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Do You Really Want Him Back?

He's Gone, You're Glad. Or Are You? Take This *CW* Quiz And Find Out!
By Martin Brown

I got an education over the past week when I asked different women if they had ever found themselves out of a relationship—only to find their former loves wheedling their way back into their hearts.

Should you give him a second chance or tell him to get lost? That's one of the toughest questions you'll ever have to ask yourself—particularly if your head says "No," but your heart is aching to say "Yes." Or is it the other way around?

While it would be great to take the attitude that "he's learned his lesson," the truth is that it rarely works out that way.

"The second chance thing,

*Names have been changed.

sure I've done it," said Lucy. "You tend to doubt that your original opinion of the guy could have ever been so wrong. So you give him a second chance. Sometimes even a third—and each time, you end up regretting it."

Roberta revealed that in the past, she took a guy back because she was concerned about what other people would think. "It's hard to tell your friends that someone you introduced to them—and said a lot of wonderful things about—did not turn out to be the man you'd hoped he would be," she explains. "You feel that it says you have lousy judgement and you wonder what they are

Is this relationship really worth saving?

The answer is no, if...

- ...he consistently lies, even after he's told you he won't lie anymore.
- ...he laughs off your need to talk.
- ...he gets defensive when you try to tell him how you feel.
- ...you know in your heart that you will never be able to trust him.
- ...you feel that you can't move on, because you'll never find another guy, let alone one who treats you better.

The answer is yes, if...

- ...you can speak up about what you need—and want—in the relationship.
- ...he's open to discussing the sore spots in the relationship.
- ...he truly listens to your issues—without blaming you or taking offense at what you say.
- ...he is willing to make some changes.
- ...he actually follows through on his commitments to you.

thinking when you bring your next boyfriend around."

Basic Instinct

From this man's point of view, I've always thought that your first instinct is almost always your best one. Nearly every woman I spoke with knew well before their final breakups that the men they were dating were *not* the ones they wanted to be with in the "long term," but they were always able to find a reason to put off the breakup or to let him come back—against their better judgement.

Sure, all relationships have their ups and downs or times of uncertainty, so doubts can and will occur. But those feelings are very different from when you feel constant frustration while in a relationship. As for a second time around, well, you have to consider that perhaps the fear of letting go is really based on a lack of self-confidence on your part. After all, when

we reach a low point in our emotions, it is easier to make compromises in what we expect from our relationships.

When we begin to believe that we can't do better—or we don't really deserve the relationship we want—we allow our expectations to fall below the Richter scale. Fortunately, most of the women I spoke to who had this experience described reaching an epiphany—a moment in time when they finally realized that what they wanted and expected from their on-again, off-again guy was not going to happen, so they ditched the guys. In each case, they were glad they let go, because they found the guy they were looking for in the first place. It may take courage to give up what you've got for what you only hope is out there, but having a better life is about taking chances and women seem to agree that moving on in search of a better relationship is one chance well worth the taking. **CW**

QUIZ TIME!

Are you stuck in a take-him-back dilemma? Answer these questions truthfully to find out...

1. When night falls, he...

- a) is right there by your side.
- b) is out on the town—without you.
- c) periodically disappears—he forgets to call and let you know where he is.

2. When other girls pass by...

- a) he may glance, but he never stares.
- b) he makes eye contact and flirts.
- c) he knows it—and he looks to see if you notice *him* watching.

3. He lies...

- a) rarely.
- b) whenever he opens his mouth.
- c) frequently, especially when he does not want to be in trouble with you.

4. When you catch him in a fib...

- a) it's more like a little white lie used to spare your feelings.
- b) he never shows regret, and then tries flattery.
- c) he's truly sorry—that he got caught.

5. Yes, he's...

- a) stayed true to you.
- b) had constant indiscretions—with no remorse.
- c) slipped up once, and certainly regretted it.

6. No, he's...

- a) never going to give you a reason to distrust him.
- b) never going to be fully faithful—and you know it.
- c) not a *player*, but he'd like to pretend that he's one.

7. When he's out with the boys...

- a) you never worry; you trust him.
- b) you worry that he's picking up girls, and you feel insecure.
- c) you expect shenanigans, but nothing serious.

8. Your friends think he's...

- a) a great catch.
- b) a total loser who will eventually break your heart.
- c) a sweet guy who needs you to settle him down.

9. Your biggest fight was over...

- a) something stupid; you don't even remember what it was about.
- b) the way he treats you.
- c) money, not other honeys.

10. Your biggest regret is that...

- a) you can't spend more time together.
- b) he always feels that he "needs his space away from you."
- c) he still has some maturing to do.

11. When he says, "I'll call you later," you know...

- a) he means it.
- b) you really won't hear from him.
- c) to hand him his cell phone and tell him, "No excuses."

12. The last straw would be...

- a) infidelity.
- b) gee...you hadn't thought about it.
- c) any goofball move that would embarrass you—and he knows it.

The Answer Guide:

If you answered:

Mostly A's: Hang on to this guy. He's a winner who knows how to show you respect—and he's proven he's earned yours as well.

Mostly B's: Dump the dude. He's a heartbreaker with no soul of his own. You can do better and the sooner you realize this, the better.

Mostly C's: Lay down the law. This guy is salvageable, but he's testing your limits. Go ahead and give him some guidelines. You'll know he's truly Mr. Right if he sticks to the program.

Take Him Back? Been There, Done That

Pamela, Angela and Emily each have their own thoughts and experiences on men that bounce in and out of your life.



Pamela

"I'll admit that I did, in fact, take back a guy who had cheated on me—*twice!* He would get in trouble with me, but he'd show up with a peace offering and I'd fold.

"Now, of course, I realize why I did it: low self-esteem. What broke the cycle was a major life change: I got out of school, moved to a new town, got a new job and started meeting new people. Doing all that gave me a greater sense of self-confidence and independence. It made me realize, 'I don't need a guy like this in my life.' Now when I'm in a relationship that breaks up, my philosophy is 'It's over.' "

Angela

"I learned a lot about heartache from watching my friends interact with their boyfriends. My goal is to never make the same mistake twice. When things were not working out with a guy, we always stayed friends—but the relationship was not something I continued."



Emily

"I could write a book about my one big-time bounce-back guy!

"Even though he gave me a really bad time, I was hopeful when he called two months after

our breakup. We got back together for exactly one day and two nights. I thought I'd hoped that our reconciliation would be about more than just sex, but it wasn't. Do I want him back? No way! Been there, done that."