

# How To Stop Obsessing Over a Guy – 7 Relationship Experts Reveal Exactly What To Do

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**~ Mandy Hale**

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## # Observe yourself and ask yourself the below questions



The initial connection to the man in your life elicit feelings of infatuation inviting thoughts and fantasies about the attraction and desire to spend endless hours with him.

**These persistent thoughts are normal in the early stages of getting to know each other, and, over time, mature to a deeper understanding, clarity, and security.**

Hence, time is spent with engaging in relationship and/or life in what *is*, rather than thinking and fantasizing what could be.

Trouble brews if you find rather be-ing present in love with your man, and instead are ruminating on what you think he wants, you want or how to maneuver matters to get these wants, you may be vulnerable to obsessive love versus being in love.

**How do you know if this is you? Observe yourself and ask, are you:**

1. Adjusting your behaviors according to the hidden agendas of what you want
2. Judging and analyzing the words and actions of your guy in context of proving, or not, his devotion to you
3. Monitoring and micromanaging his overall activities
4. Bombarding him with constant texting, calls, social media-ing and even stalking with intent to control the relationship according to your run-away thoughts.
5. Constantly thinking about him and ruminating how you will capture his undivided attention for your needs only
6. Nurturing feelings of being insecure in him loving you back

7. Avoiding what life would be like without him
8. Engaging in jealous possessiveness
9. Being overprotective in the name of his *best interest*
10. Over-reacting out of fear of being rejected
11. Hyper-focusing on him at the exclusion of family and friends
12. Viewing your man as being perfect beyond measure.

**If obsessing over your man, take a step back and observe and remember what drew you together:**

1. The loving humanness of one another, not him being perfect, nor your imperfectness.
2. Practice imagining just *be-ing* together. He deserves to be loved and respected, and you do equally as well.
3. Listen to how you communicate with him and he does with you. Are you mulling over ways to present and speak with him or, freely loving and receiving words back and forth? If the former, create a mutually positive change for growing forward together.
4. Reach out to your friends and family for perspective and accountability in gaining the missing insight to get re-aligned with your heart and out of your obsessive thinking. This can lead into remembering that he is in your life because you want him there.
5. Ask yourself, are you feeling like you *need* him more than want him now? If so, add a practice of mindfulness and reflect on what your relationship is offering you or not?

In the end, embracing the practice of self- reflection and awareness opens the way for breaking the habit of obsessive thinking, and then, open the way for personal growth and re-discovery of who you are within without your man.

*Cheri McDonald, PhD, LMFT – [www.aplace2turn.com](http://www.aplace2turn.com)*

## # The best place to start is to be clear with yourself about what you're looking for



If you find yourself obsessed with someone, you might feel like your mind has been hijacked. This might have more to do with you than with him.

### **Ask yourself what is hooked you about this particular person.**

- Does he remind you of someone you knew in the past?
- Does he remind you of your father?
- Is there a particular anxiety that this person triggers deep within you that you are not aware of?
- Are you using this obsession to avoid something else that you are not dealing with in your life?

### **Sometimes, obsession can be a way of binding an underlying anxiety that we cannot name.**

If we have unfinished business with people from the past, other people can show up later in our lives in order for us to finish that business or heal old wounds. When an old wound gets triggered, it can hijack our minds in order to get our attention. This means that it is time to do some work.

### **Get into therapy, and do some digging.**

There is a reason that you are obsessed, and once you understand yourself at a deeper level, it will all make sense. You might find that you are able to have a breakthrough in a way that you never thought possible. Our greatest challenges are often our greatest opportunities.

*Anita Gadhia-Smith, PsyD, LCSW-C, LICSW – [www.drgadhiasmith.com](http://www.drgadhiasmith.com)*

## # Follow the below 2 steps



**First, I think it's helpful to understand why you do it. Or I should say, why your brain does it.**

Obsessing is an activity that the brain engages in. It probably feels to you like you can't control it, but the brain is actually doing it intentionally.

**And here's why.**

Your brain's main job is survival.

**Your brain thinks that you HAVE TO have him in your life to survive.**

And your brain also believes that if you think about it enough, you will *figure out* a way to *get him* to behave the way you think you *need him* to behave to survive.

You see, thinking about things and figuring them out has worked well for you in some areas of your life in the past. But the first step in learning how to stop obsessing about him is to recognize that it is not working now and it will not work to get what you want. It will only succeed in *making you miserable*.

**The next step to help you stop obsessing over a man also involves understanding something about how our brains work.**

Our brains develop patterns of neural pathways that we use frequently, called neural ruts. The more commonly we experience a certain emotional response, the stronger it becomes.

