

6 STEPS BEFORE GETTING INVOLVED IN A RELATIONSHIP

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1

If you aren't "fixed" yet, don't get in a relationship with someone.

Now, I don't mean neutered or spayed - though I think you can agree that wouldn't be a bad thing for some people.

What I mean is: taking care of all that crap you haven't dealt with regarding your parents, your exes, your self that exists as an ongoing negative influence in your life and relationships.

Your *self*.

In the end it's all about what *you* personally carry around with you for reasons that have nothing to do with your having a free and happy life.

Your parents did what they did with the knowledge they had at the time.

Parents are human individuals. They have failings and come into relationships broken, unfixed, uneducated, and, at times—in a rush.

More than one pairing happened because of peer pressure, because of lack of understanding of themselves and what kind of person would actually be good *for* them—meaning a person who brings out the best in them, challenges them positively, and supports their practical dreams.

2

Let them grow or let them go.

Don't let your own insecurities prevent your partner from expressing him or herself in whatever they love, do well, or wish to learn.

A seed will find its way to the sun through even the smallest cracks in concrete.

If you try to inhibit an individual's growth, you will be seen as an impediment. This isn't always on a conscious level, but it always happens.

Resentment builds with every roadblock. With enough resentment, the growth of your relationship cracks, withers and dies.

Compromise staves off—temporarily—the inevitable.

Your insecurities bind other people to your insecurities. They become a self-fulfilling prophecy by your constantly feeding into them—and then expecting everyone else to fulfill them in one way or another.

Eventually, most everyone will.

If you are constantly afraid people will leave you for another person, you continually—subtly or in gross manner—will express a lack of trust and respect toward your intended.

One of the major reasons people leave others is because of lack of trust and/or continual disrespect.

Not taking someone at their word is disrespectful to them. If you clearly don't trust them, for goodness sake—don't get into a relationship with them.

If you don't trust anyone, then you have a problem if you wish to have a lasting relationship with someone in this life.

You are doing a disservice to humankind and yourself by continually exercising your fears.

Insecurity knows no freedom or growth.

If you cannot understand, work through, and release your insecurities, you will continually be at their mercy. You will continually have difficulty relating to—and having relationships with—individuals who wish to be themselves in this life.

Remember, this is their life, too. They have a right to live freely, be happy, and grow into their best selves. You are either a positive or negative to their experience, as they are to you.

3

Respect, respect, respect your partner.

Read that again.
And again. Seriously.

If you don't respect your partner, you are in the wrong relationship—or you are wrong for him or her.

Yes, it is quite possible you are wrong for an individual, because you may not pay attention to—or understand—what makes a person worthy.

What makes him or her unique.

Do you wish to live your life trying to change someone, or do you wish to live your life by living it?

At this point there are around 7 billion people on the planet. That means the odds are high of you finding someone where mutual respect flourishes.

Just so you know, you aren't required to be in a relationship with anyone in this life.

Let that sink in a bit.

It's perfectly okay to live a worthy life without having a sexual or social partner. I have known quite a few older people who would rather have lived their lives alone than to live it with the person they were bound to because of social norms at the time.

Don't waste your life and another individual's life by trying to shape them to your ideal. Either they exhibit your ideals or they don't. Your energy and resources are best reserved for expressing who you are.

Trying to change someone to suit your needs, your desires, your insecurities is disrespectful. It will eventually generate resentment.

Resentment does not engender respect.

4

Drop the expectations - except for respect.

Expectations assume a preconceived notion. A set of defining structures to which someone must conform.

You must watch out for setting up unrealistic expectations or those which do not recognize and allow for another person's (or your own) freedom and growth.

If your expectations stem from your insecurities, read #2 again.

5

Set your boundaries.

Boundaries allow for enforcing the sovereignty of your person.

Setting proper boundaries requires you to be aware of those things that make you unique, encourage your growth and freedom of expression.

With this awareness, it will be easier to recognize when others try to step over your boundaries in an effort to impress their will, personality or ignorance.

You must recognize when to say stop and then practice saying it to maintain your sense of self and autonomy in this life.

Saying stop can be metaphorical—as in cleverly or forcefully directing a conversation away from where a probing person is stepping—to using the actual word "stop" or even saying the other boundary word "no."

It's perfectly okay to say "no" to someone who says, "You've just got to try this drink/food/religion/etc."

The benefit of being an individual is that you have your own specific likes and dislikes and way of moving through this life. Just because someone is forceful of their own opinion toward you does not mean you are obligated to try out their opinion on your person.

Some people take it as a rejection, others as a loss of control.

That's for them to work out.

Be yourself. Set your boundaries. You'll be happier, and people will know where they stand with you.

Wanting to be loved in exchange for the freedom of being yourself is a regrettable experience and diminishes your individual light in this world.

6

Respect yourself.

Part of respecting yourself is enforcing your boundaries, see number #5.

It is also about recognizing that you have a right to your thoughts, feelings, and creative expression. You have a right to your life.

Your life.

You cannot go into a relationship disrespecting yourself and then expect other people not to disrespect you.

Other people in this life take their cues from you about how they should treat you.

If you abuse yourself internally (constant negative criticism, internal dialog that is insulting or degrading, etc.), it will play out in how you present yourself to other people, subtly or obviously. People will then either avoid you, abuse you, or take advantage of you for their own purposes.

There will be people who will try to help fix you, but if you do not change internally, they will eventually see their efforts in vain and avoid you as the worthless money-pit you may represent.

Working to fix yourself is of great value to everyone and demonstrates great respect for yourself.

This will play out in how others see you and interact with you. It will attract different people into your life.

Part of respecting yourself is by recognizing those things that separate you as an individual. As a creating, unique person with your own path.

If you don't know this person, then spend your valuable time discovering yourself.

Then, walk your path.

Your path.

The dustbin of life is littered with individuals who played out the expectations of others.

A life of compromise is not fully lived.