

Bad boys attract girls with risk, danger

BY ANNE REBAR
Columnist

Colin Farrell, Jude Law and James Dean: all three men are as famous for their rugged good looks and tumultuous private lives as they are for the roles they perform. However, finding even one woman who doesn't drool over them (or some other rebellious Hollywood heartbreaker) is basically equivalent to finding the fountain of youth or the Holy Grail: impossible.

The saying "nice guys finish last" might be cliché, but it also has some truth to it. According to an article in *New Scientist*, two studies now point to what we have always suspected to be true — the "bad boys" do get the girls.

Peter Jonason and his colleagues at New Mexico State University in Las Cruces administered 200 college students personality tests designed to rank them for typical "bad boy" traits, like narcissism, callousness, deceitful behavior, extroversion and impulsiveness. They also posed questions about the students' relationships with women, including how many partners they have had and whether they actively sought long-term relationships or preferred brief affairs.

Not surprisingly, the men — this correlation was found only in males — whose personality tests showed they had a higher percentage of those "bad boy" traits had more partners and were more likely to seek short-term relationships or flings than their "nice guy" counterparts.

It seems that this pattern is not restricted to our own culture but can be found across the globe. David Schmitt of Bradley University in Peoria, Ill., showed the same pattern in a survey of more than 35,000 people in 57 different countries.

Yet, there is still hope for all of those "good guys" out there. For example, researchers have noted that the "bad boys" get more girls because they tend to go for quantity over quality. And although their rebellious traits might attract girls in the beginning, they ultimately hinder chances of securing any lasting, long-term relationships.

Studies show that "bad boys" get more girls, but the real question is — why? Is it because girls enjoy unreturned phone calls, being cheated on and feeling manipulated? No, not really — I promise.

Relationship expert and author Lisa Daily wrote in her online column on *Romantics.net* that one reason women are so attracted to these men is because deep down they hold the ill-conceived



notion that they might be the ones who can turn the guy around. The chances of this happening, however, are about as good as the Rams' chances of winning the Super Bowl — a.k.a. none.

Daily writes that another reason is that some women just enjoy doing things they know could be bad for them because things that involve some kind of risk are exciting. Women date "bad boys" for the same reason people ride motorcycles and go bungee jumping. The possibility of getting hurt makes the brief encounter that much more thrilling.

Dating "bad boys" is like a professional sport. Women do it when they are young, but eventually stop after a certain age. Daily writes that as women grow older and want more committed and long-term relationships, they tend to grow out of their "bad boy" fetishes and go for the men they can see themselves with in a long-term sense.

So, while we still might be — OK, we most definitely will be — admiring men like Colin Farrell from afar, realistically, you nice boys will finish first in the end.



BY ELIZABETH NECKA
Columnist

I'm horrible at making decisions — I argue back and forth with myself about the most complex life-changing choices and the simplest "what to wear today" choices. So when it came to deciding between studying abroad next summer and finding an internship, I had quite the dilemma.

Some would say I'm indecisive, but I argue that I'm simply too decisive. I place too much emphasis on the outcomes of my decisions and put too much time and effort into figuring out all the intricacies of the result. When deciding which college to attend, I made a pro/con list to help choose between my top two. When deciding if I could afford a plane ticket to see a friend, I made a hypothetical cost spreadsheet. Even after I've decided, I ask five or six different people for their opinions as well, just in case they bring up a point I haven't already considered. Sometimes I think too much for my own good.

As a student, I am taught to work logically through everything. It's thanks to my meticu-

The Truman Experiment: Gut feeling produces right result

lous nature that I caught those two mistakes on my statistics exam. So it makes sense to me that I go through my decision-making process with a fine-tooth comb to make sure I haven't missed anything. But am I really making better decisions as a result?

New research says no. In fact, I may even be putting myself at a disadvantage by deliberating on these decisions. The "unconscious thought theory," formulated by Dutch psychologists Dijksterhuis, Bos, Nordgren and van Baaren, suggests that the most pleasurable and satisfying outcomes result from unconscious deliberation (the deliberation without attention or "sleep on it" effect). Even though we're programmed to consider all facets of a situation first, those spontaneous people that "Just Do It" may be making the better choice.

In a series of recent studies published in "The Journal of Social and Personality Psychology, Psychological Science and Science," psychologists presented subjects with a variety of choices: Cars, apartments, oven-mitts, toothpaste, roommates, artwork for their living rooms and furniture. Some subjects were asked to make an instantaneous decision, some were allowed and encouraged to deliberate and make a "wise" choice and others were distracted and asked to make the decision after a period of time. For complex decisions, unconscious deliberators consistently picked the "best" choice. No matter if that "right" choice was based upon normative group ratings, the subject's future satisfaction or the subject's

greatest preference relative to other choices.

Perhaps when we gather information about a decision and then set it aside rather than dissecting it, our unconscious processes are organizing, polarizing and simplifying the information so that it can be more easily recalled, revealing our true feelings and opinions. Or maybe, because our consciousness has limited capabilities, working through a problem causes us to devalue certain angles on an issue and exaggerate the importance of other aspects, completely skewing our perceptions of the outcome. For me, a major "con" in my college list for Truman was its small-town location, but I nearly failed to give credence to the "pro" of easily accessible outdoor activities that I love, such as biking, hiking and camping. The brain is a tricky thing, and it's hard for psychologists to pinpoint exactly why it behaves in the manner it does.

Though consciously considering all possible alternatives in decision-making can be beneficial when the choice is less complex and less meaningful (like deciding which pair of socks to buy), typically you'll be more satisfied if you go with your gut feeling. This is especially true of life-changing decisions, such as where you live or go to school. I can't help but laugh at the irony of this finding: Life-changing decisions are the ones I worry about the most!

You can't completely ignore a decision that needs to be made — it must be your goal to come to some conclusion. Studies also show

that people who are in high-power situations can constructively use their problem-solving skills to figure out the best choice much more effectively than those people in low-power situations. Theoretically, the CEO of a company will be much more successful in deciding between possible retirement options if he plans and calculates his costs and benefits. A bottom-tier employee who has to vote on the same options would be better off going to bed and looking at it fresh in the morning, when he'd likely experience an "A-ha!" moment and know which one he truly prefers.

Sifting through this research just befuddles me more and more because it's the opposite of everything I've ever thought or been told about decision making. But now that I take a step back, I realize it fits in perfectly with what I've learned recently about happiness. The ability to think logically and rationally is both a blessing and a curse, because sometimes we get too consumed by it.

I'm learning how to be a more spontaneous person. I need to trust myself a little bit more and trust that what I feel is right. Though I wanted to do both study abroad and an internship, I found myself sending an e-mail the other night declining my invitation to the study abroad program. I don't recall ever deciding that I wasn't going to go — somehow I just knew it wasn't going to work out. No pro and con sheets necessary — maybe my mind really was capable of figuring this one out by itself.

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