

**Paper: Chicago Tribune RedEye Edition (IL)**  
**Title: Get out of relationship that's going nowhere**  
**Author: Laura Baron**  
**Date: October 7, 2004**

It's been three years, two months and 15 days since you guys first started dating. If it were up to you, you'd be married and done already. But apparently, it's not. Because you and this Almost Partner you proudly claim are merely coasting. Every time the future is brought up, the subject is changed. It's the ever-so-lovely, don't-want-to-brush-my-teeth, no-need-to-try-I've-already-got-you sort of dance. Not quite what you had planned.

You're frustrated, and staying put. Such a combination. Once you were convinced this Almost was the Right Partner. You're beginning to believe instead they're more likely your Right Now Partner.

So, when do you cut it off our friends are wiped from your tired stories and excuses. Your whine is not getting better with time. Sure, everything happens for a reason. But c'mon. Face the fat truth. With perhaps a few mating ritual exceptions, the relationship isn't where you want it to be, so what's the issue? Your Almost has made the intentions clear. The relationship is stale. The writing is on the wall; read it.

Forget the waiting, the appeasing. Stand up for your needs. Deal in your truths. If you feel it, it's real. Respect yourself and what you desire. Get honest with your feelings. If you're losing respect for your Almost and you don't care, it's absolutely time to retool or get out. Drama does not dictate love. Project this relationship forward. Are you able to truly be yourself in the relationship? Are you proud of your Almost? Can you count on this Almost? Does the Almost listen when you share how you feel? Sort it out, get yourself answered.

Before bolting, have a conversation. No begging. Find out what your Almost is thinking. Maybe it's been a mutual hell. Sweet, if you've both been miserable, good-byes are smoother. But be aware. When there's nothing to lose, it's easy to fight for resolution. Just be honest with what you want. This conversation can likely take a turn toward mending. Remember, people don't change easily, habits are tough to break. If your Almost has been non-responsive to your needs throughout the relationship, don't count on change.

On the other hand, if Almost comes to some tripped-out epiphany and you do choose to stay, at least renegotiate. Start healthy. Create and agree on a new timeline and expectations.

And then, if you've tried making it work and the Almost is dumping the same non-committal wah wah waws, be done already. Blow out of there. If this Almost Partner isn't into you, fine. It's good, quite frankly, to know. Get yourself free for someone who can appreciate all of you. You deserve to be fulfilled. And if your Surrogate isn't bringing it, no worries. Satisfaction is out there waiting.

Being alone isn't the scary part. Being with someone and feeling alone is. Sure they're breathing next to you, sucking up your air. So take a deeper breath. It's all yours now. It might take you awhile to get over. Fine, give yourself the space. Be proud. Before your Almost, you lived a full life, had friends, had hobbies. Nothing much has changed. It's still just one step in front of the other. It's not a breakup, it's a breakthrough. Go get yourself some lovin'. Flirt. Laugh. Go at it. It's your life, explore it. You'll have sex again. You'll feel connected again. Someday.

Relax. No need to get hooked on Xanax. You've read the signs. Now go write your new chapter.

-----

*Author: Laura Baron. REDEYE SPECIAL CONTRIBUTOR LAURA BARON IS A RELATIONSHIP COACH BASED IN CHICAGO. SHE CAN BE SEEN THURSDAYS ON "WGN MORNING NEWS."*

*Copyright (c) 2005, Chicago Tribune Company. All rights reserved.*