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Online Dating 101 – The Basics

By Kevin Koger

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Feeling like there's something that's just not quite there yet in how you're going about this whole online dating thing? Don't feel bad, chances are you're one of the many people who're still pretty new to this gig. Heck, internet dating has only been around for about eight years, so obviously no one out there can claim to have all the answers.

But hey, seeing that we've been perfecting the art of matching people up online all eight of those years, we'd like to share a little of what we've learned about how to make the best of your online experience. Who knows, one of these pointers might be just what you've been missing in perfecting your own online dating adventures.

Therefore, without further ramblings, here are the ...

TOP 10 TIPS FOR SUCCESSFUL ONLINE DATING
SAY CHEESE!

Look your best and submit a great photo of yourself for your profile photo. A good picture really is worth a thousand words, and research shows that you are nearly 10 times more likely to be noticed if you post a photo to your profile.

And, the same stats hold true when you contact someone you've noticed on the site. If you don't have a photo, don't be surprised if the responses aren't too quick in coming back.

Now, don't get mad a start making accusations about all the shallow people out there. While it may be true that some people place too much emphasis on physical appearances, the bottom line is it does make a difference when two people are meeting and making initial evaluations of their interest in each other. And, it's also a trust thing. It is always going to be much easier to interact with a face than with a blank box.

FRESH IS GOOD

Change your profile picture and greeting occasionally, add photos to your photo album, and login regularly—this will not only get you noticed, but it will help others get a more varied and up-to-date idea of what constitutes the real you.

When something interesting happens in your life, tell us about it in your profile greeting. This is a great way to let your online friends in on what it might be like to actually spend time with you. That's the main goal of online dating isn't it, to find people you'd finally like to meet and spend time with face-to-face? Anyways, it's always more fun to hear about a crazy experience you've just had than to read the same old descriptions of you and your cat that have been on your profile for months now.

As for photo albums, this is the icing on the cake. Not only do these photos round out and confirm the physical picture your friends are forming of you, but they also go a long way in helping others really see what makes you "you." The head and shoulders shot of you in your profile photo is nice and all, but when they see you hanging 10, running with your Chihuahua, or shoving a big fat piece of cheesecake in your mouth ... now they're getting to know you.

I HAVE CONFIDENCE IN ME

Have fun describing yourself without making excuses about why you're on the site or who convinced you to finally go online. Tell us what makes you unique.

Believe it or not, being an online dater no longer places you on the fringes of society or even in the minority. Online dating has grown up and moved into the mainstream, and so you can now happily assume that the face-saving qualifiers of past times online are now obsolete. And, more importantly, just realize that they don't help your cause when meeting others online.

One more thing ... try to be original. Yes, I'm sure you really do like the outdoors and want to meet someone who looks good in a tux and in jeans, but so does everyone else! Tell us some things about yourself that wouldn't necessarily come out in an elevator conversation with your tax accountant. For example, what are you passionate about? What would you do if no longer had to work for a living? What's your favorite flavor of gelato? Do you secretly wish everyday was sampling day at the grocery store? ... now it's getting interesting!

HONESTY IS THE BEST POLICY

Don't be fooled thinking telling fibs will impress that special someone enough to get a relationship started... it will turn them off! Be your best self.

When you really stop and think about it, what do you think your new friend's reaction is going to be if when you meet for the first time it's obvious you're not the person they thought they were going to be meeting? "Oh .. hi. I see that you've been dishonest with me from the get-go here, but hey, I'm still thinking we've got a great shot at having an open, trusting relationship for the long-term" Obviously not. They're going to be hurt, and disappointed. And, your relationship is unlikely to get past the wave goodbye as your friend gets back in their car to go home.

IT'S NICE TO BE NICE

Okay, so you get a little grouchy once in a while—don't we all? However, people like nice people.

Please be considerate and polite ... it will make this whole online thing so much more enjoyable for all of us!

There's an interesting social phenomenon researchers have discovered in online interactions. They've found people often change their standards of politeness and diplomacy when a conversation is happening online, versus face-to-face.

Don't believe it? You might be surprised if you were to go back and look at some of the things you've said. Look at some messages you've sent, and then consider saying the exact same words in a face-to-face or a telephone conversation. Sound a little rough? Don't feel too bad, it happens to the best of us, just try to keep this in mind the next time you're typing out an email or instant message.

One more thing—please don't ignore people. A quick "thanks, but no thanks" note is so much better than no reply at all. In fact, next time you're replying to a message on the site, check out the new "Thanks but No Thanks" template. It's a quick way to nicely let someone know you're not interested in

corresponding.

YOU CAN PICK YOUR FRIENDS ...

Invite your friends along! Create Activity Groups, go on group dates, try Express Dating, enjoy travel events, and just enjoy the net together. After all, instant messaging alone isn't enough to build solid relationships.

