Relationship Advice: Tips and Tricks for Successful Internet Dating

Despite the horror stories you may hear, a recent study showed that upward of 84-percent of people who use online dating apps do so with the intention of developing a romantic relationship, rather than a casual hookup. What does this mean for those looking for love? You're in luck.

Still, there are ways to make the task easier for yourself when trying to find that special someone. Here are some of the best

relationship advice tips and tricks for internet dating to help you find "the one".

Define Your Goals

First and foremost, you need to do some self-reflection to determine exactly what it is you want out of this experience. Are you sure that you want to look for a serious relationship, or are you looking for something casual? What's important to you in a mate? What are some compromises you're willing to make and some that you aren't? Perhaps you'll date someone with kids, but you won't date a smoker. Maybe you need a [christian dating](#) site to stay aligned with your beliefs and values. It doesn't matter what your guidelines are, as long as they are authentic to you.

Ideally, you should define your goals before diving into the online dating world. If that ship has sailed, however, it's never too late to take a step back and re-evaluate your situation, especially if you've had a few negative experiences.

Portray Yourself Authentically

While it can be tempting to choose a photograph of yourself from six years ago or one from the rare occasion when you're dressed to the nines for a special event, refrain from doing so. Why? Because this approach doesn't show the real you and it leads to possibly starting a relationship on a bad note.

If you're a woman who spends most of your time outdoors, hiking through the woods and camping under the stars, then perhaps the photo booth picture of you as a bridesmaid with your hair and makeup done isn't the right choice. Alternatively, if you're a man who loves sports and has no

interest in fine dining, don't hype up your profile in attempts to tell women what they want to hear. You're trying to find someone who will love you as a person, not as a picture. Keep that in mind when crafting a profile.

Think About Your First Message

The first message you send to someone will act as your first impression, so give it careful consideration. Messaging someone and saying "hi" is unlikely to get you far. Look at their profile and make a connection based on their interests to show that you went beyond the picture to learn more about them.

On the other side of things, consider your response carefully if someone reaches out to you and you are interested in pursuing something. Keeping things simple and friendly is the best way to go. If, by chance, you are exposed to someone rude, block them and move on without engaging.

Set up a Safe Meeting

When you feel ready to meet someone, take precautions to ensure that the person is who they say they are and that they have good intentions. Start by looking past the profile picture and seeing that the person has an online presence beyond that. Next, schedule a long phone call or video chat so you can talk for real before making the agreement to meet. Anyone can be sitting behind a keyboard typing and sending photos. Verify their identity so there are no surprises.

When everything checks out, plan to meet in a neutral place where there are lots of other people around. Tell a close friend or relative about your plans and the person you are going to meet. If you ever feel as though something is amiss, don't feel obligated to stay out of politeness.

To have success in online dating, remember these three key takeaways: be kind, be truthful, and be safe. There's someone

out there for everyone; you'll find your person soon enough.