DATING 2.0: “Marketing Myself...?”

August 26, 2008 By David Capogna

Call me old fashioned, but the last time I was single, me and my "gay posse" would go to the gym, a bar, dance clubs, or parties to meet other guys. My tactic of batting my eyelashes worked, guys always approached me. That was in the 1990?s, not that long ago. Remember those cheesy Together Dating Service commercials in the 70?s and 80?s?who used those things? Okay, now I?m really sounding old?enough. Now, every
guy has ManHunt Mobile downloaded onto the iPhone! (I?m one to talk; I?m obsessive with my BlackBerry, it?s always at arm?s length, and when I shower I place it in the sink. Someone might be facebooking me from Sweden or the Netherlands, it?s already late in the afternoon there.) For me, online ?dating? was a whole new set of rules, I couldn?t just stand there and look pretty, I needed a ?marketing strategy!? By trade I’m a designer, not a marketer, in fact, the worst selling products I designed were usually my favorites.

It wasn’t my original intention to post a profile; my self-esteem was running in the negative around a year ago. If you’ve read my previous blog, off of my website, you know where I was coming from. The first photo I selected (which I’d fashioned for my website specifically) was a major problem, by itself. I was standing in waist-deep, crystal clear ocean, squeezed into my Speedo briefs, thoroughly drenched after resurfacing from a dive, looking off into the distance. (It could’ve been a cover for a porn movie!) The photo was taken before I was diagnosed with liver disease, and I was on a cycle of steroids, but next to no body fat ? ?cut up and defined,? as they say! Wait there’s more, I also placed type pointing out my flaws, (e.g. ?tooth decay,? ?facial wasting?, etc.) If that wasn’t enough, right in the center of the image it said ?just another steroid clone.? This was way too esoteric for anyone to understand, they needed to read my whole website (and it’s a long one) to comprehend the severity of my illness, how it changed me, and that I wanted to go forward with my life. TMI!!! Even worse, the image was ?false advertising? (e.g. like posting a photo from 15 years ago) which I despise. Not only is that not me physically; but not emotionally either. I had the

audacity to check off ?long-term relationship,? even when I look like a porn star/hustler!

Secondly, I had my website positioned all over the place, in the intro, ?more about me,? etc. Posting my websites so conspicuously, it was like I was saying ?feel sorry for me? or ?I'm damaged goods, love me anyway.? At one point, my intro sentence was ?in sickness and in health?does that mean anything to you???.bitter?! Was I shooting myself in the proverbial foot? What I kept forgetting was that my illness was in the past, a not so distant past, but I can now say it is history. On my facebook profile under religious views it says, ?I believe in NOW.? Obviously I haven't been to church in a while because I'm not practicing what I preach. My last relationship of almost 10 years ended a little over a year ago. In retrospect, when I posted my profile in January 2008, I really think I wasn?t ready to date. On an important side-note, I have much older parents that are still married after 55 years, AND they were high school sweethearts! You know my sense of reality is a little shrewd. (That?s a whole string of blogs in itself.) I still believe the website is very important to me, it served as therapy, both cognitive and emotional, it offers up a lot of helpful information, but most importantly it shows that I survived, and gives hope to others; it now needs to be underplayed but not overlooked.

In the last eight months I've obviously changed my photo to a current one, tweaked and re-tweaked my info, subscribed to new sites, canceled old sites, had a few dates along the way. Some guys I remain friends with, others I don?t; I?ve offended some by my ?HIV+? openness, suffered from rejections, I've been adored and sometimes freakishly worshiped?fundamentally the same crap anyone else has to face online. Until I see an animated Disney movie with an HIV-positive character in it, there ain't no knight in shining armor that's going to whisk me off my feet and carry me into the sunset. Enchanted was such an excellent movie, because it makes fun of itself, it was the fact that you had to be a cartoon to fall in love in an instant. I'll take real life, it?s rough around the edges; sometimes it's not fair, but that makes the journey so much more exhilarating?

XOXO...

Editing by fellow Virgo (born the same year,) go-go girl extraordinaire, classical pianist Dr. Aimee Kilbane

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