

2020

THE IT'S JUST LUNCH
GUIDE TO DATING



Chapter 1

**Change Your Outlook &
Your Luck Will Change**

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Here you are, about to start your great dating adventure. You've been dreaming about meeting someone special for a while now, but the idea of actually getting out there and doing it is a little scary.

You spend time and energy on your career, your workouts, your finances, and now you're ready for romance. You've tried the traditional ways to meet new people - dates set up by friends, the Internet, the bar scene, the gym, but none of that has worked out. The next step is to go out into the world and meet new people, but where and how? You're busy and you don't have a lot of time for trial and error.

That's where we come in.

There is no better place to find good advice about dating than from people who have gone through it before - in our case, more than 50,000 times a month. It's Just Lunch is responsible for millions of fun first dates, so we know a thing or two about successful dating.

How to Use This Book

In each chapter, we'll demystify some aspect of the dating process, as well as provide tips and suggestions to boost your prospects.

Welcome to the Wonderful World of Dating

Perhaps you picked up this book because you recently went through a divorce or a breakup. Maybe you've never dated. Or maybe you've been single for some time and just haven't met the right person. Whatever brings you here, let us first say, congratulations on being single. Yes, we mean it! Being single is an exciting time in your life. It's a chance to learn more about yourself, to understand what you want for the future and to discover qualities you'd really like in a partner. And you're in for a treat - there are hundreds of millions of singles in the United States to choose from.

Of course, not everybody has a positive outlook on being single. In fact, some people are downright negative, especially about dating. If you think like this, you might want to take a look at how you could be sabotaging your chances. Are you the type who loses hope if a date turns out to be not what you expected? Do you judge every date as a marriage prospect? Do you try so hard to impress that you end up scaring the other person away? If this sounds like you, chances are you take dating way too seriously.



It's hardly unusual. These days we're inundated with reality shows and movies that depict two incredibly beautiful people meeting for the first time, barely getting to know each other, quickly falling in love and then deciding to spend the rest of their lives together. With expectations like that, it's no surprise we're all wondering, "Where's mine?"

In addition, chances are you've been hurt or suffered some pain or loss along the way. The idea of facing that ordeal again is enough to make you want to stay in bed with a good book and a pint of ice cream.

If you're reading this book, you probably do want to date. If you're not feeling enthusiastic about it yet, you might need a little attitude adjustment to get you mentally prepared for your dating journey. Having a positive outlook as well as knowing the possible pitfalls and how to overcome them will make all the difference.

Start by putting all those bad relationships and dates behind you. That's all in the past and you can't do anything about them. Think about the future and make a promise to give yourself the time to enjoy the dating process - and try not to take it too seriously.

Here's the scoop: Dating can and should be lots of fun. Keep this in mind and you'll have a much better time than you think.

Successful Dating Guidelines

The key to successful dating is to focus on enjoyment and friendship. Date with the intention of making a new friend rather than expecting to meet your life partner. You'll have more fun and way less anxiety.

SIX WAYS TO MAXIMIZE YOUR FUN

1. Approach dating as not just looking for an important relationship, but as enjoying life.
2. View dating as a chance to expand your circle of friends.
3. Find innovative and unusual ways to meet people. Join a gym, volunteer or take up a sport.
4. Take one positive aspect away from each date. For example, “I liked their values, their sense of style or sense of humor”. Pick a quality of characteristic that you would like in a future mate. This benefits you, even if you aren't attracted to that person.
5. Become the person you would like to date. Use your experiences as an opportunity for personal growth.
6. Embrace your single status. You have the freedom to do anything you want, meet everyone you want and learn everything you can about yourself.

Keep dating light and casual, especially early on. On a first date, go out to lunch, drinks or brunch. This keeps the expectations and pressure lower. If you decide to see each other again, you know your date is interested in you.

It's that simple.

As you get to know each new person, you'll have an opportunity to “try each other out” and see if the relationship might work. Pay attention to what you're discovering. As you progress on your dating journey, you'll be exposed to new types of people and new ideas. Even if a date doesn't develop into a full blown relationship, you're still growing and learning as a human being, which makes life interesting and exciting.



If dating still sounds daunting to you, keep reading. You'll find many suggestions throughout this book that will make it easier than you imagine.

