

male call



A query comes in from the East coast; such is the power and breadth of readership of the mighty *TheTatumSunTimes*:

"Whatever happened to dating locally, where what you look like, sound like and actually seem to be are known to others you might mutually know?"



JAMES ROBERTS

Phoenix

And then, as if by magical coincidence, this note appears from a gal in East Tatumland (Scottsdale to you):

"Face-to-face is great...but where!?"

Where indeed? It's easy to say that you want to meet alleged people in the flesh but, like Archimedes, you still have to be somewhere.

So where be the most likely romantic candidates?

Some places to consider:

- Supermarket
- Video store
- Bike path
- Work
- Church functions
- Museum
- The "fix-up"
- Parties
- Singles events
- Activity clubs
- Bar or dance club

As you go down The List, it's perfectly obvious that the greatest chance of meeting another person who is single, romantically inclined and in a proper conversational situation is (drum roll)...

...The bar!

Of course, nearly all women say they HATE HATE HATE having to go to bars.

But if you look at the straw man list above, it's clear that supermarkets, video stores, hardware stores and the like, while great places for scoping out potential partners, do not provide the opportunity for extended conversation. As much as the parties might like to keep the talk going, it just feels creepy to ask for a phone number based on 30 seconds of produce-department flirting.

I could go down The List (and I have) showing the disadvantages of each option—dog parks...must have dog; church functions...great place to build your faith; museum...a bit desperate; biking/jogging paths...people moving too fast; workplace...risky business; fix-ups...rarely work; house parties...inflated expectations; singles events...ewwww; activity clubs...same crowds from week to week and everybody knows your business.

Much as you hate it, you have to admit a good dance bar has a few things in its favor:

1. High percentage of singles
2. People are there to be social
3. Dancing: a license to hug
4. Ever-changing mix of people
5. Come and go whenever you want
6. Get to see the exact physical package right up front and maybe even talk enough to find out what the person pretends to do for a living.

Of course the downside is well known: marrieds posing as singles; guys on the prowl; women with more make-up than a local TV news anchor; and, of course, "meat market" ambience.

As much as the parties might like to keep the talk going, it just feels creepy to ask for a phone number based on 30 seconds of produce department flirting.

And that's why I'm now going to reveal the James Roberts "Three Pretty Good Places™" to meet the partner of your dreams without having to sit on a bar stool in a low-cut cocktail dress feeling sleazy.

- The monthly "Second Act" happy hour at the Herberger
- Group hikes (usually free, but make sure you know the experience level)
- Volunteering at events where you personally like to be (e.g., film festivals, if you like movies)

The best alternative to face-to-face interaction still seems to be Internet dating where you get to read all about someone, see their fake picture, and choose from hundreds of people who come right out and admit they're looking for romance.

So don't come whining to me about old-fashioned face-to-face meetings. My sleazy cocktail dress is at the dry cleaners.

*James Roberts 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 jrobertspenn@aol.com.*