

# Dating in the digital age

DR NIKKI GOLDSTEIN



It's nearly Cupid's favourite time of year. But instead of love just being in the air on February 14th, it will also be floating around online. Here's how to harness the internet and score some points this Valentines Day.

### Go old fashioned

Emails, tweets, Facebook messages, texts and Snapchats should complement – not substitute – a card, present or flowers. Sometimes, traditional romantic tools work best. Of course you can connect with your 'special friend' electronically, but just send a thoughtful gift first.

### Take the plunge

Valentines Day is the perfect opportunity to send an electronic message to someone you can't stop thinking about, but have never had the courage to act on. Often there are people in our online networks that are not completely involved in our 'real' lives, but we're intrigued and we look for excuses to break the ice and get to know them better. What better excuse than wishing them a happy V-Day and suggesting a drink date?

### Tone down the bragging

If you're a loved-up romantic, just be mindful of those who are flying solo this Valentines Day. By that, I mean avoid posting a million photos of your partner, presents, flowers and dinner. One photo is acceptable, so choose wisely. Anything more than that and you'll be branded as an oversharer. The fact is, no one cares as much about your relationship as you!

### Switch off

Are you surgically attached to your phone? Do you carry your iPad around in your handbag? If you're a hyper-connected person and in a relationship, treat (and surprise) your partner by turning all electronics off for the day. As much as technology enhances our lives, it also comes in the way of our time with loved ones. Time is truly the best gift you can give.

# STOP!

## In the name of love

EMMA KIRK

Thanks to the Tinder phenomenon, certain online dating faux pas have become far too common. Just like any other dating forum, social media dating can be a tedious experience with its fair share of highs and lows. If you want to find a great woman, there are a few things you absolutely should *not* do – unless of course, you want to get the dreaded flick, block or delete.



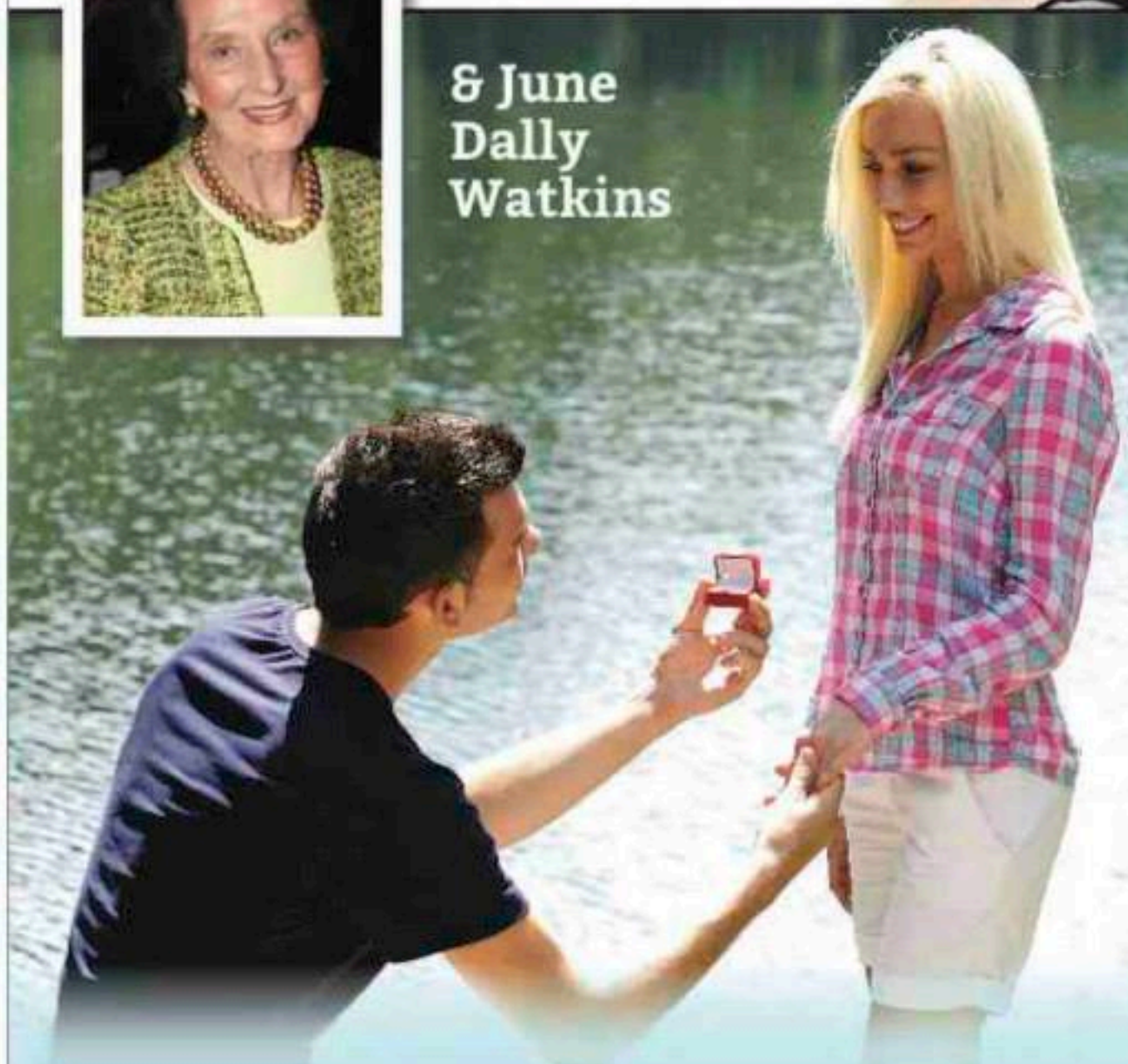
away from you. Simply select a decent head shot of yourself and you'll get much further.

