Dear Alice,

I have a problem. I've never considered myself gay, but I have begun to care for my best friend a little more than I think I should. I get jealous when he finds a woman he likes, and begins going out with her, and I have become very protective of him, since he is a few years younger than me. I don't know if I am just a little jealous that he is able to find someone, and I am not, or if I am gay and am beginning to like him in that way. When I think about it, he fits my idea of my perfect mate. And I often wonder what his penis size is. Help me. Do you think I am gay, or just suffering from jealousy and penis envy?

Answer

Dear Reader,

Let's just pretend for a minute that there is no such thing as a heterosexual, bisexual, or homosexual man and woman. Instead, there are only "sexual beings." If this were the case, your question might read:

Dear Alice,

I have a problem.... I have begun to care for my best friend... I get jealous when my friend is attracted to another person and spends a lot of time with them... I don't know if I am just a little jealous, or if I am sexually attracted to my friend... I think about my friend's body, and I'm sure we would make a perfect couple... Do you think I'm suffering from jealousy and sexual attraction?

When the social taboos are removed from discussions about gender and non-heterosexuality, your situation sounds a little less charged. Your friend is someone with whom you spend lots of enjoyable time. Whether or not you are sexually attracted to him, it stands to reason that his spending lots of time with others, for whatever reason, would generate feelings of jealousy.

The only person who can answer your question, "Am I gay," is you. As you explore the answer, it might be useful to honestly reflect and examine whether you have similar attractions to other men, and if you allow yourself social opportunities outside of your best friendship. Sometimes, the only way to find out what really turns you on is to reach for the light switch and explore your feelings in search of inner peace. Choices can lead to a better understanding of who you are and miles of personal growth. If you decide to "branch out," however, your best friend's switch may not be the one to flick. You are the best judge of how your friendship would fare if you communicate your feelings. As frustrating as it may be, you
might try to spend some time with other people and activities when your friend's time is otherwise occupied.

You are lucky to be able to articulate these important and powerful feelings. And your friend is very lucky to have someone looking out for him. Remember how important it is to look out for yourself, too: your goals, desires, and right to learn more about who you are. The road to inner peace isn't always easy and smooth, but it is worth the journey. Step into the light.

Alice!
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