

# **MARKETING AND DATING: NOT SO DIFFERENT!**

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A marketing specialist (*Coffee News of Scottsdale, June 2010*) states that the twelve most persuasive words to apply to all forms of communication are: discovery, easy, guaranty, health, caring, money, new, proven, results, safety, savings, and you!

These terms can easily be applied to dating, especially after one has been out of the dating arena for many years. After all, isn't dating about communicating with another? A first date, in particular, is a time when the participants are selling each other on the idea of starting a relationship – or at least having another date!

Let us review each of these terms and apply them to entry into the dating world.

### **DISCOVERY**

Discovery is the most fun of all in the dating process! Although a first date can be nerve inducing, it is both exciting and fascinating to learn about different people who may have different ideas about a myriad of subjects. If you met someone via the Internet, you may also be meeting someone with whom you might never have encountered in your normal walk of life. In this way, you get to discover unknown territory – especially if you have to travel to another part of town to get together!

To look at dating as a time when you are going to have an opportunity to increase your sphere of knowledge about others and the world, calms the jitters. This is terrific for those who have not dated in forever and are exploring with some trepidation!

### **EASY**

Most people like experiences to be less complicated and without stress. You can make dating easy and enjoyable by incorporating the following behaviors into your style.

- ♥ Make uncomplicated arrangements to meet
- ♥ Be emotionally honest with dates (i.e. no game playing)
- ♥ Be open to hearing about different ideas without judgment (listening does not mean you agree)
- ♥ Go with the flow (does it matter if you are having Chinese or Italian?)
- ♥ Enjoy a date for what it is and do not have grand expectations

## **GUARANTY**

We all know very well that there are no guarantees in life. However, you can make a guarantee to simply enjoy yourself – in life and on a date. Even if you only have the chance to have many first dates, you are still getting out of the house and interacting with another adult. If that person is not right for you, you will have still learned something, even if it just to take note of the characteristics you do not want in a potential partner!

## **HEALTH**

In any situation, self-preservation is always a big motivator. Try to incorporate healthy behaviors into your life. One such behavior is claiming some “me” time. In particular, this becomes a life saving technique when there are lots of babies and young ones at home and you are taking care of them by yourself. It is healthy to get out of “mommy” clothes every now and then and to talk to another adult. Even if your date turns out to be someone whom you know not to be partner material, chalk it up to practice for when the real thing comes along.

## **CARING**

We all like the feeling of being cared for, as well as having someone for whom we can care. That is something sorely missing in a widow/er’s life after the death of a spouse, as well as someone who has gone through a divorce/break-up. On a date, caring behaviors may include:

- ♥ Being courteous (often using the word please and thank you)
- ♥ Opening doors and holding out chairs
- ♥ Laughing with another – or even laughing at ourselves
- ♥ Actively and attentively listening

After a great trauma such as the death of a spouse, sometimes our emotions are numbed. We tuck the possibility that we *could* have another relationship or we *could* feel love again in a dark and deep part in the back of our minds. It could be too scary to go there – the thought of being vulnerable to another and perhaps loving and losing again might be too hurtful to consider. It is easier just to not think about it all. However, when first dating and experiencing caring behavior from another, it might awaken those emotions up a little bit. It is not that you are falling in love so quickly again, but it just proves to you that you can feel SOMETHING! Perhaps you did not die when your spouse did; those types of feelings and emotions just went on hiatus for a long while and are now slowly waking up. That is an exciting thought – starting over with all the curiosity of a “born-again virgin”!

## **MONEY**

It is not necessary to spend a lot of money to have fun on a date. You can go on a picnic, take a walk, visit a mall, or go to a free street fair. Sometimes planning an activity for a first meeting is less nerve wracking compared to sitting across the table and staring into a person's eyes. Walking, looking at, and doing something will give you ample fodder for conversation, as well as keep your hands busy and your eyes off each other. It also gives you a more in depth peek into a person's personality, for example, you might get to see likes and dislikes; see if a person is a fast walker or a stroller; or see if a person smiles at strangers or not. Keep your eyes and ears open, and you can learn a lot more about a person than what he or she is saying.

## **NEW**

New is always exciting! Maybe you are a first date junkie, meaning you like the excitement of meeting new people all the time. Another way to approach dating is to find ways to make every date (with the same person) new or innovative. You might try to find local, interesting (and most often free!) events to attend that can spark playfulness rather than falling back on the often used, and sometimes boring, dinner and a movie date option.

## **PROVEN**

Most everyone likes tried and true. Widow/ers that had a wonderful relationship with a late spouse are a proven commodity. They have the tested skills to build a healthy and successful relationship because they have done it before. This is why widow/ers make great partners!

## **RESULTS**

Of interest to most people is the bottom line -- or what is in it for him or her. The best way to approach dating is without great expectations. In this way, you always have a great bottom line, or result. You can learn something about yourself and another, get out of the house, get to dress up, not have to cook, see a movie, and talk to another adult. Aren't these all terrific results?

## **SAFETY**

We all want to be and feel safe, and we are interested in our own peace of mind. Rather than being afraid to date, a better approach is to be mindful of danger and take the necessary precautions.

- ♥ Meet new dates at a safe location (rather than being picked up)
- ♥ Park in a well-lit lot (if nighttime) or only meet during the day
- ♥ Be aware so that you would notice if you are being followed home
- ♥ Always let a friend know where you are and with whom

## **SAVE**

Everyone love a bargain! Be mindful of another's purse when going on dates. It is easy to be a "cheap date", and this will probably be appreciated. No need to order the most expensive item on the menu plus appetizers plus dessert plus drinks. It is also easier to carry on a conversation if you have not had too much to drink and are not preoccupied with eating (or getting food caught in your teeth!).

## **YOU**

Finally! Dating allows you to learn about another, but it is also one of the best forums to learn about yourself. When you see yourself reflected in another's eye, you learn how you are projecting your personality. If you do not receive the response for which you are looking, perhaps it is time to re-examine your body language. You might be saying one thing with words and another with your bodily stance. You also might think of yourself as the "old you" (pre loss); however, now that you have grown so much, you are probably a different person. As you get to know your "new single self", one of your jobs is to merge the old you and the new you. How your dates respond to you might help to bring that picture into a clearer focus.

There you have it -- the similarities of the words important in a marketing campaign and how they may be applied to dating. This is not to say that dating is a MEAT market where the participants are out to sell themselves. I prefer to think of it more as a MEET market or a venue where you can meet a diverse group of people in your search for the special one with whom you can connect.

Dating is a numbers game. The more people you meet, the better chance you have of finding those with whom you might have a base upon which to build. When first entering the dating scene, look upon it as practice – especially if you have not done it in 10, 20 – maybe even 30, years. Like a youngster, you need to try out your wings and find a style with which you are comfortable. This might take a few months or even longer.

When you can meet new people without grand expectations, be comfortable in your own skin and your life circumstances, and not take another's actions personally, you are ready to have a successful dating career that can result in you finding a new partner.