
DATING DECODED – THE NITTY GRITTY WITH NICOLE

By: Nicole Heinrich
Master Life Coach

Unnatural Selection

Scenario

Dear Nicole, I am single, just turned 42 and I am sad to say that I was officially classified as a “Cougar” by some 20 something men whispering nearby my friend and I at a bar during happy hour 2 weeks ago. I hadn’t been to a bar for about 3 years and strangely, I’m not sure when I crossed over into the middle age category or if my self consciousness about my age is inadvertently attracting negative feedback but I have never been so uneasy in a social setting before. I felt unattractive, old and terrified that I’ll be alone for the rest of my days. I don’t think I look that much different than I did a few years ago but I have lost the confidence I once had. In my 30’s, men would flock to me but now something is different. That interest doesn’t appear to be there anymore. Men just stopped looking. If looks and youth are currency, am I on my way to being bankrupt? I know I can be dramatic but I don’t think I’m making this up.

Since that experience, I have become somewhat obsessed with the idea of getting plastic surgery. A tummy tuck to slim down my once flat but now thick mid section, some micro suction to tighten my jowls. Am I crazy to want my youth back? Is it even possible to hold onto my youth now that I’m over 40? Should I just accept that I’m aging and the sex appeal I once had can never be recovered again? Next stop menopause and loneliness? I’m really confused and starting to panic. Please let me know your thoughts on what I can do to stop these intensely negative feelings.

Sincerely,
Exhausted

Nicole answers...

Dating Decoded/ The Nitty Gritty

Dear Miss Exhausted, your concerns are very common among women over 40 and there is a lot you can do to change your perspective and pull yourself out of the self rejection abyss you’re finding yourself in. Beautiful vibrant women have questioned their value and desirability for thousands of years and have resorted to severe rituals to attain beauty. In 10th Century China and for a 1,000 years thereafter, foot binding was a common practice and a prime example of how an extreme deformity could be viewed as culturally beautiful and how extreme suffering can be inflicted on women and girls in the pursuit of so called beauty. Things aren’t much different today with over 45% of American women undergoing breast implant surgery every year. I have nothing against plastic surgery but if we are modifying our bodies because we hate our body as it is, then surgery is not the answer.

Creating an unnatural façade to appeal to societal standards of beauty may be the ultimate gesture of self rejection. The bottom line is that we have bought into the concept that superficial beauty is essential if we want to have a full life. What is ironic is that our body is actually our best friend. It wants to serve us. To keep us in homeostasis. To be loved and accepted and will respond by beaming, leaning out, emanating youth and glowing when we care for it and use it as it was intended (rest, exercise, proper diet).

In 1859 Darwin introduced the theory of Natural Selection which basically dictates that human beings are naturally drawn to traits and characteristics that indicate their mate has what it takes to perpetuate the species and further the evolutionary process. Strength, health and beauty were the rudimentary outward characteristics that qualified and individual as desirable back in those days because survival of the species and procreation was foremost on peoples minds. Genetics weren’t yet studied and love, intellect, kindness, self-confidence and other factors were not deemed as critical in the selection process.

What's amazing is that 153 years later we are still trying to be the strongest, youngest, most beautiful by any means necessary, totally rejecting who and what we are, what we are meant to become thereby stunting our emotional-spiritual-personal evolutionary process.

What do I do Next?

Ask yourself honestly, would you ever date those guys in the bar? I'll bet you weren't even attracted to them. Did you believe the disparaging remarks they were making about you? My guess is YES, you did believe them otherwise you wouldn't be affected. I am sad to say that our culture has crazy ideas about youth and beauty but I am telling you, and please believe me, 40 is not old. 42 is not old. 45 is not old. 50 is not old. I am willing to bet that the self consciousness that always accompanies self rejection is what invites rejection, not your age.

Your age is actually irrelevant unless you make it relevant. I know a woman, Mary Stroebe, who ran triathlons until she was 88 years old and just retired from competition at 90. She's absolutely beautiful and is known for saying "I think I'm young" and she has an entourage of younger men who admire her. The problem is that you believe that you lack value and are not fully aware of how powerful you are. I am a firm believer that discovering that power can be realized through physical activity. As a certified personal trainer for the past 6 years, I suggest that you make friends with your body and take care of it, not for the purpose of appealing to societal dictums but for the purpose of becoming fully self actualized, connected to self and to the world around you. Maximum physical health and the effort it takes to get there is one very effective gateway to self confidence. Through bold action you will find you are far more attractive, sexy and capable than you are presently realize.

Also, I would advise you to choose a woman in her 40's or beyond as a role model. This woman can be an athlete or an activist or a writer or what have you. The only prerequisite is that she emanates confidence and self acceptance - qualities you can learn and practice that will ultimately get you out of the mindset that you are not enough. Here are some examples of strong sexy confident women over 40 who make no apologies for their age or looks and are more beautiful than any runway model: Dana Torres 42; The female lead in 'Harold and Maude' Maude was 65 at the time of the film; Ultra Marathoner Lisa Tamati 40; Rachel McLish 55 years old. Keep me posted on your progress.

Nicole