

The Matchmaker Chronicles

Part 1: Technology and Dating

They say that experience is the best teacher, and while we concede that we are far from experts on the subject of singles and dating, we feel that we have much to say on the matter (as most matchmakers do)!

This column is a culmination of the knowledge, feedback and advice that we, the administration and 'agents' of Sephardic Link, have acquired thus far. We've spoken with seasoned matchmakers who have been in the field for over 20 years. We've befriended the specialists at other dating sites and absorbed whatever we can from the over 150 rabbis whom we deal with on a daily basis.

Experts from every field approach us, eager to lend their expertise to our team in an effort to help us in any way that they can. Every article, book or excerpt has been sent our way. Most importantly, we have watched things unfold before us in real time as we set up dates, couples and eventually marriages. What a shame it would be not to share our thoughts in the hopes of contributing to a more encouraging outlook and improved results in today's singles scene.

Obviously, due to our strict discretion policy, we would never divulge anything personal, but rather make constructive suggestions based on the learning experiences of others.

This month we'd like to hone in on what we believe to be one of the most destructive tools of dating in this generation— technology. It can be your best friend or worst enemy. Here are some of the technological blunders we've witnessed firsthand.

Our tips of the month are:

Guys and Text Messages

Never ask a girl out through a

text message or email— call her up like the gentlemen that you are and ask her out properly! If you have to cancel the date for any reason, do



not do it by text or email either. Furthermore, never, ever, text a girl to 'Meet me outside now,' when you pick her up for the date. You must adhere to the chivalry of the past, and go to her door, meet her parents, and walk her to the door at the end of the date, no matter how hard this may be for you. Anything less is disrespectful to her, and makes a negative impression on her parents. Same goes for meeting her in the city after work. Always offer to pick her up, no matter how independent she is, and only allow her to take a cab or car to meet you if she insists upon it. We've seen many dates gone awry because of this!

Girls and Facebook

Unfortunately in today's age, most singles are spoiled by the likes of

MySpace and Facebook, and will not entertain being set up with someone based solely on their internal merits (as they should!). Some insist on seeing a photo— and then to Facebook they will go. We're not asking singles not to be a part of these networks; just make sure that every photo and word written on your profile represents you as a respectable girl. So many matches have ended before they've begun because of the way a guy saw a girl conduct herself on Facebook, or because of the way she was dressed or the drinks she held in her hand in every photo. We are not the morality police, we're just making people aware that everyone's life is on public display and you never know who's looking.

Girls and Guys: The First Phone Call

No matter how cool you are, most people sweat during that initial first date phone call whether they are making the call or receiving it. There are exceptions to this rule, but for the most part— if there are nerves involved, keep the first phone call short and sweet. So many dates have been sabotaged because the conversation didn't go well. Hopefully on the date you'll have more time to get comfortable and be yourself.

Girls and Guys: Distraction During the Date

The best way to show someone you respect them and want to get to know them better is to put away your phone and Blackberry during the course of the date. Focus on what's in front of you; you'll have plenty of time to catch up on other things later. Furthermore, technology aside, if you go to a restaurant where you see others you may know, be cordial but do

Continued on page 2

The Matchmaker...

Continued from page 1

not spend more time at the tables of others than you do with your date! Even if you don't click with your date, chances are one day you may date someone they know and you must always leave them with a good impression of yourself.

A Worthy Mention

This may not have to do with dating, but we'd be remiss not to take this opportunity to help prevent one of the most damaging conducts on the Internet today. Never violate anyone's privacy by copying an inappropriate photo or IM conversation and sending it out to others to exploit them. If at any time you receive anything like this— you must never forward it— this can potentially ruin someone's life. If we all do our part to nip it in the bud, then exploiters won't be able to get away with this. Resist the urge to show others— you wouldn't want anyone "forwarding" you in a compromising position— so why would you do it to someone else?

Relying Too Much on the Internet

Technology today is so fast-forward, that a person need never leave their home to socialize. However, this convenience has taken away some of the vital tools of dating. For one, people rely way too much on a photo to make a decision. When meeting person-to-person, one is able to capture the essence of a person, something they can never get from a picture.

Their warmth, personality and soul are invisible online, and if people would just take the initiative to get together, for even coffee to 'really' meet this person, instead of just dismissing a person merely based on a photo or his or her exterior, then many more of our singles would be meeting. That being said, no matter how much we disagree with photos, it is the norm in the dating scene today— and if you do post a photo, make sure you look your very best and that it captures who you are— inside and out. Also, get out there more and meet people in person, and say yes, nothing is ever lost by meeting a person— and you have everything to gain!

Although we've barely scratched the surface, we hope to present to you more tips every month. Every day on our site is a learning experience, for agents and singles alike and we try and fuse together the proven traditions of the past with the innovation of today's technology. It may take some time for all of us to get used to our ever-changing world, but learn to use it as an accompaniment and don't let it take over your life. □

Remember, anything you see in this column should not replace the advice of rabbis, parents, or experts in the field. It is just an opinion.

For comments, feedback or suggestions for future topics please email Kelly@Sephardiclink.com.