

**Identifying strategies
and concerns around
algorithmic matchmaking**

Strategies

I define a **strategy** as **user behavior that falls outside of expected user interaction with the dating app**. For example,

- swipe left on a profile you would be interested in (when the user is expected to swipe right),
- including ages and distances in your filters that you wouldn't include,
- deleting your profile even if you want to stay active on Tinder.

85% of surveyed users indicated using some kind of strategy on dating apps



Swipe Ratio

Unclear if users tend to be more selective or more inclusive

30% (n=39) of users who indicated changing their behavior on Tinder said that they changed the way they would swipe on a profile.

6 saying that **they were more selective than they usually would be** (“swipe left more,” “be picky with swipes”)

1 saying that they **were more inclusive** (“swipe right more and put my standards aside”).

“I tend to be very selective on Tinder as a guy and I definitely swipe left on the majority of profiles and only swipe right on a few. [...]. However, because I get less matches would I be put as lower priority in the algorithm due to having less matches?”



When you first create the account, the app pushes you in the faces of everyone around you. Then it determines your "value" and mostly just shows it occasionally to people with about equal value.

Reset Profile

One survey user mentioned that they **“recreate the account to get a noob boost.”**

Unfortunately, I forgot to add this option to the list of workarounds on the survey

This was the workaround mentioned the most on Reddit by **15 different users**: easy and quick.



A match with someone far away has almost no value because it's super unlikely we'll ever get around to meeting up. But if expanding the range also indirectly helps with getting more matches close by then it's obviously worth it.

Expanding filters

The most popular algorithmic workarounds are changing location and age settings **to include more potential profiles in the user's swiping pool**

52% (n=67) of workaround users indicating that they **change their location**

41% (n=52) indicating that they **change their age settings.**



“I came to the conclusion that gay men swipe on everything. I put my profile on gay and got a ton of likes. I now have 99+ likes and the algo has deemed that my ELO is high. I switched back to straight and it only shows me 10s.”

Expanding filters

15% (n=19) surveyed users also indicated that they **changed their preferred gender settings**

15 of those users reported that they were **only attracted to one gender.**

This means that about 12% (n=15) users included **genders that they are not attracted to** into their swiping pool to increase their chance at matching.

