Don't love him anymore? [1]

Dear Alice,

I'm having a problem with my boyfriend of five years. I don't think that I love him anymore!!! What should I do?

Signed,

Desperate

Answer

Dear Desperate,

While it may feel uncomfortable, unexpected, or both, falling out of love with a boyfriend of five years isn’t unusual. There could be a number of reasons for this, including simply growing apart. Exploring your feelings regarding your boyfriend and the reasons why you may have fallen out of love with him may be a helpful first start for deciding what feels right for you moving forward.

Sometimes “falling out of love” is due to withheld anger, outgrowing the other partner, changing your mind, or developing or acknowledging different priorities. Sometimes it has more to do with yourself self than it has to do with the other partner. Although it’s unclear whether you believe that falling out of love with your boyfriend is itself the “problem” or whether having problems with your boyfriend led you to fall out of love with him, you may find it useful to be a bit introspective and examine more closely what may have led you to feel (or not feel) the way that you do.

You seem conflicted about the thought of not loving your boyfriend anymore. As such, you may want to consider reflecting on the following questions: Does the fact that you may not love your boyfriend anymore bother you? How long have you felt this way? Do the two of you have mutual respect, friendship, and trust? Do you feel that your relationship is a caring one? Does your relationship enhance or diminish who you are? Do you feel that you need some time apart? Can you picture him as a life partner? What would your ideal relationship (with or without your boyfriend) look like? Thinking about these questions may help you get some clarity on what shape your relationship has taken and what you're looking for in a partner.
Have you discussed this issue with someone you trust, such as a friend, family member, or mental health professional? In any case, have you considered talking to your boyfriend about this? While it may not be a comfortable conversation to have, your boyfriend may appreciate your honesty and openness with your feelings. In addition, he may be having his own feelings about the relationship as well. Open and honest communication, in any relationship, is key to expressing wants, needs, and desires. Perhaps such a discussion could be an opportunity to communicate about relationship satisfaction and how you might improve it. Still, you may decide that taking some time apart may be beneficial for both of you or that breaking up may be the way to go.

If you would like to discuss this with a mental health professional, you can visit the Q&A How to find a therapist [2] to learn more about how to identify one that will meet your needs. You may also decide to have couples counseling if you feel the need for it. For more ideas and resources about relationships, you may want to read some of the responses in the Go Ask Alice! Relationships [3] archives. Understanding your feelings and communicating with your boyfriend are promising steps to helping you feel comfortable with any decision you make regarding your relationship. Good luck!

Alice!
Category:
- Relationships [4]
- Relationship Stuff [5]
- Moving On [6]
- Relating & Communicating [7]

Related questions

- Stay with boyfriend or move on? [8]
- To be or not to be... single? [9]
- Smarter than my boyfriend [10]

Resources

- Counseling and Psychological Services (CPS) (Morningside) [12]
- Mental Health Services (CUIMC) [13]

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[8] https://goaskalice.columbia.edu/answered-questions/stay-boyfriend-or-move-0
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