

## THE ART OF FLIRTING

*You don't have to look like the next Pamela Anderson, or have teeth as white as Arnold Schwarzenegger to get members of the opposite sex to go weak at the knees. Mary Brown investigates the dos and don'ts of flirting.*

It's so instinctive, we barely even notice doing it. Flirting. It's you tilting your head slightly to reveal your neck, laughing hysterically to a joke that's not even funny, battering those eyelashes that took you an hour of hard labour in the bathroom to perfect every last lash. People of all shapes and sizes excel in this art of wooing, but how is it fair that they're just born with it? Why is it that some of us can't charm the backside of a bull to save ourselves? The answer you would suspect lies beneath hours of reading pages of silly gossip magazines, but after endless trips to Whitcoulls in search of a magazine with decent flirting advice, it has been proven a waste of time. Much as we'd like to believe that all success relies purely on that killer opening line, (according to *Girlfriend* magazine) it doesn't. (para 1)

## WHO FLIRTS?

Contrary to what many believe, there are in fact only two very distinct groups of people who flirt. Those who are married, and those who are single. Of course singles flirt. They're single. Therefore no one is in any way obliged to socialise with them, pay for their dozens of unneeded designer shoes or put up with continuous pounding from the home speaker system of the latest shoot out in *Call of Duty*. Married people however are a much tougher code to crack. They've settled down, found their so called, 'soul mate'. Why on earth would they continue in the game? Arthur Aron, professor of psychology at the State of University of New York believes that what propels already committed lovers to the game of wooing is that flirting is, "Testing one's mate-value against the possibility of alternatives. Actually trying to see if someone might be available as an alternative." The statistics are high. According to one website, as many as 22 percent of married men and 14 percent of married women have strayed at least once during their lives. (para 2)

## FLIRTING FOR BENEFITS

However there are of course the intentional flirts. You know who you are. The smart girl who chats up the barman to get a free drink, or the sweet talker who winks at the naive police woman and gets away with a 120 kilometre speeding ticket. The odd wink here and there just produces so many perks! A nicer table, a 50 percent markdown or a fuss free purchase return. This small, effortless act of 'friendliness' has become a fundamental requirement in today's society. Why? Because it gets you what you want, and works (almost) every time. *"I must admit, at parties I'd flirt to get a drink off a guy"* - Year 12 student. (para 3)

## THE SCIENCE BEHIND THE SUCCESS

Peacocks sprout their multi coloured feathers to lure in potential mates, men and women chuck on their glamour gears to look seductive for their first date. Animals all over the universe are evolutionarily programmed to perform in the exact same way: Look hot to score a second date!

However, on a scale of importance when flirting, our looks are in fact second fiddle to our attitude, gestures and overall quality of yarn. Therefore success is not found in the person with the longest lashes, or the person who spent hours at the dentist getting a full set of dentures set to dazzle possible candidates. As cliched as it may sound it really is what is inside that counts. Here's proof:

- More than 55 percent of the impression we perceive from someone is simply through stance and swagger.
- 33 percent is from the tone, speed and nuance of their voice.
- A mere seven percent is what they actually say.

Pair those few statistics up with the fact that most experts agree it takes between 90 seconds and four minutes for someone to decide whether or not they're into their fellow friend and you'll find that the secret to success just has to be body language. (para 4)

## MIRRORING

A form of body language, this concept is a much neglected weapon when performing the art of woo. The concept is simple. When you look in a mirror, the mirror imitates your actions. The same has been found when two people are in deep conversation. Examples of mirroring may include:

- If they take a sip of their drink, so do you.
- If they lean forward, so do you.

Instinctively, the person feels on the same level as you. As simple as this trick is however, it can be easily ruined should you choose to rush in and do it straight after them. Chances are they'll think you're a freak, and you'll end up dateless, with a stained shirt dripping with wine. (para 5)

### PICK-UP LINES

These kick off phrases have been around for about as long as flirting itself, but what on earth are you supposed to say next after something like, "Is your butt from Maccas? Cos I'm lovin' it." This pathetic attempt to sound smart, sassy or in any way approachable leaves no hope for further conversation. A Year 12 student from Sunshine College believes abusers of these opening gambits are desperate. A survey conducted by Dr. Stephanie Sparkis, showed that women rated men who used such lines, as opposed to other types of men, as somewhat high on humorousness and sociability, but low on trustworthiness and intelligence. (para 6)

### EMPLOYING A WING MAN

In any given group of males, it is highly likely that one of them has been dubbed the "wing man." This is usually assigned soon after a first encounter with a batch of highly attractive young females. The first job of the wing man is to assist in making the other man look, in comparison, more sexy, and therefore more worthy of taking that girl home with him. This act has been dubbed the "pre-wing." Follow up support is then expected of course, which could involve the befriending associates of the potential partner. Should the couple happen to wed, that wing man would then be expected to, "get sloppy drunk at the reception and recount the tail of the "first date". Preferably using the microphone or any available amplification device," says Wikipedia Online. Time and time again this handy tool has been proven successful when courting. *How I Met Your Mother's* Barney Stinson has had a major influence on the youth of today in making this concept known, and widely accepted in society. (para 7)

### FLIRTING 101: A GUIDE FOR DUMMIES

If endless reading of unhelpful gossip magazines to learn how to be successful doesn't really take your fancy, then try this simple and fool proof guide for dummies. These few steps will have the guy/girl of your dreams falling at your feet in no time

- 1) Be a funny smart ass. Its generic. Girls like funny men.
  - 2) Avoid those cheesy pick up lines. As discussed before, be sure to avoid these cliched blunders if you want to appear in any way interesting, literate or worthy of 'picking up a chicks.'
  - 3) Do act your age. Don't make yourself look dumb by giggling at everything he says or asking dumb questions you already know the answer to. Stupid questions deserve stupid answers.
  - 4) Women, make the first move. Golocal.com's recent survey found that 95 percent of men would, "love it if the woman made the first move."
  - 5) Its all in the eyes baby. Over 60 percent of the girls that were surveyed agreed that eyes are one of the first things they look for in a guy.
  - 6) You should want to make the other person feel good.
  - 7) Don't dance with guys... In front of your boy friend."I had a friend who would constantly dance with other guys while her boyfriend was in the other room. I felt it was just tacky to see her dancing on another guy when her boyfriend was right there. She blamed her drunkenness for her flirty personality," says Anna Grey from Sunshine College.
  - 8) Make small talk. Number one conversation this summer: the weather. Immediately it breaks the ice! What better story is there than the one about your grandmother having to dig her car out of the snow last winter...
  - 9) Sniffing. "I really hate sniffing" says Leslie Green from Aroha High School
- "I wouldn't fall for [pick-up lines]. The guy must be stupid and a try hard." -Anonymous (para 8)

### WHAT'S YOUR BEST FLIRT WEAPON?

After much debate, the verdict is set. **The best flirt weapon really is just a pearly white smile. "Happy is in! Mysterious is out," says Whitney Casey, Match.com's relationship expert. "Smiling at him is an oldie but goodie. Your self-confident look will always get him."** (para 9)

So there you have it - The tricks of the trade; the secrets to success. Yet though all our flirtatious gestures, our constant embarrassment and our endless worrying, it is the simplest, most genuine gesture of all that will really get you noticed. A smile is makes anyone look good. (para 10)