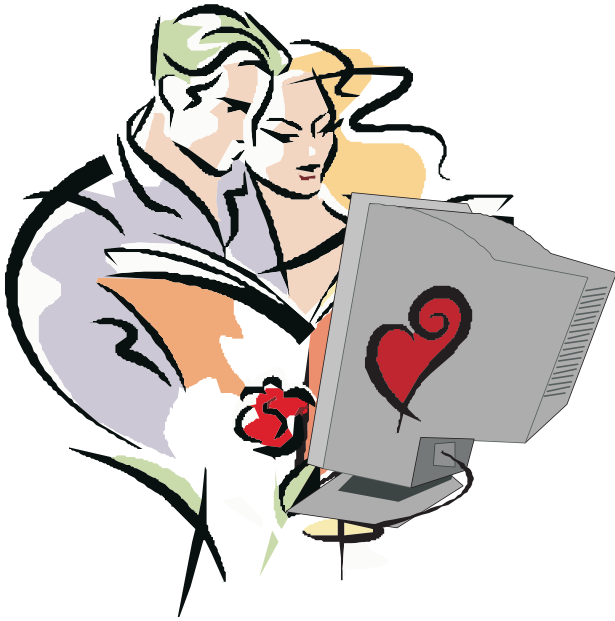


The Reality Guide to Online Dating



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INTRODUCTION

So, you're sitting home on Friday night, again. Your computer on, and "You've got Mail;" it's another dating website spam advertisement. Bored, you pause and think, "hmm, why not?" Mistake number one!

RULE:

Never ever patronize websites that spam you.

You think the real-world dating scene is scary?

Wait until you start weeding through the typical online dating community. It's not all bad, there are some success stories, so read on to find the keys (rules) to the best odds of that success you desire. What is "success" in this situation? **You** get to decide.

As you read through this book, you will be tempted to begin logging on to dating web sites, **Don't!** You need to read this entire book before even looking at any dating sites.

Keep in mind, especially with online dating, everyone creates a fantasy in their mind of who/what the person and the relationship they are with/in is, eventually everybody falls short of this perfect fantasy. Keep your feelings grounded in reality through the entire process, or you will eventually be disappointed.

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1. Setting Expectations & Goals

Is your goal: Long-term, a date, or sex. Your overall goal should include, finding a person who wants to be with the real you as much as you with the real them – a lot.

RULE:

Be honest with yourself
and your goals, be ready
and willing to stick to
them

Set boundaries. What are you willing to do in the short-term to get to your long-term goal? What morals are inflexible?

It is o.k. to have high goals, just keep your expectations of online dates realistic, the odds are against meeting Mr/Ms Perfect - especially online.

2. Choosing a Website

Many of the dating web sites point to a common central database of members so don't waste resources on multiple sites and explore site candidates thoroughly. One façade will be tailored to women and their typical dating goals (a long-term relationship) and another façade for men and their typical goals (a date).

Create a simple free profile on the ones that look like they cater to your goals and read a lot of profiles of your target mate type to verify if others on the site are expressing similar relationship goals to yours. Before you proceed, create a new Yahoo account, so you don't clutter-up your regular mailbox, just for this purpose. This account also creates a Yahoo Instant Messenger (YIM) login.

3. Creating Your Profile

Let's start with, *be honest*.

If you present a false-front, the people you attract will not ultimately meet your goals, nor you theirs (not a match).

The first thing you need is an eye-catching photo for your "main" profile picture, yes we humans tend to filter visually at first. This is where many fail. Be sure it showcases your best feature or features and is true to your goals. If your goal is not just a date or sex, don't post a sexy/revealing picture, especially as your main profile picture. Most sites allow you to have other pictures in your profile. These other pictures should reflect as much about who you are and your interests as possible (if you live to dance, have a picture dancing, love to surf - picture with your surfboard). Be sure all pictures are close-up and in focus enough to clearly see you. Pictures with multiple people in them are discouraged; seasoned web daters assume the least attractive person in the picture is you.

RULE:

Never put a picture with children in it, it puts them at risk, you don't know who is looking at your profile

Your profile title should be eye-catching as well. Be sure it is in keeping with your goals and personality - a bit of humor is usually good (but only if you are genuinely a funny person).

Your profile essay is your best opportunity to share yourself and your goals with others. Again, honesty is the key. Be clear, detailed yet not too verbose. A novel will not be read by most people. Start with who you are, what you are about, and what you have to offer as a match. If your essay is all about what you want, it will be off-putting, as in the real world.

Many sites give you an area to describe the type of person you are looking for. Be clear, realistic and state your goals.

You never want to put what you think a visitor might want to see, but only the genuine you.

Avoid things like, “I like all kinds of music...” (we all know there must be some you dislike, you can say this only if you follow it with, “but my favorites are...”). This goes for other types of likes/dislikes.

4. Searching & Browsing Profiles

This part can be fun or arduous, depending on your attitude.

RULE:

Not everyone is sticking to the “Be honest” rule.

