



Julianne Cantarella

## DO YOU SUFFER FROM SARMASSOPHOBIA (AKA FEAR OF DATING)?

It's natural to have fears, we all do, especially around the unknown or things that are seemingly out of our control. This is especially true of dating. Clearly we cannot control the outcome of our experience or the behavior of others. However, it's our approach that can make or break things.

So, I ask you, has your fear of dating been stopping you from engaging in the process? If this sounds familiar, you are not alone. It's actually a typical response I receive from my date coaching and matchmaking clients alike. While they don't always articulate it so succinctly, the message is clear. I am sure you can relate on some level if you've been dating, too.

There's the vulnerability element and of course the chance of rejection. Let's add in all the horror stories you've heard about dating today, no wonder you have a fear of dating.

Nonetheless, if you are serious about

having a relationship, there is no way of getting around it, you have to date. Let me quell your fears and give you some tips to help you get past the most common fears of dating:

**Don't make it bigger than it is.** Dating is an opportunity to meet someone and get to know him or her better. It's a test drive if you will, to see if someone could potentially be a fit. If you build up every potential partner to be the one, you run the risk of chronic disappointment. You'll also, drive yourself crazy wondering if this could be the one, building it up unnecessarily. Take a step back, a deep breath and look at dating for what it is worth, an opportunity to meet the right one.

**Don't believe the hype.** I know it's easy to believe all the negative reports around dating today, however, not all the stories are accurate. While I am sure there are those who have experienced some difficult situation the vast majority of my clients have had a positive dating

experience. I will tell you if you approach the process with openness and positivity, you will increase your chances of a positive outcome.

**Slow and steady wins the race.** Nothing guarantees disappointment like trying to force the dating experience. If you really want to have success, do create a dating plan, but also approach it with the understanding that it takes time to meet someone. And, you don't want to meet just anyone; you want to meet the right one. Be selective with your search, and have fun.

Of course there is no way to fully control the dating experience. If finding and having a committed relationship is something you really want, then it's time to get real with yourself and understand there will be some fear in the process.

Remember, nothing worth having is ever easy; it's the important things that take work, commitment, and sometimes taking a new approach to gain success.

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*Julianne Cantarella, MSW, LSW, is a licensed social worker with a deep passion for people. Her personalized approach to matchmaking and date coaching has earned her the title of New Jersey's TOP Relationship Expert. A professional matchmaker and dating coach since 2005, Julianne has the skills to successfully match her clients with their perfect partner or coach them into a loving committed relationship. Julianne is the owner, principle matchmaker and dating coach at New Jersey's Matchmaker, located in Northern New Jersey.*  
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