

PROFESSIONAL ADVICE

Denver Life asked some candid questions of **Michele Fields**—a Denver-based matchmaker who's successfully created more than 300 matches. **Michele the Matchmaker**, baskin10@earthlink.net 303.756.8106

ETIQUETTE & ATTITUDE AT THE BEGINNING

DL: What activities are conducive to meeting a good match and where are some places (Denver-based) you recommend singles look for other quality singles?

Fields: Restaurants, concerts, parks and local social clubs as well as activities such as volunteer work, hobbies, classes (dance, adult learning) and visits to local attractions such as Denver Botanic Gardens and The Denver Art Museum. These are all tried and true options...but any of them are just options. It depends on the person's comfort level. There are no guarantees with anywhere; it's timing mostly and luck.

DL: What are your top tips for the very beginning of the dating process (for instance, what things to discuss on early dates)?

Fields: Discussions early on, depending on how you've met, should be light and fun—no debates on serious topics such as religion, politics, abortion and pre-nups. If you've met through some type of online profile, you will have most of that anyway (if it is asked on the profile) so early on you are really just looking for the chemistry connection.

MIRROR, MIRROR

DL: Since you've been successful in creating more than 300 marriage matches, what were the commonalities in these couples (for instance, readiness to date, acceptance of partner's imperfections, etc)?

Fields: OK here's the meat of it...all of the couples who married were average to above average in appearance, realistic and open-minded. The women were not gold diggers and the men were not sugar daddies. They followed my suggestions, i.e., shaving off moustaches, losing weight, whitening teeth, tweaking their style within their comfort levels. But most importantly when they jumped to conclusions about someone, they would listen to me when I would rein them in, clarify, point out that they were jumping to conclusions and were too narrow in their preferences. They also followed my advice to not second-guess whether the other person would be interested. I advised them that it is up to the other person to decide their interest, not them.

DATING DOLDRUMS AT ANY AGE

DL: How do men/women in their 30s, 40s, 50s find the right partner? What challenges are unique to these age groups and how would you suggest overcoming them?

Fields: With some of my clients who are widows/widowers, if they had a great marriage, they will compare everyone to their spouse. Their preferences can be narrow so I try to open those up. 40+ are funny...the women call me and say I don't want some old guy who is a couch potato; the men call and say I don't want a woman my age who is out of shape, old looking and a couch potato. Right away I correct their misperceptions...yes, some people are those things, but these days many people are NOT. My women 60+ are in better shape and more interesting and active than the younger ones. The men as well. If a man calls and wants someone 15+ years younger I tell him I don't play that game, use the Internet. My matches are age-appropriate. Lately, I've had many women call and say they are dating younger men and I tell them the same thing. With younger daters, they typically have not thought out what they want, need and are appropriate matches for them. One thing that never seems to change from 20 to 70, both men and women want fit, healthy, good-looking people. Good-looking being relative to each person's taste.