

A PRACTICAL GUIDE TO RELATIONSHIPS

STOP CHASING HIM

How to quit chasing the guy who's mixed, hot and cold, or just not really available.

Clarity is worth more than an answer you had to pry loose.

EDITION WITH WORKBOOK

BEFORE YOU START

This book is here to do one thing

Not to help you "win" against someone. To help you stop losing yourself in the wait for a reply.

In relationships, the most expensive problem usually isn't picking the wrong person. It's staying too long inside a dynamic that never gives you enough to decide well.

How to read this

- One chapter at a time. Do the exercise before you move on.
- Don't judge yourself, and don't judge him. Look at the behavior, the frequency, the consistency.
- Every chapter leaves you with something to do, not just something to understand.

IMPORTANT NOTE

This is a general-interest guide. It's not a substitute for working with a therapist. If a situation is causing you serious anxiety, or it's affecting your sleep, your work, or your self-worth, or if you feel pressure, control, or fear, reach out to a professional or to the support services in your area.

Three words to keep in your pocket

This whole book turns on three words. When you're confused, come back to these.

Clarity

Knowing what you actually want, and which behaviors are compatible with that.

Consistency

Looking at what a person does over time. Not the high of one great night, but the average of the weeks.

Reciprocity

Don't just count how much you give. Count how much the two of you are building together.

EXERCISE

Write one sentence: "In love, I want to stop _____ and start _____." Keep it as your yardstick for the pages ahead.

PART ONE

Why you chase him

Before you change anything, let's understand what happens inside you when he pulls away.

Why you chase him right when he pulls away

He replies less. He disappears for a day. And instead of pulling back, you lean in. You text again. You check your phone. You hunt for the perfect line to reel him back. The more he pulls away, the harder you chase. You've watched it happen before.

You're not "needy," and nothing is broken in you. An alarm is going off. When you sense distance, a signal fires inside you that says: get close again, now. It's an old alarm. As adults, it goes off in our relationships.

There's just one problem. That alarm isn't asking you for the right thing. It's asking you to make the anxiety disappear right now. But making the anxiety disappear isn't the same as building a relationship. Texting, checking, asking for explanations calms you for ten minutes. Then the anxiety comes back, often stronger than before.

An example. It's 11 p.m. He hasn't texted back since this morning. Your hand goes to your phone on its own. Before you text, stop and ask yourself one thing: do I actually want to talk to him, or do I just want to stop feeling bad? Almost every time, it's the second one.

THE SKILL: LET THE WAVE CREST AND FALL

Anxiety is like a wave. It rises, it peaks, and if you do nothing, it comes back down on its own. Usually twenty minutes is enough.

- Put the phone down.
- Do something that keeps your head and hands busy (a shower, a walk, a call to a friend).
- After twenty minutes, revisit the urge. If you still have something real to say, say it. If it was just anxiety, you'll find it's already smaller.

How you'll know it's working: not from whether he replies, but from how you feel. Hours pass and you don't need to fill the silence with ten texts.

EXERCISE

Before you text him, ask one question: "Am I after connection, or am I after relief?" Write it on a piece of paper and keep it near your phone for a week.

The chase-and-distance cycle

It usually goes like this, the same every time:

- You feel less contact.
- You ramp up: more texts, more questions, more availability.
- He replies to smooth things over, or he takes even more distance.
- You read the short reply as proof that something's wrong.
- You ramp up again.

The cycle feeds itself. The more your behavior is driven by fear, the less you can see how often he actually reaches out on his own. You end up single-handedly keeping alive the very contact you were trying to measure.

Here's the uncomfortable part: if the connection goes dark the moment you stop holding it up by yourself, that's already data. Useful data.

EXERCISE

For one week, note three things: who starts the contact, who suggests getting together, who breaks the silence first. Don't use the data to "play games." Use it to see the real reciprocity.

The breadcrumbs that look like promises

There's a reason breadcrumbs feel like a feast: when you're getting very little, every positive gesture counts double. A text after three days feels bigger than ten steady texts from someone who's actually present.

The brain latches onto exactly the people who are unpredictable. You wait for the next good signal, and that wait creates a rush that feels like passion. But the intensity of the wait is not the quality of the relationship.

Signs of breadcrumbing:

- He reappears right as you're pulling away, but never turns the contact into an actual date.
- He makes vague promises ("one of these days," "as soon as I get some time") but never names a date.
- He keeps the digital intimacy alive but avoids any clear talk about the relationship.
- The intensity comes in spikes. The consistency doesn't.

