

Episode 16 ~ Online Dating

I. Intro:

Alright, folks, let's kick things off by stepping into the intriguing world of online dating. It's pretty fascinating, you know. Did you catch this? Recent stats tell us that more than 30% of all U.S. adults have given online dating a whirl at some point in their lives. That's a whole bunch of people, each with their own unique stories, out there on the hunt for that special connection. And post-COVID, it seems like that number is just on the up and up.

Now, here's a real-world example to put things into perspective. Meet Rita, a fellow New Mexican, just like yours truly! Rita decided to dip her toes into the online dating pool after hearing some success stories from her buddies. So, she crafted an honest and charming profile on a popular dating app. And guess what? In no time, she crossed paths with someone who shared her passion for art and tarot reading (yeah, we've got another thing in common). Their first date? A leisurely stroll through a local art gallery. And guess what? Fast forward to today, they're happily committed.

But wait, not every online dating story is all sunshine and rainbows. Take John, for example. He dove headfirst into the classic pitfall of rushing things. After just a few days of chatting with someone he met online, he felt this deep connection and decided to spill the beans about some seriously personal stuff. Tough break, though. Turns out, the person he was chatting with wasn't exactly who they claimed to be.

These tales paint a picture of the highs and lows you can encounter in the world of online dating. And guess what? We're here to be your trusty guides through it all. Whether you're a seasoned pro in the online dating game or just thinking about dipping your toes into the digital dating pool, this episode is custom-made for you. We're going to serve up some practical advice, share some experiences, and chat about the do's and don'ts of online dating in the most friendly and approachable way possible.

II. The Online Dating Landscape

So, folks, let's jump right into the fascinating world of online dating. It's like a virtual playground filled with potential matches, but also a few twists and turns. But hey, that's what makes it interesting, right?

Now, let's talk numbers, shall we? As I mentioned earlier, more than 30% of adults in the U.S. have dipped their toes into the world of online dating. That's a significant chunk of the population! And guess what? It's not just about numbers; it's about diversity.

Online dating isn't just for the young guns; it's for everyone, from Gen Z to Baby Boomers. It's a melting pot of ages and backgrounds. So, it's not just a millennial thing anymore; it's an everyone thing.

Here's a real eye-opener: Did you know that 66% of online daters have actually gone on a date with someone they met through a dating site or app? That's a whole lot of digital first dates happening out there!

Let's get personal with a couple of stories. Meet Sarah, a 30-year-old graphic designer from Austin, Texas. She's living proof that online dating can lead to lasting, meaningful relationships. She found love on a dating app and is now happily married with two kids."

But then there's Mark, a 25-year-old aspiring musician from Los Angeles. His online dating journey wasn't all sunshine and rainbows. He had his fair share of not-so-great experiences, including a few catfish encounters. Mark's stories remind us that online dating can have its challenges.

Let's dig into some more examples, shall we? Take John and Emily, for instance. They met on a dating app during the pandemic and had their first date through a video call. Despite not being able to meet in person for months due to lockdowns, their connection grew stronger. It's a prime example of how online dating can adapt to even the trickiest circumstances.

And then there is Lisa, who learned a valuable lesson about profile honesty. She used some seriously filtered photos that made her look quite different from her real self. When she finally met her date in person, let's just say the disappointment was palpable. It's a reminder that being authentic in your online dating profile is key.

Finally, there's Brian, who stumbled upon love in the most unexpected place—a niche dating site for hikers and outdoor enthusiasts. It goes to show that specialized dating platforms can help people connect over shared interests, no matter how unique.

So, as you can see, the world of online dating is as diverse as the people who use it. It can lead to beautiful love stories, teach us valuable lessons, and sometimes,

it's just a wild adventure. Online dating has something for everyone, and it's a world worth exploring.

III. Profile Creation

Let's shift gears and dive headfirst into the fascinating world of online dating profiles. Creating a profile that captures attention and makes a lasting impression is a must. So, let's roll up our sleeves and explore some tips to help you master the art of crafting amazing dating profiles.

Tip 1: The Power of Profile Pictures. Okay, folks, here's the scoop. Your profile picture is like the front cover of your dating book. Studies actually back this up – having a clear, high-quality photo can boost your chances of getting likes by up to 30%.

Take Jane from Georgia, for instance. She decided to give online dating a whirl, and she made a simple but impactful change. She swapped her profile picture for one where she's well-lit and flashing a genuine smile. The result? Within a week, her matches shot up significantly. It just goes to show that small changes can lead to big results.

