

There's More to Life Than

SEX

On the surface, the gay community can seem overly sexual. This is partly because the most visible parts of the community are those parts that promote themselves the most—the bars, phone sex lines, major parties, bath houses, internet chat sites and the like. They advertise regularly on billboards and in all the major gay publications and there is always a heavy sexual emphasis as they know that will attract clients to their businesses.

Gays and lesbians that aren't pursuing sex as a primary objective don't often know where to go to look for a serious relationship and so they go where everyone else goes—to those same bars, clubs or internet sites. Unfortunately this can leave them leaving a bit disappointed or can just slowly draw them into a very sexualized lifestyle.

However, just as greater prominence and acceptance of the gay community has led to better portrayals of us in society, it has similarly led to the creation of more companies that cater to our needs. One such company is the Entre-Nous Network which has been operating out of Toronto for the past three years and have expanded into Vancouver (among other cities). This company is a matchmaking service for gay men and lesbians that, unlike the above organizations, screens the pursuit of sex out of the equation altogether. If you are looking solely for sex, you will be politely declined any further involvement with them.

The process with Entre-Nous involves an initial meeting, in person, with a consultant. In addition to screening for how serious you are, the company will do a full Relationship Development Analysis to ensure that you, like the rest of their clients, are stable and secure—they research

your interests in religion, affection, romance, spirituality and have you sign an affidavit declaring that you are giving honest information (you can be turfed out for lying about anything). After that, a real live person will go through their database to find other clients who appear to be a match for you.

They will agree, as per your contract with them, to introduce you to a set number of people and will follow up with you after each meeting to see how things went. Future dates will be adjusted and refined based on how the first ones go. They may also provide some coaching on things like communication skills along the way.

Like any other way of meeting a potential mate, the process is not without its flaws—it doesn't happen over night and it is inevitable that one or more of these

dates many just end up being a great friend. As with anything else in life, you probably won't get it perfect the very first time. However, it is definitely a better alternative for those that really have no interest in the sexualized environments where gay men (especially) and women typically go to find a mate. If nothing else, everyone you meet will be someone who is pre-screened to be stable and looking for a serious relationship. The helping hand from someone along the way may alone make the difference.

The most visible parts of the community, while serving a purpose, are certainly not the only way to meet a future life partner. If you've gotten a little tired of these alternatives, or were never into them in the first place, it may be time for you to try a different approach. Perhaps Entre-Nous can help. **▼**

