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**Internet Dating - It's Not For Geeks**

**By Sara Blackmore**

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Six months ago an old school friend and I were chatting over coffee, putting the world to rights as women do. She was bemoaning her lack of success in meeting the "right sort" of men. I asked her if she had tried using an internet dating service, and the look of horror that spread across her face gave the instant answer - of course not! Internet dating, she informed me, was for the sad, desperate, geeky or freaky.

Sadly this type of response is typical of people from all walks of life. Why sadly? Because those who instantly dismiss such services are missing out on a great opportunity.

The traditional argument for not using the internet to meet someone is that it is not natural. So what is natural? Where have people traditionally met their husbands, wives, lovers, and friends? Statistically, over the past 50 years the most common place for meeting ones spouse has been the workplace. This is hardly surprising given the ever increasing amounts of time most people are finding themselves working. Other common meeting places include bars, nightclubs, and parties, and some lucky few meet their lifetime partner early in life at college or university. However, the workplace remains number one for long term relationships.

The reason for this is simple; lasting long term relationships are usually born out of robust friendships, and strong friendships form over time. Spend eight hours a day five days a week with the same people and you will get to know them very well. It is not uncommon in the modern world to spend more time with your colleagues than with your family, an unfortunate but true fact of life.

The increasing amounts of time we as a society are spending working is leaving less time to spend in social environments outside of the office, which means less opportunity to meet new people. So if you don't meet someone at work, where else is there? Enter the dating agency.

Dating agencies are not a new idea, they have been around a very long time. The internet has simply served as a new medium for bringing people together in a tried and tested way that agencies have used for years. However, it offers some unique advantages for those seeking a partner. Firstly it has lowered the cost of running a dating service, and that means agency dating has been opened up to a much wider audience. Secondly, it has broken down geographical barriers in a way that off-line agencies could never hope to. This is an important point because not everyone is looking for their future husband or wife on their doorstep. Indeed not everyone is looking for a future husband or wife; the explosion in internet dating has made it easier than ever to find new friends and correspondents across the globe.

These two points mean that some of the bigger agency sites now have in excess of three million members, and literally thousands of new members joining every day. With that many people, if you are serious about finding a partner, lover, or a friend, then the internet is simply too big a resource to ignore. And internet dating is safe too; there is no need to exchange real names or even email addresses until you feel you know someone well enough. All the services allow you to block unwanted

communication and so there is no fear of being pestered. Used sensibly, internet dating can be safer than almost any other way of meeting people.

The internet has revolutionised the way we work, shop, conduct our financial affairs, and entertain ourselves. To use it as a medium for meeting new people is a logical step in our fast changing world.

After that chat six months ago, I convinced my friend to post a profile on a dating site, she didn't even have to pay anything to do so unless she wanted to start sending messages to other members of the site. Now I never see her because she is spending all of her time with her new man. She didn't find him in five minutes like some of the sales pitches would like you to believe, but then six months ago she didn't expect to find him at all.

Sara Blackmoore is a relationship counselor and regular contributor to The Dating WebReview. She lives in London, England with her husband and two children. The Dating WebReview provides independent reviews of internet dating services, as well as insightful articles, tips, and advice.

### **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

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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