

The Most Important Thing Men Don't Know About Single Women—But Should

OK, guys. Here is a little quiz for you. Of these four traits, which do you think a single woman secretly finds most attractive in a guy? Which one comes next? Which is the least attractive by comparison?

- Buff body
- Self-confidence
- Thoughtfulness
- Wealth

Go ahead. Rank them. I'll wait.

If you guessed wealth, buff body, self-confidence and thoughtfulness in that order, you are not even close. The real order is the exact opposite. Over the last 10 years, I've conducted extensive interviews and anonymous, nationally representative surveys with more than 12,000 men, women and teens. And without fail, I have seen that most single women—everyone from the single-again middle-aged woman to the hot 20-something to the 15-year-old girl who has never had a boyfriend—find thoughtfulness and self-confidence more attractive.

Now, there are many other attractive traits that matter. In fact, a survey I conducted with young women listed 12, and sense of humor ranked No. 1, with thoughtfulness and self-confidence close behind. I only mention the four above to demonstrate how easy it is for single men and women to overlook what each other find appealing.

And I'm not the only one to reveal these same results. In fact, the "2014 State of Dating in America" report by

discovered that single women would rather go on a date with someone who is funny as opposed to someone who is attractive.

I know you, as a single man, are probably skeptical that these women are telling the truth. You've seen too many women who say they want the nice guy but go for the bad boy. And you value physical attractiveness so highly, so why wouldn't a woman?

If you can set that skepticism aside and look at why thoughtfulness and self-confidence are appealing to single women, it will change the way you interact with them. Even better, you are setting yourself up to have a much happier relationship.

The Important Truth Hiding in the Data

Here is the vital truth: The attractive, confident woman you are seeking is constantly asking one question inside her head. The surveys I conducted for my books *For Men Only* and *For Young Men Only* revealed that up to 90 percent of women question, "Am I loveable? Beautiful? Special?"

No matter how wonderful, gorgeous and unique she is, she probably doubts all these things. And she is subconsciously looking to those around her for clues to answer her deep question.

Now enter the guy with the buff body and the expensive car. Does the fact that he is good-looking or wealthy answer her question?

Not really. Sure, those things are appealing, but they are more superficial. They, by themselves, don't do much to make her feel special.

Now enter the average guy who meets a girl at a party. He is only average-looking, and nothing indicates that he is well off. But after being introduced by a mutual friend, he walks

up to her some time later at the appetizers table and says hi to start a conversation. He offers to hold her glass while she tries to juggle her hors d'oeuvres. They talk and laugh for a while and then get separated when someone pulls him into a different discussion. But before the evening ends, she notices that he is scanning the room for someone. And it turns out to be her.

He walks over and says, "Look, I really enjoyed meeting you. If you're not seeing someone at the moment, I'd love to get together for coffee or lunch after church sometime."

Now, let me ask you: What does that approach say to a woman's secret question? His confident approach to her, his attentiveness, his thoughtfulness all say, "Yes, you are special."

All too often, the nice guys hang back and don't confidently approach. So all too often, this is why great women go for the bad boy. The bad boys are much more likely to sidle up to the girl at the party and drawl, with a cheeky grin, "Hey, beautiful." But just because that stirs something in her, it doesn't mean that's what she *most* wants.

The 4 Things You Should Do Differently

According to ChristianMingle's recent report, here are the four big things that single women really want from single men:

- **They want a nice guy to directly ask them out.** Now, OK, that doesn't mean hanging a banner from the rooftops saying, "Marie, will you go out on a date with me?" But it does mean being clear: "I enjoyed talking to you and would love to take you out."
- **They want you to ask them over the phone, not via text.** Eighty-five percent of the single women said, essentially, "Ask me out with a phone call, already!" Why? Nearly half of women said texting has made it much more difficult to tell whether something is a date! And

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- **They want to know it's a date.** I know directness may make you nervous, and it is easier to be ambiguous and try to slide into some time together. But ambiguity does nothing to signal, "You are special." At some point, you have to make it clear. In ChristianMingle's report, 66 percent of women said they were sometimes or always confused about the status of this interaction with someone they are interested in—is this a date or not a date?
- **They are fine with simple.** It doesn't have to be big and fancy. Seventy-nine percent of women said a planned one-on-one hangout is a date. The key is to *plan it* and *ask her*.

Yes, a direct approach may be more common for bad boys, but a single woman would much rather have a quietly confident approach from a nice guy. She would much rather be pursued by *you*. That habit will not only be deeply appealing to single women, but also to one day reassure your wife, 20 years into marriage, that you still find her lovable, beautiful and special.

Shaunti Feldhahn is a social researcher, popular speaker and best-selling author of books such as *For Women Only* and *For Men Only*. Her research is regularly featured in media as diverse as *Focus on the Family*, the *Today* show and *Cosmopolitan* magazine. A recent member of the ChristianMingle advisory board, she loves speaking at events for men and women and is passionate about helping singles create great relationships and then healthy marriages. She and her husband, Jeff, live in Atlanta with their two middle-school aged children and two cats who think they are dogs. Find her at .