

EIGHTY-NINE per cent of single mothers are "up front" about their kids, telling romantic interests right away about their children before the first date.
SOURCE: OkCupid.com



MORE THAN half of men (52 per cent) bought someone they were dating an expensive gift because they hoped it would lead to sex, compared with 23 per cent of women.
SOURCE: Harlequin Romance Report 2007



MIND & BODY

metro TOP FIVE

... true stories of awkward sex moments:

1. Falling off the bed.
2. Being unable to remove a condom cause it's stuck.
3. Dating a med student and having him try to examine you during sex.
4. After having sex, your partner says, "So, you weren't joking about being a virgin."
5. Giving your partner a high-five after sex.

— KASIA IGLINSKI/METRO TORONTO

Boost for gay dates

Despite the stereotypes of gay men, Mike has never been into the bar scene.

"I'm simply not the outgoing type," he says, asking me to only include his first name for fear of making his private life too public. But after a 10-year hiatus from the dating scene, this shy 37-year-old was itching to find someone to build a life with.

Chatrooms and online dating sites — another often used hook-up arena — weren't his style either.

"I didn't want to waste my time with someone who wasn't going to tell me who they are," he says.

For Mike, the ideal would have been to meet someone through a friend, but in the end it was Entre-nous Network, a same-sex match-making service, that helped him meet his partner who he has been with for two

DATING jungle

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years now and will soon be moving in with him.

Patricia Ross, a client services representative with Entre-nous Network, believes the legalization of gay marriage and the current research to support the good parenting skills of gay parents are helping Canadians become less ignorant of gay couples.

"Gay couples are really no different than straight ones, it's really just a partner of choice that varies." Ross, who has been with Entre-nous almost from its inception three years ago, says one of the biggest chal-

lenges of gay dating is where to meet a partner.

"Nowadays with society ... our wires don't cross," says Ross. "We walk into

an elevator and somebody starts talking to you, you look at them like they're nuts. It's tough with opposite-sex dating, it's even

tougher with same-sex dating because walking down the street you wouldn't know if someone is gay or straight. A lot of people

really aren't going to walk up and ask."

Through a screening process both over the phone and in person, Entre-nous tries to find out what somebody is looking for and what their past relationships have been like before matching them up with people from

more online

For more on Entre-nous, go to www.entrenousnetwork.com.

Compensation upon completion of study.

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their database. If, after hearing about a potential match, both clients are open to an introduction, their numbers are exchanged and the match can take it from there.

"If there was something that didn't sound right on either end then we would cancel the introduction and (go back to the evaluation stage)," says Ross. "One thing people don't focus on enough is the personal side of their life. We focus on our career and our home, but we don't often pay attention to certain patterns that occur (in

our dating life). We use feedback from clients in order to create a learning curve to find out what their true preferences are."

For Mike, it took three matches before finding the man with whom wants to spend his life. For others willing to give such services a try it may take more. "Just be sure to ask all the questions you have and find out how things work," says Mike.

After all, we could all afford to spend a little more time making sure our dating lives find their happy endings.

Sex, intrigue may be behind bad relationships

What is it about love that makes us say and do things we wouldn't normally do?

I'll get personal, in a minute.

And how is it that when we love somebody, we sometimes don't see who they really are, and often-times find out only too late that love has made us blind?

One of the hottest songs on the radio these days is by Senegal-born soul singer, Akon:

"Nobody wanna see us together/ But it don't matter no/ Cause I got you. Cause we gon' fight/ Oh yes we gon' fight/ Believe we gon' fight/ Fight for our right to love yeah. Nobody wanna see us together/ But it don't matter no. Cause I got you."

These lyrics got me thinking — at some point almost everybody becomes

relating

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involved in a relationship that's not necessarily the most healthy. And even though other people may try to shed light on the situation, we can't see past the love we feel.

Yeah, absolutely, I've been in relationships where my family and friends could not, for the life of them, figure out what I saw in that person. Some tried to tell me, some tried to show me, and others simply opted to support me while letting me know how they really felt.

What was it about those particular guys that kept me so attached when clearly they weren't meant for me? I guess a combination

of factors.

In general, for some people, I would say it's pure chemistry. You know, the sex is great, and well, the sex is great. That's a big draw for a lot of people. Huge.

For others, it may be an insecurity. You may feel like this relationship has been long overdue, and you deserve to be in a relationship. Your thoughts can start to run away from you: If I walk away from this person, will I ever find someone else — anyone at all?

And in other situations, it may be just the fact that you are so different from

the other person that you're intrigued, mesmerized even, and then find yourself trapped like a fly in a spider's web.

Love is complex, and relationships are complicated and take work at the best of times, even under the best of circumstances.

It's in our better interests, and that of our families, to find a partner with whom life can be as easy as possible.

I'd love to hear from you readers whether any of you have ever been in a relationship that either you knew was unhealthy, or

that everyone else seemed to know, and told you, but you didn't listen. E-mail me with your stories and perhaps we can find a common thread as to why we do what we do, and more importantly, how to untangle ourselves when we get caught in these situations.

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