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Evolutionary assessment

Evolutionary psychologists examine the adaptive function of blushing in social situations

By [Jesse Berino](#)

The good news is that although it may cause you some chagrin, blushing appears to serve a

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To test their own evolutionary hypothesis, Dijk's group asked 130 undergraduate students from the University of Groningen in the Netherlands to read a series of brief stories about female characters. Participants were told that the woman in the story had either just committed a "social transgression" (such as missing a funeral because of a party, cutting in line at the bakery, driving away after a car crash) or was involved in an "embarrassing mishap" (such as bumping into a rack full of wine glasses, farting in an elevator, spilling coffee on someone). Half of the students were randomly assigned to the social transgression category and read twelve such stories, while the remaining participants read about twelve embarrassing mishaps. Importantly, each brief story was paired with the head-and-neck, color photograph of a different female model (so that there were 24 unique models total) said to be the main character in the story. The students were then asked to rate this woman on a variety of factors. For example, on a scale of 0-100, they were asked to rate their overall impression of this person, how sympathetic they found her, how trustworthy and so on.

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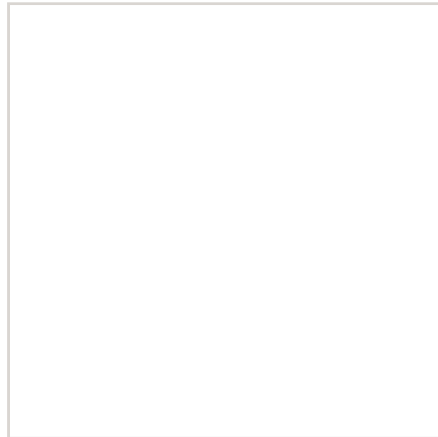
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