

Action Magazine Fall, 2008

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More people are turning to the Web to find someone to share their life with than ever before. In response, online dating sites are flourishing. When I began my research on disability related dating sites, I was amazed to find over 15 different websites.

There are two basic types of sites: matchmakers where someone reviews your profile and matches you with others depending on your parameters, or sites where you review the profiles and photos yourself and send a message to someone and post a profile of your own.

What follows is a small sampling of what's out there on the internet for people looking to connect with others—potentially significant others—with disabilities.

Soulful Encounters

Soulful Encounters (www.soulfulencounters.com) is another “dating site for the medically disabled,” according to Louise Maxwell, creator of site. At Soulful Encounters users browse profiles to find members who meet their search criteria. Users must be a member to contact other members. This site is free for searching to find people, contacting people or using member services such as chat areas or message boards which are in the process, according to Maxwell. She hopes to make the site “one that persons that have already met someone can still come into the site and find out about medical news and resources.”

Maxwell said Soulful Encounters “offers unique services that I have not found on other sites such as counseling in psychotherapy, nutrition and life coaching.” Letters from the health experts will be posted on a rotating basis and members will be allowed to send in questions. However, said Maxwell “if they would like to use their services, that is separate.” There is a charge, and services are provided on a by appointment basis by telephone.

It was not until she became disabled herself and was unable to work outside the home that she decided to start the site. “I have the belief that there are not too many people that want to be alone. . . everyone seems to want someone in their lives in spite of what people may think,” said Maxwell.

Soulful Encounters began in May 2006 and currently has over 550 members. Maxwell said that although she is located in Canada most of the members are from the states. All kinds of disabilities, physical, psychological, mental, and medical conditions are represented.