

Summer and the single---will you be sizzling or fizzling?—you make the decision. With consistent warm weather there are many things one can do. If you are in a weekly rut with your personal responsibilities mix it up and think –flexibility. The reason I say this? I hear stories of singles turning down opportunities of attending events because it is laundry or grocery night. Living vicariously is more eventful. Your laundry isn't going anywhere but your soul mate is—they may be trying to find you and can't because you never show up! And ladies, don't let menopause stop you either, drink a lot of soy milk, take vitamin E, take Vitamin B1 for the blues and dress cool bringing a jacket /sweater just in case. Men, break out of your mold, broaden your horizons plus take my advice--- you can benefit from vitamins as well.

So what can you do this summer?—Start by shopping for groceries early Sunday mornings or afternoons—there are many single prospects who are shopping and eager for conversation. The produce dept. is the best because it is easy to make innocent comments about green bananas or the price of blueberries. Always look into their eyes as you speak because you will be able to identify if the interest is mutual. If numbers are exchanged, first talk on the phone to reach a comfort level and initially meet at a public place. If your approach is rusty -- not to worry—there is always the next time—practice makes perfect. Next, try Home Depot/Lowes—many singles are getting supplies for gardening or refurbishing their home. Simply ask for their help because usually no employees are available, correct?

Take a walk on the beach in the early morning/evening; stop at a unique and inviting coffee shop along the way. Make it your goal to visit each quaint coffee shop within a fifty mile radius of your home. Opportunities are everywhere!

Do what makes you happy-- join a sailing club, garden club, book club, try an evening of dancing lessons—always attending on singles night. How about a swim class? Need some color before you don a bathing suit? Use St.Tropez suntan foam from Bath& Body Works- it is temporary, no streaks and lasts for a few days even after shaving. Men—that includes you!

Walking dogs will get a lot of attention especially from other dog lovers.

Attend a horse show this summer—bring yourself back to the serenity of nature. Better still take lessons just for the mere joy of accomplishing the ride. Enjoy the experience? There are ranches that offer vacations encompassing riding with real cowboy barbecues which can be a great setting for romance.

Treat yourself whenever you can—something as simple as asking friends over for tea—using antique dishes/teapots such as Limouges. Visualize living in another era. The group can discuss the history, the type of dress, how they lived and who drank from the very cups you hold.

Invite a mixed group of singles and have a spa day. Both men and women love the pampering of a foot massage, manicure, chair massage or facial.

My point is- with the cold weather behind us there is no reason you should stay secluded in your cocoon. Get out there and grab your share of fun knowing there is always the possibility of bumping into your soul mate. If love doesn't find you by the end of the season at least you know you lived your summer to the fullest creating joy within your soul.

Dear Deborah,

I was married for thirty -eight years and never dreamed I would be dating again. Here I am and yet I have no idea where to start. Could you tell me what to say when I do meet someone and what I should talk about? I also hear that it is ok to call a man, but when?

Out in Left Field

Dear Left,

Well, if it helps- you're not alone. The first time you meet someone or you talk on the phone with a potential date it can be nerve wracking. First be who you are and not what you think he/she wants you to be. Honesty is the best way to go.

For a positive outcome:

Keep an open mind and be flexible.

Smile while you are on the phone—it is a fact the person on the other end can feel or sense it.

Discuss what each others interests are including hobbies.

Talk current events but avoid religion/politics for now; you want the first conversation to be light and fun. Talk about recent trips.

If asked if you were married and how many children—it is fine to give a brief synopsis. Do not explain in detail and never talk about your last partner in a derogatory manner.

Whatever you desire in a relationship refrain from making demands such as – I want to be married, buy a house, travel the world and have you support me.

One can ask what the other does for a living but please don't ask their financial status.

The conversation should go both ways, if the talk is light and easy he will ask you out on a date.

Both come to a decision easily as to where you will go on the date. Women-- don't leave it up to the man all the time, it can be frustrating. If you give him suggestions he will certainly appreciate it.

Keep in mind that as you continue to date many answers will unfold naturally.

In today's world of dating many men welcome a woman calling *them* because now they *know* you are interested. Men like the fact that this way it eliminates rejection.

Prior to calling, prepare yourself for any outcome. If he doesn't ask you out, feel good about your confidence and move on. After the initial call –leave it in his hands. If nothing happens don't beat yourself up—there is always someone new right around the corner.

Not everyone is going to love us.

Dear Deborah,

I was brought up with manners so when I take a woman out I open doors whether car or restaurant. I have ordered for women at dinner and have gladly paid the bill. I have helped with their coat or sweater and everything else in between. I have been a perfect gentleman. I find some women seem to get a bit upset with this kind of treatment. Why?

Mr. Manners

Dear Manners,

I understand what you're saying because I hear this from other men. Some women feel that they are giving up their independence when allowing a man to open the door, etc. It isn't a bad thing but depending on their approach ---it can be rude. My suggestion is to keep opening doors and see how she reacts. It is really up to her to say --thank you, but I can open my own door. When dining, simply say, "Once you know what you would like, may I order for you?" If she prefers to order herself, now she has the opportunity to say so. Other women adore men like you because of their manners with the hope the manners continue six months or longer into the relationship. With all the confusion in today's dating--asking questions usually helps cement a successful date.