

# Playing with Matches

*Fired Up about Getting Burned in Cyberspace?  
Yeah, Me Too...I Only Lasted 12 Hours.*

*Turns out finding your match has everything to do with finding yourself.*

I was curious when match.com launched big in 1995. I logged on to take a look at the male pool, but never really pressed *go* on setting my profile public because I feared that I was just too visible in the public eye. I was voyeuristic, I guess you could say – content to watch from the sidelines while everyone else went fishing for love. As time went on



Jami Appenzeller. Photo by Church Street Studios

so did the stories... “I met him on Match and we’ve been married for three years.” “I met the love of my life on Match and she’s amazing.” It goes on and on. Each personal story is as compelling as the next and it makes you wonder: *What about me?* The idea of your match – i.e. the lover you were destined to have – being matched up with someone else just because you couldn’t do it. Well, that’s just plain tragic. So what’s a gal to do?

The almost sci-fi concept of having a magic computer find my Prince Charming seemed a bit too good to be true at the time – a little unreal and impersonal. The world of online matches is littered with serial daters and jaded toe-dippers (checking to see if they are still able to attract suitors as a quick self-esteem boost). My advice? Just be honest. Humor and truth win big in Cupid’s virtual world. Oh, and be ready when you receive ninety-two matches in under twelve hours, or conversely, only two. Put your ego aside as well as your doubts and plunge in.

## Backing Up

For years I was all about anonymity. I held my privacy sacred and really focused on raising my kids and building a career that was rewarding. I put a lot of sweat equity into establishing “my brand” – what ever that was. Turns out, “that PhillyFIT blonde” is actually a pretty well known character in the Philadelphia metro area. I shied away from online dating because I didn’t want my worlds to abruptly collide; I wasn’t ready for my “single coming out” online. Call it denial, instinct or even fear – there was something in my gut that just wouldn’t allow me to meet other like-minded singles in my area. I just couldn’t bring myself to hitchhike on the information superhighway because I did not want to provide my information. It was that simple. I was hesitant, skeptical, and just not able to go forward even though those TV commercials were so incredibly persuasive. I just couldn’t go through with it.

A decade ago, my internal hard-drive was saying no. Instead, I met a few friends – but not “the one”. I didn’t have time to play the game, kiss the frogs, do the “interviews,” and quickly learned that trolling through possible matches is somewhat cathartic, especially if you’re going through your own dry spell or rocky relationship. Online dating portals provide people with an escape, a chance, an opportunity to fix your ego, even if it’s in ten-minute spurts. For many, this is okay. For me, it’s downright overwhelming, but my desire to meet someone who was able to teach me new things and open my eyes to new experiences outweighed the stigma and pitfalls of potential matches birthed in cyberspace.

## Upgrading My Operating System

Recently, I won a trip to a beautiful B&B in Virginia (yes, the place for lovers). Funny thing is, I brought one of the loves of my life (the other two being my sons, Derek and Darion) on this trip, Savannah, my daughter. It seemed like a cool mother-daughter getaway opportunity and in hindsight, it truly was. We explored museums and mansions and got to know Orange County, Virginia. We even stayed in the nicest suite on the property, which just happened to be the Bridal Suite. There were numerous opportunities to dine with the other guests at the B&B and so we met some really awesome folks during our stay, but mostly everyone wanted to fix me up with their son/cousin/lawyer/neighbor after learning

that I was there with my daughter and not with a significant other. For years others have been trying to introduce me to men. But what they didn't realize was I did meet men. I just wasn't "ready to meet them". So I always chose to go home alone.

