

'ONLINE DATING HELPED ME LET GO OF MY *body worries*'

Dating blogger* Gaynor Evans, 57, swapped low self-esteem for body pride and a whole heap of fun

Suddenly single after my husband had an affair, I was full of fear and loathing. On top of heartbreak I felt frumpy at size 18 and looked downtrodden. But when I finally realised my marriage hadn't been giving me joy, everything changed. I started to see the break-up as a second chance – an opportunity to transform myself.

The stress of the split caused me to lose a little weight, but I also found being single gave me more time for the gym and taking care of my body. After dropping a dress size I felt more energetic and confident. I wanted to be out dancing, not moping at home.

That's when a friend suggested online dating. 'Oh, I can't do that! What would they see in me?'

I protested, but she created a dating profile for me anyway, using a photo I didn't think would turn a single head.

I forgot all about it for three months until one day, out of curiosity, I logged into my account and found a mailbox full of flattering messages. Just like that I found myself changing 'I can't' into 'I can, and I'm going to have fun'.

My first date, however, was a bit of a disaster. Forget chemistry, he had zero conversation, so I made a polite but quick exit. The lesson I learned was to always chat to potential dates on the phone before meeting them. My second date, with a charming, attractive Australian, couldn't have been more different. We had an instant spark, and every time we met, he made me feel special – I felt like I'd gone to heaven.

The first time we took things further, I was so nervous. He was younger than me and the thought of him seeing me naked – even if I was in better shape than I'd been in for years – terrified me. I remember worrying about how I could ensure the lights would be off, how I could discreetly undress, whether I'd be a disappointment... But he didn't care that I was older, that my body had carried four children, or that I had some wobbly bits. He fancied me for me – so who was I to argue?

That relationship eventually fizzled out, but I hadn't been looking for commitment, just fun and companionship. And I've found that by the bucket load online.

Do you know how many men are bothered by the fact I'm 57 and not some skinny 21-year-old? Zero! I don't need a man to feel good about myself, but after feeling so low, online dating has shown me I'm a pretty great person.



GAYNOR'S TOP DATING TIPS

Being interested in your date makes you interesting. I ask open-ended questions to make conversation *and* keep it going. Fake it till you make it! Wear something that makes you feel great, but is also comfortable. I always choose supportive underwear and a dress for dates.