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Title: How to know when the relationship is over
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You know something's wrong with your relationship, but you're not sure if it's enough to drop the thing altogether. Cute couples bother the hell out of you. You can't have a conversation with your mom that doesn't somehow circle back to your childless, unfocused state. And friends are starting to ask those quintessential "are you happy?" questions. You realize your relationship isn't cranking, but you're not sure if it should end. It's that if-I-do-nothing-it'll-just-die-on-it's-own phase. Before you bury the deal under a slab of indecision, get honest.

Both time and your instincts are on your side. Neither lies. The past typically repeats itself. Your gut always knows what's up in the present. It's just a matter of recognizing it. If you're in an extreme situation where you are getting harmed, take no time. Get out. Think about the relationship out of harm's way. Get perspective. Get safe, please.

Now if the drama isn't to that level, but you're still having doubts, take a step back and give yourself some time. Let it be all about you. It's essential to come to terms with how you're feeling before going to your partner. Fully understanding your own perspective will allow you to be more objective and less defensive when talking things out. Launching into premature talks will only lead to misdirected conversations. If the dissatisfaction brewing is like what you've felt in other relationships, look for patterns in your behavior. Pushing away when getting close is common. Intimacy can be exposing and scary. If you're falling into patterns, be honest. You can't change what you don't admit. You can't run from intimacy forever. In some way, you are contributing to the chaos. Figure out how. Nothing can be done to you without you letting it. Owning your behavior will empower you to do something about it. It'll also set you up for healthier deals down the line. Then, look at your goals. Are you and your partner truly aligned in what you're looking for? When one is looking for some bling in the night and the other is looking for some bling on a band, that's an issue. Without mutual goals, it's difficult to know what you're working for and difficult to qualify if it's working at all.

Then get basic with yourself. Are you happy? Is what the relationship is doling out greater than what it's taking? One dater confided she liked most everything about her boyfriend but his personality. Problem. She said the initial attraction was all physical. Red flag. Now she's feeling stuck in a situation where she doesn't feel like she knows her partner because the majority of the relationship has been spent expressing themselves in bed. Shocker. Like too much of anything, good sex and a great face may not get you fulfilled. As the relationship grows, so do your needs. It's essential that your partner continue fulfilling them. It's also essential you let your partner do the same. If what you're needing is more than what your partner can give, that's an issue. You either have to renegotiate what's important to you or find a partner who can bring it.

Once you've done your work, sit down and have the talk. Make it about the both of you,

not what your partner is lacking. Then listen. Is your partner hearing you and still willing to try? This isn't about false promises; this is about a plan.

If you can't ride out the turbulence, you'll find the exit doors located at the front and back of the cabin. Put on your life vest and proceed.

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