Breaking “The Rules”

The first and only rule we have here at It's Just Lunch is throw out all your old ideas and rules about dating!

Dating is not about playing games, using clever tactics or making sure you come out on top. There are no winners and losers as far as we're concerned.

While other guides might instruct you to hold out, be mysterious and develop a game plan to trap your mate, we don't believe in that. Those games don't work in the long run and they're exhausting. If you present a fake exterior and try to be someone you're not, you deny yourself the opportunity to be liked for who you really are. And that's what real love is all about - just be yourself from beginning to end.

DON'T:

Play games

Play hard to get

Pretend you're not interested

Wait three days to return his or her call

In other words, don't utilize any other ploy that seems like game playing.

Dating Karma

It's true - what you put out is what you get back! Whether you believe in the whole principle of karma or not, the idea behind it makes sense. If you are constantly thinking you need to lose weight, you need to gain weight, you're too old, not successful

enough, not smart enough or any negative thoughts about yourself, chances are you won't attract your love match. If you believe there are only jerks and losers out there, these are the people you will meet. If you think dating is a complete waste of time, then it will be! Negative thoughts produce negative results. It becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy. If this sounds like you, then make a promise to yourself to stop RIGHT NOW! When you catch yourself in a negative thought, give yourself a little pep talk. Stop that thought and turn it into something more positive. Give yourself a compliment about one of your strengths. You get the idea.

Would You Date You?

Think about it. Would you? This is a very important point. Unless you become the type of person who you're looking for, you won't attract the type of person you seek.

Have you ever known men or women who aren't necessarily the most handsome or pretty individuals, but they never lack dates? What makes them so attractive? You guessed it: self-confidence, and it's contagious. It also screams sex appeal. These people are glowing with a bright, friendly, fun attitude, and they have a genuine interest in others. They're happy with who they are and appreciate what they have to offer. This positive energy attracts an abundance of people who want to meet them.

Self-confidence produces the most amazing results.

Here's why:

It's sexy!

It allows you to relax and have fun.

It means you take rejection lightly and not personally. It makes it clear that you are not desperate.



It means you're content with yourself, your looks and your life - which only makes you more attractive.

In order to gain self-confidence, you must first learn how to love yourself. It's important that you recognize and appreciate what's great about you - and accept what's not so great. If you don't love and accept who you are, how do you expect someone else to?

Do the Following for Yourself

Try these five boosters to improve your self-confidence and sex appeal:

Stop measuring yourself against others, especially celebrities or models. Recognize that you are a hot ticket with a unique set of qualities and attributes. If you believe you are special, you will attract a partner who appreciates what you have to offer. Tell yourself, "I'm great just the way I am" or "I'm exciting" or "I'm loveable". You are! This kind of pep talk helps imprint positive messages into your brain and eventually will change your outlook.

Remember the very characteristic or behavior that turns one person off may turn another person on. Don't waste your time with people who don't recognize what you have to offer. Learn to love yourself for everything you are and everything you're not. When you like who you are, people will naturally be drawn to you.

Surround yourself with people who treat you with the love and respect that you deserve. If you have people in your life who are overly critical or negative, weed them out.

If you're not happy with the way you look, treat yourself to a new look. Join a gym and build self-confidence. You'll feel like a million bucks. Dress and act your best at all times, because you never know when you might run into someone special.

When you look good, you feel good too.

Step outside your own boundaries. Take a dance class or an improv comedy class, go horseback riding or skydiving. Push through your fears, and you'll find yourself alive with confidence. Finally, date more. As you handle all the different situations you come across, it will reinforce positive feelings about yourself and boost your confidence in your dating ability. Dating is a numbers game.

At the end of the day, everybody could use a little improvement. But nobody's perfect and no one ever will be, so you have to balance your desire to be all that you can be with your willingness to accept who you are.

Get Current With Yourself

Next, it's time to mentally update who you've become since your last round of dating. After all, you've had new experiences that have affected you - so what you want may have changed. To make sure you meet someone who makes sense for the "current you", here are some questions to ask yourself:

1. Why are you dating again? Is it for a long-term relationship, or are you looking to date for fun?
2. What do you have to offer that may be different from the last time you dated?
3. Are there things you want to do differently this time? What are they?
4. What do you hope to gain from meeting new people?

