

AI-00823 Back-Burnering vs Cushioning

👤 Owner	Ⓒ Rigel Arcayan
☰ Tags	Life
🕒 Created time	@March 30, 2024 10:28 PM

What is a back burner or cushioning in a relationship? Explain and deep dive. List 20 examples.

Both back-burnering and cushioning refer to keeping romantic options open, but with some key differences:

Cushioning:

- **Focus:** Having a safety net of potential partners in case your primary relationship fails.
- **Action:** Actively flirting, maintaining emotional intimacy, or casually dating others while supposedly committed.
- **Mindset:** Fearful of being alone, unsure about the primary relationship.

Back-Burnering:

- **Focus:** Keeping someone you're interested in available for the future.
- **Action:** Staying in occasional contact, expressing future interest but not actively pursuing them.
- **Mindset:** Indecisive, keeping options open, not fully invested in either.

Deep Dive:

Both behaviors can be emotionally damaging and create a lack of trust. Here's why:

- **Dishonesty:** You're not fully committed to your primary partner.

- **Deception:** The "cushions" or the back-burned person might not be aware of your true relationship status.
- **Emotional strain:** Juggling connections can be draining and lead to neglecting both relationships.

Examples (10 each):

Cushioning:

1. Exchanging flirty texts with someone from work while in a relationship.
2. Going on "friendly" outings with someone you're attracted to while dating someone else.
3. Liking and commenting excessively on social media posts of potential partners.
4. Keeping past dating profiles active.
5. Being overly affectionate with friends in a way that could be misconstrued as romantic.
6. Confiding in someone else about relationship problems instead of your partner.
7. Planning "accidental" encounters with a past fling.
8. Taking excessive time to respond to your partner's texts or calls while readily engaging with others.
9. Dressing up and putting extra effort into your appearance for someone other than your partner.
10. Comparing your partner to other potential matches.

Back-Burnering:

1. Casually mentioning future plans with someone you're not currently dating. (e.g., "We should grab coffee sometime!")
2. Liking and occasionally commenting on their social media but not actively pursuing them.
3. Staying in touch with an ex on friendly terms, leaving the door open for reconnection.

4. Mentioning how you're "not looking for anything serious right now" despite being interested in someone.
5. Flirtatiously texting someone you met but not asking them out because you're "busy."
6. Keeping them updated on your life without actively initiating conversations.
7. Saying you'll "hit them up" when you're single, even if you're not currently planning a breakup.
8. Casually mentioning your relationship status as "complicated" to keep them interested.
9. Accepting invitations to hang out with them in a group setting but avoiding one-on-one time.
10. Indirectly mentioning your availability if they ever become single.

Remember, open communication and honesty are key to healthy relationships. If you're unsure about your feelings or your relationship, address those concerns directly instead of resorting to back-burning or cushioning.

Is back-burnering or cushioning be applied to friendships also and not just to the affairs of the heart? What I meant is something like this "I am establishing friendship relationships outside my institutionalized relationship so that when my main relationship fails, I have a redundancy humans to lean on". Is this a type of cushioning also in the synthetic form from the original concept?

You're right, the concepts of back-burning and cushioning can be applied to friendships, though it's not as common. Here's how it translates:

Cushioning Friendships:

- **Focus:** Having a network of close friends to rely on if your main friendship falls apart.
- **Action:** Actively nurturing other friendships while potentially neglecting or downplaying issues with your primary friend.
- **Mindset:** Fearful of losing the main friend, unsure about the friendship's health.

Back-Burnering Friendships:

- **Focus:** Keeping someone you connected with as a potential close friend for the future.
- **Action:** Staying in occasional contact, expressing future plans but not actively putting effort into deepening the friendship.
- **Mindset:** Having a large social circle, keeping options open, not fully invested in any particular friend.

Your Scenario:

Yes, what you described aligns more with cushioning friendships. It's a way to hedge your bets in case your main friendship crumbles. While having a strong social network is healthy, relying solely on it as a safety net can be problematic. Here's why:

- **Neglecting the Main Friendship:** Focusing on building new connections can take away from addressing problems in your primary friendship.
- **Inauthenticity:** Building friendships solely as a backup plan feels inauthentic and might not lead to genuine connections.
- **Unnecessary Worry:** Constantly fearing your main friendship's failure can create anxiety and strain the relationship.

