

Chapter 1

The Making of a Successful Flirt

In This Chapter

- ▶ Understanding the fundamentals of flirting
 - ▶ Recognising and sending flirting signals
 - ▶ Putting yourself in the flirting zone
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Mother Nature has blessed you with all the skills you need to be a super flirt. Perhaps you've lost touch with these skills along the way or haven't used them enough to have full confidence in them, but believe me you do have the skills and you can improve them to whatever degree you desire.

Flirting is a subtle combination of body language, confidence, attitude, and appearance. You can employ these features of your character to flirt in different ways, from the innocent, non-sexual, mutual kind of flirting where you're not attracted to the other person to full-on flirting when you're madly attracted to someone. Flirting's not just about sex, although that is a very pleasant by-product when the feeling's mutual, but about making personal connections with people you find interesting and want to get to know.

When you flirt with someone they feel good about themselves, and in return you feel good too. Being flirted with is the ultimate confidence booster and it's free.

If you've ever felt that a chapter out of your flirting life felt more like 'How to lose friends and alienate people', then your flirting exploits are just about to make a huge paradigm shift.

Flirting Fundamentals

For most people, the big flirting concerns are:

- ✔ How do I get people to notice me?
- ✔ How can I tell if they fancy me?
- ✔ What am I going to say?
- ✔ How do I move things on from being just friends?

I cover all of these issues in this book. What you need to know now are some of the basic principles that apply to flirting, explained in the following sections.

Tuning animal instincts

Flirting in the human and animal worlds has been studied by everyone from anthropologists to psychologists and you can use their findings to your benefit.

In the animal kingdom, the males are adorned with ornate tail feathers, impressive manes, or striking markings to attract a female. In humans, however, the situation's reversed: with the exception of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries when men sported massive wigs and flamboyant clothing, women have taken on the role of prettying themselves to attract a mate.



Studies show that women initiate flirting 90 per cent of the time. Although men appear to do most of the running, they actually do so because women have invited their advances with their flirting signals.

In addition, both humans and animals follow species-specific mating rituals and displays that the other members are familiar with. Human courtship follows a five-step pattern when you meet someone you're attracted to:

1. **You make eye contact.** A passing glance doesn't cut it; flirting requires a deliberate eye contact that's held long enough for the other person to definitely notice.
2. **You smile.** Smiling shows you have an interest and is a non-verbal way to invite someone's attention.
3. **You preen a bit.** Arranging your hair, smoothing your clothes, and positioning yourself on your best side catches the attention of interested parties.
4. **You build rapport.** Disclosing personal information about yourself and asking questions about the other person accelerates the attraction process.

Disco dummy

Jake went to his first ever school disco. He'd looked up some tips online and spoken to his big brother about meeting girls. He came back with his ego deflated. 'I flirted at loads of girls and none of them were interested,' he told his mother. 'What made you think they were interested in the first place?' she asked. 'Nothing, I just fancied them, so I flirted at them,' he replied. Jake was lucky enough to have a mum that could give him the lowdown on how girls think and his next disco was much more successful.

Jake made a schoolboy error that many men continue to make throughout their adult lives. First, you need to find someone who's available; then you flirt with them, not at them. To be a successful flirt, look for the signs and follow your instincts.

- 5. You find reasons to touch both yourself and the other person.** Touching yourself in autoerotic gestures and touching them at moments of increased rapport lets them know you're interested.



Follow your animal instincts to attract more friends and lovers. If you want to attract the opposite sex, emphasise your sexual differences; to discourage an attraction, downplay your differences.

Flirting: A game of two halves

It takes two to flirt. You can't flirt *at* someone; to have any chance of success, you flirt *with* them. Flirting with someone is like dancing: the movements are co-ordinated, but different.



In general, your role in and success with a romantic flirtation is determined by your gender. Women's success with men is directly related to their ability to send out courtship signals and to interpret how they reciprocate. Men's success with women relies on their ability to read the signals being sent to them, as opposed to being able to initiate their own flirting rituals. Both women and men need to accurately interpret the signals they receive and respond accordingly.



Men's difficulties in finding mates result from their lack of perception in reading women's signals; women's lie in not being able to find men who match their ideals. Guys start paying more attention; girls, stop being so fussy!

