



The Future of Dating ²⁰₂₃



A Renaissance in Dating, Driven by Authenticity


Online dating is now the most common way that singles are making new connections. Not only are the majority of people under 30 using dating apps according to a recent survey, but over half (55%) have been –and 37% know someone who has been– in a serious relationship with someone they met on Tinder.¹ Dating apps have become a bonafide stepping stone into the dating pool for many singles, with Tinder standing out as the #1 most-downloaded dating app among 18-25 year olds. When an app has been downloaded 530 million times globally and resulted in over 75B matches, it's clear that it's opening endless possibilities and fulfilling a very human need.

The last time Tinder raised the curtain on top dating trends for young singles was two years ago, in the midst of the pandemic, and since then, life has changed. To better understand where Tinder members find themselves now, and how these attitudes influence evolving perceptions around love and human connection, Tinder teamed up with Paul C. Brunson, Tinder's Expert in Relationship Insights, to decode what the future of dating looks like today.


55%

of dating app users have been in a serious relationship with someone they met on Tinder





Young Singles Show that Authenticity is the key to Successful Dating




When Tinder was created, 18-25 year olds were ‘millennials’ who were discovering the golden age of apps – but it was also a time when online dating sites were less intuitive and more complex to use. Tinder suddenly transformed the way we make new connections, taking all the angst and mustered-up courage of approaching someone at a party, on campus, or on the street and simplified it into a “Swipe Right®”. Meeting someone new – even someone outside of your own social circle – became stunningly simple and surprisingly fun.

But an interesting thing happened as millennials aged up and Gen Z (today’s 18-25 year olds) hit center stage. These digital natives felt at home online and didn’t see the need for perfectly curated profiles or extensively filtered photos. They also didn’t see the need for playing the mind games of yore when it came to dating either. More than half of millennials surveyed agree that dating is healthier for 18-25 year olds today than it was when they were the same age. In fact, three in four 33 to 38 year olds (73%) agreed that dating games – like playing hard to get, giving mixed signals, playing the field– were all accepted as “normal” when they were between 18-25 years old.²

But with Gen Z, new relationship deal breakers were on the horizon, and they hinged on being more honest, more open and more focused on prioritizing mental health. Thanks to that, a renaissance in dating is now upon us, and it’s Gen Z who’s ushering it in.

Today’s 18-25 year olds, who now make up more than 50% of Tinder’s membership base, are looking for authenticity. They are more self-aware, open and fluid in how they view gender, sexuality and dating than any other generation before them. Today’s young daters are changing the state-of-the-date by tossing out timelines, goals of the white picket fence and endless self-imposed pressure for conventional labels. Instead, they are embracing a low-pressure approach to dating that has cracked open a whole new world of meaningful relationship types.

For Gen Z, this makes Tinder a place of possibility. Whether things last for a series of messages exchanged in-app, a day, a night, or a lifetime, young singles are less focused on “commitment” in the traditional sense. For this generation, committed relationships come in all forms—from monogamy to open relationships to, yes, a situationship. While Millennials may have defined “hooking up” as a one-night stand, for Gen Z it’s simply part of the dating process and a way to explore a connection without the pressures of labels – not something to be ashamed of or secretive about.



Despite all of this, it's clear that young singles today are looking for something more meaningful than the traditional understanding of a 'hookup'. For instance, a long term relationship is the most popular Relationship Goal on Tinder. 40% of Tinder members using the Relationship Goals feature to signal their intent on the app, say they are looking for a long term relationship. "Short term fun" is among the lowest selected Relationship Goal on Tinder globally (13% of members using the feature).³

Still, an overwhelming majority (75%) of young singles in a recent survey believe their generation is challenging the dating and relationship standards that were passed down to them from previous generations⁴. On the topic of marriage alone, getting married drops to tenth on the priority list for surveyed 18-25 year olds when thinking about their short to long term goals (versus fourth for millennials when they were the same

age).^{2,4} In fact, 69% of participating Gen Zers agree that dating standards need refreshing to fit a more modern and diverse society – and that they're just the generation to do it.⁴

If we really want to get to the heart of things, it's Gen Z who is saving – and savoring – the art of getting to know someone, with that most important someone being themselves. This is a cohort that's prioritizing qualities like intentionality and transparency, with self-love and personal fulfillment being a primary consideration. It's no coincidence that 80% of 18-25 year olds agree that their own self care is their top priority when dating and 79% want prospective partners to do the same.¹

The rejection of old-fashioned norms in favor of a less constrictive worldview is what will define the future of dating. Now, let's dig in.

