

The dating game

Discussion

Answer these questions truthfully. Then compare your answers in pairs or small groups.

1. Do you ever read 'Lonely Hearts' ads in the newspaper?
2. Do you ever look at 'Lonely Hearts' websites?
3. Have you ever placed a 'Lonely Hearts' ad in a paper or anywhere else? If so, what happened? Who replied? How did you follow it up? Was it a successful experience? If not, do you think you ever would? Why/Why not?
4. Have you ever replied to a 'Lonely Hearts' ad? What happened?
5. Do you know anyone who has ever placed a 'Lonely Hearts' ad or replied to one? What happened? Was it a successful experience?

Reading

Read the passage and answer these questions:

1. What has the writer done?
2. Why has she done this?

NOT ONLY THE LONELY

Writer, 25, dark hair, brown eyes, GSOH, seeks reliable, intelligent, 30-something man for long walks, long conversations and long-term relationship. No time wasters.

OK. So I did it! But then everybody's doing it. There are over two million people registered with dating agencies – and that's the expensive way to do it. So there must be at least twice as many using 'Lonely Hearts' ads. The thing is, the men and women who place these ads aren't necessarily lonely. Take me, I'm not. I've got a wide circle of friends. And an active social life. It's just that my circle of friends does not include many single men. So, if I want to meet any single males I need to take positive action. My ad joined those of other professional women who do not have the time to follow the more usual methods of finding a partner and *those of some of the 1.5 million single mothers who have obvious difficulties in getting out.*

And was it a successful ad? Well, I think 75 replies speaks for itself! Some of the replies were touching; some were surprising, some appealing and some appalling. A few people clearly did not have sufficient self-knowledge to realise they were nerds. Others were, for a variety of reasons, clearly unsuitable. In the end I met 12. Of these, 7 were liars, usually much older, fatter or uglier than their photos suggested; two were nerds, missed at the initial examination. One was far too enthusiastic about putting his hand on my knee; one lived in Edinburgh, a beautiful city (and he was a nice man) but I wanted a long-term friend – not a long-distance one.

The last one I met was Gavin. 36, intelligent, good-looking, kind, definitely GSOH, and sitting across the table from me as I write this. Oh yes – and tomorrow he moves into my flat. I did it. And it works!

True or false?

Mark the following sentences T (true) or F (false):

1. The writer thinks that over four million people use 'Lonely Hearts' ads.
2. Most people who use 'Lonely Hearts' ads don't have many friends.
3. Professional women use the ads because they don't have much time for socialising.
4. Some people lied when they replied to the writer's ad.
5. She met her current partner through her ad.