

A HANDBOOK FOR MEMBERS





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WELCOME!



WE ARE THRILLED YOU HAVE DECIDED TO JOIN US AND
TAKE THIS EXCITING STEP INTO YOUR FUTURE

*“we will always guide you
towards a hoped-for conclusion”*

Searchmate is a unique dating experience for everyone and this handbook is designed to guide you through your **Searchmate** membership.

It contains some vital and helpful information and it is crucial you read through it all. It will help you start your membership off on the right foot, with the right attitude and approach, and you need to make the most of your time with us.

And our essential Code of Conduct which we expect all our members to adhere to is in here too so make sure you don't skim through the serious bit!



YOU HAVE JOINED SEARCHMATE



THE DAY AFTER JOINING SEARCHMATE YOU WILL PROBABLY HAVE ONE OF TWO VERY DIFFERENT REACTIONS TO THE STEP YOU HAVE TAKEN

1. You will feel excited and energised about life because you have done it! You have taken a step you have been thinking about, usually, for quite some time. You had grown to realise by doing nothing you would change nothing, that you needed to do something to fill that gap. You chose **Searchmate**, enjoyed your consultation and realise now the only problems which are unbearable and unchanging are those we do nothing about. For the first time in months or even years you feel excited about the future.

2. **You panic.**

You want to know how soon your letter of confirmation and membership pack will arrive. You want to clarify something you might have said or not said. You ask, 'am I right for this and are my pictures OK?'

Both reactions are perfectly normal, perfectly understandable but you don't need to worry, you don't need to panic, you **should** feel excited and optimistic.

OR...

NO - we are not going anywhere, we are growing bigger every day.

NO - your letter may be sent the next day but will most likely be with you within the week.

YES - the fact you called us at all means you need us, you want to do this and everyone who is single and does not wish to be so is right for this.

Remember...

You can call us any time with any questions or concerns you have. They will not be there 24 hours a day and they do have other clients, but they will always get back to you and your call is always important to them.

Your Area Director's advice is very valuable. This may be your first time but it most definitely is not theirs.

*“you don't need to panic,
you should feel excited and
optimistic”*

help you get the best out of your membership - their aim will always be to guide you towards a hoped-for successful conclusion.

What will happen is this

- A plain envelope will arrive containing your profile, a letter of welcome and payment confirmation.
- You must then call us and approve your profile or make any changes you wish to make. **Your profile will not be activated until you have done so.**
- Your details will then be loaded into our totally confidential software accessible only by **Searchmate** staff.
- Our specialist matching team will be searching for suitable matches. Your profile should be with you within the first month.



THE PROFILES



YOUR FIRST PROFILE HAS ARRIVED - YOU ARE
EXCITED AND OPEN THE ENVELOPE EXPECTING
THE MAN OR WOMAN OF YOUR DREAMS TO FALL OUT

Well, you described this person in great detail to us so why wouldn't it be possible to simply send him or her to you within the week?

This kind of dream is exactly that - a fantasy. We are not sending out men and women we have manufactured to order at head office. We are dealing with real people and all the complexities they bring with them - just like you.

We do successfully match clients with the first profile sent to them. More commonly it takes much longer than that to work through the different shades of black, white and grey which can be found in every one of your profiles.

"The people who are open minded about their future are usually the ones who are successful in finding it."

WE GUARANTEE

- You will change your mind about what you want during your membership.
- We will change our mind about what you want during your membership.
- You will realise age is just a number and that although you said 'no older than 60' that last man you met was fantastic and you would never have guessed he was 61.
- In the beginning you may tell us categorically a partner must have a certain something. We will send you a profile of someone who hasn't and you will realise it is nothing at all when set against everything else they have to offer.
- You will say you definitely could not...only to find that maybe you could after all.

You can stick to your guns, stipulate every attribute and characteristic, want every facet of colour and consideration ...but only if you are buying a jacket.

When you are looking for love, a soul mate, a partner for life, when you want that gap that is reaching into every aspect of your life filled, you need an eye on the bigger picture.

You need to realise an hour in the company of the right person and your must-haves may pale into insignificance.

