

## Tekst 6

# Flirting

**I**F YOU have ever sat alone in a bar, depressed by how good-looking everybody else seems to be, take comfort—it may be evolution playing a trick on you. A study just published in *Evolution and Human Behavior* by Sarah Hill, a psychologist at the University of Texas, Austin, shows that people of both sexes reckon the sexual competition they face is stronger than it really is. She thinks that this is 10: it makes people try harder to attract or keep a mate.

Dr Hill showed heterosexual men and women photographs of people. She asked them all both to rate how attractive those of their own sex would be to the opposite sex and how attractive the members of the opposite sex were. She then compared the scores for the former with the scores for the latter, seen from the other side. Men thought that the men they were shown were more attractive to women than they really were, and women thought the same of the women.

Dr Hill had predicted this outcome thanks to error-management theory—the idea that when people make errors of judgment, they, understandably, tend to make the error that 11 in terms of damage. The notion was first proposed by Martie Haselton and David Buss, two of Dr Hill's colleagues, to explain a puzzling quirk in male psychology.

As studies show, and many women will attest, men tend to misinterpret innocent friendliness as a sign that women are sexually interested in them. Dr Haselton and Dr Buss reasoned that men who are trying to decide if a woman is interested sexually can err in one of two ways. They can either 12 she is

not interested, in which case they will not bother trying to have sex with her; or they can erroneously conclude she is interested, try, and be rejected. From an evolutionary standpoint, trying and being rejected comes at little expense, except for hurt feelings. Not trying at all, by contrast, may mean the loss of an opportunity to, among other things, 13.

There is an opposite bias in women's errors. They tend to 14 signs that a man is interested in a committed relationship. That, the idea goes, is because a woman who guesses wrongly that a man intends to stick around could end up raising a child alone.

On looks, 15, men and women make the same error. So go on, pluck up your courage: you may think the competition is frighteningly hot, but then so does she.



*The Economist*

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*Kies bij iedere open plek in de tekst het juiste antwoord uit de gegeven mogelijkheden.*

1p 10

- A curious
- B humorous
- C pointless
- D sad
- E useful

1p 11

- A can be very risky
- B has the least impact
- C is hardly acceptable
- D is highly noticeable

1p 12

- A directly ask her if
- B feel annoyed because
- C mistakenly believe that
- D quietly wonder whether

1p 13

- A boast one's successes
- B express one's feelings
- C spread one's genes
- D test one's emotions

1p 14

- A imagine
- B overestimate
- C undervalue

1p 15

- A however
- B moreover
- C of course
- D therefore