

## INTER-NET LOSS DATING

The idea behind Internet dating came from drive through burger stands, which is not to be confused with the drive in, burger stand. In the latter you actually meet a person who comes to your car bringing your order. In the former, you speak into a little box and place your order. “Would you like cheese with that?” “Fries or Onion Rings” “Drink?” “What kind?” Once you have made all your choices you drive to a little window and get an order that has your name on it. Both parties have a sanitized transaction with out ever having to say anything more than, “Here is your change, thank you.”

As so it is with internet dating services. You and your mouse put in the order, making choices about your prospective date as if they were accessories on a car. “Would you like windows with that?” I choose what year the model will be, whether she will have a hard top or will put her top down. Do I want a ride that purrs or rumbles? Will she be lean on gas or will she suck it up at the pump like a binge drinker after a three week dry spell? I do have to ask myself the important questions like, “Do I want the big comfortable ride or something sleek that handles well.” Am I the kind of person who is more interested in her finish or what’s under her hood?” Am I looking for something right off the lot that is still in the box, or a model that has been around the block and has already proven dependable with the ability to ‘go the distance’. Will she haul my gear or turn heads?

Let’s be clear, I am not a chauvinist, just a pig and as such I can be as blunt as hammerhead on the internet without the qualms of retribution; like a slap in the face. I can create an elaborate alter ego online that is so convincing that nuns would line up just to polish my pulpit. Why be honest when you can back up your story with a lie? I have heard tales that could rival anything seen on reality TV shows. However internet dating is anything but real.

Go into any internet cafe and you will find men and women, sitting next to each other, facing separate computers, seeking prospective dating partners online. Their live flesh and blood has lost its appeal

because it just doesn't translate to the screen. It will be our computers that will be doing the handshaking in the future instead of us.

In defense of internet dating we as a nation are saving billions of gallons of gasoline because what was once "Cruising the Strip" on a Saturday night has been replaced by "Surfing the Net" As this can be done in the safety of our own homes the mortality rate on the highways will plummet. In the future it will be your computer and not your car that will crash. Nobody has ever been hauled off to jail for TUI. (Typing Under the Influence) nor will they be pulled over for doing 175 words per minute.

Men will be able to make more discerning choices about who they want to spend a week's salary on before going on that date. They will be able to get the tough questions answered without being embarrassed, "Do you sleep with a guy on the first date?" or "Are you expecting me to pick up the tab?" And even more importantly, "Do you have any life threatening disease that I can catch when I touch you with my genitals." You can even pose the very same questions they ask contestants in the Miss America pageant. Which may include some of the above anyway.

Certainly spelling and grammar will tell you a lot about your date, like whether she was a cheerleader in High School and never had time for computer classes or if she majored in English Literature. Short answers like, "U R cute" paints a picture that is less likely to cloud a guy's judgment than if she is wearing a skirt that is as short as a shot of Espresso and amps your pulse equivalently.

It is easy for a man who paints himself at baseball games to recognize that he need not respond to a woman who writes, "I find that in the preliminary stages most relationships are constrained by preconceived notions that are formulated by the media's superficial depictions of the female anatomy." So in this way the screening process is indeed valuable and saves time, money and energy. Not to mention the embarrassment of having to tell your date, "Excuse,

me but I left my car running and I'll be right back, go ahead and order without me.”

After being a member for four weeks I was feeling pretty good about having my profile viewed 119 times which translated into three phone calls and one meeting in person. Imagine the blow to my 150 PSI ego when the first woman who agreed to meet over coffee said that she joined one week ago and had already gotten 1309 hits. Her comment, “People are on this service because they don't know how to have a relationship.” Gee, and all along I thought it was because they wanted to get laid. That again is another dating service that you can only join if you have a small black strip across your eyes and use an alias like, “Pole Prancer” or “XXXavier” or “You'll Flinch”.

Many people join dating services because bars in this country are so loud that you don't converse, but yell at your date. The reason the music is so loud is because these people don't have anything to say to each other anyway. We have forgotten the art of conversation because it requires thinking and the ability to engage another human being. It is or national pastime to ‘Veg’ out in front of a television screen and the description is apt. Short for vegetate, and that is why term ‘Couch Potato’ is so appropriate for people as they have figuratively become “Tubers”. For those of you who will not get the pun, grab your remote, as there is something else you are missing besides the joke, like a life.

American's spend on average 6 hours a day in front of the set. You can find this statistic on the internet. Multiply that by 7, the days of the week and you get 42 hours per week, not quite two days. Now multiply that by the number of weeks in a year, 52 and you get 2,184 hours per year or 91 days. Now multiply 91 by 72 (figuring people will live to 78 and they started watching at age 6) and you get 6,552 days. This is where it gets scary so cover the eyes of your child who was probably the unlikely accident that occurred during the re-runs of *Friends* or when the cable went down. Divide 6,552 days by 365 (the number of days in a year) and that comes to 17.

Seventeen years watching representations of life, rather than actually living it.

So is it any surprise that we don't know how to talk to one another and the conversations that people are having are about what they see on TV. Which brings me back to the Internet Dating; where else can you see your possible date on screen in living color? For the time being all anyone can post is a photo but coming soon we will be able to upload a favorite home movie of ourselves. It will be complete with a script created just for you by a professional writer, a make up artist along with director and camera man to bring out your story as it can only be created by someone else. We will have stand ins play us because they will be the only ones left who will know how to emote, feel, speak, and communicate what is going on inside your own head. Then you will finally get the soul mate of your dreams and all will be well so long as you never as you never turn off the set.

© Michael Marlin 2007