

Features

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 30, 2003



The Kozouz sisters answer your relationship questions every Tuesday in *The Detroit News*. Send your questions to Lowdown@detnews.com or write to *Motown Lowdown* c/o *The Detroit News*, 615 W. Lafayette Blvd., Detroit, MI 48226.

Whenever she gets too close, her boyfriend runs and hides

When things get too close, too intimate or too stressful with my boyfriend of four years, he retreats, i.e. disappears, won't call for a few days and won't talk about what's wrong or what's going on. I never push him to talk about why he's like that, for fear he'll retreat further. Do I constantly accept this intermittent behavior in an otherwise fine relationship or do I turn and run? Do all men lack communication skills and crawl into their caves or just my boyfriend?

— Rejected in Rochester

Dear Rejected:

Your boyfriend sounds like a selfish jerk, and you sound like a spineless wimp. It seems as though you and your boyfriend not only lack communication skills, but a true sense of what constitutes a healthy relationship. Until you start talking to each other, this relationship is going nowhere. So next time Houdini pulls another one of his disappearing acts, do some communicating yourself and tell him you'll vanish just as quickly unless he starts talking.

— Reham

Are you freaking out over nothing here? Often when people push too much or become too clingy, others will pull away; I call it the rubber-band effect. Are you smothering him and he just needs some alone time? Perhaps he's a bit too nice to tell you he needs his space or does not know how to effectively communicate his needs? If the relationship is fine, you are happy and he takes some time once in a while for himself, I would not overreact.

— Rana

What is it that makes you stay in this relationship if your needs are not being met? There are many people who stay in bad relationships for fear of being alone. Take some time for yourself to establish exactly what you want from your partner and what things you are not willing to give up. Maybe then you will find the clarity you need to take the necessary steps in either direction.

— Ruba

This relationship is not fine. He disappears for a few days and won't talk to you when things get too intimate. Hello?? It is ridiculous that you could carry on for four years and call this an otherwise healthy relationship. Unless you are OK with his MIA routine when you're walking down that aisle, I suggest you jump ship and find someone who does want to be intimate with you.

— Leena

New Year's Eve with the Kozouzes

Looking for a hip way to bring in the New Year? Ring in 2004 at the Roostertail with *The Detroit News'* Motown Lowdown.

The event, co-sponsored by *The News*, will begin at 8 p.m. Dec. 31 and will feature a Garden of Eden theme, complete with DJ, hors d'oeuvres, a champagne split and party favors. Hosts are events producer/restaurateur Khalil Rhamadan and Roostertail vice president John Schoenith. Dressy attire is a must.

The Roostertail is at 100 Marquette Drive in Detroit. Tickets are \$50 per person in advance. A portion of the proceeds will benefit Newspapers in Education. Call (313) 729-4929.

My dad has been a widow for almost one year, for the second time. I can tell he is pretty lonely, but I am so afraid for him to be in a situation again where he might suffer another loss. Any suggestions on what I can do for him?

— Troubled in Troy

Dear Troubled:

Let him be lonely if that's what he wants. It's better than the rejection that comes along with dating. He's too vulnerable right now. It's only been a year since his second such loss. You're best off steering him away from starting any romantic relationships right now.

— Leena

Know that there are five stages of grief. The natural progression of someone who suffers a loss is denial, anger, bargaining, depression and, finally, acceptance. Identify where your father is currently. It may help you to better cope with his loneliness.

— Ruba

My girlfriend once said that she'd rather be heartbroken, miserable and doing the shower cry than bored and ambivalent with no love interest. Life is about passion and love. Stop being so overprotective and cautious and trust that if he falls again, he will get back up.

— Rana

They say time heals all wounds and I can think of no better way to pass that time than to jam-pack his days with fun, fun, fun! He may be just going through the motions and not in the mood, but a little persuasion on your part to fill his schedule with new and interesting activities may be just what he needs. You can't predict, nor control, what's in store for him in terms of love and loss, so put away your crystal ball and let him make the call.

— Reham