I guess in my dream, the white knight just rides up to me on horseback and throws me on the horse and we ride off into the sunset. His aunt Lola never really introduces us. It just happens organically, this fictitious love. I blame Disney. Not one of those princesses was set up on a date and certainly none of them would be caught dead surfing the Internet for her dream guy. So yeah, my expectations of love, marriage, and romance in general was somehow rooted in the disillusionment of Disney, my daughter's favorite TV channel. Something had to give, because the reality of the clock striking fifty was hitting me hard, and this Cinderella had to change the way she operated. **For the first time, in a long time, I was thinking about opting for the navigation bar in lieu of the corner smoothie bar.**

During the car ride home from Virginia, Savannah fell asleep and I began to wonder if maybe I was ready – ready to

take the risk and tell the entire plugged-in world that I was single and ready to be matched up. Maybe I should have said yes to those folks back at the B&B who wanted to fix me up. Maybe it was time to step waaaaaay outside my comfort zone and take a risk by exposing myself – my single self – to the planet as we know it. That night, when I arrived home, I couldn't get to my laptop fast enough. It was a total and complete epiphany. It was time to get over myself and just make my profile public (yes, with a picture). I felt that the reward was greater than any of the humility I might experience by giving up my identity. I finally realized that I needed to stop being so guarded and take a risk. The urge to post my profile was so profound and powerful, I felt like a young schoolgirl on her way to the big dance.

### MegaBites to My Sanity

"Who has time to look at all these matches," I asked a good friend over organic fruit smoothies? "I mean really, between e-mails and texts, when do people have time to go through ninety-three possible matches," I asked a bit naively.

"Jami, your profile was nothing short of a masterpiece. You might as well have said that you'd cook men steak wearing panties and a half top in their man-cave, while they 'read' Playboy," she joked.

Maybe it was the blonde hair, blue eyed, slim cliché thing or maybe it was the honesty of my profile, but she was right; the responses were overwhelming. I didn't know what to do, and I just didn't have the time to throw against looking through profiles. So, I was on Match for twelve hours. That's it – twelve hours. I did meet a few men who piqued my interest, but one turned out to be the mentally unstable, creepy stalker type, so that really left a bad taste in my mouth for online dating. Though I was very (almost too) honest when drafting my profile (which was done at the speed of light by the way), others are not as forthcoming and well, yeah... lie. I did meet a really great guy and I've for sure made a great new friend. But that's it.

### No Attachment

In hindsight, for me going public on match.com this time around was more of an experiment than anything else. I did not rely on 'winks' to validate my involvement and I never viewed it as a silver bullet to cure once-in-a-while loneliness. It was just a fun thing. I saw it as a vessel to lead me to new experiences. I was in search of someone who could open my world to new experiences and not fall into my daily wants and needs. But what I realized is I really do love my life as full as it is now, and if I were to add a great guy someday, that really would simply be an added blessing, but it's not a necessity.

My hope is to broaden my horizons and find that something, be it animal, vegetable or mineral, that blows my hair back, makes me smile, and enlightens

(left) Jami, (right) Lisa Nocera



me. I just know there's a little bit more to life than loving, being a mom and 9-5 working gal. I have no attachment to online dating services, and so I am not for them or against them. If I had to give any piece of advice to my fellow female friends who are looking for love via a keyboard, I would say make sure you're ready... really ready. Why? Because you're going to get hit with questions from cynical people who simply can't believe that you're using Match as a dating tool. You will have to explain away the impetus of your decision. "Why are you single?"

I'm not reliant on match or any other dating site and I think that's a healthy way to approach the notion of finding love online. Much like the effects of say green tea, I think it's something that people should try, but not depend upon.

## In The Cloud

Yeah, that's right, cloud nine is actually a table for one at the present time and that's okay. Defining cloud nine is tricky at mid-age simply because you almost have to reinvent yourself – decide who you are and who you want to be as a maturing adult (gulp). And while you're tweaking, discovering, and adjusting, you also have to be mindful about appearance, brain functioning, bodily changes (getting to the gym gets harder, right?). And while you're doing all of this – while you're trying to be the "you" you want to be, you also have to attract "the one". Oy, that's a lot if you ask me. So, instead, I'm just focusing on the little things that make me happy and if Mr. Right happens to show up with a glass slipper (either at my front door or on my monitor), I

## Letters To The Publisher



Hey Jami,

I always enjoy your editorials (Publisher's Page you personally write), but this one was spot on! (Jan/Feb 2016 issue). I came up with my own great expression about life: "The most predictable thing in life is that it is unpredictable." Thanks for a great magazine. Great work you do for all of us in the Fitness industry.

