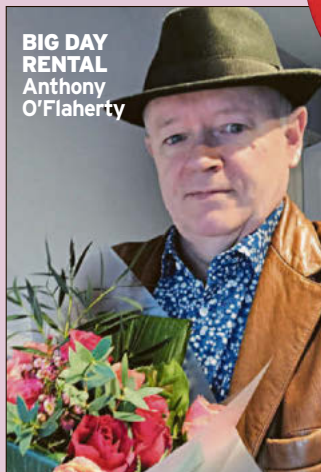




IT'S THE MOST ROMANTIC

LOVE IS IN

BIG DAY RENTAL
Anthony O'Flaherty



Singer sells hand-holding dates for €2k

BY LOUISE WALSH

CLASSICALLY-trained singer Anthony O'Flaherty is renting himself out for Valentine's Day.

Prices start from €200 for the one-hour "friend zone" to €2,000 for a three-hour date and unlimited hand-holding.

The 57-year-old civil servant said yesterday he was expecting "an avalanche" of requests after putting himself on social media offering four separate packages.

For €200, companionless ladies can get the "friend zone" which is one hour of "basic hanging out".

The "innocent romance" package for €350 includes a "one hour walk along the beach or in the park. Hand holding in private only. No photos".

Anthony says that for €800, lovelorn ladies can get the "we're almost official package" - a two-hour evening date, including a meal or ice cream up to the value of €100.

LAUGH

This includes public hand-holding and private kiss goodnight "without tongue". An extra €50 will allow him to pose for an Instagram pic.

And for a cool €2,000, investors in love will receive a three-hour date, dinner and movie with CDs, chocolates, unlimited hand-holding and a kiss goodnight.

Anthony, who is originally from Bradford in England, hasn't had any offers yet, after posting on several community pages but was yesterday expecting a late rush on his services.

He admitted that the tongue-in-cheek post is being taken in the good spirit it was meant.

He said: "It's all a bit of craic really. Some people go over the top for Valentine's Day while others can find it very lonely. I just wanted to lighten the mood a bit and give people something to laugh about."

He added: "Being a classically trained singer, a serenade could even be in the offing for those with generous tips and short coughs."

» 'Look after your relationship and romance will last forever' » Top psychologist reveals her secrets to staying strong



EXPERT
Michaela Brady has insights



BY MICHAELA BRADY

LOVE is the subject of movies, songs, books and much psychological and scientific study.

Why do so many relationships fall apart, while others improve with time?

As a psychotherapist, I've supported many clients through the highs and lows of love.

I've learned from their stories and developed insights from a few of my own.

Here are my signs that you are in a great relationship - and how to get back on track, if not.

Take the Gottman Assessment

This is the world's first relationship wellness measurement tool. It's based on the "Gottman Method", the gold standard for couples' counselling.

It analyses strengths and weaknesses in key areas, including friendship and intimacy, sex and passion, conflict management, shared meaning and trust and commitment. You receive an

overall score plus a tailored plan to strengthen your connection.

Make the effort

Falling in love is easy when you have chemistry, common interests and shared values.

Both parties present their best selves, with romantic gestures, respect, enthusiasm and affection.

It's called the "honeymoon phase" - see new celeb couple Taylor Swift and

“Falling in love easy when you've chemistry & common interests”

MICHAELA BRADY
PSYCHOTHERAPIST

her football star boyfriend Travis Kelce. It's a phase destined to change.

With time, issues arise, feathers get ruffled and efforts can dim.

If your relationship is to thrive, it's essential to invest some of the effort so freely given in the beginning.

It's a willingness to treat each other as we would like to be treated with kindness, consideration, compassion and consistency. To show through

actions and words that we value, respect and appreciate each other.

Create trust

It's not just about being faithful; rather showing up in ways that signal you can be relied upon.

This creates safety, connection and intimacy. We all mess up sometimes, which can tarnish trust. For it to be rebuilt, it's crucial to take accountability and use mistakes as learning curves.

It's a red flag if the apology is insincere or not backed by behavioural

LUCKY IN LOVE
Valentine's is a joyful time for couples

Stages of love from honeymoon to attached

THE attraction stage is commonly known as "the honeymoon phase" and is magical and intoxicating.

The initial euphoria and infatuation is not sustainable - it transforms into the "curiosity" stage. It's a time of exploring

if there is enough compatibility and connection.

The "crisis phase" of romantic love is when some sort of crisis presents, normally as a result of incompatibilities in expectations and needs. It's an

opportunity to deepen the connection, if both are willing to work together.

Then love enters "deep attachment". Shadow selves have been seen, trials and tribulations transcended and if you've made it here, you may be closer.