



ONE CLICK LOVE

A Guide To Finding
Your Valentine In

2006

By Manu Sood

— a traveler, an avid socializer &
a great human being!

Foreword

If you are single or just want to widen your circle of friends, Fropper.com would like to help you with our definitive guide for online dating success. The free Ebook, written by Manu, gives you interesting tips on writing your profile, searching, making first contact, using forums, what not to do, impressing your potential date with your listening & questioning skills and some confidence building measures.

A small investment of your time in fine-tuning your profile and overcoming your fears & apprehensions will open up the door to loads of people. Some of your life's greatest experiences could be just a few clicks away!

Notes:

Success in dating can be dangerous to your political ambitions

Fropper.com offers you a no-questions-asked, full-money back guarantee for this free Ebook

Feel free to send this book to all your friends. Spread joy and give the gift of love

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Preface

Hi! I am Manu from Lonavla. After leaving India in 1991, I studied, worked and traveled extensively in Australia, Asia and Europe, living in some of the most vibrant cities, meeting some amazing people who changed the way I think, going on adventures and getting experiences that words can't describe and money can't buy.

I love adventure sports like scuba diving, snowboarding, rock-climbing, trekking in high mountain ranges and remote forests, canoeing, white-water-rafting, cycling and 4WD. I gave up a career helping technology companies raise equity to pursue my passion of traveling. I'm currently back in India setting up a chain of environmentally friendly adventure resorts and living it up in South Central Alleppey in Kerala.

Today, nobody believes me when I say that I grew up in a village outside Mumbai with few social skills, completely unable to interact with people unless I was formally introduced. When I was 11, I remember going to the best hotels with my father, when he was on business, but didn't have the confidence to pick up the phone and order a snack from room-service or go down to use the pool or the entertainment center. I also remember my dad commenting, when I was 16 and in the habit of buying luxury items like imported shoes, and my mom supporting my expense saying, "he has girls to impress" and my dad saying, "I have never seen any of the girls he wants to impress" rubbing in my lack of social skills and my inability to even have girls as friends, let alone girlfriends.

Now when I go out to a party, I chat up every man, woman, old, young, dog, non-dog. This transition over the last 12 years has been a lot of fun but it required having an open mind, traveling alone internationally and constantly making attempts to start conversations with others. The last of these is the most important and a challenge that really requires you to **get out of your comfort zone**.

My work requires me to stay in different countries for extended periods. In places where I have difficulty meeting new people, I find that the easiest thing to do is to enroll in short courses like acting, drumming, language, massage etc. and also join an online dating website. I'm a full paying member in 4 countries. It's a great feeling to land up in a new country and have 2 dates and a weekend trip planned before I even get off the plane! Most times I'm in a hurry and the dates aren't a perfect match but we usually go out in groups and you do find someone who you really connect with.

My best experience was contacting someone in a region I wanted to go trekking. I started a conversation about trekking and then ended up in Australia to be picked up by an amazing person who drove me 250km with a canoe tied to the roof-top. We did a two day trip paddling and camping on a fresh-water lake and then spent the third day on bicycles going on a wine tasting tour. We got arrested for drunk driving (on bicycles!) and spent an awesome day in a small country jail. I wonder if they rubbed out my scribbles off the wall!

On Fropper.com, I did a similar thing and ended up with a whole bunch of people in Manali where we met some cool Israeli people and organized a big, full-moon party with music from iPod's of traveling, international DJs!

Over the years, I have met many, many people online and offline. In the following paragraphs I share some tips on what has worked for me and what hasn't.



This Ebook

These tips are for anyone who wants to widen their circle of friends and is willing to step out of their comfort zone.

Contrary to claims, there are no dating gurus or golden rules because every situation and every person is different. For me, dating is 50% science and 50% art. The science part can be learned just as you learn to speak another language or learn to drive. This is the easy part where you read a lot of research & opinions and learn from observing other couples at the movies, at shopping malls, at beaches, at bars & parties. The other 50%, the 'art' of dating, is the harder part and it requires years... It's the art of applying what you have learned and developing your own style. This requires you to approach a lot of people; take notes about what worked, what didn't, and not be afraid to go back and try again, and again till you become an 'artist'.

Sounds like hard-work? Actually the most fun and memorable dates will be the ones in the early stages where you make mistakes and then do some things that bring the date back from the brink of disaster. If your first date goes smoothly, it may get you top marks with your partner and can give you quite a buzz. But, in the long-run, the most memorable moments are me laughing at my (our) goof-ups.

Since, success in online dating requires a lot of "offline" work, the suggestions here are not limited to online dating.

Why online dating?

