

Lover,

Once and for all, let me be specific in what I am asking of you:

- If you're too busy to be around for chatting, here's what you say: "Hi baby! The next few days I'm gonna be really busy. I'll contact you when things get easier. Love you!" Or the like. I will still send messages such as "Hi, I love you, good morning, goodnight" via text or email if I feel like it.
- You will send me nice, meaty emails, full of whatever you want: a story idea, the details of what's bothering you, your plans/goals/wishes/dreams. And I will not have to ask for them.

In our relationship there is very little body language to read or voice to interpret and much room for error in comprehending what is being said. Instant messaging conversations go so fast that anytime I want to say, "I just figured out that 5 minutes ago you thought I meant Y but what I meant was Z" we are already way past that topic and it seems a moot point. But I will do a better job at identifying these misunderstandings quicker and clarify them immediately. You should do the same.

Another way our conversations screw up: cultural slang, the reality that English is not your main language, and our personal definitions of words like "partnership," "dating," and "critical." (Do you know what a moot point is? It means irrelevant.) Again, I'll try to be very clear in what I am asking, maybe even follow that up with "I mean this...what do you think I meant?" You should do the same.

Then there's the fact that you are a boy and I'm a girl. (About this I am quite certain...you are definitely a boy.) Women are much better at communicating and comprehension; we talk to get closer. Men talk to relay information and lead to a resolution. Please consider these differences when you talk to me.

Remember, I am constantly evaluating all stimuli to make sure I comprehend it correctly. I analyze what I'm seeing/hearing/feeling to make sure its right. So, I'm gonna "get it" better, faster and deeper than you are. Keep that in mind.

However it seems I have failed to get you to understand what I saying, and in fact you have accused me of making you feel claustrophobic and tied up. So I'm going to respond directly to a few of the things in your email:

Some of it is going to seem brutal, but blame it on my foreigners language. Actually, I am getting much better at understanding the way you talk and what it really means. Each time we tussle, it is less scary for me. I'm getting braver, and I've learned you enjoy arguing. I don't. *That said, don't worry, we just need to clarify some things.* Oh boy, do we ever...and you're going to not just **listen** to me but **understand** me as well.

First of all, I realise that you need attention and not reassurement. But that this attention that I need to send you is critical, I find hard to ... well take serious. I ask myself: why is it critical -

because that would be nice to know. I did not say that giving me attention is critical. I said that staying connected is critical. You've combined it in your mind with my request for more attention (two separate topics, my love). And it is critical, and on that point I will not cede (give up). I am not on my deathbed when I don't get regular lovins' from you, not by a long shot. I get frustrated that you're not understanding me. To think my use of the word "critical" could mean "I'll be out of my mind if..." is ridiculous.

'we need to be close...' we are and as I see it we don't need to speak every day. It's nice to, but as we're 9 hours apart that can be hard in busy times to schedule. You know that. I do know that. But how am I to know what your schedule is? Because...you tell me? That's the point, you don't. You're the one with the insanely busy life, so why aren't you the one scheduling the "you and me" time? We're not going to magically connect when we both have time, because I have no idea when you would have time for me. Feels like scheduling time is not as important as Facebook quizzes or responding to a request for sex.

Instant messaging is fine for hanging out, chatting, and sharing files, but one of the great benefits of being in a true partnership is getting to spill your guts about big stuff, little stuff...whatever. Getting an insightful email from you about whatever you want to talk about would be such a treat. You know my epic emails? That's me giving you a kind of a textual snapshot of me, as your romantic partner. It takes effort to write them, no way could I do it everyday. Come on, I do have a life you know. A very stressful one full of tons more financial responsibilities than you have, and a (crappy, unfulfilling) job that now leaves me less time to fuck off. But I took the time to SHARE with you to help you feel close to me and give you greater understanding about who I am.

Thirdly - and this isn't meant as a threat, (oh really?) but you need to know that if you're over me as soon as I don't give you attention, like the email I'm responding to here, I'm getting a lot of pressure and I find that to be annoying. You wanna talk annoying? Let me go over this as I only had texting in which to explain my terrible day: Thanksgiving was a surprisingly very, very hard day for me this year. I had sent 3 or 4 text messages over a couple of days that you'd not responded to. And just so you know, if you were not in my life I would be talking to Becca about this shit. And also, just so you know, she is just as busy if not busier than you are and she still makes time when I need her.

