

Business

## **Counting the cost of love**

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Finding love costs time, energy and money ! in fact over a life time, couples can expect to spend thousands of pounds in search of their soul mate. ADRIENNE MCGILL reports

THE course of true love never runs smooth, according to the old saying. But it seems that the quest to find love can be rough on the bank balance.

Falling in love after all is a numbers game. The more people you date, the better your odds of finding your soul mate ! but costs can mount up.

According to new research, the average person in the UK spends more than £38,000 trying to find love during their lifetime.

But despite people collectively spending £15.2 billion each year in the pursuit of love, a third of relationships end within 12 months, according to online dating service **Parship**. co. uk.

The quest for love, therefore, involves a commitment to invest financially. That means money for buying drinks, dinner, phone bills, and petrol to travel.

During the first six months of a relationship men spend an average of £1,426 on their partner, nearly double the £740 spent by women.

Men claim to spend an average of £970 on drinks and dinners, £148 on presents and £63 on both taxis and flowers and chocolates.

Around three per cent of men even claimed they had paid their new partner&s gym membership.

But once the relationship has passed the 12-month barrier, men&s spending drops off to £987, while women&s increases slightly to £784.

People lose a further £5 billion a year when they break up with partners through the cost of property, ranging from CDs and clothes to pets, jewellery and even cars, that is not returned to them by their ex.

In fact, 38 per cent of women and 47 per cent of men admitted they had refused to return things to people they had broken up with, while 11 per cent of women and seven per cent of men said they had destroyed items out of spite.

Psychiatrist Dr Victoria Lukats said: Clearly people are able and willing to invest a lot of money in the pursuit of love.

Nowadays the average age at which people settle down and marry is much older than it was 30 years ago, so singles will tend to have more disposable income to spend on going out.

The difficulty is that relationships are also now less likely to last than they were 30 years ago, people are much more likely now to get married during the first flushes of love, rather than waiting.\$

So be prepared to fork out for more than a dinner when it comes to the dating game and searching for love. It could be a small price to pay for finding your perfect partner.