

Should you be open to talking about your ex?

The wrong name, dropped at the wrong time, has been the downfall of many a good relationship. But while too much ex-induced paranoia can make a nice girl resort to wristslaps, a willingness to talk about your past—especially if you've achieved the elusive status of "friends"—with your ex—can make you seem all the more open and honest. If your current significant other *really* doesn't have anything to fear from your former flame, why dismiss or hide a good friendship?

The main ideas measured by this equation, like any potential crime, are means and motive—is it practical to get back together with your ex and is there a chance that you might? For you to speak freely, either actual time and/or distance from your heart (as shown in the chart) must outweigh the ex's attractiveness, marital status, and proximity (that is, how much worried). Also, if your ex has a sexy accent, is extremely successful, or has an obvious and significant talent, add 5 to H_c .

T_c = How many months have you been seeing your current girlfriend?
T_s = How many months has it been since you split with your ex?
T_e = How many months did the relationship with your ex last?
H_c = How attractive is your current girlfriend? (1–10 with 10 being "every time I see her I feel lucky")
H_a = How attractive is your ex? (1–10 with 10 being "every time I see her on a billboard I feel nostalgic")
D = How many miles away does your ex live?
S_e = What is the relationship status of your ex? (enter 1 for "swinging single," 5 for "dating," and 10 for "married")

$$\left[\frac{2T_c + T_s}{T_e} \right] - \frac{H_a}{H_c}^3 + \left(C - \frac{10(H_e)^2}{H_c S_e \sqrt{D}} \right) = T_{\text{alk}}$$

Is this one for fun or for real?

Tonight will be your fifth date on the whirlwind tour of a new romance. You've been to a nightclub, the zoo, a romantic dinner, and even to a lecture on twenty-first-century existentialism, a subject you read up on before going in order to look smart. It's time to make the tough choice: Is this one for real or just for fun?

First, the quality of your time spent together is determined by total time together multiplied by the ratio of how many of those hours are daylight, and how many are night—which is also affected by

the number of drinks you have when you get together. If your relationship thus far has been based solely on drinks, dancing, and carousing until the sun comes up, the likelihood of this being more than fun is less. The equation then combines quality of time spent together with factors that determine compatibility and practical potential. Specifically, are you both ready for a relationship and are your backgrounds compatible? This is, of course, adjusted by how many other people you are currently dating. If she is one of many, there's a smaller chance this one is for real.

H_d = Average hours of daylight you spend together per week
H_n = Average hours per week you spend together after dark
D = Combined average number of drinks that you and she consume when you get together
S = How many other people are you currently seeing?
T_y = How many months do you plan to continue living near subject? (maximum of 24)

T_b = How many months does site plan to live near you? (maximum of 24)
T_r = How many months has it been since the end of your last relationship?

$$\frac{H_d}{(D+1)H_n} (H_d + H_n) + \frac{B}{20(S+1)} \sqrt{T_y(T_y + T_h)} = R_{\text{real}}$$

B_c = Your score on the background compatibility chart below. Circle a number for each statement and then add your answers to get a total score.

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- C** = Your score on the chart below. Circle a number for each statement in terms of how true or false it is, and then add your answers to get C.
- If T_{alk} is less than zero, you should never speak of your ex.
 - If T_{alk} is between zero and 3, you should speak of your ex only to put her down.
 - If T_{alk} is between 3 and 10, you may include your ex in relevant anecdotes.
 - If T_{alk} is greater than 10, you can talk freely about your ex.
- | | False | True | | | |
|--|-------|------|---|---|---|
| My current girlfriend was for obvious reasons. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| My ex and I did not remain friends. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| My ex would not get back together with me even if I wanted to. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| My friends/parents like my current girlfriend more. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

Should you go to a bachelor party in Vegas against your girlfriend's wishes?

$$\frac{P_s}{P_t} (O_t + F_t) (G_c + W) - \frac{P_t F_s}{P_s E} [(O_s)^3 + A_s (A_s + A_t)] = G_o$$

went the best relationship needs space.

E= There's only so long you can stay cooped up in jointed-at-the-hip land before a taste of your old life beckons. Unfortunately, the need to break free of the constraints of a relationship, if only for a weekend, might not be understood in the benign terms you intend. If your friends are gunning for a real hangover-inducing bummer and your girlfriend knows it, you might be spending too much political capital for one night out.

Simply put (although this equation is a bit complex) in order for you to go out with the boys, the experience of hitting the town needs to outweigh the experience of staying home and is affected by the possible fallout from each. If this really is a special occasion either in or out, it can make your decision easy. Also, if you are finding yourself highly entertained by activities you once thought were only for the repressed, it might be time to bust out of your current motel.

P_s= In the past month, how many nights have you spent with your girlfriend?
P_t= In the past month, how many nights have you spent out with the boys?

F_t= Level of fun you would have going out with your friends (1-10 with 1 being "eh" and 10 being "yay")
E= On a scale of 1-10, how entertained are you by PBS specials, your pet's antics, chat rooms, and Internet poker? (10 being "very")

O_s= How important is the occasion to your girlfriend? (1-10 with 10 being "extremely")
O_t= How important is the occasion to the guys? (1-10 with 10 being "best friend moving to Sri Lanka tomorrow")

A_s= Your odds for intimacy should you stay in this evening (If you have a "3-in-10" chance, enter 3/10)

G_c= How strong is your craving for gossip or news of the outside world? (1-10 with 10 being "still waiting to hear about that Watergate thing")

W= How whipped do your friends already consider you? (1-10 with 10 being "Friends must apply for tourist visa before stopping by to say hi")

F_s= Level of fun you would have staying home with your significant other (1-10 with 10 being "dating stand-up comic")

- If G_o is less than zero, you would be better off staying home and pretending to watch *Sleepless in Seattle*—again.
- If G_o is zero to 5, you should hit the town, but be prepared for the consequences.
- If G_o is greater than 5, you're going to Vegas, baby, Vegas!