75%

of young singles in a recent survey believe their generation is challenging the dating and relationship standards



1. *I am cringe but I am free*

The internet –specifically TikTok– has spoken. Embracing your inner cringe has become the holy grail of Gen Z’s most revered value: authenticity. 64% of young singles are comfortable with cringey/awkward situations if it’s in service of being genuine.⁴ From a relationship perspective, this means lifting the lid on how a potential match communicates love and affection, and being assertive about how they express their own. For example, 82% of surveyed members agree on the importance of knowing their matches’ “love language” before getting in too deep⁵, while mentions of “love languages” in Tinder bios has also increased by 50% YoY⁶. In fact, over 72% of Tinder members say they’re looking for someone who’s upfront about their relationship goals.⁵ This generation believes that welcoming all that is awkward and weird about yourself is an intrinsic part of being sincere and a fundamental element of building trust with a partner. For 18-24 year old Tinder members, the top green flag is that they feel comfortable being themselves with their Match (86%).⁵

Whereas previous generations invested in building a relationship over time, slowly revealing deeper, more meaningful layers, Gen Z doesn’t have time to peel back the onion. Because 18-25 year olds are happy to display their true authentic selves from the outset, they have adopted a take it or leave it attitude – meaning they’re fine to leave any situation if that means being true to themselves.

For this group, doing pre-date homework and being clear on where you stand isn’t considered “too much” – it’s for anyone who wants to champion realness.

64%

of young singles are comfortable with cringey/awkward situations if it’s in service of being genuine





2. Dating starts with me

Mental health is a top priority for young singles. They're working to be confident about who they are so they can feel like their best selves. In fact, when thinking about their goals in the next 3-5 years, surveyed young singles named working on personal growth and well being as their #1 priority (39%).⁴

Going to therapy and working on self confidence, past traumas and healing will be the sexiest thing you can do to appeal to your potential match. Even if many young singles are prioritizing other parts of their life, relationships are a big part of their journey to self discovery and improvement.

According to a recent study by Deloitte, the truth is Gen Zers are regularly stressed and anxious. They can't control the environment around them, but they can learn to control how they respond to

it. Nearly half say that they feel stressed all or most of the time. And while this feeling is indeed significant among millennials too, levels are higher among 18-25 year olds. The difference is that Gen Z is willing to be more real and more honest about their relationship with mental health and the need to prioritize it. In dating, this can be seen in the fact that close to 75% of young singles say they find a match more attractive if they are open to or currently working on their mental well-being.⁴ 'Self Care' comes in at #4 in the list of the most attractive interests on Tinder.⁶ So it should be no surprise that Gen Z isn't interested in feeling burnt out by dating – that's why 70% of young singles agree that dating without intention or not knowing what you want, first, is better left for amateur hour.⁴

When thinking about their goals in the next 3-5 years, surveyed young singles named working on personal growth and well being as their

**No.1
priority**

3. Quit playing games with my time

Since being locked down on and off for a year and a half, young daters no longer take time for granted. Young singles are being pragmatic (89%) in the way they date and are making up for lost time! 77% of Tinder members reply to a crush within 30 minutes, 40% respond within five minutes and over a third reply immediately.⁷ This mindfulness to avoid wasted time is converting online connections into offline meetups at a quicker pace, with 51% of Gen Zers surveyed agreeing that they're constantly looking for ways to fit dating around their daily schedules.⁴ Globally 18-25 year olds are 32% less likely to ghost someone than 33+ year olds, showing once again that it's the younger generation who are more authentic and more considerate of other people.⁸

On average, though, setting an IRL meeting after 'a few days' of chatting is the most common match-to-meet timeline for young singles on Tinder, with a vast majority allowing two to three dates to give their match a chance⁵, versus

millennials who often approached the first date like a job interview that you'd either pass or fail.

