

GDI

SPECIAL REPORT

WOMEN IN DATING SPECIAL REPORT 2025

RECOGNISING THE MOST INFLUENTIAL AND INSPIRATIONAL FEMALE LEADERS IN ONLINE DATING

TRIBAL

WOMEN!! IN DATING

WWW.GLOBALDATINGINSIGHTS.COM



KARIMA BEN ABDELMALEK

CEO, happn

As President of Women in Dating, I am deeply honoured to introduce this new edition of the Women in Dating Special Report.

Each year, this report reminds us why our industry continues to evolve for the better. It highlights leaders whose work is shaping a safer, more inclusive and more meaningful future for those who seek connections.

Their achievements illustrate a core truth I have witnessed throughout my career in technology and human relationships: progress happens when we combine innovation with integrity, empathy and responsibility.

Across the profiles featured here, we see women who push boundaries thoughtfully, whether by rethinking user safety, building emotionally intelligent products, challenging outdated norms or transforming local ecosystems through community and culture.

Their voices echo the purpose that drives our movement: creating digital spaces that reflect dignity, diversity and real-world connection. From redefining matchmaking to advancing psychological well-being in dating ecosystems, these leaders show how our industry can elevate people's lives far beyond the screen.

At happn, where I serve as CEO, I have seen how vital trust, authenticity and local understanding are to those who use our platforms to meet others.
As in the stories you will read in this report, our work is rooted in a belief that technology should empower individuals, protect them and support their search for meaningful encounters.

Women in Dating exists to bring together all those committed to this mission, to share best practices, amplify each other's voices and build a more representative industry.

I hope this report inspires you as much as it inspires me and encourages all of us to continue shaping a more inclusive and equitable future for the dating world.

Karima ben Abdelmalek
CEO, happn

WOMEN IN DATING

1 BRING TOGETHER WOMEN

Bring together all women working in the dating industry. Not only to leaders and C-levels but women whose everyday mission is to make dating apps a safe and happy place for all singles.

2 GATHER BEST PRACTICES

Gather all the best practices from all the women working in the dating industry to create a guide of what dating companies should look like.

3 MAKE YOUR VOICE HEARD

Showcase profiles of women who are part of the movement to show how amazing they are. The podcast will create content to share and spread the word about the people making a difference.

4 NETWORK TOGETHER

Network together, during real-life events: meet at least twice a year to network, a great place to feel sorority between us and exchange challenges and successes.

5 INSPIRATION

Give you the inspiration you deserve, by offering you content and news which enhances women who are successful, sharing tips and best cases of the industry.

WOMEN!! IN DATING

Busy shaping the future

www.womenindating.com



LAALEEN SUKHERA
Founder of Social League



BROWNIE MARIE
Founder, Fox Hunters Club



DENNIE SMITH
Founder, Geek Meet Club



JACQUELINE AND ALEXA CHILD
Co-Founder, Dateability



JILL CROSBY
CEO, Conscious Dating Network



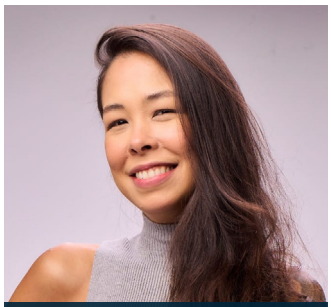
JULIE GRIGGS
CEO and Cofounder of Fourplay Social



LISA DRENSLER
Chief Sales Officer, Dateshare



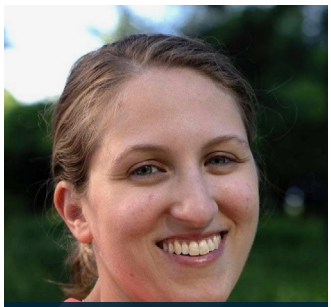
LUCY RAND
Co-Founder, Muddy Matches



MAYUMI SATO
CMO of eSapiens Venture Builder



NAINA HIRANANDANI
Co-Founder, Sirf Coffee



NATALIE CRAMER
Founder & Creator of Single Saturdays NYC



RACHEL HARKER
Clinical Psychologist & Founder/CEO, TRIBAL



RICHA RAVAL
Founder and CEO, Walnut



RUBY GILL
Senior Product Director, Bumble



SARAH LOUISE RYAN
Dating and Relationship Expert



ZAAHIRAH ADAM
Founder, hati

LAALEEN SUKHERA

FOUNDER OF SOCIAL LEAGUE

Social League was created as a solution to online dating fatigue, emphasising genuine, real-world relationships.