But here's a pro tip, folks. Be mindful of the message your photos send. If you're looking for a meaningful connection, make sure your photos reflect that. I have had clients who have posted pictures of themselves drunk at a club, and then wonder why they aren't finding quality matches. It's all about aligning what you're looking for with what you're putting out there.

Now, onto Tip 2: Crafting a Compelling Bio. Your bio is like the back cover blurb of your dating book, and here's a juicy tidbit – profiles with bios are 60% more likely to get a message."

Let's take a look at two bios, shall we? First, we have the 'Good Dating Profile.'

“Hey there! 🙌 I'm Summer, a tarot reader and artist hailing from the enchanting landscapes of New Mexico. When I'm not shuffling cards or creating art, you can find me lost in the pages of a good book. I'm all about embracing the mystical and magical side of life, and I'm looking for someone who's open to exploring that with me. I'm a firm believer in good vibes and positive energy. Whether it's finding the perfect tarot spread or discovering a hidden gem in the art world, I'm always up

for an adventure. I'm known for my friendly and approachable nature, and I love sharing laughs and meaningful conversations with friends and loved ones. If you're someone who values creativity, spirituality, and a touch of whimsy, we might just be a perfect match. Let's chat about our favorite books, swap tarot stories, and see where the cosmic journey takes us!"

It's like a window into their world, with enthusiasm for tarot reading, art, and books. It's engaging and inviting, right?

But then, there's the 'Bad Dating Profile.

"Hi, I'm Summer. I guess I'm into tarot and art or whatever. I don't know, it's not a big deal. I live in New Mexico, and it's alright, I guess. I like reading sometimes, but it's not like I'm a bookworm or anything. I'm just here to see what's out there, I guess. Not really sure what I'm looking for. Hit me up if you want, or don't, it's whatever."

It's a bit, well, bland and vague. It doesn't really tell you much about the person or what they're looking for. Remember, a good dating profile should be like a captivating story, reflecting your personality, interests, and what you're seeking in a partner.

Now, for Tip 3: Honesty is Key. It's vital to keep it real in your profile. Studies reveal that over half of the folks on dating apps feel let down when they meet someone whose real-life self doesn't match their profile.

Consider Becca, who claimed to be a bookworm but rarely picked up a book. Her date, a fellow book lover, was pretty disappointed. Being honest in your profile can save you from these mismatches.

Lastly, Tip 4: Showcase Your Interests. Your profile is like your own little stage. Use it to shine a spotlight on your hobbies and passions, just like Summer, our tarot-reading artist from New Mexico.

Take Maria, for instance. She mentioned her love for hiking and salsa dancing in her profile, and guess what? She attracted matches who shared her interests, making those first conversations flow naturally.

So, to sum it all up, your profile picture, bio, honesty, and showcasing your interests are the magic ingredients for a profile that stands out and attracts the

right matches. It's all about being genuine and presenting the best version of yourself.

IV. Navigating Conversations

Alright, folks, let's dive into the art of conversation in the world of online dating. No more small talk, we're getting real here. But before we get started, I've got some eye-opening stats to throw your way.

Did you know that, according to a recent survey by Pew Research, a whopping 60% of Americans believe that online dating is a great way to meet people? It's pretty clear that it's become a staple in the modern dating scene.

Now, when it comes to sending that first message, here's a little nugget of wisdom: generic 'Hey' or 'What's up?' messages? Not your best bet. Statistics show that personalized messages get a way better response rate. So, take a sec to read their profile and craft something that shows you're genuinely interested.

Okay, here's a bit of advice that might sound a bit strange unless you're a South Park fan. Ever seen the episode where one of the characters uses ChatGPT to respond to his girlfriend and ends up sounding totally different in person? Yeah, don't do that. It's a recipe for disappointment when you finally meet.

Next -emojis. They're not just for fun, they're also your wingman in the digital dating world. A study by the dating app Zoosk found that using emojis can boost your response rates by up to 62%. But, hey, don't go overboard – moderation, my friends.

Let's talk about keeping those conversations interesting and respectful. We've got a real gem from a listener, Abigail, who nailed it. Instead of the usual 'How's the weather?' stuff, her match dropped a thought-provoking question: 'If you could have dinner with any historical figure, who would it be?' It kicked off a fascinating chat and gave them a glimpse into each other's interests.

But, hold up, not everything's all sunshine and roses in online dating land. A survey by NortonLifeLock found that 43% of online daters have stumbled upon some fishy stuff on dating profiles.

