

Dating's emotional roller coaster

Your experience dating your current guy swings from elation to disappointment, glee to frustration, fun to hassle. But the good far outweighs the bad, so you stick with it. When it's great, it's really great.

It would be easy to complain about — and to — him. But you have to realize you voluntarily climbed into the front car of this emotional roller coaster. When you look forward to seeing him, you are on the up-hill, raising your hands high in anticipation of a great, adrenaline-filled time with him. If it turns out to be a dud or a difficult time, you are disappointed.

Are you a drama queen? No. Is he a drama king? No. But still there are emotional ups and downs which some find common with new relationships, when you're getting to know each other, having unexpressed — and therefore often unmet — expectations.

In “What's your date's Delight/Disappointment Scale score?” (in the *Real Deal or Faux Beau: Should*

You Keep Seeing Him? book) I suggest you track this relationship's emotional roller coaster route. If there are dramatic highs offset by too many pronounced lows, you are setting yourself up for a world of hurt. Any relationship will have ups and downs. But you want most of your relationship experiences on the upside, and the downs not to repeatedly make your stomach drop.

Should you get off this roller coaster? If after a few weeks things haven't calmed down, then yes. In fact, some people say that any time your emotions go into the Dungeon of Disappointment, you should not overlook the danger signs and sirens sounding. Others believe that you should expect some downs, as no person or relationship is perfect.

But of course, many of us tend to live our dating lives in the Fun House, seeing distorted images of reality. We look in the curved mirror of infatuation and his heart looks unusually big, so that's the image we hold. Even when we step out into the sunlit midway and look at him again, we don't notice that the humongous heart we saw as so large and open is really just normal size. Then we become disappointed when this perceived romantic giant is really a regular guy.

Have you experienced a dating emotional roller coaster? How long did you stay on it? Did you enjoy the ride or hate it? What happened that made you get off?

*When your guy vexes
you, ask what your
highest self would do*

When the guy you're dating does something that really torques your jaw, something you consider incredibly rude, self-centered, or insensitive, it's easy to get in his face about it. But if most of the time he's a thoughtful, polite, sharing, caring, conscious guy, this inconsiderate behavior is an anomaly.

So how do you approach the situation with love and maturity, yet let your feelings be known? This concept is not easy to apply when you are in the heat of anger, but when you do the outcome is amazing.

Ask yourself, "What would I do if I were coming from my highest self?"

What do I mean by that? What would you do if you were happy, secure, confident, fulfilled, and at peace with yourself? If you didn't take anything personally,



and someone's behavior didn't mean anything about you?

Let's take a dating example. The guy you're dating is commonly late. You've had it. You're ready to lay into him when his sorry self does show up. You get yourself into a rage thinking how disrespectful he is of your time, what a flake he is, why can't he get his life in order, what possibly could take priority over being on time to be with you, and how clearly this shows he's not that into you?

Take a deep breath.

How would you react if you were able to give him some grace? You know he's a kind, considerate, thoughtful guy, and he has an Achilles heel where he tries to do one more thing before leaving, so is often late. When you've talked to him about this, he knows it is a problem and promises to do better, which he has, but he's obviously not cured.

Your highest self forgives him in advance, and you busy yourself with other things until he arrives. When he does, you matter-of-factly ask if he is alright, as he's a bit later than he said he'd be. He apologizes and says he knows he has a problem with tardiness, and he is working on changing this habit and he



appreciates your patience. You tell him you appreciate his efforts on this because it is bothersome to you when you repeatedly have to wait for him, and you've seen that he's a tad less late than he used to be. You ask him to call you if he realizes he will be late so you can do something else with your waiting time. He agrees, and promises to work hard on changing this behavior.

You feel good about how you handled this because it is in alignment with the self-image you have that you are a kind, understanding, compassionate, patient, calm person.

