Dear Alice,

Where do I begin? My ex-boyfriend recently professed his undying love for me. It had been a year since we broke up and he told me it was one of the biggest mistakes he made in his life. In the year that we were "broken up," I struggled to let go of the past, to let go of losing him (he picked up a new girl in that time). So, of course I jumped at the offer of "getting back together." It has been a couple of months that we have been trying to rekindle our lost love, and it seems to me that he has made little effort to keep the flame burning or to light the candle for that matter. I fight day and night with the idea of moving on with my life (because these were the very same problems that ended our relationship the first time), but after waiting and dreaming for a year that I could have his true love back, I am very afraid that throwing it away will only devastate me. HELP!!!!

? Redley

Answer

Dear Redley,

Taking the time to reflect on your relationship and your personal needs is a great way to clarify how best to move forward, as an individual or as a couple. Have you considered making a list of what you want from a relationship? i.e., respect, daily phone calls, regular sex, romantic gestures, compassion, etc.? While it is important to consider the needs and wants of your partner, try to focus on yourself during this activity.

How well do the qualities of your current (and ex-) boyfriend match your list? Is he presently meeting your needs? Is he capable of meeting your needs? What are you willing to give up or overlook? Where are you not willing to compromise? Can you discuss this with him and see where he is willing to accommodate and where he isn’t? Are his needs being met in this relationship?

Self-exploration and honest communication can help you make choices about whether or not to stay with your ex-boyfriend. In order to make the relationship work, both you and your partner's needs should be considered. Are you both willing to work towards those ever-changing goals together? If not, you may decide it is time to cut your losses and move on.

You mentioned that you are worried about being devastated? Why do you expect to feel this way? Are there any positive feelings that could come from ending the relationship? Do you
have the support of friends or family to help you during this potentially challenging time? You could also consider seeking the support of a counselor; someone who is not closely tied to the situation and can offer an objective point of view.

Identifying your needs may help you to make important decisions, as well as encourage future healthy relationships, with or without your ex-boyfriend.

Alice!
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Relationship Stuff
Moving On

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Resources

Counseling and Psychological Services (CPS) (Morningside) [11]
Mental Health Service (CUMC) [12]
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