Laaleen leads efforts to reinvent human connection in the digital era. Her platform uniquely combines a free singles database, personalised matchmaking services, and curated in-person events, which she describes as 'the antidote to swipe culture'.

Since its launch, Social League has transformed the way professionals connect and build relationships in Dubai, a city famed for its diversity, with 90 per cent of its population being international.

The platform boasts a global database of over 3,500 singles from more than 70 nationalities across 26+ countries. Laaleen's community includes more than 6,000 successful professionals and has hosted 73 events so far, including cocktail evenings, themed mixers, and business networking sessions.

A trailblazer for women in business, Laaleen also champions female entrepreneurship through her active role in the Dubai Business Women Council and the British Business Council Dubai. As the only MENA region delegate at the GDI London 2024 summit and a panellist at the inaugural Women in Dating Network, Laaleen has amplified the voice of women leaders in the Middle East in the global relationship industry.

Inclusivity is fundamental to Social League. The platform is a space for senior professionals, single parents, those seeking to start families, and individuals from all backgrounds, regardless of ethnicity or faith.

Collaborations with global matchmaking agencies further amplify Social League's reach, enabling cross-continental relationships that bridge North America, Europe, South Asia, and South Africa.

Social League's notable successes highlight its human impact: from connections between single parents from different nations to the union of mature professionals across continents, ethnicities, and faiths. In its initial trial, 60 individuals signed up for matchmaking, resulting in three long-term relationships culminating in a wedding proposal, demonstrating the platform's personal approach.

Laaleen's leadership ensures Social League remains the city's prime facilitator for these genuine relationships.

social league
CONNECTION · COMMUNITY · COMMITMENT



SARAH LOUISE RYAN

INTERNATIONAL MATCHMAKER, RELATIONAL PSYCHOTHERAPIST, DATING & RELATIONSHIP EXPERT

Sarah Louise Ryan has spent over a decade transforming how people connect, combining international matchmaking with relationship therapy to help singles create lasting love. Since 2011, she has advised thousands globally, blending emotional literacy with practical dating strategies.

Founder of multiple relationship brands and a trusted media contributor, Sarah is a regular BBC voice and has been featured in Vogue, Forbes, GQ, The Times, and CBS News. She is regularly invited as an industry expert on leading podcasts and panels.

As a leader, Sarah has built a team of matchmakers, coaches, and therapists across the UK and internationally, delivering personalised support rooted in inclusivity and emotional wellbeing. Her initiatives, including 30 Days of Heartbreak and high-profile workshops, challenge stigmas around dating and mental health.

Sarah continues to innovate at the intersection of psychology and technology, shaping a safer, more inclusive, and emotionally intelligent dating industry.

P6: Jill Crosby, CEO, Conscious Dating Network

Jill Crosby has made a powerful and enduring mark on the online dating industry over the past year by championing trust, authenticity, and meaningful connection through her platforms, including Spiritual Singles.

Recognising the importance of credibility in an often-skeptical marketplace, Jill has brought to life the real success stories behind her sites by conducting and publishing heartfelt video interviews with couples who met through her platforms — some of whom have been happily together for over 15 years, alongside others with 11-year, eight-year, and more recent love stories.

These intimate conversations, shared widely on YouTube, provide undeniable proof that online dating can spark deep, lasting relationships that stand the test of time.

