



Adventures in Mid-Life Dating

by Jackie Pantaliano

On a first date, would you rather have a date who didn't leave a tip or picked his nose?

Nothing gets a group of girlfriends howling with laughter (or sighing over sweet memories) more than first-date-stories, regardless of whether your last one was decades ago, or last night. And as open-minded as we try to be, there's always that hidden screening process for the important issues - and let's admit it ladies - the not-so-important ones, too. Remember the person you never dated again because of the goofy shoes? Would you date that person today? And how do Boomers' dating decisions compare to those of younger generations?

A free online matching service, www.okcupid.com promises "extreme accuracy as long as (a) you're honest, and (b) you know what you want." And their latest survey found out exactly what women want - and don't want - on that all important first encounter.

The following survey rankings gathered from 2,836 women was reformulated exclusively for *Girlfriendz Magazine*, enabling us to compare answers between women under 45, and those 45 to 60.

So take a look at this Q&A, then let us know where you stand in our *Girlfriendz First Date Contest*. (See page 24. You don't need to be single to enter!)

Not surprisingly, the question of whether your date still lives with his parents was not the number one "impolite" question for Boomers. (He'd better not still be living with his parents at our age!) The over 45 group's number one question, "are you on the rebound?" was number two for the under 45s. More Boomers were interested in how much money their date had than the younger daters.

Although we Boomers are the original women's libbers, from these answers it's apparent that our upbringing by parents from a more traditional generation held fast.

When it came to a choice of clothes that flatter your date vs. other options, more Boomers were satisfied that clean clothes were good enough, while the younger respondents preferred flattering attire. Also, more Boomers would plan to have a first date last 1-2 hours, whereas the younger daters opted for 2-3. I guess either we're more cautious or more tired! Or maybe we're better at knowing what we want, and won't waste time with someone who doesn't fit the bill.

A sense of humor was rated number one among both age groups. Responses were also similar regarding how much we usually drink

on the first date, with “nothing” cited the most. In contrast, the Boomers’ second choice among favorite first date activities was wine tasting, which came in fifth for our younger sisters. A picnic was the first date choice of the majority of Boomers, while a movie was the number one choice for those under 45.

The biggest first date no-no for both groups was body odor, but having a wandering eye bothered the Baby Boomers more than the younger respondents who were more disturbed by their date taking cell phone calls. Both groups would rather have a date who didn’t leave a tip than one who picked his nose at dinner! We Boomers and our younger sisters overwhelmingly agreed that we’d rather have our date spill a drink on us than make limited eye contact! Finally, the generations preferred a big talker over the strong silent type.

Best of all, more Boomers said they feel excitement before a first date rather than nervousness, whereas the younger women cited having the jitters. While you might think we mid-lifers would be more nervous, we’ve been around the block and experience breeds confidence. Not only that, many find this stage to be an adventurous time of life, and dating in mid-life can certainly be viewed as another adventure.

Some Realities

While unfathomable to those who are married, some of us will find ourselves dating again due to the death of a spouse or a divorce. According to Sharon Romm, M.D., author of *Dating After 50*, there are 21 million 50+ singles in the U.S., many of whom are embarking on an old game with a brand new set of rules.

Citing statistics from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Romm notes a brand new threat that didn’t exist when many of us were dating the first time around, “AIDS is spreading rapidly among non-gays fifty and older. Of all reported AIDS cases in the U.S., 13% are found in this age group. The problem is especially dire since 50+ heterosexuals are less likely to get tested.”

What about our aging appearance, when many of us feel “invisible” compared to the days when we were the ones stopping traffic? There’s always heavy-duty exercise, dieting and cosmetic surgery, but not everyone has the energy, money or bravery for that. Here’s where our senses of humor, intellect, sensitivity and wisdom hopefully offer more lasting appeal than some young hotties without our depth. (I hear turtlenecks help too!)

There is some hopeful news in that vein says Romm, who references Joel Block, author of *Sex Over 50*, “Research shows that older men focus less on the physical aspects of a relationship and more on the social and emotional perspective,” he notes. “Men become better at romantic relationships, friendships, and social relationships, while women tend to become more assertive as they grow older. The end result is that men and women become more like each other as they age.”

Finally, Romm says “Be brave. Take chances. The second half of your life can be better than the first. Want love? Figure out how to enjoy life, enrich yourself and be loving and you’ll find the person who is right for you.” **g**

Women
18-44 Women
45-60

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If discretion were not a requirement on a first date, which of these impolite questions would you ask?

Are you on the rebound?	2	1
Are you on prescription medication?	6	6
Do you have an STD?	3	2
How many people have you slept with?	4	5
Do you still live with your parents?	1	4
How much money do you have/make?	5	3

Who usually pays for a first date?

You	3	3
Your date	2	1
You split	1	2

What do you most look for in your date's attire?

Designer or expensive clothes	4	4
Clothes that flatter him/her	1	2
Sense of style, regardless of cost	2	3
Clean clothes are good enough	3	1

When you're making plans for a first date, how long do you plan for it to last?

Less than one hour	4	4
1-2 hours	2	1
2-3 hours	1	2
More than 3 hours	3	3

Which attribute is most important to a successful first date?

Intelligence	2	3
Sense of humor	1	1
Attractiveness	6	6
Kindness/Politeness	3	2
Confidence	4	4
Flirtiness	5	5

How much do you usually drink on a first date?

Nothing	1	1
1 drink	2	3
2 drinks	3	2
3 drinks	4	4
More than 4 drinks	5	5

Which of these is your favorite first date activity?

Massages for Two	7	7
Hang Gliding	6	6
Miniature Golf	3	4
Picnic	2	1
Wine Tasting	5	2
Movie	1	3
Concert/Sporting Event	4	5

Which is the biggest first date no-no?

Talking about ex(es)	4	4
Having a wandering eye	3	2
Taking cell phone calls	2	3
Body odor	1	1

On a first date, would you rather have a date who:

Didn't leave a tip at dinner	1	1
Picked his/her nose at dinner	2	2

On a first date, would you rather have a date who:

Spilled a beverage on you	1	1
Rarely made eye-contact with you	2	2

On a first date, would you rather have a date who:

Talked too much	1	1
Didn't talk enough	2	2

Before a first date, which feeling is usually stronger:

Excitement	2	1
Nervousness	1	2

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