

Dating Advice: What To Do When Your Relationship Gets Real



By Tracy McMillan

It says something about how intoxicating brand new love can be that while you're in it, you truly don't believe it's ever going to end. The butterflies, the long talks, the gazing into each other's eyes, and even (admit it) the sexting. There's nothing better! But sooner or later it happens – you get into an argument, you stop automatically clicking over when he calls, you choose drinks with your girls over dinner with your man. Your relationship is shifting gears. So what are some dating tips on how to make the transition from *Dangerously In Love* to *Irreplaceable*?

Check out this relationship expert's best [dating and relationship advice](#) on what to do when your relationship gets “real”:

1. Don't Freak Out. The first thing you need to know is: THIS IS NORMAL. It's easy to think that the first time you're not dying to jump into bed (or worse, he isn't) that the relationship is over. It's not.

2. Separation Is Necessary. Relationships follow a path that is sort of like child development. First, there's infancy, where forming a bond means you're all about 24/7 togetherness. But after infancy comes toddlerhood, where you learn that you and your partner are actually separate people. And learning to be separate is just as important as learning to be together.

Related Link: [Why Time Away Is Important in a Relationship](#)

3. Take Leaving Off The Table. There comes a point in every relationship where you have to decide if you're in or out. Contrary to romantic comedies, this isn't a magical turning point on a moonlit night. It's a decision you make to commit to a partner (who is totally imperfect, btw) because you've decided that a long-term or lifetime partnership is what you want for your life. Then you carry out that commitment day by day.

4. Go To Couples' Therapy. Every relationship has issues – every single one! It's part of the purpose of a relationship to heal old unresolved stuff from childhood. This is why, in my opinion, going to therapy should be like going to the gym. It's something you do once a week not because there's something wrong, but because you want to build on what's right. And that is all about skillfully handling the emotional

challenges that are part of being close to another human being.

Related Link: [Couples Therapy: A Way to Rebuild a Struggling Relationship](#)

5. Love yourself more. Your negative qualities are unlikely to show up in the beginning stages of the relationship. But once things cool down, it's like the tide going out – you're suddenly going to see all the less-awesome aspects of the real you (and the real him, too). Loving yourself is all about being kind, compassionate, and patient – *with you* – even when you blow it at work and nothing fits but your fat jeans. Learning to love you no matter what is the single most important thing you can do for your partner. Because in the end, the only relationship you'll ever have with another person is the one you're already having with yourself.

Tracy McMillan is an author of the book [Multiple Listings](#), which addresses conflicts in both family and romantic relationships. Connect with Tracy on Twitter at [@TracyMcMillan](#) and on her [website](#).