*So, obsessing over him becomes a default response by the brain.*

**In order to change this, we can't cut out a neural pathway, we have to build a new one.**

At first, the brain wants to default to the behavior that it knows. This is why we have to become mindful and pay attention to our brain and when we notice the obsessing behavior, we need to gently remind ourselves that this strategy no longer works and we must begin to build that new pattern.

The new behavior is to come into the present moment and ground yourself in your body and get out of your head. The best way to do this is with your breath.

**But here's the thing; the brain is very efficient and it wants to do what it knows so it will keep defaulting to the old pattern.**

You have to become the brain police and really pay attention because when we are building new neural pathways in our brain, it takes time.

Here is the ***How To:***

**Step One is to recognize as soon as you start obsessing and tell your brain:**

*I know you are trying to help me survive but this is not helping me. I can't control getting what I want and need from him so I just have to surrender to what is*

**Step Two is to teach your brain to do something different instead of what has become automatic.**

To break the cycle of obsessive thinking, shift your attention out of your thinking mind by focusing on your breath, or feeling your feet on the ground, or using one of your senses to become aware of the present moment. Here is [a list of 13 different ways to practice mindfulness](#).

Notice I said “practice”. Be patient and kind with yourself. It takes time to build those new neural pathways. But it’s worth it. You are worth it.

*Ellen Hartson, LISW – [www.ellenhartson.com](http://www.ellenhartson.com)*

**# Letting yourself identify all the things you feel you are losing can help you access the emotions you might be avoiding by staying stuck in a pattern of obsessing**



**It can be so challenging when you find yourself spending a lot of time thinking about someone that you are pretty sure is not spending equal time thinking about you.**

Maybe this is happening for you after a breakup or when a relationship fizzles out in the very beginning.

It could also happen when you have developed an attraction for someone who is already in a relationship or otherwise not available for you to be with.

Regardless of the reason you find yourself in this situation, the first step is to recognize that you are spending a lot of time on a person that is not giving you anything back.

**The next step is to figure out how to stop!**

I would encourage you to consider the reasons why you are so enamored with this person.

**Is it because they represent some future for you that you really want and are holding onto?**

For example, if a relationship ended and you truly believed that was going to be your partner for life and the father of your children, it can be hard to move on because you are grieving not just the loss of the relationship but the loss of the future you envisioned with that person.

Unfortunately, if the relationship has ended or is not reciprocated and you feel you need to move on, you will also need to grieve all of the losses this person or relationship have come to symbolize for you.

It can be helpful to journal and talk this through with yourself, or even a trusted friend or therapist.

**Letting yourself identify all the things you feel you are losing can help you access the emotions you might be avoiding by staying stuck in a pattern of obsessing about getting back together or just about them in general.**

Sometimes we spend time thinking and obsessing about the same things over and over as an unconscious defense mechanism against feeling the feelings we would need to feel if we just accepted reality.

**If you can let yourself, ask yourself the question of “what do I feel about this relationship being over or not being a viable option for me” and truly let yourself sit with the thoughts and feelings that come up.**

Just let them come and try to be curious about your thoughts and feelings, rather than judging yourself for them.

**The more we resist feelings, the more they stick around and often grow.**

But if we can invite them in to teach us what they can, we can then usually release them more easily.

I hope these questions can help guide you in developing your internal compass about your relationship and path forward! In my psychology private practice, we help our clients work towards their goals and live the lives they have always wanted.

*Erica Wollerman, PsyD – [www.thrivetherapystudio.com](http://www.thrivetherapystudio.com)*

## # If you want a healthy relationship, you have to find a person that allows you to be the healthy version of yourself



Girl meets guy. They go on a couple of great dates, the girl falls for the guy, then things seem to fizzle on his side, texts and calls go unreturned, and the woman is left with “what ifs” and “maybes”.

**A tale as old as time.**

*Another classic: a couple is in a long-term relationship but neither partner's full needs are met.*

The couple breaks up, but one partner is left to obsess over details, how she could change to meet her partner's needs and abandon her own, and their potential of getting back together... for eternity.

**Sound familiar? More than likely, you or a friend have been in a similar place.**

Obsessing and analyzing are not the ways to get yourself a healthy relationship, but they are great ways to drive yourself nuts, abuse unhealthy coping skills, and ignore potential partners that may be a better match!

**So, what can you do to get over the obsession and free yourself?**

As a therapist, I often tell my clients to think about the relationship they want in as many details as possible.

- What kind of communication would suit you best? What kind of romance would you like?
- What would intimacy be like?
- How would your ideal partner treat you?

- How would they support you?

**Take some time to write down the qualities of your ideal partner and relationship.**

Read over your list. Now, take a deep breath and be as honest as possible, is that likely with the person you are obsessing over?

- If the answer is no, you have to find a relationship that can offer you those qualities.
- If the answer is yes, have you ever gotten those things routinely from this person?

