



WELCOME TO YOUR HAPPY EVER AFTER!

I'm thrilled that you've decided to take charge of your dating journey. My co-author, Ariadna and I have worked with so many people over the years and seen how difficult people find it to create a meaningful, long term relationship.

Leveraging on our experiences, we decided to put this comprehensive ebook together for people like you. Someone who is ready to find love but doesn't know where to start. Someone who wants a long term, meaningful relationship but can't seem to find the right person. Someone who gets matches on their online dating profile but none of them lead to a relationship that you want.

This ebook is packed with information and we've even included activities so that you can take action after reading!

BONUS!

As a thank you for downloading my ebook, I've included a very special step-by-step guide on creating a super online dating profile. Follow these tips and I'm sure you will attract the right kind of matches! Again, this guide is packed with practical information that you can immediately use to update your dating profile.

For those of you eager to get started, you can scroll right down to the guide (it's on Page 38). But be sure to take your time and go through the ebook for more detailed information, tips and tricks on Winning the Dating Game.

All the best on your dating adventures!

Lots of Love,

Valentina





Winning the Dating Game

M
MAITRE D'ATE



Meet the authors

Maitre D'ate is Hong Kong's newest matchmaking and dating concierge agency.

Hong Kong is a great place to be single but not so great when you want to fall in love. The deadlines, late-night conference calls, endless travel, and countless networking events and happy hours make it tough to slow down, meet and connect with people on a meaningful level.

This is where Maitre D'ate steps in. I can introduce you to the right people, who have the right intentions, and create the right circumstances -- so you can fall in love.

I started Maitre D'ate when I realized the coolest, most social and highly successful people I knew in Hong Kong were the ones who were rarely in relationships. They didn't want to be single (and shouldn't be single because they're so awesome) but were.

That's when I realized Hong Kong is great for casual dating and hooking up but it's a tough environment for when we are looking for real and meaningful love.

This is because Hong Kong is on fast-forward – we're so busy living, succeeding at work and enjoying each day that we find it hard to slow down and connect on a deeper level.

I want to change that with Maitre D'ate.

I tailor my matchmaking packages for each client but at the minimum you will receive:

- Pre-profile session to understand what you're looking for in a partner;
- Profile session to really get to know you and your criteria;
- Hone in on your totally non-negotiables and review your past dating patterns;
- Identify your communication and attachment styles;
- Family/friend outreach;
- Executive search;
- Introductions to eligible singles who match your criteria and want the same things you want;
- First-date concierge service; and
- Post-first-date feedback session after each date.



Ariadna D. Peretz
Founder & Managing Director

Happy Ever After is a unique Dating Consultancy that specializes in dating and relationship coaching services for people who are looking for long-lasting love, willing to take control of their life, and want to learn the skills they need to create their ideal relationship.

I know many people believe dating is difficult and painful so I want to make it exciting and fun! My coaching programs show you how to find a partner in the shortest time possible as well as transform the way you think about love.

What I really love doing is helping you uncover:

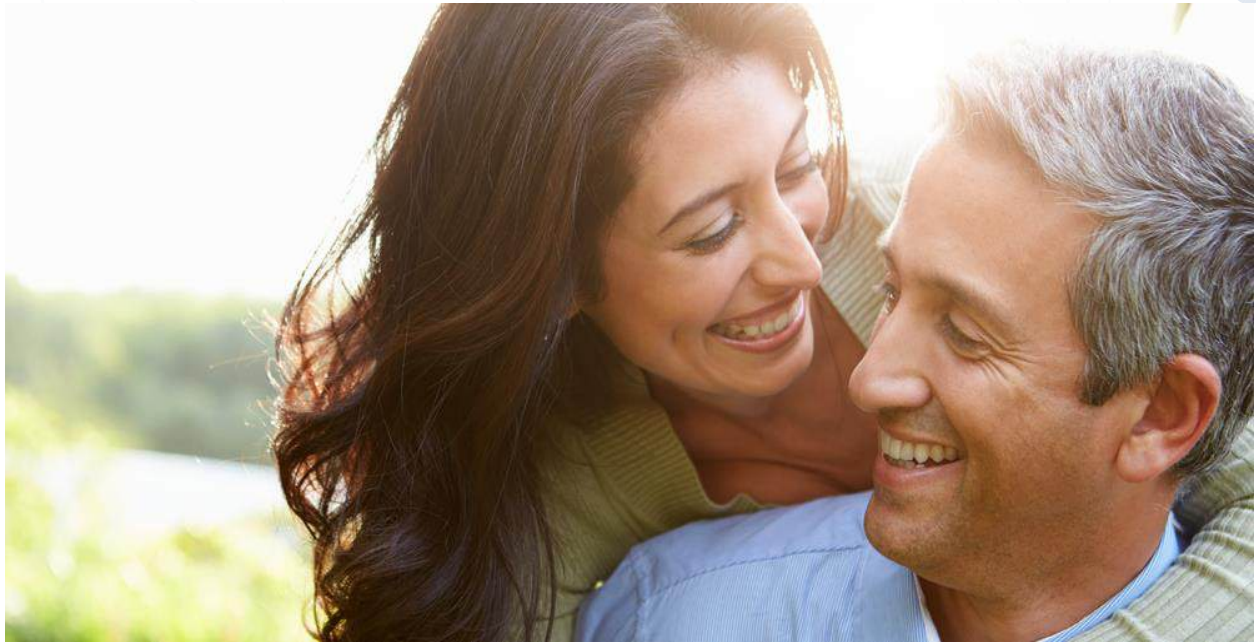
- Why you attract the wrong people in your life and what to do to change that;
- What your ideal relationship looks like and what makes someone your perfect partner;
- How your past relationships affect the way you connect with people in your life and what you can learn from your past relationships to avoid falling into the same traps;
- What is your definition of the ideal mate and where you are most likely to find them; and
- Exactly what you want in a relationship and a clear action plan to make it happen.



Valentina Tudose
Dating Coach & Relationship Expert

I will also teach you how to:

- Create the perfect online dating profile;
- Deal with rejection and learn from every dating experience;
- Flirt and communicate – without feeling nervous or scared;
- Screen and test potential matches to minimize time spent on unsuitable partners;
- Impress your date in different situations; and
- Have the right types of conversations on the first few dates.



Foreword

They say that ‘Love is blind.’ But love itself is not blind – it’s us who approach it like blind people walking around in the dark hoping to *literally* bump into someone who could change our life.

Why are we blind? Because we usually don’t have even have the slightest idea of what or who we’re really looking for.

The purpose of this book is to give you a head start. If you apply the science of dating and relationships to your search for a soul mate, looking for love can be easier and more enjoyable.

The skills taught in this book are fundamental for you to take charge of who you meet and with whom you explore a potential relationship. These tips will propel you several levels of magnitude from where you are today towards your biggest dream.

In short, the goal is to simplify dating and make it fun for you.

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Dating then and now

Dating is a relatively new concept in the history of humanity. It's only been a few centuries since beliefs about marriage, love and the role of women in society changed to allow for the supremacy of [romantic love](#).

Historically, relationships and marriages were more like business deals in which the woman was essentially traded between her family and that of her new husband, with no talk of love. Romance was usually only present outside of the marriage and was hyperbolized in literature as secret, dramatic, and usually with a traumatic ending (think *Romeo and Juliet*).

Lucky for us, things have changed and we can make our choices based on what we really want in our life.

But, do we **really** know what we want?

Or do we let ourselves get carried away by all the options?

Because, you've probably noticed...we have a lot of options.

It's a little ironic we've never had so many single people!

That's because the problem isn't *meeting* people. The problem is *connecting with* people. Like the ball in a pinball machine, we spend our life having micro-interactions with thousands of people.

These interactions are too fleeting to make any impact.

What needs to change is turning those micro-interactions into meaningful ones so you and the person you are interacting with have enough meaningful information to decide if you are romantically compatible.

