Dear Alice,

I'm a guy who can't seem to find the right person. I'm not unattractive or a louse, but for the longest time I've had trouble starting a relationship with anyone. The problem is that when I meet a woman, I can't seem to progress past the friendship stage. Many of these women become my good friends, but they just don't seem interested in starting a physical relationship. My bad luck has left me feeling unattractive and unconfident. I get frustrated when I hear about my friends falling in and out of relationships. Any ideas on how I can improve my relationship status? I know it's vague, but it's been troubling me for a long time.

Thanks,
Down on his luck

Answer

Dear Down on his luck,

Luck often doesn't have a lot to do with romantic relationships. It seems you must know that because of the strong feelings you're having about not being in a physical relationship. When potential intimate relationships are not progressing as anticipated, someone's frustration with this may cause her/him to just give up rather than spend time fostering that potential connection with a possible partner. If you feel romantic about someone, flirt and clearly communicate that you are interested in pursuing the relationship past friendship so that the other person knows of your interest. Take it slow, but not too slow, so the initial excitement and momentum do not diminish. And then your next steps will be determined from there.

It sounds as if you need to start defining yourself for who you are, not by who you're with. You mentioned that your bad luck with relationships has left you with a lack of confidence. Men and women alike are attracted to confident people with high self-esteem. Your lack of confidence may be detectable to potential partners and give off the vibe that you aren't ready to fully enjoy a new relationship with someone because you aren't yet content with yourself. Taking the time to know yourself, develop your personality, and actually like yourself are important to do before seeking a mate. Then you'll be better prepared to approach a new partner with more to offer, not more you desire.

Admittedly, this is all easier said than done; this will definitely take some work and patience on your part. You might want to think about taking a self-esteem seminar, or maybe a workshop about building relationships. There are also books to read in the meantime, such as Perry

In any case, give yourself some time and work on yourself. If you are a student and you find that you are stuck, it might be helpful to see if your school offers short-term therapy services. Here's hoping your luck rebounds!

Alice!
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