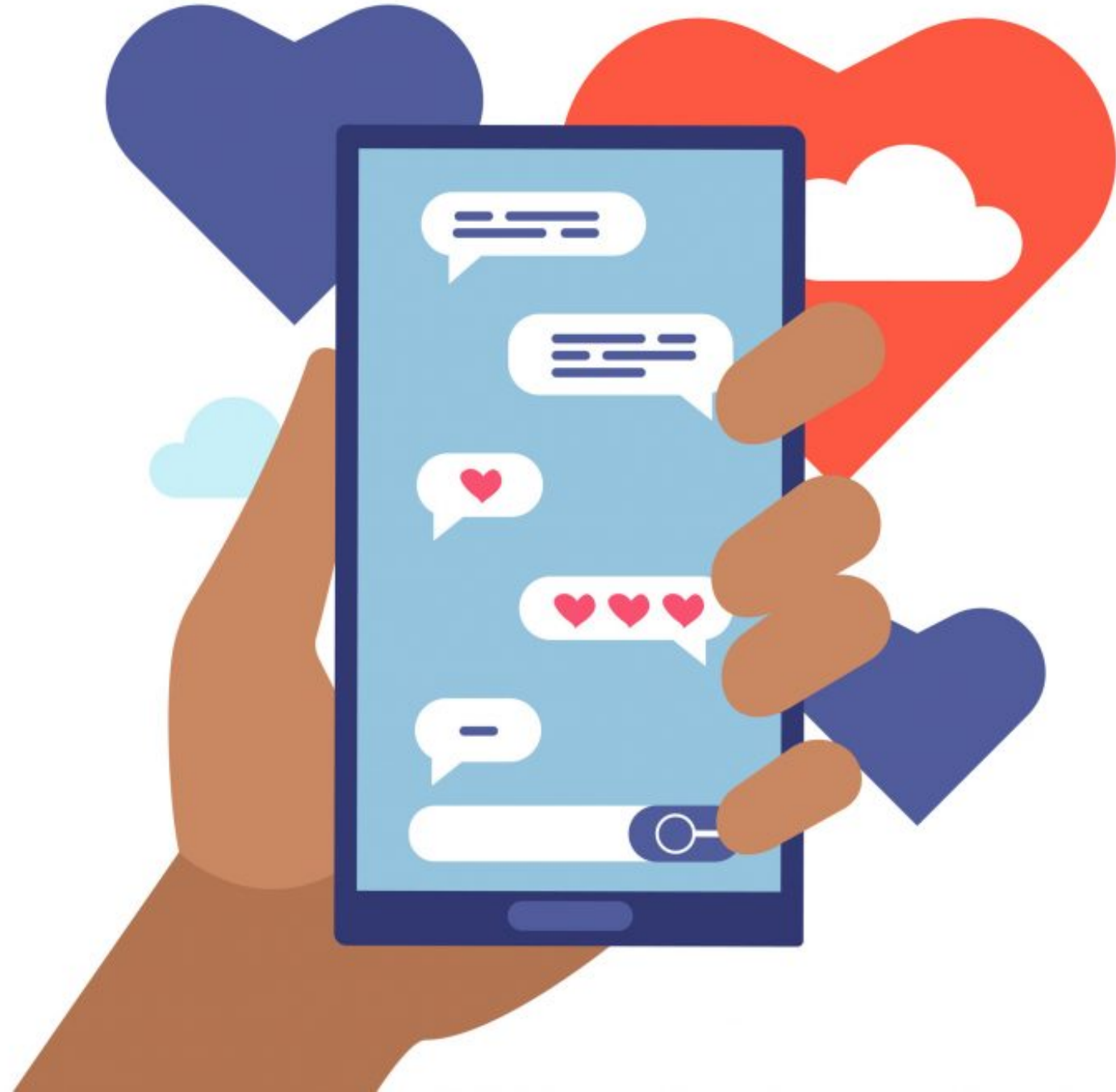


Concerns

Out of the 150 surveyed users, **20 wrote down a concern that they have with algorithmic filtering.**

Unfortunately, I did not do a good job incorporating many of the identified concerns within the survey.

12 Reddit posts were created for the purpose of sharing some concern about the Tinder algorithm.




Conventional Preferences

Users believe that they are given an **attractiveness or desirability score** based on their activity on Tinder (referred to as ELO score).

The Top Picks section, which should show users profiles that they would be most interested in, only features **conventionally attractive people**.

Most survey users **either agreed or were neutral** when asked if the profiles in their feed and their Top Picks were good matches:

- 33% strongly agree or agree and 40% are neutral about profiles in their feed
 - 45% strongly agree or agree and 29% are neutral about profiles in their Top Picks
- Common concern or question phrasing?
 - Survey participants also had high trust in algorithm, correlation?



