



WILL MY BISEXUAL BOYFRIEND DUMP ME FOR A WOMAN?

▶ DEAR JOE ▶

I met my boyfriend about eight months ago and things have been going amazingly ever since. He told me he was bisexual the night we met and it didn't faze me at all, but now I've fallen completely in love with him and I'm worried about the future. He's dated guys before but his only serious relationship was with a woman, who he was with for nearly four years. I've never

been the insecure type but the longer we're together the more I'm getting paranoid about his attraction to women because I can't compete with it. He says he loves me but we're both in our late 20s and I'm worried that as we get older he might want to settle down with a woman. Am I going to get hurt if I stay with him?

LUCAS, HASTINGS ▶

HI LUCAS,

There is a myth that bisexuals can't be monogamous. People think that bisexuals can't make up their minds and can't commit because they will always be longing for what they don't have – the other gender. The truth is that we all struggle to some degree after a while in a relationship choosing monogamy. We start to have interest in what it would be like sexually and/or romantically with another person. And yet most of us can choose our commitment and not stray. This is no different for bisexuals.

Many believe that you are “bi now, gay later”. In other words, bisexuality is a stage and transition toward coming out as gay. This is scary to a straight man or woman involved with a bisexual who believe their partner will eventually come out and leave them. This is unfair and untrue and makes it seem like bisexuality isn't a true sexual orientation. Bisexuality is real and legitimate.

Bisexuality is also very complicated, because there are so many shades of bisexuality. It is almost impossible to get universal agreement, even among bisexuals, on what a bisexual is and isn't. Some people still argue that there are no bisexuals. Others insist that everybody is bisexual. Some people call themselves bisexual; others have sex with both genders but don't claim the label. Advocates of “sexual fluidity” claim that labels like “bisexual” (and “gay” and “straight”) may not always be useful or meaningful.

A bisexual guy might not need to have relations with both genders for his whole life. I've treated other bisexuals who've explored both sides of their sexuality before they got married and that was enough: “Yep. I'm bisexual. Those were great times. Loved it. I don't need to do it anymore.” Other bisexuals find they want to have relations with both genders all their lives.

Some bisexuals are more ‘heteroflexible’. Wikipedia defines heteroflexible as “a form of situational sexual behaviour characterised by minimal homosexual activity, despite a primarily heterosexual sexual orientation that distinguish[es] it from bisexuality.”

It is an appropriate label for many straight men who occasionally have sex with other men given the circumstance, and isn't necessarily based on any attraction toward men as a whole. Significantly, the word itself brings out strong reactions from many people – men and women,

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young and old, gay, straight and bisexual. But the worst reactions typically come from males (both gay and straight), who may become emotionally charged and sometimes even enraged at the thought of a gay or straight man identifying himself as sexually flexible.

Such definitions can drive people crazy. When someone can be fitted inside an either/or category, everyone breathes a sigh of relief. OK, you can be gay or straight, but if you are a real man, you can't be anywhere in between. We are too attached to a system of sexual identity labels that are being shown to be increasingly outdated.

A period of exploration for gay men before they settle down; the ‘gay adolescence’, is well recognised. Less discussed is this ‘bisexual adolescence’, but the same developmental process seems to operate.

The first step in establishing a serious relationship with a man who believes (or is discovering) that he is bisexual is to discuss what he means by the term. Then, the couple can move on to a mutual understanding of what rules the relationship will operate under. The myth is that bisexuals cannot be faithfully monogamous because of their strong draw to both men and women, but individuals differ. If you're wanting a relationship with a bisexual man then you should discuss frankly what you're expecting and listen to what he's expecting. Although a bisexual man has a “straight side” that needs to be acknowledged, sometimes mere “acknowledgement” is all that he needs.

You should ask your boyfriend if he feels he has got his bisexual adolescence out of his system. Did he have the experiences he wanted to have? Does he worry if he will long for a woman eventually? Even if his answers assure you that he won't stray that doesn't mean he won't. None of us know if our partners will cheat in the future any more than we can predict that we won't. No one gets relieved of this anxiety. The issue for partners of bisexuals is that their reason for possibly straying is known up front in the beginning.

One type of bisexual partner who has come to me for counselling quite a bit is what I call ‘hetero-emotional homosexual’. Basically, this is a man very committed to his woman but who feels drawn to have sexual relations with men on the side. It never turns emotional with the men and remains strictly sexual.

You need to know what type of bisexual your boyfriend is. If he doesn't know he needs to figure it out to the best of his ability. Even when he does know there is a possibility things will change as he gets older as they do for all of us. Our sexuality is constantly evolving and changing, as it should be.

You might find that you go through changes yourself. You need to ask yourself if you are in love enough with him to be alright with an open relationship later on if things change for him. Our culture has an allergic reaction to open relationships as if there is something inherently wrong with them but this is not necessarily true at all. You might not be open to it now but that could change in the future.

The bottom line is, you are walking into a relationship with a known dynamic which could be a problem. I say take the plunge if you love him. It will be worth it no matter what the outcome.

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