Dear Alice,

My friend and I went to a male strip club last Saturday. One of which caught my eye. I would have chickened out if the guy we were with hadn't gone over to him and brought him back. We talked for a while and then went back to my friend's house — I was so attracted to this guy I could have died. We started to fool around and things got heavy so he went out to the store (CONDOMS, CONDOMS, CONDOMS!!!).

He seemed very sensitive in the way he acted, letting me know that it would go only as far as I wanted it to, afterwards asking me about how I was doing, how I was feeling — he even started cooking the next morning. After breakfast, though, things got a little weird when he expressed that he wanted to see me again and I took his number, but didn't give him mine. Of course, I also told him that I'm living with a guy who I've been going out with, but that I am moving out in the next month — I felt that I'd better be honest...

How seriously should I take this guy? How much of what he told me should I believe? Do you think that this guy just has sex and moves on? I didn't initiate the subject of seeing him again, although I would totally be into that. How should I handle the subject of the guy I live with???

HELP!!

— Strip Club Junkie

Answer

Dear Strip Club Junkie,

The great news is that there are answers for all of your queries; the flip side, however, is that there's a host of possible answers. The bottom line is that the people best equipped to answer most of your questions would be you and the people you're seeing. With that in mind, there's no way to gauge how the person you've just met may respond to your shared experience or what their interest is in spending more time together — until you ask or learn more about them.

Before inquiring about their feelings and interest though, you may consider what you want out of this new spark. Do you want to get to know this new person a little more? Do you want to keep it
casual or are you hoping for a more serious connection? Where does your current roommate fit into this picture? Given how you hope to move forward (or not) with this new person, what do you want (or not want) to disclose to the person with whom you’re currently living? Taking some time to think about these questions may help you solidify some answers and potential next steps.

If you're looking to fan those embers into flames — you’ve got his number in hand, so you might consider sending out a text message or giving a call. You’ve referred to him as sensitive and responsible enough to go out to buy condoms; he also took the first step by giving you his number — all of which seems like a positive first impression. If you decide to reach out, hanging out casually and getting to know each other may help you determine how serious he is about dating, whether he’s as honest as he seems, and whether or not he’s viewed your time together as a one-time occurrence. It may also help you figure out whether your physical attraction has deeper roots. If you’re thinking about a more serious relationship, it can help determine if you two are in sync when it comes to other factors such as personal values and interests. As a side note, if you had decided (or do decide) that you’re not interested in anything more than the time you already enjoyed together — that’s okay, too.

When it comes to your roommate: it’s unclear whether your relationship is a committed one or whether you moving out is signaling the end of a relationship. Those factors may inform your decision about if and what you may share with them about this other person. You may also consider: Are you both on the same page about your current relationship status? Are you free to see other people? If you’re free to see other people and are still in a relationship, what have you agreed to communicate about being involved with other people? If you’re currently in a monogamous relationship with your roommate, what would it mean to tell them? Would the decision change if you’re ending your (romantic or sexual) relationship? If you’re feeling compelled to share and are unsure about telling him that you’re seeing other people, there’s no time like the present to consider having a conversation about the limits and boundaries you both can agree to in this last month of living in the same apartment — and potentially beyond.

In any case, the choice is yours to decide on the next steps. Every person and every relationship is different, so there isn’t one clear direction for the situation you’re in currently. Reflecting on what your needs and wants are in both relationships may be your guide — as well as taking note of what you learn if you do communicate with one or both people. If you feel as though you want more support on how to address this situation, it may be helpful to talk with a trusted friend, family member, or even mental health professional.

Good luck!

Alice!

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