

Excerpt from *Finding Community: Assumptions and Expectations*

"Assumptions and Expectations: What's Realistic"

You will feel included in the group right away—experiencing that wonderful “sense of community.” As mentioned earlier, feeling included, and feeling a “sense of community” between a newcomer and existing community members takes time, getting to know one another, and shared experiences — particularly shared experiences of working together, and of emotional processing and truth-telling. You need to be there long enough to establish bonds of friendship. It will happen, though it takes patience. The larger the community and the more members it has, the longer it may take. Also, as noted previously, it's more difficult for people who tend to feel shy, timid, or socially awkward. People “expect to be included and loved fairly soon after arrival, because of an idea that all the people in a true community love one another,” notes Twin Oaks co-founder Kat Kinkade. “It is a serious disappointment when they realize that this kind of love only grows after time and mutual commitment, and cannot be grasped quickly.”

(Communities Directory, 1995.)

Tip for Seekers: Don't expect too much on the first date.

—From Chapter 20: “Evaluating Your Visits (And Debunking Some Assumptions and Expectations)”