

mxFlirt



Got the first date jitters? Likely lads **PHINEAS MOLLOD** and **JASON TESAURO** steer you in the right direction.

In today's world of anonymous email and to-the-point voicemail messages, the art of courting a woman often falls by the wayside.

Which is why we – experts on savvy-suitor skills – would like to provide a first-date manners brush-up.

Manners will put your date at ease, charm her, and convey your affection – all the while boosting your confidence.

So, for your wooing pleasure, we've compiled some first-date dictates to speed the way.

1: DRESS WITH FINESSE

Put more than a moment's thought into your choice of first-date attire.

Simplicity and sophistication should rule. What's proper? Neither your Sunday best nor your most casual Friday garb, but rather something pulled from the cleaners or at least the top of the hamper.

Also worth a mention: If you accessorise to reflect your every interest, you can look like the decorated hood of a NASCAR racer. From your collection of LIVESTRONG yellow wristbands, boldly-



patterned ties, and quirky socks, pick one – and only one – attention-grabbing item before going out.

2: PERFECT THE PROPER GREETING

When you pick your date up (much better than meet you at a restaurant), it helps to have flowers in hand. Greet her with a warm, ever-so-slightly lingering kiss on the cheek and proffer a sincere compliment. Try, "You're even lovelier in person" if you've met online; "You're even lovelier than I remembered" – if you met in person.

The goal here is to say something flattering and sincere.

And, yes, we did say to lead with a swift kiss.

Train your bachelor eye to decode body language.

If initial chemistry is lukewarm, start slowly and simmer, don't be pushy with busy paws and probing questions.

When the temperature is hotter, capitalise on a live wire with enthusiasm as you unleash a battery of smiles, edgy banter, and tender touches across the table.

3: CLASSIC CHARM

Does your date secretly wish you wouldn't hold the door for her or let her order first? Come now. Do you really need to ask?

Revisit some old mandates: Do hold the door, yield the seat with the better view in the restaurant and, for Pete's sake, insist she have the last bite of dessert. Also, stand

when she leaves the table and escort her down the street stand nearest the curb to shield her from puddle spray from cars.

Nowadays, dating is like job hunting, and gracious manners are a bonus. (Beware: Do keep your actions subtle. Overdoing the chivalry will only make you appear phony.)

Convinced you're not the manners type? Let us put it this way: After a long week of loud-mouthed bosses and messy roommates, what modern woman wouldn't welcome some special treatment?

Especially given the post-grunge casualness of today's society, manners stand out ... and can melt her heart.

4: ORDER WITH PANACHE

Ordering isn't just the utility of requesting food, but a time to test plate-sharing preferences and taste-bud adventurousness.

Instead of burying your head in a menu, focus on the main dish of the evening ... your date.

If the server returns while you two are just getting warmed up, don't break the momentum, take command – "We're still looking, but please bring some spring rolls while we decide."

While ordering entrees for another is a tad forward, get a sense of her flavours; any opportunity to glean personality clues shouldn't be missed.

After suggesting a Chianti Reserva, do you get a snappy retort about her Tuscan

semester abroad, or a blank stare? If the latter, chime in with why it's one of your favourites – and why you think she may like it too.

Accentuate the positives ("I love sushi"), and voice negatives ("Mussels, never a favourite of mine").

Standing by convictions helps identify common ground while uncovering curious contrasts that can stimulate conversation.



5: GRAND GOODNIGHT

If the night was a flop, a quick finish with a polite handshake or brief hug is expected.

Be simple. ("I had a nice evening, thank you. Good night.") Never make false promises. ("Let's do this again ... um, I'll call you.")

But let's be optimistic and focus on a great night.

Don't sully it with an awkward close or last-second lobby for a slobbery kiss.

In fact, the post-dessert stroll is a fine time for romantic hand-holding.

As for the final parting, marry thoughtful words ("What a marvelous time. I'd love to see you and your sweet smile again.") and actions.

By actions, we certainly don't mean a platonic hug. A successful first date is best capped off with a lip-to-lip smooch that neither lingers too long, nor leaves too soon. Then, lean back and offer breathing room.

If an encore is desired, body language will be crystal clear; otherwise, bid good evening and march away confident there will be a next time.

HOW WAS IT FOR YOU? DR BELLA



"Relationships take work. You can't expect your partner to fulfil each and every one of your needs."

Ok, I've received your letters. I'm feeling your pain. It's the perennial problem really.

Love, which started off so divinely, has become boring. Your relationship, which once was everything, is steering towards flat line. It's like being with a friend. A good friend, who you happen to shag, but... where is the spell, the enchantment, the absolute, neon yes?

Well, if there is any order to the apparent chaos of life, it is that human beings generally want to have sex during their reproductive years. Birds plus bees equals babies. And once wee ones enter the picture, a couple's romantic energy is often transferred to mutually protecting the little creation their DNA cocktail has produced.

The innate desire for booty, coupled with religious or cultural norms that place importance on family values, is what I believe has kept people together throughout history.

But what if you extend the period of childlessness? Science has given us the power to control conception. A pill a night is all it takes. Some latex. And then, instead of staring at the glory of the new child in your arms, you're staring at the same face you've been staring at for the last few years. And frankly, glory's not exactly the feeling it gives you.

Add to the pot:

(1) an increase in premarital sexual relationships; the average age of sexual debut in Australia is 16;

(2) changes in gender: women don't necessitate a man to be economically secure and;

(3) a culture of fast-track consumption.

We know, we know... Relationships take work.

Don't expect your partner to fulfill all your needs. Deprogram yourself from the Cinderella myths of non-stop orgasm-ridden ever-after. Yadda-yadda-yadda.

But if it's inevitable that the spark dwindles, at what point do you say, Ok, every relationship, fades in intensity, so I'll accept what's good here? Or, I love this person, but I'm not crazy-in-love Beyonce-style any more? How do we know whether to hang on for the deeper hit of adult, there-for-you, commitment type-love – or when to say, see ya? Should we keep going if the love-zing reaches flat line?

Before throwing in the towel, why not give these love boosters a shot:

DISTANCE

If you feel you're being taken for granted, become unavailable.

Even if circumstances mean you have to be around physically, distance yourself from your partner. A little indifference can be a great turn-on.

CLOSENESS

Use words to seduce your partner. Words from your heart. Words that say: I see you for who you are and I like what I see.

Gratitude and emotional vulnerability can go a long way. Show a little tenderness.

SHOCK

I'm not suggesting wrapping yourself up in cling-wrap (just yet). It's more along the lines of deconstructing your routines. Not being predictable. Think novelty, (ie. venturing away from the missionary position.)

In summary, as is the nature of life, if you leave a field fallow, it naturally renews itself. Then again, crop rotation also works wonders.

BTW

Questions, thoughts, sexual tips?
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