

# flirting with love

Helpful  
hints for  
those  
looking for  
Mr. or Mrs Right

**W**ink, wink! Hey, you! Yes, you. Cupid's calling. Can you hear him? No?

Well, get up, turn off the TV and open your ears and eyes to love's possibilities.

"I've never heard that waiting and hoping for something to happen works," says Amy Rolando, owner of Table For Two, a Twin Cities based dating service with a branch office in Rochester. "Just start talking to people. It's one of those things, if you're in a bookstore, just ask somebody a question: 'Have you ever read books of that author before?' If you're in the grocery store looking at fish: 'Have you ever prepared salmon before?' Just start a conversation. I met my husband that way."

OK, so you're off the couch, you're ready to ask questions. Now what.

## •Get thee thy twin

Start looking in the right places. Contrary to the popular cliché, opposites don't attract. Proximity does.

"We have this conception that if we go out in the world," says John Johanson, professor of psychology at Winona State University. "But we more than likely have met the one in only in the nearest drive."

Demographics typically predict love-sweet-love, he says. That means people of the same age, background, level of physical attractiveness and social competence attract each other. "Opposites" who attract typically are opposite on secondary characteristics, like having a dominant vs. passive personality, Johanson says.

## •Get thee an opener

So you've found an appropriate potential date. Now break the ice...just don't make a fool of yourself in the process.

"Most (people) aren't very good at what they're trying to do," says Dan Engelburg, head bartender at the Aquarius Club.

In his work, he's privy to lots of attempted hooks and too-often stinkers. Stinkers include trying too hard, bad pickup lines, rehearsed pickup lines, not taking "no" for an

answer and acting like a major goofball.

Hooks? Being yourself. "I've always just been myself and it seems to work really well," Engleberg says. "It works for everybody I know. I don't know anybody who's ever gotten a woman or a guy off a pickup line."

## •Get thee socializing

Where do you use that inborn hook? The obvious answer is a bar or night club.

But, you also can try a ski club, book club, bowling club, any club, suggests Nancy Hengeveld, a licensed psychologist and adjunct instructor at Rochester Community College and Technical College. She met her husband through an amateur dance club.

Rolando also suggests asking your friends to set you up with available singles.

Then again, you can join a dating service and leave the pre-screening work to the professionals. That way, you needn't waste months finding out you date, for instance, wants children or whatever else

it is you require in a mate.

Now that you've found L'Amour Righto, let nature take its course. You know, smile, lean in, talk.

"(Flirting is) a universal body language that people have, it doesn't need to be taught," Hengeveld says.

You've got the flirting down pat, now perfect your communication skills. That means learning how to communicate your positive and negative feelings in an assertive, respectful way, and also having empathy and the ability to see your partner's viewpoint.

"It's really crucial if a romantic relationship is going to continue," Hengeveld says.

Your final (or next) step? Thank cupid. Or, get off that couch and try again.

"Keep the big picture in mind and take a chance," Rolando says. "People worry too much about what the outcome is. If you've never asked someone out before, just do it. What's the worst outcome? If there is any type of negative reaction, just chalk it up to it wasn't meant to be and move."