MISREADING SIGNALS

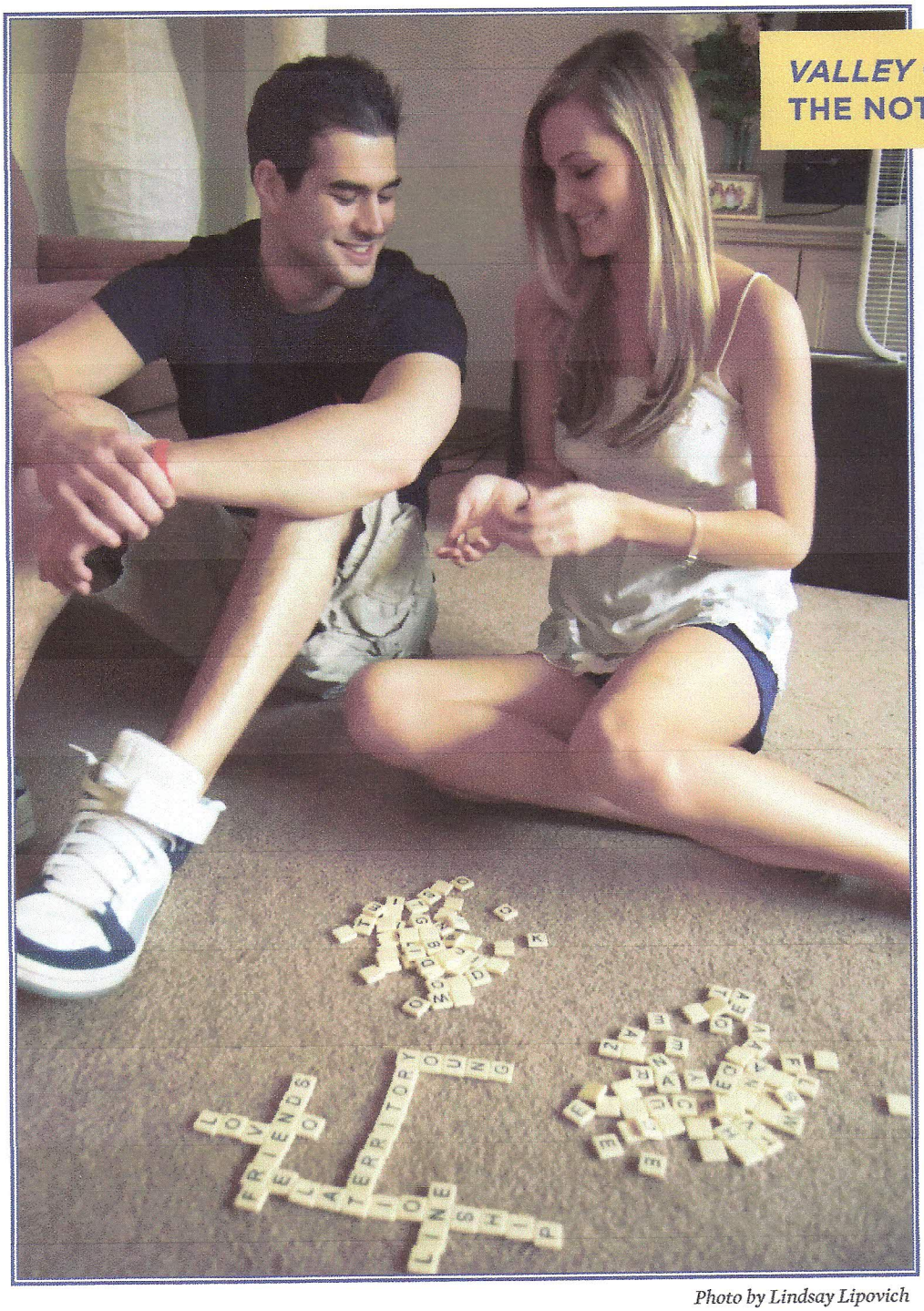

Photo by Lindsay Lipovich

VALLEY GETS TO THE BOTTOM OF THE NOTORIOUS "FRIEND" ZONE.

By Ali Prescott

"I think he likes me, but I'm not sure." How many times have you heard this statement? Guys and girls often think they're reading someone's signals perfectly, but are then confused when they hear the words, "I think we should just be friends."

The "friend zone" arises when one person is interested in another person romantically, while he or she sees the other as just a friend.

Being just friends has its benefits, but for many people it presents a problem when they want more out of the relationship.

How does the friend zone even happen? Part of the problem has to do with misreading signals. Don't consider the friend zone a death sentence because, it's possible to get out of it or even avoid it altogether. Being conscious of your body language is a good way to avoid miscommunication.

"Women read much more into body language than men do. Men are not as conscious of their body or the signals they give off," says Cheryl Dellasega, GNP, Ph.D, a professor of humanities in the Penn State College of Medicine and a women's studies professor.

"Seventy-five percent of women's communication is through body language," she says.

Body language confusion plays a role on many levels, no matter which party you represent. A little flick of the hair here and there or a touch on the arm can mean many things. It becomes a mess when people don't realize they're giving off the wrong signals to a person they aren't interested in.

"I get confused when they ask for your number but they don't call you, or if they say they want to hang out but they never do," says Holly R. (senior-communication science disorders). There are numerous reasons why people decide it's better not to date someone they may be attracted to. Most people agree that losing a friendship is number one, although there are other reasons.

"I think it's because people don't feel they are ready for a relationship or both people want different things," says Beth P. (senior-crime, law and justice).

"I think some people like dating around and don't want to settle down," says Holly.

The "friend zone" is not the end of the world. In fact, if you think you're being put into it and you don't want to be, speak up.

"It depends on what you want out of life and if you're a risk taker. You need to decide if you are satisfied with having the friendship. If you are really interested in the person, you need to tell them that it isn't enough," says Dellasega.