1. Lie about your age. If and when we decide to start chatting to you, we will eventually work out if you're tacking on a few extra digits or worse, taking them off.
2. Post pictures of just your puppies. Most online dating apps are based on visual cues. If you like what you see, you can give them the green light (or tick) and pursue a conversation. So if your profile photo is a snap of your puppy, that's not much use to us.
3. Put up family photos. Everyone has a past, and for some people, that includes ex-wives, ex-girlfriends, and even kids. However, seeing as your profile is being viewed by a bunch of people you've never met, it's best to save the happy snaps – and the conversation about your children – until you know the person a little better.
4. Post photos with other girls. The problem with this one is that women will spend their time deciphering who the girls are, meaning their attention is focused
5. Post wedding photos. See points 3 and 4. Leave the discussion of your marriage and/or its breakdown for a private conversation.
6. Upload shirtless photos. Most women love looking at fit bodies – but there is a time and place to flash your guns, and it's not on Tinder. After all, isn't it better to leave some things to the imagination?
7. Put up mirror or gym selfies. Unless you want to be perceived as a poser or worse, self-absorbed.
8. Post more than one photo of your car. It's great that you own a nice set of wheels, but quite frankly, the majority of women don't care. We want to get to know you, not the car you drive.
9. Mention past lovers or dates early on. Again, there are certain aspects of your past that do not need to be brought up in the present. All we'll be thinking is, "what's in your baggage?"
10. Push the line of decency in private chats. In other words, don't be an online predator. If you are on social dating sites purely for sex, please go elsewhere.

# Rules of ENGAGEMENT

with Emma Kirk

8 June Dally Watkins



Many formalities from years gone by don't mesh with today's society, but having class and social decorum is never out of fashion.

Case in point: proposing. When it comes to asking for someone's hand in marriage, the protocols invented so many years ago still stick.

Miss June Dally Watkins says proper proposing etiquette hasn't changed over time.

Unsurprisingly, the traditional tactic – "Will you marry me?", as he is on one knee presenting the ring" – earns the tick of approval.

"It is still very courteous for a male to ask his partner's father for his daughter's hand, if the father is available."

She also advises men to be completely, absolutely sure about how their partner feels about spending their lives together.

If there is a sliver of doubt, put off popping the question.

According to Watkins, a delayed response or straight out "no" will be embarrassing to both parties – especially if they are out in public.

"If the proposal is in front of a

group of people or cameras, he should be sure she is happy to accept."

While some brides are beating their partner to the question these days, Watkins believes men should take the lead.

"I don't think it should be acceptable for a woman to propose to a man."

"But females do seem to be taking over. Watch out males!"

Interestingly, brides brave enough to ask their man to meet them at the aisle do not have to get their future in-laws permission.

But – and this is a big but – if the man has shown no interest in marriage, do not try and

force him into it. Instead, consider moving on.

"If he is not indicating he wants to join her in marriage she should

withdraw from the relationship before she is too emotionally hurt."

In a nutshell? Make sure your partner will say yes before you plan the proposal, and keep it simple – the commitment is even sweeter when there are no bells and whistles.

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