

Press Release: Friday, 23rd December, 2005

The Dating Review of 2005

- Preparation, how much to spend and who should pay, quickest turn-offs, how long before to get back in touch -

(London 23/12/05) According to new research published today by PARSHIP.co.uk, the UK's first compatibility-based online dating service, over 5.4 million single Britons used some form of paid for dating service to find romance in 2005. Of these, online dating is now the most popular way to get a date, with 65% of all active singles claiming to have looked for love online during the last 12 months. A further 18% of respondent said that they had either placed or responded to an advertisement in a newspaper or magazine, 13% opted for the traditional dating agency and 5% joined a singles club. Just 3% went speed dating and 2% went on a singles holiday. 40% of all singles still prefer to meet people through the social networking route.

Of those 8 million singles who have actively dated during 2005, PARSHIP.co.uk has completed the first study to establish how this growing breed behaves before, during and after the first date. Do they dress to impress, flash their cash or simply act easy? What is there to learn, as 2006 approaches, for all those still single who are contemplating the possibility of romance in the New Year?

Try to impress or accept me as I am?

Of the 1,000 people polled a massive six out of ten women confessed they had splashed out on an expensive new outfit, visited the hairdressers or underwent a beauty treatment in order to make the most of themselves for that important first date. Even 37% of men confessed to some pre-date grooming – one third got a short back and sides, while 9% bought a new item of clothing. Surprisingly it's our friends in the north who are the best groomed and singles in Wales and the south west who score lowest.

But if you think chivalry is dead think again. Nearly half, 49%, of all men said that they had gone out of their way to impress a woman – 28% sought out an unusual venue, 8% booked expensive and exclusive restaurants and 6% bought tickets to the latest must-see concert, show or exhibition!. Yet sadly, four out of ten men said they didn't make any special effort to impress on the first date, preferring the like it or lump it approach, with Midlanders being the least likely to impress.

Who pays and how much?

The man's still expected to pay and 11% of Londoners spend over £100

41% of singles expect the man to pay for that first date and only 2% the woman, with 40% saying they should go Dutch. How much is spent, though, varies considerably. Taking

everything into account (clothing, fares, tickets, food, drink etc), 29% of singles will spend between £20-£40 on a first date and the same percentage £40-£60. A generous 7% expect to spend over £100. Londoners are the big spenders with 11% spending over £100 on a date, compared to just 3% from Wales and the south west. Defying popular belief, the Scots are the second-biggest spenders.

What are the biggest turn-offs?

33% said 'Too much to drink'

Once you've chosen your ideal venue, invested in a snappy new outfit or sexy hair-cut, and decided on your budget for the evening, what are the things to avoid making your first date a disaster? Well a good bath and deodorant will help! At 77%, personal hygiene problems were far and away the biggest turn-off. Excessive drinking was the predictable runner-up, an especially strong turn-off for women (42%). It may also not help if you pick your teeth or repeat yourself constantly, since annoying personal habits came in at number three, mentioned by 29% of respondents. Fattism is still rife, with excess weight being quoted as the fourth biggest turn-off, at 23%. At a time when communication is at a premium, surprisingly, talking too much on a first date was given a big thumbs-down, by 20% of singles.

How long before I get in touch after the first date?

Nearly 50% of men are back in touch within a day

'How long should I wait before I call him/her?' is the plaintiff cry of first-daters. 'Within a few days' was the most popular answer, given by 40% of singles. Men were the keenest, with 36% saying they would get in touch the next day, and 13% the same day/night! Only 21% of women said they would wait until their date contacted them.

Although the phone was the likeliest means of getting in touch (48%), texting was not far behind at 42%. Women are far and away the texting champions, being twice as likely as men to text a partner after a first date, 58% v 29%.

Psychiatrist Dr Victoria Lukats, commented:

"The first date in any relationship is critical – first impressions last longer and can make or break a potential relationship, even at the earliest stage. Any turn-offs can be difficult to rectify even if you like the other person, so think ahead, be well prepared and be on your best behaviour.

Even in the current climate of casual dress and behaviour, being well turned out can only impress your partner and for women, particularly, good manners mean a lot. Listening as much as talking is also a way to convince the other person you are genuinely interested in them.

Appreciation is important for both sexes and so don't forget to compliment your date, as long as it sounds genuine! Do thank your date for a lovely time at the end of the evening, particularly if he or she has paid! A quick follow-up call just to say again how

much you enjoyed the evening is often a very effective way to get that vital second date.”

PARSHIP.co.uk has over 1.5 million members and has matched thousands of single people who are looking for a serious, long-lasting relationship. The 20-minute PARSHIP psychometric test means members' profiles are carefully matched in terms of similar and complementary characteristics. Research suggests that people who meet with PARSHIP's help are twice as likely to form a lasting relationship as they are through any other method. For those seeking new love in 2006, PARSHIP.co.uk has a special New Year offer of a 7-day free trial from 27th December, 2005, to 31st January, 2006.

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