

# Dear John,



Dear John,

A year ago I started seeing a guy who happened to be good friends with some of my guy friends. After three weeks, without warning, he stopped talking to me, and I found out later he was seeing another girl. I was devastated, but I moved on. I avoided him for a year and then ran into him at a friend's party. He apologized for what had happened and wanted a second chance. He claimed that he had "changed" and was more mature than before. So I gave in, because my feelings for him had returned. Now history is repeating and once again he is pulling the same crap and not talking to me. I don't know what to do this time. Normally I would just move on and not say anything, but he is even closer with my friends now and I will have to see him around. I need some advice. Do I say nothing and pretend everything is good, or do I call him out and confront him?

Signed,

History Repeating

Dear History Repeating

First off, let me applaud you for your letter. While many Dear John letters are lengthy sob stories, yours calmly and quickly brings to light many universal dating issues worthy of discussion. For that reason alone I am convinced that you are miles beyond the immature loser you were with, and better off without him.

Dating a friend of "guy friends" can be risky business, and you are right to be leery of it. From our earliest kiss-and-tell playground days we boys talk about our girlfriends, and not always respectfully. As we grow, we control our bravado better, but until we fully mature (and admittedly some of us never advance past adolescence) we tend to speak disrespectfully of girls. It's a way to fit in to the He-Man Woman Haters Club that we'd joined on the playground. For some reason, respecting girls is seen as unmanly, and quite possibly a sign of being "gay", so we develop a learned misogyny, at least on the outside. Frankly, I've never understood this mentality. Being thought of as gay by talking lovingly about women is devoid of logic.

Anyway, when you date a close friend of your guy friends you can assume he'll be high-fiving his frat mates upon his return from a night in your cookie jar. Therefore, you need an extra layer of caution, because the guys he'll be high fiving know you too.

But let's say moving slow isn't your speed. You give in quickly, and after three weeks he's hungry for someone else's cookie. Do you talk to your mutual guy friends about what a scumbag he is? If his friends know he's scum, you'll be painted as a fool for having trusted him. If they think he's a caring guy, you'll be blamed for making him act in a way he usually doesn't. It's a no win situation for you.

You may have heard of another little bond we guys have called "Bros before Hos". We stick by our friends over our girlfriends, for fear of being labeled pussy whipped; likewise, our friends stick by us no matter how much of a jerk we are. I imagine that your ex and his friends will stick by each other on this one. Therefore, you be the better person and move on. We've already determined that you are the better person, so this shouldn't be hard.

Your thoughtful letter also touches on the question of one's ability to change. There are those who suggest that a leopard can't change his spots, that once a creep always a creep. I don't prescribe to this notion. It is a pessimistic attitude and gives little credit to man's free will, not to mention his morality. Psychiatrists, psychologists, social workers, coaches, self-help writers, rehabilitators, preachers, motivational speakers, wardens, teachers, counselors, even advice columnists are in the business of helping others help themselves. Why pay a shrink two bills an hour if change isn't possible?

It's important to realize that man (and woman) has an immense capacity for change. Some changes happen naturally through maturity, some because we strive for them, still others after hitting rock bottom; but whenever they happen, the key to change is recognizing the need for it and wanting it.

That being said, my guess is your ex-boyfriend doesn't see a need for change and doesn't want it. He's high fiving his frat mates after each new morsel and is pleased as grain punch being the pig he is. Otherwise, he'd have given you the courtesy of an explanation. Any squealing you do won't change him, and it won't make your mutual friends more sympathetic toward you either.

Your best bet is to understand the situation and not cry over the spilt milky substance between you. As a thoughtful, loving woman, you are worthy of a man who is secure enough in his masculinity to give the same thoughtful love back to you. So wash your hands of the loser and pretend everything is good. Then find someone truly worthy of you, and after your first great night of lovemaking together, give him a high five for a job well done.

Thanks for playing,

John