

make me a MATCH

a local matchmaker shares advice
on catching a catch

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It was love at first sight. He was on vacation, escaping the bitter February temperatures of Washington, D.C., and I was celebrating the near-end to my long career as a college student. Eight months later, I was boarding a one-way flight to the District. At 22, I was certain I had found the man I would grow old with.

But two years and one broken heart later, I found myself in the passenger seat of a rental van with my mother. I was moving back home to Tampa, and saying goodbye to the man I called my soul mate for three years.

My girlfriends told me it takes half of the time you were in a relationship to get over someone, so I committed to listening to sad music, eating ice cream from the carton and watching really bad chick flicks for the next year and a half. That is, until I logged onto my Facebook account six months ago and saw my ex's status change: In a relationship.

I never considered that he might be the one to move on first. My competitive nature kicked in, and I started asking people to play matchmaker. I joined eHarmony.com. I even enrolled in an art class so I could find another "tortured soul." But I quickly learned that at age 26, the dating game was much different than at 20. I also learned that rushing into a relationship wasn't the best idea I ever had.





Through individual coaching and traditional matchmaking methods, Nancy has helped many Bay area singles find their happily-ever-afters. New emails and letters arrive every day to thank the “modern day Cupid.”

Still, I was frustrated and upset; I had learned that my ex and his new girlfriend were already saying “I love you,” and I hadn’t found someone I liked enough to go on a second date with. My friends were getting sick of hearing me complain and joked that I needed professional help. And while I told them what I really needed were new friends, I ultimately decided to take them up on their advice. So after a few hours of online research, I found someone who might be able to point me in the right direction: Certified matchmaker and life coach, Nancy Wall, Ph.D.

Over soy lattes and bagels, I asked Dr. Wall about finding Mr. Right, Tampa’s dating scene and her

professional opinion on the notion of soul mates.

Q&A

Jen: Is Tampa a good place to be single? I feel like it’s really hard to meet people here.

Nancy: That feeling is global; singles complain in every city. It’s frustrating looking for that right person, no matter where you live. But Tampa’s actually a great place to be single.

Jen: Well, then where can I meet these singles?

Nancy: Meetup.com is a great resource. There are hundreds of

different groups—from ghost tracking to horseback riding. The key is to get out and do things you enjoy, and you’ll meet people with similar interests.

Jen: But I feel like I have put myself out there but I still never meet anyone.

Nancy: Well, you are meeting people; you’re just not acknowledging all of the people you’re meeting. We tend to focus on the negative, so when you say that you never meet anyone, you really mean you haven’t met the right person. Maybe that’s when you start questioning, where am I going, who am I hanging out with, am I going out at all? Why am I not meeting anybody, and what are ways I can go out and make myself available? Tell your friends that you’re available, go to a meetup, do things you enjoy and get out there and have fun. You can meet anyone you want. Again, they might not be the right person, but that person might know someone who is.



Jen: Well, I’m trying to be more open-minded, but I keep going back to the type of guy that’s not necessarily good for me.

Nancy: Sit down and really be introspective and start making a list. Yes, you may be open, but what are your non-negotiables? What are you absolutely not willing to negotiate on cause you know you won’t be happy? They can be things like smoking, religion, things like pets, children...anything that you say ‘I could not live in a situation like this.’ Then go back over that list and say, ‘why is this so important?’ Make sure it’s not based on a previous relationship, and make sure they are really true values for you. Then make a list of preferences; it would be nice if the person played tennis, but that’s really not that important. Remember not to rely so heavily on the physical attributes...yes, chemistry is important; I don’t want to downplay that ever. But also look at the person’s heart—what’s inside that person.

Jen: What do you think about the term soul mates? Does that exist?

Nancy: I think it does exist. It exists in people’s minds—their feelings for the person they’re in a relationship with. I believe there is someone for everyone—at least one person, many people for everybody. But not like, ‘oh that person’s in California or married now, so I’m never going to get married.’ ■

◀ Nancy Wall, Ph.D. is one of only three certified matchmakers in Florida. Known to her clients as “the headhunter of love,” her job is to go out into the community and find Mr. or Ms. Right. To learn more about Nancy, or to try out her services, call (813) 907-0410 or visit www.TampaBayMatchMakers.com.