



Singles, Set Sail! *Dating Tips for Safety and Success*

Successful singles see what they can bring to the single circles. They use their gifts, talents, and time to create more opportunity and connectedness for everyone-not just for themselves.

There are fish in the sea like you

Let's take a look at some options of meeting singles:

Natural circles: your work, your working networks, your church, your family's friends, your friends, your friends' friends, classes, sports and organizations that interest you naturally even if you didn't meet anyone there.

Natural circles are places you would go as a natural course of your life. The benefits of natural circles are:

- They don't take any extra time. You'd be doing all these activities anyway.
- You have a frame of reference for the people you meet. Someone you know, knows the people you meet.
- The people you meet fit naturally into your life because they have been running in the same circles.
- The focus of these relationships is bigger than just "meeting someone."

Disadvantages:

- These circles can become “in-grown.” For example, if you have followed the show, “Friends,” you probably noticed that everyone on the show has dated and slept with pretty much everyone else. If you don’t keep growing as a person, your world can become very, very small.
- One of the negative side affects of a small circle of relationships is that it can become easy to feel angry with your friends as they marry and you don’t.
- You can slip into a depression as you feel your world shrinking. Bill and I have seen attractive, talented, positive singles slide into a dark depression because they didn’t keep working on expanding their friendship circles.
- Your current natural circles might have built on your married life. If you are recently divorced or a widow(er), all your friends or a majority might be married so there aren’t many people to socialize with or many who can empathize with your current situation.

Assertive circles

Assertive circles are ways of meeting people that cause you go out of your way.

These might include singles conferences, social events, networking, websites, and matchmakers.

The Advantages

- They expose you to broader variety of people than you would meet normally
- Some sites also sponsor conferences and events, so you have a safer place to meet in person someone you’ve met over the web.

- Others offer surfing options that limit the field (or “match” for you based on a set of criteria.) This does two things: saves you time and adds to the accountability-someone else knows the person.
- Some sites screen out emotionally toxic: Neil Clark Warren’s site, *eharmony*, was launched as a result of his extensive research over decades that led him to one irrefutable conclusion: Mate Selection is THE KEY to a brilliant marriage. Therefore, his site only connects singles to others who match in over 29 human compatibility dimensions like common values, beliefs, attitudes, personality, temperament, behaviors and skills. They claim emotionally unstable people are identified and screened out. Warren explains, ““Eighty-five percent of what matters is what’s inside you, your beliefs, your principles, values. Fifteen percent has to do with the wrapping.” And as a society, he said, we spend far too much time on the 15 percent.”
- You avoid feeling like you are doing nothing to meet people. Bill and I were invited to be the first marriage speakers at Park Church in downtown Chicago. An offshoot of Moody Bible, this church plant targeted the population that lived in downtown Chicago, which was primarily single, upwardly mobile professionals. The congregation was nearly 90 percent single! We were impressed as we walked into the foyer of the church because there were table after table of ministry opportunities. These singles had created a healthy place to mature in Christ and try to navigate the single social life in a healthy manner. There was every kind of small group, social interest, outreach and mission opportunity you could think of! What better way

to really to know a person than to take a missions trip or river rafting trip with someone?

- You can be reasonably confident that other people want to meet you because they are also going out of their way to meet others. .
- It might just work. The popularity of the movie, “You’ve got Mail” romanticized email. Email definitely does have its advantages. You can email whenever you are thinking of a person, night or day, so the time constraints that formally ruled the process of getting to know someone have been extended by technology.

Disadvantages

- It can be quite expensive. Methods for meeting people can range from free to thousands of dollars. Just like any other investment or purchase, do your research and check up on the options and their successes. Get personal recommendations from others who have used them. Some may cost more because there is higher selectivity and accountability, and that may be worth every cent for the safety of your heart and life.
- The potential for disappointment is higher because the focus is usually on meeting the right person to marry. In our travels, we meet many leaders. One recently confessed, “It was bad enough feeling rejected because I was still single, but it felt worse after I spent thousands of dollars and still felt rejected..”
- The potential for getting distracted from God’s purpose for your life is heightened because the focus is usually on meeting the right person to marry.

“Clubbing” may expose you to many singles, but rarely have we seen the relationships that have developed from these liaisons become very positive. Usually, they turn into relationships that range from a one-night stand to a volatile relationship fraught with drama.

- The potential for deception is higher because people are intentionally putting their best foot forward.

Common Sense makes the most sense

Our mentor, Jim Conway, lost his wife, Sally, after years of marital happiness. He found the single world a frightening place initially. He decided the safest route back into the single social circle was to simply have coffee. Coffee was safe. Each would drive to the appointed Starbucks and drink a latte. If the conversation was going well, then coffee could last an hour or more. But if it was obvious this relationship had no future, you can both quickly finish the cup and escape graciously and quickly. Coffee was just the safer route. So grab a cup, invite a friend or meet a new one. Just keep your “boat in the water” and set sail with God on a relationship adventure.

For much more on singles and relationships, pick up *Single Men Are Like Waffles* *Single Women Are Like Spaghetti* by Pam and Bill Farrel . Order a copy at www.Love-Wise.com.