



CUES: Learn to flirt confidently

Learn to flirt your way out of singledom

Coaches can help you date with confidence

FLIRTING is a skill. Although some are born with the natural ability to lure their prey with the mere bat of any eyelid, the rest of us can take comfort in the fact that it's something we can learn.

If you have found yourself resorting to last ditch, booze-fuelled advances on random strangers at 3am (which rarely get you anywhere except Rejectionville) maybe it's time to go back to basics.

Perhaps you could learn a trick or two from a new singles coaching night, which has just launched in Ireland.

5 Go Flirting promises to coach you in the "secrets of seduction", the "art of attraction" and "body language", which will transform you into a superflirt, sending out the right signals and picking up on subtle cues from other people.

The nights are run by David Kavanagh, a psychotherapist, dating and flirting coach, familiar to many as 98FM's resident dating expert.

He invited me to take part in the first 5 Go Flirting night, which kicked off at a city centre pub.



By Aoife Kelly

Initially I had reservations.

Despite having enjoyed dating events like speed dating and online dating before, at the end of the day it all seems a little contrived, clinical and, if I'm brutally honest, desperate.

However, David assured me that 5 Go Flirting is not a matchmaking service. It's a coaching service. There's no pressure to hook up with anyone (although if that's what you want you're in fertile hunting ground).

So I decided to give it a go. I figured the worst that could happen was I'd learn a few tips.

Actually, the lure of free wine and nibbles may have had something to do with it!

On the night, I was introduced to my fellow flirts, and David and his associate coach, psychotherapist and hypnotherapist

Michaela Brady, took two groups of five for an hour-long coaching session.

A bubbly Michaela headed my group of two women and three men, and talked us through everything from pupil dilation, to proximity, to mirroring.

She was full of tips such as this: when meeting someone you like, shake hands and touch them on the elbow with your free hand.

It's less invasive than hugging, putting your arm around them, or touching their back (all of which invade their personal space), but it still lets them know you're interested.

Also, if someone mirrors your movements, such as taking a sip of their drink at the same time as you, that's a sign they're interested.

This part of the evening was more like chatting to an informative mate than sitting through a lecture.

And since you're free to indulge in a few glasses of wine throughout it's relaxed and fun.

However, Michaela did spend a considerable amount of time fending off the advances of some eager flirts intent on trying out their newfound skills on her!

As a woman it was also fascinating to hear what the men in the group thought constituted flirting.

One over-zealous Italian had the basics right, but Michaela informed him that some of his "techniques" were perhaps a little too forthright.

The men also appeared to be surprised by Michaela's insights into what women find attractive and what they find off-putting.

What is also interesting is that these skills can be used anywhere from a nightclub, to work, to the local supermarket — and not just for flirting with the opposite sex.

The ability to read body language is a skill that can serve you well at home and at work.

You can tell if a colleague is open to listening to you, and you can tell whether or not your friend really is annoyed with you, even when she says she's not!



LEARN FROM THE MASTER: David Kavanagh teaching the flirting students



RULES OF ATTRACTION: (above) Being a maneater with hunky men hanging on your every word is a skill that can be easily learnt say the organisers of this flirting course. (Left) Michaela Brady and David Kavanagh who run the course with *The Star's* own flirting student Aoife Kelly (centre)

Michaela demonstrated how people can say one thing verbally, but be saying the complete opposite through physical cues.

After the coaching session our buoyed up contingent were let loose in the bar to either practice our skills or simply observe the other punters' body language.

This was a little cringeworthy since it was a relatively quiet pub and the arrival of ten tipsy people on the prowl was pretty obvious.

Also, it felt a bit like being at the zoo. It was difficult to resist the urge to stare at people and even point while discussing their body language with each other!

This was, for me, the least enjoyable part of the evening, although my fellow flirter seemed to be in their element.

After this "trial" the entire group is taken to the host nightclub, Howl at the Moon, where you can really go to town.

On a regular night there will be about 15 flirter in attendance, and you can practice on each other or on anyone else who takes your fancy.

There is no pressure to hook up with anyone in the group.

But, if you do want to hook up with someone, you're not limited to the flirter — you have an entire bar and nightclub at your disposal.

It's a lot of fun, thanks to Michaela and David's relaxed approach, but it's also pretty informative. Okay, most women know the basics of flirting from reading the glossies, but here you get the chance to put all that knowledge into practice.

If you're struggling with sending out the right signals or can't decipher somebody's body language, the coaches are on hand to help. They can also help with introductions if you're having trouble getting started.

I defy you to get through the evening without, at least, having a good time.

For some people it may well also offer a nice confidence boost. So sure is David of this that he will allow you to attend the next available event for free if you feel your confidence has not improved.

5 Go Flirting offers much more than your average "dating" night. At speed dating, for example, you meet lots of new people,

which is great, but unless you know how to read their body language or send out the right cues, it's pointless.

A night at 5 Go Flirting to hone your skills and practice could be a great way to prepare for speed dating and may even increase your chances of success.

There are 5 Go Flirting nights for different age groups (20-32, 24-40, 26-38, 35-45) and the nights cost €50. It's also possible to book a one-on-one session with a flirting coach.

Or, if you'd rather the prospect of a higher hit rate, you can attend a 50 Go Flirting event where 25 men and 25 women enjoy a night of coaching.

The team also offer a host of other services including Speed Dating, Dinner Dates, Getout Parties, seminars and weekends away. For more info on these services check out www.getout.ie

At the moment events are running in Dublin, but David plans to establish nights all over the country over the next year.

For more information, check out www.5goflirting.com or call 01-524-2362.