

To Sell 25x4

Your Life

Would you like to be my mummy?" said the email from an earnest young man replying to my online dating advert.

I'd been hoping for more of the wining and dining sort of dates, not a night in for two with a tube of Sudocrem and the Mothercare catalogue.

But since going online in my search for Mr Right - or even Mr-Can-String-A-Sentence-Together without calling me "lol, babes" - I've mostly attracted a succession of louts, losers and layabouts.

Tired of only hooking fishy types in the online dating sea, I decide to consult a dating guru who promised to "accelerate my love life with ideas and actions to attract the perfect partner".

I'd just settle for someone who doesn't leave damp towels on the floor.

But convinced my knight in shining armour is out there somewhere, if I just knew how to hook him, I enlist the help of Paula Rosdol, 54, a sassy American lady with a smart line in self-help advice at her London School of Love.



EXPERT: The Love School's Paula Rosdol

"No wonder you're not attracting the type of man you're seeking," Paula tuts after checking out my dating profile on her laptop when we meet in a London hotel.

"Your photo screams 'sex bunny', yet you say you want a professional man who knows his Pinot from his plonk.

"Your profile doesn't demonstrate you're that type of woman," she continues.

"I thought my fancy dress Bunny Girl outfit looked cute," I whine, tucking my bobbed tail between my legs.

"But I'm all ears, Paula, how can I find the right type of man?"

"Well you refer to yourself as a 'girl' which would indicate you consider yourself a plaything," says the dating coach.

Ah, I thought, that might explain all the hot-tub invites.

"Then you say want a good-looking bloke," says Paula. "There are many attractive good men out there who don't consider themselves a Harrison Ford type and will think, 'Why should I email this woman? I'm not good-looking'."

Despite nodding, I wasn't entirely sure that I agreed. In my limited experience it was mostly the facially-challenged who replied to my ad. Harrison Ford has yet to get in touch.

Finally, she adds: "Ask yourself this... why am I different to other women? Why should a man want to date you?"

Sitting at home that night half-listening to organ music on Radio 2, eating pickled beetroot from a jar, I had to admit she had a point. I thought I'd made it clear in my

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BACK ON THE DATE
HASN'T HAD MUCH

profile that I was a 43-year-old single mum looking for a decent, funny guy. But as Paula pointed out, it was hardly surprising that instead I'd been offered five hours of "work" at a private poker game.

Worse still, at the time I'd even considered accepting.

Dating guru Paula's first lesson at Love School is about repackaging and marketing you, the product.

"I've helped well over 150 women between the ages of 35 and 70, and some men who come to me for advice on finding love on internet dating sites," she says.

"I tell them, you're competing with thousands of other women... you have to look your best.

"I have a client in her mid-30s who came to me saying, I get the dates but men just want take me to bed straight away. So I

My pic screams 'sex bunny', which doesn't help my cause

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ATING MARKET, SINGLE MUM-OF-ONE SIOBHAN MCNALLY, 43,
CH SUCCESS AND HOPES SOME LESSONS IN LOVE WILL HELP



Making a good impression

- 1 Wear bright colours for your photo. Men are particularly attracted to red and fuchsia.
- 2 Get a friend who's interested in photography to take a proper shot of you.
- 3 Use photos that reflect your life, whether you like sports or travelling.
- 4 Smile for the photo and look relaxed and friendly.
- 5 Disguise or cover parts of your body that are less than ideal. But if you have a good figure, take a full-length shot.
- 6 Don't post pictures of yourself in a group.



smooch with the second in line to the throne.

Paula continues: "Looks shouldn't be so important. Studies have shown, the more we get to know someone, the more attractive they become."

Yeah, I thought, I know that feeling... it usually kicks in about halfway down a bottle of wine.

"So you don't believe in Mr Right?" I ask Paula.

"I am so down on this Mr Right fantasy," she snorts. "We're not 20 years old and driven by our hormones."

"Now we're older there are more important things than instant chemistry. If you like something about someone, give them a chance... go on a few more dates..."

In fact John Molloy in his book *Why Men Marry Some Women And Not Others* revealed some of the reasons men choose their partners.

He asked men who had just got hitched what made them propose, and characteristics like kindness and compassion topped the list, along with being able to take them home to mum and dad without scaring the cat.

I tell Paula that a few times I actually emailed a few guys I liked the look of but found none of them replied. It's like men still want to be ones who make the first move.

She says: "I tell women to be passive. If you've set up your profile correctly you wait for him to contact you. After all, if he emails you, he already finds you attractive."

"So which site did you meet your husband on?" I ask Paula, who has been married for four years.

"Actually, I didn't meet him through internet dating. He was a friend of a friend," she replies. "But you can't just pin your hopes on the internet. You have to use several channels including friends and work."

"And even if you don't find love, it will really improve your social life."

I like to think with Paula's expert help I've improved my chances of meeting someone who isn't completely hideous and lives with his nan.

But I'm now worried one of my three criteria might limit my choices. After all, it's not every day you get to meet a man who can play the nose harp...



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How to raise your profile

See how other women present themselves online.

Let the man choose the venue for a date – it reveals how he really sees you.

Be passive. Write a great profile and let the men come to you.

Dating is a numbers game. Try to do three or four dates a day.

Don't fill out all the online forms.

Men never read those bits about your favourite teddy bear.



looked at her profile. She had eight typos in her copy, she talked about how she loved partying and going to gigs, and her photo made her look cheap, which she wasn't in person. She was sending out the wrong message."

Silently, I make a note to delete arm wrestling from my profile hobbies, and perhaps also remove the trophy I won for drinking a Yard Of Ale in my very short list of qualifications.

Paula's philosophy is simple: "Women say I want men to like the inner me, but based on male psychology, if he doesn't like the outer you, he's never going to know the inner you."

"Feminists out there are going to have to bite the bullet because this is how men are built. They're visual, while women are aural... we love to hear romantic words."

It doesn't seem fair that we have to look our best in photos, yet in their profiles most blokes just take a snap of themselves in the

mirror... either that or they're being held captive by Afghan terrorists.

Paula continues: "After that, it's a matter of choosing an internet dating site and getting your profile advert right."

"I tend to advise my clients to start with Match.com, simply because it's the biggest. But there are sites for single parents, music or wine lovers. Sign up for a month and test drive them. The more media you use, the better your chances."

"But I'd avoid the free ones," she adds. "The quality is fairly poor. I'm from the school of thought that says if you don't pay for it, it's not worth it."

An international marketing consultant before becoming a love coach, Paula tried internet dating for two years before meeting her husband. "I dated 125 men," she said, "but

I was never disappointed because my criteria was pretty specific... no workaholics, no young children and they must like travel."

"So I advise women to have three main requirements in the man they're looking for – the things they can or cannot live without."

"But," I ask her, "why can't I ask for a good-looking bloke then? It's not like I'm asking for a fit, young, posh bloke who's also amazingly rich and likes to lose at strip-snooper... THAT would be ridiculous."

Paula replies: "That's like asking for a man over 6ft, which narrows it down to only 29% of the UK male population. And of those, how many are on a dating website?"

By Paula's reckoning, that means finding a tall, dark and handsome man online is about as likely as a snog with Prince Harry. Actually, you're far more likely to

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