

**Demographics:** Straight, White woman. Medium Income. Relationship status: in a relationship that did start online.

**Interview Summary:**

Sarah is a very exuberant and bubbly woman, who is 23 and white. She is in a relationship with a man she met on Hinge 10 months ago. She expressed feelings that were overwhelmingly positive around the use of apps, calling them fun. She refers to her period of time dating on the app as "man of the month". Despite enjoying the apps, she doesn't think she would continue to be on them if she hadn't had success within a year.

She remarked on how dating apps have flipped traditional ways of meeting, for her, they were in college: where you met someone, got to know them as a friend, and then became romantic. She also touched on themes of safety and the ubiquity of online dating.

**Prevalent Themes:**

1. The gamification of dating
2. The ubiquity of online dating platforms
3. Lack of commitment in online dating
4. Online vs. In-person norms
5. Safety of dating apps
6. Dating apps as a third party in the dating process

**Interview date:** 11/14/2023

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**Transcript:**

**Interviewer:** Okay, and I would love if you could start with just like demographics about yourself. Age, where you live, age, ethnicity, sexuality. And like a general income bracket high, medium low. Okay. And then if you're sorry, also relationship status if you're in a relationship currently and whether or not you met that person online, like 10 months ago.

**Interviewee:** I am 23 years old, I'm Caucasian, or white. I am medium, medium to high income, I guess, depending on where you live. Um, but I live in New York. So I would say medium to high. And I am straight is my sexuality. And I'm in a relationship and I met on hinge. Awesome.

**Interviewer:** Thank you for sharing that. How long were you on hinge before you met your current partner?

**Interviewee:** Um I guess? Well, I've been on it since 2020. But I met my previous partner on hinge as well. Oh, wow. So then this second relationship, I guess I was on hinge for a little over a year on and off.

**Interviewer:** Did you use any other dating apps? Or were you primarily focused on hinge?

**Interviewee:** Um, I've only gone on dates with people from hinge. Okay.

**Interviewer:** And how would you describe I guess your general into like, use use of hinge like what was like your, you open up the app, when you when you're out, you open up kind of like, walk me through what that looks like for you.

**Interviewee:** I open up the app. I respond to any messages I might have or look at like any matches. And anyone who might have liked me and hit yes or no. And then I go through my, I guess feed whatever, you might call it my feed of potential matches. And I select yes or no. Usually until my matches run out. That's 10 people. I'm not sure how many people you get to choose before my free version.

**Interviewer:** Would you say you are how would you just like define your selection criteria? Like how selective were you when you were going through the app.

**Interviewee:** Um, I would take pretty selective I feel like by the time I was using it for the second time and going on dates, like, I know my own type. And like there's a beyond a certain age, I'm not really interested in I think when Hinch came out with like their paid version, they limited your ability to select more specific criteria. So then, on my end, I had to be more specific. So age, I mean, obviously pictures. I guess where people are from, I look at people's education too. Personally, I'd like to date someone who has a college degree. But everyone has their own criteria. Height, I guess, too. But once you look through all that it's usually good enough. Sometimes if people do a lot of drugs, and we're really interested in that either. Yeah, and I swiped from there.

**Interviewer:** Do you think if you weren't in a relationship now you would still be on the apps? Yeah.

**Interviewer:** Why is that?

**Interviewee:** Um, because I think it's fun. I think it's pretty easy to meet people on on a dating app. If you know what you're looking for. And I think I personally am willing to go on dates with people and just try it out.

**Interviewer:** I would like to hear more about like, what about it feels fun to you.

**Interviewee:** Well, yeah, obviously you know that I love to have a man of the month. I think it's I just think it's I think It's fun to meet people. And I think a lot of the times, obviously, what you're looking for on an app is not going to exactly reflect what they're like in person. And it takes one or two or three dates to kind of figure that out. And then from there, it's kind of like the decision of, oh, should we keep seeing each other not? And many times it's not. And that's okay. Because better options will come along. But I think after some time, it's definitely frustrating. Like, I think I've still on hinge for over a year, and like, still didn't have any success with it, I

probably would not still be on it. But I think if you're willing to go casually, date people and date a lot of different people over a span of time, then it's really fun.

**Interviewer:** You mentioned it's kind of like a hot take, do you think that's not something that a lot of people feel? And why do you think that you see it differently than them?

**Interviewee:** I think that everybody has hinge like everybody's on hinge. But most people don't meet people on hinge, like people will swipe and people will have casual conversations. But I think a lot of my friends are not willing to actually go meet a stranger in person. Because it's scary. It's, I mean, a lot of things can go wrong when you're meeting a stranger on hinge in New York City. And you know, not much about them. Like if you don't even know their last name, and you're just meeting them at a bar or restaurant. It's risky. There's a lot that can go wrong. By but I think if you I don't know, I think there's a way to ask the right questions and find out about a person. I feel like I never went on a date with someone who I couldn't find on social media somewhere before I went and like if I was like, Oh, I found this person. I have this like random mutual friend. In my mind, that's like, a safe bet enough.

**Interviewer:** Do you think that the biggest hesitation of people and like converting chats into like, real life meetups is physical safety?

**Interviewee:** No. I mean, I think that's part of it. I think too, it's just like, for our age, coming out of college, going on actual dates is really different than what we're used to. We're used to, like meeting people in college, probably drunk, like you're not sober. When you meet people, you probably have a sexual relationship with someone before you have, like, an emotional relationship with someone. And now that we're, I guess, adults, and we're actually interested in dating. A lot of times the relationship doesn't, it's not going to start as a sexual relationship. And you have to build that connection with someone before you get to that point. And so I think people are scared to do that, or just don't know how, because it's not really part of our culture anymore.