This book is intended to give you a comprehensive outline of what you can start doing today, both online and in real life (IRL), to transform your dating life from lonely, painful or boring to exciting, passionate and FUN.

Let's get started...

Meeting online

Overall, the world is better off now that we have online and app dating but you need to remember:

- Online dating is only as good as you make it;
- Online dating takes a lot of patience and effort; and
- Online dating is not an end but a means to an end (and this end is IRL dates).

In this section, you'll find ways to minimize your time online while maximizing your matches with people who are *worth* your time and energy, and meeting IRL.

Your profile

In essence, your profile is your elevator pitch. You have a little bit of time to make an impression – so make the most of it!

Your photo

If you've browsed any dating app for more than five minutes, you know there are some terrible profiles out there. From photos 'borrowed' from celebrities or Google images, to semi-naked bathroom selfies, endangered animals and unrecognizable Halloween costumes, it's all there for show. And it's NOT good.



Top Profile Dos & Don'ts

DO choose photos that clearly show your face. This communicates you have nothing to hide. Your face needs to be completely in the frame, looking towards the camera and there shouldn't be any shadows over it. Keep in mind that [a study has shown](#) women are attracted to photos of men who look proud whereas men are more attracted to photos of women looking happy.

DON'T use group pictures, especially for your first photo because it's confusing.

DO use a professional photographer if you have the budget to do so. A professional photographer can tell your story authentically and attractively. However, make sure you go easy on the Photoshop because your potential matches will want to meet you in real life and all that effort will only lead to disappointment.

DON'T have children in your first profile photo.

DO ensure you're making eye contact with the camera in your primary picture.

DON'T use photos that are overtly sexy or revealing if you are serious about meeting a life partner. However, these types of photos are fine if you are looking for something casual.

DO have more than one photo. You want to build a story about who you are and several pictures are the best way to do it. Choose images that showcase your passions and interests and tell your potential matches what sort of person you are. Ideally, you'll have four to six photos and they will be a good combination of close-up and full body.

DON'T use gym and bathroom selfies.

DO ask some friends for honest feedback when it comes to the pictures you've chosen...and take their advice!

DON'T use pictures that are not your own or show a version of yourself that is no longer representative of the current reality. Honesty and self-acceptance are the best policy. If you have self-confidence issues or are not clear on how to look your best in your profile, talk to a coach who can help you focus on your strengths and overcome any limiting beliefs about your body.

DO wear something red. It's the colour of love and very eye catching.

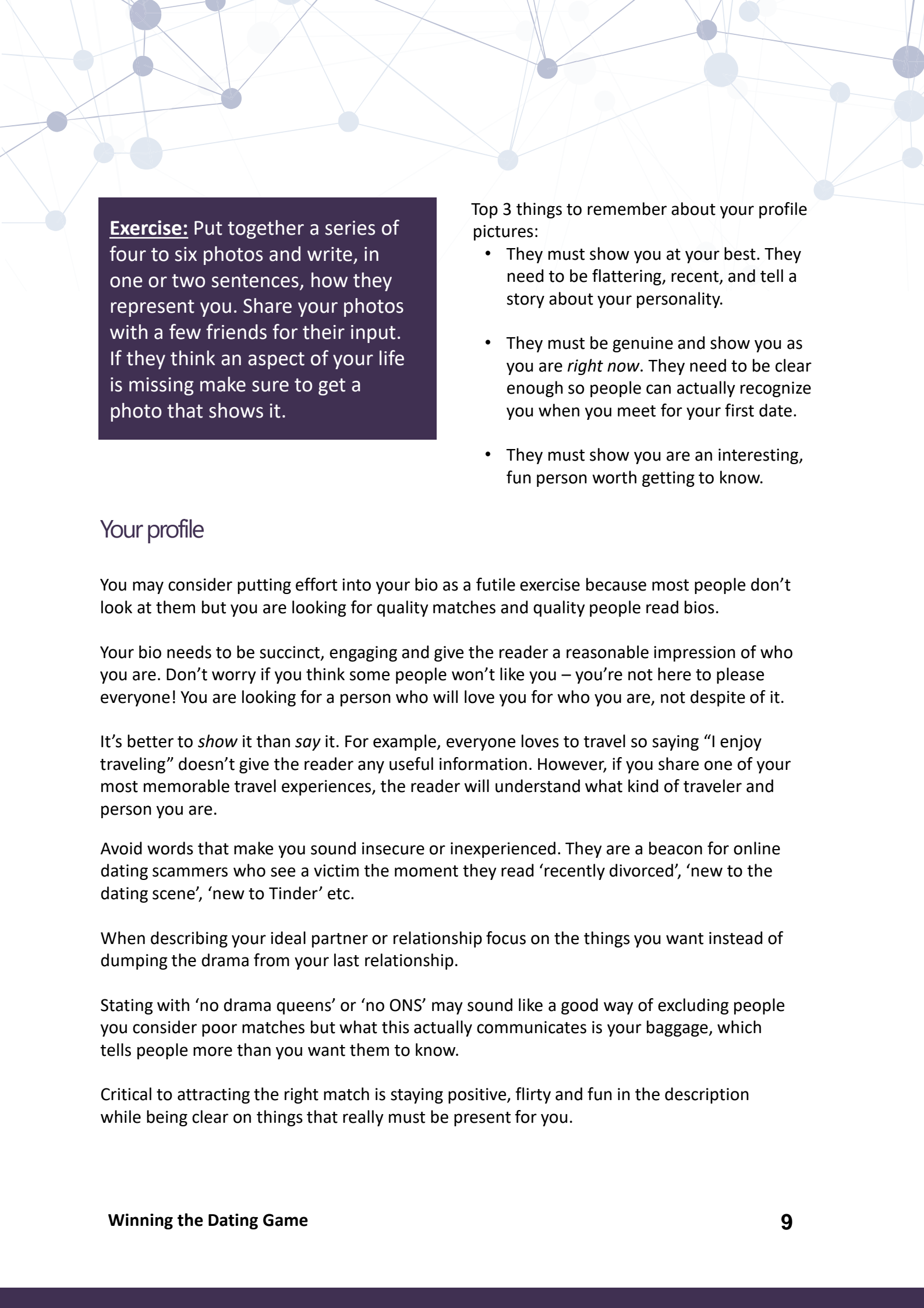
DON'T use pictures showing you with someone of the opposite sex.



When choosing photos, you want to show several aspects of your life but do not give the impression that you have an unhealthy interest in something. For example, if you love your dog then have a photo with your dog. But don't have three photos of you and your dog because they're not offering any more insight into your life (and it looks like you don't have friends).

You may be tempted to choose pictures that don't clearly show your face because you believe you are less attractive than some other people you see on these sites. No need to worry if you're a man because research shows [women often prefer to contact 'average looking' guys](#) and not the most attractive of them. (The reverse is sadly not quite true.)

If you do not have any usable and current photos, you can work with a photographer. Alternatively, ask a friend to do a mini photo shoot with you. Another option is to hold off on creating an online dating profile until you've been to several networking and evening events (where you are well dressed). Ask people at each event to take a photo of you.

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Exercise: Put together a series of four to six photos and write, in one or two sentences, how they represent you. Share your photos with a few friends for their input. If they think an aspect of your life is missing make sure to get a photo that shows it.

Top 3 things to remember about your profile pictures:

- They must show you at your best. They need to be flattering, recent, and tell a story about your personality.
- They must be genuine and show you as you are *right now*. They need to be clear enough so people can actually recognize you when you meet for your first date.
- They must show you are an interesting, fun person worth getting to know.

Your profile

You may consider putting effort into your bio as a futile exercise because most people don't look at them but you are looking for quality matches and quality people read bios.

