

He's Just Too Into Me: One Woman's Struggle With Intimacy

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By Anne T. Donahue

In my twenties, I had one long relationship that lasted three years. Other than that, I dated around a bit, but never seemed to end up with the right kind of guys. Either they were serial daters or they were just too into me. After some good, hard soul-searching, I realized it wasn't that I was a dude trapped in a woman's body, it was something much bigger: fear.

Teenage girl (14-17) sitting on floor, elevated view

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When I was 13 turning 14, my dad was diagnosed with lung cancer. He died three months later in the farmhouse I grew up in. His last words, which still haunt me to this day, were: "Where's Ari? I want to make sure she's all right." It was three weeks before I left for boarding school (a choice that was mine. Can you believe it?).

While Dad was dying, I basically couldn't hack reality and decided to replace having heart-to-hearts with the number one man in my life with partying and hanging out with boys. It was just too big for me to deal with. Adolescence is an universally unforgiving time, complete with raging hormones and insecurities that feel bigger than you. Add a dying parent, a dash of issues, and you have a recipe for—well—me.

I'm no therapist, but as a daughter of one and a "professional patient," I have come to realize that I'm friggin' terrified of being abandoned. If I let someone I love in, there's a chance that he's not going to stick around. So I wouldn't (let anyone in), but ironically that made no difference. For a while there, when a guy dumped me, no matter how I felt about him, I would mourn him like he died. Luckily, I had friends who would drop anything and everything to see me through. They are my true soul mates.

Since I'm NOT a therapist, I asked Psychologist Rachel Needle, Psy. D, if she might have some insight on how my dad's death could have had an effect on my romantic relationships, and she had this to say:

*The loss of a parent can have profound and wide-ranging consequences for most people at any stage in their lives. Particularly at an earlier age, an adolescent may develop a fear of intimacy following the death of a parent, because they feel emotionally abandoned, betrayed, and rejected by that parent who has "left" them. Depending on how the loss is

interpreted and coped with, the adolescent might also begin to feel unworthy and unloved thus intensifying the previously mentioned fears of abandonment, betrayal, and rejection. *

Sweet. Well, at least I'm not wrong! At least I have that (wink). Seriously, though, the hard truth is that life isn't always easy and we all have our own struggles. And people die. It's something every single one of us will have to deal with at some point in our life. And it sucks. But if you've read this far, I thank you, because I'm sick of pushing away the good ones, and I'm over letting fear rule my life. Stalker/Soul-Mate is into me and I am so down with it.

Can you relate? Do you have trouble letting people get close? What issues come up for you in romantic relationships?