Nevertheless, young daters are proving that dating doesn't have to be a chore, and are increasingly integrating the search for new connections into their daily schedules. Over two-thirds (68%) of surveyed users say they use dating apps while at work and 32% have even met up with a date during the workday.⁹ For perspective, Tinder's Work Mode is accessed by someone every 4 seconds.¹⁰

Gen Z also knows exactly what they're looking for when considering someone's profile, with interests, lifestyle preferences and dating intent outweighing everything else. See image to the right for the 5 criteria that define a 'quality' profile according to Tinder members.



- At least 4 photos ✓
- At least 3 interests ✓
- Photo verified ✓
- At least 4 descriptors ✓
- A bio of at least 7 words ✓

4. Welcome to my manifestation era


While star signs may be the top descriptor added to Tinder profiles by 18-25 year olds, there's a new spiritual sheriff in town. 41% of young singles believe manifesting (i.e. mentally visualizing your wishes/dreams to help them come true) is the new Astrology and has an undeniably larger influence on compatibility and connection than Zodiac signs.⁴ It's no coincidence that the hashtag #manifestation has +34B views on TikTok, or that there's no shortage of Tinder members sharing their manifestation goals in bios. For a generation that's highly aware of their inner state, this self-help technique is a no brainer.

Gen Z is entering adulthood, which comes with countless unknowns. These unknowns are exactly what shape this group's mindset, how they are approaching life and how they express themselves. For this generation, focusing


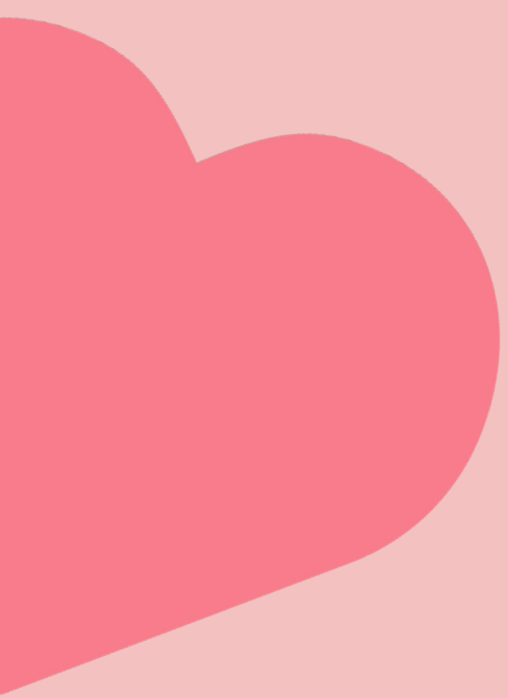
on the present and leaning into intention-based thought patterns is a way to deal with the uncertainty of the future, which has only become more daunting as a result of the pandemic. Young people missed out on major social milestones, faced an unprecedented level of unemployment and are still shouldering the psychological effects of lockdowns. Clearly, a release valve was needed – and many found it in a key tenet of manifestation: the power of manufacturing your own joy.

The truth is young singles are constantly being bombarded with negative news, like public health crises, climate change, abortion bans, the failing economy, gun violence... it's never ending. This unrelenting sense of instability not only contributes to Gen Z's tendency towards risk-aversion, but also informs their need for reassurance through positive thinking.