Your bio needs to be succinct, engaging and give the reader a reasonable impression of who you are. Don't worry if you think some people won't like you – you're not here to please everyone! You are looking for a person who will love you for who you are, not despite of it.

It's better to *show* it than *say* it. For example, everyone loves to travel so saying "I enjoy traveling" doesn't give the reader any useful information. However, if you share one of your most memorable travel experiences, the reader will understand what kind of traveler and person you are.

Avoid words that make you sound insecure or inexperienced. They are a beacon for online dating scammers who see a victim the moment they read 'recently divorced', 'new to the dating scene', 'new to Tinder' etc.

When describing your ideal partner or relationship focus on the things you want instead of dumping the drama from your last relationship.

Stating with 'no drama queens' or 'no ONS' may sound like a good way of excluding people you consider poor matches but what this actually communicates is your baggage, which tells people more than you want them to know.

Critical to attracting the right match is staying positive, flirty and fun in the description while being clear on things that really must be present for you.



Exercise: Write 30 to 40 words that best describe you. Now narrow it down to the top three or four qualities that make you truly different and special. These few things should be the essence of who you really are and they will be the 'keywords' guiding your ideal partner to you. To be sure you are on the right track, ask your friends or coach for feedback on your final words. They might be able to help you define what makes you unique.

Use emoji! It adds colour, it's easy to understand and decreases the number of words you need to use.

Sense of humor is important to most people. If it's important to you too, don't say "I have a great sense of humor" because showing it is better than saying it. Instead, use some humor to show your light side.

Remember: It is important for screening purposes to be perfectly clear on what you are looking for so matches can self-select.

Anatomy of the Ideal Online Dating Profile



Excellent photo: Not a selfie, well lit, shows his personality, face is unobscured & he's facing the camera

Genuine smile

He's not shirtless

less than a mile away

Intense & rare being 🧠 living passionately 🔥❤️🔥

The emoji reduces the number of words so it's easier to read; it also adds colour and humor

Reality seems to equal the unification of the sensory structure you tend to use... 🤔

Bite-size sentences (vs. long paragraphs) make it easier to read

Moving the world with ❤️

Seeking to inspire and be inspired 📖

Shows what he's like and who he's looking for

Interested in new experiences, contributions, & growths 🙌

"Partnering up" vs "settling down"... So be real and be your weird AF self 🧠❤️🧠

Shows what he's looking for without any negativity or being disparaging

Moving fwd w zero insistence on outcome & unconditional ❤️! 🦄

🌐 Ambivert 🌐

This is Bumble (where the woman has to initiate the conversation; he has made it easier by suggesting an opening line

What else? If the conversation seems silent let's start w "what does love

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Swiping

It only takes our brain a few nanoseconds to decide if someone is 'hot or not'. Once you decide that someone warrants a second look, do you just go ahead and swipe right? If you're looking for a serious relationship, there are a few things you need to think about.

First and foremost, you need to be clear on what **you** want, so your match selection will not be only based on looks.

Traditionally, we are taught to approach our partner selection by screening in, which means giving people the benefit of the doubt. We tend to believe that having certain criteria for a relationship is wrong -- it makes us demanding, high maintenance or a perfectionist who will never be able to find someone who meets all our requirements. The truth is, if even ONE of our non-negotiable deal breakers isn't met, the relationship is doomed, so why bother?

There seems to be a general obsession with superficial criteria like looks or income level and, while they obviously matter to a certain extent, they are not what make a relationship work. Consider what this says about you when all you care about is whether the guy you want to date is a banker and whether he would qualify for the basketball team.

Confident people who are successful at the dating game focus on what *type* of relationship they want, ensuring things like honesty, sense of adventure, or compassion are present.

You can start by defining your three minimum-acceptable requirements that are absolutely necessary to build your dream relationship. Ideally, these are not related to looks, age or profession but are the non-negotiables that must be present for you to be happy.

For example, if you are not open to a long-distance relationship, someone who's based elsewhere and just visiting your town for the weekend is clearly not going to work out in the long run, so why waste your time?

Similarly, while you may be dreaming of a tall, dark and handsome prince who will swipe you off your feet, you may still find your soul mate might be your height and have average looks but will love you exactly how you want to be loved. Question is: would you even give him a chance? Because of this seemingly endless availability of new matches, we often reject people who might make great partners by overlooking them or focusing on the wrong features. Keep an open mind when it comes to physical attributes.

To save time, don't use more than two apps, go on each app for a predetermined amount of time, and don't spend more than an hour a day swiping.

Exercise: Make a list of 10 to 12 things that you simply cannot live without in your ideal relationship. These are things like affection, passion, independence, financial responsibility. Sort them in order of importance and pick the top three as criteria to decide if there should be a first date. (You'll verify the others in subsequent dates, should all go well).

Remember that requirements are black or white (e.g. non negotiable) so it's OK to be strict.

Based on these three criteria, practice a reverse strategy to screening in – **screen out**. This means instead of looking for reasons/ excuses as to why this relationship *could* work, look for specific reasons why it *could NOT* work. That way you spare yourself the hassle of getting attached to someone who doesn't meet your requirements. If you have more than three criteria, ask yourself why they're so important. This will give you clues about the internal blocks you need to address.

For each profile, review the photos and read the profile. Try not to make snap decisions on their worth solely based on the photos as you don't want people to make snap decisions on you.

You will want to consider how they come across in their photos – Kind-hearted? Egotistical? Hard working? Obsessively interested by something?

Lastly, swipe right on people you don't find to be very attractive. Yes, really! People get better looking the more you get to know them and most people aren't photogenic and tend to choose terrible photos. Always assume they will look better in person.

Chatting

The main goal of chatting to someone before a date is to determine if there should BE a date! This is where the most critical dating skill comes in: **Screening**. This is the process of learning enough about your match to determine if they're worth your time.

Once you've matched with someone, stop swiping and start the conversation immediately. If you leave the conversation to the end of your swiping session, you will have forgotten what it was about the person that made you swipe right and that will affect the quality of your ice breaker.

Also, if you leave it to the end, you may have several new conversations happening at the same time and it will be hard to give each match the attention it deserves.

You can find conversation tips on pages 23-24.

Ladies, do not fear making the first move.

Traditionally men initiate but it's no longer a strict rule. In fact, most men love being approached by women and [research from OKCupid](#) shows women who message first get 2.5 times more messages than those who wait for the man to break the ice.

Possible opening sentences:

- Hi! I'm glad you swiped right on me too. You look like you're a lot of fun in your photos.
- Hello, was your profile photo taken in Thailand? I was there recently and....
- Hey, how's it going? I really enjoy doing <mutual hobby> too. When was the last time you did that?

Last thing: You may feel after some time chatting that you don't want to meet this person. Feel free to let the person know you're not feeling any chemistry and move on. You are not doing anyone any favours by dragging out the conversation. If you don't want to meet in person, you might as well cut it short and see what else the app has in store for you.

Setting up the date

Remember: Online dating is not an end but a means to an end: IRL (in real life) dating. Catching feelings for a person that you will never meet totally defeats the purpose of online dating.

If the conversation flows or you feel there's compatibility, suggest a date. Women can take the lead on this although it's customary for the man to initiate. The important thing is someone initiate a date before you both forget about each other or things get awkward.

If no one has bothered to suggest a date by the end of the week, you can delete the entire conversation as it's safe to assume nothing's going to materialize. No need to say goodbye.

Ending and deleting the conversation is **especially** important if you're feeling chemistry and the other person is treating you like a pen pal.

This is a problem on several fronts:

- You start growing feelings for someone who isn't interested in meeting you.
- The longer you text the more chemistry you feel but the harder it will be to replicate that chemistry once you met.
- You have finite time and energy. If you are using it on a person who does not want to meet you IRL it takes away from the time and energy you could be using to meet people who really are looking for a relationship.

Exercise: Come up with a list of ten opening sentences you can use to start an online conversation. Remember, almost anything is OK as long as it's more interesting than "Hey" or "WYD?"

