



IT'S YOUR TIME TO SHINE

Meet Sydney S., our Passport to Discovery 2025 top model

Lights, cameras and plenty of star power: Last August, we jetted off to sunny Orlando for Barbizon's Passport to Discovery, the premier modeling and acting scouting event in the country.

It's where the fiercest new faces in fashion step into the spotlight—and where we first met Sydney, whose bubbly personality and runway slay instantly set her apart.

Go behind the scenes with Sydney and snag an exclusive peek at PTD at girlslife.com/PTD2026. Plus, get all the deets you need to kick-start your own modeling career.

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CHATGPT

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Use AI? YES AND NO. Sure, chatbots can give you some ideas for potential conversation starters, but copying and pasting a suggested response keeps the person on the other end from actually getting to know you.

"I was so nervous when this guy I liked finally texted me that I asked ChatGPT to give me a good response," says Ariana B., 16. "But my crush literally replied by asking if he was messaging me or Gemini! It was so embarrassing."

Sorry to say it, but it's pretty likely that your crush will be able to tell who's really behind the text bubbles. We get it: It can be challenging to come up with something fun and flirty on the fly, but using a bot's script word for word just comes across as unnatural.

Bottom line? If you want to build a real connection with someone, you need to get comfortable with back-and-forth convos. Plus, hello, AI isn't going to do the talking for you on your first in-person date.

YOU WANT A NEW FRIEND.

Use AI? NO. On the surface, a bot seems like the ideal bestie: It's never busy, it won't gossip about you and it always wants to keep the convo going.

But Doria emphasizes that no matter how much you tell AI, it will never be your friend. "Friendships are about shared experiences and emotions. Bots don't have emotions—they just mimic them," she warns.

And that brings us to one of the biggest dangers of AI: It's literally designed to keep you hooked, which means it often tells you exactly what you want to hear. Basically, these chatbots are built to offer "frictionless" relationships—friendship without the rough spots.

Even though connecting with people can sometimes feel complicated, Dr. Goel stresses how important it is to turn to IRL friends: "Otherwise, you never learn how to have natural conversations. The teen years are when you learn how to do this."

So while a casual chat with a bot can help you feel seen or heard, it simply can't replace going to your first concert with your girls, laughing over a silly inside joke or sharing a hug after a basketball tryout doesn't go your way. Those experiences? Totally human. ☺

GUT HEALTH

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body? Eat healthy, stay hydrated, exercise and manage stress.

"Don't let social media convince you that gut health has to be complicated or costly. Your daily choices—what you eat, how you sleep and how you move—are what make the biggest difference," advises Dr. DePasquale.

First, make it a goal to have fiber-rich foods at every meal (like fruit, veggies, oatmeal, brown rice, lentils and beans). Fiber helps feed the good bacteria in your gut and promotes digestive regularity. And we know you've heard it a million times, but try to cut back on sugary sweets and fried foods. They can irritate your digestive system if you overdo it.

Want to give your gut a little extra love? For a natural digestive boost, add one or two fermented foods to your daily routine. Greek yogurt, kefir, sauerkraut, kimchi, sourdough bread and kombucha all contain live strains of beneficial bacteria that can support your microbiome by introducing new probiotics.

Also important? Drinking lots of water (at least 64 ounces per day—it keeps things moving smoothly through your digestive system) and exercising regularly. Studies show that even low-impact workouts such as walking, swimming, cycling, pilates and yoga can help improve the diversity of your gut bacteria by stimulating digestion and boosting circulation.

And don't dismiss the impact of stress, either. Have you ever felt nauseous before a big test, crampy during a tough convo with a teacher or had to run to the bathroom after tryouts? That's because your brain and gut are connected through your central nervous system.

If you're experiencing anxiety on the reg, your body can release stress hormones that wreak major havoc on your digestion (think: diarrhea, constipation or pain)—and even alter the balance of bacteria in your gut. So whether it's practicing breathwork, scheduling daily time for self-care or talking to a therapist, do your best to keep stress at bay.

At the end of the day, simple, healthy habits will do way more for your digestion and overall well-being than any fancy potion from your FYP ever could. Trends come and go, but your body? That's one thing worth treating with consistency. ☺