Of course, we ask you for as much information as you can give us about the person you seek at your consultation. But we treat this as a guide only, a starting point for the search. We don't use charts and we don't always use numbers but we always use instinct.

"We are always ready to bend and listen to our instincts. To be successful at this you must too."



PICTURE PERFECT?



WHEN YOU RECEIVE A PROFILE YOUR RESPONSE TO IT
WILL BE VERY DIFFERENT TO THAT OF OTHER MEMBERS
AND THE MATCHERS WHO CHOSE TO SEND IT TO YOU

We all see something different in others.

This usually means 'attractive or not attractive?' You will probably look at the picture on the profile and decide instantly whether that person is attractive to you or not. It is human nature.

But if you are truly open-minded and ready to embrace any opportunity to find The One then you can change the picture in front of you completely. You do this by reading about them, speaking to us about them, speaking to the person themselves or meeting them.

A voice and personality can change a picture completely. You owe it to yourself and them to take that trouble, grab that chance. Remember they have signed up for something life-changing and they will be looking at your profile too. Wouldn't you always prefer the chance to present a whole picture in person than be judged from two sheets of A4?

The picture is a very small part of the profile -
the profile is a very small part of the person.

What else should you see?



Yes it is a guide, yes it is an indicator but it should be a long way from the end of the road you are travelling on when you are considering whether to take the next step with a match.

Remember relationships are built on flexibility and a willingness to change and grow and that:

- The camera is kind to some but not to others.
- Some people would have been very nervous in front of it.
- Some would have been posing at the end of a long hard day.
- Some people will wear something they think looks great but their friends simply haven't told them it isn't their best look.
- For some the clothes they wear are irrelevant - they judge themselves in other ways and will judge you in other ways too.
- There may be a list of hobbies and interests on page two - but they may be really looking forward to sharing different interests with someone new.
- They may say they work long hours, play golf five days a week, are always on the go - but in reality be desperate for someone to simply stop for.
- Just because this is the way it is for them now, doesn't mean it is the way they really want to be or plan to be forever.
- Is everything about you, who you are, what you are on your two-page profile? Then it definitely isn't on theirs.



“Feedback is crucial - without it we do not move forward to your next match and you do not step forward into the future.”

Client Services Department • cs@searchmate.co.uk • 01608 682801

THE MATCHES - HERE'S THE DEAL

In joining **Searchmate** you have:

- Signed up to a partnership that could change everything.
- Recognised a need to change - how you look for that someone, where you look for them and who you are looking for.
- Acknowledged you have tried other ways to find what you should be able to have, recognised it may not be out there or that you don't know how to find it.

In joining **Searchmate** you have NOT:

- Handed over responsibility for every area of your life.
- Handed over a search which proved impossible for you to us to have a go on your behalf.

We can:

- Send your profile to others and send the profiles of others to you.
- Open doors and create opportunities.
- Guide you as much as we can without breaking confidentiality rules to help you make the right decision.

We cannot:

- Know instantly what you find attractive.
- Make the other person say yes.
- Make you take advice if you choose not to.

How we make it work

When we send you a profile, it is for you to decide if you wish to make contact. We do not expect that you will make contact with everyone we send you, but we do ask that you tell us exactly why you do not wish to.

The information you send us in your Feedback Forms by post or email to Client Services is crucial in our efforts to build a total picture of the person you are and the person you seek.

- We aim to get a better and better idea about you with each match - we cannot do this if you simply say no!
- We need to know what you liked, what you didn't like, what you found attractive, surprising, likeable, a real turn-off.
- Don't forget we may have more detail on someone than just their profile. Always ask us, we may be able to give you more information about that person and change your view of them completely. We may have another match lined up for you and the feedback you have given us will change our view on his or her suitability.

SILENCE IS GOLDEN



YOU JOINED A DATING AGENCY TO PUT AN END TO ALL THAT! NO YOU DIDN'T!

- There will be times during your membership when you don't receive profiles.
- There will be weeks where you wonder what, if anything, is going on.
- You haven't had a date in months, you haven't had a date in weeks.

Other agencies pride themselves on their success - at counting online clicks, firing pieces of paper through letterboxes and reducing the tree population.

Searchmate is different

Our aims for you will have been spelt out at your consultation when you had so much to take in so it is worth explaining them to you again here.