Her work has inspired thousands of singles worldwide, offering tangible hope and dismantling the stigma that online relationships are short-lived. By presenting genuine couples who embody the promise of love found online, Jill has elevated industry standards for transparency and trust.

With multiple new interviews already in production, she continues to expand this library of real-world proof, creating a legacy of inspiration that strengthens consumer confidence and reinforces the industry's role as a powerful connector of human hearts.





DENNIE SMITH

FOUNDER, GEEK MEET CLUB

Over the past two years, Dennie has poured her time, creativity, and resources into building Geek Meet Club as a safe, fun, and inclusive all-in-one social, dating and friendship platform for geeks. She has worked tirelessly, often around the clock, steering the app through major pivots to ensure it truly meets the needs of our community.

Every decision has been driven by the goal of fostering genuine connections in a welcoming environment where shared passions come first.

In an industry often dominated by mainstream dating approaches, Geek Meet Club stands out for its focus on niche inclusivity. Dennie is a hands-on founder who interacts daily with members and builds a judgement free community over quick swipes.

The team have built almost 40 geeky groups, bringing people together through quizzes, online meetups and offline events.

Without external funding and using profits from her hair salon business, Dennie has personally overseen development, branding, marketing and community engagement - proving determination and vision can create meaningful impact, even in competitive spaces.

Although the company has only just begun to see revenue coming in, its growth has been entirely organic, with more than 3,000 members and counting. This steady rise shows that Geek Meet Club's mission is resonating and authentic connection truly has a place in the dating industry.

MAYUMI SATO

CMO OF ESAPIENS VENTURE BUILDER | DIRECTOR OF YSOS AND SEXLOG

Mayumi is CMO of a venture builder that operates some of the world's largest platforms in the adult and dating market, including a social network with over 23 million users and Ysos, an app focused on open relationships, which is rapidly expanding into the US and Latin America. She is responsible for guiding growth, internationalization, and brand positioning strategies in culturally distinct markets.

Mayumi also promotes the debate on autonomy, honesty, and companionship as pillars for modern relationships, as opposed to models based on lies and betrayal. Activates an active voice to reduce the stigma surrounding non-monogamous relationships, building bridges between communities and the market.

Recognised across the industry, Mayumi has spoken at international events in the US and Europe and at some of the largest technology and innovation events in Brazil. She has also delivered two TEDx presentations on the complexity of human desires and changes in contemporary relationships.

Mayumi is also the creator of the Sex Summit, an event that connects leaders and companies in the adult and dating markets to discuss innovation, technology, and trends, with a focus on collaboration and social impact.





JULIE GRIGGS

CEO AND COFOUNDER OF FOURPLAY SOCIAL

Over the past year, Julie has led product and community efforts that had an immense impact on dating culture, making single life feel healthier and safer for those navigating it.

Fourplay Social emphasizes social connection and shared experiences by letting friends pair up and match with other pairs of friends.

This reduces pressure and improves emotional and physical safety. Julie has championed user research, trust and safety practices, and inclusive in-person programming that brings singles together in supportive spaces. This includes gender-specific events (e.g. single women only) to facilitate meaningful connections and community without dating as the focus.

Her leadership has been recognized beyond Fourplay. She was invited into Rebecca Minkoff's Female Founder Collective Tech Council, a select group of emerging leaders in technology, and was also selected as one of FounderSquare's Top 25 Founders of 2025 (H1).

In addition, she was a guest on Entrepreneur Magazine's podcast, Help Wanted, as well as Jason Feifer and Nicole Lapin's podcast, Problem Solvers. She was selected to pitch Fourplay during NYC Tech Week as a top 10 startup in Startup World Cup.

Julie personally engages with users online and offline, hosts events, and turns community feedback into thoughtful product improvements.

The result is a kinder, more human dating experience that is genuinely moving the industry forward, proving that safety, joy, and connection can coexist.

fourplay

RACHEL HARKER

CLINICAL PSYCHOLOGIST & FOUNDER/CEO, TRIBAL

Rachel Harker is a pioneering force at the intersection of psychology, technology, and human connection. As the founder of TRIBAL, she has redefined how dating platforms approach user wellbeing, trust, and long-term relationship outcomes.

