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FAQs About Internet Dating

By Susan Dunn

FAQs About Internet Dating by Susan Dunn, MA, Relationship Coach

If you're interested in meeting new people to date, the Internet match services are a great new option. The number of people joining them is staggering.

If you're new to the experience, here's an FAQ for you:

Q: How can I be sure he's not married? How can I be sure she's not a felon?

A: The bottom line - there are no guarantees about this or anything else in life. Unfortunately, deceptive people are good at deception and you can't always tell. With time, experience and common sense you can pick up on the "red flags" earlier. In your favor is the fact that people tend to reveal more with the anonymity of the Internet than in real life. From experience, I can tell you it's likely you'll be able to tell by their language and by their questions. They "spill." For tips, email me for my free white paper, "How to Tell if the Man You're Dating is Married."

Q: How can I avoid alcoholics and addicts?

A: Again only time will tell, but here's one tip. When the person checks "don't drink", this is a yellow flag, not a green light. Find out WHY they "don't drink".

Q: Do websites screen applicants?

A: The good news is that some say they do. The bad news is they do it by requiring all registrants give their social security number. This will limit selection as many good single folks aren't willing to put their social security numbers on the Internet.

Q: There are so many websites. What sites should I register on?

A: Use your EQ to make the selection. Intuitively, when you go the site it will appeal to you or not. On one site, people sign in as "SeXy Fox" and "ReadyWillingAndAble". On another, they use their first names, "Sam" or "Martha." Which is the one for you? Are you after a man who leads with "Italian Stallion" or simply uses his name? Is someone who calls himself "C" hiding something or too "closed" for your tastes? The way the sites phrase their questions can alert you to style as well.

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Q: What type of person uses these sites?

A: Everyone's using the sites, but it's especially well-suited for introverts. The normal progression is website, to normal email, to telephone calls to meeting in person. Introverts like a slow get-to-know-you. If you like introverts, you'll find more of them on Internet dating sites than in local bars and social groups. Extraverts tend to jump steps in the process. Extraverts you can meet out and about.

Q: I'm sick of men (women) who just want a brief affair. I want marriage. How can I find someone else who wants what I want?

A: That's good - know what you want. Some sites let you choose an array of desires from penpals, to friendship, to marriage, so there's one clue. Otherwise, the only way you'll know is to ask and find out.

Q: What kind of questions should I ask?

A: Eharmony.com (<http://tinyurl.com/2lyea>) has a long list of pre-selected questions you send back and forth that are good. Each time you have contact with someone and it works out or doesn't, figure out the early clues and save yourself some time. You'll quickly learn that when someone asks you a certain question right-off, they're not the one for you. Their initial choices reveal a lot if you're paying attention.

Q: For example?

A: Three leading questions that send off good clear signals are "How do you feel about pre-marital sex?" and "How do you feel about traditional gender roles?" and "Are you willing to relocate?" These give a lot of information about what the person is interested in. Ask yourself these questions, and there's no right or wrong answer, it's simply what you're after: You'll quickly learn when they ask XX question, press the delete button.

Q: How can I maximize safety?

A: Exercise normal caution. Some of the sites give you safety rules. Read them. Common sense would tell you to get to know someone before you invite them into your private email or home. When you do agree to meet with someone, make it a public place in the daytime, go in your own car, and let someone else know where you're going. Use the same precautions you would anywhere else.

Q: What should I avoid doing?

A: That you'll learn through experience, aside from the safety precautions already listed. When something goes poorly, write it down and don't do it again!

Q: Should I try someone who lives far away?

A: One of you has to have some money, that's for sure. Most sites let you roam the world for a mate, if you're so-inclined. If you're after long-term commitment, are you willing to relocate? Is he? How are your (plural) finances? LD romances require a lot of money and flexibility. You can easily run up a \$700 phone bill in a month before you even get to the plane tickets.

Q: What else should I check for?

A: His pace should match yours. Do you like a man who asks permission to call you after 2 months or corresponding, or someone who looks your number up on the Internet and calls you the next day? Do

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you want someone who tells you right away they're an alcoholic in recovery or have been divorced 3 times or have a \$300,000 home in the Bahamas? Their pace of revealing both their strengths and faults should match your tastes. Are they lying? Is she desperate and needy? Only time will tell. Take your time.

Q: What if it doesn't work out when we meet in person?

A: Sometimes it won't. If you're mostly motivated by appearance and "chemistry," it can be a shock. Everyone's going to put their best photo on the Internet and some people are more photogenic than others. If you're more after internal qualities, those you will have experienced and they should still be there. Plan your meeting so there's an easy escape-route. If they're in your town and you meet for lunch, how long can an hour be? If you meet in San Francisco for a weekend, even if you don't hit it off for romance, you can still have a good time and part amicably.

Q: Is it just for weirdos?

A: Not at all. I know personally people who met and married through an Internet dating service. It's confusing at first but you'll hit the learning curve. Internet dating is a viable option in today's world.

There are plenty of good people using the sites. They may live in rural locations, have little time to get out, prefer to get to know someone in writing, or any number of legitimate reasons. If you're serious about dating, why not try all options? Use your head and good luck!

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Does Internet Dating Work?

By Kathryn Lord

What's the Number One Question that Everyone Asks About CyberDating?

Everyone — and that included YOU! — wants to know: "Does Internet Dating Work?"

Well, I KNOW it works, and in the best possible way, because I met my husband Drew on

in May 1998. And I know others who have met their True Love that way, too. (I'm collecting stories of Internet True Romance, if you know of a couple that met that way — email me at

and tell me all about it!)

But what about for you? Will it work for YOU???

Kathryn B. Lord c. 2003 All Rights Reserved

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No one wants to get their hopes up and then be disappointed, do they? If this is "not going to work," then why try?

Sounds like a good reason not to do anything, doesn't it? Because even though CyberDating most definitely worked for me, I can't guarantee that it will "work" for you. Too many variables, the biggest of which is you — your own fears and how far you are willing to go.

Let's look at this question from a more logical place.

What have you been doing, other than posting on an Internet Dating site, about finding a mate? And how is that working for you?

Either you have been doing something (singles events, let's say, or trying to let others know that you are interested) or you have been doing nothing. "Something" is more likely to have results than "nothing," but neither have "worked" in that you haven't gotten a mate yet, or you wouldn't be asking the question "Does Internet dating work?"

So let's redefine "work." What Internet dating does better than any other method I know is that it exposes you to a very large group of other singles and helps you sort them into the likeliest category for potential partnership with you. How well does "doing nothing" compare with that? For that matter, how well does "doing something" other than Internet dating compare?

I've had clients who loudly complain that Internet dating is not working for them, when they have, at the same time, been carrying on several correspondences with possible mate candidates and have met and screened several others, all in a few weeks' time. How can they say that Internet dating does not work???

I can't answer the question "Does Internet dating work?" ANY other way than with a resounding

"YES!!!" It works by getting you the best possible exposure to the most potential partners.

Now what you DO with that exposure is up to you — that's where your "work" comes in. Many, many factors come into play — your relative receptiveness to a new relationship, the kind of barriers you may put in the way, your skills or the lack of them in presenting yourself and relating to other. All those and more are part of the "work" that needs to happen to transform potential mates into actual ones.

And that's YOUR "work" — so the question becomes "Can I do the work that needs to happen to find a mate and develop a lasting relationship?"

That's the RIGHT question. It's a big one, and if you have been long frustrated in your efforts, maybe getting a Romance Coach could help.

Getting a Romance Coach is unlikely to make your situation worse. And who knows? It just might work!

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Kathryn Lord, Romance Coach

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