

# Humor isn't a deal-breaker when finding 'the one,' says study

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University of Queensland research has found being funny or having a good sense of humor doesn't necessarily make you more attractive to potential partners.

Lead author Henry Wainwright from UQ's School of Psychology analyzed results from 3-minute speed-dates with hundreds of heterosexual participants. The results are published in [\*Evolution and Human Behaviour\*](#). The research is a collaboration between UQ's School of Psychology Centre for Psychology and Evolution and The University of Stirling.

"We asked 554 participants who participated in 861 speed dates to first answer questions about themselves, including their preference for [humor](#) in an ideal partner," Wainwright said.

"After each date they then rated their partner on characteristics including their humor and how attractive they found them."

Wainwright said the results were surprising.

"We found that irrespective of sex, participants who laughed more at their partner or received more laughs did not rate their partner as any more or less attractive," he said.

"It's interesting that this result opposes the commonly held belief that women are more attracted to funny men and that men are more attracted to women who find them funny."

Wainwright said the findings were inconsistent with the fitness indicator theory, which argues being funny requires quick thinking, intelligence, and creativity.

"In the past it was thought that being attracted to funny individuals was useful because your children were more likely to inherit beneficial characteristics, like intelligence," he said.

"If true, this process would lead to an [evolutionary advantage](#) both for

being funny and being attracted to funny people, a potential explanation as to why humor is found in virtually all [human cultures](#).

"However, our results suggest that trying too hard to be funny on a date might be more counterproductive than helpful—you should just be yourself."

**More information:** Henry M. Wainwright et al, Laughter and ratings of funniness in speed-dating do not support the fitness indicator hypothesis of humour, *Evolution and Human Behavior* (2023). [DOI: 10.1016/j.evolhumbehav.2023.09.005](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.evolhumbehav.2023.09.005)

Provided by University of Queensland

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