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Are you whipped?

$$\frac{HY_a [10 - (F_y - F_s)] \sqrt{C_o}}{50 + 5[C_y - (C_s + S)]} = W_{\text{whipped}}$$

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Whapped! Whapped!: the universal sign for "your girlfriend rules your life." There's even a chance your friends already crack this imaginary whip in your direction. But what's the real deal? Are you really whipped or do your friends simply have unreal expectations of you, due of course to their status as desperate geeks incapable of finding a date themselves and jealous of your good thing?

The first step in solving this important question is to get an answer to the previous one ("Should you go to a bachelor party in Vegas against your girlfriend's wishes?"), because you will use the answer (G_o) as a variable in this equation. Contained in the

earlier question are the important algebraic values of whether or not your friends

already consider you whipped and whether or not you have been spending too much time with your significant other.

However, by themselves, these values don't necessarily make you whipped—in rare cases, you may be hanging out with your girlfriend simply because you want to, not due to any voodoo mind control. To your boys'-night-out score, this equation also adds your ability and willingness to stick up for yourself and the degree to which you are told what to do versus the degree to which you *decide* what to do (tempered if you actually are a lazy slob and deserve to be told what to do).

H= Number of habits you repress when your girlfriend is around

V_d= Number of times per day you say the equivalent of "yes, dear"

G_o= Plug in your answer to "Should you go to a bachelor party in Vegas against your girlfriend's wishes?"

F_y= Your willingness/ability to fight (1-10 with 10 being "Muhammad Ali")

F_s= Your girlfriend's willingness/ability to fight (1-10 with 10 being "Xena: Warrior Princess")

C_s= When you do a chore around the house how often is it because your girlfriend suggests you do it? (Base answer on ten chores.)

S= Are you a slob? (1-10 with 10 being "bottom layers of bedroom studied by archaeologists")

- If W_{whipped} is greater than 1, you had better put this book down and get back to work scrubbing the toilet. Cinderella.

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Should you become a monk?

$$\frac{4(D_g + W) \left(\frac{-M^3}{2250} + \frac{M^2}{20} - 1.8M + 100 \right)}{D_p} = M_{\text{monastery}}$$

This is a complex equation, and rightfully so—the decision to condemn yourself to a life of hair shirts and Latin is a weighty one.

However, sometimes enough is enough and at least joining the cloth will get you out of explaining to your parents why you haven't yet produced grandbabies.

This equation weighs time, effort, and romantic success, rewarding the middle ground in each. For example, if you have dated no one in the past year, you are all but cloistered already. However, the flip side is also true—if you have dated more than 12 people this year (more than 1 per month), you might need a stint in a lonely cell to let your mind and body recover.

Obviously your result is affected by the ratio of good dates to bad and by how fresh in your mind those bad dates are.

Your monk chances also increase in direct proportion to the time since your last serious relationship, with a significantly low chance if it's been less than a year (your judgment is still clouded by angst and you are in no frame of mind to make decisions concerning your future celibacy) and a significantly high chance if it's been more than five years (it's time to adopt a neighborhood cat).

Though it's possible to be in a *relationship* that makes you want to become a monk, this equation only works for those currently single.

Should you apologize?

In fact run over her mother with said SUV, you will likely be righteous in your defense.

However, if the issue is not a big deal, even if you are not actually at fault, you might as well apologize if your girlfriend demands it (that is, holds you at fault and is pissed about it). Of course, as these variables interact with each other, you will find a delicate balance. Raising the level of perceived responsibility will make you increasingly likely to apologize until it reaches the point of persecution at which

such a big deal, your entrenched stance on apologizing or not will be reduced). Later in the equation we see that if your girlfriend accuses you unjustly, you will be highly unlikely to apologize. For example, if she blames you for running over her mother with the new SUV and you did not

W= Weeks since your last bad date
M= Months since you have been in a "serious" relationship

D_g = Number of good dates you've been on in the past year
D_b = Number of bad dates you've been on in the past year
D_p = Total number of people you have dated in the past year

T= How hard have you been trying to date? (1–10 with 10 being "listed on more than 10 Internet dating sites")

- If **M** Monastery is greater than 1, you should just call your spreading bald spot a tonsure.
- If **M** Monastery is less than 1, you should fill out an initial-screening questionnaire ("friends stage regular interventions, thinking you're a shut-in")
- If **M** Monastery is between 1 and 5, you should at least offer a perfunctory "Sorry."
- If **A** is between 5 and 10, you should prepare a few remarks and deliver them with sincerity.
- If **A** is greater than 10, contact the nearest florist immediately.

$$D[R_p(R_a + P) + D(R_a - R_p)] = A$$

D= How big of a deal was the issue? (1–10 with 1 being "forgot to take out trash before work" and 10 being "forgot to turn off the gas before leaving for vacation")

R_a = Actual responsibility (On a scale of 1–10, how responsible are you in reality for this blunder?)
R_p = Perceived responsibility (On a scale of 1–10, how responsible does your girlfriend perceive you to be in this matter?)

- If **A** is less than 1, you do not need to apologize.
 - If **A** is between 1 and 5, you should at least offer a perfunctory "Sorry."
 - If **A** is between 5 and 10, you should prepare a few remarks and deliver them with sincerity.
 - If **A** is greater than 10, contact the nearest florist immediately.
- P=** How pissed off is your girlfriend? (1–10 with 10 being "mail-order thumb screws have already arrived")