Telling the love of my life I need time alone [1]

Hi Alice,

The almost impossible has happened — I met the most wonderful fella ever! We have so much in common and I feel like I have met my partner for life. But my love wants to spend every weekend together, spend one night together during the week, and go out after work sometimes, too. After the first two months, all of this love and time together is getting a little stifling for me. Last weekend I lied and said I was sick so I could have some time alone. I really want this relationship to work! I don’t want hurt his feelings by saying I need a little breathing room, but I don’t want to keep making up excuses to spend some time alone. It has been a long time since I was in a relationship and I don’t want to muck this one up.

Help!!

Thankful for new found love, but needs to reclaim some solitude!

Answer

Dear Thankful for newfound love, but needs to reclaim some solitude!,

All you need is love… and some “me time.” You’re not alone in your concerns about spending lots of time with your partner, wanting space, and needing more alone time to nurture your sense of self. Every relationship has ups and downs, and you may not always be in sync with your partner. Maintaining a balance between your needs and those of your partner takes practice and is an essential component of fostering a healthy relationship. Fortunately, there are many ways for you to express your needs without hurting your partner’s feelings. The key is honest communication.

It seems as though your partner has expressed the ideal amount of time he wants to spend with you — now is the time for you to do the same. Consider the following ideas:

- **Take some "me time" to reflect.** To prepare for your discussion with your partner — ask yourself a few key questions: Ideally, how much time might you like to spend with your partner? Why does that amount of time seem appropriate? What kinds of activities do you like to do with him?
Try not to be afraid of conflict. It’s okay to disagree every now and then. Romantic partners may feel intimidated by conflict and avoid it in an effort to keep the peace. This is especially true of new or budding relationships. You have the right feel safe expressing your concerns without disappointing your partner or fearing retaliation — and so does your partner.

Communicate honestly. Some relationships suffer from insufficient, dishonest, or ineffective communication. Your desire to be truthful about your needs is crucial in the facilitation of effective communication. Be honest, but while doing so try not to use harsh language. Avoid words that may come off as judgmental or hurtful (e.g., saying he is smothering you or being clingy, etc.). Your partner isn’t a mind reader and may not pick up on subtle hints. Be clear, straightforward, concise, and try not to stray away from the topic of conversation. Use “I” rather than “you” statements to communicate your feelings without putting your partner down.

Negotiate and compromise. It’s a rare event when both or all parties involved in a relationship uniformly agree on the ideal amount of time to spend together. Consider your expectations along with your partner’s needs — your partner’s needs and desires are as valid as your own. A satisfactory compromise might consist of alternating weekends spent together in order to reconnect and spend quality time with yourself.

Reinforce your enthusiasm. Make sure to convey that even though you want some more personal space, you’re still crazy about him. To strengthen your partner’s confidence, consider sandwiching the main substance of the conversation with positive sentiments about them and the relationship.

Many relationships are stifled by stagnation. At the very least, not addressing this may lead to dissatisfaction over not getting your needs met; not voicing your needs could also lead to built-up resentment or anger towards your partner. Having these types of conversations can help set precedents for how you will communicate in the future and how you’ll resolve differences in your relationship. This type of communication is all part of a healthy relationship! It may also be helpful to discuss these concerns with a mental health professional (either on your own or with your partner). For even more information about navigating relationships, check out the Relationship Stuff [2] category of the Go Ask Alice! Relationships [3] archives.

Alice!
Category:
Relationships [4]
Relationship Stuff [5]
Relating & Communicating [6]

Related questions

Relationship, not just sex? [7]
In love, but not in lust [8]
Can't make a commitment [9]

Resources

Counseling and Psychological Services (CPS) (Morningside) [10]