

# He Wants My Attention But Not Me – 6 Relationship Experts Reveal Exactly What To Do

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## **# Learn to recognize the difference between an emotionally irresponsible partner vs an emotionally responsible partner**



**An emotionally irresponsible person is an individual who:**

- lacks conscientiousness for a partner,
- is unable to consider an alternate perspective in the context of an interpersonal relationship and is frequently insensitive to those whom he or she is closest to.

**This person feels entitled to do what he wants without concern for how these actions and words impact the person who ought to be the most important.**

Yet, he is not shy about demanding a partner's attention and may throw a fit when she is not at his immediate disposal. Asking her to do things for him and expecting to be the center of her world is a standard expectation.

These egocentric tendencies are often glaringly apparent in an interpersonal relationship but frequently camouflaged in public life.

**An intelligent person realizes having manners and appearing to care about others generates a favorable reputation.**

Yet behind closed doors, when there are no "real" consequences, this person often exhibits a lack of empathy for a partner and an avoidance of uncomfortable emotions. Yet, it is the unpleasant emotions that allow a person to self-reflect, admit fault, feel remorse, and operate with a conscience.

In addition, the discrepancy between the person's public persona and the quality of his interpersonal relationship may be vast. This disparity frequently causes a partner to question her sanity.

“Everyone thinks he is such a great guy, but nobody sees how he treats me.”

**Unfortunately, emotional irresponsibility is easy to disguise in an interpersonal relationship because it is one person's word against another's.**

Utilizing deflection, minimizing and justifications, an emotionally irresponsible person quickly dismisses a loved one's feelings and exonerates himself or herself. He easily evades the discomfort of emotional responsibility.

**Unfortunately, this type of emotional makeup is static.**

Expecting a substantial change in a person's character may not be possible if he is unable to self-reflect and be authentically accountable. Without self-awareness and insight, permanent change may be impossible. It may be more advantageous to invest in a person who is emotionally responsible.

**The signs of an emotionally responsible person include:**

1. An ability to see a loved one's perspective, even if it differs from his or her own.
2. The capacity to self-reflect and own his or her part in a conflict
3. Experience sincere remorse after making a mistake
4. Is emotionally attuned and conscientious of others
5. Is able to be vulnerable and identify and discuss difficult feelings
6. Sincerely apologizes for a mistake

**Emotionally sophisticated people can resolve conflict because they can entertain a different perspective, self-reflect, and own their part in a conflict.**

In addition, because they have empathy, they are usually conscientious of others. Following a selfish act or a mistake, they usually feel remorse, apologize, and attempt to repair the rupture in the relationship.

For example, say Ben is frustrated with Liz because she wants to talk about a conflict with her friend. Ben tells Liz her friend is a liar and she needs to stop listening to her. Liz starts to cry and defends her friend.

Ben pauses because he experiences empathy for Liz who is hurting. He self reflects and realizes he may have been too strong. He softens his tone and apologizes, "I am sorry Liz. I know you are hurting. I do not think what I said helped. I respect your process and I am here for you."

**Alternatively, an emotionally irresponsible party only contemplates how he feels and is incapable of entertaining a differing viewpoint.**

Resolving conflict becomes almost impossible because of the person's belief that he is always right.

For example, after Ben tells Liz her friend is a liar and she needs to stop listening to her, Liz breaks down. Ben, only able to consider his feelings and viewpoint, continues to reprimand Liz. "Why can't you see this? Are you blind?"

She does not care about you. What is wrong with you? You are one of those co dependent types. I cannot listen to you anymore. Good luck."

Obviously, Liz is doubly hurt and upset, and Ben lacks empathy and walks away without any remorse for the way he spoke to Liz. Liz refrains from talking to Ben anymore about her issues.

**An emotionally responsible human being is a person who can maintain healthy and close relationships with others who share the same emotional abilities.**

Resolving conflict, conscientiousness for others, and admitting fault in a relationship are essential capabilities which allow a person to care for and understand those around him or her.

This is not to say that an emotionally intelligent person won't have a selfish moment or make a mistake, but it does mean he or she is capable of owning a selfish act while attempting to repair the hurt it inflicted. Remedying relational missteps maintains closeness, joy, and trust.

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### **# Challenge yourself to gain insight that your concerns are not only about doubting your own value and worth**



- Does it seem that the guy you are dating is really needy of attention?
- Does the relationship seem off balance in favor of his needs?
- Does it seem your attention to him is more important than you, yourself?

If you can answer yes to these questions, you probably feel frustrated and uncertain about how to navigate this type of dynamic.

For some, these concerns are red flags, and for others, deal breakers!

**The reasons these types of characteristics are concerning are as follows.**

- There might be only room for one person's needs in this relationship; his needs.

- You might be dating someone with narcissistic personality traits.
- This person might lack empathy, or be very insecure, or controlling.
- All of the above.

**Check in with yourself first, to confirm what you are noticing about the relationship that seems one sided.**

Make a list of examples when you noticed an imbalance in the priority of both of your needs, versus just his needs. Explore why you believe that he is more interested in the attention you provide him, instead of being interested in you as an individual.

**Challenge yourself to gain insight that your concerns are not only about doubting your own value and worth.**

*Is this a dynamic that you keep finding yourself in with other partners, family and friends?*

If you answer yes to this, I would encourage you to spend some more time gaining understanding as to why you would doubt someone would not care about and value you, versus just the attention you provide.