The world is changing faster than you think: consider this from a futurist at a recent conference for Salesforce.com:

- In one day today, the world does more business than *all* of 1974
- In one day today, we make more phone calls than *all* of 1984; and
- In one minute we send out more emails than *all* of 1994

15 years ago, you and I didn't know about ATMs, Microsoft office, email, SMS and the World Wide Web. Think you can get an exciting job today without knowing *all* of these? I assure you that 15 years hence there will be equally bigger changes! Think genetics, think space, think nanotechnology; but whatever you do, think BIG. These are exciting times, for sure!

In a similar vein, one of the things rapidly changing is the way we interact with people. A hundred years ago, most communication was face-to-face with people within a small radius of a person's home. International communication was either very slow, very expensive or both; Today, if you live in a city, you are more likely to communicate with someone on the other side of the world than with your next door neighbor.

This sudden shift has only come about recently with cheap international calls (thanks to VoIP), email, SMS, online chat and the growing international outlook of Indian businesses.

In this scenario, people around the world are exchanging views on the different ways we work, live, hate our politicians and lust after small-time TV stars. Compare this to my grandfather who only ever lived in one city, had only one job (handed down from his father), and had only one partner, one car and one phone...

Here is my personal opinion:

- Thinking you will only have one partner is like thinking you will only own one car your entire life; I wouldn't let my father select the clothes I wear and I'm definitely not letting him select the girl I marry.
- Thinking dating before marriage is not in tune with Indian culture is like thinking democracy should be abolished because it's a western concept.
- Limiting your friends-circle to only people you are formally introduced to is like living the life of the proverbial 'Frog in the well'.

The Internet continues to change every aspect of your life; it is expanding your choices, getting you better prices from around the world and increasing your dating options!

But before you get into the tips, let me share with you a small observation. I have found that most of my friends who are unsuccessful in online dating had 2 opinions in common that sabotaged their chances of success before they even got online!

Myth 1: Online dating won't work for me and other negative self-talk

Your success in any aspect of life like public speaking success, career success or online dating success is very dependent on your beliefs about yourself. In a Cisco (\$25b networking hardware and VoIP company) sales training course I attended, they had an example of a salesperson who was making a phone call to an important prospect and while the prospect's secretary put him on hold his mind constantly kept reinforcing negative thoughts "He doesn't want to speak with me", "Why did I call him?" , "He is very busy, maybe I should call him later", "I'm not ready for his questions, I should read up the product literature again in case he comes up with some technical question".

First time he hung up pre-maturely and the second time, after he read all the product literature and changed his sales talk, the nagging doubts still remained. He fumbled during the call and hung up on his prospect.

Now what if the exact same person chose instead to **believe the fact** that his product will save the prospect time & money and that while the prospect may get tens of phone calls a day, he would actually like **a someone**, who understands his work-issues, to contact him professionally and present a solution that meets his needs? Do you think that, with all other things being the same, the salesperson with the changed attitude has a better chance of success?

Here is what [David D'Angelo](#) (a dating Guru!) has to say on this issue as it relates to dating:

Do you believe the opposite sex will have a negative attitude towards you? Find you unattractive, stupid, boring etc.? Do you believe that you are more likely to get rejected instantly than accepted?

I can remember when I used to believe that women would be very offended or alarmed if I tried to strike up an unexpected conversation with them. I

can remember feeling that if a woman rejected me in front of other people that I would die of embarrassment. I can remember thinking, "Why would a woman find ME attractive?" And believing that the truly desirable, beautiful women out there just wouldn't find a guy like me interesting or attractive because I wasn't rich, tall, famous, buff, or of royal descent.

And, as a matter of fact, even though I've spent literally YEARS reprogramming myself and learning as much as I could about women and attraction, I still know that somewhere deep in my subconscious mind this old programming exists. Of course, it doesn't affect my behavior the way it used to, but my point is that once you program yourself or open yourself to programming from others and from our modern culture, it's sometimes a challenge to overcome that programming and go on to be successful.

Let me give you a little Tough Love:

No one cares whether or not you figure this stuff out with women. And no one cares whether or not you're successful with women... Other than you!

Really!

If you learn how to meet and date the kinds of women that you've always wanted, it won't matter to anyone. Your friends won't think you're any cooler (well, maybe a little), your mom won't stop nagging you, your boss won't pay you more money, and you won't lose that extra 10 pounds that you've needed to lose for the past 10 years. It just doesn't matter. No one cares. ***The only person that cares is you***

So if you convince yourself that you will fail with online dating, you probably will! But if you have an open mind, think of all the people (like me!) who are out there today having a great time with people they met online and that you really, really want to meet nice people, you will be successful.

Other than being negative, be aware that the first time things don't go right, your mind will need to justify failure by finding an outlet that lets you shift the blame instead of introspection or analyzing it correctly and trying something different. The worst thing you can do is convince yourself that your present friend's circle is adequate and you don't need to meet losers online. Or thinking that online dating as a concept doesn't work.

Other advice from the Internet:

Do all the things that will boost your confidence: from avoiding negative friends (often the married ones) to attending the right kind of social functions. Couples at dinner parties in far-off suburbs are not necessarily where you need to be right now.

