

Dating Advice: 5 Red Flags in Online Dating Profiles



 By Kelly Rouba for Galttime.com

If you're looking for love and feel like you just aren't meeting the right type of people, online dating *can* be a great alternative to the typical dating scene.

"Dating sites do increase the number of people, at least in principle, (who are) interested in meeting you," says Dan Sapen, Ph.D., a clinical psychologist who runs a private practice in Long Island, NY.

But navigating these vast online dating pools can be tricky.

"Dating sites sell the most powerful thing of all—the promise of love and/or sex. The responsibility for making it work or making it a disaster rests both with the seller and the customer. But, as we've all heard, let the buyer beware," Sapen cautions.

According to Sapen, if you are a woman who is looking for a mate online, you can "assume Mr. X is trying to impress you enough to get you to go out with him with as little delay as possible. Assume he is not interested in giving you a complete listing of accurate, relevant facts."

Sapen says some dating profiles remind him of sales pitches used by traveling salesman back in the good old days.

"Fancy talkers would roll into towns full of hard-working miners and poor folk with little education or money and convince them that the mystery liquid in the bottle would solve their problems."

The same goes for guys looking to reel in vulnerable women, so it's best to bypass profiles that sound too good to be true.

"With dating sites, a candidate's sales pitch, based on the information he wants you to believe, mostly comes long before there is any chance the two of you will be in the same room. So, what is he going to tell you about his status, his success, or his financial security that will get you into the same room with him?"

Stacie Ikka, a relationship expert and founder of the dating consultancy *Sitting In A Tree*, shared this example of an online dating profile to avoid:

"I consider myself an honest and stand-up guy. I enjoy skiing, soccer, and cycling. Although, I don't box, I am a avid fan of boxing. I think I am a pretty darn good cook. I love trying out new recipes. I like to travel and at least take one big trip a year. Guilty Pleasure: I still watch South Park.

When I do go out on dates, they are with very attractive females so after a few minutes you better win me over with your personality or else I move on. I am looking to date and have it turn into something long term but want to find that special girl to do it with. I am not looking for someone to hang out with, if you are emailing me to do so, it means there is something wrong with you and you don't have any friends and aren't good enough to be around me.

Please have a picture when you email, if you don't i'll just assume you are fat or very ugly or both and I don't have time for that. You might be very nice and have a great personality but there are fit girls who have that too so why would I settle for less?

I have a nice job downtown around the financial district. *Please at least be able to pay for half on the date. I won't be paying for you (at least not at first) so you better be able to pay your own way. Sorry I have to admit that*

was out of line. What I should have said is, don't expect to be going to upscale restaurants and have me pay for everything. (I don't mind picking up the coffee tab on the first date!!) I want an equal, not a freeloader!! If you are a picky eater, than you are not the girl for me.

Quick Question: Why is the "average" female body 20 pounds overweight? They should really refer to the BMI when choosing a body type. I think it's a conspiracy of some sorts. I know my comments may seem rude but I am being brutally honest. Thanks for your time and best of luck!"

Unlike the sample profile above, some may be worded in such a way that women think they've found a catch, though the person is actually someone to avoid. To help online daters discern fact from fiction and guard their hearts, Ikka says there are at least five red flags to look for when perusing profiles (while keeping in mind that her remarks are generalizations and that there are exceptions as well as alternate perspectives, intentions, and interpretations).

1. Me, me, me

Some profiles overuse the word "I," and the person focuses too much on himself/herself. It is about what he/she wants, needs, or is looking for with little to no mention of what the lucky suitor will get in return.

"A well-balanced person and, therefore, a well-written online dating profile that accurately depicts one's personality, preferences, and relationship goals will ensure that the profile covers what they're looking for in addition to what they are willing to contribute to a relationship. You should be able to glean some observations around whether the person is a giver, a taker, or both by the way the individual packages their profile," Ikka says.

2. Attractive picture but few words

“In these cases, [typically] this is a person who is accustomed to getting by on their looks and, perhaps, their looks alone,” Ikka says. She adds that this type of profile also suggests superficiality, lack of substance, and/or laziness.

3. Negative positioning

These profiles often use words like “can’t, won’t, don’t, shouldn’t, or wouldn’t.” They contain statements, such as “I won’t date someone who doesn’t have a job.” or “You shouldn’t be too opinionated or you’re not for me.”

“These profiles indicate a variety of potential difficulties with their authors, including control issues, a negative perspective on life (or at least on dating), a sense of entitlement, or a victim’s mentality—basically nothing that one should find attractive right off the bat,” she says.

A former client of Ikka’s had a profile that fit this description when she started working with him, she shares. In it, he wrote, “If you’re not fit and into exercise, don’t bother contacting me.” After reading that, Ikka quickly worked with him to change the wording in order to make him sound more approachable.

“I helped him understand that his value of wanting to lead a healthy lifestyle and wanting to find a partner who was like-minded was understandable (but that) he could communicate the exact same thing in a more positive manner. Ultimately, we changed the text to read, ‘Because I value my health and enjoy staying active...I am looking to meet someone who shares the same or similar interests and fitness goals.’”

4. Window shoppers

“These are people who are active on a website but who have not paid for a membership,” Ikka explains. In some instances, “this is a huge red flag because they have no skin in the game and are one foot in, one foot out. You can identify these people only when you go to contact them and realize that you’re not able to or your message goes unanswered; this is because they are not able to access messages, flirts, or e-cards because they are not paying for those services. In that case, do you really want to date someone who can’t even commit to their own online dating profile?”

5. Monologues

“Although people who write long-winded profiles typically have the best of intentions, it is often an indication of what’s in store when you meet them in person,” Ikka says, adding, “It can be innocent and chalked up to a lack of dating experience, an attempt to be everything to everyone, an autobiography, or, in its worst form, it can be a preview to the ‘it’s-all-about-me’ show.’”

Ikka believes online dating profiles should be like movie trailers.

“The purpose is to whet the audience’s appetite, create interest and perhaps some intrigue and mystique, and then let those wanting more opt to buy a ticket to see the full movie. In this case, by reaching out through some form of communication.”

Having to watch for red flags, like these, can make online dating seem daunting. “Some of the problem lies with the fact that the two of you are starting out backward. In the real world, there will be eye contact, body language, scent, and the ability to witness social behavior,” Sapen says.

“The good and hopeful news here is that a woman who is honest with herself, is willing to separate reality from imaginary romance, and who understands that real communication (in a real room, where eyes and hands can be seen, words considered, aroma savored, body language studied, and social behavior observed) stands the best chance of finding a lover for now or for forever, who is really a match based on the realities of sexual chemistry and interpersonal harmony.”