

Going from 'It's Complicated' to Monogamy: 5 Tips Every Woman Should Know



By Melissa Caballero

The status of our relationships in this modern day dating world have become much more complex than they used to be. Many couples go through multiple stages until they're officially declared an item. From 'single' to 'it's complicated' to 'in a relationship,' the situation can get blurry. Although the beginning of a relationship can be exciting, it doesn't always end that way. Some people date for several months without a label, and then the painstaking question "Are we exclusive?" is asked and the relationship abruptly ends with no warning. It may not make sense, or seem even fair that one question can stir so much confusion or controversy. So, many women have learned to keep mum and stay in the 'it's complicated' stage instead of turning their status back to single. But, instead of going backwards how do we proceed forwards to the comfort zone of monogamy? We spoke to psychologist, professor, relationship expert and author, Dr. Karin Anderson and she offered five ways woman can navigate through:

1. **Play it cool.** Of course you're going nuts with the nebulous nature of your relationship and of course you're looking for a more definitive understanding as to what sort of connection you and your "friend with benefits/booty call/boyfriend(?)" actually have. But the #1 way to keep things complicated is to push the issue by having one of those, "I really need to know where this relationship is headed" conversations. Play it cool. Psychologists who study couples speak of *The Law of Least Interest*—whoever is least

interested in maintaining the relationship holds the *most* power. Every time *you* bring up an issue, you lose power. And until your relationship has more concrete structure, you don't want to lose any power.

2. **Was it ever *not* complicated?** A good question to ask yourself is, "Was this *relationship* ever not complicated?"

Meaning—did you ever know where you stood with your man? If not, you probably have more information than you realize. This may be hard to hear, but if this guy has known you for some time, has enjoyed having sex with you regularly, has never wanted to legitimately establish himself as your partner, then it's likely he's *never* going to go in that direction.

3. **Make him want to commit.** Naturally, we can't *make* anyone want to do anything, but we can certainly sweeten the pot.

For example, when you're together, demonstrate your affection in ways men respond to (e.g, a fridge stocked with his favorite beer, a TV tuned to his NFL and college teams' games). When you're away from each other, resist the temptation to be too available (i.e, absolutely **no booty calls**). You want him to recognize how great you and he are together, but those benefits can't be his 24/7 until you guys are an official couple. It'll keep him wanting you.

4. **You may need to pull all the way back.** If the above suggestions aren't working, you may need to create some space. Skip the drama of an ultimatum (remember, most guys think women are a little crazy because our emotions tend to run more intensely than theirs); let your behavior get your point across. If he reaches out with, "What's up with you? Where have you been?" you can reply, "I've been super busy with work and friends and I have to get my priorities straight. As much as I love hanging out with you, I need to focus my energy on aspects of my life that are more clearly defined." Leave it at that. Again, **no drama!** Just state the facts and see what he does with them.

5. Be honest with yourself. Is this *really* what you want? Ultimately, there's no magic formula for moving from 'it's complicated' to monogamy. But more importantly you need to ask yourself why you want this person. Hasn't it been a drag walking on egg shells, trying not to scare him off with your desire for a *real* relationship? Don't you hate the insecurity that comes with not knowing your place in his life? The reality is, most guys go for what they want—chalk it up to their DNA or the thrill of the chase or whatever, but most men will claim you if they want you. What does it say when we want a man who doesn't want us?

If none of the above works, maybe the best answer for moving forward is to let the whole thing go and find someone who's interested in the same sort of relationship that you are.