

YOU'VE got the 3Cs - condo, cash and career. What's missing is the significant other to make life complete.

And unlike other career-minded professionals who've probably settled down or have a date this Saturday, you might have missed the boat.

Dating in this day and age is hard enough. But the age old adage of going out and meeting new people is lost on those who prefer to stay home after work to watch the latest television dramas.

But don't worry. While most couples meet by chance, if you are still single and available, there are ways to widen the net and catch the right fish so to speak.

Joining a dating agency or meeting like-minded singles through speed dating may have fallen out of fashion. Fear not, mobile apps such as Tinder and OkCupid are bringing singles together.

Tinder is a mobile application that allows singles within the same vicinity to chat. All you have to do is swipe right on a profile that attracts you. If the other person does likewise, you can start chatting immediately.

While Tinder is thinly veiled as a friend finder, it also doubles as a hookup finder. Within minutes (depending on how smooth or easy you are), you can meet and see if sparks fly.

Those looking for a serious, committed match might prefer more formal services such as speed dating since profiles are screened through beforehand.

At an entry point of between RM110 and RM220 per event, depending on the format and venue, speed dating allows participants to fact check with potential matches in a confined and yet sociable setting.

This solution suits those who are toying with the idea of meeting new people but are unwilling to take the plunge and engage a professional dating agency.

Possibly one of the more popular speed dating services is Cupid Space, an initiative by Wanita MCA to help match urban singles.

Its project executor Peggy Lim says the service, which started in 2001, sees many working adults on its platform.

"We charge a three-year, RM50 membership fee which serves to ensure registrants provide correct personal information and sign a declaration that they are legally single," Lim says.

Cupid Space's service ranges from monthly computer matching, a lunch or dinner gatherings, quarterly day trips and an annual dance party.

These events help participants socialise with the opposite sex and usually feature a speed dating session too.

For the uninitiated, speed dating sessions are a fairly straightforward affair. Typically, a group of 40 men and women are given five minutes each to speak to a participant of the opposite gender.

By the end of the night, they are given a form and asked to identify who they wish to keep in touch with. Should there be any matches, Lim's team will reveal their respective phone numbers the following day.

Cupid Space has over 2,500 member profiles and has matched 360 couples thus far. Lim says there are no guarantees no matter how couples meet as it involves the "delicate matter of the heart".

"We are seeing more participants born in the 1980s and 1990s and realise they are more self-centred.

"If a couple texts each other and do not get a reply within a day or two, they are willing to move on to another candidate as opposed to trying to court that party."



Splashing cash to find your soulmate

From speed dating, to Tinder and dating agencies, singles ready to mingle now have more options



by Behance Beh

While Lim's team does not facilitate setting up the first date beyond the speed dating round, she strongly suggests candidates meet first as opposed to ditching each other over unanswered texts.

Dating agency

For those who prefer something more discreet or wish to have their candidate pool filtered, signing up with a dating agency is an alternative.

iMatch Consultancy and Services founder Christine Foo says rates for her personalised services range between RM1,000 and RM4,000, depending on the needs and requirements.

Those looking for a higher number of introductions are likely to fork out more money. It's the same for those whose dating eligibility and criteria are harder to match, such as divorcees, high profile members of society, and those with demanding lifestyles, among others.

Foo says her services attract more singles in their 30s and those seeking a life partner.

She defends the fees she charges as the cost of weeding out potentially incompatible matches based on her clients' profiles.

Her clients are required to fill a form listing their personal details, likes, dislikes and preferences for a match.

"We screen through our singles

pool and let the client review our top picks before setting up the parties for their first date," she says.

However, do not expect to go on a date with a new match every weekend. It is highly recommended to meet a new person when one is feeling their best and in a relaxed state of mind. Dating is a process and not a job interview. Some people are nervous on the first date, but should they feel comfortable, then it certainly warrants a second meeting, she says.

Foo's clientele consists of eccentric personalities and individuals with high expectations. Their professional backgrounds range from accountants, engineers, bankers and programmers to auditors, among others.

These people often seek an equal and are not willing to settle for any random person.

"Some of them have gone through failed relationships and are tired and exhausted. They are not easily attracted to another, especially after they had been in a long-term courtship.

"Such people have usually been hurt badly and find it difficult to move into a new relationship," says Foo.

Hence, her matchmaking services extend beyond the initial pairing. Should a coupling be successful, she will follow up with them on a quarterly basis to check on their progress. Those who do not sound enthusiastic about the relationship could be advised to move on.

Relationships are built on compatibility and respect. There is no need for one to go to great lengths to accommodate the other.

When all is said and done, one should tread carefully in matters of the heart. Nobody wants to end up broken hearted, drinking boxed wine and munching on nuggets while sticking voodoo pins on the ex's photograph.

Before choosing the above options, Cupid Space's Lim advises singles to have at least an idea of what they are looking for in a partner.

"Everyone hopes for the richest or best looking partner. In reality, they have to know what suits them the most in terms of appearance and personality.

"Many will say they do not have a preference but when presented with the situation, they are likely to realise the match is not a right fit," she says.

If you do not know what you want, identify what you do not like and avoid it like the plague. **FOCUSM**

Lim (left) says those born in the 80s and 90s are more self-centred

Chemistry between a potential couple is important, says Foo

