

LL31-Why Men and Women Flirt

I'm Alvean Lyons, and I'm Doug Weiss and welcome to Love Life.

OK so I love this topic, why do men and women flirt?

I think there are many answers to that question and you gave me the best one just before we rolled and that is because it feels good. That's a pretty good explanation in and of itself, it does feel good and why it feels good is fundamentally because we all want affirmation and affection. Understanding that, I think, is probably one of the great lessons that anyone in any relationship can learn... and by that I mean not just relationships between men and women or couples of any gender, but relationships in life, in work, in sports, you name the endeavor. When you pay other people the attention and give them the approbation that they deserve, that you would want to have paid to you, you create an energy that is quite frankly infectious, empowering, and leaves everyone feeling so good about the experience that it is addictive. And that's the addiction of a loving relationship. That's what gets the hormones flowing....the feel good hormones that we talk about and you can do that with nothing more than a smile or a compliment. One of my favorite things to do.....and guys try this sometime... is a kind of low level kind of flirting. I want to be clear here to make a distinction between flirting and taking that to a place that's inappropriate. .

I will see a woman wearing a very pretty dress or someone who has a wonderful smile and I will say that's a gorgeous dress, or that color is perfect for you. Now a woman saying that to another woman is an expected thing but when a man does that it's another thing entirely. Guys, you probably didn't know you had this power. You just made that person's day. It's the equivalent of turning around and handing that person flowers or a box of candy but ten times better. That person will go through the day feeling better about themselves I guarantee. And what did that cost you, nothing, absolutely nothing. In fact you get something back you can't believe, because the response, the reciprocal back from that person, their reaction, will make you feel better about yourself.

And for women who are profoundly cerebral, because there are those that are not into physicality per se, you can flirt with someone's mind. If someone says something that is just brilliant, taking that moment to say do you know how brilliant that was? I just have to say I overheard you speaking and that was ultimate brilliance. That can have the same feeling as a compliment of someone's physicality. So there are multiple ways in which we can connect with another that gives that wonderful sense of affirmation through something that they may value. Flirting is such a beautiful thing, and it's not just between you and strangers. Flirting can totally exist inside of your committed and loving relationship. I flirt with my husband all the time, so much so that when we're in public we have literally had waiters say to us, you guys are so cute you should never get married.

We would literally break into laughter because it's a little late, we've been married almost twenty years. Or sometimes it's you guys probably don't have kids. So here's another horrible thing. They just assume that if we flirt with each other still we couldn't possibly have children. Too late for that one too. Normally the question that would follow that is how the heck are you guys still into each other after all of these years? The truth is we have never taken each other for granted to the point that we start flirting with other people rather than flirting with each other. I flirt with everybody because of the very thing that you spoke to, that it's not sexual in nature, it is truly just affirmative in ways that make people feel good and secure. People have no qualms about complimenting another because you're not losing anything to make somebody else shine for a moment and quite frankly it actually makes you appear more attractive when you put a spotlight for a moment on somebody else. So, I am I am a huge advocate for appropriate flirting and my husband's a flirt too. I mean we just flirt all the time. There are times when he's walking through the room and he has a T. shirt on and it's just it's like choking his arms (my husband works out a lot) and I can see all of those muscles I'll just make some kind of noise that suggests that he's a little piece of meat walking through the room. It always makes him smile. What's funny is he always comes back to see if maybe there's another compliment. I will give him as many as he wants, because when you love somebody, when you care about somebody you want

to let them know. I see you, I hear you, you matter to me and I find you beautiful and attractive and I have not forgotten any of that just because you have dedicated your life to me. It's actually the very reason why it should be a priority.

I think there are, however, difficulties that we have, not just in this day and age, with knowing where the line is and how not to cross it. Like many men I suspect, I can be incredibly obtuse. What I mean by that is that there are times I don't know when someone is flirting with me. I really just don't see it. I don't connect to it. Yet there are times when I feel that happening and I'm worried about acknowledging or responding to it because I don't want to cross a line or I don't want to send the wrong signal. I think that that's the fine edge. We all know when we've crossed the line it's when we are about to cross the line that's tricky. You don't want to lead somebody on with false expectations, but being flirtatious with somebody, having a delightful conversation is about getting to know them and understanding where that line is for them.

I'll tell you a quick story. There's a lovely woman that I know who's probably about ten years older than I am. I'm guessing as I would never ask. She certainly doesn't look that age but I am inferring from some things that she's said. She's married by the way and one night a week she goes out and goes dancing with her girlfriends. That's her thing, that's what she likes to do. We met about a year or two ago. We were both sitting in a restaurant at the bar because there were no tables for singles. We were both sitting at the bar and having a drink and we struck up a conversation and it was an innocent conversation. She had a great southern accent and she's an absolutely charming woman and I said to her at one point after we had gotten to know each other, had seen each other at the same place two or three times, if you weren't married and ten years younger..... And she just laughed and she said yes I know. Well we could have that conversation without either of us feeling uncomfortable about it. It was a conversation that came from truth and honesty with one another because we had established some knowledge of each other. We knew where the lines were and that it wasn't a remark that meant I want to take you home tonight, it was a conversation that was much more lighthearted but still affectionate and affirming. I think that's the tricky bit, especially for guys, because we are not..... well you've heard me say this a number of times.... our social skills are often not well developed.

I think that the key is something that you said in terms of relationships. When you know someone, or have at least developed enough of a relationship with someone, you have a better sense of where the lines are. So one of the ways to keep ourselves out of trouble is to either have very clean and crisp compliments that can still be considered flirting but they're very clean: beautiful dress, brilliant commentary, wonderful way in which you handled such and such... those are very clean. It's still affirmation but not overly intimate. You can be engaging enough that if it's someone that you are interested in and they too are interested it gives you a touch point to begin that connection. But it's also appropriate enough that if that person is committed to someone else and so are you, it can be just that compliment. When you have relationship with someone then there's a little more play inside of the boundaries of what can be communicated because the intention is not confused. I know you well enough to know where that is coming from, and you know me well enough to know what I would find affirming and positive. If you go home wondering what she meant, probably there's some miscues, probably you don't have enough of a relationship yet for whatever transpired. So there is something to be said for knowing who a person is to understand what will connect with them appropriately if you're going to flirt overtly.

I confess that I will go to the flirt, but I'm again very judicious about it. Not the least of the reasons that I flirt is that I genuinely like women, the way they think and feel. I enjoy their company and so that light hearted banter back and forth without it getting too hot and heavy, without crossing the line that makes the experience delightful like a pleasant volley in tennis.

Well we hope that you've enjoyed this episode we have. There are lots of other interesting topics to come in the weeks that follow and we hope you'll continue to listen to us. If you have a thought about this show or any other, or an idea for another topic please write to us at doug@lovelife.digital or alvean@lovelife.digital

We want to thank Chelsea Washington, our producer, Todd Washburn, our Recording Engineer and the entire Love Life family, including you, our listeners. We'll be back next week with another episode. Until then, have a wonderful week. Bye folks.