

Are You (or are you with) A "Commitment-Phobe"?

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Are You (or are you with) A "Commitment-Phobe"?

By Toni Coleman

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We hear it all the time. "He just won't make a commitment." "She just wants some space right now." "I'm not sure if I'm ready for a serious relationship."

What does having a fear of commitment really mean? Actually, it means basically what it says. For SOME reason you, or someone you are involved with, isn't ready to take this relationship (or any relationship) to the next step.

So how do we know if we or our (hoped for) partner are truly afraid of commitment? How do we know that it's not something else? Is there any real difference between these two anyway?

Do these excuses sound familiar? "I'm just under a lot of stress right now." "It's not you, it's me." "I can't focus on a relationship right now because of my overloaded schedule."

Very often, we want to accept these reasons because we fear the real truth. Other times, we are just very confused by our feelings and the often mixed messages from the other person.

So, how do we evaluate our ability to make a long-term commitment? How do we know if he/she is really ready or willing?

There are only two real issues here to examine.

The first issue involves looking at a true fear of commitment itself. If this is the problem it's important for the person with this fear to ask themselves a few key questions.

- Are you concerned about the idea of forever?
- Do you fear you could make a mistake in who you choose?
- Do you fear a loss of your freedom/autonomy?
- Are you afraid of a bad marriage- like your parents for instance
- Do you fear you would be a bad mate?

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If you answered yes to any of these, it would be a good idea to begin working to understand where these feelings come from. Once you understand them better, you can choose to address them.

Perhaps you need more time or emotional growth before you consider making a long-term commitment.

If you'd like to deal with past relationship feelings, I have an article on this at <http://www.consum-mate.com/02jul.htm>.

If you are unsure if you are relationship ready, check out my article on this at

<http://www.consum-mate.com/03jun.htm>

If lack of self-awareness is an issue, check out <http://www.consum-mate.com/02aug.htm>

Greater self-knowledge will help you to overcome this block to building a lasting and satisfying relationship.

The second issue is the inability to make a commitment to a PARTICULAR relationship. This may not be the right one. Perhaps there is a sense of this but it is written off to being a "commitment -phobe" in general.

Focus on the true level of involvement with each other. Is there a genuine connection? Or is there a vague feeling of something missing? Evaluate the quality of your intimate relating. This does not mean how often (or even how good) the sex is. This is about how open, sharing and real you are in your interactions with each other.

Does any of this sound familiar?

It seems like we are only killing time?

He/she doesn't seem to want what I want.

We seem to be off and on in our level of contact/affection.

I hey are still not over a past relationship.

I hey just don't seem to know what I hey want.

Remember to focus on the involvement or lack thereof between you. If either person is disengaged in any way, it's time to address the real issue of; "Is this the right relationship for us?"

Exploring your ability to make a lasting commitment should be a first step in your plan for building a healthy and lasting relationship.

Toni Coleman is a relationship coach in McLean, Virginia. She specializes in working with singles that want to create lasting, intimate relationships. She has also written numerous email classes for singles on all aspects of meeting, dating and relating. She is the author of the email newsletter, The Art of

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Intimacy, which goes out to thousands of subscribers monthly

Being Committed

By Liz Sumner, Life Coach

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A number of years ago at my first personal growth seminar, the wise group leader asked if I had problems with commitment. I clearly remember my thought processes. "Commitment? I'm not sure I understand what that means. Oh well, it's probably not important."

That was a pivotal realization for me. I subsequently learned what commitment means and how it shows up for me. Maybe this is on my mind now because I'm coming up on a significant wedding anniversary— my first. That aspect of my life is working well. What about the parts that aren't?

I recently had to cancel two workshops because not enough people had signed up. Certainly the beautiful weather and/or frightening world circumstances may have been factors. But I wonder how much of the lack of interest was generated by me. For both events I had created a design that was about 80% complete and I stopped there. I had the main ideas worked out but didn't finish the final agenda or produce the handouts. Was this prescience or a self-fulfilling prophesy? Are people not committing to me because I'm not committing to them? Which is the cause and which is the effect?

In retrospect I think I was waiting for the enthusiasm of others to carry me over that last hurdle. I wanted to see some registrations before I fully committed. It was a bargain, not a gift. Why? Holding back certainly didn't protect me from disappointment. And we'll never know whether the effort would have been wasted. What would it have cost me to disconnect the giving from the receiving? I don't tell my husband, "I will love you if you love me back."

At that same personal growth seminar mentioned above I heard a useful explanation of the different levels of commitment:

Level One – I hear you.

Level Two – I'll think about it.

Level Three – I'll do it (unless something comes up).

Level Four – I'll do it unless, god forbid, I'm hit by a bus.

Level Five – I'll drag myself there bloodied and broken if I have to.

I like this distinction. Not every circumstance deserves a high level of commitment— it would be exhausting. But I want to choose based on what I'm willing to give not on what I want from others.

Maybe it's not a matter of disconnecting the two sides of the bargain, but providing both halves yourself— the giving and the receiving. I have this image of a seesaw. The more commitment you have on one side the more trust you need to put on the other— trust that your needs will be met somehow or other. At all levels the seesaw is balanced, but the heavier the commitment and trust, the wilder the ride.

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Life Coach Liz Sumner is fully committed to your clarity and empowerment. For a complimentary

30-minute coaching call to help you take action email eamsumner@monad.net, call 603-876-3956 or visit www.WonderfulCoach.com.



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