Know What You Want: If You Build Them, They Will Come!

When you're looking for that special someone, you need to figure out who this person is going to be. Knowing what you want and



who you're looking for helps you find the right person.

We once attended a seminar on relationships where attendees were asked to design their perfect mates as specifically as possible. The goal was to create a wish list of all the qualities and characteristics that we felt were important.

It was a great exercise - a lot of attendees realized that they didn't know what they wanted, although they had very specific ideas of what they didn't want. A few months later, the participants reunited to complete the final part of the seminar, which analyzed our results. We were blown away by how many participants had met people who matched most of the criteria on their list. It was as if putting it down on paper reinforced the belief in their mind's eye. Or perhaps by defining what they wanted, they became more conscious of those qualities when they saw them in a potential partner. Either way, the exercise worked for a large number of people.

Visualizing your ideal partner and the relationship you want is a great motivator. Athletes have long understood this process of imagery and will visualize a goal before acting on it. You can do the same with your love life. Give it a shot now! You have nothing to lose.

Close your eyes and picture your ideal partner. Engage all of your senses. How does this person smell? What does he or she look like? Listen to this person's voice. How does it sound? When you kiss, how does it feel? Where are you? What are you doing? Are your friends and family around? How does he or she interact with them? Try this a few times until the picture becomes clear, then take out a piece of paper and make a list of the most important characteristics of this partner.

List about 20 qualities that mean something to you. What values and attributes does this person have? Look over your list and

separate your “deal breakers” from your “ideals”. “Deal breakers” are traits that are non-negotiable, like finding a partner who wants children or is of the same religion (if those traits are important to you). “Ideals” are more about the attributes or traits that you’d prefer, like “ambitious” or “good sense of humor”. By prioritizing which qualities are important and which are ideal, you’ll discover what you are absolutely unwilling to accept and where you’ve got some flexibility.

It’s also good to think about your past patterns in terms of people you’ve dated:

What kinds of men or women have you been attracted to in the past?

Are there common themes among the people that you’ve dated?

Do they have personality characteristics in common?

Are they similar in physical appearance?

How have your past relationships worked out?

Get Out Of Your Comfort Zone

After working with tens of thousands of clients through the years, we have found one piece of advice that makes the biggest difference as to whether people are successful at dating or not:

“Get out of your comfort zone!”

That doesn’t mean let go of your “deal breakers”. And it doesn’t mean you can’t have ideal qualities that you hope for in someone you date.

Obviously everyone has preferences.

But preferences can be limiting if they are so rigid that we don’t allow ourselves to explore new people or new ideas.

Let’s take a look at some common preferences that might keep you from meeting your match.



For Men: Age

Perhaps you are a man who has always dated women who are younger than you. You have learned over time that you are mostly attracted to women who are at least five years your junior.

When you are out in public, it is the younger women who turn your head. You've spent years dating them and you've had both short and medium-term relationships. But nothing lasted the way you wanted it to.

Every now and then, your friends will tell you that they have a great woman in mind for you, but purely based on her age, you decline to meet her because you are set in your ways. It is ingrained in your mind that you only like one type of woman. The trouble is, you've never been able to find someone who feels like the right fit for you. Yes, these women have fulfilled your desired physical wants, but you are still searching for the whole package.

Since you've decided to start dating again, now is the time to evaluate your patterns. Ask yourself how well these patterns serve you.

We always tell our clients, "Now is the time to try new things. You never know who you are passing up by being set in your ways!"

It is time to experience meeting different kinds of people. Get out of your dating box and have some fun. See what it feels like going out to lunch with someone you wouldn't ordinarily consider.

There may be a woman your age, give or take a couple of years, who could make you very happy. Wouldn't that be worth a trip outside of your comfort zone?

For Women: Height

One thing we hear from women on a regular basis is: “He’s too short!”

Many women have strong height preferences for the men they date. But could this preference be keeping you from meeting your right someone?

We have worked with clients who refuse to date a man unless he meets their minimum height requirement. Somewhere along their dating path they decided they are just “not attracted” to men under a particular height.

You might, however, be passing up the opportunity to meet a great man based on one single trait.

