

# Dear John,



Dear John,

*My guy and I have lived together for a year now. Not long before we moved in, his mom died. He had treated me well to that point, but after her death he began treating me much worse. It got so bad I started asking if he still loved me. Sometimes he'd say yes and other times I'd get no response. I would try to hug him and he would push me away.*

*He only kisses me when we have sex, but at least we still have sex and I know he is satisfied. Occasionally, I have broken up with him because he gets so intolerable. During break ups he'll say hurtful things like, "You're ugly" and then insist on coming back. One night I deliberately cried hard in front of him so he would know how much he was hurting me. He said, "Stop crying! What are you crying about?"*

*He says I am the only one he has ever truly loved, but I don't know about that. When his mom was alive he always wanted me around, now he doesn't. When we have free time, he spends it at his best guy friend's house instead. His friend treats him badly, but my boyfriend shows him the utmost respect. Meanwhile, he treats me and his own sister like crap.*

*I don't want to make it sound like his mom's passing is the only reason, but I have noticed a change. He is very hard to talk to about any of this. He ignores me or changes the subject or accuses me of arguing with him. I don't know what to do. It is complicated because I love him and we live together and if I kick him out he will have no place to lay his head.*

*Signed,*

*Lost and Forgotten*

Dear Lost and Forgotten

Many women who write to Dear John describe emotionally abusive partners, and some of these women do little to stop the bad treatment they receive. In your case, it sounds like you have at least made an effort to reach your boyfriend and he has been unwilling or unable to listen to you.

I don't want to oversimplify your situation because it is complicated. My guess is his mother's passing has in fact hit him hard, and while you have legitimate concerns about your relationship, his bad treatment of you may be due in part to confusing feelings he has about the relationship he's lost.

That being said, it is impossible to excuse this guy's behavior. He comes across as a brute and a bully and completely disrespectful of you. But it also sounds like you have stopped demanding respect. Maybe you now realize that avoiding confrontation and finding a quiet place to sulk only brings more to sulk about.

Therefore, you must stop being your boyfriend's emotional punching bag. Get off the ropes, stand up to his jabs and fight back. If you do this, hopefully he will appreciate your strength and treat you better. If he doesn't, you should feel no guilt from saying "No mas" to the relationship, and suggesting he go live instead with that friend to whom he gives so much respect.

Thanks for playing,

John