*Enamullah Khan*

Jami,

Thank you for your Jan/Feb Publisher's Page, "The moment you realize that your life's more than half over"...it was just the thing I needed to hear today, thank you!

*Brandy Miller*

PhillyFIT Magazine,

My clients LOVE this magazine...makes many different people of different walks of life feel like fitness is accessible and that is so important.

*Peter Andrew Danzig  
Founder, Theatrical Trainer*

Jami,

For inspiring all of us with your commitment to keeping Philly fit, thank you!

*Drew Braun*

Jami,

Just read your January/Feb Publisher's Page about "realizing over half of your life is over...and what your going to do about it..." Beautifully written. Great job.

*Frank Monticello*

Jami,

Just finished reading the latest Pub Page (Jan/Feb 2016) and it really hit home, resonated deeply...with my own life, and made me smile. I love reading your pages and your perspective, it hits home every time.

*Dan C.*

Jami,

I wanted to tell you I absolutely loved your article in the last eat Philly Fit Magazine about life. I recently lost my mother and its has been very hard. Your article really hits home on the things we go through in life. I admire your strength and determination.



*Sincerely, Theresa Gordon*

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just need to be open to it. My cloud will have a silver lining no matter what. At the end of the day, if the only thing I'm embracing is acceptance of myself at fifty, then I'm really okay with that.

Hey, it's spring! Get out there and enjoy the flowers, fresh air and the gift of warmer weather!

Love,



*This (below) recently came across my desk, and I nearly fainted after reading it. What do you think about this anonymously written masterpiece? Email me and let me know!*



*Dear Future Love of My Life:*

*I know. I should have written before. Forgive me.*

*But I got the feeling that you were beginning to think I didn't exist. But I do. And I wanted to let you know that while I might be as elusive as a unicorn grazing in a field of four leaf clovers, I'm close.*

*I'm around the corner, down the street, on Facebook, in your office, at our local coffee shop, a complete stranger.*

*I made eyes at you once on the subway. I saw you across the room at a party. I swiped you right on Tinder. But it's not our time yet. And I know you're wondering why.*

*It's really not fair that you've had to wait this long, or go on blind dates, endure bad sex, settle for meh relationships, feel misunderstood, cry from loneliness, wrap your arms around a pillow as you fall asleep at night.*

*I'm so sorry, my love. You deserve an explanation. So here it goes. It's taken me a long time to even admit this to myself much less to you, so please know that everything I've written here is true.*

*The reasons we haven't met yet, in no particular order:*

- I haven't thrown out the list of things I think you should be.*
- I'm with the wrong person right now.*
- I'm not ready to be loved unconditionally.*
- Since my life isn't together, I think you'll reject me.*
- I still believe that drama is a show of love.*
- I've been intentionally keeping my head too busy to think with my heart.*
- I need to date more to understand what I do and don't like.*
- I won't be able to appreciate you until life has kicked my ass.*
- I'm too focused on my own needs.*
- I don't know how to create the feeling of home that lives in my heart.*

*Clearly, I'm not my best self yet. Or even myself—I'm still figuring out who that is. I'm pretty sure even if we did meet, you wouldn't like me all that much right now. It's entirely possible that we did hit it off once, and I left without getting your information; or maybe I did get your number and never called because of any one of the above reasons.*

*Be patient with me, darling heart.*

*Know that I'm working my way toward you. So don't spend any more time thinking about where I am or am not. Just keep making your life exciting and full, so when we do finally come together, we can bring each other joy, because we are already happy.*

*I know it's taking longer than you'd like. It's a hell of a lot slower than I could have ever imagined.*

*But I'm here.*

*This is me talking to you. And I'm not going anywhere.*

*Don't give up on me.*

*Yours In perpetuity,*

*The Love You Haven't Met Yet*

*(written by: anonymous)*