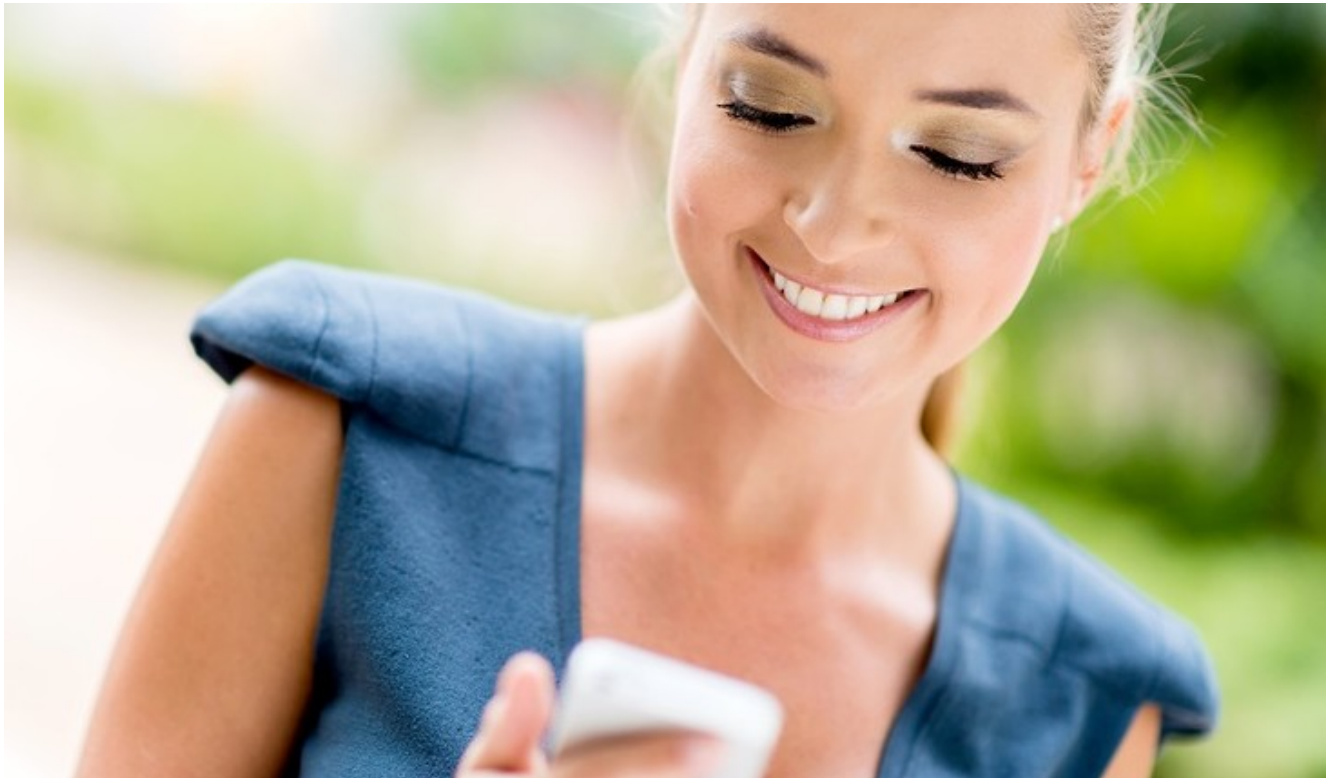


Twitter Dating 101: Actions Speak Louder Than Tweets!



By Mandy Hale

In honor of National Singles Week this week, I'd like to address a new phenomenon that seems to be sweeping the globe faster than planking and twerking combined. (Okay, maybe not THAT fast.) What am I talking about? Twitter dating!

Not to be confused with online dating, "Twitter dating" is when you stumble across a profile of someone on Twitter who intrigues you, begin following them, they begin following you and a flirtation starts to build in the form of tweets and direct messages, aka "DM's." The more Twitter popularity climbs, and the more we increasingly turn to our social media

circle as a trusted community of friends, the more rampant these “Twitter crushes” seem to become. Which would be all fine and good if they turned out well. Or even okay. But I’ve had two experiences with “Twitter dating” and both have been what we like to call on Twitter (don’t forget the hashtag): a #MajorFail.

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Because of this, I thought it was half past time to establish some rules or guidelines to help the single ladies of the world know when to follow and know when to block – a few red flags to look for that might save you from a giant stop sign up ahead. I mean, none of us want to end up on “Catfish,” right? So here are some early warning signs that your Twitter crush’s “character” might not go any deeper than that infamous 140 or less limit...

1. A lack of photos other than his profile pic. Big red flag. If he portrays himself to be a functioning, successful adult, there should be SOME other photos of himself other than his avatar. And I don’t mean photos of inanimate objects or his dog or the ocean. I mean ACTUAL photos of him, clear photos, where you can see his face. In the day and age of camera phones, if a man is hiding his face from his profile – there’s a reason.

2. A lack of any sort of online presence other than Twitter. Okay, so Facebook isn’t everyone’s cup of tea, so we’ll let it slide if he doesn’t have a FB page, but if a man doesn’t have SOMETHING out there besides his Twitter profile that can vouch that he’s a real person (an Instagram account, a LinkedIn profile, a Google+ page...SOMETHING), chances are – he’s not. I mean, God gave us Google for a reason, ladies; so we can let our fingers do the walking and learn a little more about our Twitter crush before we welcome him offline and into our lives! If you Google him and absolutely nothing comes up, I’d

definitely be a little wary. And for that matter, if you Google him and an article about how he was arrested for cyber-stalking pops up, obviously – RUN, don't walk, to your nearest block button.

3. Finally – maybe neither of the above apply to your situation. Maybe you've seen his FB page, you're following him on Instagram, and everything seems to be on the up and up. But THIS is where you have to watch out for another phenomenon – the infamous “Twitter player.” Just because he is physically who he portrays himself to be doesn't mean his character matches up with his 140 characters. I encountered the not-so-rare species “The Twitter Player” back in March, and found myself in a drive-by relationship: One where he faked a future with me for a few weeks before moving on at break-neck pace to another unsuspecting Twitter victim.

So how do you identify a “Twitter player”? This one's a little trickier, so here are a few signs to look for: If he's regularly flirting with other girls on his timeline. If you've taken the relationship offline and are talking and Skype-ing and texting, yet he NEVER talks about you openly on his Twitter timeline. Or if he comes to town to see you and STILL doesn't post about you, take a picture with you and actually CHECKS IN SOMEWHERE ON FOURSQUARE but doesn't bother to tag you (Not that this EXACT scenario happened to me or anything. Okay. It did.) Online and in life – if a man hides you, it's because he's still out there seeking something besides you. It's better to render the player powerless by exiting the game than wind up losing your dignity and your self-respect to play a losing hand.

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Based on my experiences, I have to say I'm retiring “Twitter dating,” at least for the foreseeable future; but if you choose to roll the dice, I'd just encourage you to be careful. Set boundaries. Don't ignore the signs. And online and in life

– always date smart by guarding your heart. (It's the most precious commodity you have).

*Follow Mandy Hale on Twitter @TheSingleWoman. Get more fabulous tips on love by checking out her website, <http://thesinglewoman.net/> or grabbing your copy of her new book *The Single Woman: Life, Love, & a Dash of Sass*, available on Amazon and anywhere books are sold.*