You have paid us to do work which is largely in the background. We are searching out, finding, contacting, meeting, profiling and approving or rejecting people for you all the time.

A small fraction of these will make it past our team and through your letterbox. This is what you are paying us to do. Anyone who has sifted through the thousands of options online to make it finally to a disastrous date, will know the enormous opportunity there is for time, emotion and money wasting in dating.

This is why you joined Searchmate



The work we do is time and labour intensive providing you with a route more likely to result in a long term relationship.

We will find someone we reject, we will find someone we send you, we will find some people who don't make it past our phone call to be profiled.

So it is important to remember that if their profile has made it to your hand, there is a very good reason for that and a lot of work has gone on beforehand. Look carefully at the profile and trust we believe he or she could be someone you should at least speak to.

"...our efforts are spent entirely on finding the next person for you to meet."

Remember:

- We will call immediately if you both say yes to exchange your phone numbers.
- If you say yes but the match does not we will **not call** but simply move you on. You can call us at any time for an update on the progress of your matches and introductions.
- If you have contacted us to approve an introduction and then don't hear anything it could be because the other person is away, not responding to our efforts to contact them, or hasn't made their mind up yet. We will give them a reasonable time, probably two weeks, to return with an answer, then we will move you on.
- Silence may also mean your match has declined and we have moved on to the search for the next one for you. You can call and ask why if you wish but our efforts are spent entirely on finding the next person for you to meet.

WAS IT SOMETHING I SAID

The one thing our clients probably haven't considered fully when they join is dealing with rejection. Unfortunately, it is an essential part of the process.

You will reject profiles of clients and they will reject yours.

You could have walked into a bar or room full of people, scanned your eyes around it at the opposite sex and mentally rejected 90 per cent of them out of hand. This is no different.

One of the best aspects of the route you have chosen to search for a partner is that you will instantly have something in common with everyone we match you to. You have both invested time, effort and money to find a partner, you are both aware that the other person at some stage of the procedure may turn round and say, 'no - this isn't for me'.

If your belief in your own self-worth is strong enough you will understand this is just part of the procedure - he or she was not for me or me for them. If it isn't, use your counselling or buy that book.

A leading body language and communication skills expert once said you cannot offend anyone, the other person has to choose to be offended. We all have a choice in life - a choice of how we feel, react, respond. Make sure your responses to this situation are good for you, work for you and don't hold you back.

The worst thing you can do after a rejection is get hurt, cross or offended - these emotions will only build barriers your common sense cannot get over when the next profile arrives. They will attack your happiness and your good judgement. They could stop you making the best of this chance in life you have created for yourself.

*"Don't take it personally.
They are not rejecting you.
They haven't met you.*

*They are rejecting the boxes you have
ticked and the slots you fit into."*



SAY SOMETHING SIMPLE



YOU HAVE HAD A PROFILE. YOU ARE EXCITED ABOUT IT. YOU CALL CLIENT SERVICES AND SAY YES.

You wait.....the team call to say that the match has said yes too. You have their phone number. They have yours.

Now for the hard bit.

The most seasoned and skilled communicators would still be nervous in this situation. They are a stranger, you have no friends in common to talk about and they know and you know that so much rests on this: a phone call.

Surprisingly though this is really simple if you follow the golden rules.

*"It was nice to get your profile.
Is this a good time to chat?"*

THE RULES

- Never talk about an ex-partner, wife, husband or relationship.
- Never respond in any way to a suggestion by linking to a past relationship: "I used to go there with my wife." "My husband used to say that."
- Never say nothing at all. Never say too much.
- Always talk and listen - never one or the other.
- Never let them make a statement about themselves and then simply ignore it and carry on talking about yourself. If they make a statement, ask a related question - show them you are interested in what they have to tell you.
- Always be completely prepared with a suggestion about where and when to meet which is half way for both of you. Be happy to be the one to say: "Why don't we meet at...how about Saturday?"
- Never say: "I can't meet you for three weeks, I'm a bit busy." They will assume you aren't really bothered and who can blame them. You can say: "I'm really sorry, I am going away this weekend, I would have loved to meet up, but I can see you Tuesday evening if that is OK."
- Be keen but not too keen. "Great let's meet up, Saturday is fine." Not: "Can't we make it tonight?" A few days' wait builds up excitement.
- Never play conversation conga: "I don't mind, what do you want to do? No, what do you want to do? I don't mind..."
- KEEP IT SIMPLE. Try not to get into lengthy, deep and meaningful discussions on the phone. Some people like a long first phone call, some like to keep it short; some speak on the phone several times before meeting. But our advice is a 20 minute chat on the phone then meet. What you have to say is far better said in person and you are much more likely to create a good impression when they can see you as you speak.
- Don't fumble around the 'shall we meet?' issue. Get to the point. You have chatted for 20 minutes. Someone has to take the plunge, why not you?



