

male call



Can I be honest?

According to my own quarter-baked survey, "honesty" is among the top five terms that women use, after "laughing," "having fun," "movies"



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and, of course, "last book read: *Da Vinci Code*" (followed closely by "I look younger than my age").

I was amused then recently to read the following statement by a woman who lists her age as 50 on her Internet profile:

"I seek honesty above all things. Tell me anything, just tell me the truth. I'm easygoing...honest to a fault. Speaking of truth! I'm 55. I was told women over 50 do not receive responses. Hence, I've stretched the truth. Hope I'm forgiven?"

I like that..."honest to a fault." Apparently stretching the truth by 10 percent doesn't count.

Is lying about your age all that bad though? Personally, I almost expect a woman to fudge her age a bit. Just don't tell me how dang honest and trustworthy you are. Like the guy on the TV show "Hooking Up" who found that the lovely woman across from him lied about her occupation and her name - makes you wonder what part is real.

But I'd like to hear from you. How much age-fudging is OK? How about height-fudging for guys? Is any fudging acceptable?

One of the more popular honesty detection schemes these days is to Google your prospective partner. This seems to me to be a reasonable way to find out more about someone. After all, anything on the Net is public knowledge anyway. It's not like someone is rifling your purse...or your cell phone!

Yes, innocent ones, my cell phone was rifled the other day. I was visiting a friend's house and we had gone out back for a while. I found out a couple days later that friends of the woman's teenage daughter had gone through the cell phone that I had carelessly assumed was safe in the house...and looked through all the old text messages that were on there.

Now, since I've never really figured out how to do text messaging on this phone, the messages mostly consisted of a series of inane three- and four-word test phrases that I had experimented sending with another friend about a year ago. Apparently the perp was in the habit of investigating her own mom's suitors via this sneaky method and decided to have a go with me to hone her skills.

Then there's the woman who asked her prospective beau if she could say hello to one of his best gal-pals whom he's always talking about. He gave the woman the gal-pal's e-mail. The note to the gal-pal (which I happen to have seen) says: "I would appreciate any information you can provide...confidentially, of course."

Apparently the gal-pal didn't take this too well. You don't just up and ask someone's best friend to give you the skinny on a guy. You have to pay your dues to join that sisterhood.

Should we really be investigating everyone though? You tell me. Maybe the question I started with shouldn't have started with "can." It should be "may." Yes, you may.

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*James Robert is an over 40-something Phoenix-based writer, author of *On Being Eight Again* and *The Tao of Coyote*. Divorced with no children, he has been exploring the dating scene and collecting tales of woe for many years. Need a guy's perspective? Jot a note to Male Call at jrobertpenn@aol.com.*