

Dates & nuts

What's he thinking? The “brofriend” perspective on modern dating

By Stacey Rowe



If you were to Google the definition of “bros,” my male friends—let’s call them Chad, Michael, and Murray—would hardly fit the descriptions of obnoxious frat boys chugging beer out of red Solo cups. In contrast, they have great jobs and are well-liked, affable professionals in the community. They’re also involved in many extracurricular activities such as volunteer groups, committees, and boards.

With all of these great qualities, one might think these guys have it easy. However, each has taken a few turns at driving the struggle bus when it comes to dating in the digital age. I learned more about this after Michael and I decided to have a Tinder contest. Upon examining my matches on the dating app back in April, he informed me that the male experience on Tinder was quite dissimilar. He then made a bet that he would have significantly fewer matches in a twenty-four-hour time period than I, and what do you know? He was correct. In fact, he only received one, and the woman turned out to be what he referred to as a “robot”—an online dating spammer cleverly disguised as a very attractive woman.

While it’s common knowledge that

women tend to fare better in quantity of interested suitors on dating sites and apps, I didn’t fully grasp the male point of view until the four of us sat down to chat about it over cocktails. Chad, thirty-one, recently started dating a lady he met online through Match.com. He used online dating several years ago and recently decided to try Match again after an abysmal two-day stint on Tinder.

Asked what he typically looks for in an online profile and a relationship, Chad said, “An outgoing and easy going personality—someone who likes to stay busy being out and about at events and yet still manages to make time for a relationship.” He indicated that the relatively new concept of meeting up for “Netflix and chill” was not of interest. Prior to meeting his current companion, he was generally looking for pictures and content that conveyed evidence of outside interests and specific details versus a bland list of interests. Turnoffs included excessive selfies, too much makeup, pictures of groups of two or more people, and kids. “Without any caption,” he said, “you can’t tell if it’s her children or her nieces and nephews.”

“I have no idea how to hit on women,” said Murray, thirty-four, “and I really

don’t know when they are hitting on me. I’m good when women make the first move.” He admits that going to a small school limited the amount of interaction he had with girls, but today he prefers meeting people out or through friends versus online. He said, “I don’t use the sites. I tried eHarmony for a year and it was terrible. I get along with people easily, so I got a million matches, but none were attractive and they all wanted babies right away. And Plenty of Fish was just a mess of sad, sad people.” Murray likes intelligence and a person who embraces passions and shared interests (e.g. music, film, and art) while still maintaining independence. Above all, he values a positive outlook, easy conversation, and how a woman treats others. “I’d like to see a live version of Tinder,” he said, “like a singles’ dinner event. If both parties hit it off, they could exchange information afterward.”

Meeting women through the course of his day-to-day routine comes rather easily for thirty-nine year old Michael, who has become adept at assessing a woman’s interest level and when to stop wasting his time. “I ask whether or not the girl is single,” he said, “and if so, I ask for her number.” Michael said he is more successful in person than online and he attributes that to his personality. “I think Tinder is shit. No one’s online dating profile does a person’s true personality justice.” Even so, he recently reluctantly signed up to try Match. Profile qualities that quickly diminish his interest include not smiling, lack of full body pictures, limited information about hobbies or interests, using buzzwords or clichés, and last but not least, “gold-digging” women who provide income specifications for their potential match. Michael is currently seeking an open-minded and outgoing woman with similar values, an appreciation for family and children, and a love of all things Rochester.

Asked about final thoughts for others on dating, Chad said that it’s a great opportunity to meet new people. “Don’t give up and put judgments aside. Online dating is awkward, but it’s the chance to introduce yourself to someone who may surprise you.” He also recommended reading Aziz Ansari’s book, *Modern Romance*, for those who are discouraged and are in need of a laugh.

“Everyone wants to put you in a box,” said Michael, “so, you’re either a player or a relationship guy. Until I find someone who is relationship material, I want to play the field. I don’t think there’s anything wrong with that.”

Murray, whose brother messaged him during the course of our discussion to announce that he had just proposed to his girlfriend (and that she had accepted!), ended on this positive note: “Be happy with yourself and find people who are happy with themselves. Look for someone who enhances your life versus completing it.”

Well played, bros. [585](#)

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