

Go Fish: How to know when it's time to cut the line

By Kate Elliott

There is this inevitable shift when we reach a certain point in our relationship where, pardon the cliché, we want to know whether to “fish or cut bait.” We’ve all been there, the hour at which we either want the person to profess their undying love, say they can’t live without us and want to spend the rest of their lives making us happy, or we come to the sometimes sad realization that they may just be biding time until someone better comes along. Either way, it’s important to know where you stand in your relationship; whether all the time and energy you invested into niceties, weekend getaways, family gatherings, and tokens of affection have really paid off, and if your partner feels the same way you do about the road ahead.

If you fall into the rare category of being- *one of the lucky ones*- please bare with me as there are some that need real, hard-to-hear advice about to what to do when you reach that inevitable fork in the road. The *lucky ones* knew right away, love at first sight, never left each other’s side, blah blah blah. We’re happy for you of course, but for most of us, it’s just not that simple. Relationships are hard work. They take time, energy, patience, stamina, consideration, and a lot of courage, as often times things don’t work out the way we want them to. It is most important to never forget number one when it comes to relationships- it’s not the in-laws or the friends, or the dog you bought together- it’s you. Your intuition knows what is best and if all your energies are really worth it.

Ok, so you and your significant other have hit the six month mark (for some it may be a year, maybe less, depending on how much time you’ve already spent together, and/or how much other person may have fabricated a personality in the beginning!) By six months you’ve spent a lengthy amount of time with someone to know roughly the ins and outs of who they are, what they like, if they snore, whether or not they get along with their parents, have decent friends, eat with relatively good table manners, etc.- all the things we look for to start. These traits help us decide whether or not we can deal with imperfections and move on to the “getting to know the real person,” and how they might best fit into our lives. You’re past all the awkward stuff. Now it’s time to decide whether or not you will travel together as a couple or part ways, smile at the good times, and move on to the next fish in the sea.

If your partner spends considerably more time at your house than their own, and you like having extra dirty laundry, their toothbrush sits neatly beside yours in the cabinet, or you don’t mind the long haired Chihuahua sleeping on the end of bed (even though you’re allergic) then maybe you’re happy with the way things are. You are comfortable with this other person becoming a fixture in your life- like a well worn pair of shoes they fit into your daily routine better than you could have imagined- and you kinda love it.

If at six months you find yourself more interested in going out with friends, chatting up a coworker, random people encounters and pretending to be single- cue the popular phrase “I’m not seeing anyone special”- then it may be time to reconsider your relationship and let your partner know that the only room you want share is single occupancy only. If you’d much rather clean your car than watch a movie with your lover, than it’s time to move on, and for you to find something more interesting to do. And the longer you wait, the harder it gets to cut the line; there is no point in trying to destroy someone’s ego along the way, therefore be honest and open about how you feel.

The most important thing I can think to reiterate from all this is that you should not settle unless you are absolutely sure that you’ve chosen the right route. If you doubt your own happiness, or feel as though your partner is great (despite a laundry list of things you can’t stand), then all I can say is keep fishing. But please don’t be greedy and keep a handful of them all to yourself as there are plenty of... well, you get the point.