

I Think My Boyfriend is a Mama's Boy...Can You Help Me?!

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Every once in awhile, I get emails from women who need unique relationship help. They have identified their significant others as mama's boys and want to know if they should continue to try to love them or leave them. Now, mama's boys come in a variety of personalities. A real macho dude can be every bit his mother's son even as the man who is still tied to her apron strings. But these emails are specifically about the "apron strings mama's boys."

Having changed identifying details to protect the innocent, a recent email read something like this.

"I have invested several years in my relationship with my boyfriend. The problem is his elderly mother. He has lived with her in her house for a decade! She runs his life! They share everything. They even have matching robes. They divide up household chores and expenses as if they are husband and wife. When I visit him in her home, I certainly feel like an interloper, trespassing on their relationship. She doesn't like me and tries to undermine my relationship with her son at every turn. I can't get through to him. He just doesn't see the problem. I've broken up with him several times but it's the sex that keeps me coming back for more. I just feel he has so much potential that he is wasting living this life style with his mother. To be perfectly honest, his lifestyle disgusts me. Can you help? Should I follow my friends' advice and finally dump him?"

This is my advice for her. Your mama's boy is in a very intense situation. The biggest hurdle seems to be that he's happy living with his mom. It sounds like whatever you do to change your behavior to make a difference; they both react in an effort to maintain the status quo. The bottom line here is he doesn't want to change!

In my work, I talk a lot about looking at your relationship as a mirror of you. I think your best bet is to let this relationship go; but as you do so, acknowledge it as your creation so that you don't have to create it again. When you can take this level of responsibility – honoring your relationship as a mirror of you and as something you created to learn from – then you're in a much better space to create a healthier relationship next time.

The sex draws you back in because you two are now chemically attached. The "cuddle chemical," oxytocin, is released in peoples' systems when they make love and it contributes to the sense of attachment. Great sex by itself is evidence of good chemistry but NOT evidence that the relationship is meant to be or that the relationship will ultimately serve you somehow.

I think this relationship has served you in terms of letting you know that you don't want this kind of dysfunction and that you are worthy of better love.

I don't think this man can detach himself enough from his mother to love you better. Not because he isn't capable of growth but because he's apparently content with her and their lifestyle.

Good luck! You don't want to waste more years on anyone who can't really love you back as a full fledged adult. Your friends' advice is to leave this mama's boy and get on with your life. If you choose to leave then leave it knowing you created this mama's boy in your life with clarity that you do not want to do this again. Without that clarity, you will attract to you another mama's boy in a different form.

These changes in your life take courage and a lot of self-love. The changes are 1) choosing to look at your relationship as a mirror of you; 2) treating it as something you created so that you know you can create better for yourself; and 3) leaving the relationship because you deserve better. You loving you is the best foundation for a healthy relationship because the more you love you, the more you attract people who can love you too.

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If you recognize yourself or someone you love in these articles on mama's boys and daddy's girls, you must purchase *Getting Back to Love: When the Pushing and Pulling Threaten to Tear You Apart*.

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