

# how to be a people magnet

**PICTURE THIS: YOU'RE AT** a neighborhood barbecue, a business meeting, a sporting event or a birthday party. You happen to exchange smiles or catch the eye of someone you've never met before. And within seconds, even before speaking, you feel magically drawn to her.

Coming face to face, the conversation seems effortless. There's an instant rapport. You're both at ease and laughing at the same things. It's as if you've known each other forever. In short, you feel an immediate "click!"

How is it possible for two strangers to feel like old friends within minutes?

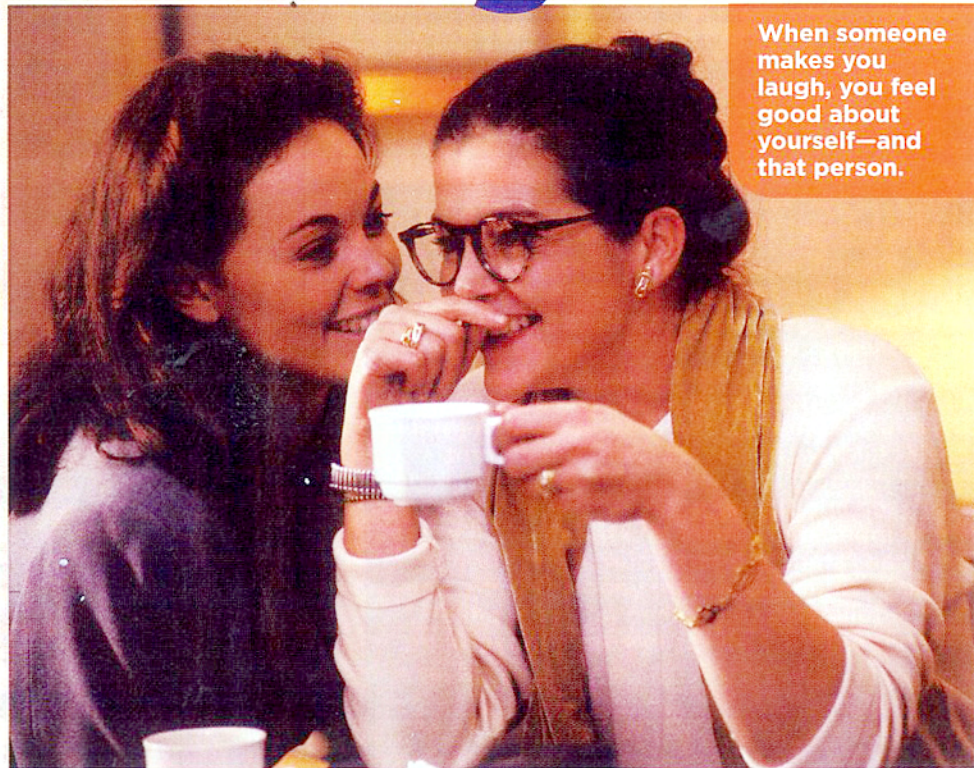
And what do we call this delightful sensation?

It's the mysterious, pleasurable, intangible force in human relationships known as chemistry—the phenomenon of two people being drawn to one another and feeling an instant connection, a sense of warmth and comfort.

Potential mates, of course, may experience this as sexual attraction, the most potent form of this hormonal dance: The heart starts thumping and all senses are aroused. But a forceful

By Glenn Plaskin

*Glenn Plaskin is a New York-based writer.*



When someone makes you laugh, you feel good about yourself—and that person.

magnetic pull toward someone can exist in Platonic relationships too—with friends, family, colleagues and even relative strangers.

How strong is the bond with your most treasured friend, your workout partner or your favorite buddy at work? And why is it that you always smile with that one special person?

Is it a meeting of the minds? A match of similar energies? Physical attractiveness? Common interests? An intellectual affinity? Or do the people we instinctively respond to remind us of those we loved as children?

It's actually a little of each, according to a panel

of experts FAMILY CIRCLE consulted to understand the nature of relationship chemistry and our ability to experience it. In separate interviews, we asked, first, what accounts for an instant click with someone you've just met.

**Your Click Appeal**  
"Chemistry is an immediate resonance between two people—the result of how their energies are exchanged, combined and blended," says author and longtime couples counselor Sandra Anne Taylor. Her book *Secrets of Attraction: The Universal Laws of Love, Sex and Romance* (Hay

House) reveals that each of us projects a "personal energy field" that is the center of all we attract.