Myth 2: Cool people don't use online dating because they are already in a relationship

There are 35 million people online in India alone, over 100 million in China and over 1.5 billion across the world. Do you really believe that you won't find someone suitable online? Do you really believe that all these people will only go out with one person and stay with them happily for the rest of their lives?

Look around you, there is a battlefield littered with break-ups, divorces and unhappy relationships. The world is changing and so are relationships. People have a lot more choice than they used to and they aren't going to put up with the crap that our parents and grand-parents used to put up with.

Dating and people-to-people sites are amongst the most popular websites across the planet. My Italian friend asked me why I wasn't making a move on this girl I was spending time with and I said, "She has a boyfriend" and he replied, "Yeah, but is she happy"? That has changed my life a bit.

Your commitment

How serious are you about devoting time to dating? If you are just going to put up a quick profile and wait for hot people to contact you because you are better than everyone else, it probably won't work (unless you are a super hot girl) and you will go away thinking "online dating doesn't work". But like anything you want to be successful at, dating requires thought, time and action. After all, you spend months researching the perfect car; years researching your home. Shouldn't you put some work into research that might lead to you finding the person of your dreams?

The more time you put into it and the more open you are to other people's feedback, changing and re-changing your lines, the more successful you will be.

Step 1: Compare online dating sites

First find the popular online dating sites. One way of doing this is by thinking of your friends who are similar to people you would like to meet. Ask them, what online dating sites they use or have heard of. Start with those sites.

The most important things to compare are their target market, size of the member database, quality of the database and their marketing. For instance, Fropper.com has over 1 million members. They also have a policy of de-activating members who haven't used the service for over 2 months. This I find increases the chances of people getting responses. Most dating websites, will keep inactive members online so that they can boast of higher numbers but this means their database is of much lower quality.

Get an idea of how they market themselves. Are they visible on other sites? For example: Fropper.com is visible on top Internet sites like: indiatimes.com, yahoo.co.in, google etc.

Then compare the details in the profiles (discussed later) and features like 'buzzes', 'free chat', 'forums', that let you test a site for free before you are

required to pay for membership. Fropper.com gives you unlimited 'buzzes' that you can use to contact the other person and the other person then uses response buzzes to say that they are interested in further contact. At this stage either one of you has to take up a paid membership to get the contact details of the other person.

Step 2: Fine tune your profile

Once you start contacting people online or when people search, the first thing they are going to look at is your photo, which as they say, is worth a thousand words. If you don't put up your photo, you have a better chance of being chosen to be the first Indian on the moon, than getting a decent response online.

Most dating experts will tell you how looks are not important and give various examples of pretty girls with average men. That is bull-crap in general and even more so for online dating. People base a lot on first impressions and if you make first contact by sending them a 'standard buzz', they cannot base their first impressions on what you said and have to go to your profile. Here, the first thing they will notice is your photo. If they see a photo of a fat, ugly geek with oily hair sending them a standard buzz, they won't even bother reading your profile. However, even if you appear semi-decent, they will give you a quick glance to see what stands out in your profile and then decide to take some more time to read and then maybe respond.

So don't put up a photo because it was the only one you had on your computer. If you are serious about meeting someone online, spend the time and get the best photo, scan it or get a new one with a digital camera, go to the photo studio and get someone to make you look nicer and take out that birthmark on your face and get rid of the pimples and dim the lights a bit if you have wrinkles. Add a dimple if you like. Hehe!

When filling out your profile, think of yourself as a 'brand'. Everything you say or do will be used in forming a brand attitude and brand comparison and there are a

lot of brands out there! How are you different? What do people you like look for? While I was joking about massaging your photo, never ever lie in your profile. You can leave out things that may create a bad first impression but if it is important, bring it up in your later conversations. People don't like surprises, but people also don't know what they want. The general rule is to have some fun with the form, think of something funny and different that will make you stand out.

When I fill out forms, under 'Sex', I always put in 'twice a week'. In Australia, before the last census, an email went around requesting people to put 'Jedi Knight' (from the movie Star Wars) as their religion. By law, if more than 1,000 people put that in, Australia has to recognize that as a religion! And loads of people put it in! Sadly, on Fropper.com one has to choose male or female. Well, that's OK. Another sign that the site is worth using.

The most important section is however the 'other information'. This gives you a chance to stand out from the crowd, show your individuality and creativity. Make sure its funny and give them some ammunition to use when they first contact you. Or if you are expecting standard buzzes, instead of individualized responses, you can always reply with "I bet you sent me a buzz because you saw in my profile that I am cook and well organized around the house. Are you looking for a boyfriend or someone to do the housework?"

It's very hard for words to convey emotions like sarcasm and humor, so I find using words like 'hehe' work well. The person reading your profile is more likely to smile as they read this as well.

