

Relationship Advice: Online Dating Isn't a Threat to Monogamy—It's a Blessing



By Terri Trespicio for GalTime.com

Online dating is revolutionizing all relationships – whether you're dating or not.

For most of recorded history women did not have romantic options. You married the dude who your family deemed appropriate, and he likely lived within a quarter mile, and you stayed with him for life, like or not.

When I interviewed Dan Slater, author of *Love in the Time of Algorithms* (excerpted in *The Atlantic*, in a piece called “A Million First Dates”) on my show on Sirius XM, he agreed that it's changing the way we view commitment. He also said that those who are happy don't have that much to worry about.

But for those of you in less-than-ideal situations, or relationships that have gone south, online dating—even if you don't actually use it – creates this sense of options. That this doesn't have to be it for you.

This is the best news ever. Because if the only way you think you can “keep” a man or woman is by eliminating his or her other options, that means you want an inmate, not a life mate.

The internet didn't invent options—it just brought them a little closer—made it a little easier, yes. But if you were under the impression that disconnecting someone's internet is all you need to do to keep someone from having options? Yeah, that's not gonna work.

Look, I've struggled with this myself – I worried that the more options someone had, the less likely he was to choose me. That's not a technology problem. That's a self-esteem problem.

Could someone decide to be with someone else instead of me? Of course! Always. That's something you can't ever protect yourself against – not you, not me, not anyone. But what I'm realizing is that what I'd rather have is someone who chooses me and continues to choose me, regardless of the other options.

Lest you think I'm not a romantic, I'll remind you that there's nothing romantic about being stuck in something going nowhere fast. You don't get points for martyrdom. Just a sucky life.

While everyone's freaking out about online dating killing love, rarely do we realize those options can work in reverse. Competition – even the idea of it – works in everyone's favor. The idea of options not only makes your partner hop to, but makes you bring it as well. Because throwing your relationship into park once you've "landed" him is a sure way to end the forward momentum. The whole "oh yeah where are you going to go" argument just doesn't hold water anymore.

People will always gravitate toward coupling – and long-term coupling. Monogamy itself isn't dying – but commitment for its own sake is. The idea that you'll only ever want one person is not true for most people (and that's being generous). So if having other options means you're able to leave something that isn't working anymore, then that alone is worth the price of posting a profile.