

A matchmaker's guide to dating, for the guy with no swag

It's Valentine's Day! And because you're an Esquire man at the top of his game, pass this on to that buddy of yours in need of some dating advice. **Wendy Tse of Society W**, a modern matchmaking service with a personalised touch, and the ladies of **Lunch Actually** offer some pointers to consider the next time you, um, we mean he goes on a date.



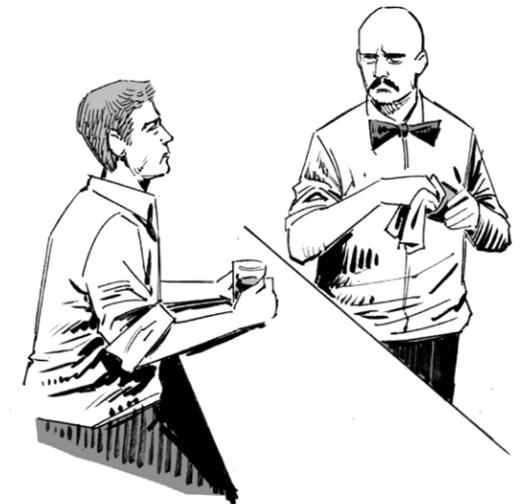
- **Don't be a downer.** "It makes the whole scenario a little bit awkward," Wendy says. "Try to be upbeat, and keep the mood light-hearted and fun, because everybody wants to talk to someone fun and interesting who seems happy, right?"
- Your attention tends to go to the people who seem to be having a good time, so that helps you get noticed.
- Norman No-Mates in the corner playing *Clash of Clans* will not get the girl. Don't be that guy.



On rejection

Rejection is a natural part of the dating process and, most of the time, you just have to roll with the punches and move on. Wendy advises not to read too much into the rejection, especially in your opening salvo, and follow these tips instead:

1. "Some men have grandiose thoughts of, for instance, *This woman looks amazing, she looks like she'd be a good mother, you know, I think I've a future with her...* You don't know anything about her, so don't allow your mind to go there, okay?"
2. "If you treat talking to this person as just practice to fine-tune your social skills, or to learn to think on your feet more, and she rejects you, it's just her rejecting your method of approach. She doesn't know you at all in those few minutes. **Don't see it as a personal attack** if the girl isn't so receptive."



- "Warm up by **talking to someone who's a stranger**, such as the bartender or a waiter, regardless of gender."
- Before chatting up the hot girl, **think of interesting topics of conversation.** "I think preparation is key, especially if you're a nervous person who can't really think on your feet."



- Although you won't want to hang around male models and be outshone, don't surround yourself with a million wingmen either. **Only have a few friends with you to avoid intimidating the girl.**
- Wendy is a big believer in giving off positive energy. "Smile a lot, laugh a lot, joke a lot—look like you're having a good time. That's the first step."

The ABCs of flirting and charming

A is Anxiety: "The key driver of attraction is something very surprising: anxiety. When you don't feel completely comfortable, when you feel a little anxious, it makes you think of the person more." Don't be dull. There's a reason why the trope of girls liking bad guys is so popular.

C is Chivalry: Yes, some might balk at it while yelling, IF WOMEN WANNA BE EQUAL! But the truth is, it helps her develop romantic feelings for you if you behave like you care for her.

D is Decisive: Ask her if she has somewhere in mind, but ultimately, decide where the date will be. "If you foist the decision-making on her, you're thrusting her into a very masculine role of being decisive, which is just not attractive. Dating is a very fine balance of feminine and masculine."

E is Escalation: You need to have an after-dinner plan, because dinner is commonplace and not a particularly romantic activity. You have dinner with your parents and business partners, don't you?

F is Flirting: "It is a skill. Not everybody knows how to do it, but you can learn."

M is Meh: Trying too hard to be on your best behaviour and ticking the right boxes that you forget to loosen up and have fun. Don't do this.

N is Non-sexual touch: "Done correctly, this is something that will elevate you from just a nice guy to someone that a woman sees as a romantic interest." But no grabbing her by the waist; instead, lead her by the elbow through a crowded restaurant, for instance.

P is Positivity: As New Age as it sounds, this is crucial advice for those who adopt pessimism like it's a cool, ironic detachment from life. Really, she's not that interested in your problems and what you think is ruining the world on your first date.

R is Real: "Keep it real, pay her a genuine compliment, talk about your life, and don't pretend to know something you don't. When it comes to conversations, sometimes people just play along; but they actually have no idea what you're talking about, or they try to comment on something they have no idea about. If you don't know, just say you don't know."

T is Thought: Put some thought into where you'll go on your date. It doesn't have to be expensive. Suss out what she likes.

V is Vulnerability: Revealing your vulnerable side will make her feel important and that you trust her. "Show some vulnerability, because, c'mon, you're not fooling anybody if you're Mr Tough Guy in every aspect of your life."

Additional tidbits

92.5 percent of Singaporeans prefer to date within their race, compared to Hong Kong's 89.6 percent and Malaysia's 76.6 percent.

More men are amenable to interracial dating than women.

Malaysians aren't all about the bass, compared to Singaporeans and Hong Kongers.

Hong Kong women, about 90.6 percent, would be cool with your beer belly, but Singaporean and Malaysian women would prefer it if you had a six-pack.

Idealised forms

Based on data gathered by Lunch Actually from close to 3,000 members in Singapore, Malaysia and Hong Kong, Qlik analysed dating trends and demographics to produce the following insights. If you don't match the ideal, that's okay, you special snowflake, you! Head out there and get 'em, tiger!

Ideal partner for heterosexual men

Height
160–165cm

Build
Slim

Age
25–30

Degree holder, non-smoker.
Light-hearted extrovert, generous, spontaneous, and enjoys the outdoors.

About 80 percent prefer women who've never been married.

93.8 percent prefer women with no kids.



Ideal partner for heterosexual women

Height
170–175cm

Build
Medium

Age
30–35

Degree holder, non-smoker.
Serious extrovert, tidy and organised.

About 33.5 percent are willing to consider divorcees.

12.9 percent are cool with a blended family.

