

Swiping left on Tinder

Why some singletons are ditching the dating apps

By **LOGAN HUMPHREY**

Emma grabs her phone to “play” a daily game of Tinder. With every swipe of the finger, she soaks in each new face. That is until the guy from her English class pops up on the feed. Perturbed by that sight, Emma then transferred to the page of several direct messages where responses were awaited. Hoards of men blatantly asking for a hookup align the page, top to bottom. Annoyed by the continuous pattern from the app, Emma swipes out of the app to find a partner in a real world setting, not on a phone application.

The young adult demographic, being the most tech savvy, love to use the innovative online dating apps in hopes to find the one. Whether it's Tinder, Bumble or Hinge, there are several apps to choose from. The Pew Research Center conducted a survey which discovered that 48% of people between 18 and 29 have used dating apps at least once in their lives. Only 17% of those were successful in finding a marriage partner or at least one committed relationship. Despite the low success rate, users strongly place their romantic dreams in the hands of a generated algorithm. It then takes most people hours upon hours of swiping left and right in order to get somewhere. For some people, an algorithmic format like this is not going to find them their oxytocin. There is a culmination of reasons as to why singletons desire to find love elsewhere, in a setting that they can take more seriously.

Emma Armstrong is a fourth year speech pathology major at Ohio University. She has spent several un-serious years on Tinder. Emma is a social butterfly, in favor of in-person flirtation rather than through a dating app. When Emma first entered college, she labeled herself to be bisexual. Though in more recent months, she has decided that was a lesbian, with no more attraction to men.

To her, Tinder or any dating app in general, has always seemed like a joke, apps that shouldn't be taken seriously. Part of it comes from her inability to see men as people, as she states. During her time on the app, she's happened to have two Sugar Daddies who have shuffled thousands of dollars to her. She would continuously receive free meals on the daily, lunch and dinner, just from different matches. Apart from the fun and games, there were several meet-ups that did not go so well. Eventually, Emma undownloaded the fun and stuck with her

usual routine of socializing with someone face-to-face.

Face-to-face interaction is deemed as one of the most crucial aspects to start a worthy relationship with someone, platonically or romantically. It can't necessarily be provided through the confines of online dating. With a screen barrier placed to restrict that in-person interaction, the questions of authenticity arise. Does this person really look like a Greek god? Did that man really catch that large fish? Doubt and a lack of trust is enough to dislike this structure, whereas someone can look at a person with their own two eyes and gain a better first impression. The Pew Research Center found that 7 in 10 dating app users believe that it is very common for people to lie about their appearance.

Dating apps depend on love at first sight, or technically, love at first swipe. A user will select six pictures of themselves to reveal themselves to the dating world, plus a brief bio to cram in a few details about themselves. These apps rely on physical attraction to further its algorithm but not everybody can fall in love this way. A 2017 study from the University of Groningen found that only a third of people have actually experienced love at first sight.

“My personality is not going to be presented well in six pictures and a bio.” Emma stated. She expresses further that a person could not possibly tell how funny she is based on her set profile. No matter how well technology emerges, there is no way a person's whole persona can be presented as thoroughly as it might be while in the actual presence of a new suitor.

Since these apps are built on a person's level of attractiveness, some might not be able to conjure up several matches and likes that some people get. Thus, the thoughts that you aren't “pretty” enough start to flood in. 18-year-old Cassie Dye would perk up with the notification of a new match after about a week-long drought. Her experience on the app differs from her fellow friends that use the apps, as they were receiving likes and matches on the daily. Cassie's self-esteem dropped due to the lack of matches and in order to boost up that low confidence, Cassie would configure Hinge's set location to the country of Ireland. The Irish lads from afar were able to provide just a little bit of comfort for Cassie, even though there was a little chance of a relationship

being created off the app.

With the app's whole premise based on attractiveness and the amplified aspect of hookup culture, there arises this stigma of what a swipe actually means.

"You're basically swiping based on whether or not you want to have sex with them." Emma professed.

The hookup aspect of these apps have escalated rather extensively because of its convenient format. But for those who don't want the one night stand, it's difficult for them to even use the apps without being asked for sex.

"Dating apps have this undertone that just implies sex." said Ohio University senior Lily Spiers, who laments her use of the apps for that sole reason.

"The Current Collegiate Hookup Culture" book by Pace University professor Aditi Paul, features a qualitative analysis of the differing characteristics of those who prefer to use dating apps rather than in-person. It found that people that use dating apps have a higher sex permissiveness whereas those that don't have a lower sex permissiveness.

With the majority of people using the apps wanting to find a local hookup, people looking for something more serious have it harder, hence why they have started to stray away from the apps.

Among the many who have begun to close out the apps, freshman Lily Bruggeman follows suit succeeding her raunchy hookup experiences. Along with Emma, she too doesn't think dating apps should be

taken seriously.

"I don't think anything good can actually come from Tinder," Lily said.

Lily had downloaded the apps prior to entering the college atmosphere as a way of preparing herself for the dating culture at her school. But it wasn't enough to prepare her for the horrendous hookups and downright diabolical men she had to encounter in the matter of three months. She sees dating apps as a form of self-sabotage, not seeing it beneficial in either finding a relationship or a casual hookup. Her mental stress lessened when the apps were no longer being a burden on her phone.

With the rarity of people actually finding love on an app designed to find them "the one", there is a growing consensus that Tinder, Bumble, Hinge or any dating app on the market, should not be taken seriously. Want to have some non-harming fun with the opposing gender? These apps could definitely fulfill that prophecy. But looking for anything other than a hookup, a real human connection, requires face-to-face interaction to allow a true authentic relationship to be built.

Only in the real world could Emma connect eyes with a stranger across the bar and lipsync the entirety of Taylor Swift's "All Too Well" 10-minute version to each other without breaking eye contact. The song mellows out and the two exchange phone numbers, a successful connection was made without the need to swipe right.