Meeting people offline

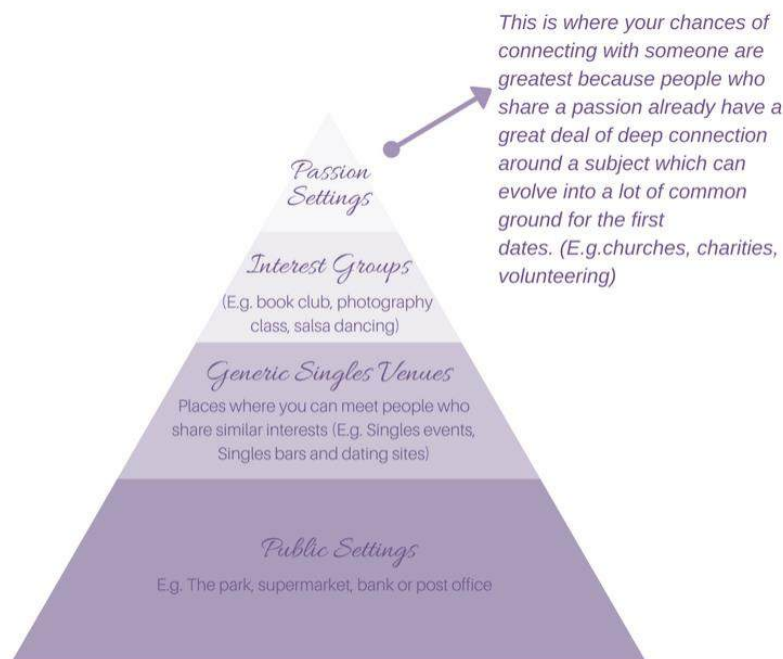
The best part about meeting people offline is that you aren't judged within a split second by a photo. When you meet IRL you get to experience all the different dimensions a person has.

Location

The usual advice when it comes to trying to meet strangers who could possibly become Significant Others is to go to the places you enjoy however...this isn't always the best idea.

If you are a woman looking to meet men you need to go to places where men go. Not the spa nor cooking class nor belly dancing class. Yes, you could possibly meet a guy there but your chances are very low so don't waste your time. This is the same for men...don't go to places that mostly attract other men because you will not meet your goal.

You already have made a list of the qualities you want in your future SO. Now is a good time to make a list of places where you would find such a person.



Exercise: Make a list of your ideal settings. Have at least two for each level and define what would attract you most to a person in that environment.

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Attraction venues

There are essentially four levels of **attraction venues** that increasingly enhance your chances of success.

- **Public Settings**: This includes the park, supermarket, bank or post office. Yes, it is possible to meet your future partner in any of these situations but the likelihood of success is quite low because many of the people you meet there are not even single therefore not open to meeting anyone.
- **Generic Singles Venues**: One thing you know about people at a singles event, singles bar or on a dating site is that they are (at least in theory) single and looking for a partner. How true that is, what kind of relationship they're after, and whether they are a good match for you, are still unknown variables so screening skills are necessary to protect yourself from mismatches.
- **Interest groups**: This includes art or photography clubs, gyms, etc. These places allow you to meet people who share similar interests. Some of them are dedicated to singles, while others are not, so choose carefully among the thousands of groups available.
- **Passion Settings**: This is where your chances of connecting with someone who has potential to become a life partner is very high and therefore most effective. That's because people who share a passion already have a great deal of deep connection around a subject, which can evolve into a lot of common ground for the first dates. Passion settings include your place of worship, favourite charity or a social cause you believe in.

Icebreakers

There are two points that need to be made before moving on to this section:

- Going to places on your list isn't the answer. You must engage with people.
- Rejection hurts but the pain doesn't last forever.

Icebreakers are essential because that's what is going to get the conversation started.

Exercise: Make a list of icebreakers for each of the eight passion venues you listed out. Aim for at least two ice breakers for each venue.

The icebreaker depends on the location. Below are some examples:

- At a bar: I think we are cheering for the same team. Who is your favourite player?
- At an art gallery: This painting is stunning/ weird/ intense....
- At a restaurant: What did you order? It looks delicious!
- On the street: Are you from here? I'm looking for xyz street.
- At Starbucks: Do they ever get your name right? I've yet to be so lucky.
- At the gym: I've been noticing you and you're starting to look really good. Great commitment!
- In the elevator: Do you live in this building? I've been here for a few months but haven't seen you before.

You are better off making a positive remark instead of a negative one (e.g. This coffee is delicious vs. this coffee is disgusting) as you don't want your first impression to be negative. However, if you're in a situation that merits a negative remark, go ahead but add a positive spin to it (e.g. I can't believe this MTR line isn't running. I hope no one got hurt).





Keep the ball rolling

Now that those first words have been exchanged some of the pressure is off but a new type of pressure sets in...What to say that will keep this person interested?

The easiest answer: To be interestING be interestED.

It's good to ask open ended questions and avoid Yes/No questions. Start your questions with Where? When? What? How? This allows them to elaborate and give you details that will keep the conversation going.

But make sure it doesn't sound like an interview! A 'getting-to-know-you' conversation is a balanced give-and-take. Expand on their perspective with yours and contribute to where the conversation is going without monopolizing it or steering it towards speaking too much about yourself.

Ending on a high note

Keep the conversation succinct! Wrap it up quickly by saying you need to meet someone or do something. You don't want the conversation to drag on because you two will get bored and uncomfortable.



Asking for the telephone number or email address

By prematurely wrapping up the conversation you have an excuse to ask for their number or email address. You can say this was an interesting conversation and why not continue it at another time. That's how you ask for the contact details and set up the date at the same time.

Don't *trade* details! When it's time to call/email, you will wonder to yourself why they haven't made the first move and then you'll decide to wait until they do. To preempt this, just ask for contact details and be done with it.

If you met on the weekend, you can wait until Sunday night to get in touch. Any other day of the week, get in touch six to 12 hours after you've met but never late at night because that insinuates your interest is purely sexual (which is fine but if you are reading this book you are probably looking for a committed relationship so a late-night text won't sit well).

The first date

The point of the first date is simple: To find out if you'd like to go on a second date. It's not the right time to ask about your preferred method of birth control or what is their MPF contribution.

Your priorities are:

- Have fun;
- Get to know your date; and
- Let your date get to know you

To decide if you truly had a nice time or not, ask yourself:

- Did I have fun?
- Did I get annoyed?
- Did time pass quickly?
- Did I feel comfortable?
- Did I feel respected?
- Did we make each other laugh?

Exercise: Practice overcoming the pleaser in you by saying no for 21 days in one situation where you normally would say yes. Works best if you are accountable by telling a friend. By the end of 21 days you will find it easier to say no to lots of things that come at you.

Date ideas

When it comes to deciding what you will do on the date (e.g. how much effort, time, and energy you'll invest) you should consider how you met. If you met online or briefly at a bar you are better off doing something low commitment and low investment that allows you to exit easily, such as coffee or a walk around the park.

If you have been introduced by a matchmaker or friends then you can do something that requires more time, energy and/or money. The reason for making this distinction is that in the former you don't have much intel going into the date whereas in the latter you've had your date vetted by a third party you trust.

Many people believe the best set up for a first date is a fancy dinner. It's natural to want to impress a match but there are some big disadvantages connected to this choice:

- If there is no chemistry or your date is boring or rude, you're stuck for at least a couple of hours with very little chance of making a polite exit;
- Dinner can be an expensive undertaking; and
- It is much harder to manage your boundaries around sexual involvement with a new date when the date takes place late at night, especially if alcohol is involved.

Date 1

- A quick coffee or walk in the park during the day are your best bets.
- Plan to meet for no more than 45 minutes and give your date a heads-up that you will need to leave at that time.
- You're best off to have an exit strategy: know what to say if the date is not going well.

