



Putting the soul into soulmate

Do the spiritually aware have a harder time dating than those who stick to mundane requirements like 'tall, dark and handsome'? **Tania Ahsan** goes in search of true love

Love is a funny thing, isn't it? Rarely 'ha-ha' funny but often quite strange and mysterious. There are so many different little coincidences that go into you meeting somebody.

Turn left and you might never have met. Then there's the 'push me-pull you' of getting it together. Sometimes you might like a person and that person doesn't like you back, or vice versa. Or you both like each other but you live in opposite parts of the world. Or you both like each other but circumstances are such that you can't be together. It is a bit of a fraught subject. Add to that the increasing desire among people with a spiritual bent to meet someone

who is their 'soulmate', someone who encompasses so many esoteric little points of connection that it's a miracle that person exists, much less that you manage to track him or her down.

Jane Meredith, who writes on sexual spirituality, says that there are many people you can connect with at a deep soul level. "I do not think we are 'fated' to love or be with a particular person," she says, "but can seek the soul-elements in all of our relationships, including with our children and friends. Some people may feel like part of your own soul but they are not always the best choices to form or sustain relationships with. Choose someone as dedicated as you are to

discovering and nurturing the soul aspects of your relationship."

She also advocates bringing in some assistance in your quest for a partner – be that divine or mundane. "I am a big believer in people taking responsibility for their own emotions, offering genuine love and support to each other and reaching out for help when it's needed – from a counsellor, the gods and goddesses or friends and family. If you're not in a relationship, it's an opportunity to deeply heal sexual issues. And – relationship or not – you can invoke a god or goddess to assist you: Aphrodite, Pan, Ishtar and Shiva are some to choose from. A loving relationship can be the greatest magic of all – which can be your relationship with spirit."

Jane advises looking for shared values when seeking to form a lasting relationship. Asking for a nudge from your guides, higher self and/or the Goddess can also yield results, she says. And apparently you can tell when the advice is coming from them because you might not like everything they say.

Taking off our masks

One of the big problems with dating can be that you aren't able to be entirely genuine or authentic. You may think that men will only like feminine women and so you force your Tomboyish tendencies aside in favour of a girlishness that you're not comfortable with. Or you may think women prefer the 'strong and silent type' and so you suppress your genuinely chatty nature.

Jan Day runs Meetings without Masks, a workshop day for singles who want to meet in a more heart-centric space. "I do think that

what happens with all people, whether from a spiritual background or not, is that they have an idea of what the perfect match should be like. A man might think he needs to be with a blonde or a woman might think she needs a fit man," explains Jan, "these are ideas about what people should be... it ends up fostering a criteria not to do with true connection, authenticity and love."

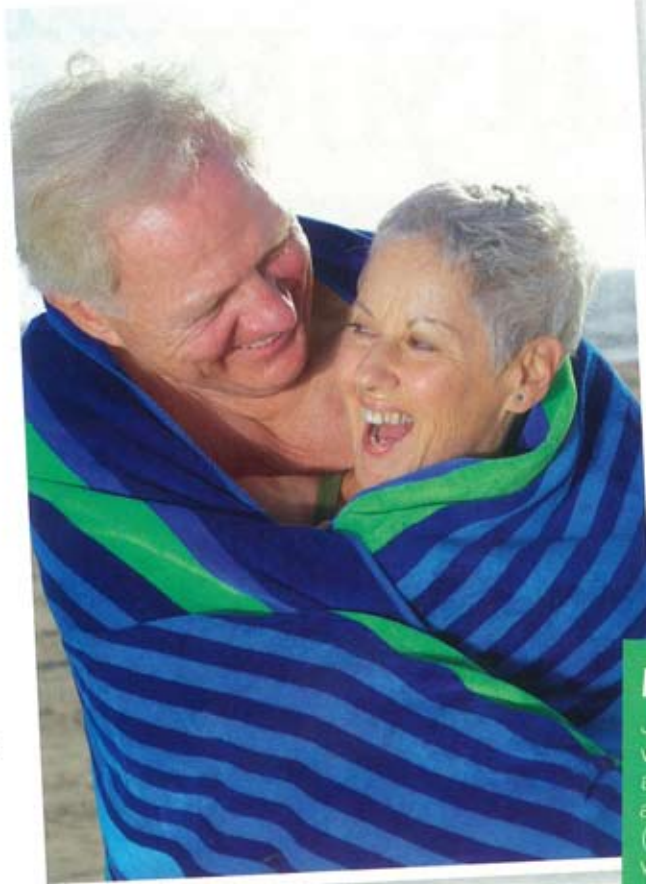
Jan devised her workshop for singles after she discovered that people were coming to her other workshops in the hope of meeting people in a relaxed and different way. Except that some were finding that the people they connected with on her workshops were half of a couple and so there was a bit of disappointment there. She decided to create a workshop day specifically for singles so that she could help people meet each other authentically in an open way, without wondering whether the other person was available.

"It does help people who are shy because the exercises provide context within which to speak to people. However, there is challenging work on the day too, people have to look deep into themselves and that can bring up things that are not so easy so it's not an easy day. People are encouraged to be whoever they are, that can bring up tears, shyness, embarrassment but that begins to show them that they are okay the way they are. They can be shy, extrovert, turned on, turned off, whatever they are, and share that in a safe space."

It does sound like a scary prospect since we are trained to think of dating as almost adversarial. I remember coming home from a date that went well and had resulted in the man asking me out again and the next

day receiving messages from friends that almost all said 'well done' as if I'd won a tennis match or something. Jan laughs and recognises this attitude but says it is a million miles from what happens in her workshops. "The most important thing is to view meeting people with curiosity and an open heart. To really meet them. There's relaxation in that, who you are and who I am. You don't have to predict what the other person wants you to be, who they are, or what's between you. If two of you work together, that's great; if not, that's not rejection, you just don't work together. We build things up into success or failure, acceptance or rejection and that makes you very anxious before you even start. You have to be in love with yourself so can be in love with them. You have to be who you are and love who you are so that they meet you."

Anyone who has found dating difficult will attest that it is easier said than done to be in love with who you are. We are constantly bombarded with images of what we should look like, how clever and funny we should be, what we should have materially, even – some circles – how



enlightened or pure we should be in our outlook. All this pressure means that we buy into the notion that we're not good enough just as we are and that we need a 'makeover' before we can meet our true love.

One of the best pieces of advice I ever received was from a friend who stopped my obsessive recounting of what he'd said (and whether she thought that was a good sign that he liked me) with 'but what did you think of him?' – it was such a basic question and one I hadn't even pondered in my immediate scramble to have him like me. Of course we know immediately if we don't fancy someone but when we do fancy someone, we can sometimes let our hormones blind us to whether or not we actually like them. It is a good idea to keep yourself in mind while meeting a prospective partner. 🍷

More information

Jane Meredith's site is www.janemeredith.com. She is author of *Aphrodite's Magic: Heal and Celebrate your Sexuality* (O Books). Jan Day's site is www.meetingswithoutmasks.com and the booking number is 020 8123 9831.

