

FORMERLY DATELESS TOLEDOAN KEVIN FENG IS A DATING COACH NOW

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Any guy who's ever wanted to go from loser to schmoozer should take heart in the story of Kevin Feng.

At the age of 22, he'd never had a real girlfriend and couldn't figure out why.

"What's wrong with me?' I really thought that waking up every day," he said. "Why don't girls like me? Am I ugly? Do I smell bad?"

When Mr. Feng was chosen to compete on the second season of VH1's reality series *The Pickup Artist*, aimed at helping guys unlucky in love, he thought it was better than a golden ticket to Willie Wonka's chocolate factory.

It wasn't; he was kicked off the 2008 show after the second episode.

Still, the experience proved transformative for Mr. Feng, a University of Michigan graduate who recently moved to Toledo as an analyst for a medical consulting company. It led him to redouble his efforts to become a suaver, smoother gentleman suitor.

The first step, he said, was moving past the TV appearance, which included awkward attempts to meet women at a club. That it was a disaster probably shouldn't have come as a surprise.

"Take nine guys that are petrified of women. Now walk into a night club. Literally 3 million people are watching you. ... I tensed up," he said. "It was almost like a blackout. I came out of that club and had no idea what happened."

Mr. Feng, now 23, followed this up by moving to L.A. and devoting himself entirely to the art of approaching and dating women.

"It requires a lot of rejection and a lot of tenacity and motivation," he said. "I told myself, I'm going to do this every single day. I don't care if it takes me five years. ... L.A. is a complete party city and in terms of learning pickup, it is a great environment to do so."

Aided by two of his mentors from the VH1 program, Mr. Feng learned to be more confident and tolerate failure. By the time five months had passed, he felt he was proficient.

"Pickup actually is not very conceptually difficult. We're not talking multi-variable calculus here. We're just talking interactions with a woman," he said.

Mr. Feng's advice for others sounds simple: be assertive and get used to rejection.

"I've gone for many kisses and I've been rejected many times," he said. "Like Michael Jordan says, he's missed so many shots in basketball, but he always remembers the shots he's made."

These days Mr. Feng, whose parents live in Farmington Hills, Mich., is helping others who have the same languishing love lives that he once had. In addition to his local job, he works for ABCs of Attraction, which is based in California and sponsors help sessions across the country. Founder J.T. Tran said Mr. Feng has made much progress in meeting women since he arrived on the West Coast.



Kevin Feng in a promotional photo for the ABC's of Attraction Web site.

"At a certain point in the beginning, it was incredibly frustrating," Mr. Tran said. "I would tell him every single night and he would fix it and then the next night he would revert back to the same state."

Now Mr. Feng helps lead group boot camps that cost \$975 and spends some weekends counseling individual clients at \$2,500 a pop.

Mr. Feng stressed that being a pickup artist has nothing to do with being a womanizer; he got into it because all he wanted was a girlfriend, and most of his clients do too.

Now that he's brought his skills to Toledo, he said there's no reason for the single guys here to be intimidated.

"I'm like a really chill guy," he said. "Come hang out. I'll buy you a drink."

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