

## Ice-Breakers: Tips for Reaching Out

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So after creating your profile and browsing the profiles of some other singles, you've found a few women who seem to have many of the interests and personality traits you're looking for in a partner. So—what now?

Unlike the “real world”, online dating doesn't give you access to the universal cues of attraction, such as prolonged eye contact or suggestive smiles. Instead, you're forced to express your interest through the written word, which can be challenging for some people. Below are some tips for breaking the ice and making a favorable “e-impression” on a prospective partner:

- **Make it personal.** Many online dating sites have something equivalent to a “wink”—a generic way to let someone know you're interested in them. It's easy to see the appeal of these for the sender—there's no risk of saying the wrong thing, and because you haven't really put anything out there, there's much less fear of rejection. But for these same reasons, a casual wink doesn't have nearly the same impact as a personalized message. If a woman's profile has piqued your interest, take the time to send her an email telling her why. Your message will be much more likely to attract her attention than a general thumbs-up from some other guy.
- **Keep it short and sweet.** The goal of an introductory message is to get the woman to visit your profile to learn more about you. It's not the place to tell your life history, list all your goals and dreams, and catalog what you're looking for in a partner. Compose a simple, breezy message letting the woman know you liked her profile and would like to get to know her better. You'll have plenty of opportunities to strut your stuff in your follow-up messages.
- **Save some time.** While it's always best to include a personal angle, you don't have to reinvent the wheel every time you reach out to someone. Start by creating a simple paragraph to use as a template, and then tweak it to address the person you're contacting.
- **Get material from her profile.** You don't want to come across like a stalker, but it can be very effective to include some subtle references to items from her profile. After all, she put them in there for a reason—and nothing is more attractive to a woman than a guy who expresses a keen interest in what's important to her. For instance, if she noted that she's a big Bengals fan, you might casually mention that you were at their home game last Sunday.

Most importantly, relax—and remember, the odds are in your favor. When you approach a woman at a bar or restaurant, you have no idea if she’s single, looking for a relationship, or even in the mood to talk. The main advantage of online dating is that everyone’s there for the same reason, and there’s no “on the spot” pressure. You can send your ice-breaker with absolutely no risk, and if she’s interested in getting to know you, you’ll hear from her. It doesn’t get much easier than that!