

Ouch! Such a repulsive aura

By Ruth Ostrow

I felt really uncomfortable, threatened at some primal level

I WAS sitting next to a nice-looking man at a party last week and I suddenly felt totally repulsed by his energy. Usually, in social settings, I'm happy to share a drink or a laugh with a stranger. But the more this guy looked at me, and tried to talk to me, the more the hairs on my arms bristled.

As I talked to someone else, I could feel the stranger's eyes on me. Could feel him looking at my legs and assessing my body and I felt really uncomfortable, threatened at some primal level.

It's not that I am against a flirt. My partner and I both consider flirting normal, healthy and flattering.

In Italy, where men celebrate femininity in all its shapes and sizes, such male attention makes me feel alive. Even the simple act of walking feels hugely sensuous.

Why then did this stranger's admiring glances cause such ripples of disdain in my body?

Later, I was talking to a group of girlfriends. One said: "I saw you sitting next to 'Sam'. I always find him sleazy. What did you think?"

"I was so disturbed by his energy I had to move away," I replied.

And thus began a really interesting discussion: Why do some people come across as offensive and others not?

Why, for instance, can one girlfriend deeply offend by saying: "Your chicken dish is as dry as old boots," while another can say the same thing and have us in fits of laughter? Why do some people make us feel bad?

The answer, we all decided, was to do with intention. We decided that in the case of male behaviour, some men made us feel uncomfortable, or edgy, even before they opened their mouths.

There's an unseen force of energy, aura, call it what you will, which comes largely from whatever agenda that man is carrying.

For instance, some men have light, happy energy and just want a bit of erotic play, to express a part of themselves, to enjoy and delight in the female. Others are angling for something inappropriate, they need to validate their masculinity or to confirm their identity, or they are simply hungry for sex, and these intentions come out in every pore of their being.

The guy I was sitting next to kept tapping his foot aggressively, impatiently, which -- according to books on non-verbal behaviour -- is a sign of sexual frustration. He kept baring his teeth at me, which looked very Neanderthal, and

when he finally stood up, his legs were spread open and one foot was pointing towards me in a way that experts say indicates the desire to penetrate, which I found threatening at an unconscious level.

We all agreed that the same contradiction existed in our relationships with female friends, relatives and acquaintances. Some intimates make us feel insulted, criticised, judged, while others get away with murder.

I'm a big believer that we all intuit people's energy and we pick up on true feelings even before a gesture is made. But certainly by the non-verbal stage of communication, we are getting strong signals. A man's attitude to women is there in the tone of his voice, body language, whether the pupils are dilated -- even if he is unaware of his own true feelings.

A friend who is jealous or resentful will tell you your chicken is dry in a different manner than a friend who adores you, perhaps damning you with faint praise, but always with a heavier energy in and around her body, like a guy at a party on a mission.

Agendas -- conscious or unconscious -- are revealed in every physiological nuance: be it in flushed cheeks, tense shoulders, shortness of breath or degree of sarcasm; and most certainly in the metaphysical energy that surrounds us all. It is wise not to believe someone who says "I love you" with arms folded tightly across their chest.

Similarly, we should appreciate that our own true intentions will always come out to friends via non-verbal cues -- maybe even before they are clear to us. And it's probably worthwhile examining our own deeper beliefs and feelings when we cause anger, in case we're also guilty of running an internal program we're not aware of.

But it's good also to remember that others are not always responsible for causing us offence. Sometimes someone can offend us just because they remind us of our mother, or they say things our father used to say, or we let some projection from the past pervert an innocent comment.

The message is: stay objective. Watch and listen carefully for the true feelings behind the feelings, including our own. Because more often than not, being "too sensitive" means we are tapping into our intuition, and are spot on.

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