How soon can I date after a break-up? [1]

Hi Alice,

I'm a college sophomore. Just recently, my boyfriend of two and a half years broke up with me. We haven't talked for almost a month. Since that time, I have done many positive things to change my life and myself. I'm wondering about dating. Is it too early? How do I go about it? Is it okay for me to date when I'm not at all over my ex? Or, should I hound him to give me closure, and do I need closure? Can I just move on? Should I ignore my feelings of being used and abused emotionally?

Answer

Dear Reader,

After a significant relationship has ended non-mutually, the partner who has been "dumped" often wonders about similar issues to yours. Dealing with these issues and feelings are the next steps that need to be taken. Through some personal exploration, you'll learn the best choice(s) to help you move on.

You were with your boyfriend for two and a half years, which allowed you to develop and foster a relationship in which you got to know and care for him. It's natural for you to be "not at all over" him right now, as it's been only about one month since the break-up. Not enough time may have passed for you to get over him... yet. You are grieving the loss of your relationship and may still need more time to mourn.

Wouldn't it be great if there were quick cures to the "break-up blues"? Unfortunately, there are no simple remedies, and at times, uncomfortable feelings also come along for the ride. Regardless, some people may put a lot of blind faith into certain defined "break-up rules" in the hopes that they will feel better and move on soon. For example, Charlotte of Sex and the City believes that it takes half the total time you went out with someone to get over him or her. In reality, however, moving on itself has no clear-cut rules, and can often be a difficult process.

It appears that you still have some unresolved feelings (your "feelings of being used and abused emotionally") regarding your ex and the break-up. Although you may not get an explanation or apology from him, what's important is that you take as much time as you need to explore your own feelings of loss, sadness, anger, hurt, confusion, depression, or anything else that you may be feeling. Hounding him for an answer may not be the best thing to do, as
he may not give you the answer you're looking for, or it could cause more fighting or angst. Writing in a journal, or talking with a friend or family member, and/or even a professional counselor, about your feelings is a good next step.

You ask, "Can I just move on?" Absolutely. Continue doing the things that you enjoy, such as participating in clubs and organizations, playing sports, going to work, and/or spending time with friends. Chances are that eventually you'll meet others with whom you share similar interests. Some of these new interactions could lead to potential dates, too.

Alice!
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