Drawing on her expertise as a clinical psychologist, Rachel has embedded evidence-based psychological principles into Tribal's design, ensuring that the app promotes not only meaningful connections but also healthier user behaviours.

Over the past 12 months, Rachel has led Tribal through a period of significant growth and innovation. She spearheaded the launch of new UX features designed to reduce anxiety and increase authenticity in dating interactions, creating a safer and more inclusive environment for users. Her commitment to trust & safety has set new benchmarks in the industry, inspiring competitors to rethink their own practices.

Rachel's leadership extends beyond product development. She has become a respected advocate for integrating mental health awareness into dating ecosystems, challenging the industry to see beyond short-term engagement metrics and instead prioritise user wellbeing and sustainable relationship outcomes.

Tribal
Deeper Bonds, Stronger Connections





JACQUELINE AND ALEXA CHILD

CO-FOUNDER, DATEABILITY

In 2022, the sisters founded the only dating app designed for the disabled and chronically ill communities, after personally experiencing discrimination in the dating world.

The app is intentionally inclusive, welcoming anyone who shares its mission and values.

In just three years, Dateability has grown to 45,000+ users across the U.S., Canada, Mexico, and the U.K., with Version 2.0 launching later this year, global expansion on the horizon, and the first Dateability wedding scheduled for February 2026.

Drawing on their combined backgrounds in psychology, human development, and law, and a shared commitment to social impact, Jacqueline and Alexa have built more than an app, they've created a movement.

Their work not only fills a long-overdue gap in the dating world, but also positions them as cultural commentators advancing accessibility, inclusion, and representation.



BROWNIE MARIE

FOUNDER, FOX HUNTERS CLUB

Fox Hunters Club is a dating platform launched in April 2024, designed specifically for millennial women and older men seeking committed, non-transactional relationships.

The app sets itself apart from typical dating or 'sugar-dating' models by focusing on meaningful connections between women around age 30+ and men from Generation X or baby-boomer age ranges.

Fox Hunters Club emphasises authenticity, respect and clarity of intention. As founder Brownie Marie puts it, the goal is to offer 'a safe, drama-free space for millennial women and older men seeking meaningful, long-term connections'.

The app explicitly rejects a "sugar baby/sugar daddy" model—its policy states there should be no transactional money exchanges in dating.

Fox Hunters Club addresses an underserved niche in the online dating space. By focusing on women 30+ seeking older men who are emotionally available and ready for commitment, the app disrupts two common narratives: the focus on youthful dating only, and the conflation of age-gap with sugar-daddy dynamics.

It also shows how a founder with a journalistic/tech background can identify a gap, develop a product to address it, and build brand credibility (via media features, events, partnerships) rather than relying only on VC-funding or broad-based growth.

Brownie's event, social media, and content marketing raise awareness of loving, age-gap relationships, and niche dating in general. Fox Hunters Club is one of the apps changing perceptions of what a healthy relationship looks like, and that is worth celebrating.





ZAAHIRAH ADAM

FOUNDER, HATI

Zaahirah Adam is the founder of hati, the intentional dating app pioneering a safer, more accountable way for people to meet.

Over the past year, she has introduced a model that goes beyond profile swipes and endless messaging: every match leads to a 5-minute voice or video call, and if both parties want to continue, hati automatically books their first date at a vetted, trusted venue.

This innovation not only removes the stress of planning but also creates a safer environment for daters from the very beginning.

Zaahirah has placed trust and safety at the core of the platform, introducing features such as a ghosting ban to hold users accountable, manual verification, and a pause function that encourages users to focus on someone they've met rather than endlessly browsing.

By combining safety with intentional design, she has set a new industry benchmark for how dating apps can facilitate real-world connection responsibly.

Her work over the last 12 months shows how one founder can shift the industry conversation from gamification to genuine safety and trust, while still creating a delightful, modern experience.