But you are my love and so I went to you instead. Yes, texting is now officially not dependable since sometimes you don't get mine, sometimes I don't get yours. But you didn't respond to any of them, and I was having a very hard time. So here I am at an awful low point, and I finally get a text that you were really busy. I was/am quite fed up with you not doing what you say you're going to do (i.e., email once in a while and let me know when you'd be unavailable for me) and I was trying to talk to you about my head and heart via lousy text messaging. You also had not had Internet for days prior to this. The email was sent as an impulsive reaction to your "I'm busy" text. That is what my snarky (bitchy and rude) email was about: the worst day in years + no response from you + you have no Internet + you're leaving for the weekend the next day. Yeah, I found you to be annoying as well.

I feel claustrophobic and tied up, and that's why I left my wife 6 years ago. Okay here's the part of the email that infuriated me, your "non-threat" of a remark. Let me get this straight: I request that you let me know when you're going to be too busy to play/talk/love me (so I don't expect any interaction for a while) and email me occasionally to share your thoughts and feelings; you recognize that it would make me happy for so little effort; and YOU AGREE TO THIS. But, you don't do it cause you think I'm asking too much and really *It's about me not doing anything in a rush, it's about me and the choices I take. The way I prioritize. Sometimes things are more important to get done than to send a hi - goodbye.* And you don't validate that what you think I'm asking of you is really what I am asking of you. So, as I repeatedly ask you for what I want, and we both get increasingly resentful, and you still don't do what I ask or talk to me about it, you end up feeling claustrophobic and tied up... and it's ME making YOU feel that way?? Oh no, that's all on you big boy.

Listen here, I am putting on my boxing gloves for a moment: I have no doubt that your feelings of being pressured are very real. Remember, I am an extremely sensitive person and often have very strong emotional reactions to people/situations/sensual changes. Even if it's a totally unwarranted reaction it is still a very, very real feeling. But...did you not agree to keep in touch (even if you thought I meant daily, and what I meant was when you are going to be off doing things and not available for a while)? Did you consider the fact that I am not your manipulative bitch ex-wife (your words, my dear)? Did you stop to remember that I want you to be out there kicking ass and staying busy and happy? The kind of man you are, a fiercely independent, stubborn, self-assured man with unlimited potential and ambition, can still exist in a legitimate dedicated long-term relationship. But you're acting like one who doesn't want to change his style and habits for anyone, even for the sake of bridging the time and space in a very long-distance relationship. And your independent nature doesn't give you permission to be an asshole and conveniently forget what you agreed to do, and not ask for clarification, not communicate your concerns before they turn into claustrophobia. How am I to know you've misunderstood me? For Christ's sake, take responsibility in figuring out the reason behind what you are feeling before you blame that shit on me. Figure out (by talking to me without being a jerk) if you even have the right to feel that way or if you are reverting to your old days of asshole-ness. You'd better first make sure you've got your facts straight before you say something like that to me again.

Okay, so here's my "non-threat." You need to know that in the past I have been the type to bail out at the first hint of foul. I often wonder how people in relationships can put up with as much as they do, because at times the conflict is unbearable. There is only so much of it I can take before heads go a-flying and doors slam shut forever. These days I try VERY hard not to hurt the ones I love with my quick temper, but I will not stick around for passive-aggressive BS.

I am often afraid of being a big fat hypocrite by expecting others to keep their emotions in check, meanwhile letting my emotions run wild. That's why I do all that deep reflecting shit, to make sure I'm not being unreasonable in feeling as I do. But I will always strive to protect my most valuable resource, and that's ME. I have learned I cannot change my sensitivity, only my reaction to it, and that's very, very difficult. Daniel, since I fell in love with you I have found it easier to keep my reactions in check. I think it has something to do with the way you challenge me and inspire me to look at things in a different ways, but accusing me of making you feel tied

down for having to remind you what I want (even if you misunderstood me, and to which you agreed) IS NOT OKAY. You're going to need learn to tone down the asshole, be nicer about getting your needs met, master the art of compromising (which is not the same as accommodating), and make sure you know what part you've played in creating your angst before you wave that finger of discipline at me.

