

Am I Coming On Too Strong?

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We are constantly chastised for falling too quickly in love, for getting too involved too soon and for expecting more from somebody who we have just met. Why is it that two good friends of mine, upon announcing their engagement should be concerned that they shall be met with cynicism simply because they have been together for less than a year? Why should we have to defend ourselves to those who deem us too needy, too keen or too interested and if love is contagious, then are break ups infectious?

Despite our best efforts to ignore our own mortality and our even better efforts to recognise our singledom, do we really get too attached too quickly? If this is the case, how are we being measured, is there an international scale which determines the timescale of a relationship? Furthermore, how far should we defend ourselves for wanting to define what it is that we have with another person? All of these questions may have easy answers, you may be sat there thinking that they are the concerns of other people, you are laid back, relaxed when it comes to relationships, however, how far is this true?

We live in a society where to be single may be increasingly more desirable and with an increasing divorce rate amongst heterosexual couples, is it fair to infer that relationships are under attack? What about gay relationships? Obviously we are only just able to analyse statistics of marriage and divorce but are we encouraged to stabilise every relationship we have, is the pressure on to find that other half?

Certainly as a gay youth, especially in the UK with a diverse youth community and the ability to be proud of your sexuality it is easy to meet new people and then form relationships with these people. However, do we aim for that one special relationships or accept the reality of having to test the water and relax around those we meet in order to find what we want? As a gay youth, compulsively single I would like to believe that I do not impose a mania of committal or definition to those guys that I meet. However, am I right in this assumption?

What makes this assumption more complex is that I suppose I have a relationship aim, or at least I am all too aware of what it is I find attractive in a man. This isn't to say that I write people off should they not tick every box, but I certainly pay more attention should they tick more than a few. Does this translate as mania; do I find it hard to relax around my own single status? I would like to argue the opposite as true, my awareness of these criteria makes me all too aware that I need to give everybody a chance, therefore I work extra hard to not label relationships or to impose definitions on those relationships at an early stage.

I use myself as an example in order to try and find a way into this topic but think that it works well. Why is it that we should be 'cool' around somebody that we like? Moreover what has made us believe that to come on too strong is to be uncool? Further still, are these youth concerns; do we have an awareness of ourselves in this way? Firstly I think that it is incredibly hard to alter yourself and even harder to convince another that you are different to your innate character. However, this is not to be negative; I believe that you are only as attractive as you can be when you are exactly yourself. So should we be anything less than proud of exactly who we are?

Finally, let us consider the break up as a reinforcement to hold onto a relationship. We are conditioned to feel that the break up has the potential to emotionally damage us, we are spectator to numerous film narratives and media images of relationships gone bad. However, as a gay youth should we not be promoting the image of friendships, strong relationships and not dwelling on the ifs and maybes? Relationships are of course dangerous in as much as they may eventually end but this does not mean that we start them with the intention to hold onto them forever.

Especially true is this when getting to know somebody; the first few weeks should always be fun and engaging, do not forget that you are getting to know each other. Again I do not use this to suggest that we should hold off emotionally until a relationship gets serious, but let us not get too carried away initially. Sometimes, I admit those fireworks do remove the need for such thought and love at first sight blinds all notions of getting too involved too quickly. However, the next time somebody says that things are moving too fast or that you are coming on too strongly, do not instantly think this to be the case, simply take a step back and see yourself as being yourself.