Dear Alice,

My (ex?) best friend and I drifted apart a few months ago because of her new boyfriend and my busy schedule. Before, we were like sisters, but now we just ignore each other. She's recently been trying to contact me, and even though I do miss her more than anything, I haven't been answering her calls. I'm not sure if I want her back in my life. There were certain things about our friendship that didn't seem right. There were things we couldn't/wouldn't tell each other. She also liked to make me feel unimportant. I know this makes it seem like we never were true friends, but we meant everything to each other. I just don't know if I should let her back in or not? Please help?

Answer

Dear Reader,

It can certainly be difficult when a relationship fizzles out, and it’s unfortunately not uncommon. There's no question that strong friendships can provide sustenance, love, and support for many people, but negative or drama-filled relationships can have the opposite impact. Loss of a friendship may be devastating, but reflecting on what you miss about your friend, why the relationship ended, and if and how you can fix what didn’t feel right can be a helpful first move in determining whether or not to rekindle the friendship. Only you can make the decision and forge a way to move forward.

You mention that your falling out was a result of drifting apart, not feeling valued in the relationship, and not having full trust to share certain information with each other. At the same time, it sounds like you two had a deep connection, which makes this decision feel really tough. As you consider whether to let her back in your life, it might be good to think through a few factors:

- What aspects of the friendship do you miss? How did the relationship add to your life?
- How did you two connect? Was it based on shared experiences, location, hobbies, etc.?
- What led to you two drifting apart? How did you get to the point where you ignore each other?
- How can you fix the parts of the relationship that didn’t feel right? Do you think it's possible...
for those changes to occur?

- What do you envision a relationship with your friend looking like moving forward? Would maintaining a relationship with this person be good for your well-being?
- Why do you suppose your friend is trying to contact you again? Does it feel like she genuinely wants to reconnect with you or does it seem like there may be some other reason?
- Have you tried discussing your concerns with her previously? If so, did she seem open to addressing your concerns?

Reflecting on these questions may help clarify your thoughts, feelings, and expectations about rekindling a friendship with this person. It’s good to be intentional with your friendships to ensure you feel comfortable and you’re treated well. That being said, only you can decide if she (still) fits that role. If you do respond to her, it may be an opportunity to voice your concerns and discuss making changes or shifts in your dynamic or end the friendship.

If this is the first time you’ve had to engage in a difficult conversation, preparing for it ahead of time by thinking through what you want to say, how you want to say it, and the impact it could have on your friend may be a good idea. You might also use this opportunity to try and understand her perspective. To help you plan for the conversation, consider meeting with a trusted advisor, a professional, or another friend to talk about how you want to approach the conversation and develop a plan for how you’ll move forward.

Being open and honest with each other may lead to an even more rewarding relationship. It’s also possible that your friend isn’t willing to make changes to the relationship. At that point it may be worth considering letting go of this friendship in an effort to prioritize your well-being. It’s also possible that you may have outgrown the friendship, which is also normal. People can grow and develop varying interests, and they may not always align with their friends, changing the dynamic of their relationship. It’s okay if you find that this relationship has run its course.

Hopefully you now have some additional factors to consider when deciding whether to reconnect with your friend.

Good luck,

Alice!

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