



Ask Connie... “Green-Eyed” Love!

Dear Connie,

My fiance thinks I have a problem. Doreen is a wonderful woman—kind and considerate, honest and loyal, interesting and funny. She’s also drop-dead gorgeous, the kind of woman who turns heads when she walks into a room. When I’m with her it doesn’t bother me, but we both work and are three hours apart, so until we get married in September we only see each other on weekends. I know she loves me, but I find myself questioning her a lot about old boyfriends, about who she’s talked to each day, where she’s been, if she thinks about other guys, in a way that’s beginning to really upset her. She says no reassurance she gives me is enough, and it’s true. I’m terrified of losing her. Can you help?

Sincerely —Tom

Dear Tom,

It sounds like you’ve found someone with whom you’ve formed a strong and loving bond. At the same time, you don’t trust that it’s a strong enough bond to keep Doreen faithful to you and to the relationship you’ve developed. You seem to understand that you’re afraid of loss, and yet your fears and anxieties continue to cause you to behave in ways that create tension and disharmony in your relationship. Doreen, naturally, wants you to trust

what she says and how she conducts herself around other men. Most people—women and men—will eventually become angry if their partners exhibit jealous and possessive behavior. It’s a real turnoff. If Doreen loves you, is planning to marry you, and has given you no reason to doubt her, it’s time to look at your own issues.

According to Pathwork, jealousy is a distortion of love. When we love someone and form an attachment to that person, the attachment represents our security at a deep level. Our child self depends on that attachment for survival just as an infant is totally dependent on its mother for survival. Your rational, adult self may know you can count on Doreen to continue loving you and being there for you, and even if she ended the relationship you would survive. But it sounds like there’s another part of you—a young, vulnerable, insecure part—that believes otherwise. The underlying belief—and we all have unconscious underlying beliefs that control a great deal of how we think, feel, and act—might be something like, “without Doreen I cannot survive,” or “without Doreen I am nothing.” This would be a belief that developed out of your own particular experience in life and relationships, especially in your early relationship with your mother.

We all form conclusions in the first few years of life—some accurate, others not—about ourselves and about what we need to be safe and loved. Then off we go out into the world with these fixed beliefs, generalizing about people and the world at large, creating our reality and thinking that's the only reality there is. False beliefs—such as, “I could never survive without this person”—can control us until we understand what they are and how they developed. So it's worth asking yourself what might have happened earlier in your life to create this intense fear of loss. The things we are most afraid of have usually already happened.

Some questions to consider: Were you separated from your mother early in life? Did either of your parents die when you were young? Did you have a male sibling who stole your mother's affection and attention? If your parents were divorced, did your mother remarry during your adolescence? Were there other traumatic experiences of loss while you were growing up? If you can trace your fear to its source, you will be on the path toward freedom from it.



Connie Myslik-McFadden, MSS, LCSW, is a psychotherapist in Bozeman with 25 years of experience working with individuals, couples and groups. She leads workshops, retreats and teaches Dream work and Pathwork. Connie devoted 9 years to Jungian analysis, training, and supervision, after graduating from the Bryn Mawr School of Social

Work. She went on to graduate from the Barbara Brennan School of Healing, and Society of Souls, a kabbalistic school of healing. She is the author of *Gathering the Soul, a True Story of Spiritual Healing*. Pathwork (Pathwork.org) and Imago Relationship Therapy (Gettingtheloveyouwant.org), which are two easily accessible sources for the theories upon which much of this column is based.

Do you have a relationship question?

Write to Connie at conniem@mcn.net or
Call 406-582-7450 —and ask!

E-mail sent to Connie is read only by Connie Myslik-McFadden, MSS, LCSW, and will be held in strictest

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There are few people who don't experience jealousy at some point in a relationship. Often it occurs early, when there hasn't been enough experience of the other to know how secure the relationship is. Time, and ongoing behavior by one's partner that affirms the strength and security of the relationship, usually alleviates the fear of loss. When you are married and living together, it's likely that you will feel more secure.

However, I think it is important for you to do some inner work now to prevent damage from being done to your relationship. It may be helpful for you to acknowledge your fear to Doreen instead of questioning her obsessively, which as you have seen, has a negative result. If she can understand that it's not really about her, but rather about some earlier hurtful experience you've had, she is likely to have more compassion for you. And that's a good thing for each of you to develop towards one another!

Good luck, Tom!

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