I constantly change the message and sometimes just a couple of lines do wonders. Here is one - "Smile when you read this, because I like messages from smiling people". Obviously, keep refreshing this.

Some general dating advice I found on the Internet:

Get your act together. Begin a regime of looking your best. Join a gym, read health magazines, get fit and start a diet. Get your hair cut or styled and begin a new regime of good grooming or beauty treatment. Go shopping and treat yourself to new clothes and even a whole new look. Get your image right, one that you can manage and live with, but one that flatters you. Don't go overboard and look like someone you are not but maybe its time to throw out those tired jeans, old sweaters or cardigans and spruce yourself up. People appreciate appearance.

Though it will not find you a date in itself, you will feel a million times more confident about yourself.

Step 3: Searching

If it's your first time using a dating site, it may be too early to define anything other than the gender and age of the person you are looking for. Remember you are going to have to *kiss a lot of frogs before you meet your Prince or Princess*.

Also, remember you aren't going to marry them. Not the first few anyway, so don't worry about taking a few risks. Contact people who you normally wouldn't. At this stage you just want to practice making first contact, practice conversation skills, get feedback (verbally or indirectly) and generally take notes about what works and what doesn't.

Remember boys will date anything that moves and if it doesn't move, they'll push it first. Girls will give you in-depth details about the boy of their dreams and then go out with some complete idiot for some incomprehensible reason. Another thing I notice is that girls have innumerable choices when they are young and boys have few when young; but as people grow older, the situation is reversed. A US survey showed that if you are a woman over 45, you have a better chance of getting shot by a terrorist than getting married.

And girls, don't get overwhelmed by the large number of responses you get. If you are dissatisfied with the responses, make an effort to make first contact yourself.

Step 4: First contact – “Nice shoes, wanna have sex?”

In most countries you would get slapped. In India this will positively be enough reason for someone to kill you (or in an online world, hack into your computer and delete all your contacts in MS Outlook!). So how do you start conversations?

In my experience, after I have convinced myself about the suitability of the website, ***I get a paid membership*** immediately. Girls in general and some of the cool guys get a lot of buzzes and the only way to make yourself stand out in this situation is to start off with something unique, tailored to their profile and funny. You can't do this with a standard buzz. Buzzes are meant to let users test out the website. Unfortunately, people use this as a measure of their probability of success and since buzzes would likely get a low response because they are so generic, people end up thinking that online dating won't work for them. In short, it is more expensive and costly (in terms of what you would lose by not having good people around you sharing new experiences) to not be a member. At the cost of sounding like I'm an online dating salesperson, consider this as an investment in yourself. I also say this about traveling.

So, assuming you become a paid member, what is the best starting line? According to a University of Chicago study, the best opening line (in the offline world) is simply the word "hi". In online dating, it would have to be a funny, creative opening line that is targeted at something mentioned in the profile of the other person. Say something that is completely unexpected.

On an online dating website, I remember a girl from Jervis Bay, a beach south of Sydney, whose profile I liked. She had mentioned diving as one of her hobbies. So I did a quick search about diving in the area, saw one interesting cave dive that required a boat to get to and sent her a message saying that I wanted to go

diving there on the long weekend and was wondering if she knew anything about it and how to get a boat cheap. She sent me a long message of all the dive sites in the area that didn't require a boat and the ones she was interested in doing. A few emails later, she came over to Sydney with her brother and a couple of their friends to go out to a 48 hour *bush doof* (*bush = forest; doof = psy-trance party where the music goes doof doof doof!*). She was a great person and it didn't blossom into a friendship but we both had a great time under the stars, skinny dipping with a few hippies and then going tree-hugging without any clothes!

Remember, online success requires a lot of offline work and you have to constantly come up with interesting lines to start conversations. I have devised some useful party tricks, like when I go out, I only fill up my wine glass a quarter, then go and introduce myself to a new group. And if I feel unwelcome or decide that I don't like them then I drink up and excuse myself to get a re-fill. Smooth, easy and nobody gets hurt! Haha. But this trick is harder in India than in Australia and Norway; In India, when I approach new people at a club or party just to say hello, I get rude stares and unwelcome responses. I just move on in these cases as if nothing happened, only to later watch the same faces watching me go around and meet interesting people while they go home with the same bunch of people they hang out with every day of their lives moaning about their 'frog-in-the-well' issues!

Tip: Never, EVER, contact someone without having read their profile. Nothing will piss them off more than an irrelevant first contact or something that is already mentioned in their profile.

Step 5: Being Funny

Girls like nice guys but they love the teasers and hate people who show desperation or emotional dependence. So don't be afraid to tease them a little, play a few mind games and definitely never show you are too eager in the early stages. But the one thing that is needed at every stage of your interaction is a good sense of humor and a boat-load (think Titanic) of creativity,

A good sense of humor requires split second thinking; nothing is less funny than a good come-back 10 minutes after the topic has changed. I have said some stupid things to some people because I'm at a point now where my mouth is faster than my brain. Most of the times, I come across as being very funny, but people can be unforgiving when I cross that thin red line. So you burn a few people along the way, and that's just the price you pay for having a good sense of humor.

