Relationship, not just sex? [1]

Dear Alice,

I've had a great time at college, but all my relationships have been based on one thing... sex. Sometimes it is all that I want, but sometimes it is all that she wants. Any suggestions on how to find a "nice girl," just to have a good honest relationship with? I'm a model so I don't have problems meeting girls, just keeping them! I am also a very nice person, concerned with nature and I could never hurt a person's feelings if I tried. This leads to problems, however, because it is hard for me to "make my move" for fear of upsetting the girl. I have never been turned down for a first date ? plenty of second dates though, but only because I make sure before the first date, through a friend, that there is an interest. If any of this makes any sense, give me a write!

? Seeking love in all the wrong places, Mr. Nice

Answer

Dear Mr. Nice,

It sounds as though you're ready to have a relationship that goes beyond the sexual realm. This isn't uncommon. What people want out of relationships may change over the course of their life. You may think you're never going to find someone special, but fear not, as there are many ways to meet [2] and develop a connection with someone who wants the same out of a relationship. So, what can you do? Read on to learn more.

Before asking someone out, you may find it helpful to consider what characteristics you want in a partner ? you might even create a list. You may not be able to find someone who fulfills all of those qualities, and that's okay. Doing this will help you think through what characteristics and values you desire in a romantic partner. For example, you say you're looking for someone who is nice and that you're nice as well. What are other traits that you'd like in a partner? Are you looking for someone thoughtful? Nurturing? Focus on the positive, non-physical attributes. Also think about what traits you want in a partner that you also possess and can bring to a partnership. Self-exploration of this sort isn't always easy. Learning to embrace "quirky" aspects of oneself may be quite challenging.

When it comes to making the "first move," one rather respectful option is a simple statement that lets a person know you like them. You could try something as simple as, ?I enjoy spending time with you and it?s cool how much we have in common,? or ?I really like you.? This may not as simple as it sounds. For many, it feels risky and vulnerable. Concern about rejection
may stop someone from making their feelings known. It seems like this may be a worry for you as you stated you don't ask someone out without confirmation that they're interested. Thinking about situations in which you don’t know whether or not the other person likes you may be helpful. It could help to consider the following questions:

- Why do you think you need to know for sure that someone likes you before you ask them out?
- What would it be like to ask out someone that you're interested in without knowing whether they're interested in you first?
- What might make you feel more confident when it comes to asking someone out?

You also say you have trouble "keeping" a relationship. Are these relationships with someone you want to continue having only a sexual relationship? Or are these with people you may have liked to have a deeper relationship? Also, what happens when you "lose" them? Also, since you seem to be interested in a relationship built on more than sex, another option you may want to consider is to wait a while (perhaps longer than you have with previous partners) before you have sex with a new partner. This may allow for excitement to build and for you to notice what feelings you're having besides physical attraction. It might help to look for patterns or similarities between these situations. This might help you to determine what you might do, or not do, in future relationships. Talking with a trusted friend or a mental health professional may be helpful in this regard.

Props to you for striving to learn more about what you want and how to find that in a partner. Here's to hoping you find a relationship that allows you to connect more deeply. If you still have questions, considering checking out the Go Ask Alice! Relationships [4] archives.

Happy dating,

Alice!

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