I don't want a relationship, okay? [1]

Hi Alice,

You have so much information and advice for those who want to start, maintain, or end a relationship; but then there are people like me. I have no desire to be in a relationship with anyone. I'm a full time student, I work two jobs, and I like hanging out with my friends and family when I do have spare time. I'm not interested in the feelings, emotions, and time it takes to be in a relationship. Basically, I'll have sex with anyone before I even think about holding their hand. Then afterwards, the guy will usually end up getting his feelings hurt because I don't want to date him. Is there anything strange or unhealthy about this??

Answer

Dear Reader,

Some folks pair off like lovebirds while others like to fly solo. There's nothing wrong with savoring your independence, as long as you are honest with yourself and your partners about what you want and don't want out of each connection, sexually and otherwise. Ultimately, it's up to you to decide what shape your relationships will take.

People are naturally social beings, and we spend a great deal of our time interacting with others. Sharing life's ups and downs with friends and family can bring a sense of closeness and fulfillment that can't be found in your professional or academic life. Likewise, some people enjoy romantic relationships for companionship, commitment, and physical and emotional intimacy. Other people partner up out of fear of being alone or pressure to "settle down."

So why the monopoly on monogamy? As you implied, society often puts a premium on romantic relationships. From age-old love stories to reality dating shows, coupledom is portrayed as the romantic ideal. In many cultures marriage is a strong form of "social glue" that binds together individuals, families, and communities. However, there are many other expressions of love and togetherness that don't require you to tie the knot, or even go on a second date.

To begin, it may be helpful to sort out your feelings, values, and desires related to sexuality and relationships. For example, are you satisfied with your current social scene, or do you want make more time for friends or dating? Do you wish you had a "special someone" or are you truly happy on your own? And lastly, what's your take on sex without commitment? Do you feel comfortable getting it on and then heading out, or would you prefer to get to know each other a bit more, before and/or after? There are no right or wrong answers here, so go
with what feels best for you.

The tricky part is that everyone brings their own preferences to the dinner table and the bedroom. As you've experienced, it can cause discomfort and hurt feelings when, after a roll in the hay, your sexy someone wants to take you out on a date and you'd rather part ways. Since there's no way to predict how your partner may feel, perhaps you could try being more upfront about your intentions. For example, before things really heat up, you could say something like, "I'm not looking for a relationship, but I'd still like to have some fun together." Put into your own words, that warning gives your partner a fair heads-up about where you'd like the experience to go.

All that being said, navigating one-nighters or even steady commitments is easier said than done. Even a short fling requires some amount of time and effort, and it's likely that emotions will come into play at one point or another. To gather more advice or a different perspective, you may want to take a look at some of the Related Q&As below about "friends with benefits" and other relationship quandaries. Here's to the single life if that works for you!

Alice!
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