

We've known each other for years, but I've been in two relationships since then

Contributed by erosok

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Some of this was very helpful as I am trying to work out if a bloke fancies me and how to follow up on it if he does. Let me explain: we've known each other for years, but I've been in two, committed, relationships during that time - the second of which broke up two months ago. Before that happened though this bloke and I were getting on better than we ever had (jokes, smiles) and while we didn't talk about what was going on with my relationship he was very sympathetic. Other than that he is known as a bit of a flirt, but it seems very specific with me - in the sense that other people have started to look at me a bit strange when we are together in front of them (possibly because I tend to get rather more of his attention than they do and sometimes when we look at each other as a result of what someone else has said, those eye-contact smiles are a bit 'private' feeling, and we've started standing inside each other's personal space a bit, also we occasionally walk part way home from work together). Anyway, we went to the cinema together to see a German film and I accidentally (honestly, accidentally) rested my arm against his (thought it was the chair back!), being embarrassed - in case he thought I was pushing things - I moved my arm forwards, and then so did he! Needless to say, I didn't move again and though both of us shifted to get comfortable our upper arms stayed in contact until the end of the film. We had coffee and a chat afterwards and I said that I'd had a lovely time and really enjoyed his company, to which he said he had too and we must do it again sometime, to which I said that that would be nice. Since then though things seem to have dropped off - I've mentioned a film I'd like to see (just us) and an art gallery/exhibition that I'm going to with friends (a group and an interest of his) but he's avoided both (in the sense of not clearly saying yes or no but talking about other things). Other than that things are pretty much the same as before (smiles, jokes, interrupting what either of us is doing to have coffee when the other is free) with two differences. Firstly, he has popped down to my office (usually we talk in the staffroom or in his office as I pass it on the way to mine) to see if I'm going for coffee once and secondly, while he started out talking to my face he had recently (pre-cinema) started occasionally looking at my tits (which are quite nice, if I do say so myself! so I wasn't upset by that), now though (and this is making me a bit puzzled/uncomfortable) he's started looking at my midriff/hips sometimes.

Essentially, I'm confused! I think he fancies me. I fancy him, but don't want to ruin the friendship (which is very good, we can talk about serious family/health stuff - the flirty stuff is a nice added layer on top) by doing something too overt - or plain stupid if he's changed his mind. I just can't get past the fact that he smiles at me as if the sun had come up when he sees me. Help! And thanks.

Sam's Response

You say "I moved my arm forwards, and then so did he". You can class that as 'mirroring' and that is a sign that he either fancies you or you are a very close friend. Judging by the length of time you have known each other, it could be either. Close friends do mirror each other and touch each other so it is not conclusive evidence that he fancies you but add a few other signals and it might become conclusive.

You mentioned a film and an art gallery, both of which you know he likes. Have you just mentioned it or have you actually asked him to come? Women often seem to have this problem that they will hint that they want to go somewhere but won't actually ask the question. For example, a woman would say "I'm going to the art gallery with my friends this Sunday" instead of "I'm going to the art gallery with my friends this Sunday, do you fancy coming?" Men are not the slightest bit psychic, if you want to ask him a question, ask him, don't leave him to guess whether you are asking him to come or not.

The majority of men are not as socially intelligent as women. If you just make a statement and he thinks of saying "I would not mind going myself" (he will probably think he is being pushy, clingy or sounding desperate saying this), then you say "oh no it is just for my friends", then he will find it difficult to cope with that social situation. So usually he will avoid saying it in the first place.

You say "started occasionally looking at my tits, he's started looking at my midriff/hips sometimes". As friends you can expect him to give you a lot of eye contact and focus on your face a lot and maybe drift down your body very occasionally. But if you have noticed him looking at your tits and your hips on more than a few occasions, I think you can safely say that he is thinking of what it would be like to get his hands on them. In the first paragraph I was saying that mirroring alone is not conclusive, it must be supported by other signals, I think the signals he is giving here supports the mirroring signals that he fancies you.

To me you are showing classic signs of knowing each other for a long time. You value each other as close friends, but

because of that close friend thing neither of you want to risk losing the friendship by making the final move and tell the other you are interested in more than that.

It is difficult to say how to cautiously try and push your relationship further because you have to do it correctly for it to work.

Realistically you want a situation where you are both alone together, no distractions from other people and where you are more able to concentrate and relax in each others company. Invite him back to your place for dinner or to watch a DVD. Maybe he is good at fixing computers or electrics or plumbing in which case you can invite him back to your place to help out. Bear in mind he might expect sex if you do this.

A cinema or theatre is a very good place to get started. There's nobody watching and you can ACCIDENTALLY touch. You say you pulled away from him. You found out he wasn't bothered by you touching him. So why bother pulling away from him anymore. If he moves just say sorry was that your arm or just pretend you did not notice.

Any chance you get to move near to him without it looking forced, take it. For example you are walking through a crowd, keep pressing against him or sticking close to him, if you get the chance grab hold of his hand because you want to make sure you don't lose each other in the crowd.

Ultimately it requires one of you to take a risk and risk your friendship. Lets face it while you are waiting around he could end up finding someone else, would that be more devastating? If you make the move and he doesn't fancy you, there are plenty more people you can have as close friends.

Please bear in mind that I hope my take on your situation is correct but I am neither there to experience it, nor am I right all time. It is ultimately up to you to evaluate the situation. Good Luck!

Reply by erosok on 31.08.2005

Thanks, I know that you aren't where I am and may not be right but every bit of insight helps. Especially with the body language -I had a friend who suggested he was 'checking out your child-bearing/nurturing capabilities' and I nearly puked: even if you're not right I feel more comfortable with things.

I think on reflection that I had been a bit too subtle with the invites (so as not to seem pushy myself!), so will bear in mind the male mind and be a bit more obvious next time! You're right about taking a risk and if I don't I don't think he will (he's older than I am, and made a few comments about his age a few weeks ago which seemed designed to see if it bothers me - it doesn't, we get on too well for that - and he's not mentioned it since), so basically this is to say thank you for the suggestions about accidental touching, but if they don't work I'm not going to blame you :-). Interestingly enough he's just nearly (but not quite) touched my arm/back himself while ushering me through a door and now I've paid attention to the 'mirroring' thing it's something we both do unconsciously quite a lot (leg crossing towards each other, hands touching our cheeks, leaning one elbow on our kness) I think we're going to get there! It's unfortunate that he's totally DIY impractical and doesn't even garden so the more obvious dinner/DVD will have to do. All I need now is an appropriate time and to realise that if I get knocked back its not the end of the world as at least I tried and it may be better to regret doing something than regret doing nothing in this case. Thanks again!

Sam's Reply

Thanks for your comments.

Sorry to make you nearly puke again but I reckon your friend is right. His conscious brain will be thinking I can't wait to get my hands on her body. His unconscious brain will be assessing your child rearing capabilities.

So whilst he will only be consciously thinking I can't wait to get my hands on her, his unconscious brain will be assessing your potential fertility.

Just like your conscious brain is probably assessing his personality whereas your unconscious brain is probably assessing his ability to produce babies and protect you (even if you are not interested in babies at the moment).