

Frumster: 630 Marriages and Tips for On-Line Dating

Frumster.com, the on-line dating service which works with observant-Jewish singles, ranging from Modern Orthodox to yeshivish and chassidic, with several gradations in between, just celebrated its 630th wedding, according to Derek Saker, the Passaic-based organization's director of marketing.

The latest bride, identified only as Chana, credited Frumster's personalized service, which includes live support, insightful profiles, thousands of pictures, interactive forums, and social events.

According to Mr. Saker, the site's 23,000 screened members conduct searches and contact potential matches anonymously through the private and discreet Frumster network.

Large Family

It certainly worked for Chana, who says her husband, Moshe, seemed obviously perfect to her from the beginning, even though others disagreed.

A member of the Lubavitch community, Chana, who was divorced in 2003, was not particularly worried about remarrying. She assumed her "decent-sized and well-known family in Lubavitch circles would send out the bloodhounds to find me a good Lubavitch boy from any of the four corners of the globe."

"If there was a Lubavitcher available, I was apprised of it," she says, explaining that her parents, who, between them, have 16 siblings plus all their families, also travel extensively for business.

Not-For-Me

When her network failed to produce the results she had been hoping for, she turned to Frumster. "While I did

not have any horror stories, I did have many 'not-for-me-dates,'" she says.

After two years, her initial high expectations began to turn bitter. "I began davenning as the only way to hold my head above water," she says.



Devorah and Tomer

On Dec. 20, 2005, *yudtet Kislev* (the day, in 1798, when Rabbi Schneur Zalman of Liadi, the Alter Rebbe of the Lubavitcher movement, was released, after 52 days of imprisonment in St. Petersburg for his efforts to strengthen his movement and disseminate its teachings), Chana went to the gravesite of the last Lubavitcher Rebbe and poured out her heart to Rabbi Menachem Mendel Schneerson, z"l.

"At the ohel, I had a particularly moving experience, and I just knew my happiness was imminent. I could taste it," she says.

"No Way"

The following Thursday, she received an email from Frumster announcing a Chanukah event for singles, sponsored by the on-line site.

"I decided I would give Hashem another chance. I would make myself the vessel for good things to hap-

pen, but only for one more month," she says.

Before the party, she peeked at the profiles of those who had been looking at hers on-line. When she saw Moshe's profile, "my heart actually skipped a beat." He

"Pretty Cool"

Moshe replied that he had been divorced for five years and had just heard about Frumster while browsing the Arutz Sheva website. After checking it out, he decided to subscribe for three months. Just 12 hours later, he received Chana's email.

"Wow, that's pretty cool," he told her.

Of course, a connection was easily made. As soon as he told Chana the names of his children, she recognized one as the name of his mother who had passed away. Moshe's sister is Chana's aunt's sister-in-law. Chana's brother is the best friend of Moshe's nephew. Chana herself was friendly with two of Moshe's sisters and one of his sisters-in-law who resided in Crown Heights. Another of Moshe's brothers was married to the daughter of the family that had sold Chana's parents their home.

On top of that, at a *simcha*, Chana's parents asked the officiating rav about a possible *shidduch* for their daughter. Although Moshe was also at that *simcha*, no one mentioned his name to her parents.

Even a fellow with whom Chana did business—a long-time family friend who,

continued on page 30

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Frumster Comes Through continued from page 29

as it turned out, was one of Moshe's closest friends—did not think to set them up.

Mistaken Impression

Asked how it was possible that, with all their inter-relations, no one considered making a *shidduch* between them, Chana has a suspicion: she and her first husband were divorced before they had any children; Moshe, on the other hand, had three.

"His sisters didn't think I would date a guy with teenagers," she says.

In addition, most of their mutual friends believed Moshe was so much quieter than Chana that any attempts at matchmaking between them were destined to fail.

Baruch Hashem

Today, when Moshe recalls her first "FFB, Lubavitch, 37, no way," email message, he smiles. Chana's now-standard response is: "FFB, Lubavitch, 37, *Baruch Hashem*."

"To me, my husband seemed obviously perfect, but the rest of our world seemed to be wearing a different shade of glasses. If it were not for Frumster, I would not have found Moshe. He was in my back pocket the whole time, and I had no idea. In hindsight, I guess it wasn't the right time. However, I must say that I can't thank Frumster enough," she says.

Wishing all those currently looking for husbands and wives to have the same fortune that smiled on her and Moshe, Chana says she strongly urges people to join Frumster.

Learning Process

Tomer, who found his wife, Devorah, on-line at Frumster months before Chana found Moshe, also sees the site

as a tool used by G-d to bring intended couples together.

Tomer, who came from Los Angeles, says he began his search, confident that, according to Jewish tradition, his intended had been selected for him 40 days before he was born. He prayed to Hashem "day and night with all my might and soul that He should



Moshe and Chana

help me find the one who belongs to me from creation."

With this in mind, he looked on the dating process as a learning experience, trying to determine which tools he would need to meet his future spouse.

"At times it would get frustrating, and I would get discouraged, but that is exactly when you have to get stronger in your *emunah* and pray even harder to Hashem that He should have *rachmanus* on your soul, and even cry to Him that He should draw your spouse closer to you, and trust that Hashem created you and knows exactly what you need and when to give it to you," he says.

Be Real

He admits that when he first heard about Frumster, he was skeptical, but his profile

(username "AlwaysReal") did produce dates, which he found "fun and exciting." Nevertheless, he still did not think he would meet his future wife through the site.