Better Approach:

- **Open Communication:** Talk to your friend about any concerns you have in the friendship. Honest communication is key to a healthy bond.
- **Invest in Existing Friendships:** Put effort into strengthening your existing friendships. Plan activities, share openly, and be a supportive friend.
- **Expand Your Social Circle Organically:** Join clubs, attend events, or volunteer – you'll naturally meet new people who share your interests and could become close friends.

Remember, strong friendships are built on trust, effort, and shared experiences. By nurturing your existing bonds and building new connections authentically, you'll create a strong and supportive social network without resorting to cushioning.

Can back-burning or cushioning be done with no bad intentions ?

It's possible for back-burning or cushioning to be done with no malicious intent, but it still comes with risks and unintended consequences. Here's why:

- **Misunderstandings:** The person you're back-burning or cushioning might misinterpret your actions as romantic or friendly interest when you don't intend it that way. This can lead to hurt feelings and confusion.
- **Emotional Strain:** Even with good intentions, juggling multiple connections can be emotionally draining. It can be difficult to maintain the necessary time and energy for all relationships.
- **Mixed Messages:** Being overly friendly or keeping someone on the hook, even unintentionally, can send mixed messages. This can make it harder for them to move on or form genuine connections with others.
- **Hinders Openness:** When you're back-burning or cushioning, you might hold back from fully investing in your primary relationship for fear of missing out. This can prevent open communication and addressing potential issues.

Alternatives with Good Intentions:

- **Focus on Strengthening Current Relationship:** If your concern is a potential breakup, invest time and effort in strengthening your current relationship. Open communication and addressing underlying issues can build a stronger foundation.
- **Building a Balanced Social Network:** Having a strong social circle is healthy. Expand your network organically by joining activities or volunteering. This allows for genuine connections without keeping anyone on hold.
- **Honesty is Key:** If you're unsure about your feelings or a relationship, be honest. Communicate openly with both parties involved.

Overall:

While the intentions might be good, back-burning and cushioning often create more problems than solutions. It's better to be upfront and focus on building genuine connections, whether romantic or platonic.

In WHODAS 2.0, there is a category for getting along and participation, if I am fearful about back-burning and cushioning consequences later in the second half of life, how can a person develop friendships and participate in the

community. Where to find balance? It seems like the two concepts are conflicting.

You're right, there can be a tension between building friendships and fearing back-burning or cushioning. But WHODAS 2.0 (assuming it stands for the World Health Organization Disability Assessment Schedule) emphasizes getting along and participation for a reason – strong social connections are crucial for well-being throughout life. Here's how to find balance:

Focus on Quality, Not Quantity:

- **Authenticity:** Prioritize building genuine connections based on shared interests and values. Don't see friendships as a safety net, but as enriching experiences.
- **Depth Over Breadth:** Invest time and effort in deepening existing friendships. Regular communication, shared activities, and offering support build stronger bonds.

Open Communication:

- **Be Upfront About Your Needs:** Express your desire for genuine friendships. Explain that you value honesty and open communication.
- **Address Fears:** Talk to a therapist or counselor about your back-burning/cushioning anxieties. They can help you manage those fears and build healthier relationship patterns.

WHODAS 2.0 and Participation:

- **Finding Your People:** Join clubs, volunteer groups, or online communities based on your interests. You'll naturally meet like-minded people you can connect with.
- **Focus on Contribution:** Approach participation with the mindset of offering your skills and interests to the community. This creates a positive focus and fosters connection.

Remember:

- **True Friendships Take Time:** Building strong friendships takes time and effort. Don't get discouraged if it doesn't happen overnight.

- **Friendship is a Two-Way Street:** Be a good friend by offering support, being reliable, and being a good listener.
- **Enjoy the Journey:** Focus on the present and appreciate the connections you're building. Strong friendships enrich your life, regardless of what the future holds.

Additional Resources:

- The National Institute on Aging (<https://www.nia.nih.gov/>) has resources on building and maintaining social connections in later life.

By focusing on building genuine connections, open communication, and participating with a positive mindset, you can develop strong friendships and actively contribute to your community without the worries of back-burning or cushioning. Remember, WHODAS 2.0 emphasizes participation because strong social connections are a key factor in overall well-being. Go forth and connect!