



# MY MID-LIFE DABBLE IN ONLINE ROMANCE

by DAVID MATHEWS

The Spark.

Date: Sat, 5 Aug 2006 05:14

Dear David,

*There's someone we'd like you to meet...*

*Synchronicity's Compatibility Matching System has found for you a highly compatible match, based on our rigorous, multidimensional scale. With this level of compatibility, we believe you will have a lot to talk about, and may even find true love together.*

*The next step is for you to begin communicating. Explore your shared areas of compatibility, and have fun discovering if there's chemistry. Remember, your match has been carefully selected from millions of candidates because you share extraordinary levels of compatibility in the areas proven to create relationship success. So we encourage you to consider this match with care and find out what lies beyond your summary profiles. It's simple – just begin communicating today!*

*Sincerely,*

*Dr. E. Stanley Wickerling*

*Founder, Synchronicity.com*

For the umpteenth time in umpteen months, I received that same provocative invitation to click my way to true love. Previous encounters ended poorly. In short spurts, some were rewarding, but in the long run... no. The analytics the system purported to use made logical sense, but my experience showed that these logic-driven matches lacked some mysterious key ingredient. I was already in the process of resuscitating a romance I singlehandedly trashed a couple of years before. Did I really want to take a look at this new match who blinked her way onto my computer screen?

"Damn it." I couldn't resist.

I gave her profile a quick look. Her name was Clare. She'd provided a photo, a rather evocative im-

age of her standing amidst a cluster of trees during a light snow fall. She looked directly into the camera, smiling the slightest of smiles. She conveyed a feeling of strength and independence, with a touch of vulnerability. Her brief bio revealed a Master's Degree, no children at home, a love of good literature, a penchant for art, and a comfort with her lot in life. We shared a fondness for stray dogs, good movies, and thin crust sausage pizza. This lady looking back at me intrigued me.

"Hmm..." And so, by responding, I began my latest venture into online matching. I could not resist Dr. E. Stanley Wickerling's siren song.

Date: Sat, 5 Aug 2006 17:52

Dear Clare,

*Congratulations! David has reviewed your basic information and would like to start the process of getting to know you better. You can find out more about David and answer some simple questions by clicking on the Match Details page.*

*We encourage you to communicate with David using our easy, safe and anonymous SynchroSafe Communication process. Let Synchronicity guide you as you get to know your match scientifically and safely.*

*Sincerely,*

*The Synchronicity Team*

*Click Your Way to True Love.*

As luck would have it, Clare did not stumble over the funkiness of my profile bio, the stuff about being passionate about life, and my calm demeanor. I have yet to ask what it was about our initial contact that urged her on. Anyway, we spent most of the next day clicking, typing, and flirting our way through the Synchronicity mating ritual.

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David: "What best describes your attitude towards work?"

Clare: "I like my job, but my focus is elsewhere."

David: "Are you adventurous?"

Clare: "I sometimes like to do things that are a little frightening."

David: "Do you enjoy debating the issues of the day with your partner?"

Clare: "As long as we don't get too intense, I enjoy a good discussion about general issues."

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Clare: "How important is chemistry to you?"

David: "Within the first couple of dates, I need to sense a certain chemistry."

Clare: "How romantic are you?"

David: "Romance is the seasoning that flavours a relationship. I consider it very important."

Clare: "How would you assess your verbal intimacy skills?"

David: "I know when to speak and when it's best to remain silent."

We then got into the deal makers and deal breakers...

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Clare's Makes – Chemistry, Emotional Health, Resolves Conflict, Affectionate, Energetic, Self-confident, Responsible, Sexually Knowledgeable, Kind and Autonomous.

Clare's Breaks – Lying, Anger, Rudeness, Laziness, Mean Spirited, Judgmental, Undependable, Infidelity, Depression and Racism.

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David's Makes – Sense of Humour, Emotional Health, Artistry, Exciting, Good Personal Habits, Affectionate, Curiosity, Stylish, Spiritual Acceptance and Passionate.

David's Breaks – Lazy, Obesity, Poor Hygiene, Undependable, Uninterested, Depressed, Self-Centered, Childish, Sloppy and Pessimistic.

Once again, nothing untoward, ungainly, or unacceptable with either hers or mine. We remained safely within the bounds of respectability. Who can argue those characteristics anyway? In no previous profile reviews had I encountered anyone who said, "Yeah, well, I yearn to be with a really gross, stinky, lazy slob who is childish and self-centered." We continued with vigour and enthusiasm, escalating to the next level of personal dissection.

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Dig Deeper Questions:

David: "What do you find physically attractive?"

Clare: "I like a man to exude confidence and intelligence, which manifests in a physical way. I like the whole package, which includes affection and personality. These are far more important to me than appearance."

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Dig Deeper Questions:

Clare: "What is your take on intimacy? All kinds..."

David: "A direct question...I like that. On a spiritual level, I expect to share basic core beliefs and values. There is nothing



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more intimate than exchanging one's thoughts about God and the afterlife.

On an emotional level, partners must know what buttons to push (and not push.) Emotions are like the tides... they ebb and flow. Partners should know how to deal with their own emotions, and those of the other. Finally, on a physical level, I believe it is important to be open, to share, to experiment. As long as it is not hurtful to one's partner, why not enjoy what we've been given? I've always been open-minded."

Survival of these pre-fabricated questions effectively ended the formal interrogation process; consequently, the doctor issued a final word of caution and a wish of good luck, then unlocked the door to unbridled email interaction via Synchro-Mail. With enthusiasm matching our raging hormones, we passed through this portal into open communication that very night. There was something about this new girl. I know... you've heard that before. But the reality of it was, there was something. I was drawn by her written words to a uniqueness I couldn't quite put my finger on. I wanted to know more about this Clare. I wanted more. |

*David Mathews lives in Wisconsin with his wife, Clare, whom he married 39 days after this first email exchange, and their neurotic Wheaten Terrier, Dave. Having forsaken past skulduggery, David enjoys his nine grandchildren, and tinkering with old cars and trucks. Lemons and Lemonade is his first book.*

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