

Interview with Terri Lechton

By: Susie Hardesty

This is an interview with Terri, who has been our most successful Do It Yourself Matchmaking Club (DIY) member. We will discover how she used the DIY club to her advantage and how she was able to inspire other members, find guys, and support the mission of the club.



Susie Hardesty: How did you get involved in the DIY club?

Terri Lechton: It was a little bit by chance. When I went in to talk to Dating Directions, I thought this was a really good idea. What did I know about dating? I had not dated since before I was married and dating is a lot different when you get into your 40's, 50's, and 60's. What I found was that I had been married so long that I really did not understand how to date. So, I looked at DIY as a way to teach me. When I got into the DIY one of the things I did was write down all of the recommended books. Then, I started going to the workshops because I was not having a lot of success on my own. I was doing online dating and having zero success, so I thought of this as a way to learn how I could better myself and make improvements.

The other thing is I did not have a lot of single girlfriends. I had been in a circle of friends where everyone was married. While married friends can give lots of advice, they are looking back at when they were 20 years old, which was decades ago. Or they are telling you things that they wish they would have done, which has no relationship to dating in reality. They really did not understand what is going on in the current dating scene. I needed a group of people I could talk to that understood what was happening now.

SH: Thanks Terri. That was a great reason to join the group. Once you joined, you became really active in the group. We saw you at most of the workshops. We always tell our members, "If you don't use it like a gym membership, it is not going to work, so you really have to use it." One of things that you clearly did, right from the beginning, was you got in there and made friends. Could you talk to us about how important it is to make friends within the group and how that is the way you expand your social circle?

TL: As I said, I really did not have a lot of single friends and by getting involved, I was able to meet other women who were single and dating. I was also doing meet ups and it forced me to expand myself and put myself more in a single's world. Once I did that, I started to have a lot of friends and activities. As the other women and I started to date again, one of the best things we got from the membership was the ability to compare notes, bolster each other up, reinforce things we had learned, and help each other through the dating process. Particularly when we got to those moments where we were ready to run away, thinking this guy was horrible etc. we were able to call our friends check in with them and they would sort of talk us through it. Sometimes we found out that the reality was not actually what we had thought. Sometimes it was our fear and our own weirdness coming out.

It was really important that we had supportive people and people going through the same things that we were. Also, on occasions like holidays and birthdays where we would normally be alone,

instead, we had each other. I had a group of people who were in the same situation. We could hang out together and because of that, we were not so desperate to meet someone.

SH: I think that it is really true that you have this period of time where you are single and you are waiting for this person to show up in your life. This is a time where it is important that you live your best life. Terri, I can tell you that you are truly an example for how to live life to the fullest. One thing that you did that I really liked was that you started to go on trips with some of the other members in the club. Can you tell us a little about that?

TL: We did some small trips as well as a trip down to Nashville. Even though we had started to date people, we were not far enough along in our relationships to be spending holidays together. We wanted something to do over New Year's Eve, so we went to Nashville. We had a great trip. We also had small one day trips, both with the club and on our own. We went biking, to concerts, on sightseeing trips, etc.

SH: What you did for the other members was amazing. You were dating a lot and meeting different types of men. You were one of our great RECYCLERS. What I mean by that is, when you met great guys who were not right for you, you brought them back to our group. You brought them to the Bring A Guy party and introduced them in other ways. I know that you matched one person in the group who is still in that relationship.

You also love to do research and I think you thought of dating as a research project. You pulled together all of your carefully sought after information and taught us a class about online dating. I think it is that law of reciprocation that you live by. Can you tell us a little bit about that?

TL: One of the things that I think is important is, that I would meet people and I would think, age-wise or interest wise, this is not really a person for me. But I would also think about the group of women in the club and if these guys would be good for them. I would try to get to know the other women in the club and find out about who they were looking for. By knowing what the other women were looking for, when I met a guy who wasn't right for me I would be able to say to him, "Hey would you like to meet someone?" I did that on several occasions. I would say, "I don't know if it is a go or a no go, but we are all trying to meet people." On one occasion, I met a guy who asked for help writing his online profile and immediately thought of a friend in the group who had a lot in common with him. They have been dating for almost a year. In these situations, where I meet someone that won't work for me, why not have it work for someone else? What we try to do is introduce people to each other. If you do, it will come back to you. I believe what goes around, comes around.

SH: We really do believe that what you put out there comes back to you. So put out what you want. I think you have helped a lot of people in this club and you have been a shining example of what can happen in someone's life. We were really excited because we actually found your boyfriend for you. I felt that the two of you were so similar in your essence. But can you share with us what you did not know in the beginning?

TL: I keep a gratitude list. Every time I would date someone, I would put down one of the things I was really grateful for in meeting that person. I really tried to stay in the mindset that EVERYONE I met was a great opportunity. When I look back on it, I can see now that most of those men would not have worked anyway. What I found in online dating was that it really took about 6 dates before I actually knew someone. I followed the advice I got from DIY and decided that as long as the guy didn't turn my stomach or seem scary, he would get a second date. I always waited until right around date six before I made the decision to move forward with the relationship or not. I had to give it that amount of time before I could honestly get a clear picture of whether the relationship

would work. I dated close to 40 guys in a year. Most of these guys did not get to 6 dates, but that is where I usually made the decision.

When I actually met the person I am now in a relationship with, I did not know immediately if he was right for me. We had fun on the first date and there were no red flags, so I accepted a second date. It really took us about 6 weeks until we made the decision that we only wanted to date each other. That knowledge definitely did not come right away.

We make so many bad assumptions in the dating process and we build whole stories around them. He and I had our stories and were thinking things that were not true about each other. He and I were having fun with each other. I thought he lived in a cardboard box because he talked about money. I thought he had all sorts of health issues. I thought he was too old for me. I thought we had nothing in common. In reality he had a very nice house, he is very athletic, and he is willing to do anything I want to do. Once I got to know him, I found out that all of my assumptions were incorrect, but it took months to get there.

In the process, I found that being flexible was really important. I realized that I shouldn't have too tight of a list and just to have fun and see where it goes. My biggest advice is to not make a decision in 10 or 15 minutes. At that point, if you think that person is not right for you, it may not be true. You have to get to know someone in different settings. You have to see how they interact in different places with different people. You have to really learn about the person, or you might pass up someone that could be good for you.

SH: That is great advice and thank for taking the time to tell us about your experiences.