5. I'll have a scotch and soda, hold the scotch



Divorce rates among Gen Z are skyrocketing – from alcohol, that is. The numbers don't lie: 88% of surveyed singles say they're interested in going on a sober date this year, with 52% either planning to drink less alcohol this year or opting not to drink alcohol at all.⁴ In 2022, sales of no- and low-alcohol beverages grew by more than 7% surpassing \$11 billion in sales according to IWSR Drinks Market Analysis. Call it what you want –sober dating, dry dating, sober curious dating– this is becoming less of a trend and more of a lifestyle choice for Gen Z, with the ability to form a more genuine connection (42%), safety (40%) and quality of conversation (39%) topping the list of motivators towards sobriety.⁴

This is yet another departure from previous generations, as it's clear that young singles are more willing to go on a sober date compared to 33 to 38 year olds when they were the same age.² Surveyed millennials, for example, resoundingly agree that the top date of choice when they were 18-25 would have been grabbing cocktails or drinks at a bar.² So, if today's young singles aren't imbibing, what are they doing on dates

instead? A top go-to is a picnic in the park (41%), while a casual stroll with coffee or tea (39%), or an outdoor movie or concert (33%) are a close second.⁴

It's no wonder the 🍷 and 🍹 emojis have each decreased (40% and 25% respectively) on Tinder profiles YoY.⁶ And, when describing their drinking habits, 72% of Tinder members confidently proclaim they don't drink or only drink occasionally on their profiles.⁶ According to World Finance "the mental toll of drinking is a real sticking point for Gen Z – 86% of zoomers feel that mental health is as significant a consideration as physical health when considering drinking."

As we said, today's young singles believe that working on their mental well-being can help with their dating life, and that having a partner who values self care is critical to a happy relationship. So it makes sense this generation would rather hit the mini-golf range (56%) or catch a drive-in movie (34%) than go tequila-tasting.¹¹

88%

of surveyed singles say they're interested in going on a sober date this year

6. Technology doesn't threaten me, it supports me.



There's no doubt AI will be transformative, not only for online dating but for the world – which is why everyone is talking about it, including Tinder members. In fact, Tinder bio mentions of Chat GPT have increased 14 times since Jan 1st 2023.⁶ And young people dating today really do see its benefits. 34% agree they would use AI to help them build their dating profile – because, let's face it: writing a bio or choosing photos that feel truly representative of you can be a lot of pressure.⁴

There's also a cohort that has zero interest in generic profiles created by a chatbot, whether it be for themselves or for a potential match, BUT – and this is a big but – most 18-25 year olds (and Tinder) agree that Gen AI, as in Generative AI can work well specifically as a first prompt.⁴ AI's potential to act like a coach in helping young singles authentically highlight their unique qualities is pretty impressive. This can even extend into enhancing a conversation with a match by leveraging AI to point out similarities between two people or suggest a relevant icebreaker for them – which, who knows, could even lead to more offline dates.

Another space where AI will change the game is in-app safety and efficiency. Tinder already leverages machine learning for various safety features, but the opportunity to evolve these features through the use of AI can potentially make their impact even greater. For example, AI's capacity to further contextualize language in service of features like Does This Bother You? and Are You Sure? –tools that are already encouraging good behavior with reports of inappropriate messages increasing by 46% and a 10% reduction in inappropriate messages being sent, respectively– is enormous.¹²

The truth is, there is a lot of testing, exploration, and development that has to happen before significant steps can be taken toward implementing more AI – but we're grabbing our shades, because the future is bright.

34%

agree they would use AI to help build their dating profile

7. The world is my neighborhood



Two thirds (66%) of members surveyed agree Tinder allows them to date more people outside of their friendship circle or connect them with someone they would otherwise never have met in their day to day life.⁴ The butterfly effect this has had in dating cannot be understated. What started as an experiment in breaking people out of their immediate social bubbles has coalesced into dating becoming more diverse –racially, culturally and geographically– than ever before.

In fact, the overwhelming majority of young folks who have dated someone from another race or culture –or even someone in a different city or country– met that match on a dating app. It's no wonder online dating is increasing interracial marriage and openness to multi-cultural relationships. A whopping 75% of young singles strongly agree.⁴ 61% of surveyed dating app users say they are open to interracial dating or marriage and almost 80% of surveyed Tinder members say they have been on a date with someone of a different ethnicity.⁴

Geographically speaking, this has translated into a steady increase in search distance ranges on Tinder – by 12% on average YOY. Interestingly enough, women on Tinder have a 12% higher distance range than male Tinder members on average.⁸

In terms of Passport use, 46% of passport users use Passport but don't travel to the place they have passported to directly after, which suggests that Tinder members have a strong interest in exploring possibilities outside their immediate network.¹³ The most popular Passport destination cities? LA, New York, London, Paris and Tokyo. With 18-25 year olds passporting on average 9 times a month, the world via card stack is clearly theirs for the taking.¹³

Ultimately, Gen Z will only continue to break any remaining barriers –both cultural and geographical– thanks to apps like Tinder that help them connect with people they never may have considered otherwise.