I practiced this concept of “coming from my highest self” when going through my divorce. My ex was behaving in a way I'd not known him to be in our 20-year relationship. He was making unreasonable demands and insisting on things I didn't think made sense. At first, I got angry, and our mediations deteriorated into shouting matches.

I didn't like how the mediations were turning out. Little got accomplished and I always ended up in tears. I felt disempowered and unable to deal with a man I'd loved for 20 years who was now radically different. I walked out of the sessions with more hurt and anger than when I arrived.

So I tried preparing myself by saying, “I'm going to work at coming from my highest self.” When he made an unreasonable demand, instead of getting angry, I began asking him probing questions, “Help me understand why that is important to you?” “You say you want

one of our two matched couches. Is it just a couch you want, or do you specifically want that couch?” “If we were to agree on X instead of Y, would that satisfy your need?”


By being more forgiving and calm, I was able to negotiate for what was truly important to me and let go of what wasn't. In fact, I saw it as a gift when he demanded things that I didn't want in my life anymore.

Please don't misunderstand this point — I'm not saying you should put up with abusive, dysfunctional or toxic behavior thinking that is coming from your highest self. Your highest self means you are taking care of you in all ways.

*Complain about what
you don't have or enjoy
_____ what you have*

A guy I'd been dating persistently tried to pressure me to go sexually further than I was comfortable. I continued saying "no" and reminded him that he had agreed to my boundaries. He kept commenting on what he'd like to be doing with me. I finally got tired of his trying to persuade me, so said, "You can enjoy what you have or you can complain about what you don't have." I told him we would cease what we were doing if he didn't stop trying to pressure me to go further.

As I later began to date others, I realized I needed to take the phrase to heart myself. When I



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find myself complaining about some new love interest not calling as frequently as I'd like, I realize I should just enjoy when we do talk and get together. If I'm not happy that my guy doesn't like to do all the activities I like, I remind myself that I can't expect a mirror-image sweetheart, and I focus on the fun things we both enjoy.

So when you hear yourself complaining about what he doesn't do or say, see if you can turn it around to focus on what he does or says that lights up your heart. Both of you will be so much happier.



The first fight

New relationships frequently end over a first fight. Sometimes there isn't even an actual fight, but one of you says/does/doesn't do something that upsets the other and it's over — without a word ever being said about it.

So a first fight is important. Not that I'm encouraging you to pick one, but when it happens, look at it as part of the relationship-building process. Of course, you may go for years without having a fight, and I'm not sure if that is good or bad.

Even great relationships involve differences of opinion. Both parties have to be willing to voice their opinions, even if their voices may become agitated in the process. My ex and I rarely fought in 20 years together. I saw this as a sign that we could communicate our differences without getting upset. Only in the divorce mediation did I learn there were lots of things he was upset about but never voiced. So he became passive-aggressive instead. I interpreted his behavior as forgetfulness or moodiness, never identifying it accurately. It would have been better if we'd fought, as the issues would have then been out in the open.

The important parts of a fight to pay attention to are:

Before:

♥ **What triggered it** — Of course you can point to exactly the thing you/he said/didn't say/did/didn't do. But that is rarely the true cause. This action/inaction is usually a trigger from something from the past. The quicker you realize that and stop acting like it is the current event, the wiser you'll be. And the less prone you'll be to reacting to an ancient trigger. If your ex was always late and didn't apologize then you're going to be more upset with your current beau's tardiness, even if he does apologize.

During:

♥ **What was said** — Was there blaming, name calling, cursing, condescension? Was the anger overblown for the situation? If he calls you despicable names, you know that is a sign of deep anger issues you don't want to be around. Within the first 10 days of dating, the crazy psychiatrist and I had a disagreement and he called me the "b" and the "c" words. I should have ended it then but didn't, and I endured more of his immaturity and unbalancedness until finally we had a fight and I never heard from him again.

♥ **What wasn't said** — No sharing of emotion, no sharing at all — just silence. If he won't talk about how he feels about what happened ("I felt disrespected") and focuses only on the action,