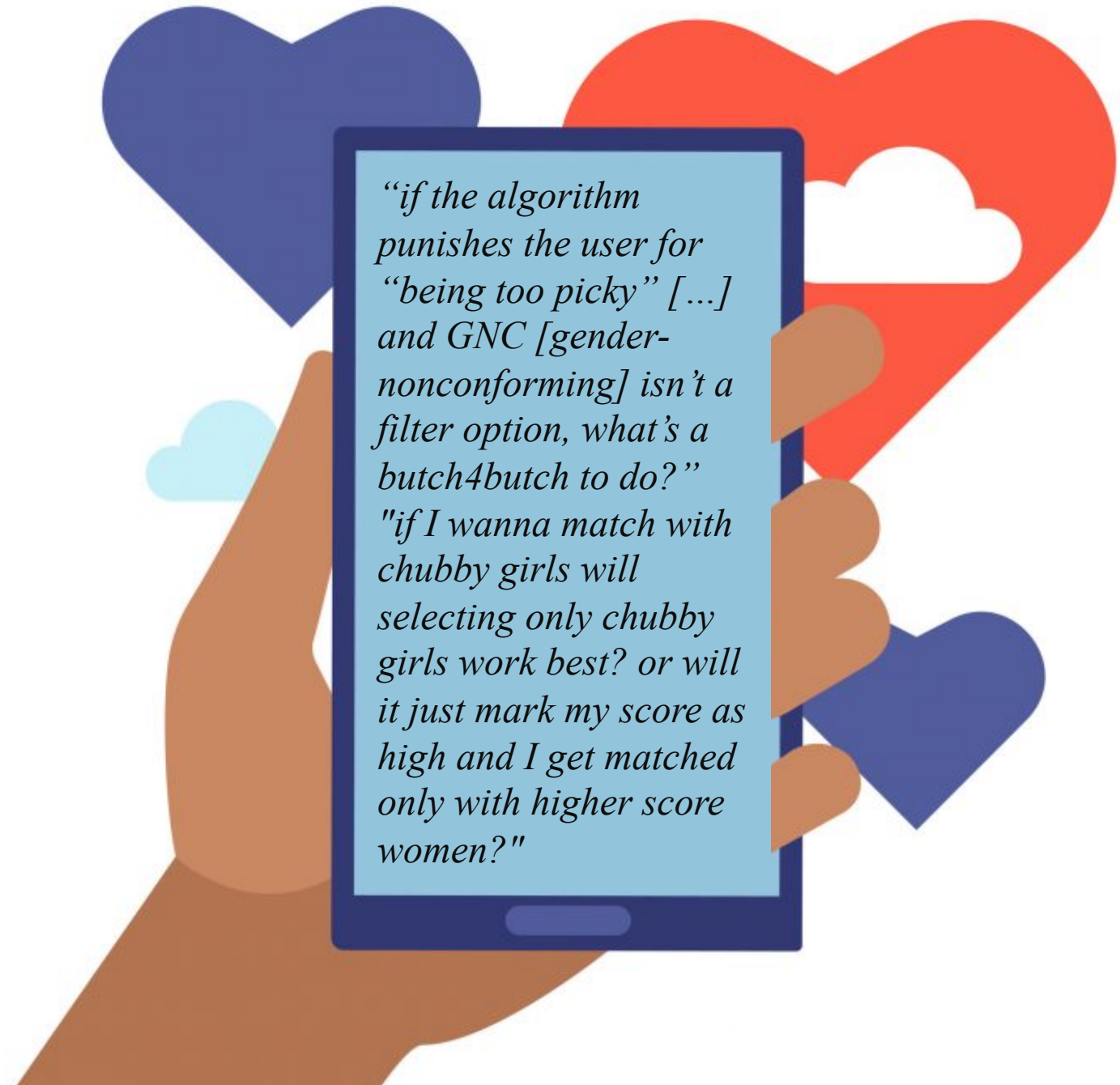
“Every single day I literally only see white girls and only once in a while a Hispanic girl that has light enough skin to pass as white. I wouldn’t see this as a problem if Tinder’s algorithms saw that I swiped right on this type of demographic. However, that’s not the case for me

Filtering and Control

Users would have more control over the profiles they can see.

81% (n=122) of surveyed users said that they would prefer more filters on Tinder.

- 57% (n=69) for drinking & smoking habits
 - 39% (n=47) for political beliefs
 - 38% (n=46) for educational background
- Preference for filters related to unconventional preference?