Flirting to attract new friends can be daunting because of the tendency to wait for the other person to make the move to engage you. However, that other person could well be employing

the same tactic. Taking the initiative yourself is therefore the best and most successful way to meet new people and make new friends.

Attracting more friends through flirting is almost risk free and has a high success rate. Naturally, people are going to be attracted to you if you demonstrate all the key flirting signals, but in friendly proportions.

Common flirting pitfalls

Flirting has four common pitfalls that most of us have fallen into at one time or another:

- ✓ **Picking the wrong person to flirt with.** The key to flirting success is flirting with someone who's available. Too many people make the mistake of flirting with someone without first looking for clues that they'll be receptive to the attention.
- ✓ **Not knowing how to make the approach.** Dithering and procrastination kick in because you're not sure how to make an approach or what to say. Always approaching from the front and learning to use general conversation cues are the simple fixes for this problem.
- ✓ **Worrying that something awful will happen.** Fearing rejection is quite natural, but you can learn to overcome this fear, which in turn eradicates irrational fears of something awful happening.
- ✓ **Not being able to accurately read the signals you receive.** How can you respond appropriately if you misinterpret the signals coming your way? Actually, you can't. Misreading signals is one of the main reasons flirtations go awry. You can solve this problem by learning how to read body language.

FACT



Men have between 10 and 20 times more testosterone than women and as a result tend to view things in terms of sex. Research shows that men find it difficult to interpret subtle signs and nuances and can often mistake friendliness for sexual availability.

Getting in Tune with Body Language

Body language is a fundamental part of flirting because it shows how available, attractive, enthusiastic, and sexy we are, or are not.

Some signals are unconscious, so you have no control over them and nothing to learn; others are deliberate, so you need to put your best effort into learning them.

Being able to interpret other people's body language and actions provides you with clues to their emotions. You can use this information to tell when someone fancies you and also to build relationships at work and socially.

Becoming a people watcher

Nothing's more fascinating than people. The more you watch people, the more you learn about their behaviour and can predict how they'll react in certain situations. For this reason, companies spend small fortunes on psychometric testing to see if they can predict how someone is likely to behave in an occupational setting before hiring or promoting them. The added value you have over any test is that you can actually observe people in their own environment. You can learn to anticipate or predict behaviour in family and friends, as well as potential dates.

Get to grips with the behaviour of others and then strangers won't seem frightening figures that can make you feel awkward in their presence.



Next time you think 'X makes me uncomfortable' or 'I really enjoy bumping into Y', analyse why that's so. Consider what it is about their behaviour that makes you so uncomfortable or brightens up your day.

People-watching opportunities exist all around you, so make the most of them.

Spotting key signals in other people

Being able to recognise the right signals gives you the confidence to step up to the flirting mark. You can tell whether someone's initiating a flirtation if they do the following: make eye contact, smile at you, fiddle with their clothing or hair, initiate a conversation or mirror your behaviour, or find reasons to touch you. These behaviours are the same five outlined in the human courtship pattern mentioned in the earlier section 'Tuning animal instincts'. If you see them, you're good to go. For the full rundown on flirting signals, see Chapters 10, 11, and 12.

Right clues, wrong order

Dave had researched flirting behaviour and had made a checklist of what to look for when he met a woman to see if she fancied him. The signs were:

1. Dilated pupils
2. Swollen lips
3. Batting eyelashes
4. Moist, dewy eyes
5. Hair flicking

Dave was most upset that none of the women he fancied showed any signs of fancying him; in fact, they couldn't get away fast enough.

Dave's checklist wasn't bad, however. His mistake was just marching up to women and checking if they were all in evidence. Dave returned to the drawing board and included all the initial signals which he'd thought were a bit boring and general, and before he knew it he'd bagged himself a dream date.

Flirting follows a process. Checking to see if you've made a good cake is useless if all the ingredients are just heaped into a tin and thrown in the oven. You start with the ingredients, mix them in the right order with the correct tools, pop the tin into a pre-heated oven – and bingo you get something hot and tasty.

Looking at revealing behaviour

Our gestures are created by our emotions. Being aware of the gestures we can control as well as those that are involuntary provides a good picture of what gives your hand away, as well as what holds you back.

