

When Your Significant Other Is Having Doubts About Your Future, Here's How You'll Know

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Just because you're in a serious relationship doesn't necessarily mean that you know where things are heading, and this can be completely frustrating. In a perfect world, you'd know exactly where your partner's head is at all times, and you'd be on the same page about what the future of your relationship looks like. Unfortunately, this isn't always the case – but there's a way to effectively communicate your intentions, together. So, how do you know if your significant other is having doubts about your future?

Maybe you've got a clear image of what you want your romantic future (or even the rest of your life) to look like – meet the parents, move in together, become a power couple, and live happily ever after. Or perhaps you have something else in mind, like traveling the world together and settling down later. Maybe you not only know *what* you want, but also *who* you want to be with, and that's bae. If you're unsure what your SO's thoughts are on all of this, it's normal to feel a little uneasy. In fact, thinking about the unknown future of your relationship can be downright agonizing.

To help sort out this conundrum, I talked to some real-life relationship experts, and they helped me nail down exactly how you'll know if your significant other is having doubts about your future together.

According to Dr. Jane Greer, a New York-based relationship expert and author of *What About Me? Stop Selfishness From Ruining Your Relationship*, there are a few signs to look out for right off the bat. "You start to feel a distance between you, they may become more critical, [or] they may be more reluctant to engage in the things you want to do," she says. So, if your boo is showing less interest in the relationship in general, it could be a clue regarding their enthusiasm about the future. Take note of your partner's behavior, and think about having a chat with them about your concerns.

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Dr. Rachel Needle, a licensed psychologist, certified sex therapist, and the co-director of Modern Sex Therapy Institutes, agrees. "If your partner is acting differently and more standoffish, that could be a sign that their feelings are changing or that they are having doubts about the relationship," she tells Elite Daily. Other red flags could be if they "begin pulling back or communicating less, stop making you a priority, become more defensive, [or] are more distracted and less present with you." Just remember that your partner's quiet moods and distracted attitude could just be a result of work, school, family stuff, or other life stressors. Consider this before assuming they don't want to be with you, and ask your partner what's been up.

Laura Lohr, a sex therapist and licensed clinical social worker associate, recommends asking yourself a few questions about your partner's recent behavior. "Is your partner becoming more distant? Do you sense a fear of commitment? Have you been dating for a while and feel like the relationship isn't going anywhere? Maybe you feel stuck in the friend zone," she suggests.

A low-key attitude about what's on the calendar might indicate longterm doubts, too. Dr. Greer adds that another more obvious sign would be that your SO starts "talking about their doubts, maybe about future plans you have on the calendar." If they're less-than-stoked about going on trips, moving in, throwing a party together, or aren't making future plans with you further than a few weeks out, it could be a sign that they're unsure about your long-term future as well.

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You can try to play detective and collect various clues to tell you whether your partner is having doubts about the future of your relationship, but the only way to really know is to ask them. Of course, this is easier said than done, but Dr. Needle says that "the best thing to do is to communicate about it. Be honest about your feelings and what you want."

Ugh, the serious talk. *Do I have to?* You don't have to, but Dr. Greer agrees that communication is key here. "Confront it head on! Say that you noticed a space between you. Are there things you need to discuss or address to make your relationship stronger and better? [Tell them] you'd really like to hear what they're feeling so you both can stay connected." However, since having serious relationship chats are notorious for being uncomfortable and nerve-wracking, it's possible that your SO will say that nothing's wrong in order to avoid a confrontation. If you suspect they might be avoiding sharing their doubts with you, tell them that "you feel they are distant, and if there's anything you're doing that's upsetting them ... to please tell you."

Lohr explains that to avoid finding yourself in the unknown zone, "it's important to be upfront from the beginning about your personal goals and dreams." Yes, it can be scary to declare all your #goals to someone when your first start dating them, but "being honest about your wants, needs, thoughts, and feelings is always key in planning a future with your significant other," she says. Your bae doesn't need to know for sure that they want to be with *you* forever just yet — it's normal to be unsure about the specific person you'll end up with. However, if you have your eye on things like marriage, kids, world travel, completing your college degrees together, or just committed life partnership, and they know for sure that they don't, that might be more of a concern later on.

If you fear that your partner is having doubts about your future, be careful not to jump to conclusions. People can be distant or standoffish for a variety of reasons, and it doesn't necessarily mean they don't want to be with you. Take a breath, talk it out, and be clear about your wants and needs. Yeah, having the talk could leave you feeling shook, but you'll never know where you stand with your partner unless you ask!