In February 2005, he came across a profile whose Frumster username was "BeReal." Although Devorah had no picture attached, he dropped her

the time before you meet your spouse, you feel like the day for you might never come. You hear all your friends are getting engaged, married, and are having children. You get more and more discouraged; your *emunah* gets weaker; and your motivation grows tired.

"Then one day, you wake up and your day has come as well. You log on to Frumster, and, before you know it, you find yourself married with a beautiful baby girl over night.

"So savor being single and know that when your soul mate and you are ready for each other, at the precise moment, at exactly the right place, Hashem will deliver the one who belongs to you from Heaven," he says.

VoiceIntro

Today, Chana and Moshe and Tomer and Devorah might have found another useful tool now available on Frumster: VoiceIntro, a feature which provides the opportunity for singles to record and add an audio introduction of themselves on their profiles. This means singles looking for one another on Frumster have the use of written profiles, pictures, and, now, their voices.

Intended as a creative medium, VoiceIntro allows singles to be serious, witty, or playful. They can tell jokes, play guitar, or recite poetry. As in all other profile devices used by Frumster, there are limits.

"Naturally, one cannot say anything offensive, and any offensive wording or message would result in the member's immediate suspension," says Mr. Saker.

Ten On-Line Dating Tips

Mr. Saker and the Frumster staff have compiled ten on-line dating tips:

1. Be honest and genu-

an email and she responded. They quickly progressed from the Frumster website to AOL instant messaging, and then to an exchange of photos and phone numbers.

Their first phone conversation lasted six hours, and, for a month, so did all the others. Finally, they decided to meet, which meant Tomer had to fly from California to New York. His goal was to see if they felt the same way in person as they did over the phone.

They did. "From that day, I knew I was going to spend the rest of my life with this girl," he says.

One month later, Moshe came back to New York and, at Devorah's home in Monsey, he proposed and she accepted.

Trusting Hashem

Now happily married, he says of the experience: "All

Arcar Motors: Service Comes First

Aryeh Moskowitz, a Silver Spring native, has been buying and selling cars since the age of 16. He is now married, living in Teaneck, and the father of 4 children. Though he graduated from Yeshiva University with a degree in Psychology, when it came time to pursue a career, he gravitated to his first love—cats. In 2002, after spending a few years honing his knowledge and business skills in the automotive industry, he established

Arcar Motors, Inc. to service the local communities in their automotive leasing and purchasing needs.

Today, with its three full-time and many part-time employees, Arcar leases new vehicles and sells both new and pre-owned vehicles.

Asked what make Arcar Motors unique, Mr. Moskowitz says, "Cars have always been my passion and I am, therefore, able to guide my customers to the vehicle that

best fits their needs. With my extensive knowledge of all makes and models, I can help customers compare their various options from both a vehicle and price perspective. In addition, I really pride myself on my customer service. I will spend whatever time is necessary with a customer to ensure that they are getting the car that suits them best. I always return phone calls and maintain contact throughout the process from

decision making through delivery and on."

Arcar Motors, Inc. is the proud supporter of many local community endeavors, including Teaneck Little League, Project Ezra, Tikva Children's Home, and Chabad.

Arcar Motors, Inc. is located at 133 Cedar Lane, Ste. 209, Teaneck, NJ. Mr. Moskowitz, who can be contacted directly at 201-836-4600, said he looks forward to servicing all of our readers. ☆

Frumster Comes Through continued from page 30

ine at all times. We know of no success stories in which the first contact was based on lies. Lying about age or any other feature only harms you in finding your *bashert*, someone who will accept you for who you are.

2. Take the initiative—especially women. Don't just create a profile and then sit and wait for someone to contact you. Unless you're looking for a monkey, you have to take the lead and initiate a connection. Over 58 percent of Frumster marriages were initiated by women who conducted searches and began communicating with possible results. Given the anonymity, modesty, and security provided by Frumster, the site empowers singles, especially women, to take the lead. In this, Frumster is unlike traditional methods, in which women generally play second fiddle, waiting for someone else to make a recommendation.

3. Be forthright and descriptive when writing your profile. Provide a meaningful and true-to-life, comprehensive description of yourself and the partner you seek. All singles are in marketing. You have to market yourself and

put your best foot forward.

A Good Photo

4. Include a good, recent photo of yourself and make sure it is flattering. You can include other photos that add meaningful context to your personality. These might show you engaging in an activity that is meaningful to you, for example, hiking. Don't worry if the photo is "traditional." It's okay for a photo to show a guy changing the wheel on a car, or a girl cooking a meal in the kitchen.

5. Don't be too dismissive. Be open minded and flexible within reason. In the "real" off-line dating world, potential dates are far too often instantly brushed off for the most superficial of reasons.

6. Don't dive into an emotional relationship. Frumster is a unique and powerful service that instantaneously opens new opportunities to meet people you ordinarily would never come into contact with. But it is not instant marriage! Use the same common sense caution you would in offline dating, including checking references. An exchange of rabbis' names is not inappropriate.

No Pushing

7. The initial email should be natural, meaningful, and not pushy

8. When moving from email to a potential phone conversation, use the same candor on the phone that attracted the person in the first place.

9. Once you start dating, there are always difficult past/present/or future issues that arise. Deal with them at the right time, perhaps with the advice of a rav

10. Believe that Hashem has great things in store for you!
S.L.R.

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