

HOW TO FIND LOVE

by

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It is Valentine's Day today and if you don't have anyone special then this article is aimed at helping you find someone. If you woke up this morning to find that the only card waiting for you was one from your dad then don't despair as the following tips will increase your chances of finding someone special.

Desperation shows

One of the best ways of making sure you don't find love is to give off all the signs of being desperate for a relationship. Desperation is like fear; it clouds our judgement and makes us do things we often regret. Not only does desperation cloud our judgement but also most men can sense it at 50 paces. Unless a man is a total control freak the last thing he wants is a woman who simply wants a man so she can feel better about herself.

It is natural to want a partner at some point in life. However, if you want a partner, start by making sure you have a full life as a single person.

There is nothing more off-putting than a woman who spends all her time plotting on how to find her “man”. There is nothing wrong in wanting someone special but that is totally different to believing that we “need” a man in our lives. Need is where desperation comes from as it suggests that you cannot function without your man and this is what drives so many women to become desperate in their quest for love. You do not “need” a man; you can function on your own and the more independent you become the more likely you are to come across in an attractive and positive way. Men want women who are happy, healthy and full of energy, not someone who will drag them down with despair and clinging dependence.

The first place to start is to ask yourself what things you are interested in, what you would like to do and whether you are making the most of your life opportunities. For example, the more engaged you are in life, the more things you do, the more you have to talk about and the more people you meet, the more interestingly you will come across to them.

Confidence is a winner

If you walk around thinking you're too fat, too thin or too old to attract a man, you're unlikely to find one. Look around you. There are plenty of couples where one person is more conventionally attractive than another. So what makes those relationships work? Simple pure personality. Yes, there are men as there are women out there that cannot see beyond the packaging but there are also many more who would rather have someone of substance to spend the rest of their lives with.

If there are events in your past that you feel bad about, get help to deal with them. For example, insecure women often choose men who are inappropriate, unavailable, or unwilling to commit. Other women get stuck obsessing over past relationships gone wrong. If you look for love while you are still influenced by your past, the likelihood of finding a healthy love diminishes.

Get yourself a notebook and write down all the feelings you have about what has happened to you in the past. When you have done this ask

yourself what you have learnt from those experiences. When you analyse what you have written stand back and ask yourself if these negative experiences are negatively influencing the way you respond to men now. If the answer is yes then think about what you need to do differently. Upon completion of the exercise engage in a symbolic act like burning your notebook and as you do so let go of your negative feelings. If you cannot do this then you definitely need help.

When you are confident in yourself it shows and while the new-millennium woman might want a man in her life, she doesn't need a man to take care of her or make decisions for her.

Where am I likely to meet people?

There really are more than enough good men to go round and if you think there are not then you may either be too shy or insecure to notice them or be looking in the wrong places. You have to do whatever it takes to start getting out and meeting people.

You've got to come out of hiding and declare your availability. Try personal adverts in local papers or Internet dating. No, this is not for sad

lonely people and if you catch yourself thinking that way ask yourself why. People move around more than ever before and therefore you have to be more creative in putting yourself into places where you can meet people. There are also special interest groups and evening classes.

However, only join such groups if you are genuinely interested in the subject as the point is not just to join to find a man but to join a group to enjoy yourself and to meet new people. The more people you meet, the more you increase your chances of finding love. One client of mine bemoaned the fact that there seemed to be only women at the group she joined and she did not seem that pleased when I suggested she keep going. However, a few weeks later she told me one of the women she had got on well with had invited her to her birthday bash where she met the single friend of the brother of the woman whose party it was. If you keep an open mind you would be amazed at what can happen.

Remember that no one will come and knock at your door, so be proactive in increasing your network. Don't be afraid to smile at people in the supermarket, on the bus or in the café where you normally have coffee.

You won't die if he does not smile back and if you have a book with you, you can always turn your attention to the book. Smiling works – another one of my clients with an infectiously warm personality found that because she smiled a lot people would often strike up conversations with

her because she seemed approachable. She found her man in a coffee bar when he commented on how lovely it was to see someone seem so happy! If you fear being rejected you will achieve nothing. Remember - what's the worst that can happen? So a few people will look at you as if you are mad – big deal – for every one that looks like that there will be some that think nothing and others who will respond well. Take a risk and make the most of your life.

Preparing for your date

Okay, you've got a date so now is the time to move on to the next stage. Get yourself prepared psychologically. This means creating a pre-date ritual, such as playing upbeat music to get you into a good mood. Imagine yourself having a good time, as this will help you develop a positive mental attitude and build your self-confidence.

It is helpful to have a dating strategy. For example, if you do not know the person then why not meet for lunch as this means you have a way out if the date goes pear shaped. After all, if you are having fun you can always meet again. Safety is always important when you are dating so, if you know very little about the person, meet in a well-lit public venue. Be careful about inviting strangers to your home or visiting theirs, tell a

friend where you are going and ring her when you get home. Trust your own instincts. If you feel uncomfortable then there will be good reason. Remember to be yourself and the best way to do this is to tell yourself that you are seeing this man only to see if he would make a good friend or not. If you see him as a potential mate at this stage you could well be putting pressure on yourself that is likely to show. However, if you see him as a potential friend you are more likely to be relaxed.

By the way, it is alright to date more than one man at a time. After all, you are not committing yourself to marriage. The more men you date the more chances you have to find the right partner. If you see dates as ways of meeting interesting people then there is nothing wrong in seeing more than one person at a time. If one of these friendships moves to the next stage you can stop seeing the other men.

The only really effective way to appear interested in what someone has to say is to be actually genuinely interested. This isn't all that hard; most people are really quite interesting if you can get them talking about the right things.

A Few Tips on Successful Flirting

A little bit of flirting can add a whole new dimension to dating. Flirting does not mean you are committing yourself to a man or that you are going to go to bed with him. Flirting is good fun and is a way of showing an interest in the other person.

You'll know if he is interested if you raise your eyebrows and he responds by doing the same. When a man likes what he sees he will part his lips for a moment when your eyes first meet. If he exaggerates a movement or gesture then he is trying to get your attention and he is also likely to stroke his tie or smooth his jacket as these are all ways of letting you know he wants to look good for you.

If you want to improve your flirting techniques then remember that mirroring and matching the other person's body language gives him the signal that you like him – so if he bends slightly forward so do you. Use words like “we” as soon as you can in the conversation as this plants the link of coming together in other ways so “we'll get drunk if we go on at this rate” uses this technique without sounding overly pushy. Smiling, slightly licking your lips and a gentle touch of his arm are also ways in

which you show your interest.

Recommended Reading

- Would like to Meet, The Ultimate Dating Makeover, Tracey Cox, Jay Hunt, Jeremy Miles, BBC Books, £20.98
- Superflirt, Tracey Cox, Dorling Kingsley, £12.99

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