

THE NICE GUY



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The Difference Between a "Nice Man" and a "Good Man" in Dating

The distinction between a "nice man" and a "good man" in the dating world is often blurred by cultural stories, psychology, and even evolutionary preferences. Women often say they want "nice guys," yet many end up choosing men who don't fit that mold. Let's bring some clarity to this conversation.

Defining the Terms

Nice Man: This is usually someone who prioritizes being agreeable, avoids conflict, and tries to please others, often at the cost of his own needs or assertiveness. In dating, he might show up as overly accommodating, passive, or deferential.

Good Man: A good man is different. He has strong moral character, integrity, and reliability. He treats others with respect and kindness while also showing confidence, setting boundaries, and practicing self-respect. He balances empathy with strength, and he is not afraid to stand by his values or express his desires.

The confusion comes from the stereotype: women say they want "nice guys," but in practice, they're drawn toward men who appear more confident, charismatic, or assertive. Let's explore why.

Psychological Dynamics

Attraction to Confidence and Assertiveness

Confidence, competence, and emotional steadiness are universally attractive. Sometimes these traits can look less "nice" because they come across as bold, direct, or dominant. In contrast, the "nice man" archetype often seems insecure or unassertive, which can signal emotional instability. That makes him less appealing as a partner.

A "good man" blends kindness with strength. He's assertive without being arrogant, empathetic without being a pushover. That balance makes him much more attractive.

The "Nice Guy" Trap

Many "nice guys" operate with hidden expectations. They are kind in hopes of romantic reciprocation. When that doesn't happen, they feel resentful, and women sense the inauthenticity.

A "good man" acts with genuine kindness because it reflects who he is, not because he's trying to earn affection. His authenticity makes him trustworthy and attractive.

Projection and Misinterpretation

When women say they want a "nice guy," they usually mean kindness, respect, and reliability, traits of a "good man." But when they reject self-identified "nice guys," it's often because these men show passivity or neediness, not too much kindness.

Meanwhile, men who are labeled as "jerks" or "bad boys" may not be cruel at all. They often display confidence, charisma, or unpredictability, qualities that grab attention quickly, even if they don't always translate into lasting relationships.

Evolutionary and Social Factors

Evolutionary Preferences

From an evolutionary perspective, women are often drawn to traits that suggest strength, resourcefulness, and high status. Confidence and ambition fit that picture. A "good man" can embody those traits while also offering kindness and reliability, making him desirable in both short-term and long-term contexts.

Cultural Narratives

The media often romanticizes the "bad boy", the confident rebel who plays by his own rules. Women may seem attracted to the "not nice" man, when what they're really drawn to is his confidence and presence.

Social dynamics add to this. Some women, especially when younger, may prefer excitement and intensity, which "nice guys" often avoid because they prioritize harmony.

Why the Disconnect?

So why does it look like women don't choose nice guys?

Short-Term vs. Long-Term Preferences: Dating today often looks very different from what it once was. In the

past, dating was largely intentional, pursued with marriage as the clear end goal. Now, for many, it has split into short-term and long-term experiences. In the short-term, women may be drawn to excitement, charisma, and the thrill of novelty. But when it comes to choosing a long-term partner, the priorities shift. Qualities like kindness, reliability, and emotional stability rise to the top, because those are the traits that truly sustain a healthy relationship.

Authenticity Matters: Women can quickly sense the difference between genuine kindness and "niceness" that is rooted in insecurity or hidden agendas. When kindness flows from a man who also carries himself with confidence and self-respect, it feels safe, trustworthy, and compelling. That kind of authenticity is magnetic.

Selection Bias: Many men who identify as "nice guys" tend to focus heavily on the rejections they've faced, using those experiences as evidence that women prefer "bad boys." In reality, this perspective often overlooks the countless examples of women who do choose partners that balance kindness with strength and confidence. The issue isn't that women reject kindness, it's that they're looking for the deeper version of it: kindness paired with backbone.

Some Suggestive Practical Takeaways for Men

- Be a good man, not just a nice one. Build confidence, assertiveness, and clear values alongside kindness.
- Don't make kindness a transaction. Be authentic.
- Understand that attraction is multi-layered. Humor, resilience, and ambition matter too.
- Reframe rejection as feedback. Sometimes what comes across is insecurity rather than kindness.
- Remember that preferences vary, many women are seeking a man who is both strong and kind.