"Like a satellite, a cell phone, a radio or a TV, we're constantly transmitting and receiving energy every moment of our lives," says Taylor. Each of us is releasing vibrations that can attract or repel people.

"We're like little radio stations," she says, "broadcasting at a specific frequency and attracting people who match it or will be drawn by it."

The ability to recognize what might be called a friendly signal is honed so sensitively, Taylor says,

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that we're instantly turned off by someone whose signal conflicts with our own. "Our energy shows up before we even open our mouths," she says. "Just watch someone who's buoyant, energetic, filled with joy and gratitude. They draw people to them like magnets; whereas someone who's brash, sarcastic, loud or angry is an instant turnoff. You'll immediately become self-protective and anxious to escape that person's energy field."

Yet isn't it true that even when someone is perfectly pleasant, we may nonetheless take one quick look and instantly dislike him for no apparent reason?

"Absolutely," Taylor

says. It may seem unfair, but that person might remind you of someone from the past whom you disliked, or it might be a surface visual prejudice—that someone is too fat or skinny, too hairy or too bald.

"In seconds," she says, "without any social intercourse, we have a subconscious awareness that their energy is not blending with ours—it's contrary to us."

So what factors determine whether or not our "signal" will blend with someone else's? Psychologist and pastoral counselor Harville Hendrix, Ph.D., believes we're particularly drawn to people who match those we were closest to in the past, even in childhood.

"I call this your 'imago,'" says Hendrix, "a composite

picture in your mind of the people whom you loved and admired most at an early age—usually your parents, siblings or close relatives. Unconsciously, we compare every person we meet to this image. When we identify a close match, we feel a sudden surge of interest. The picture becomes the lens through which a person scans the world, making noncognitive, emotional responses to other people."

And so, when someone's personality and behavior mirrors this treasured image in our minds, we experience an immediate sense of recognition. "That's why it seems like you've met that person before...it's because you have!" says Hendrix.

Toni Coleman, a Virginia-based relationship



Often a shy person is drawn to someone who's assured.

coach, agrees: "We're very attracted to people we see as a lot like us. Although there may be obvious exterior differences in style, there are usually powerful similarities of personality. Or that person may in some way 'complete' you."

When rapport fizzles, adds Hendrix, "it's because there's no cohesion of energy fields. You're literally on two different frequencies. We'll often read negative traits into what we see or hear because certain behaviors remind us of hidden or lost parts of ourselves that we dislike."

In general, however, you get back the signal you send out, Taylor concludes. "If you're transmitting a confident, optimistic and relaxed vibration, you'll attract someone tuning in to the same frequency; conversely, if you're angry, afraid or highly self-critical, you'll either repel those you most want to meet—or attract someone who may not be good for you."

Your "Body Talk"  
According to experts, first impressions are based on decisions made subconsciously and have almost nothing to do with what we

## What is your attraction quotient?

By Sandra Anne Taylor

**Contrary to what most people believe, what we attract in life does not depend on our looks, our status, or our IQ. "It depends on our AQ—Attraction Quotient," says Sandra Anne Taylor, "which is determined by the energetic message we send out about ourselves. Whether we realize it or not, the daily resonance of our beliefs, emotions and attitudes toward ourselves is what determines the quality of our lives."**

To find out your attraction quotient, answer the following questions on a scale of 1 to 10 (1 being the lowest and 10 the highest). Then add up your answers to find out your AQ.

- How satisfied are you with your looks or your appearance?
- How happy are you with your present life?
- How optimistic are you about your future?
- How much do you encourage yourself and make your own goals and happiness a priority?
- How much do you respect your body by eating healthfully, exercising regularly and getting enough rest?
- How flexible are you with changes in your life?
- How much do you respect yourself?
- How much do you respect others?
- How playful and spontaneous are you?
- How much do you feel a sense of purpose and direction in your life?
- % TOTAL PERCENTAGE (between 0 and 100%) This indicates your Attraction Quotient, the degree to which you are likely to attract healthy relationships and successful and happy experiences to your life.

If your score is 80% or higher, you have a very magnetic energy and you should be able to attract all that you desire. If your score is 60-80%, you can raise your attraction energy by working on changing the attitudes that you valued below an 8 on the test. If your score is under 60%, you must make changing those attitudes a daily priority in your life!

