Alice,

I'm very attracted to one of my close friends. He used to like me and I used to like him. The other day, I told him I still liked him and that it'd be cool if we took our friendship further. But he just said he liked me as a friend. However, many of my friends have been telling me that he likes me more than a friend and that we'd be good together. After telling him how I feel, I think that he doesn't even want to be friends now, plus he is really awkward. How can I get our friendship back and break the awkwardness? How can I make sure I don't get rejected again by someone else?

Answer

Dear Reader,

Sometimes the line between "friend" and "more than a friend" can get fuzzy. It sounds as though that is what you've been experiencing with this particular friend. Relationships are dynamic ? meaning, they change and evolve over time. How they change depends on the individuals in the relationship.

For example, your assumption is that when you say "like," you mean "like" in a romantic or physical sense, rather than a platonic sense. You mention your attraction to your friend. Have you always been attracted to him, or is this a recent development? You say that he used to like you and you used to like him ? what happened at that point? And, how did you establish that you liked each other? Did he tell you he liked you? Did you tell him you liked him? Or, did you figure out that you liked each other by way of another source, such as other friends? The only way to know for sure how he feels is to hear it from him.

Kudos to you for expressing your desire to be more than friends. You took a risk in telling your friend, and that's important because it is the only way he can know for sure how you feel and what you want. Even though your other friends tell you he likes you, he has said he wants to be your friend. That is the information you need to pay attention to. It may not be what you want to hear, and you may feel some embarrassment or awkwardness, much as the way he may be feeling, but at least you know.
It's most likely not realistic to get the friendship "back" to how it was before because you've told him you want more. However, you could work to re-establish a friendship with him, and that is potentially realistic, if you choose to take this road. It may not look exactly as it did before, but relationships evolve and change over time, remember?

As for a guarantee that you won't be rejected again, forget it. The more you are in the world, the more you will get both yes's and no's. Rejection ? similar to love, anger, tension, or attraction ? is another aspect of relationships and of life. By rejecting your request to be more than friends, your friend rejected the relationship you suggested. If he has also decided that he does not want to be friends, or if it's too hard for him or for you to manage a friendship together, then it may be time to consider moving on.

Alice!
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