

Why men and women want different things



RULES OF ATTRACTION: If you are seen in a pub in Cork with a friend who is slightly more attractive than yourself, then you are automatically perceived to be better looking by the man across the bar.

Picture: Posed by models

MICHELLE BOUSE went along to a talk by Dr Martin Graff which examined online dating from a scientific point of view and discovered that whether virtually, or face-to-face, love is a battlefield

ARE we looking for love in all the wrong places? Beyond mainstream online dating sites lies a whole new and more specific world.

If men in uniforms are your thing and you're calling out for a hero, there is a dating site for that. If you perceive yourself as ugly (trust me, you're not) and don't want to be punching above your weight well guess what, there is a dating site for that too.

There is even a dating site for married people seeking intimacy from another.

This was a just a snippet of the *How to Find love on the Internet* talk, which was hosted by the Cork Skeptics in Blackrock Castle Observatory. The talk was delivered by Dr Martin Graff and although the name of said talk might suggest it was offering a 'how to' guide for those seeking a significant romantic partner online — it wasn't.

Dr Martin Graff examined a series of questions from a scientific point of view, including: Are there gender differences in attraction? Can you really find love on the internet? How do people actually portray themselves online? Can you have a virtual affair?

Attraction

First, attraction was discussed. We know that physical attraction is important when seeking someone out because, let's face it, we don't want someone that has to put a bag over their head during sex do we?

But Dr Graff pointed out a few interesting facts on physical attractiveness. If you are seen in a pub in Cork with a friend who is slightly more attractive than yourself, then you are automatically perceived to be better looking by the man across the bar. But choose your friends wisely because it works vice-versa too.

A saying that Dr Martin Graff dismissed as a myth was that 'opposites attract'. He went on to say that there was no scientific research to prove that this was the case.

Instead we are attracted to those who are similar to us, unless you are one of Hugh Hefner's girlfriends.

During the talk, Dr Graff illustrated the difference between women and men when seeking potential life partners.

Typically, a woman wants an attractive male, with resources, who wants children whereas a man is satisfied by a lot less — if she likes sex, he's satisfied.

Online success

Can we really find love on the Internet and if so, then just what are the factors that determine whether relationships which begin online ultimately lead to successful face-to-face relationships? According to online research, it depends on certain factors.

The first is the type of dating site they used because the virtual place is a likely indicative of their common interests so, if you are a lawyer and meet a potential date on Lawyers in Love, there is a very good chance you and your date will be similar.

The next factor is time. Couples who went on to marry as a result of meeting on-line interacted with one another virtually for

about two months prior to a face-to-face meeting. The scientific research shows that a permanent strong relationship depends upon knowing someone well. The more we know about someone over time, the better a relationship has of continuing.

And it seems we open up a lot more during the activity of tapping a keyboard, people exchange up to four times more information online than in a face-to-face conversation; suggesting that you can build up a bond with someone online prior to a first date.

Infidelity

Affairs are more common than we would like to think, with 60% of men and 40% of women admitting to pursuing outside of their relationship.

Infidelity is a minefield, what constitutes as cheating?

Cheating is where men and women differ. For men, in most cases, cheating is sexual intercourse with another person outside of their relationship but a woman will also consider her partner unfaithful if he shares personal feelings, a large quantity of time and an emotional bond with another female — as well as sex and physical intimacy on any level.

It's easy then to see why a virtual affair may not be considered cheating by both partners. A virtual affair is where a person in a relationship communicates with a member of the opposite sex for a sustained period of time and the conversation can be of an intimate nature; or in such a way that an emotional bond develops.

So, would you consider your partner having a virtual affair cheating?

There are also websites for people seeking affairs and there is a growing number of them. What is worrying about this trend is it seems that an affair can be ordered as easily as the take away pizza these days.

GSOH

The 'you can get a woman into bed by making her laugh' theory was also discussed in Dr Graff's talk.

He asked the audience if they had a choice between two partners who were equal in all ways but person A was great at making you laugh but they didn't laugh that much when you joked around; and person B, who laughed at all your jokes but you didn't find them funny at all.

The expected result was that women want person A and men want person B. This appears to confirm that while 'GSOH' is more common on dating profiles than the 47% of women who lie in profile pictures, men and women want different things when it comes to seeking someone with a 'GSOH'.

The conclusion of the talk was that men and women are different — in case we haven't noticed. More and more people have online dating accounts but there is nothing as of yet to suggest that relationships that develop online, versus those initiated in the real world are better or worse.

The advice was to keep looking for love, where you base your search is up to you.

Childhood obesity

WHEN anyone in the family is overweight or obese, it impacts on the whole family.

This is never more true than when it's a child or the children in the family. A 2009 'Growing Up in Ireland' study reports that one in four 9 year olds are overweight or obese. The 'science bit' is that this extra body fat causes a whole host of problems for both children and adults, including high blood pressure, increased risk of diabetes and stroke, high cholesterol, depression and low self-esteem, to name but a few. So what to do?

The most important part (and the most difficult) is not to turn your home into a war-zone when it comes to food and the food choices being made by your child. How we talk to our child about weight and being healthy needs to be in a positive and empowering way. Remember that as parents we're the role models and we need to practice what we preach! We can't expect the children to eat vegetables if they don't see us eating them! Parents do their best and want the best for their children. Getting to grips with healthy eating as part of a healthier lifestyle for the family is the first step on the ladder to being a

healthier family.

What to do....

1. Watch how much high saturated food & high sugar foods are in the house (Top shelf of food pyramid). We know ourselves that treats are like beacons in the kitchen ... once we know they're there, it's very difficult to resist.

2. Allow treats but mind the portion. 100 Calories worth of treats daily is what's advised, so choose wisely. Find healthier treats that they enjoy, their favourite fruit perhaps.

3. Make sure that you're not serving your child the same portion you serve yourself as an adult. The Safefood Website:

www.safefood.eu have a very good section on 'Reducing Portion Sizes'. A 5 year old is much smaller than an adult and so only needs to get about half the amount an adult does. The Food Pyramid provides a guide about portions from 5 years of age to adult.

4. Encourage fun family physical activity. 60 mins daily in total is a good level for everyone in the family! This doesn't all have to be done together. Walking to the school or shop as well as PE, any training we do all adds up to the 60mins. And you can do more than 60 mins if you want!

5. Monitor inactivity

from tv, mobile phones, laptops, games consoles, etc. 2 hours Screen time daily is the maximum recommended.

6. Mind how we talk to children and to other adults in front of children. The words we use can be unintentionally hurtful. We know this from anytime we've been on the receiving end of insensitive comments particularly about our weight. We can't change yesterday but we can work on today and make changes for tomorrow.

7. Encourage your child to help you with preparing the family meals and praise them for their part in helping the family to be healthier. A child is valued for so many of their wonderful qualities, like being kind, doing well in school, looking after their pet, helping their friend and we need to ensure we let the child know that we see them and love them.

To help you take this step, here's a list of some useful websites:

www.safefood.eu
www.indi.ie Fact Sheets on Children's Health
By Ruth Reidy, Clinical Nutritionist/Dietitian, M.I.N.D.I.

www.nutrition4u.ie;
42 Eastgate Drive, Little Island; Tel: 087-2385230