

## RELATIONSHIPS

# Christmas rush can bear down on singles market, too

By Mark Wolf  
ROCKY MOUNTAIN NEWS

Singles who are hot-wired to find someone over the holidays may be better-served by taking a deep breath and waiting for the crisp, unhurried air of the new year.

While the season may seem made for couples and families, not everyone is obsessing about finding a romantic partner for the holidays.

"The men aren't so keen on it, but the women are," said Michele Fields, owner of Bon Jour Inc. matchmaking service.

"People are actually more anxious to join in January. They've assessed the last year, and it's time to really get serious."

Singles aspiring to couplehood traditionally make for a January spike in the membership at It's Just Lunch, which matches singles for lunch dates, said owner Leslie Lessig.

"Lots of people break up over the holidays," Lessig said. "It's

very, very stressful. If they didn't break up, they saw their families and their families said, 'Why aren't you seeing anybody?'"

However, she said, December has also been a busy month: "The first two weeks of the month have been like a full month. People have black-tie parties and they don't want to go alone, especially if they're new in town and don't know anyone.

The traditions of holiday gift-giving can also put a crimp on singles looking to start relationships this time of year, Fields said.

"Men are saying, 'I don't want to meet someone right around the holidays and be expected to buy a gift.' Men are a little resistant because they don't want all these expectations. That's why a lot of people wait."

January is a great time for singles to reassess where they are and what they want in life, according to Laurie Cameron, a Denver life and relationship coach.

"The first step is to create a really clear vision of what you want

your life to be like and how a relationship fits into that," said Cameron.

"Part of that is figuring out what you want, the qualities you really need to live your vision, the core stuff, the non-negotiables you won't settle on."

Singles need to look in the mirror before they start looking for a partner, Cameron advises.

"Be the partner you're seeking," she said. "A lot of that has to do with getting your own life ready for a successful life partnership: completing old relationships, having your career in order, reassessing your relationship skills."

A big part of knowing what you want, she said, is knowing what you *don't* want.

"That's where a lot of people fall short," said Cameron. "They know what they want but there's still a desperate quality about wanting to find a life partner and they're still willing to settle. As soon as singles stop being willing to settle, that becomes incredibly attractive."

"There are singles that you can tell may as well be walking around with a sticky note on their forehead that says: DESPERATE. When you're living your life as a successful single, you're empowering yourself. It's about being proactive, being out in the world living your life, not in a desperate way or having tunnel vision about finding a partner."

A focused approach to life will help singles succeed in whatever way they choose to meet people, Cameron believes.

"They can be more successful if they go in knowing what they want and being really clear about it," she said. "The quality of the relationship is an important focus to maintain. We have high expectations of people. It's reasonable to have high expectations of a relationship instead of expecting a person to be perfect."

*Related Web sites: askapro.biz (Michele Fields), lauriecameron.com (Laurie Cameron) and itsjustlunch.com (It's Just Lunch).*