Some of the things you can say:

- Hello this is..... The **Searchmate** team gave me your number. It was nice to get your profile. Is this a good time to chat?
- Hi you must be..... This is I have been looking forward to speaking to you.
- I would really like to chat further, would you like to sort out a time and place to meet up?
- You sound great, I think we should meet, can you make Saturday lunch time?
- Would you like to meet up, I know a really nice tapas bar/pub/wine bar!
- You sound really nice but I don't think we are looking for each other or would get on well enough. I wish you the very best of luck, I hope you find what you are looking for.
- You live near..... I went to a great little pub near there, would that be a good place to meet?
- I see from your profile you have been toI had a great holiday there some years ago but I would love to go back.

Some of the things you should never say:

- Erm!
- Can't meet you there, I had my wedding reception there. (Simply suggest an alternative, you can explain later.)
- I'm not sure we are a match but we might as well meet and find out.
- You'll have to take me as you find me - I won't have time to change after I finish painting the fence.
- Why don't you come here and I will cook you a meal.
- I insist on my men collecting me at the door.
- I hope you don't expect me to go Dutch.
- Your picture reminded me of the wife I divorced.
- You don't sound anything like I imagined you would.





COFFEE OR FOUR COURSES?

Our advice when you are choosing a place for your first meeting is to choose somewhere where you are unlikely to keep bumping into people you know. Not only will they interrupt the flow of conversation, worse still, they may ask to join you! If you don't know anywhere, ask around before the call and even check it out for yourself.

Try to pick a time and place which is unlikely to be crowded so you will not have to stand shoulder to shoulder with strangers to talk because you cannot get a seat or a table.

We would recommend a lunchtime meeting - evenings can feel more pressured and less secure - and never offer information about your home address before the first date. Meet them at the venue, retain your independence and the ability to say many thanks and leave under your own steam when you are ready.

It can be a good idea to go somewhere which offers you the option to extend the meeting if it is going well. Coffee near a cinema may be an option. See if there is a film which might

be suitable and check out if there is an afternoon showing beforehand in case you feel confident and happy enough to make it more.

Never talk about other clients you have met through **Searchmate**. It is a breach in confidentiality and if you make disparaging remarks about someone else going through this, the person you are with will be wondering if they are going to be the subject of conversation at your next date.

Always look your best for a date and be suitably dressed for the time of day and the venue. 'This is me, take it or leave it,' just doesn't work with 99 per cent of our clients. Everyone wants to feel the other person has made an effort, cares enough to look their best and dress appropriately. Be sure you are dressed suitably, cleanly and are sweet-smelling!

"There is a huge selection of places to go for drinks, coffee, light snacks, or full-blown meals these days."



LET'S BE HONEST



THE CORNERSTONE OF **SEARCHMATE** AND
HOW WE WORK TO ACHIEVE THE GREAT RESULTS
WE GET IS HONESTY AND DISCRETION

*"Be kind, courteous and
deal with others as you
would want others to deal
with you at all times."*

We ask you at your consultation to be as honest and open with us as you can be about you and the person you are looking for.

We ask you to sign the profile form to pledge that the information you have given us is true.

We do all we can to ensure that everyone we introduce you to is not in a relationship and is genuinely free to date and seek another.

If you have been less than honest with us it will not help us in our search for a partner for you and it could lead to termination of your membership. It could also be detrimental to your future if we introduce you to someone you would like to spend the rest of your life with. No one should start a partnership on a lie.