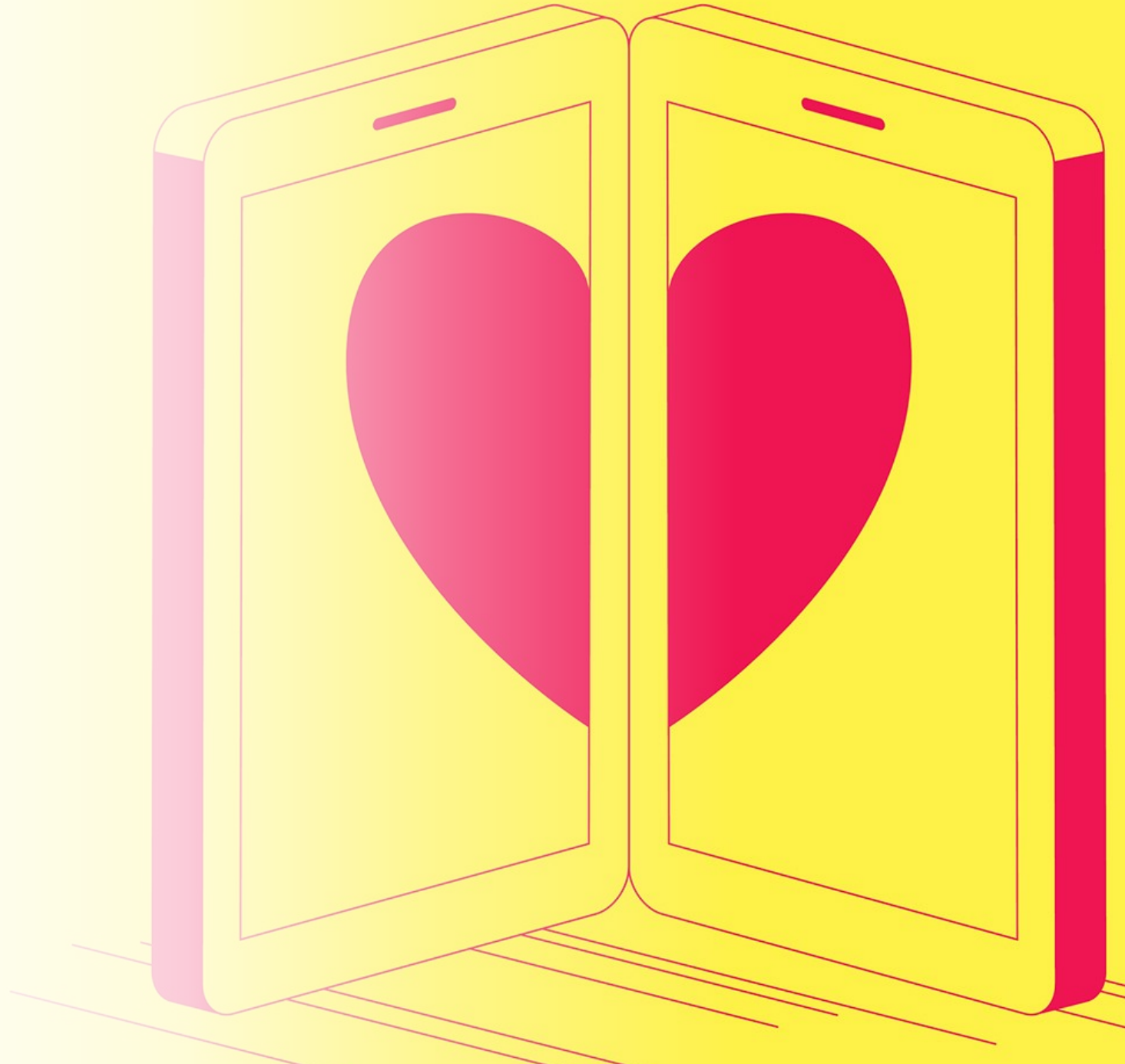


“if the algorithm punishes the user for “being too picky” [...] and GNC [gender-nonconforming] isn’t a filter option, what’s a butch4butch to do?”
“if I wanna match with chubby girls will selecting only chubby girls work best? or will it just mark my score as high and I get matched only with higher score women?”

Discussion: Success or Satisfaction?