Group dating and group events simply make a lot of sense for online dating. Not only does it make those first dates less stressful, it often makes them more fun, and it definitely makes first meetings a much safer proposition.

Have you ever tried Activity Groups? They're a great way to meet people with common interests in a safe, fun group setting. You can join a group that's already been created, or you can create your own and invite all your friends to join ... and their friends ... and their friends ... you get the point.

BREAK OUTA THAT SHELL

Don't be afraid to make the first contact. Online dating makes it easy for all you shy ones out there to break the ice, because you get to do all the initial getting to know each other from the comfort and safety of your own computer.

To start, just send a Flirt or a quick email message saying Hi—and do it often! You might be surprised how many of our great members suffer from lack of attention from their online peers. Not only might you find someone with whom you're very interested in maintaining contact, but you'll probably be making someone's day.

EXPAND YOUR HORIZONS

If your first internet efforts haven't turned up "the perfect one," don't despair. Hundreds of new people sign up every day on the site, so just come back to see Who's New. You may also want to consider expanding your searches—don't be too intent on sticking to your itemized checklist for eternal mates.

You might also want to try some different searches from time to time. Because there are about a million different things you might find attractive in another person, it's nice to mix up the criteria you're searching on once in a while. For example, you can search by their Occupation, any Keyword or combination of keywords you can think of, and many others.

UH OH ... THIS MIGHT ACTUALLY BE FUN!

Don't be afraid to have some fun along your path to relationship happiness! Enjoy getting to know people and understand that many happy relationships and even marriages start with a good ol' friendship. And, don't rush it!

You've heard animals can sense fear? Well, we humans can be pretty perceptive as well (except for that one guy who just can't take a hint). So, don't think others can't sense when you're frustrated, dejected, conceited, holier than thou, fed up, etc. etc. Put a smile on, and enjoy the ride, because even if the first few people you meet aren't Mr./Mrs. Right, it doesn't mean you can't have some fun in good conversations with them.

You may also need to be a little bit patient as you head off into the brave new world of online dating. Not all marriages are "love at first site," and even if yours is, it may take a lot of looking before you "site" that special someone. And so, once again ... enjoy the ride!

USE YOUR NOODLE

Ya know, that gray matter between your ears? That's your noodle. Use it! Be smart, be cautious, and follow our safety guidelines, your instincts, and the spirit in all your dating activity.

Done right, online dating is a lot of fun, and it's a great way to meet some wonderful people ... just ask the thousand-plus people we've had submit success stories to us in the past few years! So, enjoy it, and follow these ten tips, and hopefully we'll be getting a success story from you sometime soon.

Visit www.metromingle.com today to meet local singles in your area in a clean and wholesome environment. <http://www.metromingle.com/>

Kevin Koger has dedicated his career, or at least the past few years of it, to perfecting the art of bringing singles together online. He has a B.S. in Psychology from BYU, an MBA from the same, a dog, a cat, two or three bikes, a happy disposition, and a nack for falling off skis and surfboards.

The Single's Guide To Online Dating

By Hak Ty

If you're single and you're willing to try out new avenues to dating then you should try out online dating. It's definitely fun, less expensive and easier than dating the regular way. You're also able to meet more people since the Internet lets you talk to people from all over the world! With online dating, there's no need to restrict yourself to dating the same old guys from your very small town (read: population of

817). With online dating, there's no such thing as social classes because it's open to everyone! The Virtual Places To Be For Online Dating - If you're now open to the idea of online dating, there are several cyber places that you could stop by and see if there's anyone who appeals to your taste. First stop would be the online dating sites.

These sites were primarily designed to help people meet others with the same interests as theirs and maybe forge a relationship later on. Online dating sites such as these require you to register for membership and maybe even pay to enjoy additional features of the website.

Then, these online dating sites would ask you to create a profile for your own so that other members would know a little about you. These profiles could be the key to catching the interest of your future Mr. or Ms. Right so make sure that you make your profile as interesting as possible - without lying about anything, of course. Most online dating sites also allow you to upload photos of yourself so if you're reasonably attractive, do make sure that you post your best picture.

The second place that allows you to date online is chat rooms such as those provided by MIRC or Yahoo. These chat rooms are usually divided or categorized according to region, race or interest. If you enter a chat room with the name Singles20–40, then you should expect to meet people belonging to that age group. It's imperative to choose a chat room that reflects your preferences to ensure that you'll meet people who are probably similar to you in terms of interests.

The third virtual place to be if you want to try online dating is forums or interactive websites. By joining a forum or registering for membership in an interactive website, you'll be able to meet people who are sure to share the same interests as you do. These forums usually hold regular meetings so make sure that you participate actively and get yourself known!.

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