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Tired of 1-976 Numbers?
Here's A New Approach for the Snugglebunny Search

Unless the numerous store displays around town have been lying to me, it's rapidly approaching Valentine's Day. And since it is so, I'm sure that there are plenty of folks out there who will be "celebrating" the day all by their lonesomes and feeling miserable. For some of us, the whole rigamarole of finding that "special someone" is a royal pain -- getting dolled up, going to bars, socializing, and the like is so intimidating that loneliness seems preferable to risking rejection.

It doesn't have to be this way anymore!

An associate of mine one told me that if you don't like the game, change the rules. And in a fit of inspiration, it dawned on me that this axiom doesn't just apply to cards, but the romance game as well. And with that, I figured that all that us lonely types have to do is change the rules to fit our strengths, and happiness will follow. So anyone suffering from a lack of confidence should read on, and perhaps these tips will help you find Ms/Mr Right:

Visit the Red Cross: Blood drives have got to be the most underused method of meeting people out there today. Just think about it, people: you go in and there's dozens of others in the room either waiting to get bled or already have the tubes in their arms. It's a captive audience, and all you have to do is manoeuvre yourself into an ideal area (most likely the sofa or chair closest to your target) and shift into gear. There's nothing for either of you to do during the bleeding session, so conversation seems to be a logical activity, wherein you can gain some ground (and think of the opportunity for creative come-ons: "so, type O negative, huh?"). It's the perfect set-up: when your target is getting drained, they're hooked up and can't run away from you unless they want to leak plasma all over the room, a complete plus. Another positive is that by the end of their session, your mark will be dizzy from the loss of blood, thus clouding their judgement and making it more likely that they'll agree to go out with you later.

Hit the local immigration offices: Simply dress up really nice and assume the role of an immigration officer, pick a target and get to work; describe yourself as their "personal liaison to Canadianization" (or some equally pompous, bureaucratic title) and escort them around town, take 'em to lunch, and tell them to contact you if there's any concerns (of course, emphasize that "concerns" can include everyday stuff like the sun going down at night brings out the werewolves or the dust collecting on their shelves is really radioactive and you just happen to have a decontamination kit). Knowing a language other than English is not necessary for this ploy. In fact, unilingualism may be more to your advantage in the short term. Of course, if your mark understands English, you may have some explaining to do.

De-toxification centres are a gold mine: The real trick here is to get past the guards and nurses. But once that's done, it's merely a matter of creativity - if your mark is having withdrawal symptoms, claim to be an apparition of someone who will help them get clean and stay there (the well-timed use of a small-powered firework will add dramatic effect) then come by a few days later when the drying-out process has begun. If they're already de-toxing, follow the steps set out in the immigration scam, only change your title and expect to speak English.

Of course, these schemes are not guaranteed to work. Plus, I accept NO responsibility should anyone actually give 'em a shot.

- Ross Williams, who hopes his Russian mail-order bride will arrive any day now.



Valentines, Schmalentines

It's that time of year again, when, to quote the cheesy/sleazy Tom Jones: "Love is in the air". We're all feeling a little more mushy and lovey-dovey toward that special someone in our lives, making plans for a romantic candlelight dinner, thoughts of sugarplops dancing in our heads (oops... wrong holiday). This soap-opera scenario is hardly the case for the majority of the population, however. Sad, but true, the feeling of l-o-v-e does not live up to its universal status. Valentine's Day is not all candies and roses, especially if you're single and find yourself alone and lonesome this Saturday night. Yet, not to fret, there is no need to mope and feel like a dope.

Whether or not you have a significant other in your life should have no impact whatsoever on your feeling of self-worth.

This weekend I encourage you all to be your own valentine and get to know yourself a little better. Not to sound like a self-help novelist, what I am suggesting is that you spend some time by yourself and sa-

voir in the solitude. Learning the art of enjoying one's own company can be a truly happening event. It's a scary world out there some days, and if you can be independent and be your own best friend you'll spend a lot less time, wasted, searching for someone else. After all, the best things always happen when we're too busy not looking.

So, go ahead and do what you like to do, and do it with no one, and for no one, but yourself. Take a bath. Go for a hike. Snuggle with your dog/cat. Crank up the stereo and boogie by yourself in the basement. Buy yourself some fine chocolates and eat them all by your damn fine self. And, if you do have a sweetie near and dear to your hearth, by all means give 'em lots of love and affection; likewise, if you've got your eye on a certain hottie, now's the time to throw way those stinkin' inhibitions and make that bold first move. But, above and beyond all that, do try and love yourself a little more. Your heart will thank you in the end.

XOXO,
Cupid

Personals

WANTED:

White House interns for various positions. Must be willing to work weekend and evenings. Media ignorance a plus. Frequent raises. Send name, number, and measurements to "Bill", 1600 Pennsylvania Ave, Washington, DC.

NAGANO-G.M.s?

I WILL WOUND FOR MONEY!

Want the Olympic gold? Need the opposition eliminated? My resume speaks for itself: Smyth, Linden, Yzerman, all knees, all hurt. Willing to travel. Terms negotiable. Call "Rick" in Phoenix.