

What Do You Mean?

Rosalind Neville de-codes the double-speak language of the dating game.

■ The little girl had the makings of a poet in her when, being told to be sure of her meaning before she spoke, said: "How can I know what I think till I see what I say?" Graham Wallas - *The Art of Thought*

We all know the meanings to common remarks:

Correct me if I'm wrong - Don't argue with me pal.

I don't mind criticism but - Mind your own business.

This has been a team effort - You bludgens all know I did it myself.

I'd be grateful if - Do it or else.

I know it's none of my business but - I am making it my business.

There are many remarks that are unique within the environment of the singles scene. I am sure readers could contribute some of their own. One day we will have enough to fill a small book. Here are a few from the list we have compiled at Entré Nous so far:

I don't want to interfere but - I am going to interfere and relish the thought.

Who's going? - If the company is interesting I may put in an appearance.

Pressure of business - I found something more interesting.

Got held up - Delayed arriving in case it was boring.

I'll be there on the dot - You may as well start without me as I am always late.

Back in an hour - Back about the same time I usually return from a good lunch.

Don't ask me - I'm not to blame.

I won't be drinking tonight - At least for the first half hour.

We waited for you - We forgot you were coming, it's lucky you didn't turn up.

Trust me - I wouldn't trust me but you might be foolish enough to.

You have my word - Thank goodness I have a short memory.

You've got so much going for you - You're a loser.

You're highly intelligent - You're a dumb jerk.

Did I do something wrong? - I really stuffed that one up.

If I were you - There's only one way and that's mine.

I'd like to think it over - No!

I have to discuss it with my ... - No!

I am not really looking for a relationship - I *am* but not with you.

We had lots in common but there were no sparks - She couldn't stand the sight of me.

We agreed to be just friends - He couldn't stand the sight of me.

I have to work back and my mother's arriving home from overseas - I've had a better offer.

I'll let you know - No thanks.

I'll confirm it on the day - If nothing better crops up.

It's that time of the month - No!

You're a lovely man but - I don't think you're lovely at all.

My old boyfriend has come back into my life - Don't bother me any more.

(No wonder PG Wodehouse wrote: "There are men who fear repartee in a women more keenly than a sword".)

What are we going to do about the bill? - You're not worth paying for.

I'm not hungry, I'll just have a bowl of pasta, you order what you like - If you dare to order more than a bowl of pasta you are a gold digger.

I'm just having the main course - I'm paying the bill so I decide what we eat.

What would you prefer to drink, red or white? - I prefer red.

No, I won't have a dessert, I'll share yours - I really didn't want to pay for desserts.

She has a well balanced personality - She has a chip on each shoulder.

Although some of these sayings may seem witty, it was Noel Coward who said: "Wit ought to be a glorious treat, like caviar: never spread it around like marmalade".

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