2/3

members surveyed agree Tinder allows them to date more people outside of their friendship circle or that they would have never met in real life



8. And everyone is my neighbor



This sense of openness extends even further. For Gen Z, it's the individual and their personality that matters. Case in point with half of all those surveyed agreeing that they are open to dating someone with a disability or neurodivergence⁴, and young singles prioritizing value-based qualities like loyalty (79%), respect (78%) and open-mindedness (61%) over looks (56%).⁵

Gen Z's acceptance of difference also resonates in their more open and inclusive approach to gender and sexuality – they are, after all, the most fluid generation when it comes to both things. This is a cohort that is more likely to identify as LGBTQIA+ and reject traditional gender roles. On Tinder we see this in the fact that LGBTQIA+ members are now the fastest growing group on Tinder, and members aged 18-25 that identify as LGBTQIA+ have more than doubled in the last two years.

On Tinder, there has been a 30% increase in gender identities other than male or female since 2021. In fact, non-binary is now the fastest growing gender identity on Tinder, with people identifying as such having increased by 104% within one year alone.¹⁴

According to a recent survey of young daters age 18-25, 33% agree that their sexuality is more fluid and 29% say their gender identity has become more fluid in the past three years.¹ On top of that, online dating is today's most common way for same-sex couples to meet¹⁵, with Tinder actually accounting for 1 in 3 relationships among LGBTQIA+ females in the U.S.¹⁶

To put it simply, today's young singles are on a quest to celebrate the limitlessness of human connection in EVERY form imaginable – something every other generation should take a cue on.



+30%

increase on Tinder in gender identities other than male or female since 2021

9. Should we even call it “Dating”?

For Gen Z, the term “dating” equals seriousness and a journey that has a finite goal (i.e., a relationship) compared to older generations who view ‘dating’ as something more casual without a finite goal or ending. Young singles prefer to be friends first which reduces pressure and removes the weight of any expectations. Again, Gen Z is not rejecting the desire for romantic relationships, they are just defining them differently. In fact, although the top three things 18-25 year old singles are looking for right now are companionship, friendship or a situationship, 64% say they like the emotional uplift that a love relationship brings.¹

Even with casual relationships, Gen Z are more likely to think they start as friendships and have more open-ended outcomes (not specifically romantic), versus millennials who still tend to link some type of romantic intent to casual relationships. Gen Z prefer to use terminology that doesn’t try to define a connection before they’re ready to, or even want to – hence terms like vibing, kicking it, deep liking, sneaky link and, of course, situationship aligning more with how 18-25 year olds perceive the dating process.

But don’t get it twisted. Even in speaking to casual relationships, young singles believe they are primarily about bond-building and spending intimate/ affectionate time with someone new rather than for casual sex alone. Getting to know people –and having an opportunity to know them deeply– is still an invigorating pursuit for Gen Zers. To that point, a recent study of singles aged 18-25 found that building strong relationships has increasingly (+10% since 2020) become a priority for them¹⁷.

However, the reason doesn’t hinge on pinning down a significant other or getting married before a certain age – it’s more about the pure excitement of meeting a variety of new people (63%), making a new connection (61%) and having new experiences according to a separate study.¹

So, whatever way you slice it, Gen Z is defining the loaded concept of dating on their own terms.

Top 3

things 18-25 year old singles are looking for right now are companionship, friendship or a situationship



Gen Z's Impact on the Next Generation of Relationships

By Paul C. Brunson

Tinder's Global Expert in Relationship Insights

Gen Z, born between 1997 and 2012, has grown up in a world of constant change and uncertainty. Despite challenges such as climate change, political unrest, and economic insecurity, this generation inspires with their resilience, determination, and willingness to confront the world's most pressing issues head-on.

