

Gay, a tease, or just unavailable? ^[1]

Dear Alice,

I'm worried about my boyfriend. A lot of people have told me that he is probably gay, because he looks good and most guys who look real good are. I didn't believe any of it at all because he doesn't act or talk gay. The ones telling me this are also guys. Could it be that they are jealous? Because I'm getting ready to believe it. I say that because every time we are alone, he knows how to get me really turned on, he gets me turned on, and then refuses to "DO" anything.

What's going on? Is he or is he not?

Answer

Dear Reader,

It can be difficult to know what and who to listen to when there are so many people giving you their advice and opinion — whether or not you ask for it! Though what people have said to you has you wondering about whether your boyfriend is truly into you, keep in mind that you two are the only people who are actually in the relationship. Being honest and straightforward with each other is essential to building and maintaining a healthy and trusting relationship. This may include asking questions and having discussions about personal topics that may be a bit uncomfortable for either of you, whether it's about his sexuality or sexual preference, your level of sexual satisfaction, or any other issues in (as well as out of) the bedroom. That said, it's also good to consider that he may not be willing or able to talk about his sexual orientation with you right now. Approaching any conversation you hope to have calmly and respectfully may help the two of you open up to each other.

There are many stereotypes of what a person who is gay "should" look or act like. However, identifying as gay, just like a straight (heterosexual) identity (or lesbian, bisexual, or queer, among others), is only a sexual preference — which may not be reliable insight into or a suitable predictor for a person's behavior, actions, or feelings. Immense diversity exists in all parts of society, and there are plenty of folks of all sexual orientations who take pride in their appearance. With that being said, it may be helpful to clarify your own concerns before you talk with your boyfriend: Do you have any reason to believe he is gay (other than your friends spreading rumors)? Do you have other issues with your relationship, such as having less physical intimacy

than you would like?

If you're nervous or scared to start the conversation with him, it may be helpful to role-play with a friend beforehand. Making a list or writing down what you want to say can also ensure that the conversation goes as smoothly as possible and that you address the issue(s) with which you're most concerned. You may also want to have a talk with your friends (or those who tell you your boyfriend is gay) to let them know that you don't appreciate, or are uncomfortable with, their comments. Your speculation that some of the guys may be jealous might be right on or perhaps they have genuine concerns and are trying to help. It's also possible that they're just enjoying giving you a difficult time. You can assert your right to explore this issue privately with your beau by let them know that commenting on your relationship isn't appropriate.

Finally, the fact that your boyfriend doesn't "do" anything after turning you on doesn't automatically mean that he's gay. Instead, he may not yet feel ready to engage in sexual activity past a certain point, or maybe he enjoys and is aroused by intimacy without sex (however the two of you define it [2]). There may be many other reasons for him to not initiate sex (if that's what you mean by doing anything), but the best way to find out why is to ask him. Being frank, open, and caring of yourself, as well as of your boyfriend, will likely get you the information you need to make the best decision for yourself and your relationship.

Best of luck to you,

Alice!

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