

Wait to date again? ^[1]

Dear Alice,

I have recently started seeing this man who I think is adorable and things are going really well. My last relationship was a three year nightmare that ended a long time before I finally broke it off. Everyone keeps saying to follow the rules and take it slow and to be careful because I am on the rebound and it is too soon to get involved. How can I know if what I am feeling is right and if I should just go with the flow? I am still feeling so new at all this stuff and I am often very scared to get hurt again. Please give me some of your expert advice!

? Hopelessly in doubt

Answer

Dear Hopelessly in doubt,

Knowing when to get back in the saddle is no easy feat. When dealing with situations such as these, remember that what you're feeling isn't necessarily "right" or "wrong," it's just what you're feeling. That being said, simply acknowledging those feelings, first and foremost, may be a good place to start. It sounds like you're excited about the new man in your life, but you're also scared about getting hurt. In like and in love, there's always potential for getting hurt that comes with the territory. The variable here is whether or not you feel *ready* to take that chance again and that's something only you can determine.

Although coping with a breakup may seem like an endless road, processing and embracing your feelings may help you see a new and brighter path. Of course, everyone has their own way of healing; some choose to devote their energy to self-reflection while others find comfort in beginning new relationships. The main point here is that there's no standard formula to determine how to proceed with your life after a breakup ^[2].

And, while asking friends for advice may be helpful, the "rules" they follow for themselves may not always be the best fit for you and may even interfere with your happiness. If the new guy in your life makes you happy and if you feel comfortable pursuing a relationship with him, why not give it a chance? On the flipside, if things start moving too fast, you can always have a conversation with him and ask to slow things down.

Have you spoken to the man you're dating about your feelings? If you're concerned about getting hurt or hurting your new guy, you may want to let him know what you're thinking and feeling? you may find that he appreciates your honesty. Plus, knowing where he's coming

from and what he's ready for may relieve some of the anxiety you feel towards the new relationship.

In a nutshell: Try to be patient with your process, but remember ? it's *your* process. Take as much or as little time as you need; only you know when you're ready to move on. If you continue to struggle with processing this transition between relationships, you may consider speaking with a mental health professional to help you find a fresh perspective ? one that is your own.

Alice!

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