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Online Dating: How will the amount of pictures in your online dating profile determine how successful your relationships will be?

Online dating is a growing phenomenon which has gone from the obscure in its onset to a now ever normalized dating strategy. Though there is still a great deal of stigma attached to the notion of meeting someone ‘online’, especially in some countries, it is becoming more of a standard thing as increasingly more people join the dating game as more venues such as datemyschool.com or tinder are added.

A great deterrent from online dating is the fear of meeting someone who might be a ‘faker’ or someone who is a potential threat. There are many online horror stories out there that are sensationalized with the news outlets of today. This makes people very wary of what they might encounter online. This is one of the reasons why pictures make up such an important part of the ‘good online profile’. A person only gets so many words and so many pictures to come across as ‘normal’ and it is a widely conceived notion that pictures are way harder to fake than words.

Dating sites themselves advise their users to use as many pictures as possible. They use statistics showing that profiles with more pictures are considered more frequently than those with few or no pictures. Eharmony shows its users the advantage of numerous pictures with data from previous customers.

Although the dating websites themselves are already have a huge market share, there are separate growing industries associated with online dating . Some people are now ‘profile counselors’ and are paid, sometimes a great deal of money, to ensure that a profile portrays the person to the best of their ability. It doesn’t end there though, there are also photographers who are exclusively geared towards providing people with the best possible profile pictures. A photographer in London claims that her clients rankings often soar after she has helped them with their profile pictures.

Looking through the information available on online dating, it turns out there is somewhat of a science associated with making a profile. Certain words should not be used, grammar should be checked and most important of all, pictures should be carefully considered. More than just the picture itself, the question is what the picture portrays other than you. A picture says a thousand words and many of those words have nothing to do with you and everything to do with your environment. Potential dates are looking to understand you through your profile, to see if you would match. Thus, a lot of weight is given to the context of pictures. The science says that pictures should reflect different environments that portray different sides of your personality. It also says the pictures should be taken in different poses, apparently no one wants to look at the same picture with different backgrounds, pictures should also include at least one full body picture.

One of the ‘aftereffects’ of many pictures is the probable lack of disappointment. Many online daters who met online say that they are not happy with the way in which people are not completely honest on their online profile. While the pictures are considered one of the hardest parts to fake, they are still used to portray people in a more positive light. Although this is totally justifiable seeing as no one would want to present themselves at their worst, it also leads to dates who feel cheated when they meet in person. An old picture which portrays you a couple of pounds lighter and with more hair, you could say that you aren’t lying, but in a way you are. People expect what they see, which is why many claim that it is better to be completely honest on the profile. That way, when meeting in person, you can simply meet what you expected instead of having your standards crushed.

Online dating is increasingly used as a tool because of its simplicity. Although many people go against it saying that it makes people ‘lazy’ when it comes to dating, so that they don’t even have to shower to meet someone new, it also lets people systematically weed out ‘applicants’ they don't even want to consider. In this way, online dating is simply a tool to begin the relationship. This is why I think that pictures in this ‘early phase’ of the relationship are incredibly important.

The online profile is used as a foundation that the daters will then build their relationship on. If that foundation is shaky, there is no way that it is going to work out. Thus, I believe that the more honest a person is in their representation of themselves, thus including various pictures, the more of a chance the relationship will have in the future. If the couple starts out already having to ‘settle’ for less, or other, than they expected, the trust is already semi-broken.

With this new study showing that online relationships are more doomed to fail than ‘normal’ ones, I began to question the long-term success of online dating stories in general. Since pictures are such a big part of the online dating process, especially for some of the online dating tools such as tinder, I expect a strong correlation with how forthcoming, i.e. how many pictures, a person is.

A further measure I’d like to take into account is the type of pictures that are presented. Many face shots of the same thing are known to be less effective than more varied photographs, I would like to somehow take that as a measure into consideration. Background, theme and setting are all more or less revealing about a person. I would like to know how truth, portrayed through photographs leads to what I think will be more lasting relationships.

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