

The Science of *Attraction*

Although it sounds like the plot from dozens of bad romantic comedies, recent research suggests that who you are on the inside (your personality) is more important than how you look when it comes to catching the eye of that special someone.

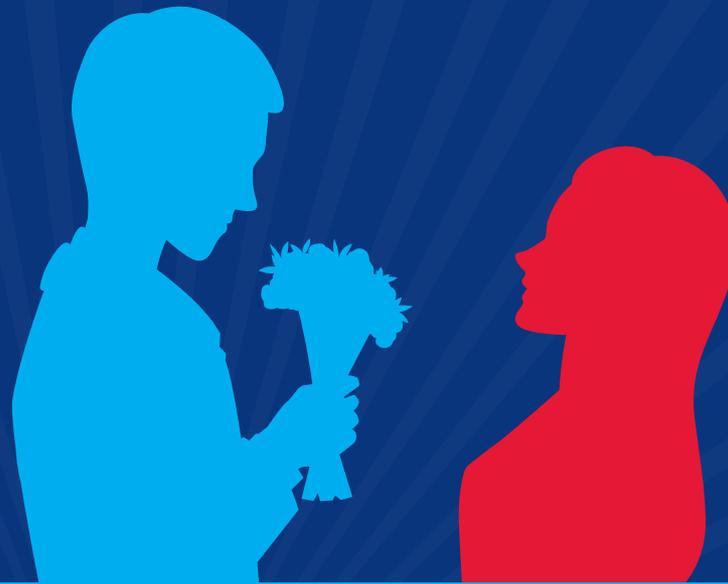
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We asked 1,177 people what was most important in a romantic partner. Here's what our sample looked like:



