

Advice for getting through a divorce

BY DEBBIE MARTINEZ



Dating has become a constant source of disappointment and hurt feelings. When I'm starting to date someone and he tells me he is going out with his friends instead of me, my feelings get hurt and I spend the whole evening thinking he doesn't want to see me anymore. By the time I finally see him again, I'm so hurt and angry and he doesn't understand why and then I clam up and that's the beginning of the end. What am I doing wrong?

Well, let's start with the fact of just because he wants to be with his friends doesn't equate to him not wanting to see you anymore or loss of interest. It simply means that he is not 20-something anymore, has had years to cultivate friendships and wants to keep them. When you're 40 or 50, hopefully you are in a mature relationship, which means you both have lives independent of each other and then have a life together.

The other thing that could be swirling about here is your past experiences. When you're in an inti-

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mate relationship with a man, be prepared for every emotion from past relationships — whether with an ex, uncle, father or brother — will be lying in wait, ready to resurface. When you are feeling something, take some time to ask yourself where this feeling is really coming from. Is it present oriented or a ghost of relationships past? What you're doing wrong is creating a story that doesn't exist and, of course, the poor guy is confused.

Take a deep breath and stick to the facts until otherwise proven wrong. Something that I suggest to my clients is when they are having these irrational stories run through their head, do some stream of consciousness writing. Sit with three sheets of notebook paper and just start writing about how you are feeling about a certain situation. This is not journaling, as you write what comes to mind without editing or stopping to think about what you are writing. Usually at the end, you have some

release or clarity.

A point I would like to make is that men like women who have their own life and are not dependent on the man as their lifeline. Be your own person with your own life and you will be happier and more fulfilled, and men will find you interesting instead of clingy. Your life should include him, but not be him. You give and do because you want to and not because you're keeping score. You are not afraid to be you because you think he'll leave and you are able to have mature emotions, as opposed to teenager emotions.

Note to Self:

I stand strong in *who* I am and have confidence in myself.

Debbie's Library:

Men Like Women Who Like Themselves

by Carter and Sokol

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