

Dating Advice from a Father

The Masculine Principle | 10 March, 2015 | by .



I talked to Dad about how this girl made me feel when I looked at her. He smiled knowingly.

"Son, she probably won't look that way for long. She might, but don't count on it. Enjoy looking at her for now. But here's some advice: If you want to do more than just look at her, then don't ever talk about her good looks or tell her she's beautiful."



"Why not?"

"Because everyone else is always doing that, and it gets old. Girls want a challenge, just like boys do. They don't want the same old compliments, they want a challenge."

"I don't understand."



"When you play shortstop, do you want the

boys on the other team to all strike out every time? No, that would be boring. You want them to hit the ball to you, so you can throw them out at first base. Maybe you'll bobble the ball, and the batter will get on base, but you want the chance to make a good play, right? If you tell a pretty girl she's pretty, you're not hitting the ball to her. You're not giving her any challenge at all. You aren't in the game. Get in the game. Hit the ball to her. Give her a challenge."

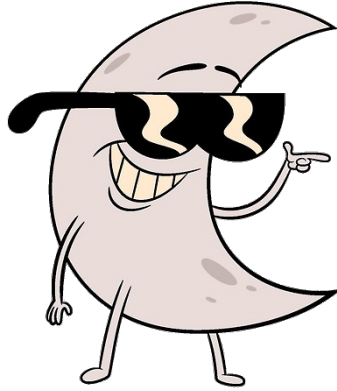


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"How do I do that?" Dad grinned at me when he heard this.

"Tease her about something. Say something about her that makes her jaw drop, and then act a little surprised at her reaction. But always be calm. Don't ever be mean, but give her brain a little tweak, see how she reacts, and then do it again. You're good at thinking on your feet. ***When a fellow sees a girl he likes, he plays with her***, only not with a bat and a baseball glove, but ***with words and body language and facial expressions***. Do that with this Jenny girl. And never back down, no matter what happens. Never break eye contact with her while the two of you are talking—let her be the one to look away. Think about it." He saw my face register some comprehension, and he added another thought. "Don't worry so much about her. Make sure you have fun. Figure out a way to tease her. And have fun."

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Letter to His Son (Excerpts) -- by Lord Chesterfield, 1748

LONDON, September 5, O.S. 1748.



.... As women are a considerable, or at least a pretty numerous part of company; and as their suffrages go a great way toward establishing a man's character in the fashionable part of the world (which is of great importance to the fortune and figure he proposes to make in it), it is necessary to please them. I will therefore, upon this subject, let you into certain Arcana that will be very useful for you to know, but which you must, with the utmost care, conceal and never seem to know. Women, then, are only children of a larger growth; they have an entertaining tattle, and sometimes wit; but for solid reasoning, good sense, I never knew in my life one that had it, or who reasoned or acted consequentially for four-and-twenty hours together. Some little passion or humor always breaks upon their best resolutions. Their beauty neglected or controverted, their age increased, or their supposed understandings depreciated, instantly kindles their little passions, and overturns any system of consequential conduct, that in their most reasonable moments they might have been capable of forming. **A man of sense only trifles with them, plays with them, humors and flatters them, as he does with a sprightly forward child; but he neither consults them about, nor trusts them with serious matters; though**



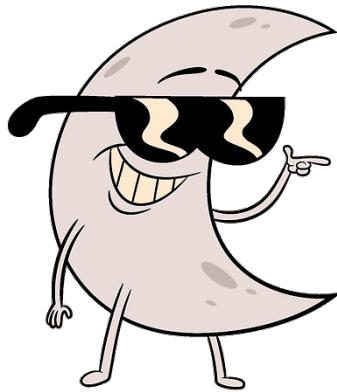
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he often makes them believe that he does both; which is the thing in the world that they are proud of; for they love mightily to be dabbling in business (which by the way they always spoil); and being justly distrustful that men in general look upon them in a trifling light, **they almost adore that man who talks more seriously to them, and who seems to consult and trust them; I say, who seems; for weak men really do, but wise ones only seem to do it.** [No flattery is either too high or too low for them.](#) They will greedily swallow the highest, and gratefully accept of the lowest; and you may safely flatter any woman from her understanding down to the exquisite taste of her fan. Women who are either indisputably beautiful, or indisputably ugly, are best flattered upon the score of their understandings; but those who are in a state of mediocrity, are best flattered upon their beauty, or at least their graces; for every woman who is not absolutely ugly thinks herself handsome; but not hearing often that she is so, is the more grateful and the more obliged to the few who tell her so; whereas a decided and conscious beauty looks upon every tribute paid to her beauty only as her due; but wants to shine, and to be considered on the side of her understanding; and a woman who is ugly enough to know that she is so, knows that she has nothing left for it but her understanding, which is consequently and probably (in more senses than one) her weak side. But these are secrets which you must keep inviolably, if you would not, like Orpheus, be torn to pieces by the whole sex; on the contrary, a man who thinks of living in the great world, must be gallant, polite, and attentive to please the women. They have, from the weakness of men, more or less influence in all courts; they absolutely stamp every man's character in the beau monde, and make it either current, or cry it down, and stop it in payments. It is, therefore, absolutely necessary to manage, please, and flatter them: and never to discover the less marks of contempt, which is what they never forgive; but in this they are not singular, for it is the same with men; who will much sooner forgive an injustice than an insult. Every man is not ambitious, or courteous, or passionate; but every man has pride enough in his composition to feel and resent the least slight and contempt. Remember, therefore, most carefully to conceal your contempt, however just, wherever you would not make an implacable enemy. Men are much more unwilling to have their weaknesses and their imperfections known than their crimes; and if you hint to a man that you think him silly, ignorant, or even ill-bred, or awkward, he will hate you more and longer, than if you tell him plainly, that you think him a rogue. Never yield to that temptation, which to most young men is very strong, of exposing other people's weaknesses and infirmities, for the sake of either of diverting the company, or showing your own superiority. You may get the laugh on your side by it for the present; but you will make enemies by it forever; and those who laugh with you then, will, upon reflection, fear, and consequently hate you; besides that it is ill-natured, and a good heart desires rather to conceal than expose other people's weaknesses or misfortunes. If you have wit, use it to please, and not to hurt: you may shine, like the sun in the temperate zones, without scorching. Here it is wished for; under the Line it is dreaded.

These are some of the hints which my long experience in the great world enables me to give you; and which, if you attend to them, may prove useful to you in your journey through it. I wish it may be a prosperous one; at least, I am sure that it must be your own fault if it is not.

Make my compliments to Mr. Harte, who, I am very sorry to hear, is not well. I hope by this time he is recovered. Adieu!

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