



WHAT IT FEELS LIKE

TO HELP PEOPLE FIND LOVE

Jennifer Haskins owns Two's Company, a matchmaking agency for people who want to find a lasting relationship

Words: Róisín Healy | Photography: Ramona Farrelly



IF YOU HAVE ANY ANXIETY ABOUT DATING, IT IS HELPFUL TO HAVE SOMEONE COACH YOU ON HOW TO PRESENT YOURSELF AND TO HELP EASE YOUR NERVES

No matter who you are, trying to find love is one of life's greatest challenges. If you aren't lucky enough to have met the love of your life in college or to fall for a friend of a friend, trying to meet that special someone becomes a minefield that is mind-boggling to navigate at any age. Jennifer Haskins started her introductions agency to solve that problem. Clients of Two's Company are people looking for a lasting relationship, and Jennifer and her team help match people who want similar things in life and love.

"The people who come to us want something genuine, wholesome and long term. They are emotionally ready for a relationship, and that is why we have such a high success rate," Jennifer explains. "It is such satisfying work. I remember seeing a couple I matched a while ago walking along Dun Laoghaire pier during the summer, holding hands and eating ice cream and even though I didn't go up to them, it warmed my heart just to see them together and still so happy."

Before turning her hand to matchmaking, Jennifer had been in business since she was 21, and ran a manufacturing business for over two decades.

"I was looking for a career change, and I read a magazine interview with an Irish woman running one of the top introductions agencies in the UK," Jennifer explains.

"I have a background in psychotherapy, counselling, coaching and other holistic therapies, so I really understand people and I knew this would be my forte."

She started researching companies in the UK and in Ireland, but what was key to building her knowledge was using herself as a guinea pig.

"I joined an agency myself as I was unattached and I wanted to see how the medium worked. I also tried internet dating and social events, so I can honestly tell people I have been there and done that. I have a great understanding of what it is like to be single and looking for a partner and trying all the different ways of meeting people."

"People thought I was crazy to start a business in the recession but I knew I had been thinking about it for long enough and that I had to get off the fence and go for it."

She started advertising, but what really made the difference was a *Sunday Times* article that ran on page four of the paper in time for Valentine's Day.

"Literally the phone didn't stop ringing for four days solid, from early morning until late at night. People from all over Ireland, all different age groups, all different walks of life. I was on a Valentine's break away myself

that week and I had to leave and come home early to deal with the inquiries, so that is how it took off."

Jennifer initially meets a potential client for a chat for about an hour.

"I get to understand the person, their personality, their lifestyle, their work, their background, their past relationships, and what they are looking for in a partner, and it is a privilege to have people open up to you in that way. If I think I have some potential matches for them, then I offer them membership, as I would never want to take on someone I wouldn't be able to look after."

As is the case with matters of the heart, sensitivity and understanding are huge aspects of what Jennifer does, particularly with clients who may be new to dating.

"Often, whether it is due to bereavement or a relationship breakdown, it may be a person's first foray into the modern dating world, and I do everything I can to support and encourage them. If a widowed person isn't ready, I work with a bereavement service to help them move past that difficult point. It is crucial that people are emotionally ready for a relationship."

Jennifer's client base is extremely diverse, with people signed up around the country from ages 24 right up to 82. Contrary to popular belief, interests and hobbies aren't what people on the lookout for romance should be focusing on.

"Meeting someone with similar values is the most key thing to a long, sustainable relationship. It's about more than what you do in your spare time – having things in common is great but it's also exciting and interesting to meet someone with different interests to you. But our values are handed down to us from older generations and are strongly ingrained in our psyche and personality."

What sets an agency like Two's Company apart from online dating is the privacy and the support.

"I think like anything, online dating works for some and not for others. I think the stigma and taboo is gone, but people may not like the idea of their profile being there for anyone to look at," Jennifer says.

"I also think if you have any anxiety about dating, it is helpful to have someone coach you on how to present yourself and to help ease your nerves."

Of course, there are dates that don't work out, but Jennifer advises her clients to keep trying.

"There is no formula for love and that special chemistry between people has never been defined. So, regardless, there is always that element of magic when you do meet the right someone." ✨

www.twoscompany.ie