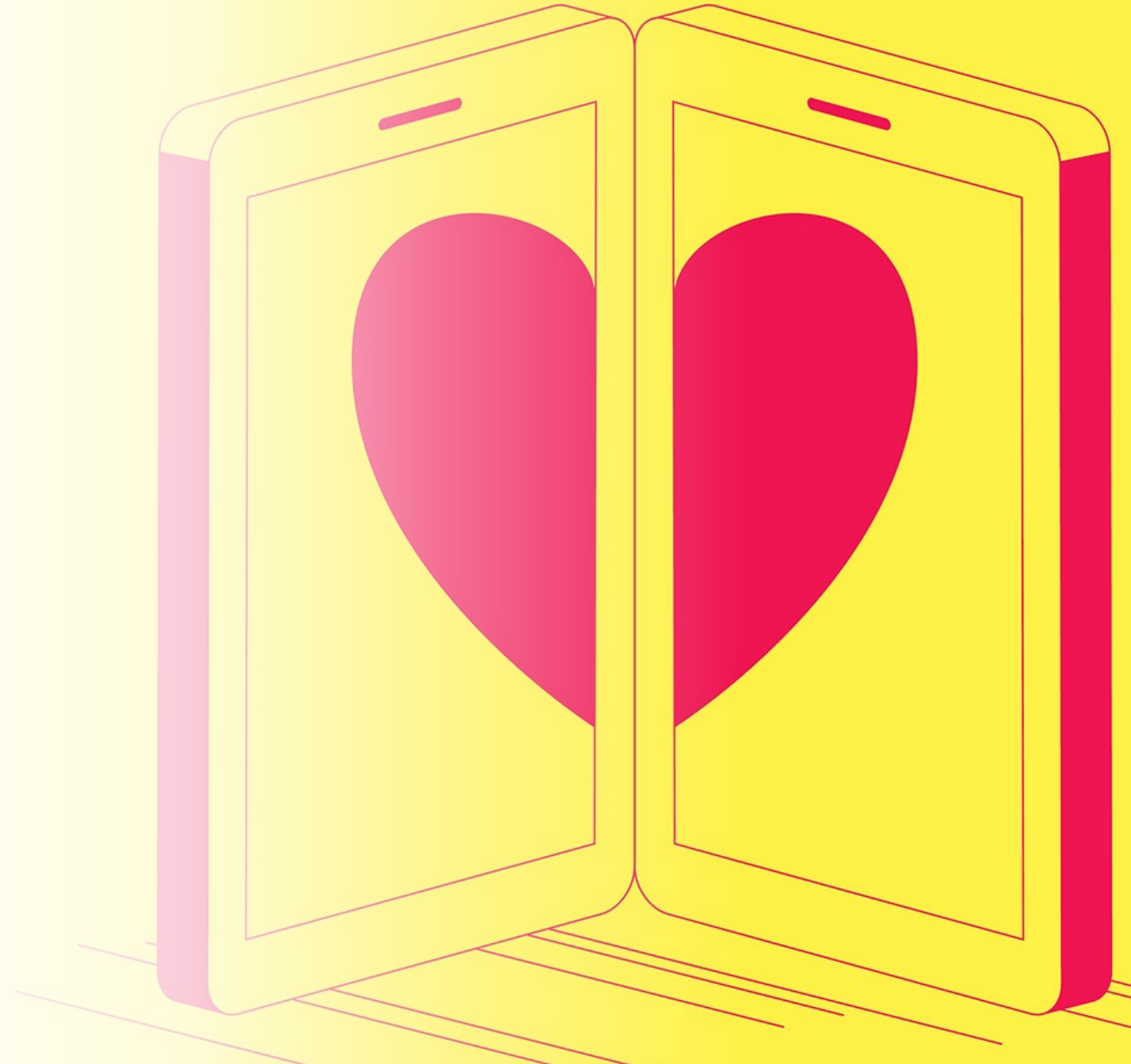
- Most common workarounds are expanding filters and reset profile,
- When users run out of profiles to swipe through, those would add new profiles to look at,
- Are users doing this to have more success in meeting new matches, or just because they're bored?

- Many users can be satisfied with swiping and matching and never meet their matches,
- User satisfaction without user success



Discussion: Filters and Preferences

- A majority of survey users prefer to have filters, so why not include them?
- No filters means more profiles to match, less exclusivity which might be ethically problematic,
- But we say most people are flexibly and fluid with their filters,
- The ethical problems with user filtering are also the same with algorithmic filtering





Conclusion & Outcomes

- Satisfaction versus success:
 - Users with different goals,
 - Stakeholder with different goals.
- The impact of algorithmic filtering:
 - Users are having different experiences,
 - Impact on mental health,
 - Only serves users with conventional preferences.