LUCY RAND

CO-FOUNDER, MUDDY MATCHES

For two decades, Lucy Rand has been the driving force behind Muddy Matches – a family-run, niche SME specialising in countryside dating - transforming it from an emerging platform with less than 2,000 users in its launch year of 2006, to a trusted community with nearly 1 million registrations by 2025.

Co-founded with her sister Emma in April 2006, Muddy Matches has become the UK and Ireland's premier destination for countryside dating, uniting singles from diverse rural backgrounds through a shared commitment to traditional values.

Lucy's visionary leadership has kept Muddy Matches at the forefront of the UK's niche dating industry. In 2024, she spearheaded a pivotal evolution of the business, launching a mobile app for iOS and Android to complement the well-established web platform.

This strategic move, driven largely by Lucy's goal of achieving a cost-neutral app build and launch in its first year, has already resulted in over 40,000 downloads. The app ranks in the top 20% of social community apps on the Apple App Store for conversion and user retention, now contributing over 30% to Muddy Matches' annual business performance—a growth trajectory that, in 2024-25, has led Muddy Matches to match annual financials posted during the spikes that came with the COVID lockdown dating boom.

In an industry increasingly dominated by AI and automation, Lucy has remained steadfast in preserving the core 'human' principles that define Muddy Matches. The app mirrors the website's simple interface, purely manual profile vetting process, and focus on serviceability in rural areas, ensuring accessibility and trust for its loyal user base.

Lucy's people-led approach, removing a reliance on outsourced technology or faceless algorithms, over the past 12 months has prioritized personal connection, reinforcing Muddy Matches' reputation for authenticity and reliability.





NAINA HIRANANDANI

CO-FOUNDER, SIRF COFFEE

As Co-founder of Sirf Coffee, Naina has built one of the most trusted names in global matchmaking for high-achieving Indian professionals.

What makes her stand out isn't just the success stories. It's the way she's redefined what thoughtful, human matchmaking looks like in an age dominated by swipes and algorithms.

Naina's approach is deeply personal. She's not in the business of pushing numbers or making introductions for the sake of it. She and her team act as confidantes, coaches and at times, protectors.

She understands the cultural nuances of modern Indian dating, the pressures ambitious men and women face, and the loneliness that can come from chasing surface-level connections and she's created a space where people can meet with dignity, respect and a genuine chance at building lasting love.

In an industry where scale often comes at the cost of depth, Naina has shown that integrity and intentionality still win. Her leadership ensures that Sirf Coffee isn't just another matchmaking service. It's a movement reminding people that love deserves care, courage and curation.

That's why I believe Naina Hiranandani should be featured in the Women in Dating Special Report 2025. She embodies what the future of this industry should look like: human, heart-driven, and transformative.

Sirf COFFEE
DATING FOR THE GLOBAL INDIAN

RUBY GILL

SENIOR PRODUCT DIRECTOR, BUMBLE

Ruby drives Bumble's product strategy across the mobile experience and plays a pivotal role in shaping the vision, direction, and execution that brings its members closer to love.

Since joining Bumble in 2023, Ruby has led her team to deliver meaningful enhancements to the product that prioritize both compatibility and safety for our global community. Under her leadership, Bumble launched ID Verification across 11 major markets including the U.S., UK, Australia, Canada, France, Germany, India, and Mexico (with more to come!).

Early testing showed that ID-verified members saw a significant increase in matches compared to non-verified users, and 80% of Gen-Z surveyed said they're more likely to date someone with a verified profile. She also introduced Share Date, giving members the ability to share real-time date details with a trusted contact.

Ruby also spearheaded the launch of Discover (previously "For You"), a personalized space in the Bumble app showcasing relevant matches based on shared interests, dating intentions, and communities. This feature reflects the fact that over half of women (56%) and men (53%) say sorting potential matches by commonalities makes dating apps more appealing.

