

If You Want Him to Stay, Leave

I am going to tell you something I typically only share with very close friends, or girls who are crying in the public restroom. This is something I know I may take some hits for, but I hope you will hear me because I ain't wrong:

If you want him to stay, you may have to leave.

First let me throw a few credentials at you before you hit the X. I teach communications, and have been studying theories on gender and communications for the better part of 12 years. Relationships are exhausting. They are time consuming and they can be excruciating. But there are a few basic principles you can always apply. The first of which is this: *if he isn't staying faithful to you, or marrying you, or giving your relationship the priority you think it deserves: leave.*

Reasons to Leave

This is something women do wrong all the time. Trust me, I read your Facebook posts while tearing my Nordstrom's Rack clearance dress in agony. Your post detail at least one of these scenarios: either he doesn't come home when he says he will, or, he has convinced you that you are being controlling because you would like a marriage to go with your mortgage and 4 children together. Or worse yet, maybe he cheated on you and swore he wouldn't do it again, but he did! And this time you are really going to teach him a lesson.

The list goes on and on. And I want you to know that my heart breaks with you. I am a woman. And not the type who likes to "hang with the boys" either. I like to do girl things with my girlfriends in our overpriced leggings. I understand how hard it is in these streets! My advice: put down your caramel macchiato and repeat after me, "I HAVE TO LEAVE."

Equity Theory and Power in Relationships

See the truth of the matter is, relationships are as much about power, as they are about love. Want to know what makes people feel attracted to one another? Power. Human beings are always attracted to power, and the more power I perceive you to have, the more attractive you become. We all watched this play out on abc's hit TV show Scandal. Olivia Pope played by Kerry Washington and President Fitzgerald Grant played by Tony Goldwyn are the perfect example of a couple with an overwhelming attraction to the perceived power of the other.

Joseph DeVito explains this idea in *The Interpersonal Communication Book* where he describes how Equity theory says that relationships are most profitable when there is an equal power dynamic between partners. If we were truly honest with ourselves, too many of us are giving one person all the power in the relationship. It's no wonder we aren't treated as a priority to that individual! No one can walk over you if you don't lay down first. If he cheats and you stay, and he cheats, and you stay, and he cheats some more, and you are angry and sad, but you still stay, what do you think you

are telling him about your share of power in the relationship? You may as well tattoo his name on your forehead because he owns you. Not only are you hurting yourself, but you are only making yourself less and less attractive to him in the meantime.

Breaks and Boundaries

Every human being in a committed relationship should have a line that their partner knows cannot be crossed. When we set up boundaries and people know we aren't bluffing they are far more likely to keep themselves in check. If someone crosses the line they made the decision for you. They crossed the line they knew would bring destruction. You are leaving because they didn't give you any other choice.

By the way, in order to leave you have to be absent. You can't break up, but then keep seeing him, texting him, and answering his phone calls. My darling, how can someone miss you if you aren't ever gone? You have to go on relationship blackout. Don't answer his texts, don't respond to his phone calls, and if a carrier pigeon shows up at your doorstep call animal control. If there is one thing men biologically and instinctively know how to do, it is to get something that they want. If he wants you, he WILL go and get you. You don't need to leave bread crumbs because you are worried he will get lost. If you are the woman of his dreams, do you really think he is going to let you go because you didn't answer his text? And if you aren't the woman of his dreams, why are you settling? In fact, some statistics suggest that you are a match for one out of every seven people. Sure, there may be six bad dates to follow. But the man who would NEVER risk losing you, who will always come after you, is right around the corner.

Say "No" to Social Media

Now, the most important thing to breaking up and setting boundaries is learning how to stay quiet on social media. Stop posting about him and the break up, or what the last thing he said to you was. Stop saying how much better off you are, or posting selfies with song lyrics the two of you used to dance too. I forbid you to like his pictures or send that snap. Remember, sometimes leaving is the only thing you can do to save the relationship. But if you do it wrong don't come to me with your clap back tweet.

Trust me. He will PANIC if one minute the person who he shared all his deepest thoughts and dreams with is there, and then she is gone. Even if he was happy with the breakup at first, your silence will cause him to tailspin. He will question everything. The powerless girl he thought he was leaving, will become a goddess he can't live without. He will start to worry that perhaps you have actually left, and may stay gone. It may take a few months, but if you go radio silent, he WILL show up at your door. And then my dear, it's your move.

In the meantime, take some time to fix what is broken. What is causing you to need someone else so badly that you will take them even if it is just in pieces? You are worthy of attention, love, and belonging. And during this time apart you may discover that for yourself.

But first, you have to leave.