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Dating Advice for Single Parents

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If you're a single parent and trying to date it can be tough. Thinking about dating and having the time to date sometimes seem as far apart as East is from West. Questions run through your mind... Am I being selfish? Do I have the time? Who is going to watch the kids? It's been so long. Do I even know how to date?

It can seem overwhelming and look like a far away dream if you didn't have anyone to guide you. Lucky for you, we've picked the minds of successful single dating parents and put together an action plan that will make dating fun, safe and rewarding.

The Action Plan

Your action plan is made up of five simple steps. Each step is designed to build upon the previous one. The goal is for you to spend time with quality dates that respect you and your situation. You will put your plan on paper. Why? Writing takes your plans out of the world of thought and brings it into the world of reality. Get your paper and pencil and let's begin!

Step 1. Assess your situation.

Do you really have the time to date? As a single parent your activities revolve around your kids. Caring for a even a single child is a full time effort. If you have more than one child your workload multiplies. If you decide to date you'll need to create flexibility in your weekly plans and plan in advance. It takes time to find love. If you want love...make the time. Write down the time available each week that you think you can devote to dating. Schedule it.

Step 2. What do you want?

What type of relationship do you want? Are you looking for short term relationships? Long term? Committed? Non-committed? Do you have a time line? Biological ticking clock? What type of person do you want? Tall? Short? Loves to travel? Stay at home type? Christian? Family oriented? Good family relationships? Be honest with yourself. Consult your heart and your head and create the profile of the perfect person for you. Don't leave anything out. List the qualities you admire. The type of family you want them to come from. The color of their eyes etc. The more specific the better. Make it as detailed as possible. A crystal clear target is much easier to hit than an out of focus one. Cupid has the arrow. Help him out and provide the target. Again, write it down. Once you have a clear picture of what you're looking for it's time to find them.

Step 3. Find a date.

There are three places you will go to find a great date. The first and the easiest is a dating website. Yes there are thousands of websites out there. Some great. Some not so great. Read a review of the best dating websites and choose the ones that meet your criteria and join 2-3 of them. Why 2-3? To increase your chances of a match of course. Having your profile/ad in 2-3 dating website substantially increases the odds of a great match. Successful daters play the odds in their favor. Another advantage to dating websites is that you meet people 24 hours a day. Seven days a week. You can view their profiles and if you don't like what you see...delete them! Pick only the best.

The second place you'll go for dates are your family and friends. They know you and your life circumstances.

They only wish the best for you. Let them know you're looking for a date and what you're looking for (pull the profile sheet out). Let them look for you. The odds are that you'll have a date within a week. Two weeks tops.

The third place to look for dates is anywhere that you happen to be. You never know where love hangs out. Be open to new experiences and new people.

Step 4. Separate prospects from suspects.

If you followed step three you'll be getting a number of potential dates. The task now is to separate the good(prospects) from the bad(suspects).

As a dating single parent your first job is to protect yourself and your child from anyone that would do anyone of you harm. Safety will be your first screen. If you know the persons full name check to see if this person is a sex offender. Your state may have a registry where you can check for free. Better safe than sorry.

If it's a dating website candidate spend time to get to know the person via e-mail first. The rule is give just general information (no phone numbers, last names, addresses etc) until you get to know the person over a period of time. Minimum two to three months. If they can't wait that long then move them to the suspect file and delete them.

If this is a blind date from your family and friends get ALL the information you can on the person. This would be a

good time to write down some questions that you'd like to ask your potential date. Nothing like being prepared. Talk on the phone first. Ask questions to determine if there is some broad based compatibility. Do you like the same things? Dislike the same things? The closer you can match these the happier you'll be.

Once you've done your homework it's time to go on a date. WooHoo!

Step 5. Date!

The first rule is be yourself. The second rule is have fun. If you can follow those two rules you'll have a great time. To ensure that you have a safe and fun time follow these rules.

- 1) Always let someone know who you're going out with. Where you'll be going. What time to expect you home.
- 2) Bring your cell phone. If you don't have a cell phone. Get one. They're cheap. No reason not to have one.
- 3) Always meet in a public place for your first meeting.
- 4) Arrange a date dump call. Arrange for someone to call you mid way through your date. Prearrange a code word to let them know that your date is going well or not. This is your opportunity to dump your date if you're bored to tears.
- 5) Consider having your date somewhere you can talk. Like over dinner or maybe a lunch date. Avoid movies on the first date because it doesn't allow you the opportunity to get to know someone. At a movie you get to sit silently for two hours listening to the person behind crunch popcorn and slurp their five gallon bucket of soda. How fun is that!

Being a single parent doesn't mean shutting your heart down. Despite having your kid(s) fill every minute of your waking day you still have a longing in your heart for that special someone.

If not for love...maybe just for a good adult conversation over a warm cup of coffee. Good luck in your dating!

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