

## 14 Valentine's Day Tips for Lonely Heart Investment Managers



- 1. Love the One You're With** – Your existing investors are your best relationships (hopefully). If they're not, you've got bigger issues. Make sure you are giving them the time and attention they need. When was the last time you sat down one on one to understand their hopes and desires (read goals and objectives)? Listen carefully. You might just learn something new.
- 2. Let's Just Be Friends** – Sometimes this means "I'm just not that into you", but other times it means exactly what they said. Friends are very valuable. They may introduce you to your next investor. Also, check back with friends regularly. Perspective changes with time. "We started out as friends..." is often heard at weddings. Friendship might grow into love.
- 3. Confidence is sexy. Hubris is Not** – Know your strengths and use them to their fullest. Let them shine through to investors, but don't shout them every chance you get.
- 4. Warts and All** – They say "love is blind." We don't believe it. Don't expect investors to simply ignore your weaknesses. Those weaknesses are risks. Self improvement never goes out of style. Can you clearly and succinctly articulate three weaknesses? More importantly, what have you learned and what are you doing about them?
- 5. The Modern Family** – Fund II, a dog, white picket fence and station wagon. Sorry, it doesn't work that way anymore. Ward and June Cleaver left the building five years ago during the global financial crises. Fund III might not be the right next move. Step back and think of your skills as an investor and manager. Then consider offering a compelling structure that is responsive to clients' goals and objectives (see #1 above) – whether it's a typical fund, pledge fund, programmatic joint venture, or separate account. And remember, all your skills don't need to be offered in the same format.
- 6. Don't Miss the Obvious** – Remember your BFF from high school or college when times were tough? See if there's more to that relationship. Just maybe, they want to take it to the next level.
- 7. Time is the Best Gift of All** – Chocolates are nice, flowers are sweet, but nothing says you care like some quality time. Invite them to come see your recent work, or better yet pay them a visit. Everyone's extremely busy these days, trying to do more with less. Be understanding if it's hard for them to make time. You won't get faulted for trying.
- 8. Similarities are the Bedrock of a Good Relationship** – Nicole Kidman is Australian and Tom Cruise is American. They both speak English but didn't speak the same language. They're both actors but similarities probably end there – stature being an obvious one. Try to find investors with common goals and objectives. That will give you a much better chance for success. And don't simply shoot for the biggest and the best. There's a reason many movie stars aren't married to plumbers.

9. **Why Buy the Cow when the Milk is Free** – Some investors are asking for a free first deal these days. That's a great way to get to know each other, but don't forget your existing clients. They have supported you over the years and should probably have first shot at that deal. If you do a deal with a new relationship, let it season a bit. No one wants to get married right after the first date. After some time has passed, and you have proven to be a good partner, see if they are ready for a more significant commitment (or at least ready to meet your parents). If they can't commit, maybe it's time to find love elsewhere.
10. **It's Me, Not You** – Let's be honest, most of the time this really means it's you not them. Most people don't like to hurt feelings. Politely ask for constructive criticism, listen, absorb it and don't immediately try to convince them otherwise. Thank them for their feedback. If you think they've missed something, thoughtfully respond with additional information and leave it with them to consider. But remember, a lot of investors are still trying to rearrange their portfolios and so it may really be them, not you.
11. **If You Love Them, Tell Them... but Keep it Short and Sweet** – If it seems like you're "clicking" with an investor, be direct and tell them what you're thinking. Ask if you can take the next steps. Keep it to the point, don't gush about it. If they say no, that will save embarrassment next time you see each other. If they say yes, the shorter you keep it, the faster they can act. Also, please don't express love to the last five people you met. Word gets around.
12. **Play the Field** – The field is ever changing. Yesterday's best spot to find single people isn't where you want to be today. Don't go chasing the big names of yesterday. David and Victoria Beckham are already married. They're working hard to make the most of their existing relationship. Find the investors that are still building their portfolios...or newly single after a previous relationship gone wrong. If you've been out of the field for a while, consider a friend that can introduce you to the right people (such as yours truly). And besides, a relationship with Posh or Becks isn't all it's cracked up to be. He's always off playing football with his mates and she's running around doing the Paris, Milan, New York fashion thing.
13. **Gardens Need to Be Tended** – If you had a date with someone three years ago and then just saw them again last week, that doesn't constitute a three year relationship. A lot has changed in three years. You need see people regularly if you want them to get to know and love you.
14. **Diamonds are a Girl's Best Friend** – Performance, performance, performance. Great risk-adjusted investment returns are the goal. Work hard and deliver the best you can. That makes you look good, and your investors look great by extension.