

Luring Cues Seven Signals That Make a Woman Approachable

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If you are a single woman at a networking event, sitting at a sports bar, or sipping coffee at a café, men are all over the place. You're intelligent and self-confident, and you're ready, willing, and able to date, but it's hard to get men to approach. Other than imagining they are big ole bears and slathering yourself with honey, how do you do it? If you are a single guy, what do you look for?

When you think of attraction and flirting, think like a cave-man or -woman. Like our cave-dwelling ancestors, we are afraid of strangers. So we form first impressions quickly to decide whether it is safe to approach. As a woman, how do you get someone who doesn't know you to feel comfortable coming over to talk in a public setting, or to start a conversation with you at a dinner party? How do you get him to pick you out of the group? How do you tell someone things about you without words? Let your body do the talking.

First, to make yourself more approachable, give off "harmlessness" cues. In dating, you want to make yourself appear safe and approachable. This may not be easy for you. Some of us have gotten so good at being independent, self-sufficient, and powerful that, in a first encounter, we forget we might scare men off, even strong and confident men. What is great for women in business can be off-putting in the attraction phase of romantic socializing. Remember that the soft, vulnerable part of you that you have been so good at protecting in business is actually appealing in the flirting or dating process.

You might be thinking that you need to be natural. Actually, these *are* very natural movements. It's the bravado you use to cover up your true self that is unnatural and tends to put off or scare others away. So how can you hold and move your body to say, "I'm safe. I'm not going to bite"? I coach women to use the following seven signs of approachability. If you're a man, read these cues in order to recognize women who are showing you they are safe to talk to.

Don't Take Up Too Much Physical Space

This means don't spread your bag and jacket over all the chairs and take up the entire table with your paraphernalia at the coffee shop, and don't stand or sit with your legs too far apart. You learned in chapter 2 that taking up too much space communicates that you are powerful and superior. We want to show that we are strong women, but remember we are trying to get a man to come over and talk to us. You have to show you have room for someone else in your life.

Stand Slightly Pigeon-Toed

Men usually stand with their feet six to ten inches apart. Toes pointed inward or outward actually show your status in the hierarchy. Toes pointed outward say, "I'm mighty." Toes pointed inward say, "I'm approachable." Standing with your feet far apart with the toes out makes you look strong and actually signals that you could attack. Women usually stand with their feet four to six inches apart. To be very approachable, stand with your feet no more than six inches apart, and if you see someone nearby that you are particularly interested in and wish to have him feel comfortable coming over to you, point your toes *slightly* inward.

Walk This Way

If you take a close look at the way you walk in shoes, you might find that some of your shoes make you walk duck-footed, with your toes pointed outward. Toss those shoes. Walking with toes pointed outward is a “hands-off” signal. It is a walk often predicated by weight and pregnancy. Of course, pregnant women can be attractive, but for obvious reasons, single men rarely approach pregnant women to ask them out for drinks.

Exercise

Shoe Snaps

If you are a woman, walk in all your shoes, and notice how they affect your stance, your gait, and your posture. Ideally, do this in front of a mirror. Notice other women as they walk in different shoes. Flip-flops, clogs, and flat boots are comfortable, but they can also make you shuffle your feet and walk with your legs slightly wider apart and somewhat bowlegged at the thighs. Some shoes can make you hunch over or walk more like a man does, leading with a flat pelvis, rather than with a swing in the hips. High heels can make you swing your hips and take very appealing short steps, but if there is a grimace on your face that says, “I am in agony in these shoes,” they don’t help your approachability.

Smile

Okay, it’s obvious, but when we’re tense, we don’t give a full open smile, and when we are trying to look cool we often don’t smile at all. The smile is an international signal of friendliness. That’s why the iconic smile-sneers on Jack Nicholson’s face as he comes after the little boy in *The Shining*, and the Joker’s face in the Batman movies, are so scary. They’re not normal. Remember that a smile means safety, not danger. Have you ever had some guy ask you why you aren’t smiling? That’s because men feel more comfortable about approaching you when you’re smiling.

Shrug

When turtles sense danger, they retreat by tucking their heads all the way into their shells. To protect our heads when we are startled, we pull our shoulders up toward our ears, and pull our heads and shoulders down and in. We shrug, bringing the shoulders up, and often tilt our heads and put out our upraised palms

Approachability and Men

If you are a man, some of the cues in the section "Seven Signals That Make a Woman Approachable" can be adapted to work for you. But many of these approachability cues can make you look less powerful. Alpha body language is often sexier. Remember, men are traditionally the hunters, the ones who approach. I know that women do approach men, but perhaps you should try making the first move yourself.

to say, "Hey, it's not my fault," or "I don't know," or "Whatever you want." A brief, small shrug accompanied by a glance at a man you're interested in tells him you are amenable. This doesn't signal that you're a push-over, just that you're approachable. I have seen women who are masters of the shoulder shrug. They make it look like a sensual feline move. They see a cute man, look at him briefly, then

shrug. Right now, slowly lift your shoulders up and let them down. Try it a few times until you feel at ease with the motion.

Tilt Your Head

The head tilt is not a uniquely feminine move, but it's certainly done more by women, as it's typically a signal of submission. A head tilt symbolically bares the neck. It mimics a head movement done by wolves when approached by the leader of the pack. This movement says, "I'm exposing my most vulnerable

spot to you to show you I know you can rip me to pieces. So let's not fight about it." Head tilts are also nonverbal signals of intent listening. Imagine your ear tilted toward the speaker symbolically saying, "Pour more of what you're saying into me." Men tend to boast when they are flirting. They will talk a lot about what they have done and what they can do. In those initial conversations (or monologues), tilt your head to show you are listening. And by the way, boasting behavior is not an indication of whether a man will listen to you. If he's not listening now, it's only an indication that he wants your approval and admiration in that moment. For the man who reads this: if you don't see a woman tilt her head, she might not want you to talk more.

Uncross Your Arms

Finally, and as we've discussed in other contexts, uncross your arms. This opens up your heart window. Crossed arms can form a protective wall. It's pretty obvious that to get a man to approach you, you have to let the wall down — or at least lower the drawbridge. Holding a beverage in your hand will give you some security if you need that in order to uncross. Or if you're sitting at a coffee house, you can put your hands out in front of you on the table.

Come Hither, *Now!*

For tips on signaling not just approachability but also your active interest, see "Luring Cues," as well as photos and videos of the

If you're still nervous, remember the "anchor" tool. Think of a time when you felt calm and confident, connect it to a slight, subtle motion such as briefly touching your leg or tummy, and then, when you're tense, use that motion to take you back to a calmer, more confident place.