

## Touch

Even the most fleeting touch can have a dramatic influence.

Studies show polite requests for help produce more positive results when accompanied by a light touch on the arm. A brief touch on the arm during an encounter between strangers has lasting positive effects.

The arm is the safest place to touch.

Touching the hand, unless it's a conventional handshake, is too personal.

Don't ever touch a stranger's face.

## Conversation

What you have to say may be fascinating, and you may express it with great eloquence, but if you have not grasped the basic social skills involved in conversational turn-taking, you will be perceived as arrogant.

The basic rule on how much to talk is very simple: try to make your contribution to the conversation roughly equal to that of your partner.

The essence of a good conversation, and a successful flirtation, is reciprocity, give-and-take, with both parties contributing equally as talkers and listeners.

## What to talk about

Negativity is a turn-off. Nobody likes a whiner.

Other characteristics that research has identified as particularly boring include talking too much about yourself or superficial things, talking too slowly or in a monotone, not making eye contact, and using too much slang.

Compliments, on the other hand, are almost universally welcomed, and do not have to be witty or original. Scientists have found they follow a tried-and-tested formula, with the word "nice" occurring in nearly 25 percent of compliments and the word "you" in almost 75 percent.

Simple, unflowery compliments such as, "That's a nice jacket," or "That color really suits you," work beautifully.

Excessive use of compliments, however, will make you seem ingratiating, and your partner may become bored with too much suffocating niceness.

But of all the ways you can bore someone, studies show this is the least offensive.

Now armed with everything you need to know about this seductive, fun, and time-honored activity, what are you waiting for?

Work it, girlfriend.

*blush*