In addition, Ruby championed the expansion of Review Before Send, a safety-by-design feature that flags inappropriate messages before they're delivered. In testing, more than 40% of members who received a warning chose to edit their message, reinforcing Bumble's commitment to fostering respectful, kind connections.

Ruby and her team also brought Bumble's Dating Advice Hub to life, providing expert tips and guidance within the app to help members feel more confident and intentional in their dating journeys.

bumble





LISA DRENSLER

CHIEF SALES OFFICER, DATESHARE

Lisa started her journey in 2017 as a Junior Account Manager at Dateshare and, through dedication and talent, rose to become our CSO three years ago at the age of 31. As a board member, she's been instrumental in shaping our sales and marketing strategy, expanding our affiliate network, and consistently driving the company's success.

But what truly makes Lisa stand out is her rare ability to blend data-driven performance with emotional intelligence and deep human connection. As a certified yoga and meditation teacher (YouTube & Instagram: Lisi Namaste), she brings warmth, calm, and clarity into every business relationship.

Affiliates and partners genuinely love working with her—because she listens, she understands their needs, and she always finds a solution that benefits everyone. Her reputation for trust, flexibility, and positivity has made her one of the most appreciated and respected leaders in our space.

I've had the pleasure of working on Lisa's team for the past three years. Her energy, care, and motivation inspire not only us internally, but also the entire network of partners she supports. Lisa doesn't just lead—she uplifts everyone around her.

Lisa is more than a high performer—she's a leader people gravitate to. That's why I believe she is a perfect fit for this recognition.

DATE SHARE

NATALIE CRAMER

FOUNDER & CREATOR OF SINGLE SATURDAYS NYC, CREATIVITY COACH, COMMUNITY BUILDER

Natalie has revolutionized the dating landscape for NYC singles by creating Single Saturdays, an innovative community-building platform that addresses the deeper emotional needs of modern daters.

Her unique approach combines her background as a creativity coach with strategic matchmaking partnerships to create something truly transformative in the dating industry.

Key contributions to the dating industry include creating activity-based events which prioritise authentic connection, reducing pressure while fostering genuine relationships. Additionally, Natalie specifically focused on singles in their 30s and 40s, providing a sophisticated alternative to apps and traditional dating methods.

Natalie's work represents a significant shift toward more intentional, community-focused approaches to dating that prioritize mental health, authentic connection, and long-term relationship success.

Her model is already influencing how other dating event organizers think about creating meaningful experiences for their participants.

Through Single Saturdays, she has not only created a successful business but also sparked important conversations about how we can better support people in their search for love and connection in urban environments.

Single Saturdays



RICHA RAVAL

FOUNDER AND CEO, WALNUT

Richa Raval is the founder and CEO of Walnut, a relationship wellness and dating app that helps users build self-awareness, choose partners consciously, and sustain healthy, lasting relationships.

Unlike traditional dating apps, Walnut combines therapist-designed modules, reflective exercises, and connection challenges to guide users through emotional growth before and during dating.

Richa's work is informed by her personal journey navigating relational trauma and complex PTSD, as well as years of therapy and self-learning.

Her first attempt to address emotional education for children revealed a powerful insight: long-term wellbeing is shaped by the home environment and modeled relational behaviors. This inspired her to focus on equipping adults with the skills to break cycles, heal past patterns, and build secure, intentional relationships.

