

## Young Indians Are Done Performing on Dates. Tinder's Knows Why.

**New Delhi, India: 1 May 2026** –For a long time, dating felt like a performance. Say the right thing. Like the right music. Don't be too much but don't be boring either. Somewhere between first impressions and follow-ups, dates started to feel less like conversations and more like quiet auditions. But that script is starting to fall apart.

According to Tinder's [Year in Swipe™ 2025](#), 64%<sup>1</sup> of young singles say emotional honesty is what dating needs most right now. And 73%<sup>1</sup> say they only know they truly like someone when they can be themselves. The takeaway? The “perfect date” is out. Real is in.

### So what is performative dating, really?

It's not always obvious but it's everywhere. It shows up in overthinking texts, staying agreeable instead of honest, mirroring someone else's interests, or presenting a more polished version of your life than what's real. However, beneath all of this isn't vanity, it's something deeper.

“Performative dating is rooted in identity uncertainty,” says **Dr. Chandni Tugnait, Tinder India's relationship expert**. “When people aren't clear on what they want, they present versions of themselves that feel more acceptable or impressive.”

Add family expectations, timelines, and the pressure to be “dateable,” and dating can quickly start to feel like something to get right instead of something to experience.

### Why it's exhausting (and why Gen-Z are done with it)

At its core, performative dating is about managing how you're perceived. While that might help in the moment, it often takes away from what actually matters which is being present in the interaction. That's where the shift is happening. More young daters are moving away from trying to be liked, and focusing instead on whether they actually feel like themselves.

### The shift: less performance, more presence

Young Indians aren't stepping away from emotional honesty, they're just doing it on their own terms. Instead of oversharing upfront, people are opening up in phases - first they build comfort, test the vibe, and then share more as trust grows. It's a more intentional, low-pressure way of connecting.

### That shift is also showing up in how people use Tinder.

On Tinder, features like [Prompts](#) and [Interests](#) are helping users express who they really are beyond photos, while [Explore](#) lets them connect over shared interests. [Music Mode](#), recently redesigned, makes it easier to match through shared taste, turning playlists into personality cues and conversation starters. And for those who like a little cosmic alignment, [Astrology Mode](#) brings zodiac compatibility into the mix, letting users see how they might vibe based on their Sun, Moon, and Rising signs. With [Double Date](#), meeting new people feels less like a one-on-one audition and more like a relaxed, social experience.

At the same time, Tinder trends reflect this move toward more authentic connection:

- **Clear-Coding** – Saying what you want, without ambiguity
- **Emotional Vibe Coding** – Emotional availability as a baseline, not a bonus
- **Hot-Take Dating** – Real opinions over safe answers
- **Friendfluence** – Turning to friends as sounding boards while dating

Even priorities are changing, with loyalty (79%)<sup>1</sup> and respect (78%)<sup>1</sup> now ranking higher than physical appearance (56%)<sup>1</sup>.

### So what does dating without the “act” actually look like?

According to Dr. Chandni, it's less about doing everything right and more about showing up as you are.

- **Start with clarity, not performance**

When you know what matters to you, you don't have to second-guess how to show up.

- **Stay present, not polished**

Good conversations don't come from perfect lines, they come from real curiosity.

- **Say what you actually think (nicely, of course)**

Agreeing with everything isn't connected, it's just good acting.

- **Check the vibe, not just the outcome**

The right connection should feel easy to be in, not something you have to constantly manage.

"A non-performative relationship is consistent, honest, and emotionally safe," adds Dr. Chandni. "You're not trying to impress, you're simply relating." Or simply put: easy, but not effortless.

Because when you're not trying to perform, you're free to connect and with features designed to help people express who they really are, Tinder is making that shift easier than ever.

<sup>1</sup>A survey of 4000 18-25 year olds who are actively dating in the US, UK, Canada and Australia between October 2025 and November 2025 conducted by Opinium on behalf of Tinder ("2025 International Opinium Survey").

## **About Tinder**

Launched in 2012, Tinder® revolutionized how people meet, growing from 1 match to one billion matches in just two years. This rapid growth demonstrates its ability to fulfill a fundamental human need: real connection. Today, the app has been downloaded over 630 million times, leading to over 100 billion matches, serving 185+ countries and 60+ languages - a scale unmatched by any other app in the category.

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