



Published on *Go Ask Alice!* (<https://goaskalice.columbia.edu>)

[Home](#) > To be or not to be... single?

To be or not to be... single? ^[1]

Hi Alice,

I am a 23-year-old college student who has been in a five-year relationship. For the last year, our relationship has been long distance (three states away). We have been on a constant five-year emotional roller coaster and now I am tired of it. I deeply love this man of mine; he was my first love and I've known him for nine years. Some days I feel I want to salvage the relationship, but other days I just want to be single and enjoy life. Just recently, I have been noticing and finding myself flirting with this guy in one of my classes. I find myself daydreaming about this guy and sometimes I think I'm in love.

My situation is that I want to experience a single lifestyle, but I don't want to lose my boyfriend in the process because he might be the man I want to marry... someday... Can you give me some friendly advice about my situation?

Sincerely Single?

Answer

Dear Sincerely Single?,

Balancing a long-term relationship while living long distance can certainly bring challenges. You and your partner were young when you met, and people can change dramatically in their late teen and young adult years. It wouldn't be at all uncommon for you and your partner to have "outgrown" one another. If in your heart, you think the relationship is serving mainly as a safety net or security blanket for you, then you'd be doing yourself and your partner a disservice by prolonging the relationship. Five years is a long time to stay on an "emotional rollercoaster." If you're tired of it, it's okay to let go. On the other hand, if you do truly love him and believe he's the person you'd want to marry, you may want to speak with him to find out how you can stay together while also figuring out how to live the lifestyle you want.

If you haven't done so already, it may be helpful to think about what single life looks like to you. In what ways would your life be different? In what ways would it be the same? Are these feelings about living a single life attached specifically to your current relationship, or are you looking to be completely unattached at this point in your life? In what ways is your relationship impeding you

from enjoying life? Thinking about this may help you to envision what you would like your life to look like and whether or not it's possible to achieve this type of lifestyle and still remain attached to your boyfriend.

The next step may be to speak with your boyfriend about your concerns, if you haven't already. Taking some time to speak about how you feel about him, along with your desire to have a single lifestyle, may provide an opportunity to discuss what that could look like. It may also provide an opportunity for him to share how he feels. Does he feel that the relationship has been an emotional roller coaster and is at the point of needing to be salvaged, or does he feel that it's a strong partnership? Getting on the same page about where you stand in the relationship could be helpful. Then, you may discuss ways that you could find approaches to understanding what a single lifestyle may look like. For example, one approach could be to take a break from the relationship for a bit to see how you feel when you're actually living a single lifestyle. You could also discuss what aspects you're looking for in singlehood and see in what ways that could fit into your relationship.

During this discussion, you may find that you and your boyfriend aren't on the same wavelength when it comes to your partnership. Ultimately, you both deserve to be in loving, happy relationships. If you find that you aren't able to meet each other's needs, you may want to consider whether or not you want to continue to move forward as partners. While you may want to keep him around for a potential future, you may find that it prolongs your roller coaster and doesn't lead to the happiness or lifestyle for which you're hoping. You may find that getting some additional support or perspective from another person to be the piece of the puzzle that helps you figure out what you'd like to do next. Connecting with a trusted friend, family member, or mental health professional may help you sort out your feelings about your partner, as well as address any concerns you have about ending the relationship.

Sometimes taking space and engaging with your deep, honest, introspective thoughts can be really difficult, if not scary. And, engaging with those can help you make decisions that align with your personal values and who you want to be, which will ultimately set you up for more happiness and fulfillment in the long run. Good luck with your decision!

Alice!

Category:

[Relationships](#) ^[2]

[Relationship Stuff](#) ^[3]

[Moving On](#) ^[4]

Related questions

[We love each other, but we fight all the time](#) ^[5]

[Long distance and lacking communication](#) ^[6]

[I want a relationship with a man AND a woman](#) ^[7]

[Building self-confidence](#) ^[8]

[Off to college and losing touch with friends](#) ^[9]

Resources

[Counseling and Psychological Services \(CPS\) \(Morningside\)](#) ^[10]

[Mental Health Services \(CUIMC\)](#) ^[11]

Published date:

Apr 11, 1997

Last reviewed on:

Sep 25, 2020

Footer menu

- ▼ [Contact Alice!](#)
 - [Content Use](#)
 - [Media Inquiries](#)
 - [Comments & Corrections](#)
- ▼ [Syndication & Licensing](#)
 - [Licensing Q&As](#)
 - [Get Alice! on Your Website](#)
 - [Full Site Syndication](#)
 - [Link to Go Ask Alice!](#)

Go Ask Alice! is not an emergency or instant response service.

If you are in an urgent situation, please [visit our Emergency page](#) to view a list of 24 hour support services and hotlines.

Source URL: <https://goaskalice.columbia.edu/answered-questions/be-or-not-be-single-0>

Links

[1] <https://goaskalice.columbia.edu/answered-questions/be-or-not-be-single-0>

[2] <https://goaskalice.columbia.edu/category/relationships>

[3] <https://goaskalice.columbia.edu/category/relationship-stuff>

[4] <https://goaskalice.columbia.edu/category/moving>

[5] <https://goaskalice.columbia.edu/answered-questions/we-love-each-other-we-fight-all-time-0>

[6] <https://goaskalice.columbia.edu/answered-questions/long-distance-and-lacking-communication-0>

[7] <https://goaskalice.columbia.edu/answered-questions/i-want-relationship-man-and-woman>

[8] <https://goaskalice.columbia.edu/answered-questions/building-self-confidence-0>

[9] <https://goaskalice.columbia.edu/answered-questions/college-and-losing-touch-friends-1>

[10] <https://goaskalice.columbia.edu/resource/counseling-and-psychological-services-cps-morningside>

[11] <https://goaskalice.columbia.edu/resource/mental-health-services-cuimc>