

Armed with advice from her 'date-ologist', Katie is ready to find love again in 2013

'I HIRED A DATING COACH, TOO...'



When Alesha Campbell (left) 35, was hit hard by a break-up, she went to dating coach Jean Smith for advice...

'I was in a seven-year relationship that ended badly five years ago. For a while afterwards, I "saw" the odd person, but pretty soon gave up dating and instead focused on my career. Two years ago, though, I moved to London, but didn't really know that many people. There's huge pressure on women in their thirties to date – especially when you've come out of a big relationship. Most people my age are settled down – dating feels like a young man's game. Plus, at my age, you're usually busier with work and more sure of yourself, so there doesn't seem any point in wasting time on going on disastrous dates.

'I first met Jean, who would become my dating coach, at a mutual friend's dinner party. At first we were just chatting about men and life; then she started giving me some advice – before finally admitting that her job was to help women talk to guys. After much persuasion, I agreed to go on one of her tours, where you learn to approach people, because it sounded fun and, before long, had signed up for three or four one-on-one coaching sessions.

'Jean reminded me to use my common sense to attract men – to make conversation



about things in shops, or ask for directions when I don't need them. Just remembering to smile and look "available" through body language. This really changed my mindset. When you're dating, you get so wrapped up in how you look, you forget how you project yourself to the outside world.

'The one-on-one coaching was useful to help figure out how to get more out of dates. I'll tell Jean about tiny things that have happened on nights out, or whether I should see a guy again based on what he's said or done. I'll even forward her texts I've been sent asking her to "translate them". It's not that I can't talk to my friends about this; I can – most of them are married with kids and they love living their single lives vicariously through me. But the thing about friends is that they know your baggage. They say, "Oh, you always do that." Jean didn't. She worked on what was happening at the time.

'With Jean's help, I've since been on seven dates in the last month. I usually never go on a second date because if I'm not completely bowled over, I don't bother seeing them again, but she's persuaded me to be more open-minded. And it's working. I recently went on my first second date in seven years.

'I absolutely credit my new-found dating behaviour to Jean's guidance. I know I'll stay in touch with her. But, of course, I hope that one day I won't have to text her before heading out for a date, for advice on what my opening gambit should be...'

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THANKS TO MY
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2013'S NEW DATING RULES!

THINK LIKE 007

Amy Webb researched the most popular women on dating sites for her book *Data, A Love Story*, and found the most successful were vague and mysterious about their careers – until the third interaction. Adds intrigue!

LOOK AROUND

Brits tend to huddle in groups when we're out. 'Look around the room regularly,' says flirting coach Jean Smith. 'It lets men know you're open to meeting them.'

ALCOHOL IS NOT YOUR FRIEND

In *The New Rules: The Dating Dos And Don'ts For The Digital Generation*, Ellen Fein and Sherrie Schneider suggest not drinking AT ALL on a date. This is clearly difficult, but sticking to just a glass or two may be wise.

THINK BEFORE YOU JOKE

Dry wit may work with friends, but Amy says sarcasm is a bad idea when dating. 'It comes across as sounding negative or angry,' she says.

CHILD-PROOF HIM

Michelle Obama offers some sage advice for assessing whether a relationship will last. 'Look at how the guy treats his mother and what he says about women. Plus, how he acts with children he doesn't know.'

DON'T WRITE A NOVEL

When doing your online dating profile, don't write more than 500 words. 'The longer it is, the more desperate you look,' says Amy.

PICTURE PERFECT

'Make sure your profile picture is taken outside, with no flash,' says Amy. 'Look at the camera, laugh – and show a little bit of skin. But no pets. Ever.'

DON'T TWEET ABOUT ROMCOMS

Yes, really. The authors of *The New Rules* reckon it shows you think too much about relationships.

GET OFFLINE

Researchers at Northwestern University say too much time online dating makes us 'objectify' potential partners. So don't wait too long before you meet face to face.

NOT ANTRUMS, PLEASE

'We take rejection too personally,' says Jean. 'Treat dating like looking for a flat – the more you see, the greater your chances of finding the perfect one.'