Date 2

- Again, ideally during the day.
- Do something active that you both enjoy. This is an opportunity to explore what shared interests you might have and, in case the conversation is lagging, there will be stuff to talk about all around you.
- Watch out for deal breakers: this is the time when you must pay attention to the subtle signs of the **'clue to failure'** – red flags we tend to ignore when there is chemistry but turn out to be the reason the relationship eventually breaks.

Date 3

- Increase the length of your date.
- Focus on values, requirements and if you both have similar views on relationships and life.
- You can go for lunch but avoid dinner because it can drag on.
- You can now be open about how you feel and share with your partner if you want to continue seeing them or not.

After the third date, it should be much more clear if this relationship is worth exploring.



A few things to watch out for:

- Even if you've been on three dates together and things are looking good, don't assume you are now in an exclusive relationship. Disasters happen when we make assumptions and it takes more than three dates to know a person well enough to decide if you want to be in a relationship.
- On that note, be careful of talking about love very early on – it can really lead to misunderstandings.
- Remember that three dates don't mean you know everything there is to know about them. Once you are past the initial screening of the partner you can now move to the next dating strategy called **testing**. Whatever you think you know about your match becomes clearer as you spend more time together so watch out for actions rather than words.

Besides going on a hike, grabbing coffee or having lunch, daytime dates can include:

- Signing up for a beach clean-up or another kind of volunteering opportunity
- Visiting the zoo or aviary
- Checking out an art gallery
- Visiting Kowloon City
- Yoga/gym and a smoothie
- Art Jam
- Cooking class
- Matinee symphony or play
- Walking tour
- Shek-O swim & BBQ
- Watching or participating in a game of a sport you both enjoy

Active dates give you the opportunity to problem solve (e.g. following a map), make & fix mistakes (e.g. getting lost and then getting back on track) and succeed together (e.g. arriving to the summit).

Active dates are awesome for conversation because there's always something to talk about – either the task at hand or getting-to-know-you banter.

Everything is more romantic once the sun goes down. Of course, you can do dinner or drinks but why not try one of these options:

- Dinner at a private kitchen or an interactive kitchen
- Play or concert
- Dancing class
- Temple Street Night Market



Making conversation

Remember, your first date priorities are:

- Have fun;
- Get to know your date; and
- Let your date get to know you.

You can accomplish all three by having great conversation. What is great conversation? It's when you're both asking meaningful questions and sharing personal details via storytelling. Don't worry – you don't have to discuss ultra-personal information! But you do want your date to see what makes you special and unique.

Great conversation is like a game of catch. You start with some easy 'throws' and as you get more comfortable and confident your 'throws' become a little funny and teasing.

You can use the [FORD technique](#) to get into a conversation that is meaningful. FORD stands for family, occupation, recreation and dreams.

Winning the Dating Game

Exercise: Think of three or four questions in each FORD category that you can ask people. Draft your answers to these questions too. Practice saying them in front of a mirror and when you get comfortable practice saying them to a friend.

If you are going to focus on occupation don't think of it as a CV recital. It's not. This is a way for you to share what makes your career interesting and how you feel about it.

Remember, you'll never fall in love with someone if you only stick to the easy stuff and no one secures a second date after two hours of chit chat. You need to dig a bit deeper.

Some great questions are referred to by Mandy Len Catron in The New York Times' Modern Love essay, ["To Fall in Love with Anyone, Do This."](#) She talks about a study by husband & wife duo, Arthur Aron and Elaine N. Aron, in which they try to speed up the process of falling in love. You don't need to [ask all of the questions](#) and you don't need to want to fall in love but they're fun and informative.

Exercise: Script out your answer for [six of these questions](#) and practice reciting the answers so when you bring them up in conversation and it's time for you to share, you deliver your story comfortably. Practice in front of a mirror and when you get comfortable practice sharing them with a friend.

If you do ask each other all 36 questions you will have had a very interesting time out. You may want to do the last exercise – which is the cherry on top – gazing into each other's eyes for four minutes.

This exercise requires a lot of courage. If you do it [let Ariadna know](#) and she will send you both a gift.

Who pays on the first date?

The entire first date is about testing the waters – am I interested in her? Is she interested in me? Do I like her jokes? Does she laugh at mine? Are we attracted to each other? Through your body language, actions, and words you engage in a back-and-forth that communicates your levels of interest.

Then the bill comes. Men may think him paying or not paying 100% doesn't mean anything. But it does for the woman.

Match.com's *Singles in America* study shows that while [71% men like it when a woman offers to split the bill, 86% of women only do it to free themselves of any post-date obligation](#). She will take the man's suggestion to split the bill as a signal that says, 'you're not my type' because – right or wrong – that's what she would do to signal he weren't her type.

As mentioned earlier, we do not recommend a fancy meal or long-drawn date for your first meeting. Something quick and easy (like a walk, hike or coffee) makes the best first date because it's low time and psychological commitment, which also means low financial commitment.



Top Conversation dos & don'ts

DO put your phone away.

DON'T pretend to listen when you're actually figuring out what you want to say in response.

DO ask "How about you?" when your date has asked you for your opinion on something.

DON'T feel the need to only ask questions. Feel free to share statements and opinions.

DO give your date your full attention.

DON'T be combative. You can ask why they have a certain opinion but this isn't a debate.

DO say, "Tell me about that," when your date mentions something interesting.

DON'T pry, especially about past relationships.

DO ask questions about the other person.

DON'T focus only on topics that are only interesting to you.

DO read the news ahead of the date so you are up to date with current events.

DON'T stick to chit chat.

DO make jokes.

Securing the next date

Even if the first date doesn't go as planned, it's always good to schedule a second date. This is because people can find first dates nerve-racking, may not be their true selves, and often aren't comfortable enough to flirt so chemistry and compatibility aren't apparent immediately.

The best time to schedule a second date is during the first date.

Look good, feel good

You need to feel your best and communicate that sense of comfort and confidence to the rest of the world verbally and non-verbally.

Confidence

Developing confidence is not easy but can be done. The first steps require introspection, time, and financial investments:

- Be active, eat well & only when you're hungry;
- Wear clothes that make you look and feel good;
- Consider the right accoutrements (e.g. hair, accessories, skin products);
- Spend time with people who make you feel good;
- Know you deserve to be happy; and
- Read so that you can comfortably discuss various topics.

Power posing

Alcohol is called 'liquid courage' for good reason but there is a better way to boost your confidence. With two minutes of power posing you can trick your body into feeling more confident. [As Amy Cuddy explains in her famous TED talk: Fake it until you become it.](#)

Studies have shown that after a two-minute "high power pose" the risk tolerance of the high-power poser soared – testosterone (the dominance hormone) increased by 20% and cortisol (which helps handle stress) dropped sharply.

Studies have shown that people who power posed ahead of interviews are overwhelmingly favoured specifically because of their presence.

Power poses include lifting your chin and raising your arms in a V (as if you had just crossed the finish line at a race); putting your feet up on a desk, recline back and rest your head on your crossed arms; hands on your hips and puff your chest out; and anything else that makes you take up a lot of room (e.g. spreading your legs and arms).

★ POWER POSING ★

2 MINUTES OF POWER POSING CAN MAKE YOU FEEL MORE CONFIDENT

Power poses include lifting your chin and raising your arms in a V; putting your feet up on a desk with your arms crossed behind your neck; putting your hands on your hips; puffing out your chest; and anything that makes you take up a lot of room (e.g. spreading your legs and arms).



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IN STUDIES, PEOPLE WHO POWER POSED AHEAD OF INTERVIEWS WERE OVERWHELMINGLY FAVOURED, SPECIFICALLY BECAUSE OF THEIR 'PRESENCE'.



DOES THIS SOUND FAKE TO YOU?

