



## **How Not to Lose Yourself in Your Relationship**

Ask yourself if you like this person, not if he/she likes you. It is more important that you like him/her and if you keep the focus on that question, you will be less likely to mold yourself into who you think this person wants you to be.

If you have a pattern of being codependent, then get help to work on the codependency. Join a Twelve Step group, get into therapy, read books, get an accountability partner and journal. Do whatever it takes to get over your tendency to become too dependent. And, start this now. Don't wait until you are doing it.

Keep up with your routine: go to the gym, church, meetings, charity events, etc. Don't drop everything for this person.

Make yourself keep up with your friends and other interests, even when you would rather be with him/her. Ask your friends to hold you accountable to keep your promise to continue with your relationships with them. Ask them to call you and set up guys'/girls' nights out regularly and not take no for an answer.

Maintain your relationship with your family. Bring this person with you some of the time, but not all of the time. Ask them to tell you, if you are neglecting them.

Agree to have certain days and nights apart. This makes the person want to be with you even more. Save those days for you and let him/her have them too. It will make your relationship healthier and make the times you are together even more special.

When you are independent and self-fulfilled with a life of your own, other people find you more attractive. So maintain your independence and continue to do the things that keep you fulfilled.

Don't be too available in the beginning of the relationship. If your goal is to win this person, then play the game. Don't text all the time. Don't call more than this person calls you. Don't check in too frequently. Don't always tell what you are doing. Let the other person call you and text you and then wait to respond, instead of answering right away. Make the person wonder what you are doing and where you are.

Don't have sex too early, as it will make you feel emotionally connected at a level that the relationship may not have gotten to. Sex feels like emotional intimacy (especially to women), but it isn't the same as real intimacy that results from really getting to know each other.

Write out a description of who you are including your personality, your interests, your passions, your preferences, your values, and your beliefs. Imagine a relationship with someone who embraces the whole you and how happy you are.

Deal with your fears. One of the driving forces behind losing yourself in a relationship is fear—fear of being alone, fear of losing your partner, fear of your partner cheating, fear of never finding “the one,” fear of being known, and fear of being rejected.

Know yourself. What do you need, want, like, enjoy, believe, and value? Make sure you get those needs and wants met. Make sure the relationship includes doing some things you like to do and enjoy. Confidently express your beliefs, values, and opinions. Don't let the relationship be all about this person and what he/she needs, wants, likes, enjoys, believes, thinks and values.

Take this person out on dates where you bring him/her into YOUR WORLD. You plan it and don't worry about whether or not he/she likes it. Use it as a way to show who you are.

Ask your friends and family what they think about whether or not you are out of balance in this relationship. Are you neglecting them? Are you keeping up with the things they know are important to you? And most importantly, do they notice any changes in you? Be open to their observations and make changes, if needed.

Make a list of the things you do in relationships that signal you are not being true to yourself. Do you give in rather than stand up for what you want and need? Do you pretend to be someone you aren't? Do you get attached too early? Do you abandon your own interests? Check your list periodically to see if any of these things are happening and then stop.

Write down short term and long term goals for your job, for your passions, for your relationships, for your physical body, and for your psychological growth. Plan how to meet those goals by writing out the steps you need to take. Assess your progress in each goal periodically to make sure you are not neglecting the things that are important to you.

Know the signs that might indicate a person isn't emotionally healthy: someone who loves you when they barely know you; someone who want to move in together too soon; someone who promises to take care of you by taking over your life; someone who encourages you to drop friends and family; someone who is jealous and suspicious; someone who is needy and clingy. All of these might feel good at first, but they are signs that the relationship isn't healthy and that at some point you will lose yourself in it.