

Time to Meet! – Advice for your first offline meeting.

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By Jennifer Lester

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You have done all the legwork and have finally found someone you are truly interested in. Now it is time to take the next step and finally meet. Your first date. This one can be nerve racking and scary, or you chose to make it the time of your life.

Be sure to plan ahead. You have been talking with this person either on line and/or on the phone. You have gotten to know them enough to have some idea of what they might like to do. Use it. Whether you are meeting in your area, or in theirs, find a place the two of you can go where you will be free to talk and get to know each other. If you are looking for a casual first meeting, try a coffee shop. You can enjoy sitting on the patio sipping your drinks of choice while enjoying good conversation. There is no pressure to spend a long period of time together; which is great since you are still not sure if you will want to.

If you don't like the coffee shop idea, try lunch. It is more casual than dinner and it gives you the option of possibly making the date a lot longer if you are having a great time. If you meet for lunch, you can always make an excuse to have to leave, or you can plan to spend the rest of the day together. However it flows, it goes.

Use your surroundings. Do not take your first date to a movie. You can't talk to each other so you really don't get a chance to get to know one another enough to know if you are going to want a second date. If you live near the beach, plan a picnic in the sand. If you live near a hillside, maybe an afternoon hike to get the two of you out under the sun and into nature. Use your date's interests to your advantage and you can create an adventure you can both enjoy.

Think of things that you can talk about before you get into the position of an awkward silence. Remember past conversations. They can give you the information you need to keep the communication going. Don't forget, almost everyone is interested in himself or herself. I know it sounds egotistical, but it is the outright truth. Just ask your dates questions about themselves and pick up on details that you can get them to expand on. After all, you are interested in them too or you wouldn't be on this date in the first place.

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Men, I know this is old fashioned, but you should always treat on the first date. It will show the woman that you respect her and want to treat her well. This is going to give you a lot better chance of getting a second date...or even more.

Women, be gracious. If you are anything like me, you have a bit of a problem letting men be gentlemen. Letting them pick up the tab without feeling like you should help, letting them open doors for you, and letting them pull the chair out at the table for you gives them a chance to be chivalrous. If you have found a man that is willing to do all of these things for you, accept it with thanks don't fight it. Sometimes the best thing you can do for another person is to let them do things for you and for you to appreciate it.

Try to relax. Go into this with the attitude that if nothing else, you are making a friend. Fewer expectations lead to fewer disappointments. I am not saying you shouldn't anticipate having a wonderful time, just don't expect it. If you are lucky, you will hit it off wonderfully and be much more relaxed to enjoy it.

Lastly, don't do anything out of a feeling of obligation. If you find you are not interested in this person whatsoever, you don't have to stay. You are not obligated to spend a lot of time with someone that you just met. If you feel like your safety or (as it has been for me at times) your sanity is at stake, find a way to leave. If you can't excuse yourself gracefully, then go out a back door. Remember your own safety and peace of mind is much more important than anything else. Pay attention to how you feel and act on it.

Now, get out there and have a stupendous time! It is time to really enjoy your life!

Jennifer Lester is an online dating expert who offers her advice and guidance through the world of online dating at her web site: <http://www.lovepersonally.com> - The tour guide for your online dating experience.

### **Met Online? Tips for that First Meeting**

**By Jennifer McVey**

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1. Before you meet someone, it's essential that you let a friend or family member know where you're going and who you're meeting. You'll feel better and they'll feel better knowing you're being cautious.
2. Meet in a public place. There's safety in numbers.
3. Keep the first meeting brief. As everyone knows, chemistry is fickle. You may know right off the bat that you don't want to ever see this person naked, let alone sit through an entire dinner with him or her. So don't agree to spend the day at Disneyland (which I did...so I know what I'm talking about) when a quick cup of coffee or a drink after work will suffice. If you're both having a wonderful time, that cup of

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coffee can always be extended into a walk around the park or lunch at your favorite bistro.

4. If you have a favorite outfit, wear it! Ladies, do your nails, fix up your hair, put on fresh lipstick. Guys, wear your lucky "going out" shirt. When you feel sexy and confident, it shows. It also shows the other person that you made an effort and that is sexy.

5. Be polite. Even if there isn't an attraction for you, treat the person you're meeting with respect. He or she may not be the date of your dreams, but remember that they took the time and effort to come meet you.

6. Keep the conversation light and fun. Don't bemoan your bad dating luck or how much you're dying to have children...immediately! Think of a first meeting as a cocktail party: you're meeting someone new and the talk is typically frivolous and casual. Discuss your work, where you were raised, any traveling you did recently. Based on your personal ads, you should already have some idea of what you have in common. If it's your mutual love for the Yankees or your record of never missing an episode of "Survivor," talk about it.

7. Keep it casual and easy. Great ideas for a first meeting: grab some java at the local coffee house, hit happy hour for a glass of wine and buffalo wings (then go home!), have an al fresco lunch where people-watching is ample (terrific for any lulls in the conversation), or meet at the dog park with your pooches in tow.

8. Don't forget to have fun! Online dating, like any dating, is an adventure. Go with an open mind and you'll do well. If nothing else, you'll have great stories to tell your friends later.

Jennifer McVey, along with her two her best girlfriends, rode the internet dating wave for several years. Now happily married to a cute Canadian she met online, she is the webmistress of the internet dating directory, First Kiss Café, where you can find personals, great advice, tips, travel and more for your dating adventures. [www.firstkisscafe.com](http://www.firstkisscafe.com)

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