So, be on the lookout for red flags during your messaging phase. If someone's dodging personal questions or their responses don't add up, it might be time to be a bit cautious. Trust your gut.

Oh, and another listener, John, spotted a red flag of his own. His match was all about the heavily filtered selfies and was a bit camera-shy, to say the least. Turns out, honesty was a rare gem in that profile. John knew it was time to move on.

Lastly, let's talk safety. Online dating is a blast, but safety should always be front and center. A report by the Online Dating Association revealed that 15% of online daters have felt unsafe at some point during their online dating journey. That's why you've gotta take precautions when you're meeting someone for the first time."

We'll dive deeper into first dates and safety measures in just a second, but for now, remember this: Personalize those messages, use emojis wisely, and keep an eye out for those red flags.

V. First Dates and Safety

Ready to dive right into the world of first dates and staying safe? It's a topic that's absolutely crucial, and we've got some real gems of wisdom to share with you.

But before we get into the nitty-gritty, here's a stat that might give you pause. According to research from the Pew Research Center, a whopping 55% of folks who've ventured into the world of online dating have had moments that made them feel, well, uncomfortable. That's more than half of the online dating crowd.

So, you might be wondering, 'What can I do to make sure my first date is not just enjoyable but also safe?' Well, fret not, because we've got some trusty tips coming your way.

First off, consider choosing a public spot for your rendezvous. Think cozy coffee shops, bustling restaurants, or serene parks. Public places offer that extra layer of security that private spots might lack. Oh, and a quick side note: Bars, while fun, can be tricky due to the possibility of drinks being tampered with."

I remember my friend's experience when she decided to meet her online match at a local café. Surrounded by friendly faces and familiar voices, she felt at ease, and it turned out to be a fantastic date.

Next up, always share your plans with someone close to you. It's a simple but powerful precaution. Let a friend or family member know where you're headed and

who you'll be meeting. Just in case. You know, heaven forbid anything goes wrong, there's a starting point to find you.

I received an email from a listener who shared how sharing her plans with a friend helped her feel safer. She even had her friend call during the date as a quick check-in, adding that extra layer of security.

Here's a golden rule: trust your instincts. If something feels off or doesn't sit right, it probably isn't. You have every right to step away from any situation that makes you uncomfortable."

I read a study that found 60% of people who trusted their instincts during a date felt safer and more in control. It's your inner compass guiding you."

With the rise of virtual dating, many are opting for a pre-date video chat. It's not just about verifying your date's identity; it's also a great way to get to know them better from the safety of your own screen.

A listener shared her story about how a video call revealed someone's true intentions, prompting her to decide not to meet them in person. It potentially saved her from an uncomfortable or even dangerous situation.

Another important tip: be cautious about sharing personal information. Statistics tell us that 53% of online daters have encountered someone asking for personal or financial details way too early in the game. Remember, it's okay to keep your personal info close until you're comfortable.

I recently read about a case where someone insisted on knowing their date's address on the very first date. She felt like he was just way too pushy about it. Major red flag, right? The date wisely ended there.

These stats and real-life stories underscore the importance of making your safety a priority when navigating the world of online dating. Enjoy the journey, but keep that vigilant radar on.

Next up we'll be discussing some common pitfalls and how to sidestep them.

VI. Common Pitfalls

Right now we're going to dive into some common hiccups folks encounter in the world of online dating. Let's kick things off by checking out some numbers that give us a glimpse into these challenges.

Did you know that around 53% of people who've tried online dating have had the not-so-fun experience of being ghosted? Now, for those of you who might be scratching your heads, ghosting is when someone you've been chatting with suddenly vanishes into thin air, leaving you hanging. Yeah, it's a real online dating conundrum.

Here's another eyebrow-raiser: about 10% of online profiles out there are thought to be as fake as a three-dollar bill. This is what we call catfishing, where someone spins a web of deception by creating a whole fake identity. It's like a virtual masquerade, and it's a solid reminder to keep your wits about you.

But wait, let's keep it real with a story from one of our listeners. Meet Ginger, hailing from the great state of Colorado. She shared her online dating adventure with us. So, Ginger met this seemingly perfect match online. Their messages were like a romantic novel, but when they finally met in person, it was like reading a completely different book. Turns out, they'd painted a rather creative picture of themselves. It's a cautionary tale, reminding us all that honesty and being true to yourself is gold in the online dating world.

