

*How to say “thanks
but no thanks” to
online winks, flirts
and teases*

When someone is not a member of a dating site — or they are lazy — they float a trial balloon by clicking on “Wink” (depending on the site, these are also called flirts, teases or ice breakers).

I am convinced some men do a rudimentary search by criteria such as “breathing” and “lives on the planet Earth” and then wink at every woman who comes up. I say this because I get winks from men who are not just outside my region, but are not in the same state or country. This is like fishing with a net, versus the more skill-based fly fishing — they are just seeing who will respond to their broad contacts.

I've had winks from men 30 years younger, 20 years older, 5 inches shorter, lived on other continents, and who are far off my other criteria. On one level, I admire their boldness. On another level, I want to say, "Do you really think the Goddess would consider going out with a 27-year-old movie usher who lives with his parents and rides his bike to work because he doesn't have a car?"

So what to do? Do you just ignore them? If you get a lot of winks — say 5 or more a day — then you have to. But I like to respond to every contact, no matter how lame or mismatched. So I have a macro saved with a polite "no thanks." By typing 3 letters I get the following:

Thanks for your wink.

I'm sure you are a nice guy. I appreciate your interest in me; however, I don't think we'd be a good match.

Good luck in your search. I wish you the best!

I've even been thanked for how I say no! It seems so many people don't respond to any contact — whether wink or email — that any response is considered polite and classy.

Create your own polite message so you can just cut and paste.



*Hello — goodbye:
How to say no thanks
after meeting*

One of the hardest parts of dating is telling your date that it isn't a match so you don't encourage him to pursue you.

It is easiest to do in an email. I recommend this method if you've only met once. Start with thanking him for coffee, lunch, whatever. Comment on some of his positive characteristics. Then tell him it's not a match:

"Thank you for treating for coffee and our interesting discussion. You certainly know a lot about politics.

"You are an intelligent, warm, fun gentleman. However, I don't feel we are a match. The right woman will snap you up soon!"

Harder is on the phone. I've had to do this when a guy calls to set up a second date. It is uncomfortable,



but you need to be gentle yet honest — up to a point. Recently, after the guy asked when he could see me again, I said, “I appreciate your interest in me, but we’re not a match. You are a nice, fun guy, but I don’t feel we have enough in common to continue seeing each other. And it wouldn’t be fair to you to accept another date knowing that I don’t feel the spark I know needs to be there to develop a relationship.”

He said he was disappointed, but he understood.

He said, “So I’ve gained a new friend.”

“Exactly,” I replied.

The hardest way to communicate your lack of interest is in person. I’ve not done this often. It is definitely uncomfortable. The other day at the end of an initial lunch, the man said, “So

what happens next?” He wouldn’t have said this unless he was interested in a second date.

“We need to decide if we both want to spend more time together,” I replied.

“It’s up to the woman,” he said, “so what do you want to have happen next?”

I squirmed. “Since you are new to online dating, I suggest you date some more women,” was the best I



could muster. I just couldn't be blunt and say, "I don't really want to go out again." While many men appreciate honesty, they also have fragile egos.

I followed up with a thank you email wishing him well in his dating adventures. That made it clear.

You don't need to go into a review of all the things he said or did that were a turn off: how he used his finger for a pusher on his plate rather than a knife, interrupted you a lot, rarely asked anything about you, picked up his lamb chops with his fingers to eat them, or showed up at the nice restaurant in sweats. No, most men don't want to know that kind of detail. And what may have been annoying to you may not be to the next woman.

Strive to be kind, gentle, and to allow him to keep his dignity. I always appreciate it when a guy does that to me.



Releasing back into the dating pool

Doesn't this phrase sound benign? Refreshing even? Can you imagine a perfect-temperature, clear, tranquil pool, inviting you to dip your toes or immerse yourself totally in the rejuvenating water? Do you see yourself floating on the pristine pond as the gentle current rocks you into complete relaxation?

If only releasing someone — or being released — back into the dating pool was so calm. In fact, it is usually the opposite, full of stress, teeth gnashing, crying, yelling or drama. Often there are hurt feelings on one or both sides. Whether you are the releaser or the released, the relationship-liberating conversation typically entails tension, even if it is agreed upon by both.

It needn't be this angst ridden. It can be mature, sane and calm, depending on how and when the discussion is broached. If the conversation is begun sensitively and kindheartedly and in an appropriate place, there will be less difficulty.



Of course, if the person you're breaking up with has a bent for drama, anger and/or defensiveness, there will be yelling, name calling, perhaps even dish throwing. So make sure you do it in a public place where his behavior will be modified, or security can be fetched quickly. Also, make sure to meet him there so you have your own getaway car — I mean transportation. And changing the locks may be in order if he has a key to your place.

What are signs you should break up?

- ♥ You've become increasingly disenchanted with him. You no longer think his jokes are hilarious, nor his idiosyncrasies charming. You used to think his eating salad with his fingers was cute. Now you think it's gross.
- ♥ His behaviors are more irritating than ingratiating. His machine-gun-like laugh used to be amusing. Now it's immature. When he dismisses his forgetfulness with, "I have a sieve for a brain" it used to sound sweetly self-deprecating. Now you notice you hear it every time he conveniently "forgets" to do something you've asked.
- ♥ You let voice mail answer when he calls. You used to love his frequent calls. But now, the fifth call of the day to give a moment-by-moment report on what he's done since you last talked — an hour ago — has gotten old.
- ♥ You find you are disappointed or angry more than pleased with him. He doesn't keep his word,

forgets important events, doesn't do anything to please you or show he cares.

- ♥ He is argumentative, belittling, condescending, controlling, paranoid, angry, verbally abusive, self-obsessed and/or downright mean. Cut loose now and don't accept him back, no matter how much he begs. Don't.
- ♥ You don't want to introduce him to your friends or take him to the office party. You can't imagine kissing him or making love to him one more time. Or still being with him in a month.
- ♥ You hear yourself thinking, "We would really be better just as friends," "This isn't working," or "We aren't a match."

These are all signs you should let him go. You're not doing him any favors by sticking around when you're really not into the relationship. And you're preventing yourself from finding someone more compatible.

You justify staying because "I love him." It takes more than love to keep coupledness working. You can love your dysfunctional uncle, your abrasive aunt, your alcoholic cousin. But would you choose someone with their behaviors as your mate, despite your love for them? I hope you answer no. You deserve someone who is functional, kind and sober. Love is not enough to stay in a relationship that isn't working unless you're both willing to work hard to turn it around.

In management, there is sage advice on the best

time to fire someone: The first time you think of it. Now I don't believe you should fire someone on the spot when the thought crosses your mind. I believe you should talk to him/her about the problem and see if the behavior shifts into an acceptable range.

The same is true with a beau. You need to talk about it if something isn't working for you — and the sooner the better. Don't let it fester. If he can't or won't shift and it's very important to you, then unless you can decide it's not important, he will never measure up. So don't ignore it when you hear yourself thinking, "I can't imagine being with this guy long term," "I'm just not attracted to him romantically anymore," or "I'd never marry this man."

Many years ago, I dated a man for over a year who I knew I'd never marry. We even lived together. I knew from his comments he expected we'd get married, although he never actually proposed. Finally, I had to tell him we weren't going to get married. Much yelling, crying and door slamming ensued. While it wasn't right for him to assume, it wasn't right for me not to correct him when he'd make marriage comments. I led him on and it was not right. I swore I wouldn't do that to anyone in the future, nor would I want it done to me.

So if releasing needs to happen, think how you can do it considerately and sensitively — and soon. Very soon. Then you can relax in the peace-of-mind pool.