Respondents were **40% male**, **60% female**

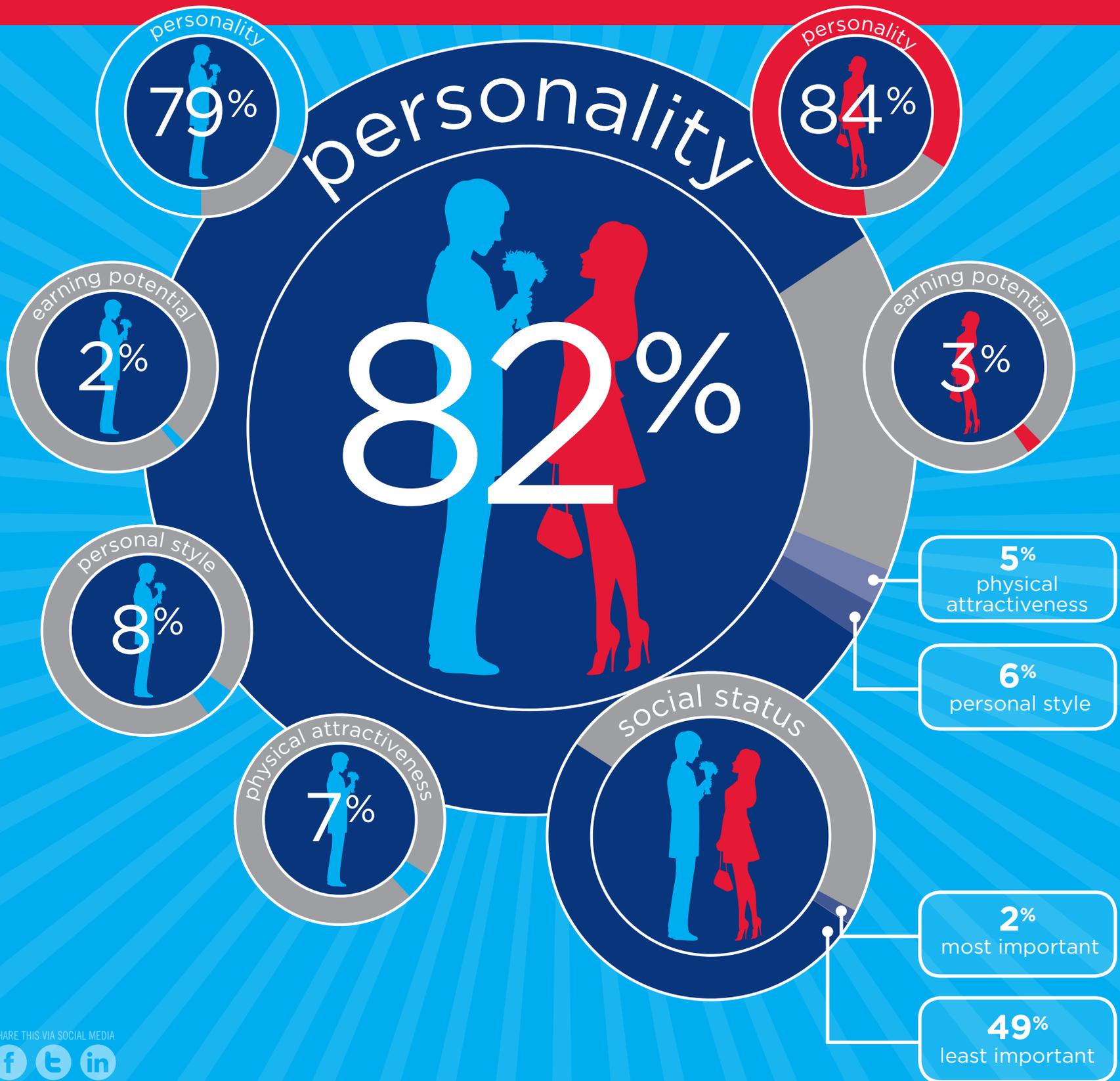


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Almost everyone said personality was most important in a romantic partner:



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In an article currently under review, Chamorro-Premuzic, Anderson, and Brown detail a study of 946 people they conducted to test the extent to which personality and romantic beliefs predict the attributes people say they want in a partner.

As it turns out,
opposites do not attract
no matter what Paula Abdul said.

Participants completed a battery of assessments to identify Big Five personality characteristics and an Ideal Partner Questionnaire. The authors' findings indicate that individuals prefer romantic partners that are similar to themselves.

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Lewandowski, Aron, and Gee (2007) conducted a study in which participants rated the attractiveness of opposite-sex facial photographs paired with desirable, undesirable, or no personality information. Results showed that positive personality information produced significant changes in ratings of physical attractiveness.

being friendly makes you more
handsome

In a more recent study, Dr. Kevin Meyer, a senior consultant at Hogan, compared same- and opposite-sex peer ratings of a large sample of individuals' physical attractiveness to personality and values data collected using the Hogan Personality Inventory, Hogan Development Survey, and Motives, Values, Preferences Inventory.

Meyer found positive correlations between ratings of individuals' physical attractiveness and their scores on the HPI Interpersonal Sensitivity, MVPI Affiliation, and MVPI Altruistic scales.

What does any of this mean? We are more physically attracted to people who value social interaction, make an effort to engage and get to know us, and take a genuine interest in our needs and wellbeing.

In a 2010 article in the Journal of Social Psychology, Dr. Tomas Chamorro-Premuzic, vice president of research and innovation at Hogan, and colleagues examined the influence of personality information on men's ratings of the physical attractiveness of photographs of women varying in body size from emaciated to obese.

it can also make you seem

thinner

Their results showed that personality information had a significant effect on the range of body sizes judged to be physically attractive. Providing positive personality information resulted in participants rating a wider range of figures as attractive compared with the control group. Negative personality information resulted in a constricted range of figures being rated as attractive.

In his study, Meyer found a positive correlation between ratings of physical attractiveness and the HDS Colorful scale, which indicates a proclivity toward dramatic, attention-seeking behavior. Big personalities draw our eyes and we seem to find them attractive for that, even if they are acting that way for self-serving reasons.

people love a

drama queen

but stop short of *cattiness*

Meyer also found a negative correlation between ratings of physical attractiveness and HDS Leisurely.

“We tend to find passive-aggressive behavior to be particularly unattractive,” he said. “Although these individuals appear friendly and cooperative, we seem to recognize that they are likely to act on their own agenda, which makes them less desirable.”

distance (the emotional kind) is a

turnoff

Meyer also found a negative correlation between ratings of physical attractiveness and scores on the HDS Reserved scale. Under stress or pressure, individuals who score high on the HDS Reserved scale tend to become withdrawn, uncommunicative, and, well, a little bit icy.

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Chamorro-Premuzic, Ahmetoglu, and Swami (2009) surveyed more than 16,000 people to examine how personality influences relationship style. They found that extraverted people tend to be more passionate in their relationships, where conscientious people tend to favor intimacy and commitment. Agreeable individuals tend to be intimate, committed, and passionate.

outgoing people are less likely to
put a rung on it

Chamorro-Premuzic and colleagues also found that two out of three relationship styles were significantly related to how long a relationship lasted. Their results showed that a tendency to be committed to the partnership was predictive of longer lasting relationships. Interestingly, however, a passionate relationship style was negatively related to relationship length. That is, if you tend to be more passionate, your relationship is likely to end more quickly