

# The Comeback Queen's Guide: 10 Tips to Finding Love Again



As a divorcee and a widow, I have more than my share of experience finding love again. I was single for almost 10 years after my divorce and I'll be widowed 6 years when I remarry this spring. Those years gave me time to heal, time to discover how to be single, self-reliant, and self-confident. Those years also gave me time to rediscover dating from being fixed up on blind dates to the mysterious and sometimes dangerous world of on-line dating.

Being in love is a wonderful thing, bringing with it joy and pleasure beyond measure.

Having a partner means:

- laughing, crying, and imagining together
- supporting each other's dreams and goals
- challenging one another to be the best version of themselves
- sharing all that life has to offer

Here are my top 10 tips to finding love again:

### 1. **Heal Yourself**

You can't be emotionally available to anyone else until you have a healthy relationship with yourself, so give yourself adequate time to heal before reentering the dating scene. In her book, *[Crazy Time: Surviving Divorce and Building a New Life](#)*, Abigail Trafford refers to the healing process as Crazy Time:

A time when your emotions take on a life of their own and you swing back and forth between wild euphoria and violent anger, ambivalence and deep depression, extreme timidity and rash actions. You can't believe how bad your life is, how terrible you feel, how overwhelming daily tasks become, how frightened you are about money, your health, your sanity. Crazy Time is usually the very painful transition period you have to go through before you can establish a new life for yourself (Trafford).

After my divorce, I waited close to two years before I was ready to dip my toe back into the dating waters. And after losing my second husband, I waited three years. That time was critical to finding my center and healing my heart. Taking time to heal your heart too is imperative. Your contentment and self-love will show through in your profile, your voice, and your presence.

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### 2. **Develop Realistic Expectations**

There are no fairy-tale princesses or knights in white, shining armor waiting to rescue you. You need to have a realistic set of expectations to begin dating. Create a list of what you want in a partner, friend, lover, or spouse, and just as importantly, what you don't want. Be sure your personal values are incorporated. Keep that list handy as you start perusing online profiles and meeting potential partners. Your list is your scorecard for a successful next relationship.

### **3. Tell Friends You Are Looking**

My current fiancé and I have a large number of mutual friends, and although they thought we are a great match, none of them thought to introduce us because no one knew that my fiancé was interested in dating. Your friends and family have your best interest in mind, so if you're getting back into the dating world, make sure you let them know. I also suggest sharing your list from Tip Two with your friends and family members. That way they know what type of person you're looking to meet. You never know what will happen.

### **4. On-Line Dating**

Today there are thousands of online dating sites. According to a Forbes article from 2013, there were 2500 in the U.S. alone (Zwillig). Downsides of on-line dating sites: you can't believe everything you read in a profile, pictures don't tell the whole story, and the pickings can be slim – especially as you age. Upsides of on-line dating sites: you can and will meet people whose paths you otherwise wouldn't cross.

I met both my second husband and my current fiancé via online dating apps. In 1999, the early days in internet dating, I signed up for a two-week free trial on Yenta.com (the Jewish counterpart of Matchmaker.com). After spending two evenings via dial-up (oy vey!) completing 50 multiple choice and 20 essay questions, I performed a search (within 25 miles of my zip code) that returned one profile, that of my late husband who was from Cleveland. We emailed through the site for two weeks while we checked each other's backgrounds, met for dinner, and started dating. We were married seven months later. At the time of his death, we had been married for thirteen years.

I met my current fiancé on Match.com. I liked his picture, and even though his profile was of a sports fanatic and outdoorsman, I took a chance and contacted him. In his response to my message, he shared that he was active in his synagogue, enabling me to vet him through a mutual friend. Our paths would not have crossed if we hadn't met through Match.com. We dated for a year before our engagement and plan to marry in the spring of 2019, in the presence of our children, grandchildren, and closest friends.

### **5. Stay Safe**

Safety is a primary issue when you are meeting someone you don't know for the first time. First, I suggest meeting at a neutral, public location such as Panera or Starbucks. Second, let someone else know where you'll be, who you'll be meeting (name, phone number, email address, etc.), and what time you'll be home. Also, have a safe word or phrase, just in case something uncomfortable happens and you need to call for help. Third, even if you and your match are both avid wine, craft beer, or martini drinkers,

don't be tempted. Alcohol dulls the senses and can knock you off your game. Don't let alcohol have any influence on your decision making. Lastly, have an exit strategy. Even if you seem to have hit it off via email, text, and phone, meeting in person isn't the same thing. If there's no chemistry, bail out.

## 6. Get to Know One Another

If you feel chemistry between you, how do you get to know one another? Try the app, "36 Questions." The app has a series of questions for you and your new friend to take turns answering. The questions become more intimate as you progress and require openness, honesty, and vulnerability. By the time you finish, you'll know a bit about each other and have a better idea if you want to move forward with this new relationship.

The app is based on Mandy Catron's *New York Times* article entitled, "To Fall in Love with Anyone, Do This" (Catron, 2015). In that article, Mandy shares the research behind the questions and her own experience asking them to a friend.

## 7. Give Each Other Space

As mature adults, you and your partner are coming into this relationship with a lot of history. While you are creating a new identity as a couple, cherish your similarities and honor the differences that each of you bring. Sharing your common interests and learning from each other is part of growing the relationship. But it is equally important to give each other space and time to pursue your individual interests. This time apart will strengthen the relationship.

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## 8. Introducing the Family

If you are a single parent with children at home, deciding when to introduce your romantic partner can be tricky. You don't want to make an introduction too early, as you are still getting to know one another, and you don't want your children to become emotionally attached to someone who may not be in the picture for the long term. At the

same time, you want your children to accept the fact that you are dating and that there might be a new adult in their lives. If you have adult children, this introduction can be somewhat less problematic as you probably don't share the same residence as your children. Take your time and discuss with your partner to decide when you want to introduce family into the relationship.

### 9. **Be Open and Honest**

Be open and honest and know your limits. You must be willing to tell your partner what you need in the relationship, how you want to be treated, and where you have limitations. In addition to chemistry and romance, developing a long, lasting relationship requires open communication, self-awareness, and a sense of humor.

### 10. **Not Ready to Date Yet?**

Maybe you're on the cusp but not ready to date yet. If this is the case, then I suggest downloading the "Meetup" app and finding a group that piques your interest. Meetup groups cover a wide range of activities from health/wellness and sport/fitness to food/drink and games. The benefit of a Meetup is that the activities are designed for a group, and you won't be doing them on your own. This is a great place to meet people and make friends without going on a date.

Need help and support to make your comeback? Contact me by phone at 330-603-1890 or email [marsha@comebackqueen.life](mailto:marsha@comebackqueen.life) to schedule a complimentary 30-minute consultation. To learn even more, visit [comebackqueen.life](http://comebackqueen.life) and pick up a copy of my book, *Surviving and Thriving Despite the Drama*.

— Marsha

