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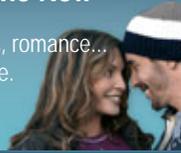
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Become the date you would like to have

By **April Masini**

Special to Yahoo! Personals



If I offered you a crash course on dating that would reveal the secrets for your success in a simple strategy that goes beyond winning in love, to include winning in the business, and in life, would you try it? Moreover, if I challenged you to examine your concepts of dating and your perception of failure and rejection, would you accept the challenge?

Let's find out.

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Lesson 1: First impressions: They are immediate, long lasting, and usually permanent. Regardless of how great you are, and no matter how sweet you can be once someone gets to know you, the reality is, your dating success will be based almost entirely upon the other person's initial sense of who and what you are. Do you have a second chance to make a positive first impression? The experts say, no.

Lesson 2: If you want the part, look the part: Statistics show that how we appear speaks more about us, and is more important, than what we say verbally. Moreover, though it may not get you all the way to your objective, it will get your foot in the door. Remember the old adage, "Dress for who you want to be, not who you are." It is as true in business as it is in love.

Lesson 3: Act the part: It is a fact that in our personal affairs, as in all our business dealings, we sell ourselves first. Poor attitude, image, and behavior will adversely affect your dating success, just as it will negatively affect your success in business.

Lesson 4: Be the part: The initial impression you make on a prospective date predicts whether she (or he) will take the time to get to know you. Dating, as well as business, is all about sales. You must think of yourself as a product and the person you want to date as the buyer.

Lesson 5: Dating is about sales and sales is a numbers game: If you want to multiply your success immediately in dating (or just about anything else), learn, understand, and embrace the concept behind "the numbers game." It supports the fundamental dynamics of dating. You will save a lot of time and heartache if you are willing to accept, grasp, and follow its tenets. They are:

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- You are a product.
- You are the product's salesperson, its packager, and its advertiser.
- The person you're trying to attract is your customer. They make their buying decisions based upon presentation, packaging, and advertising.
- The world's best salespeople don't have a 100 percent sales rate, a 75 percent rate, a 50 percent or even a 25 percent rate. The world's best salespeople are lucky to maintain a 10 percent sales rate.

Thus, the best of the best put their best product forward and count themselves lucky if one out of every ten they are interested in, is also interested in them. See where I'm going?

Lesson 6: Confidence = success: The number one quality both men and women seek in a date or a mate is confidence. Confidence is also the key attribute that all professional salesmen must possess in order to be successful. People do not buy products or services from someone who has no confidence in themselves or the products they represent.

Lesson 7: Establish a goal: A confident person is one with a plan and a goal. What's yours? Let's assume that it is getting a great date for Valentine's Day. Now ask yourself, what will it take to get that date? What steps do you need to take? Create your to-do list. Then accomplish each item on your list, one-by-one until you reach your goal.

Lesson 8: Know your target market and give them what they want: Understand who you are trying to sell yourself to and what they are interested in buying.

Lesson 9: Analyze the competition and do things better than they do: Just as you would study a competitor in business or a rival sports team, study your dating competition if you want to win!

Lesson 10: Take action and follow through:

1. Deal with your fear of rejection:

- Stop investing your energy and self-worth in outcomes. Instead of thinking of 'misses' as 'failures,' think of them as 'practice shots'. Dating is a process.
- Stop placing so much importance on what the person you are interested in thinks of you. After all, you don't know if you would even like them once you get to know them, do you?

2. Set small goals and accomplish them, one by one.

3. Get passionate about your life. Take a class, travel at home or abroad, become a Big Brother/Big Sister, get involved with politics, learn to Salsa, get out of a job you hate and into one you love. Enthusiasm is contagious, if you are excited about your life, people will be excited about being with you.

4. Dress for success. Always put your best foot forward.

5. Perfect your sales pitch. If you keep doing the same thing, you will keep getting the same result.

Lesson 10: Enjoy today! Live as if there may be no tomorrow; realize there are no guarantees, no dress rehearsals, and (usually) no second chances. Make each day "your special day," one in which you did all that you could do. You will never look back with regret.

Some 2,000 years ago, Socrates proposed "[The Law of Cause and Effect](#)." Now, after all this time nothing has changed. When you pick the action, you pick the result.

What actions are you going to take to get a date for Valentine's?

Dubbed "The new millennium's Dear Abby," **April Masini** is author of the critically acclaimed "Ask April" advice column, www.AskApril.com online magazine, and the best-selling book, "[Date Out Of Your League](#)." With more 1,500 international interviews and opinion pieces: MSN, CNN, ABC, FOX, Wall Street Journal, New York Times, Forbes, Cosmopolitan, Maxim, and more -- she's sexy, frank, controversial and comforting. April writes what Dear Abby would never print and what your shrink won't tell you.



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