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Online Dating Tips

Keeping the Community Safe

by Nicola Sloane

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It is vital to remain anonymous until you feel comfortable.

Guard your identity

Whether you're off on your first blind date, set up by a friend or you found your love interest online, your personal safety should always be your number one priority. The following guidelines will help ensure your safety.

Do not drink, smoke or take anything that would impair your judgement and cause you to make a decision you could regret.

Guard your identity. Don't share your real name, personal phone numbers, email address, home address, place of work or any other identifying information while instant messaging or emailing until you have established a reasonable level of trust with the other party. Do not post personal contact information in your profile or username.

Tip: Never post personal contact information in your profile. Don't risk having this information fall into the wrong hands.

Remain anonymous

It is vital to remain anonymous until you feel comfortable. Take advantage of the member-to-member technology utilised on most online dating sites that protects your identity until you choose to reveal it. This technology works on all email and instant messaging.

Tip: If a person provides his or her phone number early in the email exchange, that doesn't obligate you to use it.

Use an anonymous or third party email

Protect your online access information. Use caution when accessing your account from a public or shared computer so that others are not able to view or record your password or other personal information.

Tip: If you share your computer with others, consider disabling your auto-sign in feature if you have linked an auto log-in program.

Protect your financial information / Do not let love rob you blind

Do not give out any financial information, advice or charitable contributions. Beware of someone who mentions how broke he or she is. Also be cautious if they claim they "just got laid off from work", or that their financial adviser "scammed them out of all their money". Beware, too, if someone who offers to send you money.

Tip: Once given your financial information it is easy for someone to gather further personal information about you, including your real name, address, phone numbers etc. They can also "rob you blind".

Be careful when using sexy or inviting names

There are some sites that advise you to use a sexy name but please bear this information in mind when choosing a name for yourself. While using sexual connotations in your email address or user name might get you noticed, it probably won't attract the sort of person you'd like to share a relationship with - or even a conversation, for that matter.

Tip: Do not include your real name or city of residence in your profile or in your user name.

Trust your "gut"

Immediately stop corresponding if you feel unsure or threatened. "If it sounds too good to be true, it probably is." Your parents were right on target with this bit of advice.

Tip: Remember that, when it comes to your personal safety, it's not only okay to snoop, it's your duty so make inquiries.

Keep a record of all conversations

Remember to save your emails for future reference. Some online dating websites do not retain copies of your correspondence and if there should ever be a need for referencing in the future it is important that you have evidence of the communication between yourself and the other party.

Tip: It is important to keep copies of communication records for any harassment and or assault cases, this will provide you with stronger evidence if you ever wanted to press criminal charges or take out an A.V.O.

Block abusers

Block abusive users. Block any member who behaves or treats you in an abusive way and report the behaviour to the website administration immediately. Stop communicating immediately with anyone who pressures you for personal or financial information. You can block and report concerns or terms of use violations from any profile page, from your email or instant messaging window.

Tip: Your involvement will help keep the community safe, fun and enjoyable. Keep this in mind when doubting whether you should report someone.

Always meet in public spaces

Always arrange to rendezvous in a populated, public place. Never meet in a private home (or in a hotel room) or in a remote location. Please keep in mind that the only information you know about this person is what they have chosen to tell you. When meeting in a location that is not a public space you can be placing yourself in extreme danger.

Tip: First meetings are exciting, however, always take precautions and use the following guidelines.

Always tell a friend or family member where you will be and with whom

Always tell someone who you are meeting, where you are going, and when you plan to return.

Tip: Let your date know that your whereabouts are not a secret to your friends and family. Contact your friend or family member before and after the date or ask your friend to contact you at a predetermined time.

Always remain sober

Stay sober. Do not drink, smoke or take anything that would impair your judgement and cause you to make a decision you could regret. If you do decide to drink, refrain from drinking excessively, as any impairment to your decision making can put you at risk.

Tip: Stick to non-alcoholic drinks when meeting someone for the first time. Regardless of the content of your drink keep it with you at all times so that it cannot be tampered with.

Always carry your mobile phone

If you own a mobile phone, make sure you have it with you and that it is fully charged. If necessary, mobile phones can be used to call your local emergency service or police.

Tip: Do make sure to be in area where emergency service is available and know the emergency number to call.

Do not get the person to pick you up

Drive yourself to and from the first meeting. Just in case things don't work out, you need to be in control of your own ride – even if you take a taxi.

Tip: Don't leave personal items unattended. You don't want to risk having personal information stolen.

Do not give into temptation

Stay in a public place. It is best not to go back to your date's home or bring them back to yours on the first date. If your date pressures you, end the date and leave at once.

Tip: If you believe you are being followed to where you parked your car, stop and hail a cab or go into another public place to use a phone and call a friend.

You can come back later with your friend to get your car.

Proceed with caution

If someone admits their undying love for you after meeting only a few times, please "proceed with caution". Lust at first sight is alive and well, but love is, generally, an acquired feeling and this does not tend to happen in a short space of time. Love is a feeling that is earned and built over time and with trust.

Do some investigating

Get to know the other person online before meeting them offline. Use the tools available through online dating sites that protect your

anonymity to get to know someone before meeting them in person. If you would like more information about someone, we recommend using the internet and government resources available to everyone.

Tip: If the other person can only meet or talk to you at odd hours, he or she may be keeping a secret. If this person cannot be honest with you from the start, you cannot count on him or her to be honest in the future.

Be wary of vagueness

Some people talk in circles and answer questions with questions. There are some people who are very private, but if you're about to take your relationship to the next level, this isn't the time for reservation. There could be genuine reasons behind a person's vagueness, but you should recognise that they could be hiding things from you.

Tip: If you talk on the phone and the person you are speaking to talks in hushed tones or "has to go" suddenly, they may not be as single they claim to be.

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