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FLIRTING

DEAR DIARY, I like flirting. My sister Sheba is a champion flirter and she's helping me fine tune the art. It's called non-gender-specific flirting. Specific flirting is sexual, with the outcome generally being something to do with exchanging numbers and planning on meeting sometime in the near future. Non-gender-specific flirting takes you on a slightly different route.

Flirting is a good thing that provides you with mutual benefits. If I am able to butter you up to make you feel good; pretty; handsome; strong; intelligent; funny or the most fabulous thing I've met to date and in return I get a discount, a parking space, an extra topping or a better table, then it's all good. If you see a woman who is nice looking and you tell her that she has the most beautiful brown eyes you've ever seen, she'll remember you and that comment for the rest of her life and the person throwing the compliments could be male or female.

I went to a lovely garden party last summer with my niece so the crowd were mostly much younger than me. I bumped into a young man or should I say he bumped into me and my handbag fell on the floor. He handed me my bag and was deeply apologetic. He appeared to be about 10 years my junior so I remember being impressed by his manners as "youngsters" have been labelled as lacking manners these days. He then stopped his sorry-saying and said to me, by the way, I love your dress, it's really pretty, you wear it well and I think that's what distracted me. He touched my arm, smiled and disappeared. He never made a move on me after that incident, he didn't hover, he didn't come back for seconds, nor did he offer me a drink or anything, but it made me feel a trillion dollars. There was something about not wanting to spoil the moment by walking around, trying to find him. I was happy to leave the moment as it was. As you can see, I've never forgotten what he said and whenever I wear that dress, I feel pretty!

Recently, I was out shopping with my sister Sheba and she parked at the supermarket. Only we had no intention of using the supermarket, just the supermarket's car park. I often do this and when I get back to the car park, because I am unable to get a stamped ticket from the supermarket, I'm normally charged £2. When my sister was driving out of the car park, she chit-chatted with the lady in the booth and then the lady smiled and raised the barrier, you could have knocked me down with a feather. The lady reminds me of a bitter pill; imagine trying to swallow a huge bitter pill the size of a 50 pence piece, the expression on your face is identical to the car park booth lady. Anyway, the reason why Sheba doesn't pay

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a fee is because she talks to the woman and makes her feel liked. The lady actually smiled. It was such a shock for me to see her smiling that it gave me shooting pains in my chest and I started feeling dizzy. Sheba said she's now becoming interested in booth lady and they're both genuinely happy to see each other so they chat. Sheba brings 60 seconds of pleasure in car park booth lady's 12 hour shift and for this, she gets to keep her money. Win-win!!

I'm now flirting as much as possible these days. Today, in just one afternoon of shopping, I managed to flirt in Boots, Sainsbury's Greggs, Holland & Barrett, Marks & Spencer, Faiths, the Chelsea Building Society and finally, with... of all things, a **traffic warden**. The traffic warden was out of pure necessity. All day, I felt like Tinkerbell sprinkling angel dust everywhere I went and it felt good.

Almost everyone will have their heart melted by a big smile and some nice words, the nicest words are the ones that are meant. Stroking someone's ego is all good; but when you really mean it and they really feel it, it's fabulous.

The frumpy hunch back lady at work who does all the admin that nobody else wants to do had a trim. It didn't look much different to the page boy haircut she normally sports, but I said to her, "your hair looks lovely Mary". She self-consciously touched it and shyly said thank you August. I didn't even know she knew my name. Ever since then she's been going out of her way to be nice to me. I'm warming to the lady! She's quite chatty and has very interesting stories to tell. I feel like a really bad swear word for assuming all she was was a frumpy old hag.

There's a man who sweeps my road at dawn. He normally looks but never says a word. One day when I was leaving home really early (or was I coming home really late?) I said good morning, how are you? "He said morning Miss, I'm fine thanks". I smiled and stepped on. I produced a smile in another human being and it felt really good.

I'm going to flirt again and again and again until I die because it's such a nice feeling bringing a smile to someone's face.

August Mayfield