

The 'Nice Guy' Syndrome

The nice guy, they say, finishes last. But in romantic relationships, the nice guy often isn't even in the running. The nice guy is the one that you consider your friend. The nice guy is the person that you can talk to about anything, you feel comfortable with, and feel you can trust. He is often the person you talk to about "guy" problems, the one you seek when things aren't going well in a relationship. The nice guy may have expressed an interest in dating you and, although you may have thought this to be a compliment, you weren't interested. After all, you are "just friends." The nice guy is the person who you trust and feel comfortable with, but don't see as "fun" or "challenging" or really all that "interesting," other than as a friend, of course.

As your friend, I never understood why you continued to pursue guys who mistreated you, or your attraction to guys who even I considered to be jerks. I never understood why you seemed to make the same choices and mistakes repeatedly. And as a friend, I never understood why you didn't appreciate the qualities that I had to offer. After all, you said you wanted a man who was caring, sensitive, strong and intelligent, who treated you with respect. Instead, you seemed most attracted to men who were emotionally distant or abusive, dishonest, and uncommunicative.

Something interesting started to happen as we both got older. You seemed to notice me more. You weren't interested in a relationship with me, but you seemed to appreciate me a little more. You still tend to be attracted to men who are unavailable or abusive to you, but you now seem to notice me. This is confusing to me since I have tried for so long to gain your attention. And now that I have your attention, I don't understand why. I haven't changed that much. What is different about you? Are you tired of being mistreated? Are your priorities and values changing? Why are you interested in me now? Now that I am gaining your attention, I am noticing a change in me. I no longer feel as comfortable with you. I no longer trust you as I had before. And I have no idea why you are suddenly interested in me. It becomes really confusing when you show an interest in a relationship with me. For one thing, I have been hurt by your rejection and taking me for granted. And secondly, I notice that I have lost some of my respect for you because of the choices you had made repeatedly in the past. And I find it interesting when you and your girlfriends discuss men and say that all the good ones are taken. This seems surprising to hear since many of the so-called "good ones" are nice guys that you were not interested in. You may also be surprised to know that another change for me is that, while I still find you interesting and attractive, I am no longer willing to take the risk of having a relationship with you. In fact, I've found that I prefer relationships with "nice girls" who appreciate me, respect me, like me, and genuinely value the qualities that you found to be dull, boring, or uninteresting. We can be friends because I still do like you. But I doubt that we can be close friends because I no longer have the same respect for you, and I question whether you ever did respect me. But, we can still be friends.

For more information or assistance:

USF students may call 974-2831;

Faculty and staff may call 974-5469