Finding a partner [1]

Dear Alice,

I don't know whom to contact or if I should contact a professional. I am a 30 year old male, and I want to have a relationship. I find that when I try to approach someone, I can't seem to. I am not sure whether I should seek professional counseling or not. Please help.

Answer

Dear Reader,

Fear not, you're definitely not the only thirtysomething (or twentysomething or fortysomething) with similar concerns. Pinpointing a potential partner can be a very challenging process, but there are ways to make it a little easier (more of this in a bit). A first step to consider when looking for love is to see if you have a good, healthy relationship with yourself. Yes, this may sound a touch corny, but it's worth thinking about (even for those in a romantic relationship). If you're happy with yourself, then you're more likely to project a positive image to others. This, in turn, could entice others to get to know you more. If you don't feel so great about who you are as a person, approaching others can be a challenging proposition. If this is the case, then contacting a mental health or health promotion professional to help you explore what you want and develop a more positive self-image [2] might go a long way towards helping you achieve your romantic pursuits.

If you think you're doing okay, then reaching out to a professional may not be necessary. Another way of meeting your challenge of approaching others is to hang out with people who already have interests similar to yours (i.e., professional, social, political, athletic, religious, etc.). For example, if you like art and music, perhaps a lecture or performance at your local museum or concert hall might open the door to more approachable encounters. Similarly, you could sign up for a course or activity that interests you. By doing so, you could get to spend some time with folks who have similar interests and goals. And after all, aren't these similarities also components of successful relationships? And, don't forget to pass the word about your interests on to your friends. It just may inspire some matchmaking. Finally, you could always consider online dating options.
Still want more? Take a gander at the related questions for more tips! In the meantime, take things one day at a time, a strategy that tends to relieve some of the pressure that you could be putting on yourself. Enjoy the freedoms that singledom offers and investigate what makes you happy. Who knows, in the process, you might end up tripping over someone very special.

Alice!
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