Don't love him anymore?  [1]

Dear Alice,

I'm having a problem with my boyfriend of five years. I don't think that I love him anymore!!! What should I do?

Signed,

Desperate

Answer

Dear Desperate,

While it may feel uncomfortable or unexpected, or both, falling out of love with a boyfriend of five years is normal. Exploring your feelings regarding your boyfriend and the reasons why you may have fell out of love with him may be a helpful first start for deciding what you "should" do.

Sometimes "falling out of love" is due to withheld anger, outgrowing the other partner, changing your mind, and/or developing or acknowledging different priorities. Sometimes it has more to do with one's self than it has to do with the other partner. Although it's unclear whether you believe that falling out of love with your boyfriend is itself the "problem" or whether having problems with your boyfriend led you to fall out of love with him, it doesn't hurt to be a little introspective and examine more closely what may have led you to feel (or not feel) the way that you do.

You seem conflicted about the thought of not loving your boyfriend anymore. As such, you may want to consider asking yourself the following questions. Does the fact that you may not love your boyfriend anymore bother you? How long have you felt this way? Do the two of you have mutual respect, friendship, and trust? Do you feel that your relationship is a caring one? Does your relationship enhance or diminish who you are? Do you feel that you need some time apart? Can you picture him as a life partner? What would your ideal relationship (with or without your boyfriend) look like?

Have you discussed this issue with someone you trust, such as a friend, counselor, or therapist? Even so, have you considered talking to your boyfriend about this? While it may not be such a comfortable conversation to have, your boyfriend may certainly appreciate your honesty and your openness with your feelings. In addition, he may be having his own feelings
about the relationship as well. Open and honest communication, in any relationship, is key to expressing wants, needs, and desires. Perhaps such a discussion would be a good opportunity to communicate what you like/don't like about your relationship and how to improve it. Still, you may decide that taking some time apart would be a good experience for both of you, or that breaking up would be the way to go.

If you would like to discuss this with a counseling professional, you can visit the Mental Health America website [2] to locate a provider in your area. You may also decide to have couples counseling if you feel the need for it. For more ideas and resources about relationships, you may want to read some of the responses in the Go Ask Alice! Relationships [3] archives.

Remember, understanding your feelings and communicating with your boyfriend are promising steps to helping you feel comfortable with any decision you make regarding your relationship. Good luck!

Alice!

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Resources

Counseling and Psychological Services (CPS) (Morningside) [12]
Mental Health Service (CUMC) [13]

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