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say. Social scientist Albert Mehrabian, Ph.D., professor emeritus of psychology at the University of California, Los Angeles, and a pioneer in the field of nonverbal communication, found in 40 years of research that 55 percent of a first impression is based on appearance, 38 percent on the way we sound and just 7 percent on our words.

"Your body speaks!" says Taylor. "How you present yourself—your posture, your movements and especially what you do with your eyes—determines the kind of resonance you'll have with someone."

Research shows that within 90 seconds of meeting someone we form a definite opinion about him or her. In fact, our brain reacts on a biochemical level before it can even analyze any information.

"When two people experience a mutual attraction, a neurochemical called

dopamine is instantly released into the brain," says behavioral neuroscientist Jim Pfaus, Ph.D., an associate professor at Concordia University in Montreal.

"Pfaus says that dopamine, together with other mood-enhancing neurotransmitters like serotonin and norepinephrine, are linked to pleasure of any kind, promoting a deep sense of well-being. "Eating a piece of chocolate, listening to music (and getting goose bumps), or clicking with a best friend can all trigger production of these chemicals," he says.

So our determination to get closer to someone is overwhelmingly physical, states Pfaus: "What largely attracts or repels us are someone's facial features. When you meet someone who gives you a nice smile with warmth in the eyes, what do you do? You smile back! That first exchange of smiles is the beginning of rapport, a good first predictor for chemistry. Then, if

that person's voice is pleasant and their body language open, you may be drawn even closer. Why? Because our sensory impressions are activating systems in our brain that either make us want to run away from or run toward that person."

## Personal Chemistry

When it comes to making new friends, hiring employees or becoming romantically involved, trusting your first impressions can be key, but they aren't always reliable or unchangeable, says Taylor, who believes that chemistry can develop. "The more time you spend with someone, the more your energies may actually align, which allows a connection to grow. Still, I'd follow your intuition if you're repulsed by someone from the start."

One undeniable gift of relationship chemistry is its ability to ignite creativity, for chemistry is the ultimate energizer, the force that can move any enter-

prise forward. "It's like rubbing two sticks together and creating fire," notes Coleman. "Great romances, great businesses, great friendships are all the product of great chemistry. People literally bring out the best—or the worst—in each other."

Taylor concurs: "If you experience that undeniable resonance with someone, it can motivate you, providing a sense of purpose and a light to follow. When that spark is ignited, anything can happen." Look no further than the magical rapport between student and teacher, Olympic athlete and coach, doctor and patient, grandparent and grandchild, or between two best friends. A great virtuoso or tennis champion can emerge. A disabled child or a critically injured adult can recover and flourish. And, from the well of creativity generated by two people "resonating" together, the world can even be transformed. **FC**

## HOW TO MAKE YOURSELF IRRESISTIBLE!

We asked our panel of relationship experts how to improve your "chemistry quotient" so that we become more compatible with people we meet.

### 1 Maintain a well-groomed appearance.

Anyone's first impression is largely formed by how you present yourself.

### 2 Demonstrate an open, warm and inviting physical presence.

Stand erect with your shoulders back. Maintain open palms and an easygoing, welcoming posture. Smile often and establish good eye contact.

### 3 Breathe deeply.

Regular deep breathing calms the mind while stimulating circulation.

**4 Be aware of the tone and timbre of your voice.** It's not so much what you say as how you

say it. Is the tempo of your speech leisurely, or is it rushed, jumpy and fragmented? Is your tone of voice soothing, calm and confident? Or is it agitated or whiny?

**5 Don't dominate the conversation.** Someone who shows a genuine interest in others is very appealing.

### 6 Be careful not to criticize, judge or lecture.

Criticism always activates defense, which means others will protect themselves by withdrawing.

**7 Use reflective listening.** This is a simple technique that involves paraphrasing back to the person what she

has just said to you.

**8 Use the word I.** When discussing difficult topics with co-workers, family or friends, try beginning your sentences with *I* as opposed to the accusatory *you*.

### 9 Use phrases that instantly create goodwill.

Words and phrases like *please*, *thank you* and *I'm sorry* go a long way toward defusing potentially explosive encounters.

**10 Keep moving!** Any form of exercise increases energy and relaxation and dissolves stress and tension.

**11 Let go of urgency:** Life is not an emergency.



Our attraction to another person is mostly physical.

### 12 Honor yourself.

Make the choice to love, honor and value yourself completely. When you create happiness in your life, you create happy energy and people are drawn to it!