Georgie Binks wrote a fun article which addresses this very issue. She says, “I wonder how many women really know what they’re doing when they reject a man on the basis of his height. I’ve heard woman after woman say, ‘He’s nice, but he’s too short for me’. In other words, he might have a super personality, be handsome, lots of fun and have an interesting job, but if he’s too short - forget it. And I’m not talking about men who are extremely short, either (although they don’t deserve to be treated any differently)”.

Two American psychologists did a study in 1987 called Stature and Stigma, written about in *The Economist* by Jonathan Rauch in 1995. In various scenarios, they asked people about their perceptions of short men. In one case, out of 79 women who were asked if they would date a man shorter than themselves, only two said yes.

Being open minded is very important in dating. You may go out with someone who meets your height requirement but isn’t a



good match for you in other ways. If you are open-minded, you may meet a guy who is shorter than your “dream guy”, but is smart, successful, funny and compatible with you in some other important ways. Wouldn't that be worth a trip outside of your comfort zone?

Career and Economic Status

Both men and women have ideas about the kind of career and economic status they want their mate to have. Of course, we all want to be with a partner who can hold a steady job and is financially responsible and secure. These are positive preferences. But we don't want to limit ourselves by having preferences which keep us from being open-minded. Sometimes people respond negatively when they hear someone is in a blue collar profession. There is a lot of common misconception about how much income these types of jobs bring. It is important not to group people together. Treating people as individuals is critical to success in dating and life. You may meet someone with a white collar job who still doesn't earn what you consider to be a good income.

You might be too quick to decide not to date someone based on their income level. Many times we have heard people say things like, “They sound nice but they probably couldn't afford to travel to the places I like to go”. This statement is unfair because you never truly know what someone's financial means are until you get to know them. Or, you may meet someone who meets your economic status requirements but isn't compatible with you in other ways. Ask yourself - what is most important at the end of the day?

According to a New York Times article entitled, “Putting Money

on the Table”, Michael R. Cunningham, a psychologist who teaches in the communication department at the University of Louisville, conducted a survey of college women to see if, upon graduation, they would prefer to settle down with a high school teacher who has short workdays, summers off and spare energy to help raise children or with a surgeon who earns eight times as much but works brutal hours. Three-quarters of the women said they would choose the teacher.

Geography

If Mr. or Mrs. Right resided in your neighborhood or worked in your office building, chances are you would have bumped into him or her already... so broaden your horizons! Don't narrow the search for your mate to specific zip codes. Again, the more open you allow yourself to be, the more likely you are to meet your special person. Plus, with the advent of technology, connecting with people is easier than ever!

Now Get Out There!

Over the years we've met with hundreds of thousands of active daters and heard the inside scoop on just about every dating scenario one could possibly imagine. All of this has provided us at It's Just Lunch with the most up to date, insightful information on successful approaches to dating, which we're happy to share in this book. But the truth is that all the knowledge in the world won't make the slightest difference in your life, unless you actually get out there and date.

Since you've picked up this book, you're heading in the right direction and taking a proactive approach to meeting new people. Now you need to get off the couch, get out there and star in your own dating reality show. Consider these points:



Dating is a numbers game. The more potential mates you meet, the more likely it is that you will find “the one”. If you’re hoping that fate will drop him or her off at your door, think again, unless you have a penchant for delivery drivers.

Working with a team of matchmakers like It’s Just Lunch is the smartest way to meet the type of people that you’re interested in. It means you are choosing to be a powerful force in your own life, not a bystander who leaves things up to chance.

If you’re still hankering after your last love, then your heart isn’t going to be open to meeting someone new. You are emotionally unavailable. Write a note to yourself that reads “single and available” and stick it on your computer. Laugh at yourself. It helps. You’ll get there eventually, just give it time. In the meantime, enjoy being single.

Dating doesn’t have to feel like a job or consume a great deal of time. Like anything that is important in your life, approach dating strategically -- perhaps outsource it to the professionals. When you’re an It’s Just Lunch member, we do all of the work for you. From vetting out your matches, to preparing you for your dates, to taking care of all of the details. All you need to do is show up and focus on the date itself! Dating doesn’t have to take a great deal of time. If you’re an It’s Just Lunch member, we set up your dates so you only need an hour for lunch or for drinks after work.

Okay no more excuses. You can sit back and wait forever or get out there and have some fun!