If I get home very late, I don't always turn on the 'puter to see if you're there, cause I'm tired and I know I'd wanna talk to you - not just say hi - 'night. If I get up really late cause I need half an hour more to sleep, I don't turn on the computer, I drink coffee and smoke cigarettes and go to work. Well, if you had logged on you'd notice I haven't been there that much either. Been my way of putting some space between us as well due to my increasing frustration.

I'm not a good boyfriend always, I'm too much of an individualist. I think we put different things in a relationship. Expectations are hard for me to fulfill at times because of my lifestyle. That's just the way it is. I can accomodate a lot, but I also need to be myself and reflect upon other things. And you need to respect that, and not breathe down my neck. Especially when I'm busy in my life like I am now. I know you're not a good bf all the time. I didn't enter this relationship blindly, you know, I can read between the lines. And I'm not great at it either. And I do respect your need to self-reflect, so how about the same for me? Here's some personal honesty...if you were here or I was there, if we were living together 24-7, I know from past experiences you would drive me crazy if you weren't out doing stuff and were underfoot all the time. Your strong ambitious nature is one of the things I love best about you. I would be home running things or off learning and growing, and be very glad to see you when we got into bed. But I require a lot of time to be with my thoughts. There's a reason I have had more lovers than boyfriends, and why taking years off being in a romantic relationship wasn't that hard – relationships are difficult for me. Also, I didn't want just anything, but something special. As for breathing down your neck, and I say this with great love, fuck you.

In conclusion (finally!!):

Perhaps you don't do this "sharing of your feelings" thing naturally. You're very good at being supportive and listening to someone else's deepest fears and feelings, but maybe you didn't do a lot of soul revealing in your past relationships. However, what I am offering you is not what they had to give you. I am me and not them, and if you want what I am offering then you must do your part. The rules are different for us for two reasons: 1.) I could be the best thing that ever happened to you if you'd let me be. I recognize your brilliant potential and am willing to stand by you and support you even when I wanna bitch slap you for not truly paying attention to what I am saying. Yes...you listen, but you're not great at understanding. You have some growing up to do, some lessons to learn, and guess what? **I can help you get there, because I do too.** 2.) Committing yourself to me -- the very act in joining me in this relationship -- means we are dead serious about it. Why else give your heart to someone who doesn't live in the same freaking country if you don't believe in the awesomeness of it? We're talking about serious life-changing stuff here; separating ourselves from our loved ones for periods of time to be physically together, uprooting ourselves for the sake of loving and living. That's not activity for the faint of heart or for those who aren't 1,000,000% dedicated. I am, because I believe in the potential of us. Do you?

The last time we talked about the next phase of our relationship, it was that I would come to you and I've done that. And I learned a lot, and not all of it was fun and games, but I really am convinced I am supposed to be with you. Now you need to come to see me in my world and try me on as I am here. You have a lot to learn about me yet, how I live and interact and love. Then you will see how I function in this world as the person I am, and what I have to give you.

Daniel, of all the methods of communicating allowed to us, the occasional long, heart-felt email it is the best way to share our lives and try to simulate the kind of companionship we'd have if we were in the same city, in the same house. I wrote to you those emails to connect on an intimate level, to compliment the superficiality of chatty instant and text messaging. But the truth is I really don't feel like sharing with you right now. I have no urges to send you long emails and tell you what's on my mind because, why should I? I'm not getting the same from you. It makes me sad, but its how I feel. You've made such big deal out of resisting me on this, what you agreed to do and would make me so happy, my heart just isn't in it. Unless we share the mundane, awesome, roller-coaster parts of life too, and make regular time to be together, we are not in a partnership – we are merely dating. But perhaps that is the fundamental issue. Are we in a partnership or are we just dating? I really need to know the answer to that. There is a difference, and I suspect I am in a partnership with you, and you are dating me. Please tell me the truth.

I'm in love with you baby, and that's a rare gift. Don't be a jerk and screw this up by thinking I'm tying you up by pressuring you. If you're not telling me (nicely) that you can't be there for me at the moment then I'm not the one tying you up, you're doing that all by yourself. I am willing to work with you, learn from you, give you what you need to be happy – and you need to do the same. I want to walk beside you, as your proud woman. Please let me.

Love to you,

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