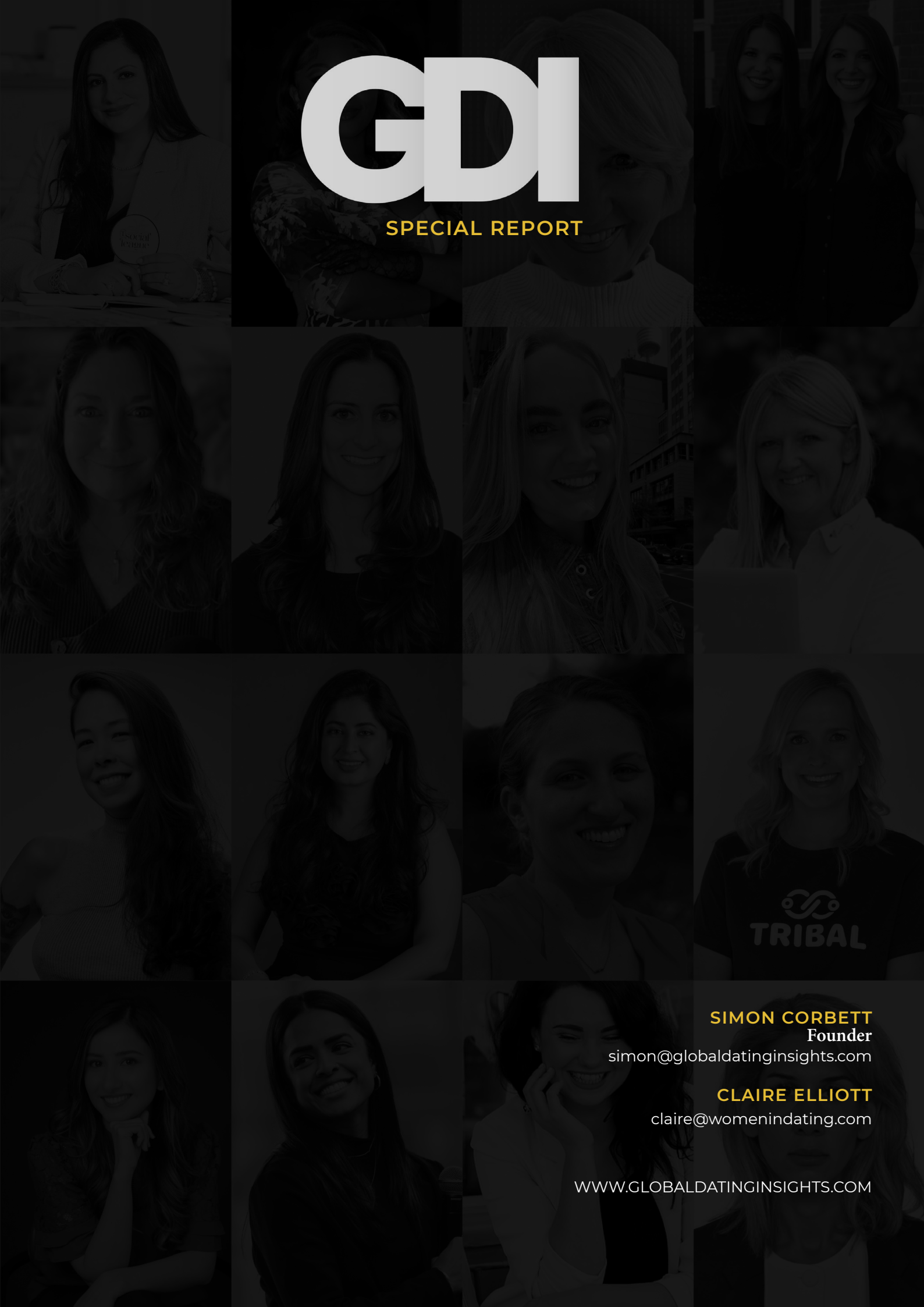
With a BBA in Finance from the University of Miami, an MSc in Innovation, Entrepreneurship & Management from Imperial College Business School, and 6+ years of corporate finance experience at companies such as Amazon, Richa combines business expertise with lived experience to create tech that is both meaningful and impactful.

Richa's work as Founder and CEO of Walnut spans product vision, content strategy, growth marketing and community development, ensuring the app's features are therapy-informed, engaging, and practical.

She leads the creation of self-guided learning modules, journaling prompts, and interactive exercises while collaborating closely with the Walnut clinical team to ensure every tool reflects real-world relationship expertise. She also oversees the app's long-term strategy, including product design, partnerships, and resources that support users in building and sustaining meaningful relationships.

Through Walnut, she is redefining how young people approach relationships and helping them create connections that last a lifetime.





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