These are tough questions to answer but go with your gut feelings. Of course, no relationship is perfect, but it should absolutely enhance your life and the things on your list are absolutely possible!

*Obsession is not a sign that things are healthy.*

**If you want a healthy relationship, you have to find a person that allows you to be the healthy version of yourself.**

Acting as if you believe you can have the relationship you want, even if you're not sure it's possible for you, is the first step to attracting the type of partner that can offer you those things. Obsession and insecurity will bring about certain partners.

**Conversely, confidence, independence, and respect will attract a healthy relationship!**

So think about how you can portray the qualities you would want your future spouse to see in you, even if you don't believe you possess them.

**Fake it till you make it.**

More than likely you will start to see that you do actually have those qualities; they were just hiding behind an unfulfilling and insecure relationship!

*Kate Funk, LMFT – [www.katefunkmft.com](http://www.katefunkmft.com)*

## # Follow the 3 tips below



*When it comes to obsessing over a guy, I often ask my clients, “What would you be doing if you were not obsessing?”*

*Next I ask, “What would you have to feel if you were not obsessing?”*

### **Obsession about someone can be a way to avoid painful feelings.**

Obsession can be a pretty awful feeling while also being a distraction. Feelings that are commonly avoided are feelings of grief, rejection, or suffering from a past family dynamic. The obsessing can be a protection from what’s really hurting.

### **It’s not the quick and painless road but first explore what you’re really afraid to feel.**

Facing this can heal many wounds. What we resist will persist (and often repeat itself).

### **The second tough part is letting yourself feel these tough feelings.**

Really feel them. Cry, Scream, Feel low, truly sit in the muck of the tough feeling and let it run through you. I promise you it won’t last forever. This might take a lot of practice and that’s alright. Journal, call a friend, book a therapy appointment.

### **Lastly, practice radical acceptance.**

When there is rejection, grief or other tough feelings associated with a painful situation we have to accept that the painful situation has occurred. Any

version of stating that it “shouldn’t be that way” increases the suffering and loop of obsessive thoughts.

**Acceptance does not mean you have to like a situation.**

Acceptance means you are willing to face and tolerate the situation as it is.

*Adrienne Alden, LMFT, PLLC – [www.relationshiprestoration.org](http://www.relationshiprestoration.org)*

## # Follow the below exercise



Obsession is tricky. It's like a part of your brain gets overridden somehow and won't stop thinking. You feel like you're on a hamster wheel. It can be thoughts, song lyrics (who hasn't suffered through endless repetitions, (sometimes referred to as earworms) of "It's A Small World Afterall? (Curse you Walt Disney!), conversations and fears, to name a few.

However, usually these repetitive thoughts are temporary and will disappear with enough distractions.

### **Obsessing about a guy is different.**

This obsession is often fed by actual contact with this man. You see or talk to someone whom you find attractive and then fantasies begin to develop that may have no real basis in reality.

### **In a strange way less contact tends to fuel the fantasies more than if you have more contact.**

More contact eventually leads to real information about this person and may eventually interrupt the fantasies about him. Think of fans who get obsessed with celebrities. Their obsessions are almost pure fantasy, and they don't ever have to contend with the reality of who that person actually is.

### **I don't know the neurological components of obsession.**

What I do know is that it is terribly disruptive and often really painful to the person afflicted with it. An obsession can interfere with your ability to function

in important parts of your life. It can affect you at work or school, interrupt your sleeping and eating, and affect all of your (real) relationships.

The obsession can become the focal point of your world. Of course, the really sad part is that obsessing does absolutely nothing to further an actual relationship. Relationships are based on reality. And reality is the key to getting over your obsession.

**I have abbreviated what is a tried and true cognitive/behavioral method for dealing with rational vs. irrational thinking.**

Get a piece of paper (I advise writing not using a computer) and make three columns. Column one is your current thoughts that are tied into the obsession (“He is the only man for me”, “We are made for each other”, “If he only knew me (better or at all) he would see how perfect we are for each other”).

**Now rate these thoughts as rational or irrational.**

Now rewrite them into column 2 “rational” or column 3 “irrational”.

This is not an easy exercise and you may feel very reluctant to do it. You have to be willing to engage your rational thinking which means you have to be in a place to actually want to give up the obsession.

Essentially, it is an exercise designed to help you replace your irrational thoughts with rational ones. It’s also not a one-time exercise. You have to keep at it until you come to really accept your rational thinking.

**Part of what makes this exercise hard is that the fantasy is usually so much more pleasurable than the reality.**

It’s hard to give it up (think of a diet vs. chocolate). However, fantasies are a very shallow replacement for the depth and possibilities of real relationships. You owe yourself the possibility of finding a real person to share your life with. That can’t happen if you’re having a relationship with an obsession.

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