If you have just joined and you think of something you have left out of your profile, not emphasised enough or simply forgotten to mention, give us a call now to make any changes you wish.

Similarly, when you are talking to the people we send you be as honest and open as you can be. This doesn't mean you need to reveal your deepest secrets on the first date or phone call or that you should ever be brutally frank in a way which could be hurtful or offensive. But people will respond more warmly to someone they feel instinctively is being straight with them.

If you don't wish to meet that person when you speak to them, if you don't wish to meet them a second time after the first, be honest about it.

Never string someone along, say yes to a meeting you don't really want or put off telling them how you feel. The sooner they know where they stand the sooner they can come back to us and move on to their next introduction. It is unfair to hold them back unnecessarily.

Never discuss other **Searchmate** profiles with members. Never show **Searchmate** profiles to other people. They are completely confidential and we are sure you wouldn't like your profile shown to others in private or public situations. We ask for your sensitivity and discretion at all times. Breach of this rule will result in termination of your membership.

If you have changed your mind and do not wish to meet or meet again it is always your responsibility to tell the other person.

Searchmate personnel will not do this for you.



TIME TO MAKE A CHANGE

The one thing we do not want you to do is put life on hold the minute you sign your contract. The worst way to approach a **Searchmate** membership is park a chair by the front door and wait for a profile to arrive.

The work we are doing for you is in addition not instead of! Yes, we are a much bigger spider with a much bigger web than any individual. By joining you have improved your chances of finding a life partner considerably. But when you employ an accountant you hand him your paperwork and say over to you, you don't wait every day for a page of figures to fall through the door or stand there and help him count your petrol receipts.

Relax, you are in good hands! But this is a very good time to start a project of your own.

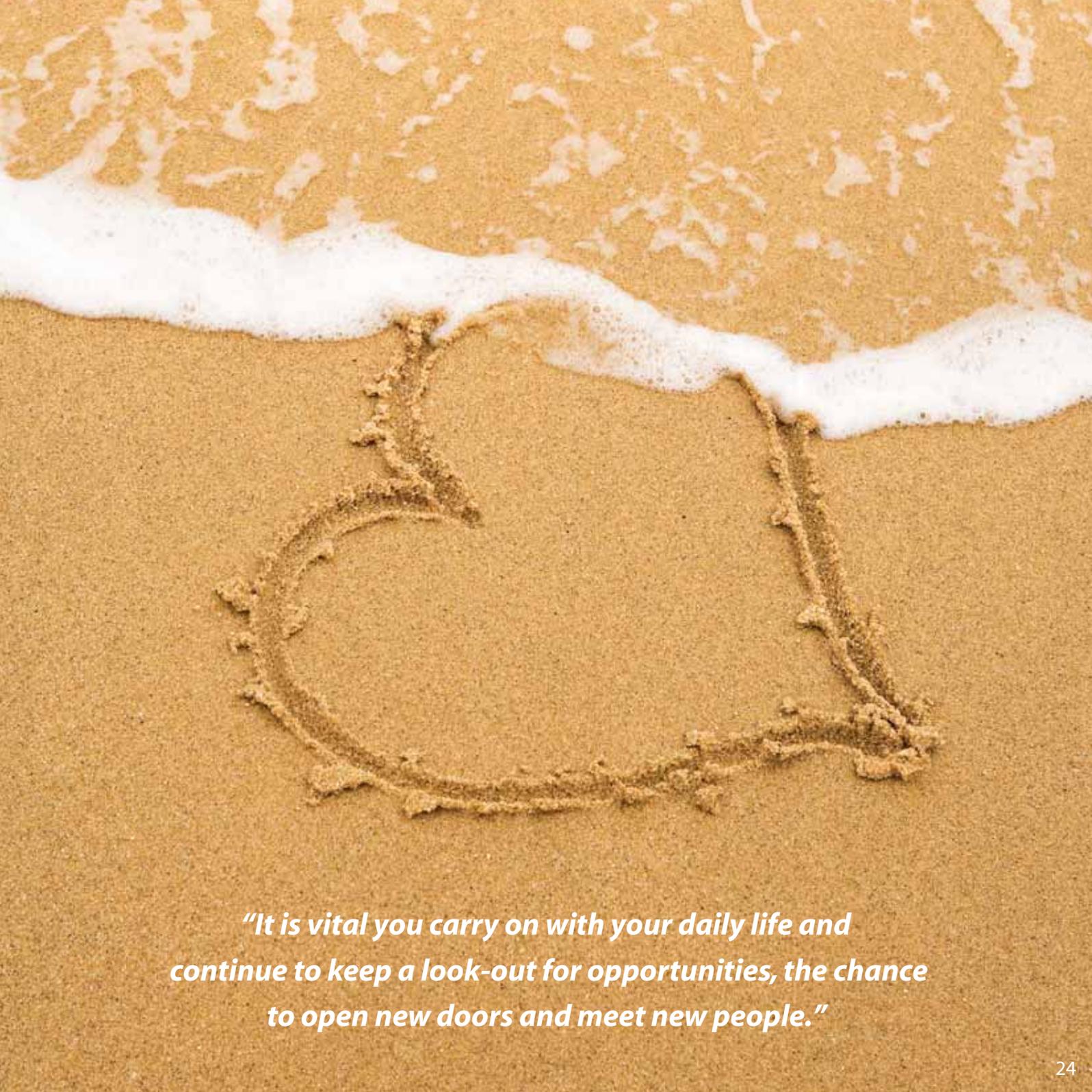
- Look at yourself, look at your life. Is there anything you want to change about it? Are there things about the past you want to truly leave behind?
- Maybe this is the time, if your package includes it, to use your life coaching?
- If your package doesn't include a session with our relationship coaches then maybe get a book. There is a host of great self-improvement books out there to help you.
- Have you met someone in the past but not made it past first base?
- Have you ever been tongue tied? Come across badly on the phone?

