

Advice from the Trenches: Coma boy

Dear C and Dr. B:

I'm in a weird situation.

Jay and I have been married for a little over 2 years. Sex was never a big thing with us, it's one of the things we had in common. We had so many of the same interests and we could talk about anything - sex just didn't seem that important.

But now, 2 years in, I find myself attracted, not to a man, but to a woman at my gym. With her, there's a spark that was always missing with Jay. I'm suddenly interested in sex for the first time, and I realize that the reason I wasn't before is that I thought I was supposed to be into men, but maybe I'm actually gay.

Here's the weird part. When I told Jay how I felt, instead of deciding it was a deal breaker for our marriage, he told me that it was OK with him if I explored my feelings for women, but he thought we should stay married until I really know what I want. He wants me to be happy, but if this is just curious on my part, he still would want me as his lifetime companion.

Is he a really enlightened person, or is he just weird? I wonder if he's in denial because he can't face the truth. I am really not sure. I'm not sure what to think about the whole thing.

Dr. B says:

Gender identity, sexual attraction and sexual identity aren't etched in stone - they can change over time, and are highly influenced by the culture in which we live. All of the new gender labels we've developed are a recent invention. They can complicate things because feelings can never be entirely captured by words. We expect our relationships to follow whatever the social norms are. We've gone overboard with classifications in this country - the result is chaos and conflict. It is my opinion that just because you are sexually attracted to a woman it doesn't necessarily mean you are just gay. You just may be attracted to this particular woman.

Couples therapy would be beneficial because you need to set some ground rules going forward. Good counseling is all about clarifying intentions and honest communication. Counseling can't save a marriage that just doesn't work, but it can really help to clear up the confusion you are feeling right now.

I don't know Jay so I can't say anything about his personality or motivations. Maybe he's enlightened... or maybe he's asexual or gay. I have never met anyone so "enlightened" that they could actually mean what you tell me Jay has said. He wants to give you an opportunity to explore? Then he says it's OK if you leave him if this woman will make you happy? It sounds fishy. Nothing is ever without strings and if someone isn't willing to fight for you I would wonder how much they value you.

If the two of you had children, there'd be a lot more to consider. But as things are, the most important question is: *What do you want?*

C says:

Here's the question I'd be asking: if this situation were reversed, and Jay came to you and said that he was attracted to a guy at his gym, how would you feel?

If it were me, I'd freak - and not out of petty jealousy.

The one thing that both you and Jay are forgetting is that this other woman is not a new toy that you are going to play with for a while and then maybe return. She is a human being with feelings, needs and a history of her own. She is an unknown quantity. You have no idea how she could affect your life, what she could bring to it, or what she might possibly do to damage it beyond repair. It changes the entire equation, however it turns out.

Jay's casual acceptance of this sudden revelation shows one thing very clearly - you're on your own here. He's not treating this like it's real, or as if it affects him at all. He's just like: "well, call me when you're done, I'll come pick you up."

If I had to guess, I'd say that Jay isn't enlightened, he's in an emotional coma. If this is the first real thing the two of you have had to deal with and Jay is just sitting it out, I'd wonder how much help he'll be when future problems arise.

You might have your answer right there.

- Cathren Housley

You can visit Dr. B's blog at drbrilliantcliche.wordpress.com