Dear Alice,

My boyfriend and I have been going out for more than four years; we decided to break up at the beginning of college. He started to go out with another girl where he goes to college. He went out with her for a month and broke up with her. Two months later, we got back together again and everything was great. But then he told me that they had sex a few times and he told her he loved her. He tells me it was just a rebound relationship and that he was confused and didn't know what he was doing.

Ever since then, I've felt very insecure. I know he has not done anything wrong since we were not going out at the time, but I feel so insecure that I have to know what he is doing every single minute of the day. I get very jealous. I wish I could trust him more. He would never do anything to hurt me. He loves me so much he even wants to marry me. I wish I could put it all behind me.

What bothers me most is that they had sex and that he told her he loved her. I don't know how to forget about it and go on.

Sincerely,
Insecure

Answer

Dear Insecure,

Even though you and your boyfriend were broken up at the time that doesn’t mean his rebound relationship is something that’s easy for you to get over. You have the right to your feelings. However, if you want to move forward in your relationship, you might want to take some time to process these emotions and rebuild your confidence. This will hopefully help you heal and restore trust in your partner.

It might be good to start by expressing your emotions, whether it’s to a trusted person in your life, in a journal, or on your own, as it can be helpful to let your feelings flow. Allowing yourself to cry, laugh, curse, get angry, or all of the above may help you clarify what might be at the root of your jealousy and insecurity. If you prefer to work through your feelings with someone other than your boyfriend first, you could talk with people in your life who you trust and who support you such as
family, friends, or a mental health professional.

You might also find it helpful to practice different behaviors to build or maintain your self-confidence. Focusing on eating balanced meals, getting plenty of sleep and physical activity, and participating in activities you enjoy may help you feel more centered and happy with yourself. Those feelings may transfer over and help you feel more confident and happy with your partner and relationship.

Insecure, these situations often take time and reflection. You might reframe this as an opportunity to build a deeper connection in your relationship. You could think about these questions for yourself and discuss them with your boyfriend: What about his rebound relationship makes you feel insecure? Have you and your boyfriend worked through the reasons you broke up in the first place? Now that you’re back together, are you both getting what you need from the relationship? What can your boyfriend do, say, show you, that will help you to trust and feel comfortable, safe, and able to be vulnerable again? Thinking through these questions can be a time to think critically about yourself and your relationship. While the future is always uncertain, it’s possible to feel confident and comfortable with the present, and be at peace with the past.

Alice!

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