**YEAH, IT KIND OF IS...BUT REMEMBER:
"FAKE IT UNTIL YOU BECOME IT."
(BECAUSE YOU WILL)**



TO LEARN MORE ABOUT POWER POSING WATCH AMY CUDDY'S TED TALK FROM OCTOBER 2012.

The opposite of a power pose is anything that makes you take up the least amount of space. This would include tightly crossing your legs; hunching over; and slouching (which as you will soon see, are indicators conveying you are not enjoying yourself).



Exercise: Power pose every morning this week without telling anyone and see if people compliment you on your presence and if people observe you differently when you are in public.

Talking to strangers

Unless you are a super extrovert you will find it difficult to talk to strangers. But if you practice it will get easier and more natural.

[Kio Stark](#) wrote a beautiful book called [When Strangers Meet: How People You Don't Know Can Transform You](#) that will inspire you to talk with strangers.

Charisma

There are two aspects to charisma – presence and confidence – and you can learn both.

Presence is being truly engaged with others; making them feel they're the only one in the room and super important.

There are several ways of doing this:

- Put your phone down;
- Listen attentively;
- Make good eye contact;
- Ask questions (but don't spend the entire time thinking about the questions you're going to ask);
- Show interest; and
- Put people at ease.

Exercise:

Week 1: Every day say hello to three strangers.

Week 2: Same as Week 1 focusing on members of the opposite sex.

Week 3: Same as Week 1 but focus on people (either sex) you find attractive.

Week 4: Greet three strangers with a remark (Great weather we're having).

Week 5: Same as Week 1 but with a compliment (I love your shirt).

Week 6: Strike up a conversation with three strangers.

If this sounds daunting you can ask a friend to accompany you the first couple of days while you're getting the hang of it.

It will also be beneficial if you increase your use of phone and in-person communication and reduce your dependency on email and texting because they're both very disengaged mediums of communications.

Body language

We don't all speak the same language but body language is near universal and you will go far by memorizing the following tips as they will give you hints on what the person you're speaking to is thinking.

Please note, however, you need to take people's body language as a cluster. For example, crossed arms could mean he's cold or it could mean he is intimidated by you or it could mean he's mad (at you or someone else).

At first it may be difficult to listen to someone and take in their body language but you'll get better, as always is the case, the more you practice.

Welcoming body language

- Tilted head
- Leaning in
- Angling body towards you
- Taking up lots of space (e.g. arms spread out)
- Laughing and smiling
- Preening
- Prolonged eye contact
- Women: exposing or touching wrists, neck

Rejecting body language

- Closes eyes frequently, for prolonged periods of time, or rubs them
- Darting eyes
- Leaning away
- Angling body away from you
- Taking up little space (e.g. legs crossed tightly)
- Hands in pocket or clasped in front of groin area
- Tight smile

Obviously, if you are hitting on someone or have the intent to, you want to exhibit welcoming body language.

Exercise: Each time you have a coffee or a meal on your own observe everyone and try to understand what their body language says.





Flirting

Beyond great conversation you need to flirt when you're on a date. You secured the date because there was an initial attraction and your date felt something too. Don't lose the feeling by acting as if you are just friends. You need to be **flirtatious**. If not, you will friendzone yourself.

Just like good conversation, flirting is a game of catch. You start simple and easy and if the other person reciprocates you build at a comfortable pace

Flirting includes:

- Maintaining eye contact
- Smiling and laughing
- Open body language
- Touching gently (yourself or your date)
- Playful teasing
- Giving compliments
- Being coy

There are times when flirting is inappropriate (e.g. with a complete stranger who shows no interest or at a funeral) but if you are out on a date that means there is interest so don't waste the opportunity.

Of course – if you do decide you aren't attracted to your date, you don't have to flirt. There is no obligation to be romantic just because you're out on a date. But, if you are attracted to your date, let them know by flirting.



This woman is lifting her head to expose her neck, which is a sign of interest. She is touching her neck and that can be interpreted two different ways – either she’s touching her neck to bring more attention to it or she’s touching it to self-comfort. The former is a sign of flirting but the latter is a sign of anxiety. When reading body language, it’s important to look at gestures in clusters. Without enough clues (two as a minimum) we may misjudge.



The woman on the left is showing open body language. She is taking up a lot of space, in fact she’s even taking up some of the other woman’s personal space by putting her arm on her chair. The woman on the left is also leaning in towards her. The woman on the right is more closed – she has her legs and hands crossed, and she’s not taking up more space than what her chair permits. She’s not leaning in nor out, however their arms are touching, which shows connection.



The man is leaning into his date but she is subtly leaning out. We cannot see the lower half of their bodies but the upper bodies show he is more comfortable than her even though she is smiling. It’s hard to tell if her smile is genuine and if she’s actually making eye contact with him. She is self-comforting by touching her hands.

Rejection

Rejection hurts but the pain doesn't last forever. If you try to start a conversation and get rebuffed, don't take it personally. Be cool, apologize if you think it's needed, and move on. (Easier said than done but please try it.) The good news about getting rejected is the more you get rejected, the less you care.

Also keep in mind:

1. Do your best to not take it personally. Usually when we are rejected it's not because we did something wrong, it's just that we aren't a good fit at this moment.
2. The cooler your response the better. They may very well come around and approach once they get comfortable with the idea of talking to a stranger.
3. Rejection can be terribly destabilizing. Don't hesitate to contact your friends (or us) for moral support.

Rejection is a part of life: you can't avoid it. However, to minimize the pain, go into the date without a particular outcome in mind – it's OK if there's chemistry and it's OK if there's not, and if there isn't mutual chemistry, don't worry, it's not a reflection of you as a person. You are a desirable person and you are a great catch but this particular person is not for you. It's important to go into a date with the mindset it's you doing the choosing, not the other way around.



Exercise: Go on a few dates with people you aren't particularly interested in so you can practice detachment. Keep this attitude when you are going out on dates with people you are very keen on.

Key takeaways

Meeting online

Remember, online dating is:

- Only as good as you make it;
- Technically free but takes a lot of patience and effort; and
- Not an end but a means to an end (and this end is IRL dates).

Therefore swipe wisely and delete matches if the conversation doesn't inspire you and/or neither of you has taken the initiative to set up a date within the first week. You want dates, not penpals!

Your profile (both the text and photos) should communicate who you are, and take the time to review people's full profile and do your best to not focus just on looks.

Criteria

We are taught to approach our partner selection by screening in, which means giving people the benefit of the doubt. This isn't an efficient way when dealing with the thousands of people available online. Instead, screen out. You can start by defining your three minimum-acceptable requirements that are absolutely necessary to build your dream relationship. Ideally, these are not related to looks, age or profession but are the non-negotiables that must be present for you to be happy.

Meeting offline

Think of the Passion Settings where your ideal mate would spend time. However, just showing up won't do the trick – you need to engage with them. It's difficult to get over the fear of rejection but you must through practice and/or professional guidance.

Use one of your prepared icebreakers to get the hard part over. Once you've spoken those first few words everything else will fall into place relatively easily. To keep the conversation interesting, be interested.

The first date

The point of the first date is simple: To find out if you'd like to go on a second date. Do something easy and low commitment so that you have an easy way to exit if the date ends up being boring or uncomfortable. The man should pay if all went well as this is a gesture that he is interested in seeing her again. If she suggests to split the bill, the man can safely assume she doesn't want to see him again.



Connecting

To connect on a romantic level you need to flirt. To connect on an emotional level you need to have meaningful conversation. To connect on a physical level you need to touch.

You must flirt if you're on a date and you find the other person attractive or you want the other person to find you attractive. You will lose whatever initial attraction there was if you do not make an effort to be flirtatious. However, don't feel obligated to flirt if you are not into the other person.

You'll never fall in love with someone if you only stick to easy conversation topics and no one secures a second date after two hours of chit chat. Don't be afraid to ask deep questions and to be vulnerable. This is the key to connecting on a meaningful level.

