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- overcome your inhibitions
- meet and impress the opposite sex
- improve your social skills

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The thing about shopping is that you have to be quite persistent. It is a matter of going to the places you have found and keep working on them. It is also about tailoring your approach to the type of 'shop' you are in.

To illustrate, Pete finds it easier to meet women who are South American and speak Spanish. This is because their cultural signals showing availability tend to be much 'louder' than those of Anglo-Saxons. He is going to try out a Spanish meet-up group. This is quite a large group (there are over 1,500 members), so there should be a good range of people turning up. However, some groups like this tend to be quite stable, in that there is the same core of people who come along again and again. In these cases, it is a matter of going along, checking out the goods available, and if there is no new stock coming in, moving on to some other sort of shop. Just like shopping, you don't go back and keep looking at the same stock, you need to move on to somewhere else.

Other types of shops have an almost continuous turnover. For instance, Jack, the man interested in intelligent artistic types, knows that every single time that he goes to an art gallery, there are going to be new people to meet. Obvious, but again worth pointing out. Sometimes, people are tempted to keep going to the same shop over and over again, despite the lack of stock turnover.

In summary:

- Treat looking for someone to flirt with a little like a shopping trip.
- There are lots of options when shopping.
- Ask people's advice when shopping.
- You will need to be persistent.
- Make sure that your shop has a good stock turnover or find somewhere new!

Rejectaphobia

Rejectaphobia is another common flirting illness that affects both men and women. Simply put, this is when the fear of rejection holds people back in their flirting.

Rejectaphobia in women is most commonly tied to signal failure – a woman is scared of giving off a signal that she is interested in a man because she is scared of rejection. A frequent response

to the possibility of giving signals is ‘Well, I don’t want him to know that I like him’ or ‘I don’t feel comfortable with making it obvious I’m interested’ or, sometimes, ‘I just get shy around anyone I fancy’.

Case study

Rejectaphobia is as common in shy people as it is in confident people. Let’s take Erin, on the outside very confident and extrovert. She is attractive and very successful in her job. Actually, her job requires her to meet and deal with new people: she works in sales. In a professional environment she feels totally comfortable talking to anyone. Yet as soon as she is in a private non-business environment, and it involves someone she fancies, her confidence disappears.

At a dating event she attended, she had managed to talk to almost every single man, except for the two or three that she actually fancied. This was a pattern that repeated itself over and over again – all the events she went to were the same. She had a great night chatting to everyone in the room except for the person she fancied. And why? Because dealing with people at work, she had a kind of business armour on, and when talking to people she didn’t fancy, nothing was at stake. Suddenly, if she had to make an approach to someone she really fancied, she were vulnerable – or, more importantly, she was vulnerable to rejection. Despite being a successful, confident, outgoing business woman, she was too scared to give eye contact to someone she really fancied, because if the person didn’t reciprocate, then she would feel rejected.

The same problem of rejectaphobia can apply to men, but it is usually easier to spot. Men have to do more of the leg work, so the rejection is much harder. Women can give a signal that they are interested and leave it at that. For a man, he has to make the long walk across the room, and start with an opening line to get the conversation going. Men with rejectaphobia just feel totally uncomfortable about the idea of approaching women or starting a conversation. Often this is with good reason; they have had rejections in the past, and usually the rejections for men are more blatant and painful than not having eye contact returned.

So, girls, please do have some sympathy for men who come and try to flirt with you. It is quite a terrifying experience, so at least be polite and gentle.

In summary:

- Rejectionphobia will hold back your flirting.
- Rejectionphobia is often tied to signal failure.
- Both shy and confident people suffer rejectionphobia.
- Outwardly confident people often don't flirt with the people they really fancy.
- Rejection does hurt, and it is part of the flirting process.
- Ladies, please be polite with men who approach you as it takes a lot of courage.

Taking the pain away

For both men and women, we are essentially dealing with people avoiding the pain of rejection. And with good reason. A tough rejection can really sting you for days afterwards. If it was from someone you fancied, the temptation is to run over it in your head, talking to your self about where it went wrong, and then you are just re-living the pain over and over again.

To be able to deal with rejectionphobia, you need to be able to deal with the pain of rejection. Rejection is going to happen, it is part of the flirting game. Maybe the person you are trying to get eye contact with won't fancy you. Perhaps you will get a green light, start flirting, and then find there is no chemistry. Possibly you only get a few replies from your internet dating. Often you might end up going out on a couple of dates and then things won't go so well. Rejection is there, and if you are going to have any success in flirting, you are going to have to handle some rejection along the way.

What if I told you that I could give you a tablet to take away the rejection pain? Just like when you have a headache, something that is quick to administer and will take the pain away. Let's call this painkiller the 'rejection zapper'. No pharmaceuticals involved though. Only your mind.

When you get rejected, your mind writes a document that says something like: *Chatted to attractive women* – Result, pain of rejection. Or *Gave eye contact to man I fancied* – Result, pain of rejection.

We are going to take a positive memory and use it to zap the rejection memory. The worse the rejection is, the more we will have to zap it.

In summary:

- The key to overcoming rejection is to be able to get over the pain of rejection quickly and easily.
- Rejection is part of the flirting and dating process: it happens to everyone.
- You can take a painkiller for a headache and it is possible to take away the pain of rejection.
- We are going to take a positive memory and use it to zap the old rejection.

Taking away the pain of rejection

We have pain for a reason – it warns us that we are in some sort of physical danger. For example, if we have cut our finger, we need to get a plaster. Emotional pain often serves a similar purpose. It can warn us that we are doing something emotionally uncomfortable, and try to stop us from repeating the same thing over and over again.

