

111010L101V10E10010101
 011001010BOY1T0ES101♥

"THE PASTA THEORY OF ONLINE DATING"

I believe in the Pasta Theory of Online Dating: Throw enough singles up against my profile, and someone's bound to stick.

Since you never know when or where your person will show up, go everywhere, do everything, meet everyone. And to increase the odds, right there in your own home, deep inside the magic land of Mr. Computer, is the biggest collection of dating talent ever thrown together in one place: the Internet. Oh sure, you'll still get your frauds and your fakers, maybe even a real fakir, which is an oxymoron of sorts—but then again, so is the term "online dating." What are we supposed to do—hold each other's mouse? Kiss screens at the exact same moment, making sure my Pacific Standard Time is in perfect accord with your Central?

Let's say as many as 35% of these virtual love connections are defective, consisting of 12-year-old prankster boys, lonely married women in spongy rollers and some very talented housepets. That still leaves a stunning number of worthy eligibles who just might be available for sharing a love byte or two. Just as long as you take those love bytes with a grain of salt.

Yahoo Personals! now claims anywhere from 8 million to 15 million daters. Match.com claims about the same, or "Whatever Yahoo says, only more." Looking at the glass as half-empty, that's a lot of competition. But looking at that glass as if it were a crystal ball forecasting a rosy future with your one and only, that's a whole lot of wonderful.

When online dating started back in the dark ages of IRC chats, blue bars and screeching modems, statistics at that time gestimated that for every 350,000 male computer nerds, there were approximately 2.67 women. I was one of those 2.67 women and yes, I was very popular. (That unfortunate .67 of a female had a rough time at the start, but I hear she finally found her better third and has been living in the Bermuda Triangle ever since.) I found I needed a whole lot of patience and a big dose of humor to survive the onslaught. But I got smart—I stopped pouring my heart out to virtual strangers, postponing a 3D meeting until I thought I was sufficiently prettier. Waiting to meet Him only increased my anxiety, making me far less attractive than if I'd had my cuppa Joe

with him immediately. It wasn't any picnic for the guy, either—he couldn't possibly measure up to the fantasy love god that he'd created, and that I'd gently blown out of proportion.

So let's get real. Women, take your mice and get to clicking. Forget about warbling another chorus of those bloated old blues, "But I'm too fat to date." If you need to, then commit to taking off whatever extra poundage that might be holding you back. You might get away with ten pounds, but fifty? No weigh.

Men, nix the fears about balding. Haven't you heard? Bald is the new "hot." If the American Bald Eagle can make a comeback, so can you. Or, if you must, wear your baseball cap backwards, but know that you're not fooling anyone. At some point, you're going to have to take off that cap. Sure, if you're clever, you can hide your love handles for awhile ... but bald actually glows in the dark.

I confess that I'm also guilty of telling a gray lie or two. I used to claim I was ten years younger than my chronological age. It was a bit tricky to pull off when I was 14, but ever since I became older than the size of my waist, it's been all downhill. Literally.

So let's agree to get a bit closer to the truth, especially by choosing pictures that honestly resemble what you look like today. Cutting and pasting a model's picture onto your site is a waste of time, not only for you, but what about that poor model? The point is to make that picture work for you. Let it show off your great smile, your eyes that sparkle with charisma. Hit us with your own unique brand of intelligence, humor, spirit.

But you must post a picture, or else no one will respond to your ad. Sans pic, you're stating that you're either the Elephant Man, or that when others slather their faces with sunscreen lotion, you opt for burlap. And please, no pictures of yourself as a baby. Unless of course, you are a baby and if so, make sure that when you go out on a date, you'll be able to get a ride from your mom.

The excuse, "I need to stay anonymous" doesn't fly. If you're married, you shouldn't be doing this. If there's any other reason for hesitancy about posting a pic, e.g., you're a wanted felon in forty states, you really shouldn't be doing this.

No matter how reclusive you are, have a friend take your pictures. Do-it-yourself snaps in front of your own digital camera simply don't

work. This results in a look somewhat akin to an alarmed, hypothyroidal rabbit lit from the chin up. If your argument is that you're purposely going for a Jack-O-Lantern, separated-at-birth theme ... then Internet dating may not be for you.

According to my sister, "Love happens on the way to doing something else." As if love's a runaway bus that'll flatten you all over the asphalt when you're not looking. She makes it sound as if we're walking targets, victims of Cupid's hapless arrows that might literally take us out any moment.

Sorry, but if I'm going to be taken out, I want some say in the matter.

Online dating gives us plenty of say. And plenty of choice. Whether you ascribe to low carbs, no carbs or the Pasta Theory of Online

"It wasn't any picnic for the guy either he couldn't possibly measure up to the fantasy love god that he'd created and that I'd gently blown out of proportion."

Dating, the important thing is to stop talking about posting a profile *someday* and simply do it. Step up to the plate, dinner or otherwise. Take a little love byte. Hell, it's not even fattening.