THE SKILL: WATCH THE AVERAGE, NOT THE SPIKE

Don't judge a person by their best moment. Judge them by the average quality of their behavior over the last four weeks.

EXERCISE

Turn every vague promise into a concrete question: is there a plan? is there a date? is there a follow-through?

Ghosting: silence is not an explanation

Ghosting is when someone disappears without ever closing things out. That's exactly why it hurts so much: there's no spoken ending, so your mind tries to fill the void with a thousand theories.

There's a hidden trap here. If you believe "he's the one, it's destiny," you'll tend to excuse even a disappearing act. But if you see the relationship as something you build, a long silence reads as exactly what it is: an answer.

What not to do:

- Send an escalating string of texts to wring a reply out of him.
- Invent some sweeping story about yourself ("I'm not enough," "they're all like this").
- Obsessively check his online activity as if it gave you any clarity.

THE SKILL: ONE CLOSING LINE, THEN DONE

You can send a single closing line, if you need it: "I can see the contact has stopped. I'm looking for more clarity, so I'm going to stop here." After that, the lack of a reply is the data you were looking for.

His silence doesn't tell you what you're worth. It tells you something about how available that person is right now.

PART TWO

How to stop chasing

It doesn't mean disappearing or "playing hard to get." It means you stop single-handedly holding up a relationship that's supposed to be held up by two people.

The myth of the perfect text

When a relationship is shaky, it's easy to believe there's some perfect line out there that can "unlock" him. There isn't.

A text can't create availability, time, or desire where none exists. All it can do is communicate more clearly what's already there.

Good communication is:

- Short. It doesn't turn a need into a long speech.
- Clear. It says what you want, with no hidden tests.
- Not forcing. It leaves the other person free to respond.
- Informative. The reply you get is data, not a win or a loss.

EXERCISE

Take a long text of yours and rewrite it in three lines max: the fact, the need or preference, the concrete question.

Asking without begging

Not chasing doesn't mean never asking for anything. A grown-up relationship needs questions. The difference is between asking once and repeating yourself until you get the answer you want.

There's a simple line between the two:

- A request: it names a need and leaves room for the response.
- Begging: it tries to talk someone into giving you, over and over, what they don't want to give or don't know how to give.

Here's how to ask well, without leading with an accusation: "I like staying in touch with some regularity. How do you feel about the contact between one date and the next?" Then you listen. And above all, you watch what he does in the days after, not just what he says right now.

"I don't know" is an answer too. Especially if it stays "I don't know" for months.

EXERCISE

Write down the question you've been avoiding the longest. Then ask yourself which answer you're afraid of, and what you'd actually do if it came.

Chemistry isn't enough: availability

You can be wildly into someone and they can still be barely available for the kind of relationship you want. Attraction and compatibility are two different things. You can have both with someone, or only the first.

Signs of real availability:

- He can talk about what he wants without disappearing when the conversation gets serious.
- He can work through a difference without shutting down.
- He doesn't use ambiguity as a way to keep you hanging.
- He makes room for the relationship in real life, not just in the chat.

THE SKILL: TWO COLUMNS

Make two columns, "how attracted I am" and "how available he is." If the scores are very different, don't average them. Availability weighs more, because it's what actually holds a relationship up.

Cancellations: one is fine, a pattern isn't

Anyone can have plans change. The standard isn't demanding perfection. It's watching how a person handles the impact of a cancellation.

Believable repair:

- He gives you a heads-up as soon as he can.
- He acknowledges the letdown.
- He offers a concrete alternative himself.

A weak pattern:

- He cancels often.
- He leaves the rescheduling work to you.
- He comes back with intensity but no reliability.

Don't turn a single cancellation into a verdict. But don't turn ten cancellations into "he's just really busy."

EXERCISE

Count the last five times a plan changed: who actually did the repair work?

When he comes back

Coming back can mean nostalgia, loneliness, boredom, curiosity, or a real change. The return by itself doesn't tell you which one.

The useful question isn't "why is he back?" It's "what is concretely different from before?"

Signs of a real change:

- He owns what didn't work, without minimizing it.
- He says what he'll do differently.
- He keeps up the new behavior even after the first few days.

EXERCISE

If someone from your past came back today, write down three concrete conditions that would have to be different for reopening the door to make any sense.

Going no contact: for you, not to control him

Creating some distance can help you break the cycle and reclaim mental space. It turns unhealthy when you use it as a technique to make him afraid of losing you.

The difference is all in the goal.

Use it for you

To cut down the checking, the circular conversations, the anxiety. To get back to sleeping and thinking again.