I meet so many people everyday that it's not even worth thinking about the people who can't take a joke or don't appreciate my sense of humor. And the best thing about online dating is that, there, if you end up pissing someone off, there are a hundred others you can move on to. But make sure when you lose, don't lose the lesson i.e. if it is genuinely your fault, you were being insensitive, apologize to them and make a note not to use that line in the future. It works.

How can you be funny? I don't know. I grew up in Lonavla, a small town between Bombay and Pune and was very shy and not self-confident when young. If I had to guess, I would say a lot of it was influenced in my teenage years by observing and imitating my older cousin from Bombay who was the life of the party (which in those days were family gatherings). I have also read widely and love humor books, movies and love watching stand-up comedians. Watch Seinfeld, the American show, 'Whose line is it anyway?' on BBC or Peter Russell, an Indian Canadian stand-up 'insult' comedian. Remember all humor is derived at someone else's misery!

There is a lot of advise out there on the Internet, but use your judgment since some of it is not relevant in an Indian context. For example, I find US Dating Specialist [David DeAngelo's](#) advice demeaning towards women but he does make some awesome points as in the advice below:

If a guy says something that's cocky and funny, and the girl doesn't jump on him, he assumes that he made a mistake. Even worse, sometimes women will respond to cocky/funny comments with the "I can't believe you

just said that" look... to which a lot of guys respond with "Oh, um... I was just kidding". Big mistake!

The best thing to do when a woman gives you this kind of look or response is to SAY SOMETHING ELSE THAT'S EVEN MORE COCKY AND FUNNY!

OK, here's the basic formula for Cocky and Funny:

Take an arrogant comment, and then add humor. It's a killer combination. The key is that it HAS TO BE FUNNY. It actually has to make others laugh. You must make sure that you are Cocky enough, because if you're only FUNNY, then you will come across as GOOFY, which isn't what you want.

It's the COMBINATION that makes Cocky and Funny work like magic. Too little or too much of either and you will come off as an idiot.

I remember approaching a girl in Singapore and saying "You are being such a snob, I've been asked by the host (pointing to the host) to come over and spank you". I was a little drunk and thought I was going to get slapped after I realized what I had said (it was completely unplanned and just the first thing that came out through my mouth). She turned around to have a quick glance at the host and burst out laughing. Turns out she had gate-crashed and the host didn't care and had approached her to welcome her to the party but she didn't know he was the host and cut him pieces with a rude comment. We started chatting and I picked up, in the conversation, she mentioning a cycling trip from Myrdal to Flam in Norway and turned out I had just done it recently as well. She ended up being one of the longest relationships I've ever had.

Here are some suggestions from [David DeAngelo](#) on meeting women online:

First of all, imagine what it's like to be a woman who's running a personal ad.

- 1) She'll get dozens of responses a day, in most cases
- 2) Most of the responses are from desperate loser guys who make it very clear that they are not at all attractive
- 3) Within a few days all of the guys seem to blur together into one big mass of exactly what she isn't looking for

So let's play this out...

You're a woman who's tired of playing the dating game, meeting guys at bars, or whatever and you think "Hey, maybe I should place a personal ad and see if I can meet a nice guy". So you get online and see an ad for a free trial at a personals site, and you go for it.

The first day of your ad, you get 35 responses. You're thinking "Wow, this is cool. I'm going to be able to choose between all these guys... there HAS to be a few good ones in here". So you go to work reading through them.

The first one says "I'm a DWM, 45, two kids, looking for a SWF for a LTR...." You're so bored that you delete it thinking to yourself "I hope they're not all that boring." Second one says "Hi, you're really hot. If you'd like to get together for some "no strings attached" physical fun, get back to me. I'm very into giving pleasure..."

DELETE.

And on and on... and the next day there are 35 more full of the same stuff. If you think that I'm exaggerating, just ask a few women who have run personals. This is real world. With that said, if you're going to work with the personals, you need to do a few things to:

- 1) Get her attention and stand out
- 2) Come across as something OTHER than a loser
- 3) Get her to answer you, and then get her on the phone ASAP, before she tunes out from all the responses

To answer your first question, YES you should be cocky and funny with personals! As a matter of fact, you need to turn up the volume for this special occasion. Here's an example of something I might say:

"Well, you sound like you might be more than just another pretty face. Something tells me that you're probably getting about 50 emails a day from loser guys saying things like, "Hi, I'm freshly divorced from my seventh wife, have 5 delinquent kids... but the good news is that I have a good chance at finally getting a job..." etc.