Now, how can you steer clear of these online dating potholes, you ask? Well, first things first, communication is your trusty compass. If you're vibing with someone, be upfront about your intentions. If it's not clicking, a polite message is a lot kinder than pulling a vanishing act.

Oh, and trust those gut feelings of yours. If something smells fishy, chances are it's not a bouquet of roses. And when it comes to real-life meetups, choose safe and public spots, especially for those first few dates. Safety first, folks.

Remember, online dating is like a box of assorted chocolates. Sure, you might stumble upon a few ghosting or catfishing flavors, but there are also countless stories of people finding love and genuine connections.

VII. Success and Listener Questions

Alright, folks, we've shared a bunch of useful tips and stories so far, and now, let's dive into some real-life success stories and tackle those burning questions about online dating.

Success Story 1: Alice's Journey

First up, we've got Alice from Ohio, just like many of you, taking the plunge into online dating with a mix of excitement and uncertainty. Now, Alice didn't rush this. She took her time crafting an engaging and honest dating profile. And guess what? She met her now-husband on a popular dating app. By the way, did you know that over 30% of couples who tie the knot these days met online? Alice's story is a shining example of the potential for meaningful connections in the digital realm.

Success Story 2: James and Emily's Unconventional Meeting

Now, our next story's a tad unconventional but full of that sweet serendipity. James and Emily both found themselves at a virtual art gallery event, part of a niche online community for art lovers. Their paths crossed during a live discussion about painting techniques. That shared passion for art sparked a connection that bloomed into a deep romantic relationship. So, it's not just about swiping right; it can also be about shared interests and passions.

Listener Question: Jennifer's Dilemma

Alright, it's time to tackle one of your questions, Jennifer from Arizona. "I've been chatting with someone online for a while, and I'm really interested in meeting them in person. How can I ensure my safety when going on a first date?"

You've been chatting with someone online and want to ensure your safety on a first date. Smart thinking, Jennifer. Studies show that about 25% of online daters have faced safety concerns during first dates.

First off, choose a public place for your meet-up, like a coffee shop or a restaurant, where other people are around. It's also a good idea to let a trusted friend or family member know your plans, including details about your date. Arrange your transportation so you have control over when you leave, and trust your instincts. If something feels off, don't hesitate to excuse yourself and go. Make sure your phone's charged and easily accessible. Building trust online is great, but remember, your comfort and well-being come first.

Next up, we've got Mark from Texas wondering how to improve his online dating profile. He asks, "I've been using dating apps for a while, but I'm not having much luck. Any tips for improving my online dating profile?" Great question, Mark!

To make your profile shine, start by being yourself. Show your interests, your passions, and what makes you unique. Share some cool anecdotes about your life and hobbies. Oh, and here's a tip: use a variety of clear and inviting photos; it can boost your profile's popularity by up to 10 times, according to recent research. Be specific about what you're looking for in a partner, whether it's someone who shares your spirituality or your love for the arts. Engage in conversations, ask questions, and show genuine interest in others. And remember, patience is key in the world of online dating. Finding that special connection might take time, but staying true to yourself will lead you to more meaningful matches.

Folks, remember, online dating is a journey, with its ups and downs. But it's also a world full of opportunities for meaningful connections. Keep those questions coming, and we'll keep exploring the realm of romantic relationships throughout the rest of the season!

VII. Wrap Up

And there you have it, another episode comes to a close. We've covered a lot of ground today, from creating that perfect profile to navigating those first-date jitters. But before we say goodbye, let's leave you a bit of a recap

Remember how we stated that in 2021, over 30% of relationships in the United States began online? That's a significant increase from just a decade ago. It goes to show the growing influence of online dating in our lives - as well as the lasting impact that COVID had on the world at large... changing the way people look for love. So if you are someone that has really resisted the idea of dating apps, it might be time to rethink that.

We've learned about the importance of profile authenticity, how to initiate engaging conversations, and crucial safety measures for first dates. We've also discussed common pitfalls and ways to avoid them."

But remember, online dating is an evolving landscape. It's not just about finding love; it's also about personal growth and self-discovery. So, stay open-minded, be patient, and most importantly, stay safe."

We're here to support you on your journey, so don't hesitate to send in your questions and feedback. We'd love to hear from you. And keep in mind, the next episode is just around the corner, where we will be discussing divorce and moving on, followed by an episode on ghosting. Our first episode of October will be another listener Q&A session, so be sure to send in your questions to queenofwordspodcast@gmail.com or by using the contact page on our website.