

Navigating ROMANTIC RELATIONSHIPS

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Graduation raises questions for students about the future of their romantic relationships. Will we continue dating after graduation? Will this relationship last when we are no longer in college? If we do decide to stay together, how are we going to coordinate a new life together post-graduation? Fears about whether partners are on the same page often cause students to avoid the conversation. But, having these hard conversations can actually help you to define a path forward, whether that is about building a new chapter together or saying goodbye. Below are a few key tips for navigating this transition. After living with someone for a certain amount of time, you may have come to grow closer to your roommates and this transition could feel like you are losing a friend or a sense of comfort. If you want to stay in touch with any of your roommates, communicate that. Make plans to meet up every once in awhile to catch. Just because you are not living together does not mean you can't keep in touch.

IF YOU CHOOSE TO...

CONTINUE THE RELATIONSHIP

Create an initial plan. Leaving college will change your relationship dynamics.

It will be important to set clear, realistic expectations about how you plan to move forward.

- o Will you try to live in the same location?
- o Will you live together?
- o How will you negotiate competing goals? (e.g., is taking jobs or going to grad school in different cities)
- o If living apart, how will continue to cultivate your relationship? (e.g., calling, texting,

Facetime/Skyping, schedule of visits)

Revisit the plan to see how it is working. You can't possibly anticipate all of the challenges that you might face in continuing your relationship. So, make sure to periodically revisit how well your plan to stay connected is working. This may lead to revising the plan or it may prompt reconsidering whether to remain together. Take time to make thoughtful decisions together.

Don't forget to have a life outside of this relationship. One of the big pitfalls that couples face as they navigate post-graduation life together is that they rely heavily on their partner to provide for all of their needs. No one person can do this. If you do this, there will inevitably be times when this one person won't be enough. Building social connections and engaging in activities outside of your romantic relationship can create balance but it also can feed back energy into the relationship as well.






END THE RELATIONSHIP

Turn to others for support. Even if you are the one who wants to end the relationship, letting go can still be hard. Relying on friends, family, or close others through this transition will help you to be more

Remember, information is power. If you or your partner doesn't want to continue the relationship, this is important information. Information gives you power to make decisions about yourself moving forward. That doesn't mean it won't hurt, but it gives you the ability to put your energy towards relationships that will be a better match for you in the long run.

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-  **Focus on understanding your own feelings about your relationship first.** Before you talk to your partner, it is important to understand your own wants and needs moving forward. How do you feel about continuing this relationship? Is your partner supportive and caring in the ways that you expect them to be? What would you want to enhance or change in the relationship if you decide to continue it? Sometimes it is helpful to talk this through with others to clarify your thoughts and feelings.
-  **Set aside time to talk to your partner.** Ever been blindsided by someone who wants to talk about something important? This approach can feel pretty overwhelming and the likelihood of you responding well will be low. This is an important conversation you want to have with your partner.
-  **Let them know that you would like to talk and what you would like to talk about,** and set up an uninterrupted time to start the conversation. Remember that this will not likely get resolved in one conversation so be prepared for this to be something you revisit.
-  **Offer your own perspective and be open to theirs.** This conversation can feel scary because there are unknowns about what your partner will want or say and it may or may not match what you want.
-  **You don't have to decide immediately what to do.** Remember, you don't have to decide right away what you will do about the future of your relationship. Take some time to just listen to each other. Subsequent conversations can explore whether your wants and needs are compatible to continue moving forward with your relationship.