Attractive man wants to set limits

Alice,

I am an attractive male. This is my first year in college, and quite frankly, many girls are all over me (or at the least are constantly around me and in my face). I am not used to this because in high school I could go home and get away from such stuff, but in a dorm it is non-stop. I have trouble telling these girls to leave me alone, so I end up being very hostile towards them in the hopes that this will drive them away. It does, but unfortunately I am developing the image of a rather mean individual. What can I do to be left alone without coming off with such a bad reputation? HELP!!!

Thanks,
"Unable to control a delicate situation"

Answer

Dear "Unable to control a delicate situation,"

Many could wonder what you mean by having girls "... constantly around me and in my face". Perhaps this could be interpreted in two ways: these girls either want you in a sexual or romantic way, or they just want to get to know their floormate platonically. In either situation, you may be experiencing the excitement of first-year friendship euphoria. That being said, there are ways you can enforce your boundaries while still being kind.

Campus living can be a great opportunity to get to know your fellow classmates, and the people with whom you’ll be spending the next few years. First year students are often enthusiastic to be living on campus, and many may concentrate on getting to know everyone. This could actually be a wonderful chance for you to make lasting friendships. It doesn't hurt to be friendly and sociable with your floormates; you may even find that you enjoy their company.

Then, there’s the concern of these girls wanting more than friendship. You may not be interested in spending extended time with your floormates. In that case, here are a few suggestions you can use to tactfully express your needs, create a boundary, or "get away:"

- “Talking to you has been a nice study break, but I have to get back to the books.”
• “It was nice talking to you, but I could use a bit of a break right now. Could we catch up another time?”
• "I am expecting a call. Gotta go!"
• "I really need to take a nap. I'll catch you later."
• "Nothing personal, but I really need to be alone now."

Regardless of whether or not their interest is romantic or platonic, if these strategies don't work, you may want to rope in some additional help. Speaking with a residence advisor or a hall director may be helpful to speak about floor social norms or a particular issue that you've experienced. They may be able to provide some additional support, ranging from working to address the culture of the floor to recommending additional campus resources.

It can be helpful to think about what you want, and then practice putting your thoughts into words. You can be clear and firm without being hostile, and most people will appreciate your straightforward, honest statements. In addition, chances are that your self-respect, as well as your reputation, could increase. Good luck!

Alice!

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