In addition to their tenacity in the face of adversity, Gen Z is also leading a relationship renaissance. As the Global Relationship Expert for Tinder, I have witnessed firsthand how Gen Z is revolutionizing the dating landscape. From their attitudes towards diversity and inclusivity to their embrace of technology and global connectivity, this generation is



changing the world when it comes to forming meaningful connections.

I have five predictions for the future of dating based on the data we're seeing, and they're nothing short of exciting.

1. Gen Z will have the most successful marriages yet. Personal development, emotional well-being, and clear communication in relationships are priorities for Gen Z, which leads to stronger and healthier marriages. They are, however, less interested in marriage than previous generations, preferring to focus on creating fulfilling lives.

2. We've entered the era of "All or Nothing" dating. Gen Z is ushering in a new era of dating that values meaningful connections and overall well-being. They are challenging traditional dating norms, incorporating dating into their daily lives, and emphasizing mental health.

3. The rise of empathetic men and healthy masculinity. By promoting emotional intelligence and self-development as essential components of healthy relationships, Gen Z is challenging traditional masculinity norms. Young men are modeling empathy and feedback for future generations, demonstrating that vulnerability and authenticity are assets, and redefining what it means to be a man.

4. LGBTQIA+ relationships will flourish! LGBTQIA+ relationships are significantly growing due to Gen Z's open-minded and inclusive approach to gender and sexuality. This generation is embracing a more nuanced understanding of gender and sexuality, and the most common way

for same sex couples to meet is through online dating.

5. Inter-relationships will become the rule, NOT the exception. Gen Z is breaking down barriers by connecting with people outside their immediate social circles more frequently than any previous generation. This trend has resulted in an increase in interracial, inter-religious, and international relationships, indicating a growing acceptance of diversity and inclusivity among young people. A shift of this magnitude is expected to shape the future of dating and social relationships.

The future of dating appears bright as we see a growing trend of passion and authenticity spreading among Gen Z. However, as with any significant change, there will be difficulties along the way. We can expect a new era of love, connection, and fulfillment as Gen Z leads the way toward healthier relationships, more intentional dating practices, and a more inclusive dating scene, but we must also be prepared to face and overcome obstacles. Let us embrace Gen Z's dating Renaissance and join them in creating a world of love and connection that we can all be proud of.

Sources

1 A study of 4,000 18-25 year old actively dating singles in the US, UK, Australia and Canada between Jan 21, 2023 and Feb 7, 2023 conducted by OnePoll on behalf of Tinder.

2 A survey of 4000 33-38 year olds in the US, the UK, Canada and Australia between April 21, 2023 and April 25, 2023 conducted by Opinium on behalf of Tinder.

3 Tinder internal data from Relationship Goals profile feature 2023.

4 A survey of 4000 18-25 year olds in the US, the UK, Canada and Australia between April 21, 2023 and April 25, 2023 conducted by Opinium on behalf of Tinder.

5 Tinder In app Survey among Tinder users aged 18-24 in UK, US, AU. Data was collected between 10/18/22 – 10/28/22.

6 From Tinder bios April 2022 - April 2023.

7 Tinder in app Survey among Tinder users aged 18-24 in UK, US, AU. Data was collected between 1/09/22 – 7/09/22.

8 Internal Tinder data 2023.

9 A survey of 1,000 18-30 year olds in the US in August 2020 conducted by the Zeno Group on behalf of Tinder.

10 Internal Tinder data from the Work Mode feature 2023.

11 From Tinder bios January 2022 - October 2022

12 Internal Tinder data from the Are You Sure and Does This Bother You features 2022.

13 Internal Tinder data from the Passport feature (Tinder Gold subscription feature) 2023.

14 Internal Tinder data from the More Genders and Orientations feature 2020-2023.

15 MIT Technology Review, October 9, 2017.

16 A study of 3,896 singles in the US conducted between February to March 2022 on behalf of Match Group.

17 Match Group International Wave Study 2022, US.



