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## The WoMan Chronicles #6

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Welcome to the wonderful world of cyber dating. You've dropped your coin into that slot, given that handle a good pull, and now you're standing in front of the ominous machine mouth agape waiting for lady luck to yield her prize. Whether you've decided to post an ad yourself, or are yourself searching through the plethora of ads out there, there are a few things you need to know in order to develop a relationship through such unconventional means as these.

As wonderful as it is, this forum is but a blank page just itching for you to step beyond the limb a little and proclaim yourself a Chippendale's dancer, Prince Charming, or any other facade you'd like to mask yourself in when seeking to impress the opposite sex. Some key advice here, there's no way she'll buy into it anyway, so why not just play up your "truly" good points. Keep in mind that she's also liable to indulge in such bouts of fantasy, and more than likely, she's not a Christy Turlington look-a-like either.

Let's imagine that you've started correspondence with several different fish you reeled in from that cyber pool of love. Due to the fact that women tend to receive many more responses from dating websites than males do, if you've made it to at least the correspondence stage, you're already half way there. At this point, you just have to hold her attention, and make yourself sound desirable enough to actually land a meeting.

### Photo Swapping

One of the first rules when entering into this form of dating is your willingness to the act of swapping pictures. Mind you, this isn't necessary, and sometimes people would rather get to know someone's inner virtues before taking a peek at the outer package. If this isn't you, you should know that it's definitely NOT taboo to ask for a picture. Best that you mask your "need" for one by simply stating your desire to check her out in the form of a question, saying: " Would you like to exchange photos?" or "Would you like me to send you my picture?". Although you may be into looks first, it's sometimes best to resist the urge to demand a picture and opt instead to make it a mutual exchange.

If you do happen to indulge in some pre-date photo swapping, just remember to keep in mind that most people look very different from their photo to real life. It may be a good surprise or a bad one, depending on the photo, but remember that if you really like this person you've been corresponding with, it's important to keep your mind open to possibilities even if the photo is a wash.

Save the :o)

When engaging in e-mail correspondence, it's essential that you remember the context in which you're choosing to start your relationship. Although you should occupy the conversation with interesting information rather than mindless chit chat, it's best to save the heavy topics for your face to face encounter. Even with the use of happy faces or happy wink faces, e-mail is very open to misinterpretation and you could find yourself being read the wrong way while you were addressing a question with what you thought to be a very casual, non-offense response.

### Escaping the Cyber Realm

So when should you start thinking about taking cyber dating into the real world? This is a fragile question as you don't

want to push for a meeting too soon--e.g. give yourself time to make sure she's not a Sharon Stonesque stalker. You also don't want to wait too long--e.g. you've found yourself dreaming about how fantastic, gorgeous, and utterly unreal this girl is given your wonderful e-mail conversation. It's safe to perhaps give her a call after 3 to 4 e-mail exchanges and after a couple of phone chats, you could then move to a date in the physical realm. Due to the fact that it's really easy to get caught up when entering into this forum, it's best not to wait too long to actually meet. Otherwise you're liable to start conjuring up fantastical images in your head as to what this person is really like and you're bound to be disappointed as reality seldom lives up to our fantasies.

There is an odd occurrence which often takes place in many real world meetings with people you've met on-line. It's as if you've suddenly been pulled into this fictional world that once only existed on paper. It's a baffling sort of cyber shock which leaves you unable to recall anything from past conversations, as you're too busy trying to acclimate to seeing this person in 3-dimensional form. Be warned that you should expect some awkwardness when finally meeting that gal you've been cyber chatting with. I mean, it IS a strange sort of experience. Due to this fact, it's a good idea to plan that first rendezvous well.

### Planning an Easy Out (a.k.a. the first date)

As much as you'd like to follow conventional norms and plan a traditional date for your first encounter, I warn against this thought. Given the fact that you've never met this person, have no idea what they're like in the flesh, and there's still the chance that she's some life sucking creature from the dark and seedy confines of cyber hell, best to make your first meeting short and sweet. A coffee shop is always a comfy place to SPOT her for the first time (remember that the more crowded the location, the more arduous a task your exploration for the face in the crowd is going to be). If you make the decision to meet in a casual location first, you are left with an easy starting point from which to make 2 choices. Either A: She's beautiful, fascinating, and you can't believe a person like this was actually found through a cyber dating site and now you want to extend the date by asking her to dinner, or B: She really is the Devil, you sit there just looking dumbfounded at each other with nothing to say, and you can't wait to get this fiasco date over with. Thankfully you decided to just have coffee.

There is of course another occurrence which may develop, leaving you unsure as to whether or not you want to pursue this person. Due to that whole cyber shock dilemma, you may not have had the most profound free flowing exchange of ideas (o.k. so neither of you had anything what so ever to say), although you're still quite attracted to this individual and your e-mail conversation was great. In this instance, give it a second date. Often the first date is so filled with anxiety and nerves that you don't really enjoy your time together anyway.

### Cyber Dating: Your Second Job

There is one last piece of advice I have for those of you who still sit on the fence, wondering if this world is something you want to explore further. If you think that conventional dating is time consuming, you haven't seen anything yet. In the world of internet dating, you not only have to find time to date, but also to engage in e-mail and phone conversation with multiple people, and to endure an endless parade of physical meetings with strangers. Seeking and finding a mate, whether it's for frisky fun or a committed partnering, has to be a major priority in your life for this whole game to work. You have to make yourself accessible or people will lose interest, and you have to be brave enough to face the potential reality that the self-proclaimed goddess you've been e-mailing is actually the goddess' ugly wicked step-sister.

This is the world of cyber love. I admit, it's a gamble. You're bound to run into some real freaks and geeks out there. Just remember that with any big jackpot, one must be willing to take a few risks. There is real potential to strike gold here, believe me! Hey, even the freaks and geeks often have hot older sisters they might be willing to hook you up with!

