

The Laws Of Attraction

Can men and women really be just friends?

I recently watched a film clip of interviews regarding whether men and women can be friends, pure and simple. Men and women, admittedly all in their early twenties, were individually asked for their opinions. All of the women said yes, of course. All of the men said no.

The interviewers then followed up with the women, asking if they thought their platonic friend would sleep with them or date them if they had the chance. The answer in all cases was yes. This got me thinking. Is there any such thing as 100% purely platonic friendship, or does every cross-gender friendship have an attraction factor involved somewhere along the line?

I cast my memory over the guys that have been my closest friends. Back in high school one of my closest friends was male. I thought he was fantastic. He got me. We had the same sense of humour, the same taste in books, the same level of ambition, and we understood each others quirks. For a long time, things were perfect. Then he decided he wanted more. In discussion I explained that I valued our friendship too much to want it destroyed if a romantic relationship didn't work. He was not happy. He drifted away, developed a school boy crush on someone else, and our friendship was destroyed anyway. I offered to date him to win him back, but it was too late. Perhaps my first serious dating error. I wonder if I had done things differently whether I could have been one of those people that marries their high school sweetheart and lives happily ever after. In reality, probably not.

I keep sifting through my memory to see if any of my friendships have been 100% platonic on both sides. I have always had more male than female friends, so this takes some time. Every now and then when I think I've found one I bring myself back to reality by remembering how I felt when I first met them. It's extraordinary - so many friendships that at some point in time could have been something different, either if I had reciprocated, if I had admitted it at the right

moment, or if the subject had shown interest.

The problem with this line of reasoning is that while the overwhelming majority of my cross gender relationships have had uneven moments where one of us hoped for something more, there are actually a few that seem different. Not many. A tiny percentage...but they are there. So now I wonder...there have been many guys in my life that I never admitted to wanting more with. Could it be that in the remaining relationships there was a moment of attraction but it came from the other side? Or could these few friendships be the exception to the rule? I would like it noted here that I am not including my gay friends in this equation for obvious reasons. I also exclude my married and attached friends. I suspect there may also be age band restrictions.

I am left thinking that perhaps the real meaning of friendship is being able to look past that attraction to find something more. Sometimes this may mean swallowing your pride and accepting the hurt feelings that go with rejection, but a true friendship is worth it. I am quite proud of the fact that I have stayed friends with most of my ex-boyfriends. I liked them for a reason and that reason is usually still there at the end of a relationship. It's just a matter of getting over the hurt and working towards remembering the reason. Of course it's not easy, especially during the first part, but it works and some of these people are my closest friends.

To put it mathematically, friendship = relationship - attraction OR attraction > friendship = problems ahead. This is a theory in progress. Feel free to contribute your thoughts.

