

Self awareness can help people navigate rocky seas of relationships

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A little self-awareness can help people struggling in the world of relationships, says Jeffrey Hall, assistant professor of communication studies at the University of Kansas.

Hall recently completed a study into styles of flirting among dating adults, surveying more than 5,100 people regarding their methods of communicating romantic interest.

"Knowing something about the way you communicate attraction says something about challenges you might have had in your past dating life," Hall said. "Hopefully, this awareness can help people avoid those mistakes and succeed in courtship."

He identified five styles of flirting: physical, traditional, polite, sincere and playful.

- Physical flirting involves the expression of sexual interest in a potential partner. People who scored high in this form of flirting often develop relationships quickly, have more sexual chemistry and have a greater [emotional connection](#) to their partners.
- Traditional flirts think men should make the first move and women should not pursue men. Because they adopt a more passive role in dating, women with this style are likely to report trouble getting men's attention and are less likely to flirt or be

flattered by flirting. Traditional men often know a potential partner for a longer time before approaching them. Both genders tend to be introverted and prefer a more intimate dating scene.

- The polite style of flirting focuses on proper manners and nonsexual communication. Although they are less likely to approach a potential partner and do not find flirting flattering, they do tend to have meaningful relationships.
- Sincere flirting is based on creating emotional connections and communicating sincere interest. Although women tend to score higher in this style, it is advocated by both genders. Relationships involve strong emotional connections and sexual chemistry and are typically meaningful.
- People with playful flirting styles often flirt with little interest in a long-term romance. However, they find flirting fun and enhancing to their self-esteem. They are less likely to have important and meaningful relationships.

Hall said that for the most part, there was little difference between genders within each flirting style.

The research results likely will be used by future researchers who study courtship behaviors, Hall said. But he added that such information has overall value to society.

"In some ways, the very early part of developing relationships is important to the success of long-term relationships, including marriages," he said.

The results of the survey appear in the October issue of the journal *Communication Quarterly*.

More information: Take the flirting styles survey:
connect.ku.edu/tests/flirt/

Provided by University of Kansas

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