Our emotions are most commonly revealed by the:

- ✓ **Face:** Even if you have great control over your face, minuscule movements still occur before you have time to compose yourself. The skilled eye can thus see your feelings 'written all over your face'. (See Chapter 10 on interpreting the facial language code.)
- ✓ **Hands:** Because the hands are in front of the body they're beautifully placed to be observed. Trying to hide your hands may make you appear deceptive. Wringing your hands shows anxiety and rubbing your palms slowly together makes you look as if you're up to something, but if they're relaxed and open they show that you're comfortable in a person's company. (See Chapter 11 on using your hands.)

Flirting monolith

You couldn't knock Jess back with an iron bar. She was undoubtedly the best flirt that any of her friends had ever come across. They were dissecting her 'secret' one night over a drink. Without being unkind, she wasn't the best-looking girl, was on the short side and rather plump. Short of hypnotising men, they struggled to understand Jess's phenomenal hit rate. What they were overlooking was that Jess:

- ✔ Smiled a lot
- ✔ Made good eye contact
- ✔ Was friendly with everyone
- ✔ Could read men like a book
- ✔ Was an expert in using all the female flirting signals
- ✔ Didn't let the odd knock-back upset her

Jess just didn't care what people thought of her. She presented the best impression she could and people loved her for it. From the paper shop to the pub, her energy and vitality won everyone over.

Being a successful flirt takes energy and resilience. Treat every encounter as a flirtation in the making. If it doesn't work out, get looking for the next opportunity, but never let the odd rejection stop you.

- ✔ **Feet:** As your feet are farthest away from your brain you have less control over them, making them very revealing. Your feet tend to point in the direction you want to be heading: point them towards someone and you want to be with them; point them away and chances are you'd rather be somewhere else.



Next time you're talking to someone and you'd rather not be, check in which direction your feet are pointing.

Face, hands, and feet provide a simple means of interpreting revealing behaviour. Complement this understanding with tips on rapport building in Chapter 8 to give yourself a great head start.

Getting Yourself in the Flirting Mindset

Question: What would you attempt if you thought you couldn't fail?

Answer: Anything.

The end is nigh

Jane would rather do nothing than do something because she was convinced that whatever she tried would go wrong. She always wore trousers when she went out, and when her friends tried to coax her into buying a dress, she refused point blank. 'My mum says I have horrible legs and I can't wear a dress as I'll make a show of myself,' was her twisted reasoning. It turned out that Jane's mother didn't have a positive word to say about anything or anybody. Jane had lived with her mother's negativity hanging over her, conditioned into thinking that she was useless and worthless. Jane's friends made a pact to stop her using negative phrases at the ends of sentences; they also said positive things to her about her appearance and her personality. Jane eventually felt positive enough to buy a dress and she looked great in it. Having the confidence to make a change also made her more confident in herself. Instead of viewing the men she met in bars with cynicism, she started to give them a bit of a chance. Before she knew it, Jane was accepting compliments from a stranger about her dress and she didn't attempt to deflect them or to put herself down. Jane managed to put a lifetime of negative conditioning behind her and is now in a stable relationship.

If someone like Jane can grasp the positivity initiative, anyone can. Just think of the rewards and stay focused on becoming the brilliant flirt you are.

To be a brilliant flirt you have to approach it as though you can't fail. Obviously not every flirtation is going to go exactly to plan, but learning from your errors is all part of the process. Remember: flirting's about having attitude; if you believe you can do it, you can. If your fears of rejection are getting in your way, overcome them with help from Chapter 15.



Practise flirting every day, with people of all ages and with both men and women. Mastering the innocent mutual kind of flirting first is an important step to take to enable you to successfully conquer the full-on variety.

Setting your thinking

You have the power to control your thoughts, although sometimes it can feel quite the opposite.

If you hear enough negative messages, you believe them. Telling yourself that you're useless or can't do something becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy. You need to change your thinking. Throughout the book you'll find tips for putting together mantras or positive *affirmations*. These are just simple little messages or phrases you keep repeating to yourself to align your subconscious with your positive way of thinking.



Make the choice to be a brilliant flirt and look forward to reaping the rewards with more friendships, better working relationships, and great dates.



