Told him my true feelings and now it's truly awkward

Alice,

I'm very attracted to one of my close friends. He used to like me and I used to like him. The other day, I told him I still liked him and that it'd be cool if we took our friendship further. But he just said he liked me as a friend. However, many of my friends have been telling me that he likes me more than a friend and that we'd be good together. After telling him how I feel, I think that he doesn't even want to be friends now, plus he is really awkward. How can I get our friendship back and break the awkwardness? How can I make sure I don't get rejected again by someone else?

Answer

Dear Reader,

Kudos to you for expressing your desire to be more than friends. You took a risk in telling your friend and that is a challenge in itself. It's a critical step though, because it's the only way he can know how you feel and what you want. But, as you've found out, sometimes the line between "friend" and "more than a friend" can get fuzzy. It sounds as though that is what you've been experiencing with this particular friend. Along those lines, it's good to keep in mind that all relationships are dynamic; they can change and evolve over time. Just because you feel a bit rejected at this point, does not mean you two won't or can't continue to be friends. He may just need to some time to process this new information. As for a guarantee that you won't be rejected again, that's not likely to happen. Rejection is another aspect of relationships and of life. Armed with this knowledge though, there are a few ways you can begin to address your concerns moving forward.

Based on your question, the assumption is that when you say "like," you mean it in a romantic sense, rather than a platonic friendship sense. You also say that he used to like you and you used to like him? what happened at that point? And, how did you establish that you liked each other? Did he tell you he liked you? Did you tell him you liked him? Or, did you figure out that you liked each other by way of another source, such as other friends? Communicating with one another directly will help you both figure out what pages you're on and how you might like to move forward be it maintaining the friendship or moving on.

What's more, even though your other friends tell you he likes you, he has said he wants to be your friend and nothing more. That response is straight from the horse's mouth, so you want...
focus on that information rather than what your other friends say. It might not be what you want to hear, and you may feel some embarrassment or awkwardness, but at least you know and are respecting his response.

With that in mind, getting your friendship "back" to how it was before you told him you want more may not be realistic. However, just because your friend didn’t share your interest in being more than friends, it may not mean he rejected your friendship as a whole. You could work to re-establish a friendship with him. If you choose to take this road, your friendship may not look exactly as it did, but relationships evolve and change over time, remember? If he has also decided that he doesn’t want to be friends (or at least not right now) though, then consider giving him some space and maybe revisit the friendship rekindling effort down the road.

Being in the middle of a relationship-related change as you are right now can feel pretty uncomfortable. Some time may be needed to sort things out? taken individually and together regarding your friendship. But, no matter what happens with your friend, remember what you did was brave! Taking a risk to share how you feel may not have resulted in the way you hoped, but it doesn’t mean it won’t in the future or with another object of your affection.

Keep up the honest and direct communication,

Alice!

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