

Matchmaker: A Guide For Your First Dates

Filmmakers and funders might need a little help getting to know each other. Below are some things to do or think about before you first discuss a possible relationship. Following that is a list of questions to consider on your first couple dates as you explore whether you're a good match. Print out these two pages and take them with you to your first meetings or have them handy when you talk on the phone.

FOR FUNDERS BEFORE YOU GO ON A DATE

- Get inspired! **Watch a great documentary film** on your subject area or another subject area. Visit ActiveVoice.net for some ideas about films you might appreciate.
- **Read the "Funder Archetypes"** here in the Prenups and place yourself as best as you can. This will help you figure out who might be the best partner to have the impact you want.
- **Consider how film/media might or might not support your program strategy.** Consult with Active Voice, Grantmakers in Film and Electronic Media or other funders.
- **Read the guide on "Communicating for Impact,"** available at GrantCraft.org. The guide will help you think about how media might be part of your program strategy.
- Not sure what this might cost? **Review the film-budgeting resources** listed on the Prenups website, or speak with an experienced media funder or filmmaker you know.
- Need a green light? **Think about the resources you have available** for a film project, what support you'll need to drum up at the foundation, and who might help make the case.
- Get ready for the big date! **Review the filmmaker's website and previous films.** If you think you might get serious, check in with his/her old flames (previous funders).

FOR FILMMAKERS BEFORE YOU GO ON A DATE

- **First, know yourself.** Think about your vision and goals for the film, what audiences you hope to reach, and what versions or distribution platforms might help you have an impact.
- **Read the "Filmmaker Archetypes"** here in the Prenups and place yourself as best as you can. This will help you figure out who might be the best partner to have the impact you want.
- **Scope out your date!** Review the prospective funder's website for funding guidelines, and to see what other work they've supported in the relevant program area.
- **Watch films or other media projects they've funded.** Try to discern whether and how your proposed project fits into the funder's guidelines and interests.
- Don't know much about funding strategies? **Get in funders' shoes** by visiting GFEM.org, as well as reading the guide on "Communicating for Impact" at GrantCraft.org.
- **Line up strong organizational partners** for your "engagement campaign," or at least have an arrangement with specialists who can create a campaign for you. The funder will want to know your plan for maximizing impact.
- Think you might get serious? If you can, **talk with the funder's old flames** (previous grantees, especially other filmmakers) to ask about his/her goals, style and expectations.

Beyond Small Talk: Things to Consider in the Early Stages

Review this list before your first meeting or phone conversation, and keep it handy as your relationship progresses. Especially when you're getting to know each other, we recommend being positive but realistic—the idea is to discuss possibilities for social change. Some of the nitty-gritty can wait until later.

VISIONS AND EXPECTATIONS

- What are our respective experiences with funding/making media?
- What is a documentary film one or both of us have seen, funded or made that has had a big impact personally or on the society at large?
- What are our experiences with and perspectives on the issue the film deals with?
- Is this film going to be commissioned and fully funded by the funder? Or is the filmmaker seeking funds as part of a larger budget?
- What role would the present funder play in relation to other funders of the project?
- Why should we work together? What can we each bring to this project and to our collaboration?
- What are our respective goals for the project, in terms of artistry and social impact?
- What stage(s) of production need to be funded, and what might the funder support?
- Who do we want to have see this film and why?
- What final product(s) or versions of the film would best serve target audiences?
- What are the best distribution channels to reach target audiences?

ROLES AND PARTICIPATION

- Do we expect this film to advocate a certain position or to follow a story as it happens?
- What do we each want in the way of editorial control or input—and why?
- At what points during the production process will the funder have control or give input?
- Will we be communicating directly or through an intermediary?
- Who are the film's subjects, and how might their lives change in a way that would affect production?
- Will any of the film's advisors or subjects have any editorial control or input?
- How might the filmmaker's presence affect the lives of the film's subjects?
- How comfortable do we feel about the changes we think might occur?

BUSINESS AND LEGAL

- Is distribution/outreach covered in this budget? Or is this a separate budget?
- Is the funding restricted in any way? For example, is it only for a certain phase of production?
- Is the filmmaker allowed to shift around some or all of the funding within the budget?
- What changes in the budget must the filmmaker notify the funder of?
- What is the disbursement schedule, and what deliverables must the filmmaker produce?
- What is the projected timeline for each phase of production of the film?
- What contingencies can we anticipate in the production schedule?
- How do we each feel about the project budget and timeline and each other's intentions?
- What do we each want with regard to copyright and licensing, and why?
- What are our respective needs with regard to interim reporting and project evaluation?
- What are some ways we might measure impact in the short-, medium- and long-term?