

## **But, what do I say?**

One of my more pragmatic clients recently made the observation that whilst her self-esteem improved by our coaching, she wasn't really getting better results when it came to meeting Mr. Right. It became clear the more attractive she found a man, the less likely she'd actually approach him. This is a very common attraction pattern, the better they appear, the scarier we make them. There's a funny (well, painful really!) dynamic that occurs when you've become excited and interested whereby you suffer the paralysis of analysis. What would I say? Maybe he's too busy to talk to me? Supposing she thinks I'm an idiot? How often in your life have you seen someone that looks really interesting, in some way they are attractive to you, and you haven't done anything about it?

This applies to far more than singles trying to get a date; it's relevant to anyone that has to meet people. That said the most painful occurrences are generally around love interests so I'll use it as the example for this article.

Let's say you see a person across the room that really lights your lights. Maybe you've taken the time to work out what constitutes your perfect partner and you instinctively know that you and this person have a lot in common. In a perfect world you'd walk right over, introduce yourself and leave arm in arm for a stroll into the sunset. I happen to know from my experience both personally and professionally that rarely happens. In fact, the more excited we get the less likely we are to do anything.

The most common question I hear around this subject is, "But what do I say?" It's like the million dollar question and in the end there are lots of different answers and it really depends on the situation. After years of reading books on the subject, attending courses, scouring the internet, getting it badly wrong and then sitting cross legged in quiet contemplation for hours I've come to the conclusion that the best thing to say is anything. In the first 30 seconds of an interaction what you say is largely irrelevant, it really doesn't seem to matter. Remember to speak within reason, of course, since the observation "that shirt is truly hideous" is rarely a winner.

The best introduction I've learned goes like this: compliment, ask a question and then introduce yourself. It's important to keep in mind that both of you are likely to be a little edgy around each other initially so your aim is to ensure that the other person knows they are safe in your company because you are at least semi coherent when it comes to conversation.

So, bargain basement introduction is to look for the place they've spent a lot of money or effort around their appearance and tell them you like it. People really want to be praised and this is your quickest way to win their affection. It's as if people are houses, you don't want to go crashing into their bedroom, just aim to get through the front gate for starters. You then smile, face them, look them in the eye and ask a fairly innocuous question such as: How do you know the host? What do you do when you're not here? Where did you

get that?

Remember it doesn't really matter what you ask because you're both busy checking each other out on so many different levels the words rarely make a difference. If you are going to click as friends, it's going to happen fairly quickly and if it feels like hard work you may well be wasting valuable time.

Now I know it's not quite that simple, particularly if you've managed to get yourself all stressed out about blowing it before you've even begun. There are ways of making the approach much easier. I'll talk more about that in the next newsletter.

In summary, I encourage anyone who has to meet new people ( Hmm... isn't that all of us?) to keep the compliment, question, introduce pattern in mind. With a little practice all this becomes second nature and you can get out of your own way. Someday soon I will be offering a "Flirting with Finesse" teleclass, one of the many exciting things happening behind the scenes that I'll let you know about in the near future.

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