In any event, I'm 35, have my life together, and I'm more than the usual amount of interesting and funny, so you'd better like to laugh.

You sound like you might make an interesting friend, so let's get together for a cup of something delicious and some interesting conversation... if you think you can handle it, that is!"

I can see it now. You're probably already going out and signing up for ten online personals sites and you're thinking "Hey, cool... I'll just cut and paste what [David D.](#) wrote here and the chicks will bangin' my door down."

Well, in fact that might happen. And I'd recommend that you test this one out. But here are a few more tips for you, based on a LOT of experience:

1) If you're going to use the personals, you have to STAY ON TOP OF THEM. You want to be one of the first 10 people to email a woman! Not number 293. Yes, this means paying attention.

2) You need to do something to make it personal. Use your cocky and funny skills to talk about something she said in her ad. If she's into dogs, say "Hey, let's go down to the pet store and see if we can't get your pooch one of those extra-fancy chew toys that are like Krispy Kremes for dogs." Use your imagination, and stay cocky and funny.

3) Get her on the phone as soon as you possibly can. Remember, even though she sounds like she likes you in the first email or two, she's STILL GETTING 40 MORE GUYS SENDING HER RESPONSES EVERY DAY. If you don't get her on the phone fast, you'll just fade into the pool of losers in her mind.

Here's a little secret: Personals are one of the BEST places to learn and practice how to be cocky and funny, because you can THINK ABOUT WHAT YOU'RE GOING TO SAY! It's like a real world simulator. I love it.

I like [David's](#) suggestions but for this to work, both you and the girl have to have a level of confidence and conversational skills that are only built up over time. My suggestion is that if you are new at this, have an online chat with her. This gives you some thinking time between responses. Once you get good at this, then go on the phone otherwise you may both become naturally uncomfortable.

The second thing is that the average Indian girl *can be* very risk-averse and in conversations I find that their primary concern with online dating is that they might meet some psycho pretending to be a nice guy. Guys on the other hand can take more risks and will go out with anyone, just in case she puts out. Hence, in the Indian context, there is a little trust building they have to go through. Nothing helps trust building more than letting the other person know about all the

other people who like and trust you and have enjoyed their time with you. I do this most effectively through referring them to my online blog that has pictures of me, my friends, crazy adventures, sporty stuff, parties etc. On Fropper.com, you could also invite your friends to become a part of your network.

Also remember, people, especially girls, like a little challenge. So play a little hard to get. If you have exchanged online chat addresses, don't chat with him/her as soon as he/she is online, *every time* she is online; let her start some of conversations and if she doesn't, hang-back and wait. When you've finally got her phone number, don't ring her two times a day every day to say hello. Hold back. Ring her on the 3rd day when you have something really interesting to talk about. You have to practice, practice and practice till you discover your own style and your limits

Step 6: Projecting the right image

Any recruitment agent will tell you, it's not the best person who gets the job, it's the best interviewee!

Projecting the right image is an important part of being the right interviewee. In the early stages of online contact, each impression (photo, profile, buzz and conversation) you make is being used to build up an image in the other person's mind. If you don't know what image you want to project, you may end up projecting something you are not. Think about you having a conversation with someone online. What kind of conversations would create an impression in your mind that the other person was a fashion model? Was it the constant topics about shopping and dining out in exclusive places, intimate knowledge and invites to private events, name dropping, testing your party sense? Similarly think investment banker, professional tennis player, college student, druggie, small village geek (like me!), international traveling bum, IT consultant etc.

So make a list of things you may want to talk about and things you don't. In a normal conversation, you won't be able to follow that list or perhaps even look at

it, but if you are lost for topics or a bad topic comes up, you want to be mentally prepared to change topics quickly.

I like coming across as being a traveling bum. I always end up discussing holidays that people take and then relating it to people I met working in a particular city or traveling to a certain destination and photos I exchange invariably have me doing crazy stuff that will make the average 9-to-7 worker fall off their chairs like cabling between high tree-houses in the forests of Laos, hovering/flying over a rocket engine in NZ, paragliding (not parasailing) over the barrier reef in Queensland etc.

What helps me project this image is that I have discussed most topics under the sun (most often drunk) and gotten different view points from a very wide range of people. I read a lot on philosophy, current events, science, books about travelers, information technology etc., and I travel extensively, always seeking out interesting people (that means dropping boring, conceited ones) and find myself having deep and meaningful conversations on remote beaches, mountain ranges, islands, forests across the globe with people from all over the world.

I always play the devil's advocate. If someone has an opinion similar to mine, I will take the opposite view and choose which of the people in the discussion I support (with a bias to the peppy Brazilian beauty or the Norwegian!). You pick an interesting, mainstream topic and I will have something controversial to say about it.

Step 7: Listening skills – questioning

Finding out what interests them gives you an opportunity to say things about you that are most relevant to them and your greatest chance of building rapport and finding an opportunity to find an excuse or event to meet them in person.

