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Is Vanessa BAD FOR NICK?

Her diva-like antics have put her career and friendships in danger — and her romance could be next

Vanessa Minnillo's love life may be booming with new beau **Nick Lachey**, but it's putting her career in jeopardy.

A report surfaced last week that the MTV veejay and *Entertainment Tonight* journalist was suspended from MTV for more than a week — allegedly because of her diva-like behavior — and received a warning from *Entertainment Tonight* executive producers that having a relationship with a celebrity was unacceptable.

Though Vanessa's rep denies the 25-year-old beauty claim that the fame she's found as **Nick Lachey's** new girlfriend has indeed supersized her ego. "Vanessa isn't the same as she used to be," says one friend who was given the brush-off at a July 11 pre-ESPY Awards party at the Hollywood Roosevelt Hotel. "When she used to run into people she'd always be friendly

'She can go from sweet to mean high school girl in seconds'

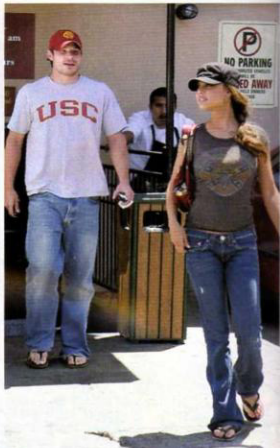
and say hello. Now she nods her head and barely acknowledges old friends. I think Hollywood has gone to her head." Another friend tells *OK!*, "It's really sad that Vanessa has been so cold. She used to be really nice."

Still, reports of bad behavior are nothing new. In fact, Vanessa herself says that after her dad overheard her ordering someone at work to get her a soda, he admonished her to "get it yourself." Even Vanessa's pre-Lachey colleagues say she can be difficult. "No one liked her," a onetime MTV associate tells *OK!*. "She is such a diva — always the last one ready and never went into makeup/wardrobe on time." And an acquaintance adds, "She can go from sweet to acting like a mean high school girl and back in seconds. She's obviously pretty and fun to hang out with, but not the kind of person I'd like to be close with."

According to experts, Vanessa's current attitude could have a lot to do with her past: An Air Force brat who changed schools eight times, Vanessa was six when her parents divorced. Four years later, her mother left her and her brother, Vince, on their father's Charleston, S.C., doorstep, never to return.

"Being abandoned by her mother will mean she doesn't bond with women," explains Denver relationship expert Carolyn Bushong, who has not worked with Vanessa. "Diva behavior stems from this and also because she didn't feel special growing up. So she tries to make up for that by projecting that she's even more special than she is."

Bushong, author of *The 7 Dumbest Relationship Mistakes Smart People Make*, also adds, "Having an unstable childhood creates a need for attention." And that could be the reason that career-driven Vanessa has dated



After a July 4 weekend in NYC, the couple have been staying at Nick's L.A. pad. Here, they're spotted after dining at Jerry's Deli on July 15.



A pal of Nick tells *OK!* the singer likes Vanessa because she's down to earth.

such high-profile men as actor **Orlando Bloom**, J.Lo's ex, **Cris Judd**, and New York Yankees captain **Derek Jeter**. Vanessa began dating the sports superstar in 2003 and ended the relationship only after she started to get serious with Nick. And some in the Yankees circle were glad to see her go. A source tells *OK!*, "A lot of the wives and girlfriends of the Yankees players didn't think Vanessa fit in with them. She was a tomboy and they told Derek she was kind of crass and should tone it down."

According to Dr. Patricia Farrell, author of *How to Be Your Own Therapist*, what Vanessa needs in a relationship is "someone who is fairly secure with where they are in terms of their life, and who can offer her support and



Pals of Vanessa say the *Entertainment Tonight* journalist was much friendlier before she met Nick and now fear that Hollywood has gone to her head.