Don't use it to control him

If the secret goal is to make him come back, you're still organizing your life around him. Even in the silence.

EXERCISE

If you choose distance, write down what job it needs to do for you: getting back your sleep, your focus, your boundaries, your stability. Not "to make him get it."

PART THREE

Fighting, setting boundaries, deciding

Here you'll learn to read the signals that actually matter and to choose with your head, not just your fear.

Why it's so hard to leave

The more you've invested time, energy, and hope, the harder it gets to walk away. That's human. But there's a trap: what you've already given doesn't come back by staying in a relationship that keeps not working.

We stay for three reasons, often tangled together: because we're satisfied, because we don't see any alternatives, or because we've invested too much to quit. Only the first is a good reason.

THE SKILL: THE QUESTION THAT RESETS THE PAST

"If I met this person today, knowing everything I know now, would I start this relationship?" Answer by looking only at the situation as it is now, not at the years behind you.

Staying for the sake of the present is different from staying out of fear that you "wasted" the time you already put in.

What to actually watch for in commitment

Commitment can't be calculated with a formula, but you can see it. You can see whether the relationship is being treated as something worth investing in, or as something to keep on hold.

Healthy investment:

- Time given gladly.
- A little planning together.
- Two lives slowly folding into each other.
- Repair after conflicts.
- Decisions that take both people into account.

EXERCISE

List five acts of reciprocity that actually happened in the last two months. If you have to "interpret" them to find them, they're probably not that clear.

Fighting and repairing

A relationship isn't judged by how little it fights. It's judged by how it fights and how it repairs. The couples who last don't argue less. They repair more.

There are four ways of fighting that poison everything. Learn to spot them, in him and in you:

- **Criticism:** attacking the person ("you're so selfish") instead of the behavior ("it bothered me when you bailed on our plans").
- **Contempt:** sarcasm, mockery, eye-rolling. It's the most dangerous signal of them all.
- **Defensiveness:** always answering "yeah, but you..." without owning your own part.
- **Stonewalling:** shutting down, checking out, using silence as punishment.

The opposite of all this is repair: a gesture or a line that lowers the tension ("sorry, I raised my voice," "let's start over"). The real question isn't "do we fight?" It's: when we fight, does he accept an attempt to make peace, or does he reject it?

THE SKILL: A COMPLAINT, NOT A CRITICISM

Talk about the behavior, not the person. Try the formula: "When X happens, I feel Y, and I'd love Z." Go after the problem, not him.

Strong signal: after a fight, something shifts, at least a little. You don't just go back to normal by pretending nothing happened.

Boundaries: to protect, not to control

A boundary doesn't tell the other person what to do. "You have to text me every night" is an attempt at control, and it doesn't work. A healthy boundary sounds different: "If this stays sporadic, I'd rather not keep going."

The difference is huge. The first one depends on him. The second one depends only on you. That's why a boundary works: you can't force anyone, but you can decide what you do.

THE SKILL: THE "IF, THEN I" FORM

Rewrite every "he has to..." as "if this happens..., then I will..." No threats, no punishments. Just what you'll do to protect what matters to you.

How he reacts to a small no from you is more telling than how charming he is when everything goes his way. Disappointment and dialogue: healthy. Guilt-tripping, pressure, punishing silence: a problem.

How to stop checking your phone

Checking nonstop feeds the anxiety and turns every notification into a little emotional event. You don't need to demonize your phone. You need to take away its job of regulating your anxiety.

THE SKILL: A MICRO-PROTOCOL

- Turn off message previews for seven days.
- Pick two moments a day when you don't check that chat.
- When you feel the urge, wait ten minutes and do something that has nothing to do with checking.

EXERCISE

Count how many times you check a chat in an hour. Don't judge yourself: measure. Next week, measure again.

The three-consistency test

When you're confused, check three consistencies. If even one is missing, you have your answer.

Consistency between words and actions

He says he wants to see you, and then he actually makes it happen.

Consistency over time

He's not only affectionate after a blowup or when he's afraid of losing you.

Consistency with your needs

Even a "good" person can be incompatible with what you want.

EXERCISE

Give each consistency a score from 0 to 10. Which one are you papering over with hope?

PART FOUR

Workbook

Now we move from reading to practice. Take the time to actually write things down: that's where something changes.

The three conversations to have

Three clear conversations are worth more than a hundred indirect texts. Pick the one that matters most to you right now and boil it down to a few sentences.

Frequency

"I like staying in touch with some regularity. How do you feel about the contact between one date and the next?"