There is a global shortage of good listeners (more than a shortage of decent men!) in the dating game. Give the other person an opportunity to speak as

much as they want. Use a bit of paraphrasing and subtle questioning skills to really get them going. Be funny! Tease them a bit, but don't insult them. There is a mental note to interject about your own related experience. Don't do it. Let them finish what they are saying. Here is some great advice on good questioning skills in the dating game by Ron Louis and David Copeland:

http://www.girldatingtips.com/articles/dating-tips/Asking_Questions.shtml

Asking questions is not the same as a compliment. You don't need to compliment a woman right off the bat. Most find it intimidating to compliment a woman, and luckily you don't have to start a conversation with a compliment. You don't have to say, "How did you decide on such a beautiful hair style?" It might be too scary to say that. Instead you are going to ask questions.

Obviously you shouldn't insult women either. If you ask a woman, "How did you get your hair so ugly?" Or, "How did you get so stupid?" you're not going to get anywhere. When you first meet a woman, it usually makes sense to start with a simple question.

Asking questions is not the same as making statements. Many make the error of making statements rather than asking questions. For example, a person said to her, "The floor sure is sticky." Well, that's not a question and that doesn't offer much of an opening for her to respond. You need to ask questions that invoke a response from her.

Asking questions is different than talking about yourself. If you were at a concert and you walked up a woman and said, "I sure like the band." This is a statement, not a question. You must learn the difference between sharing about yourself and asking a question about her. This point seems simple, but many guys mess it up.

You need to ask her something that will engage her in a back and forth conversation, not spew forth your opinions about life or share about yourself. At first a woman is not interested in you, or your opinions.

Instead, she's interested in talking about herself. This means that your focus should be on asking questions where she talks about herself. Rather than talking about your favorite color, ask her what her favorite color is. Rather than raving about the great new CD you just brought, ask her what sort of music she likes. Rather than talking about your favorite season, ask her what her favorite season is.

Do not ask stupid cheesy questions. When you are interacting with a woman and asking questions, you are not allowed to ask her, "Do you come here often?" You are also prohibited from asking about the weather. Those two questions are so clichéd that you will come across as a total bonehead. The last thing you are forbidden from asking is about, "What's your sign?" Once again they sound too much like lines and are too programmed in her mind to be boring and stupid. The good news is that there are simple questions to ask her and once you get your curiosity circuitry going, you're not going to have a problem asking them.

Do not ask overtly sexual questions. By developing your curiosity circuitry you are learning what you are naturally curious about when talking to women. Learning about your curiosity is crucial. At the same time you might find yourself wondering, "Gee, are those breast implants? How do they stand up so well?" That is obviously not a question you're going to want to ask her right out. We probably don't have to tell you this, but we wanted to double and quadruple check.

We're not suggesting that you avoid thinking about sex or avoid wondering about a woman's breasts, or what she's like in bed. Those are things we all wonder about it when we talk to women. Do not even try to suppress those thoughts. We're just saying that none of those questions will fly when

talking to a woman. Just remember that you risk face slaps, explosive forms of violence, sexless nights, and trouble if you make overtly sexual comments.

Asking questions is not an interrogation (Very very important. Giving the other person a feeling that they are being interrogated is a sure-fire way to ensure you never speak with them again). We're going to be teaching you how to ask a woman a question and then a follow up question, but it helps to say something like, "wow" or, "really," or, "that's interesting," before asking a follow up question. When you use those sorts of phrases, take a breath between questions, and then listen to her response, she'll feel much less like you're interrogating her.

So, put away the interrogation room spotlight and make sure you avoid bombarding her with rapid-fire questions. Some men keep asking a woman "why, why, why" until she feels uncomfortable — which is another way to have her feel like she's locked in an interrogation room with you.

Meanwhile, if you ask one question at a time and go at a more slow and relaxed pace the conversation will feel to her natural and easy to sustain. When some guys are excited they easily feel pumped up. While being energized is a good thing, sometimes guys in this state tend to ask too many questions too quickly and not give the woman enough time to respond and not enough space to think. Just remember to slow down and allow her time to respond as well as adding in "wow," "really," and/or, "that's interesting," and you'll be fine.

Avoid yes or no questions. What is the difference between these two questions? "Do you like art?" And, "What sorts of art do you like?"

Step 8: Asking them out

You've projected the right image, you've asked the right questions, you've created a good rapport and you know what she likes, so how do you convert that to a date?

This is where your creativity comes in. Once I was infatuated (like really really) by the president of my scuba dive club; so I figured adventure is on top of her list. I was learning how to paraglide at the time so I found out the president's number from the monthly dive magazine. Rang her up (and almost died when asked, "hey! How did you get my number?" refer to topic-changing skills!) and said that when I signed up for my paragliding course, the instructor gave me a gift voucher for a 15 minute joy ride, jumping from a sea-facing cliff at 400 feet ... you up for it?". Obviously! The paragliding never happened, but we have been through the best of times ever since.

