Dear Alice,

I have recently started seeing this man who I think is adorable and things are going really well. My last relationship was a three year nightmare that ended a long time before I finally broke it off. Everyone keeps saying to follow the rules and take it slow and to be careful because I am on the rebound and it is too soon to get involved. How can I know if what I am feeling is right and if I should just go with the flow? I am still feeling so new at all this stuff and I am often very scared to get hurt again. Please give me some of your expert advice!

? Hopelessly in doubt

Answer

Dear Hopelessly in doubt,

Well, first of all, what you?re feeling isn?t necessarily ?right? or ?wrong.? It?s just what you?re feeling. So, acknowledge those feelings first and foremost. It sounds like you?re excited about the new man in your life, but that you are also scared about getting hurt. In like and love, there?s always potential for getting hurt ? that comes with the territory. The variable here is whether or not you feel ready to take that chance again. That?s something only you can know.

With that being said, don't let other people's "rules" get in the way of your happiness. If the new guy in your life makes you happy and if you feel comfortable pursuing a relationship with him, why not give it a chance? On the flipside, if things start moving too fast, you can always slow it down.

When relationships end, we?re faced with the task of dealing with and sorting out our feelings, regrouping, and figuring out what are next step will be. Of course, everyone has her or his own way of healing. Some choose not to date for a while and devote their energy to self-reflection. Others feel ready and open to a new relationship soon after the previous one ends. And then, there are those who vow never to love again. The main point here is that there is no standard formula to determine how to proceed with your life after a breakup.

Have you spoken to the man you?re dating about your feelings? If you're concerned about getting hurt or hurting your new guy, why not let him know what you're thinking and feeling?
Chances are he'll appreciate your honesty. Plus, knowing where he's coming from and what he's ready for may relieve some of the anxiety you feel towards the new relationship.

In a nutshell: do it your own way, in your own time! You may want to talk to a counselor or mental health professional. A counselor can help you find a fresh perspective — one that is your own.

Wishing you the best,

Alice!

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