Make sure there is at least *some* touching. For instance, let your shoulders graze each other, link arms when crossing the street or touch hands when laughing at something particularly funny. Physical touch is important to cut through the first-date awkwardness and get both people feeling warm and comfortable.

Conclusion

If you're awesomely single, keep on being awesome! But if it's time for a relationship we hope you have enjoyed reading this book and you'll use the tips.

Remember: There are singles all around you and for the most part they are open to you taking a chance on them.

If you have enjoyed the book but would like some expert help in finding your future Significant Other, please get in touch! The reason we're in this business is because we love love and think Hong Kong needs more of it.

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BONUS – 4 STEPS TO WINNING THE ONLINE DATING GAME

I'm excited to share with you my handy and quick to implement, step-by-step guide on improving your online dating profile!

Here's what we'll discuss:

- Common mistakes that people continue to make when setting up their profiles (and how you can avoid them)
- Do's and Don'ts to building a super online profile
- How to select the best photo for your profile
- Writing a catchy headline to introduce yourself
- How to create a real impression online and attract quality matches

A very generic profile might leave you with hundreds of matches, but are all these matches your soulmate? Nope! Now you have to spend time figuring out which ones are actually worth connecting with.

With the number of online dating apps rising, you would think that finding the love of your life will get easier. What a lot of people forget is that this profile needs to communicate enough about you for you to make a match. This is why you may end up with a lot of matches but very few that are actually worth spending time on.

Why not make a few simple changes to your profile to not only reduce the screening time but also attract better matches.

My "4 Steps to Winning the Online Dating Game" is full of useful tips, tricks and do's and don'ts that you can implement to your online dating profile immediately!





It's a Match!

4 STEPS TO WINNING THE ONLINE DATING GAME

IT'S ALL ABOUT QUALITY,
NOT QUANTITY

HAPPYEVERAFTER.ASIA

Online Profiles Horrors

If you've spent any time at all browsing through profiles on popular dating apps recently, you have probably seen it all! Drugged tigers, cute puppies, big guns and Halloween outfits from hell!

For some reason, the owners of these profiles felt these were the pictures that described them best! I am not judging, but I do have to wonder what kind of matches they want to attract!

How to find your perfect match?

You may believe that your chances of finding the Love of Your Life are higher the more matches you have but research shows that is not completely true.

A generic profile created to appeal to the vast majority of users only makes your manual selection process more difficult and time consuming. You may get a hundred matches in a week but how much time do you want to spend personally screening these people to check they are worth connecting with?

A few simple changes to the way you approach your own profile can make a world of difference to your screening time **and** the quality of people you are likely to attract.

3 common mistakes in online dating profiles

1. NOT SHOWING YOUR FACE

The very premise of online dating apps like Tinder relies on research that says, when looking at someone we may or may not be attracted to, our brain decides in a matter of milli-seconds if this person is 'hot or not'. Therefore, when choosing a photo of yourself that is not in focus, is blurred, or your face is so far from the lens as to be unrecognisable, you are not giving yourself the best chance to appeal to the primitive part of your potential matches' brains, very likely missing the opportunity to 'seal the deal'.

In the age where every device can take high quality photos and the 'selfies' are literally the easiest thing to do, a blurred profile picture can indicate anything from lack of self esteem and a desire to hide yourself to much more damaging conclusions - like whether you are really single and serious about dating.

Some women think men who have selfies as profile pictures are shallow and self absorbed but they are also the ones whose profiles are made almost entirely of selfies so be mindful of the unintended messages your are sending via images and words.

2. TMI (TOO MUCH INFORMATION)

I'm sure you heard the saying that "Less is more". There's nowhere where this applies more than when describing yourself to a potential partner. Yes, the assumption is that the more you reveal about yourself, the more people will connect with you and find reasons to get in touch.

The reality is people are lazy and they don't like to read (sorry boys!).

Would you read a news article if it didn't have an appealing headline?

Wooly profiles with lots of text and no differentiation tend to bore the browsers and get totally ignored or rejected.

When deciding what you're going to reveal to a stranger you want to attract online, quality of information beats quantity by far, so make sure you create a unique, concise story that will only appeal to the kind of people are you really interested in meeting. This will limit the time you waste viewing and rejecting messages from people you don't want to meet.

3. BEING VAGUE

Nothing screams "FAKE ALERT!" more than photoshopped or 'borrowed' pictures, vague details about race, age, location or the classic 'Nothing to see here. Looks like they are the silent type'.

Dating is all about discovering a new experience with a new person. When there is nothing to be discovered or all a person wants to share is that they have nothing to say about themselves, the message is almost invariably 'they have something to hide'. While I am not advocating you have to reveal everything about yourself to the world without any filter, what you actually choose to keep hidden tells more about who you are than what you choose to share.

Some say, of course, that a woman must maintain a decent dose of mystery to keep the guys guessing. There is a certain amount of truth in that for both men and women, however that mystery is all about offering enough information to create but not enough to *satisfy* the curiosity of a potential partner. Being intrigued by what they see is what will make them want to connect and learn more.

4 steps to a

SUPER PROFILE

1. CHOSE YOUR PHOTOS CAREFULLY

Everyone knows a picture is worth a thousand words, so make sure yours sends the right message.

DO ...choose a picture that clearly shows your face. This communicates that you are honest, confident and have nothing to hide.

DO... ensure your primary picture shows you smiling and making eye contact with the viewers. Just like in real life, where the most obvious signs of flirting are long glances and secret smiles, let your profile picture replicate that first look across the bar that attracts a prospects' attention.

DO ... have more than one photo. Although it's worth a thousand words, you want to build a story about who you are and several pictures are the best way to do it. Choose images that showcase your passions and interests and tell the potential match what sort of person you are.

DO... ask a friend for honest feedback when it comes to the pictures you've chosen and take their advice. They see you for who you really are and whether you are conveying the most authentic version of yourself.

DON'T... ever(!) use pictures that are not your own or show a version of yourself that is no longer representative of the current reality. Although we are talking online dating, you will eventually want to meet your match in real life and it's not going to go down well if you look dramatically different.

DON'T ... use group pictures. Even when you want to show you are a social person that enjoys hanging out with friends, it is not the viewer's job to try to figure out which one is you. So make it easy for them!

DON'T ... show headless pictures. You may think it's the best way to highlight your fit body but the truth is our brains struggle to fill in the gap and that tends to distract from the job at hand - figuring out if we like you.

DON'T ... chose pictures that show you with someone of the opposite sex. Even if they may not be your girlfriend or husband, it will make people wonder why are you on a dating app, reducing your chances of a match.

DON'T ... use shirtless/sexually revealing pictures if you are serious about meeting a life partner. Those might attract the wrong kind of matches, because the message they receive is that you are looking for a hookup.

DON'T...post pictures showing you using guns or posing with endangered animals. While you may feel they make you look 'manly', it tends to achieve the opposite effect by being seen as immature or needing to reassert your sexuality.

2. HAVE A CATCHY HEADLINE

Not all dating apps ask or even allow for a headline but there is always space for a short introduction.

DO... think of this as the headline to your brand! It's the shortest way to describe yourself to appeal to your perfect match (**not** everyone in the world), so make it fun and catchy.

DO... make it all about your unique qualities: what makes you stand out from the crowd, why should this person talk to you and no one else.

DO... dare to be different, to say the opposite of what people usually see in other profiles, Your goal is not to get as many matches as possible but to get the **right** matches. This is the best way to let the potential partners self-select and only contact you if they are attracted to what you - and only **you** - have to offer.

DO... give them an opening line. Most people struggle with what to say when they first get in touch and everyone knows how boring a 'hey' can be. Add a call to action or a question in your headline to help matches with that first 'hello'

DO ... use positive, upbeat language that people can relate to without having to think too hard. Short, flirty headlines that leave the reader wanting for more are the best way to go.