**Interviewer:** That's really interesting. Expand on that a little bit.

**Interviewee:** Like I guess the difference between a romantic relationship that kind of like, grows over time versus Yeah. What we have now? Like, what hinge kind of creates? Yeah, I guess with hinge. I mean, you have a virtual relationship, or is any dating app, you have a virtual relationship, you don't know. This person's, like, really anything about them besides the way that they text and, like minut details about them, that they share over? Tech? Like you don't know what they sound like, you don't know what they look like in person. You don't know their sense of humor in person. There's just so many things you don't know about a person. So I think it's essentially a blind date. Every time you go on. Online dating, you just have you have a little bit of background from conversations and things like that. But I guess most of the time, you haven't really, like spoken on the phone or like FaceTime, you know? Yeah.

**Interviewer:** It's like you're kind of throwing yourself into a new situation. As opposed to like, what you're mentioning in college, where you like, kind of know someone over time, right?

**Interviewee:** Right. Like in person, you're, when you meet someone in person or in college, you are, like, attracted to that person and what they're like. Like, in the moment in real life in college, when you meet someone on hinge, your first attraction to them is what they want you to know about them and what like their, their persona is online, which can be completely different things.

**Interviewer:** Have you ever found that that was the case like, you know, someone portrayed themselves as something that they weren't?

**Interviewee:** Yeah, I think that happens a lot. Um, like, I've gone on a few dates with someone, and I meet them in person. And they're just like, the photos are not accurate to what they look like, whether it's better or worse, or their personality is not what I thought it would be. Or they don't have the sense of humor that I thought it was going to be. don't really think anyone's lined up exactly to what I thought they would be like, interesting.

**Interviewer:** Did you feel like does that feel fake to you?

**Interviewee:** No, I think that's just the way that it is. I think what someone's obviously uploading photos of themselves, like, from maybe a couple of years ago, that aren't what they look like, now. That's fake. That's not right. But I think otherwise, like, I mean, you can't know what someone's like, just because you know what they look like.

**Interviewer:** Yeah. Yeah, absolutely. Um, talk to me a little bit about your own profile, and like the process of making it.

**Interviewee:** Um, yeah, that's probably fake too \*laughs\*, as is like, every girl's profile. Um, it's like the best of the best photos of you. And probably you and your friends work on making it together. And it has like, one up close of your face and maybe, like a selfie, and a group photo that shows the right amount of friends but not too many where you don't know which ones you like, maybe you're doing an activity or, like, anything like that. But yeah, and then, I guess, other things on my profile, I put, like, my age and my college, I don't think I ever put my job just because I didn't want everybody to be able to find me either. Yeah. Um, like, I wanted a little bit of privacy. Like, I didn't put any social media either. Because I don't want people like being able to find my first and last name without me. Knowing them yet. And maybe hometown or, or not hometown, where I live now. And height maybe and like that I drink? And that's probably it.  
\*laughs\*

**Interviewer:** Did you ever feel like the theme has come up a lot in these conversations has been like, how? It's almost like a game like hinge can feel like a game? Yeah. Like how you kind of have to learn the platform before it can work for you. Yeah, did you feel like that at all? Ever? You can also totally say no.

**Interviewee:** Oh, totally. I agree with that. Well, because the it's like your for you page on TikTok. Like, the more the platform understands your type, the more you're gonna get people that you're looking for. And, like after a while, I probably swipe on the same type of people that I'm interested in. And like, if you go on for the first time in a day, that's the only people that I'm going to have on my like, feed and then once I run out of those, I guess top choices and the rest of the men come up.

**Interviewer:** Was there ever like a feeling of like interchangeability or like that they were kind of you know, not but it wasn't really that serious or like you weren't that accountable to like carrying on the relationship?

**Interviewee:** Oh, yeah, totally. That's why I call it man of the month. Like, it's okay. It's just whoever feels it stopped for the time being. Yeah. But I feel like it was, for me it was whoever, like was willing to meet in person, I don't care that much to have a virtual relationship. And I don't want to be talking to someone for an extended period of time for an app. So if you want to meet in person, and like, I was definitely interested in that, but if you want him to keep texting, that's good. Like, I'll pass on that one. Yeah. Fair, so fair.

**Interviewer:** And like, kind of talk me through the process of finding this latest relationship off of hinge. How did that progress for you guys?

**Interviewee:** Yeah, I think we talked on hinge back and forth, like maybe five times and he was like, Do you want to meet this weekend? And I was like, Sure. Yeah. And that's basically it. Like, we didn't know that much about each other. Which is, like, kind of preferred, in my opinion, I would rather learn it all in person. Yeah. Um, and then we made our date on hand, and then I was like, Oh, you could text me, here's my number. And then we went on the date from there.

**Interviewer:** Do you think compared to, I guess, you said your past relationship was also a hinge relationship? Have you been in a relationship that didn't start on social media or a social thing up?

**Interviewee:** Yes.

**Interviewer:** Do you feel like there were any differences in like, the early phases of those to, like an in person meeting versus an online meeting?

**Interviewee:** Yeah, I think was meeting in person. You're your relationship is not necessarily, like starts off more platonic. Because the purpose of your need, or the way you meet someone not online? Might not is not always going to be with the intent of dating. Yeah. Where whereas if you meet on hinge, you're like, is this going to be a romantic relationship or not? And if not, you probably don't speak again. Yeah.

**Interviewer:** Very interesting. Um, okay, I'm gonna stop recording

