

How do I ask someone out?

By Kaya Crawford

Keywords:

- **Consent**- Consent is an agreement to engage in an activity and occurs when you ask, or give, permission to do something.
- **Coercion**- Pressuring or reasoning with someone who has said no or is unsure.
- **Boundaries** – Limits you set for yourself or limits others set for themselves.
- **Body language** – Showing thoughts and feelings with your body like your face, eyes, and limbs.

A bar, coffee shop, walking to class, sometimes we see someone who catches our eye. How do we approach them? **What is the best way to ask someone out?** What does it look like?

When you ask someone out on a date or for coffee you are asking for consent. Consent to be in their company and consent to begin to develop a friendship that can lead into a romantic relationship.

What is consent?

Consent is the willing agreement to participate in an action or activity, or to give permission for an action to occur. In other words, a yes means go ahead and anything else means do not proceed. **However**, asking someone out/ asking for consent can be intimidating. There is often a worry of saying the wrong thing or coming on too strong. Knowing the steps for consent can help alleviate some of these worries.

The Approach

There are a few things you have to consider when approaching a person you might be interested in. **Time and place** are two important things to think about when asking for any kind of consent. If someone is grieving it might not be a good time to ask them to go to a huge rager. Similarly, if the person you are hoping to approach has their earbuds in studying, working out, or maybe is on an important phone call, it is probably best to wait for a different opportunity. If your person is open with their **body language** and maybe in a social setting or neutral public space, that would be a good time to approach them.

There are some times where a person will not be able to consent at all. **A person that is drunk, high, or asleep (or in this case half asleep) cannot consent.** If you meet someone at a party you like, enjoy the party together and wait until you are both sound minded to plan a date. Often we approach people we like through social media or on a dating app. This can be far less intimidating than in person and it does give the receiving end an opportunity to respond when they feel sound. Because you don't see your person face to face there is less fear, but it also means that we have the courage to say or do things we usually wouldn't, this can be

nonconsensual actions. This can look like a nude, sexual joke or implication, or a request for a nude. These are examples of harassment, and aren't a great way to woo your person.

Keep it clear, clean, and light! "I think you're cute. Would you like to go out sometime?"

The Response

You've approached your person. You've popped a question. Now what?

Now the ball is in their court.

It is possible a person could say no or maybe another time. Rejection is hard. None of us want to feel rejection, but it is important to respect ourselves by respecting others' **boundaries**.

Continuing to push the subject by saying something like, "What about we go to dinner instead of coffee?", in order to receive a yes is a form of **coercion**. Instead saying, "Alright, have a good day" or "See you around!", will leave the conversation on a positive note.

A person might say "yes absolutely!" Remembering that they can remove this consent at any time (before the date or even during the date), you can continue to plan and get excited about your first date.

Practice makes perfect! The more practice we consent casually every day, the better we become at it in our romantic lives. And perhaps end up at a lovely dinner date.