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## Marina Adshade, author of Dollars and Sex, speaks at Ideacity

Marina Adshade, speaks at the annual Toronto conference of smart people and big ideas, on Friday, June 21.

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MARTIN DEE PHOTO

Marina Adshade will be a speaker at Ideacity.

By: Nancy J. White Living Reporter, Published on Thu Jun 13 2013

**To turn the dismal science into the sexy science, economist Marina Adshade taught her university students to apply the market forces of supply and demand to the quest for love.**

Her course a hit, she began a popular blog on the subject and wrote a book, *Dollars and Sex: How Economics Influences Sex and Love*, published earlier this year. Adshade, who teaches economics at the University of British Columbia, speaks at Ideacity, the annual Toronto conference of smart people and big ideas, on Friday, June 21.

Adshade, 45, talked to the Star about economic forces and casual hook-up sex, online markets, and marriage's big transition.

**Love is a matter of the heart, not the wallet. How can dry economic theory explain something so emotional?**

I don't think economic theory is dry. Economics doesn't take away the idea that relationships are about matters of the heart. It just finds ways to describe how people get together and that's subject to the markets, no matter the emotional response people end up with. The beauty of economic analysis is it gives us clarity about the choices we have and the decisions we make.

**Are online sites a good marketplace for finding love?**

Online is very good because it's a much bigger market. You have access to more choices and that has to end up being better. In economic speak, markets without the Internet are very thin.

A big mistake is that people get overwhelmed and start limiting their options. They

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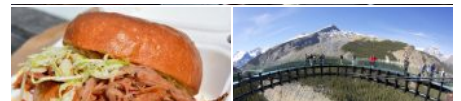
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create artificially small markets, saying I'll only date someone of a certain height, a certain religion, a particular education level. They limit themselves over things that are superficial. If you met someone at a party who was interesting, you wouldn't think, if only he were an inch taller, if only he had one more year of education.

### Why should parents encourage daughters to go to universities with more male than female students?

In Canada you'd be hard pressed to find a university with more male than female students. The casual sex market on campuses is very much a function of the gender ratio of more women on campus. Men have the advantage with so many women to choose from and their preferences drive it. Many men, particularly in this age group, tend toward more casual hook-up sex than serious dating relationships. On a campus with more men than women, women's preferences would drive the market and they tend more toward traditional dating.

### More educated women than men is a huge economic factor. Does it raise problems?

**The group of people who will not do well on the marriage market are women with little education. Men are moving away from the notion of the stay-home wife who they are financially responsible for. Women who did not go on in school are more likely to be single or divorced. Men have more options now if they are willing to marry someone with a better education and income. For some men, that will mean more time at home, more time caring for children. That's going to be the big transition.**

### Our bodies are depreciating assets. What's the best age to cash in, I mean, settle down?

This is a hot topic. Those who marry early tend to have bad outcomes in terms of divorce rates and they under invest in their careers which creates problems later in life. As for the upper-end of age to get married, it depends on how many children you want to have. The market does get a lot worse over time. It becomes thinner. You want to exit the market at your optimal value.

### Economically-speaking, what's the purpose of marriage?

That's one of the most interesting applications of economics to our love lives. In the 1970s, economists saw marriage as a firm, bringing people of different skills together, the woman in the home and the man in the workplace. It was efficient. That's not true anymore. In the latest U.S. data, 41 per cent of women are the main breadwinner. That will continue moving forward given that women tend to be better educated. It doesn't mean marriage isn't important, it just has a different meaning. The types of relationships people look for is very different. We look for people similar to us to live and consume together. Economists call this "consumption compatibility."

Read more about: [Ideacity](#)

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### Life

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Erika Tustin  
@erikatustin

23m

Transported back to early '90s with @skydiggers @TorontoStar studio. Video coming out soon! [pic.twitter.com/1vDxupHEpf](http://pic.twitter.com/1vDxupHEpf)



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