Each night, just before you go to sleep, get rid of your automatic negative thoughts. Replace these thoughts with three things that you've done well that day. Focus on what you've achieved and stamp out the negatives. This process is even more effective if you take a few moments to write down your successes. The following morning, review your notes and congratulate yourself.

Banishing flirting baggage

Flirting baggage is all the bad experiences we carry with us that convert into negative feelings and effectively stop us from fulfilling our flirting potential. Banishing your flirting baggage is a must before you rebuild your lovely flirting skills. Two types of baggage exist:

✔ **The type that you tell people about.** Your mother told you not to air your dirty laundry in public for a reason. Not only are people uncomfortable hearing about it, this baggage reflects negatively on you, regardless of what the problem is or who was to blame.



Never mention your ex-partners or hang-ups when you first meet someone; let them form their own opinion. Put all your energy into how you sound, not what you say. See Chapter 5 for tips on making yourself sound confident.

✔ **The type that you harbour inside you.** If your baggage has been going round in your mind for a while, you've probably blown it out of all proportion. This baggage isn't as bad as you think it is, and it certainly isn't important to the new flirtations in your life. They're flirting with you to get to know you better, not to get to know your life history of hang-ups. You're going to replace your baggage with new experiences with your new flirtations – time to move on.



Think about the last time you saw someone you fancied; did any nagging doubts about your flirting prowess or previous relationships prevent you from talking to them? Don't let your inhibitions or past experiences thwart your flirting ambitions. When you have told a new flirtation about your ex or previous failed relationships, have they looked delighted? Did they ask to see you again? If you answer 'No' to these questions, you need to get a grip on flirting conversation – Chapter 8 has lots of tips.

Second base, here we come

Seb had dated lots of women, but had never made it past first base. This would have been disappointing enough in itself, but he felt the need to explain his failure to every woman he dated, just to complete his humiliation and put her in the picture about his dating immaturity. Seb's mates set him up a blind date and gave him strict instructions not to give her the flirting death knell speech about his lack of conquests. They got on really well and went on to dates two, three, and four. Eventually, Seb confessed that he was very nervous about the whole sex thing. By now Anne was extremely fond of him and, although she laughed, she was very understanding. They're now married with two kids.

Let people get to know you for who you are and not in relation to your baggage to give your flirtations the best possible start.

Spotting daily opportunities

Feeling more positive about making more friends and getting more dates with your shiny new attitude? All you need now are opportunities to let yourself loose.



Practice makes perfect; use a range of flirtations regularly to become a flirting expert.

Think about your daily routine and the types of people you're likely to encounter through the course of a day. You're looking for lots of friendly flirting opportunities to cut your teeth on and boost your confidence and skills, as well as more adventurous romantic flirtations.

In an average day you can expect to interact with:

- ✓ People in queues, in shops, banks, cafes, and so on
- ✓ People on public transport
- ✓ Commuters in traffic jams and at traffic lights
- ✓ Colleagues at work
- ✓ People at the gym or involved in your chosen hobby/interest
- ✓ People via email
- ✓ People by text
- ✓ People on forums or in chatrooms

Ho, ho, ho

Barbara went to the local theatre to collect her daughter from her dance school's show. As she waited in the foyer for the performance to finish, Santa approached her. He showed her the split in the back of his trousers and asked if she thought the children would be able to notice it. Santa's young face was just as cute as his bum, and Barbara couldn't help but engage in a mild flirtation with him.

Santa was quite happy to reciprocate; he was terrified of facing 200 screaming kids and it was a pleasant distraction from his pre-stage nerves. In the space of a few minutes Barbara and Santa enjoyed a delicious – and innocent – flirtation. It left Barbara with a smile on her face and Santa with a spring in his step.

Never miss the opportunity to make someone else's day with a friendly flirtation, be they young, old, or the same sex as you.

- ✔ Parents at the school gates
- ✔ People dog walking
- ✔ People shopping

The list of opportunities is endless, so you've no excuse not to practise your flirting on a daily basis.



To find out more about exploiting your opportunities, see Chapter 4 on flirting with friends, dates, and colleagues, and Chapter 6 on spotting who's available.