For some things, a certain amount of emotional discomfort is part of the package. To look at it another way, it is something you have to go through to get what you want. A little like physical exercise. When you first go to a gym class it can be really painful – you wheeze during the class and afterwards you ache. Perhaps there are points where you really feel like you want to stop. However, the pain is well worth the reward you get at the end – the buzz from the exercise, the extra energy you will have later in the day, perhaps the weight loss. There is a whole range of benefits that you have to go through some sort of physical discomfort to reach. Eventually, you will reach a point where you realize that this pain is worth the benefits.

It can be the same with flirting and rejection. There may be a little pain to start off with but, in the end, if you get it right, it is worth risking the potential rejection for the great return. After all, you will be meeting an interesting new person, you might even find a long-term partner, or a short-term fling. At least when flirting, you will make the other person and yourself feel good.

It is okay to be worried about the fear of rejection. This exercise will help show you that it is not so bad at all, and can be quickly and easily reduced. So let's start zapping the rejection.

Exercise

Right now, think of a situation that makes you feel really, really great, something that you really enjoy doing. Ideally, this needs to be as near to a 10 as possible on a scale of 0 to 10. For some of my clients, it is the amazing moment when they are in the stand watching their team, as a striker puts a goal in. Or it is the feeling of salsa dancing, or the joy of listening to a certain type of music. For others, it is the buzz they get after a really good workout.

Right now, write down a time that you felt really great.

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Right now, circle how strong the feeling was on a scale of 0 to 10 where 0 is very weak and 10 is very strong.

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Right now, write down what you see when you remember the situation that makes you feel really, really great.

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Right now, write down what you hear when you remember the situation that makes you feel really, really great.

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Right now, write down the details of what you feel when you remember the situation that makes you feel really, really great.

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We now have the first tool to start zapping rejection: this fantastic memory. It is interesting that when you remember something vividly, your brain actually starts to react physically and mentally to that memory. Think back to a delicious meal that you have eaten – you will have a physical reaction.

Remember exactly what it looked like, then take a big sniff and remember what it smelt like. Remember taking a bite and savouring the flavour and how delicious it tasted. Chances are your mouth is now watering – a physical reaction to your memory. This is a perfectly natural process that happens all the time. You can take the details from a positive memory like that, and like the one that you have been writing about, and use them to zap, or re-arrange memories you have about negative things.

Exercise

Right now, remember a time when you were rejected. It can be in a relationship situation or perhaps a work situation. It is really important that it is quite a *small* incident of rejection. On a scale of 0 to 10, it should ideally be about 3 or 4, where 0 is not rejected at all, and 10 is totally rejected. It should be about half of the score of your really fantastic feeling above. So, if you had a situation where you felt fantastic at a 10, you can go for a situation where you were rejected at a 5. Or if you have a fantastic situation at an 8 go for a 4. This is important – when you are zapping two memories it is the most powerful one that will ‘win’. The bigger the difference between the two memories, the bigger the effect.

Right now, remember the time where you were rejected at a 5 or below, and write down some of the details about that situation.

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Right now, circle how strong the rejection is in the memory on a scale of 0 to 10. This is your old rejection score.

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Right now, play the CD and listen to track 2 – zapping rejection.

Now, after using my rejection zapper, the memory of the rejection is at:

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

You will notice that the memory of rejection has gone down the scale. Perhaps it is by only one point, or half a point, or it will go down substantially. It really depends. You can keep repeating this process over and over again to keep re-writing your memory of the rejection. If you eat delicious food over and over again, the more you eat it the more you will want to eat it.

In this case, the more you use the zapper, the more your rejection will be zapped.

Right now, listen to the zapping rejection track again.

Now, after using my rejection zapper, the memory of the rejection is at:

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Right now, listen to the zapping rejection track again.

Now, after using my rejection zapper, the memory of the rejection is at:

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Right now, listen once more to the zapping rejection track.

Now, after using my rejection zapper, the memory of the rejection is at:

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Right now, listen to the zapping rejection track again

Now, after using my rejection zapper, the memory of the rejection is at:

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Compare with this with your first rejection score on the previous page. Notice how much it has gone down.

Right now, look at the rejection memory. How does it look, sound and feel now? Write this down.

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What is really interesting about using the rejection zapper is that these changes are permanent. Your brain is a really powerful tool, if you use it in the right way, it learns very, very quickly.

Case study

Ian hadn't been out on a date for 18 months. He had given up because of a series of dates that had gone seriously wrong. He had been rejected by several women in a row and, because of this, he was scared that if he put himself on the line again, he would only be rejected again. This was particularly frustrating as Ian had his eye on an attractive instructor at his local gym, but his fear of rejection held him back from talking to her.

We worked together using the rejection zapper. We zapped his series of bad experiences from past dates. Once the pain had been reduced, Ian felt much calmer about the idea of putting himself on the line again. He asked his gym instructor out. She said yes. That's the power of the rejection zapper.

In the same way as in the case study above, you can beat your feelings of rejection. You will have a shot at flirting opportunities that you might perhaps have passed up in the past. If you know that you can zap rejection, then it doesn't bother you so much anymore. If you know you can get rid of it, getting rejected isn't so bad in the first place.

In summary:

- Changes from the rejection zapper are permanent.
- Your brain is a powerful tool; used in the right way it learns very, very quickly.
- You can use the rejection zapper all the time.
- The rejection zapper will help change your perspective on a flirting situation.
- Zapping rejection gives you a shot at flirting opportunities that you would otherwise miss.

Frienditis in men

Frienditis is a common flirting complaint among men. Every woman I have spoken to understands this condition. They all have a friend who is lovely, wonderful, great to talk to – but they would never consider him to be relationship material. This, in essence, is 'frienditis'. The man has been placed in the 'friendship' box, rather than in the 'potential boyfriend' box in

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