

Window of opportunity: But if you're done with the dating small talk you needn't sneak away

PICTURE: GETTY



Plotting the date escape

It's no joke when you're on a date but want to leave. **Helen Croydon** seeks help

DECIDING to date in the new year can be an emotional challenge in itself, but being on a date and finding the profile doesn't match the person in front of you is soul-destroying. What do you do? Sit the evening out politely, then disappear off the face of the Earth? Be honest and tell them

you're just not into them? Or fake an emergency? Almost 40 per cent of women do the last of these, according to a new survey by dating app Ciao. More specifically, they admitted having a friend lined up to call them with a 'fake crisis' to provide an excuse to escape. Still, there might be a way to spare your feelings *and* those of your date...

So what IS the right thing to say? Experts advise...



'CONSIDER whether what you say to your fellow dater will be helpful and constructive. Think about whether you would like to hear what you are about to say. You can give gentle feedback like: "I really like you but I don't think we are on the same page politically/musically/culturally/sexually, etc."'

Helen Rice, psychologist and founder of counselling service BeLoveCurious.com



'WE can be too quick to judge. If we walk into a date and don't think "wow", we write them off. Attraction is rarely instantaneous, though. Instead of switching off, get to know them at least for a drink or two. It's a good idea to say in advance that you have plans afterwards, then if you aren't feeling it, you can simply say: "It's been nice to get to know you but I need to head off now."'

Caroline Brealey, matchmaker at mutualattraction.co.uk



'PEOPLE are less tolerant these days of a non-suitable date because people generally date more. If you are going to walk out, be prepared to pay your half of the round or at least offer. The best thing to say is: "I get the sense we're not hitting it off. I'm glad we had a chance to meet but how about we call it a day as I'm sure we both have lots of things to do?'"

Ané Aurret, dating coach for women



'WAIT a courteous amount of time, then say something nice with a reason not to continue: "I think you're great [mention something interesting they've said] but I don't feel the chemistry and I wish you well." Don't offer a reason that would have precluded you from dating in the first place, such as "I'm not ready for a relationship" - they may reply: "Why are you here?'"

Susan Quilliam, relationship psychologist

ST★R PICK Unforgotten

ITV, 9pm
The superbly versatile Nicola Walker (right) returns at the helm of this crime drama, which deservedly won both critical and popular acclaim first time out. Walker is DCI Cassie Stuart, teamed once more with Sanjeev Bhaskar as DI Sunny Khan. The pair have got their work cut out joining the dots between an apparently unconnected set of characters.



Spies C4, 9pm

Test your spying skills here against the 15 recruits trying to make the grade in the intelligence officer new entry course. Exact details of this show remain top secret but it's from the crew behind SAS: Who Dares Wins, so we're expecting a white-knuckle ride.

Death In Paradise BBC1, 9pm

Kris Marshall, Ben Miller's replacement as Death In Paradise's Caribbean cop, shows no sign of quitting one of the sunniest (and sweetest gigs) on TV. The death of a scientist kicks off season six, with plum guest roles for Douglas Hodge, Natasha Little and Cyril Nri, all eternally grateful to their respective agents.

KEITH WATSON



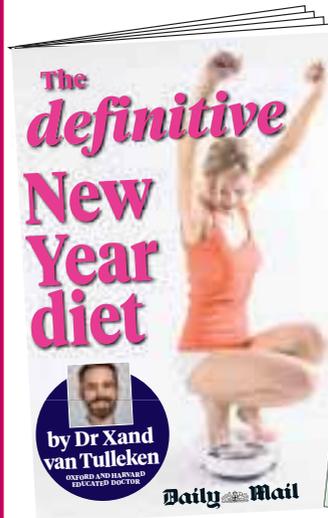
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