DON'T... make yourself sound boring. If you're going to talk about your interests, passions like 'eating and sleeping' are not exactly what most people are looking for in a partner. Focus on new interests you might want to explore from now on if nothing comes to mind and you may find yourself a partner in crime.

DON'T... undersell yourself. Modesty is all nice and good but this is your chance to become a magnet for the love of your life. Let all your amazing qualities shine bright and entice the right person's attention.

DON'T... brag or make stuff up either! Any relationship you start from a place of dishonesty is only doomed to fail when your partner eventually finds out the truth and will not be impressed.

DON'T... sound negative or bitter. Nobody wants a downer in their life, so even if you've had some negative experiences with dating, do not make your profile about the things you don't want to see in a partner. It will sound a lot like bitching and that's not even remotely attractive.

DON'T ... use words that may make you sound vulnerable, as this is a sure way to attract online scammers. It is not important how terrible your last marriage has been, how recent your divorce or how new you are to the modern dating scene. Any indication of emotional vulnerability can be taken advantage of by less than honest users, so make sure to protect yourself by keeping these details to yourself until you are sure of a person's identity.

3. BE YOURSELF

... Because everyone else is taken!

DO... write your profile as if you were describing yourself to a trusted friend. Talk about your unique qualities, what your friends love about you, without worrying how the opposite sex might feel about any of it. You are not here to please everyone, you are looking for the person who will love you for who you are, not despite it.

DO... focus on what is important to you: what you believe in, what you are passionate about, what keeps you up at night or what you want to share with your ideal partner. These unique traits are ways you will narrow down the field, saving you time and effort in the screening process.

DO ... start by making a list of 30 to 40 things that describe you. Then go back and narrow it down to the top three or four qualities that are truly different and special about you. These few things should be the essence of who you really are and they will be the 'keywords' guiding your ideal partner to you.

DO... ask your friends (or coach, if you have one!) for feedback on these four words. They might be able to help you hone in to what makes you really really unique, which could be quite different from where you think you are.

DO... talk about what makes you a good catch. Your quirky traits might be the ones that appeal most to your ideal partner, so if your favourite show is Games of Thrones and you'd like to share that passion with a partner, this could be what makes them get in touch.

DON'T... make stuff up to seem more interesting based on what you think people want to see. The right person will fall for your unique qualities, not what makes you more like everyone else.

DON'T... try to please everyone with a boring middle-of-the-road profile that focuses on you being 'normal'. People do want partners that share basic interests but think about how you can make your passions special. Maybe it's all about that secret pasta recipe you have from your grandmother that everyone really needs to try...

DON'T ... forget to be clear about the type of relationship you want. If you are looking for a long term partner and possibly kids, say so upfront. It will save you a lot of trouble down the line, as people who are in it for different reasons won't be wasting your time.

DON'T... make it boring and hard to read. Your personality needs to shine in every word you say. Use playful and engaging language, so people can already imagine what it would be like going on a date with you. Do your best to showcase your intelligence and wit in this very first contact you may have with a new potential match so they are compelled to want to know more.

DON'T ... be afraid to be yourself. Yes, you may be an acquired taste for some people but your goal here is not to have broad appeal. Your uniqueness is your strength, so show it with pride, let it shine brightly. It will make it easier for your soul mate to find you if you are not hiding underneath unrealistic pictures and 'same same' platitudes.

4. BE CLEAR ABOUT WHAT WANT IN A PARTNER

DO... ensure you have a very clear idea of the kind of relationship you want, as opposed to writing a long list of physical attributes you've been dreaming of since you were a little girl.

DO... expand on the common interests you are looking for in a partner. Research shows that most successful relationships are those where partners have passions that keep them interested in each other even after years of marriage. Once the fireworks of lust and attraction are gone, you still want to have something to talk about over dinner so start from a good base.

DO... place your profile on sites that match your desired outcome. If you are only looking for a committed relationship focus on apps or websites that largely appeal to commitment-minded people. Hookup apps or less reputable websites catering to different types of relationship choices may not be your best bet.

DO... consider expanding your reach to people who you may not have previously considered good matches (be it in terms of geographical location, age range, etc), as we are all usually stuck in patterns and we don't know what we don't know. Keeping an open mind as to what your ideal match might look like physically is also a good idea, as often compatibility is a better indicator of relationship success than instant chemistry.

DON'T... focus on the physical criteria that would define your ideal partner. Yes, you may have been dreaming of a tall, dark and handsome stranger that comes to your rescue, but believing that all that matters for a successful relationship is good looks is not your best strategy for success.

DON'T... forget that a relationship is like a contract between two people, so having only expectations of what the partner has to deliver and taking no responsibility for your side of the deal is not the way to go. Consider creating a list of Relationship Requirements that both you *and* your partner will have to fulfil. The key thing to remember here is that, if you expect your partner to be completely honest and truthful in your relationship, you need to be able to provide the same level of honesty to make it work.

DON'T....just list a bunch of generic traits that may make you seem demanding or shallow. Create a similar list of qualities you would like to find in a partner as the list you did about yourself and select the top 5 most important ones. It will help you clarify even to yourself what you are really after.

DON'T...make it all about you. Yes, your ideal partner needs to be a good match to score a date but, if all you're trying to do is tick boxes on a check list, you are not opening yourself up to a relationship, you're approaching it like a job interview process.

Final tips

Once all of the above is ready and done, there are a few more things to keep in mind to really win the online dating game.

Here are some ideas of how to maximise your chances of finding the right partner :

1. Not all apps and sites are created equal. Do your research and see which ones meet your criteria for the type of relationship you want. If you want to practice your dating skills and are open to recreational dating (non-exclusive, just for fun, with no expectation of commitment) chose apps like Bumble, Tinder or Happn. If you've made up your mind you're looking for "The One" paid apps like Coffee meets Bagel, Lovestruck or Lunch Actually may be a better bet.

2. Don't waste time with chats that go nowhere before meeting in person. The great thing about online dating is that you can keep in touch from afar and it offers an opportunity to do your screening safely and without much commitment. However, unless what you're really looking for is a pen pal, the sooner you can meet in real life the better. Do your basic checks of course, make sure the person is real and not a scam (best way to work this out is to ask for a real life encounter) and meet for a coffee.

3. Keep your options open. Even if you meet someone you like and you think you click with, this doesn't automatically mean you are boyfriend and girlfriend from the get go. Keeping things light and non-exclusive - but being clear about it with the partner¹ - is a great way of exploring if this really is a good match. If all goes well you can have the exclusivity talk soon enough, while if things don't work out with someone, at least you are not back to square one.

For a FREE assessment of your current online profile, book an appointment at www.happyeverafter.asia

Looking for the love of your life and feel you need a little help?

MAYBE IT'S TIME TO EXPLORE RELATIONSHIP COACHING

Relationship Coaching is an advanced form of Personal Development that focuses specifically on the way you connect with people in your life and is designed to help you discover and create the best version of yourself so you can live a perfect life that you love.

It's about understanding yourself first and then using this knowledge to identify and attract the right people and thus make your life vision possible.

It's really a matter of figuring out what's holding you back from achieving your dreams, and moving you forward without obstacles.

Working with a Relationship Coach can help you:

- Get full clarity on your goals and vision for your life and relationship, whether you are in a relationship or not.
- Understand how your relationships with everyone around you affect your capacity for self-love
- Discover your core values and how these affect your choices of partner
- Identify the exact characteristics of your perfect relationship so you know what is real and what is imagined
- Understand what you must have in your life and relationship for you to be truly happy
- Create your own 'Happiness Journey' so you can achieve all your goals and find your 'happy ever after'.
- Learn, practice and apply productive relationship skills to ensure you get the relationship you want in the shortest time possible.

Explore www.happyeverafter.asia for a FREE DISCOVERY SESSION