

Dating Decoded: The Nitty Gritty with Nicole

Scenario:

My name is Megan, I'm 41 years old. I am tall, attractive and very personable. I have been out of the dating scene for 2 years and recently decided to try Match and arranged a date with a clean cut guy from Bucktown. We met at Starbucks for coffee. When he saw me, his face lit up and he gave me a hug. We spoke for 1.5 hours. However, by the end of our meeting his hug was weak and he didn't ask me on a second date. I felt a little confused about this and recognized that many of my past dates have ended in the same way. I decided to send him an email politely asking him what didn't work for him. He wrote back with a blunt "thin is in". He tried to soften the blow by explaining how he used to be overweight as a child. I guess this was his attempt to show compassion but he simply came across as condescending and cruel. I felt like I had just been punched in the stomach.

Here is where I should give you a little background about my present physical state - during the past 2 years, I have put on a few pounds. I tend to be an emotional eater. Food provides a soothing effect when I'm depressed or struggling in life. I went from a size 8 to a size 10. However, I'm very fit underneath a thin subcutaneous layer of fat. I am a certified personal trainer and am often told I look like Katherine Heigl.

How should I feel about this? Why did his face light up initially upon meeting me? Why did he talk with me for 1.5 hours if he wasn't attracted to me? What should I do? I'm afraid to go on another date because I feel like I'm not eligible for love.

Nicole Answers: Dating Decoded, the nitty gritty...

First of all, I want to acknowledge you for having the courage to break your pattern of isolation and get back into the dating saddle. It's unfortunate that your first experience had to be unpleasant but there is a lot of valuable information to glean from your encounter.

He lit up at first because he was looking at your face and your face was pleasing to his eyes. He spoke with you for 1.5 hours because he recognized that you were a kind hearted person. Most people would rather sit and talk with a nice person they're not into than up and leave and be classified as a total jerk.

A person will tell you everything you need to know about him or her in the first 10 minutes of meeting. You just have to know what to look for. Here are some foolproof tips when it comes to decoding your dating situation. **1.** Watch their eyes. Are their eyes gravitating to your trouble spots? Be aware that if you are self conscious about your body, that insecurity can attract negative attention to the parts of your body you're ashamed of or trying to hide. If someone is "bodychecking" you in a disapproving way, remember, it's not about you. Their preferences stem from their private logic. Their opinions don't dictate your value or desirability. **2.** Look for their micro expressions. These are the facial expressions we cannot control that betray what we're thinking. A perplexed brow, a frown or smirk may indicate disapproval. **3.** Check in with your gut. Is your gut telling you this person is judging you negatively? If so, politely say goodbye and good luck and move on. **4.** Did he or she ask about you, your family or your opinion? Someone who is self absorbed (or married) or not interested in a relationship with you will not inquire about you or discuss topics beyond the superficial. **5.** Did he or she make plans to see you again? Someone who really likes you will not keep you guessing. Beware of those who say "we should go out again" or "I definitely want to see you again" and then don't call you. These individuals may be engrossed in dating lots of people, have an existing relationship or are looking for a bigger better deal. **6.** Most importantly ask yourself "How does this person make me feel?" Listen to your intuition. It's always right.

Next Steps...

First of all, don't be discouraged. Match is an excellent way to meet a huge number of people in a short period of time but it can often be a Players Paradise; a bar scene in Ether. In other words, don't expect to catch a delicious Orange Roughy when you're fishing in a shark tank. So what's the good news Nicole, you ask? The good news is: Armed with the knowledge of what you



The beauty of being single is often overlooked in our couples-centric society. Being single means you are free to do whatever you want, you are not subjected to the turmoil and heartache of divorce (the divorce rate in America is presently 50%), you are only responsible for yourself and if you have decided not to have children, you can take as long as you like to find a mate that truly loves and honors you.

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don't want, you are one step closer to finding a mate who knows how to create a meaningful connection with a woman of substance (you!). Thankfully, you weren't your date's physical ideal. If you had been, you may have made the mistake of dating him. You dodged a bullet, my Dear.

Secondly, ask yourself why you are frequently encountering men who judge you. Remember that you are the common denominator in these encounters. Take a closer look at your beliefs about love, your value and what you deserve. Look at the patterns of behavior that consistently bring you the same results. Do you feel worthy of love? How do you feel about men/women? How do you judge yourself? What are you projecting? Why is it so difficult for you to see how wonderful and powerful you are? Know your M.O. (Mode of Operating).

Finally, decide that you are looking for a mate who wants you, really loves you and accepts you exactly as you are. A mate who "sees" you and would never take the risk of offending you. Try other methods of meeting new people to increase your chances of finding a quality partner. Join a group of like minded people on meetup.com, attend church if you're into spirituality, get involved in community events, volunteer for charitable organizations. Positive action will bring you closer to finding love. You are closer than you think.

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The belief that beauty can only exist when a woman has perfect features, youth (under 30) and a stick thin body is a phenomenon unique to American Culture. Men are not exempt from harsh cultural standards as their desirability is determined by height, financial status and material possessions. Let's work together to bash these limiting beliefs.