Yes, it’s true! This is true in real life and even more so online. The relative anonymity of the internet gives license to fakes and cons. Most nicknames chosen advertise attributes opposite of that person’s (especially physical descriptors).

RULE:

The majority of people with profiles on dating sites are either physically unattractive or socially retarded.

This is especially true of the more sex based sites where I call this the 99% Rule. But on relationship focused sites it is much less than that. Your goal is to find the needle in the hay stack, while competing with a lot of other searchers. Don’t let this competition persuade you to not be honest or yourself, the **right** match is the goal.

RULE:

On sex sites: The Square Root Rule

[Men] the real-world size of his penis is the square root of the size he claims online.

[Women] The dress size she claims to wear online is the square root of her real-worlds dress size

5. The Now What?

So, you found a person who appears to be a match. Remember a profile is much like a resume, over-inflated and only the good stuff. So your job is to communicate thoroughly to uncover the truth about him/her.

The first communications should be online only. Email via the dating site is good as a starter, but emails are thought-out composed messages which rarely reveal complete truth. Once you've exhausted the email venue, you can graduate to Instant Messaging. Good thing we created the new YIM account earlier.

RULE:

Never give out your real contact information too early! Wait until you are fully comfortable with this person.

Now, chat a lot, pay special attention to their spontaneous responses - they are most revealing. If you begin to feel uncomfortable at all about this person: quit communicating with them, Block them, and delete them from your Buddy list.

RULE:

Pay attention to your Little Voice.

You're starting to feel very comfortable with this person, no red-flags? You might be about ready for a telephone conversation.

RULE:

Never give out your home phone number.

There are directories on the internet where a stalker can easily get your home address from a home phone number, so only give out a cell number (a pre-paid disposable cell is the safest).

Also, do not give out the name of your employer or business email address.

Listen carefully for red-flags and pay attention to any uneasiness you may feel with this person. You're feeling pretty confident in this person (no redflags)? It may almost be time for a face-to-face meeting ("f2f").

RULE:

Do NOT be pressured or bullied into a face-to-face meeting before you are completely confident in this person.

Pressuring by them is a RED FLAG!

This is one of many areas where you must be cautious.

Are You starting to feel very comfortable with this person, no red-flags? You might be about ready for a telephone conversation.

This rule is worth repeating.

RULE:

Never give out your home phone number.

There are directories on the internet where a stalker can easily get your home address from a home phone number, so only give out a cell number (a pre-paid disposable cell is the safest).

Listen carefully for red-flags and pay attention to any uneasiness you may feel with this person. Still no red-flags? It may almost be time for a face-to-face meeting ("F2F").

RULE:

Do NOT be pressured or bullied into a face-to-face meeting before you are completely confident in this person. Pressuring by them is a RED FLAG!

This is where you must be ***MOST cautious.***

RULE:

Never meet in a private or secluded place for your first face-to-face.



Print out one or more photos of the person to look at before you are apt to see them, it will make identifying them easier (you can throw it away before you approach).

You always want to meet in a public place where you feel safe and secure. Also, have a friend call you five minutes after the arranged meeting time, have a code established as an “I feel safe” phrase (“It’s in the pantry behind the flour” or anything that won’t tip them off, make sure it makes sense in your life’s circumstances). If the person has not arrived yet, the friend should call again in another five minutes. You should make clear when setting up the meeting how long after the scheduled time you are going to wait (10 minutes?). Hold firm to this, unless the person calls to say, I’m late, with a darn good reason. (This may also be a red-flag).

Unless you’re a gold-digger, pay your way on the first meeting. Guys, there are some women who go on lots of first meets just for the free meal (more so in the online arena). Meet for coffee, or something informal and inexpensive.

One trick many use is to arrive a couple minutes late, to peer in and see if they really want to meet you – you can do this too, just don’t be obvious about it.

Know your surroundings. It is a good idea to meet somewhere you frequent and are familiar with, but not your favorite most frequented place (remember the person could turn out to be a stalker).

Physical contact? Look at your goals from part-1 and listen to your little-voice, do not be pressured into anything (big red-flag!) Observe, observe, observe. Pay attention to their behavior and attitudes, especially when they don’t know you’re watching.

Do not refer to a first meeting as a “date,” that adds expectations and pressures. You have established or discovered topics of conversation or interest which you can only explore more deeply in person. If your conversation is dominated by the topic of the process of dating (online or traditional) you don’t have enough in common, or of interest in each other to have a next time, or a “date.”

6. What Next?

Do you think you've found your match who meets your goals? Here is a tricky part. Especially with online dating, everyone creates a fantasy in their mind of who/what the person and the relationship are; eventually everybody, or relationship, falls short of this perfect fantasy.

Look in your heart, is it the real person in front of you that you are feeling connected with, or is it the fantasy person you have in your mind of who they will be. The average online marriage ends within the first year, that's how long the fantasy can sustain things. Then reality kicks-in.

O.k., now you're prepared to begin the adventure that is online dating. Have fun, be safe, be realistic, be genuine.

Good Luck!

Bill

