Beautiful on the outside, but no boyfriend

Dear Alice,

I can't seem to be noticed. I am told all the time that I am beautiful by my friends, but the guys don't even give me a look. I wear semi-sexy (nothing revealing, just flattering) clothing and I stay in style. I have been asked to participate in beauty pageants. I am an honor student and I am 5’9” tall. Why can't I get any male attention and how do I change this?

Answer

Dear Reader,

The objects of individuals' attractions are dictated by the boundless assortment of characteristics that various people possess. For some, attractions may be fueled by someone's "classic" beauty, or by the features of a person's face, body, or gestures that make each person unique and intriguing. For others, a person's sensitivity, creative side, intellect, humor, or engaging way of telling a story are attractive. Similarly, there are people in the world who are attracted to your beauty, intelligence, and height—the three characteristics you mention in your question—among others. However, whether someone expresses outwardly how attracted s/he may be to another person depends on many factors, including place, time, personality, and the assumptions people make about one another.

To begin to explore your situation further, here are a few questions you might ask yourself: how would you describe your interaction style in social settings? Would you consider yourself or would others describe you as warm, friendly, and approachable? Do you introduce yourself and invite conversation, or do you wait for others to make the first move? In what ways do you show people that you're interested in what they have to say? Think about what makes you feel confident, understood, and well-received when you're talking with other people. If you feel like you do try to "put the vibe out" to those you find attractive and aren't getting the attention you're hoping for, perhaps the interest you're trying to communicate is getting lost in translation. In any case, it's good to keep in mind that there's not need to wait on the person you fancy to drum up a conversation with you—it's taking the initiative or the first move to sincerely and clearly communicate your interest to a person directly is one way to potentially increase that person's interest in you!

It's also possible that, even if you feel you're being clear about your interest in someone, a lack of attention paid to you on their part may not be about you or how attractive you are at all. All sorts of conditions and factors may play into why a person responds to you; most of which
you likely have little or no control over. Perhaps they’re having a bad day, are shy, or it’s even possible that they’re hesitant to approach people they consider very attractive for fear of being rejected.

Something about this situation that you can control is where you’re at and what you’re doing when you’re interacting with the potential apple of your eye. Not all environments are really amenable to socializing? ever tried to have a conversation over some loud, bass-heavy tunes? Consider where and when you’re scoping out these cuties and whether switching up your location or environment may yield not only attractive partner prospects, but folks who you enjoy being around regardless of physical attraction. Wherever you feel comfortable and good about yourself, there are sure to be lots of new, interesting people with which to share your experiences and maybe even a budding romance.

It might also help you to get the perspectives of others around you. Have you tried talking with your friends about what it is that they were attracted to in you and how they think you are perceived by others? It’s likely that there is more to their interest in you than how you look on the outside. They may have some insight into how you can receive more positive attention, using the same skills you use to make friends. And, who knows? Maybe they’ll tell you that they know a number of people who want to ask you out, but who just don’t have the guts!

One last consideration you might ponder is whether you truly want sexual attention, and if so, why. Are you looking for a relationship? Do you think receiving male attention may boost your self-confidence? Are you looking for approval or validation by others for some other reason? Talking with a trusted friend, family member, spiritual or religious leaders, or even a mental health professional might help you sort through your thoughts on the matter and figure out how to best move forward from here.

Alice!
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Relationships [3]
Relationship Stuff [4]
Finding a Partner [5]

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