- Put someone off by saying the wrong thing?
- Felt out of place in the wrong clothes?
- Never actually known what you should wear these days?
- Hate your hair but avoid hairdressers because you don't know what to tell them to do with it?
- Looked back on a failed relationship and recognised you attract the wrong type, worried too much about things which don't really matter, went for someone for all the wrong reasons?
- Been on a date and wondered why you didn't make it to a second?

A good relationship counsellor or life coach might be able to help you with all of this, a good book is the next best thing. You can get help with your look, your attitude to others, your approach to life, your approach to a room full of people, your conversational skills, body language and body presentation.

If you want your **Searchmate** membership to be not just about finding a partner but finding the right one who will make the best of you and the best of themselves with you, it might be time to invest in a few life laundry moments.

We may be able to find The One but you need to make sure that when he or she comes along you are ready and exactly the person you want to be to attract exactly the person you want to be with.



“It is vital you carry on with your daily life and continue to keep a look-out for opportunities, the chance to open new doors and meet new people.”



THE SERIOUS BIT

Code of Conduct

- You are expected to adhere to the highest standards of conduct at all times and so are the people we introduce you to.
- **Searchmate** profiles are strictly confidential and must never be shown to anyone who is not a **Searchmate** member. Any breach of this rule will result in instant termination of your contract with us.
- You must be single, widowed, divorced or permanently separated - if you cease to be so during the course of your membership it is your responsibility to let us know that you are no longer available to receive profiles.
- All information you supply to us must be accurate and not misleading. We will assume no relevant information has been withheld during your consultation and during your membership if contrary information is received your membership will be terminated.
- You must have declared at interview if you have any criminal convictions or been denied membership of another agency. Any breach of trust will result in termination of membership.
- You must inform us of any relationship started during your membership through or outside of **Searchmate**. We will suspend services but you can return and complete your membership.
- You must behave appropriately, respectfully, courteously in all dealings with other members, profiled non-members and members of staff whether in person, by phone, text or email. This includes conduct which is intimidating or humiliating to others or results in criminal damage or damage to the good name of **Searchmate** or the well being of staff and members. Breach of this will result in termination of contract.



VITAL INFORMATION

Client Services Department

The quickest and easiest way to contact the matching team when you are responding to a profile or updating them about a match is by email.

Their phones do get busy and although we try to keep your waiting to a minimum if you have email then it can be a quicker and more efficient option.

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