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Who to date? The looker or the bookworm? ^[1]

Dear Alice,

I am writing because I have a serious problem — I can't figure out the guys at my university!!! I'm kind of in love with two different guys. Bachelor #1, the god, is absolutely a feast for the eyes. He is exactly my "type." He always says hello to me when he sees me or stops for a minute, and he's always smiling at me — which I am told he doesn't do for everybody. I also know that he's currently seeing somebody (but not seriously). On the one hand I don't want to seem like just another girl fawning all over him; on the other I want to let him know I'm interested without offending his Christianity (he's religious). HELP ME, what should I do, how should I proceed??

Bachelor #2, the dork, is absolutely at the other end of the spectrum — he's short and dorky, but when I met him I fell for his personality. He seemed like such a nice guy — quiet, and smart, and funny. Now I do like him a lot and do find myself attracted to him, but I definitely don't want to marry him — I'm not into one night stands and I would like to be his friend (and I know he's attracted to me), but I'd prefer something easygoing over something complicated — so what do I do with this one?? HELP!!

— A confused bachelorette

Answer

Dear A Confused bachelorette,

It seems like there's a wide range of people you're attracted to and that's great! The more varied the individuals that catch your eye, the more opportunities you'll have to meet different types of people, discover your needs in a relationship, and determine what's truly attractive to you in a partner in the long run. It also appears that your quandary here isn't necessarily how to choose between two types, but how to proceed with each of them. Taking some time to get to know each of them and to reflect on your thoughts and feelings may shine some light on where your heart is leaning.

With each of these potential partners, you may benefit from taking things slowly and looking beyond the exterior to the person beneath the surface. Cultivating friendships with each will give you a chance to observe even more about you find them attractive. Are they opposite poles of

your own dynamic personality? Do they embody qualities that you'd like to develop in yourself? Are you attracted to the stereotype of “looker” and “bookworm” or is it more than that?

Have you tried striking up a conversation with the “looker” in the past? You may try to say hi back or ask him how he’s doing; it may open the door to show you’re interested in getting to know him, not just fawning over him. Maybe then you can ask him out for coffee just as friends, so he doesn't feel his religious values or current relationship is being threatened. If you’re worried about making small talk, try asking him about what he likes to do, what he's studying, and how he feels about his religion. Try to focus on building a friendship, especially if he's made it clear he's dating someone.

Have you told the bookworm how you feel? You may consider telling him that you've enjoyed spending time with him and that you’d like to be his friend. Hopefully, this will allay any confusion about a potential romantic relationship, but also allow you to continue getting to know him. It’s also worth noting, A confused bachelorette, that dating someone or expressing your feelings doesn't mean you have to marry them.

After you establish a solid friendship with each bachelor and feel more comfortable with them, you can explore the possibility of dating one, both, or neither. If you're feeling adventurous, you can ask them out or express your interest. If you'd rather wait to be asked out, be open and available to see what happens — not just with these two individuals, but anyone who may come into your life. While exciting and fun, dating involves taking risks, putting your emotions out there, and possibly being disappointed.

No matter the outcome though, dating can also teach you a lot about yourself. Tuning into how you react both mentally and emotionally as you go through this process may open up your eyes to what you want and need from a partner. Knowing yourself better and understanding why you’re attracted to certain people can result in deeper, more meaningful, and honest relationships — with yourself and others.

Good luck!

Alice!

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