

Should you try Online Dating?

The trial period is over and the results are in

You've tried everything short of online dating. Now you're wondering if paying for a dating service is just a little too crazy for you. I had my inhibitions too, but then I signed up and tested it out. If you're curious about what you can expect through online dating, read my review; I can share some insights with you. Here are details of my online dating experiment:

Online Dating with a Purpose

My experience with online dating increased the frequency of opportunities for both good and bad dates. While it provided more women to meet, from a wider geographical area, with a larger set of personalities, there were many different circumstances to consider, which is not necessarily what I was looking for. Unless you want to date many different people, expect to do a lot of weeding out. You are paying for this service, after all. You're only kidding yourself if you're using a dating site strictly to increase your pool of friends. Going in, you should accept the purpose of being on an online dating site is to find someone to date exclusively. That's not to say I didn't enjoy getting to know a number of people, or that dating isn't somewhat of a number's game anyway, but there are already enough extra extremes to deal with in online dating to be wary of. Let me explain:

Dating Scenarios will Arise

The format actually helped me to determine where I am at in the dating game, and whom I would consider dating. I had to make decisions I haven't had to consider in the past. For example, I had to decide if I would date a divorced person, someone with children, and how much older or younger I was okay with. One of the first and most interesting circumstances came from a lovely lady who posed this question: "what do you think of women in wheelchairs?" I wasn't certain she was speaking of herself or asking in general just to throw it out there (like one of those strange questions sometimes asked just to test your humanity).

The short version of my answer was this, "love conquers all." But I elaborated: on the one hand, explaining how I have had several friends in wheelchairs, and that I greatly respect them, knowing their condition in life—a condition they won't deal with in the next life—humbles them to become stronger than me in many ways. On the other hand, I explained that there was more to consider before entering into a relationship with someone in a wheelchair, and that it would test me. But as always, whether I fall in love with any person would only depend on attraction and compatibility. However, part of compatibility was the reality that I would like to have children with someone. We had some other correspondence but eventually it was apparent that we didn't join a dating site to find pen pals.

The Basic Set Up

The online dating site I joined had a monthly fee that decreased with the longer the term you signed up for. It had time frames of one month, three months, six months, or one year. Something similar is typical among the dating sites out there. I decided my trial period would last for one month and then if I wanted to I would renew my subscription for a longer period. I fully expected I would need more time. But in just one month, I learned answers to some questions (you might also have) that changed my mind:

What was the process like?

The format of the site I used had four different ways to have direct contact with others: 1) you may send and receive flirt icons if you liked someone's profile (or you can ignore them). You can expect to receive a lot more flirts from people you won't be interested in, than people you will be into. However, if you find someone you are interested in who took the initiative to show interest in you first, these will be your best leads. 2) An e-mail is much more personal than flirts. Whether reciprocal flirts leads to sending or receiving an e-mail, or a question about someone's profile prompts an e-mail, this is the crux of online dating correspondence. 3) There was also a chat option available. You may have this feature turned on when you are online at the same time as someone you want to chat with, or who wants to chat with you. Or 4) Two individuals exchange phone numbers to talk in that way. By this point you will likely be ready to meet in person.

Do you meet a lot of normal people?

A few. The process makes it possible to have a fairly good idea of who you will meet before you meet them. (That is if you take enough time to properly learn about someone). There are plenty of odd people out there though. Naturally, persons who are desperate, more readily want to contact others, than persons who are not. On the site I used, it showed whether a message I had sent was read or not. It is no coincidence that many of the persons with the best profiles I read never even read the e-mail I sent to them. After being on the site a few weeks, I determined that a person I would consider a good find likely gets inundated with a lot of e-mail and doesn't have time to sort through the crazies. After talking with a couple girls from the site, who have a lot going for them, I found out that while their profile is available for others to see and read, often girls don't activate their subscription until they get an email of interest. So hopefully they like your profile enough, but making a nice teaser subject line for your e-mail doesn't hurt, either.

Is online dating safe?

It can be as safe as any other form of dating. Each site recommends precautions to use. Be smart. Some tips I liked: 1) don't give out your last name right away. 2) When you meet someone, do so at a public place. Don't give out your address for that first meeting. 3) If possible, go on a group date where the girl can have friends along.

What came of my online dating experience?

I tried to find individuals who lived close enough for me to date. Many persons from other states freely contacted me, but none were of such interest that caused me to change my policy about starting any long distance relationship online. Though there are several girls who do live nearby, I quickly found myself going a little farther with my searches to find a good date. And then I went on a few such good dates. (There were a few other instances of note. But I'll get to that).

A Few Good Dates

The first date was also the first time I had been on a date with someone older than me (nearly six years difference). It surprised me how easily we had corresponded and how well we connected, but there was a mutual feeling that on a romantic level we did not have those kinds of feelings for each other.

I had a great time with my next date, also. Conversation was never natural for her, and she didn't open up very much. But from the start of the date to the end of the date, we both seemed to be enjoying ourselves. Nothing more came of it though; when she finally did respond to my phone calls she let me know in an e-mail that she didn't want to be more than friends—a death sentence in the context of how she uses that word.

The next date was a nice girl, who I just didn't feel anything for. Kind of sums up the dating game doesn't it. You're interested in someone who's interested in someone else, who's not interested in that someone you're interested in. Sound confusing? It is!

A Few Other Leads

With regard to the other instances: one girl I didn't know well enough wanted me to have her phone number. I decided to give her a chance and run with it. So I asked her out (she happily accepted) late one evening around 10:30pm, and by 7:30am of the next day she sent me a text that she had found someone else. It doesn't end there. One week later she sends me another text. She wonders if I would like to go on that date with her now. I declined.

Another girl used the chat option to catch me off guard. I went ahead and took her phone number and asked her out on a date. She seemed all right in chatting with her, but after reading her profile I lost my interest for meeting her at all. Her ultimatum to readers: to prove that there are still good guys out there, was a little too bitter and desperate for me. Luckily for me, she cancelled, due to being sick. She offered to call me back in a couple of days to reschedule, but thankfully she never did.

And then there is one last mystery girl. I don't know much about her but I wish her the best. She is divorced with two kids and for whatever reason I think she has real potential. I guess I had too much baggage for her, although I don't know what strikes I would have had against me. I was actually pleasantly surprised to find myself not afraid of accepting her past, given that alone to consider.

Would I try online dating again?

Yes, I would. I think I was able to get a good idea of who is out there. And I corresponded with or met up with the people of interest to me. In three to six months, maybe there will be fresh faces to encounter. Who knows?

Disclaimer: every person is unique, as is one's dating situation. No one should know better than you, what will work for you. I'm right there with you trying to figure out a scenario that works for me; I've nearly tried them all. Be safe! And best of luck to you!