**If you have come across this dynamic only in past intimate relationships, this also deserves some deeper exploration to determine why it is that you keep finding yourself in relationships with people who do not find your needs as important as their own.**

Finally, if this is not a pattern, but is a novel experience, you will want to think of this inequitable interaction as not only red flag, but a deal breaker.

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## **# Help him understand how you are feeling by being direct and open with him**



You've found yourself in an odd situation. The guy you are spending time with enjoys receiving your attention, but does not actually want you. You are filling a need he has, but he isn't filling your need to be wanted and desired. So what do you do?

### **Address this issue with him.**

It is possible he thinks this is a way to show you he is interested and does not realize you want more. It is also possible this is the type of relationship he wants and it is okay if you do not want the same.

Have a conversation about how you are feeling, what you want or need and give him the chance to listen, respond and be aware of how you are feeling and what you want/need.

### **Help him understand how you are feeling by being direct and open with him.**

Then do the same for him. Listen actively and reflect back what you hear him saying and work to understand each other and what your individual needs and wants are.

**If he is not interested in more than just your attention, take the steps you need to separate, move on, or end the relationship.**

Your needs are important and feeling desired and wanted in a relationship is a primary need.

Sticking it out hoping he may change could lead to even more disappointment and frustration on your end. We sometimes think we can make another person change, but the reality is they have to decide for themselves.

**If you are in the mindset that you can change his mind about wanting more than just your attention, I want you to remind yourself that you can only control yourself and change yourself.**

You cannot control someone else or make them change.

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**# If a man wants your attention, but does not really value you or your relationship, ask yourself why you are settling for so little**



**If you feel like he wants your attention, but doesn't really want you, that tells you a lot about him as a person.**

People with narcissistic personality disorder are notorious for this behavior.

They want control of your emotions, they want your attention, but only when they want it and only to feed their fragile egos. It is not because they truly love you or want you. Rather, it is because they want to be emotionally fueled by you.

**One of the most addictive types of relationships is one where there is really intermittent reinforcement.**

This means that sometimes you get the goodies, and sometimes you don't.

You never know when you are going to get the love and attention from the other person, and therefore continue to try your hardest to get it again. This can keep you hooked into a never ending cycle of addiction to getting crumbs from an emotionally unavailable man.

**If you find yourself in a pattern of being drawn to unavailable men, ask yourself why. Did you have an unavailable father?**

If so, you may spend many years of your life trying to get the love that you never got from your father from the men in your life. This can lead to a long-standing and very frustrating relationship pattern where you don't really get the love you need, your childhood wounds are not repaired and you continue to be re-wounded again and again.

**If a man wants your attention, but does not really value you or your relationship, ask yourself why you are settling for so little.**

Do you yourself really want a relationship?

If not, then keep playing games, this is the perfect guy for you. If you do really want a meaningful relationship, then set your sights elsewhere. Move on to someone who is more healthy and whole, and who is capable of true and mature love.

Life is short. Time is short. Use your time wisely.

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**# Be direct and to the point about what you're specifically concerned about that's led you to think he's not actually interested in who you are**



When you start to suspect that a guy is not truly interested in who you are, you have the option to either end things right away in an effort to find a guy who may express more genuine interest or you may decide to hang in there and see if he comes around.

**If you do decide to give him a chance and wait, it is important to name what you're seeing.**

This does not need to be done in a critical manner. Instead, as objectively as you can, name what has happened that's added up to you being concerned about if he's really interested in you.

**This could mean saying something like,**

“I've noticed you seem to have a hard time remembering the things that I've shared with you” or “It seems like you give me lots of compliments on my looks, but not any other qualities about me.”

You can then follow that up by saying how you've felt in these moments (i.e. “It makes me feel worried that you're not really listening when I'm sharing things with you” or “I appreciate the compliments, but sometimes I wish that you would compliment other things about me, too”).

**It's important to be direct and to the point about what you're specifically concerned about that's led you to think he's not actually interested in who you are.**

Then see how he responds. If he can give an explanation, validate your feelings, and/or apologize? You could be headed in the right direction.

If he minimizes your feelings or becomes defensive, this could be a concern that he's not aware enough to see that you're asking for more from him and he may be unable to give it.

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**# Ask yourself the below questions**



**Your relationship should give you some comfort and satisfaction. Not knowing where you stand or where it's going can be very counterproductive.**

- So, if your partner wants your attention for his ego, his self-esteem, his status, but is not interested in a full and honest relationship, you need to ask yourself, why are you there?
- What are your motives for staying, if the relationship is causing you anxiety and unease?
- What is so intriguing about him that keeps you hanging on?

These questions should give you an inkling that your judgment is working against you.

**It's not him, that's the problem; it's you.**

- Aren't you worth more than what he's giving you?
- Aren't you deserving of all that you need in a healthy, romantic relationship? So, what's going on?
- Is it your insecurities, your desperation or neediness that makes you feel so helpless?

### **Here's what you can do:**

1. **Finally make a decision one way or the other.** Do you want to stay in this kind of going-no-where relationship, or are you ready to leave? Give yourself the pros and the cons and then make an informed decision which will relieve you of all the uncertainty.
2. **Open up the conversation and have a heart-to-heart with him.** Maybe he cares enough to change his ways, because he doesn't want to lose you.
3. **Consider couples counseling.** In a safe, neutral environment, you can both speak about your concerns and fears and, hopefully, come to some understanding. If you each make some personal changes, the dynamic of the relationship can change.

Hopefully, one of these suggestions will give you the momentum to change your situation and put you moving in a positive direction.

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