

A Simple Way To Figure Out If People Like You

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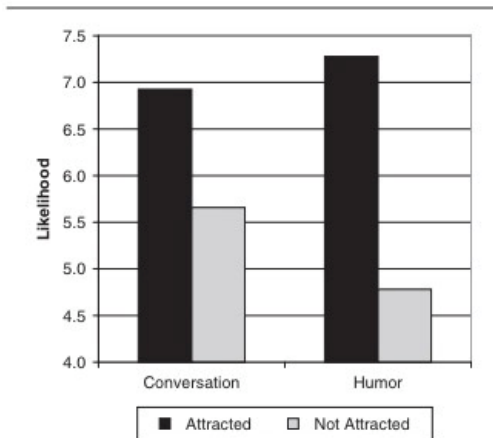


Figure 1 Likelihood of initiating conversation and humor based on attraction.

Norman Li / Sage publications

One of the easiest ways to tell if someone likes you is if they laugh at your jokes, or try to make you laugh.

Norman Li, an associate professor of psychology at Singapore Management University, recently wrote about this for Psychology Today:

In my first corporate job, I was working on a project team for a few months where I didn't really like my two supervisors all that much. Although I never explicitly told them that, I may have nonetheless communicated my disdain: I didn't laugh at their jokes. To me, they were mostly lame, sometimes offensive. However, the other guys on the project team would always laugh as if the supervisors were highly skilled entertainers. The implications became clear on the day that we all received our performance reviews. While those other guys were smiling at their glowing reviews, I was left wondering whether my subpar appraisal might've been better had I laughed at any of those jokes.

Li co-authored a study, An Evolutionary Perspective on Humor: Sexual Selection or Interest Indication, about how humor affects relationships by evaluating the way 46 undergraduates, both male and female, interacted with one another. The researchers then asked them the following questions:

1. "How likely would you be to initiate some general conversation?"
2. "How likely would you be to initiate some humor?"
3. "If the other person initiated humor, how likely would you laugh?"
4. "If the other person initiated humor, how likely would you consider the other person to be funny?"



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The researchers found that "initiation of humor depended more on attraction and satisfaction than did general conversation. That is, when not attracted or satisfied, people reported being less likely to initiate humor. However, when attracted or satisfied, people reported being more likely to initiate humor than conversation ... This specific pattern of findings suggests that there is something particular about initiating humor, relative to general conversation, that indicates one's interest in a relationship."

Which is why, when you're trying to impress someone — especially your boss — it's important to laugh at their jokes, no matter how funny you find them.