

How to survive 87 first dates? Write the book

By **Helena Oliviero**
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Divorced at 45, Ginger Emas joined an online dating site after convincing herself she was ready to go on a date.

Or maybe she wasn't quite as ready as she thought.

"I get an e-mail from a man who asks me, 'Do you have sex on the first date?'" Emas recalled.

Oh, how the rules of the game changed while she was married and blissfully unaware of the fast-paced, digital meat market.

Despite the flippant e-mail (which she ignored), she joined seven online dating sites, conquered the lingo, and went on 87 first dates in two years. Along the way, the Dunwoody resident gathered string for her book, "Back on Top: Fearless Dating After Divorce" (Globe Pequot Press, \$14.95), just out this month.

The book includes tips on what to wear on a first date, as well as a primer for online dating and advice for how to tell a guy you're just not that into him.



Ginger Emas talks about her online route to dating after her divorce at age 45.

Meet the author

Book signing/dating game event with Ginger Emas:

7 p.m., Wednesday, Worthmore Jewelers, 117 East Court Square, Decatur. 404-370-3979

("Be polite and say, 'Thank you. I had a great time, but I just don't think we are a match.'")

She also includes hair-raising tales from the "dating-after-di-

vorced thing" – such as the cheap-skate who, after standing her up once, went on and on with his woe-is-me stories about alimony, then didn't offer to pay even his portion of the check.

"After going on three or four dates, I thought, 'Oh, my gosh. This is a comedy show,'" said Emas, now 49, a freelance writer. "I would tell my friends these stories and they couldn't wait to hear about the next one."

She spoke with the AJC about her ultimate date-from-hell, how to dress to impress and whether she's still on the market:

Q: Tell us about your worst first date.

A: It was an early Match.com date before I knew all the rules. He sounded like a very well-rounded guy – martial arts instructor, gourmet cook, ballroom dancer.

I needed a date for a formal dance. So after we chatted online a bit, I asked if he'd like to go. ... He showed up in a tuxedo, sort of. No tie and his shirt

was stained. He walked me to the dance floor and he was spinning me around and around.

Just when I thought it couldn't get any worse, he dipped me very deep without any warning, and we fell.

Q: You talk about the importance of wearing a good first-date outfit. What would you wear?

A: I probably wore the same first date outfit 50 times – a cocoa-colored crushed velvet, short-sleeved, scooped neck top, not too tight but not too loose, and it showed just a little bit of cleavage – and freckles, because that's what I have.

I can understand it can sound shallow, but I really believe in feeling good about what you are wearing and believe women should wear something a little flirty and romantic but not slutty. I know there's a fine line there. I believe a great pair of jeans is a great investment; better than Botox. I wear mine with 2-inch heels.

Q: What's your dating status now?

A: I have been in a relationship for a year and a half, and my friends tease me and call me Demi because he is younger than me. He gets along with my ex-husband and my 13-year-old son. We all get along great.

We met through work. He's got all of my must-haves – funny, smart, kind and mentally and physically healthy. And he's got several of my "nice-to-haves" – he's got a subtle, sexy streak, and he loves boating.

Q: So what's your ultimate take on online dating?

A: I still think it's one of the strongest ways to meet men in my age group. We are not club-hopping. I have tried seven different sites, and I think there is a site for everyone.

Technology has really changed the dating scene from my first time around. I mean, I've been viewed 48,000 times on one site. Where else would I have a pool of 48,000 interested men?