A little white lie can be great for your sex life. (A big lie can be devastating not only to your sex life but to your personality and reputation!). So if the person of interest has been working overtime and losing sleep to meet a deadline, I'd say, "Hey, have you heard about this trendy Japanese place just opened up in Bandra that does a great shiatsu massage?" Shiatsu is one of the most relaxing massages you can get, it is different, the suggestion is adapted to her needs, implies you are different, maybe hang out with interesting people so you are in the 'know' and know how to spoil a girl. A little planning always helps. You know the conversation is going to lead into a discussion of all things Japanese; maybe a good time to mention your Japanese cooking skills and invite her over.

Tip: Nothing impresses a woman more than a man who can cook and cook well. Can you navigate the conversation towards this?

Step 9: Practice in the offline world

Most of the topics above deal with the science of online dating. To get to the 'art' of it, you have to go out into the real world and practice your skills on random

strangers. Don't discriminate by only talking to people who you want to have sex with. Talk to everyone - man, woman, dog, old, young! Standing in a line for a movie? Say something funny to the person in front or behind you. Bored at work? Chat up someone who you have never talked to before about a completely irrelevant topic. Eating alone in a crowded restaurant? Ask to sit next to someone (I have never been rejected, ever when there were empty tables around. But I don't butt into people having intimate discussions or ask snobby supermodels!).

Chatting with complete strangers is the hardest part. It is everything that your parents and society tell you, every single day, not to do. You have to constantly fight your fears, your inner voice that is constantly re-enforcing how embarrassing a rejection would be. If you do this repeatedly, over time it will build a level of confidence that chatting up someone new will be a non-event. Most people like being approached by someone likeable, most people don't want to be approached by dickheads...

When I first started traveling, I had a strong reluctance to approaching other backpackers. I was the only Indian amongst a 'white, western community' and completely stood out. Today I can't believe that I had convinced myself that I thought all of them have had very interesting lives, but I'm a small village boy with nothing in common with them. Why would they want to talk with me? Once I started approaching them, I realized, firstly they wanted to meet other travelers and they loved meeting someone with a completely different experience set and viewpoint than theirs or that of the people they were traveling with.

Hopefully, some of you have a few good tips... go out and practice them. Come back, read up some more and go back and practice. Everytime you get a laugh, you have hit the right button. Make a note; every time you get slap, you've learnt one way that doesn't work, but try it once again just to make sure that it really was a mistake! Haha!

And again -- You have to kiss a lot of frogs before you find your prince!

Note on single travel, preferably overseas

I cannot stress enough the importance of traveling overseas on your own. Single travelers are compelled to introduce themselves to more people, have to be more open, take more risks and try more ways to start conversations. I can write a whole book about this topic. If there is one single advise that I can give you, study hard, then forget your career, forget what your parents/society/bosses/girlfriends/bank-manager want, save money and spend it on travel in the early years of your life. The revolution we have seen in computers in the last 25 years will be nothing compared to the revolution we will be seeing in Medical science in the next 25 years. To cut a long story short, you are going to live a life much longer than you or I can speculate now, so don't spend the best years of your life on a chair in a congested city.

I find that people who have traveled in situations where they have started life in a new place and had to make new friends over and over again are better at first contact. I was single when I went to Australia, and most people were already in groups, so I had to make extra effort to meet them. I have met thousands of people, starting by the first person I met at university by extending my hand and saying, "Hello, I'm from India. How are you?" I felt stupid, but in one month I knew more people at the university than anyone else, especially more than the people who had their own groups from high school, and ending up being a point of introduction for people wanting to shag the brains out of other people. And I still continue to be the 'connector' (see the book "The Tipping Point")

I think the single biggest thing was exchanging views with some amazing people I constantly met while traveling to far off lands. I always make travel plans at the spur of the moment (having an Australian passport is one big help, since I don't have visa issues) and that means I mostly start my travel alone. Traveling alone means that you have to constantly make an effort to start conversations with people and that requires overcoming your fears and apprehensions and trying different ways.

Both these will leave you with some scars, but mostly with some of the best experiences in your life. Sometimes, when people ask me if I liked a particular city, I've found that the cities I liked had more to do with the people I met traveling there, than the city itself. You can meet shit people in a great city (Paris) and end up not liking it or you can meet some awesome people in a one-horse town and end up falling in love with the streets, the restaurants, the pubs...

Well, hope you have enjoyed reading this as much as I have enjoyed writing it. There are lots of stages remaining including planning the dates, following up etc., that I will leave for a future day; but if you have any questions or comments please feel free to write to **emptyoceans@gmail.com** (yes I'm an environmentalist as well!)

Nothing would give me more satisfaction than if someone emails me to say that my tip has worked for them.