

Chic LONDRES

In Talk With Rachel MacLynn, the Love Psychologist

According to the Office for National Statistics, singles form the fastest growing group in the UK, with married people deemed to become a minority within the next twenty years. At the same time, dating agencies and websites have never been so popular, proving that those singles still aspire to find “the One”. Here, psychologist Rachel MacLynn, who works as Head of Membership for super select dating agency Seventy Thirty, offers Chic-Londres some tips on finding love in London.



How have our expectations evolved in recent years when it comes to meeting a partner?

They have changed a lot... For the first time in History, women have become very independent - professionally, financially and in their choice of lifestyle. Women don't *need* a man anymore, they just *want* a man, and their criteria are much more demanding in terms of how successful and intelligent this man must be. In London, men's expectations are also very high, but in a different capacity. In terms of evolutionary psychology, they are instinctively hunter-gatherers, so they still tend to be attracted to younger and beautiful women who project some vulnerability and whom they can protect. At the same time, modern society dictates that they also are increasingly looking for successful partners, who are independent but also willing to enter a relationship, a combination which is not easy to find. Generally speaking, the more we achieve in life, the smaller the pool of compatible partners, so the more difficult it is to find a suitable match.

What are the new rules of dating and are there dos and don'ts you can mention?

I meet hundreds of single people every year wanting to find a partner, and I am always struck by an element which is deeply misunderstood: men don't seem to realize that, however successful and controlling in her career a woman can be, she still likes to be swept off her feet. Women still want men to take control in terms of gestures - opening doors for example or paying for the bill on the first date, even though most women will then reciprocate on the next date. At Seventy Thirty, we have clients aged between 25 and 70, with most of them in their late thirties or forties, which means that many have come out of long relationships and are not familiar with dating etiquette in the 21st Century: for example, if they have been in a fifteen-year marriage, there were no emails or texts when they last dated, so the etiquette has obviously changed. I personally encourage people to talk on the phone as much as they can, which is a much better way to express emotions than by texts and emails, which should be kept for practical arrangements only.

Why are there so many singles in London?

People always ask me this question, as there are so many wonderful single men and women in London and yet so many who can't seem to find someone suitable. In fact, it is much easier to find a partner in a smaller and closed community, where there are very strong core common values, than in a big city like London, where there is such a distribution of wealth, nationalities, religions, etc. Because there is so much choice, there are many compatible partners, but the problem is that they are very often hidden in a huge pool of incompatible people. One other major problem I have noticed is that men tend to find women in London quite intimidating: the art of seducing a woman is slowly disappearing because many men don't dare to flirt anymore. We have had cases where we have introduced people who already knew of each other and found each other attractive, but didn't have a clue that was the case. Usually it is because the woman expects to be approached, while the man doesn't dare to make a move by fear of being rejected, which is a shame, as there are so many missed opportunities.

What makes a relationship successful?

From the outset, each person should decide what they look for in a relationship and know themselves enough to decide what is right for them. Most people have relationship patterns, where they keep making similar mistakes, for example by always going to the same kind of people, despite the fact they are wrong for them. So it is important to understand those patterns and break them. Also, while physical attraction and similar lifestyles help to find someone suitable on the surface, what will ultimately keep the relationship together is a common approach to life, for example in terms of attitudes towards money, family or health. Two people can have very different personalities and yet have a very successful relationship as long as they share the same values. Sexual compatibility is also very important: if chemistry is there at the beginning, then it can be maintained and rekindled in the long term; if not, this quickly becomes a major problem.

Do you have any tips for meeting the right partner?

It is important to get out there and socialize, as the more people you meet, the more likely you are to meet a partner. That seems obvious but while many single people do go out a lot, they just tend to stay with their friends instead of mingling with people they don't know. It is also important to promote your image, by making an effort to dress well and look good, which in turn will make you feel good about yourself and therefore more attractive to others. I also think that at a time when people are increasingly busy, there is a huge need for professional matchmakers. Introduction agencies like ours can be of huge help, as we proactively "headhunt" for suitable partners and filter out those who aren't. Nowadays, people have personal trainers, personal stylists, life coaches, so it makes sense to also seek professional advice to find a life partner: so far, only a tiny percentage of people have done so, yet, this is the one decision in your life which ideally you would only want to make once.