Direction

"I want to understand whether we're exploring something serious or whether for you this is more casual."

Reliability

"When plans fall through a lot, it gets hard for me to invest. If we keep going, I need more follow-through."

EXERCISE

Pick the most urgent conversation. Write it in four sentences max. Cut every word that's there to apologize for having a need.

The reciprocity map

Fill in this map for the last four weeks. Mark yes or no, no explanations. The explanations come after the data.

- Who suggests the dates?
- Who keeps the contact going?
- Who repairs after tension?
- Who asks about the other person's world?
- Who actually changes their own behavior?

EXERCISE

Look at all the answers together. If most of them land on you, it's not a judgment of you: it's information about the dynamic.

Your non-negotiable standards

A standard isn't an endless list of ideal traits. It's the minimum bar for a relationship to be compatible with you. It covers the core stuff: respect, communication, reliability, how conflict gets handled, the vision for life.

For each standard, write an observable behavior next to it. "Respect" on its own is abstract. "He doesn't insult me during a fight" is observable.

- Standard 1: _____ → Behavior: _____
- Standard 2: _____ → Behavior: _____
- Standard 3: _____ → Behavior: _____

EXERCISE

Fill it in without any specific person in mind. If you write your standards while you're caught up in someone, you risk shaping them around him.

The letter you won't send

Writing helps you put things in order and close something inside, without turning it into one more attempt at contact.

EXERCISE

Write three parts: "What I hoped for," "What I observed," "What I'm choosing now." Don't send it for 48 hours. Then decide whether it really needs sending. Almost always, it doesn't.

The 7-day protocol: reset from the chase

Seven days to break the cycle. You don't have to change your personality. You just have to observe and interrupt a few automatic habits. A few minutes each day.

- **Day 1:** map the cycle (signal → thought → urge → action).
- **Day 2:** cut down the phone checking.
- **Day 3:** no texts sent to calm your anxiety. Only texts with a real purpose.
- **Day 4:** revisit your non-negotiable standards.
- **Day 5:** ask for a piece of clarity you've been avoiding, if the timing is right.
- **Day 6:** watch his response without reinterpreting it.
- **Day 7:** decide on a behavior that's consistent with what you've seen.

EXERCISE

At the end of the 7 days, write down a decision that depends on you, not on his next move.

Your personal 30-day plan

One month to put yourself back at the center, one week at a time.

Week 1

Cut down the checking behaviors and gather data on the reciprocity.

Week 2

Build up routines, friendships, work, and interests that don't depend on him.

Week 3

Practice direct communication about one real need.

Week 4

Decide based on the patterns you've observed, not on the latest emotional high.

EXERCISE

Pick one personal metric for yourself: hours of sleep, how often you check the chat, time spent thinking about him, how well you hold your boundaries. Measure the improvement.

Final checklist

Before you reach out to him again, ask yourself:

- Do I have something new and true to say?
- Am I after an answer, or a hit of relief?
- Have I already made it clear what I want?
- Should the next move reasonably come from him?
- If he doesn't reply, am I ready to accept that as data?

EXERCISE

If you answer "no" to the last two questions, wait before you act. Go back to Chapter 1 and let the wave come down.

IN SHORT

The new principle

"I don't have to stop wanting. I have to stop negotiating against myself."

Stop chasing him isn't a technique to make him want you more. It's a way to see more clearly. When you stop holding up the dynamic by yourself, it gets easier to understand what the other person is actually building.

Clarity sometimes costs you a relationship or two. But far more often it saves you from losing months inside relationships that exist mostly in your own hope.

IMPORTANT NOTE

No book can read another person's mind, and no behavior of yours can guarantee someone's interest. This guide is here to help you observe more clearly, communicate more openly, and protect your own well-being. Where there's pressure, control, threats, or fear, reach out to qualified services and professionals.

GO DEEPER

Essential reading

This guide is general-interest and is not a substitute for psychotherapy or professional support. The sources are here to give the concepts a serious grounding, not to turn the text into a clinical manual.

Bowlby, J. (1969). *Attachment and Loss*, Vol. 1. Basic Books.

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Freedman, G., Powell, D. N., Le, B., & Williams, K. D. (2019). Ghosting and destiny: implicit theories of relationships predict beliefs about ghosting. *Journal of Social and Personal Relationships*, 36(3).

IMPORTANT NOTE

No behavior can guarantee another person's interest or involvement. The goal of this book is to help you observe behavior, communicate more clearly, and protect your own well-being. Where there's coercion, control, violence, or fear, reach out to qualified services and professionals.