

# Love life



## the game of love

Love and relationships can often be a gamble, so find out what to do when the stakes are high!

Anyone who is in or has been in a relationship can tell you that sometimes, in order to hit the love jackpot you have to take a chance. The downside is that if the odds are just not right, you might end up losing more than you wagered. Don't stress—*Seventeen* expert and Life Coach Sharmini Hensen is on hand with advice you can bet on!

### age gap

“I'm 14 this year, and I'm dating a **19-year-old guy**. I'm not sure if it will work because of our age difference, but I love him a lot. **Should I break up with him?**”

- ANONYMOUS

“When you are 14, a 5-year age gap **does** make a lot of difference,” says Sharmini. You might have **very little in common** and that's probably causing your doubts. Still, that's no reason to walk away. Enjoy the love you are feeling now and **be open** to the possibility that you'll move on to meet someone more suited for you. When that happens, **be thankful** for the time he shared with you—it will help you to **grow and learn**.

VERDICT:  
Let it ride

### new girl

“There's this new girl at my school. I introduced myself to her and we have since become **close friends**. I have **developed a major crush on her**, but I don't know if she likes me too. My guy friends think I should totally **ask her out**. Should I?”

- MAX JOSEPH

You should definitely **go and get what you want**. What's the worst that could happen? Sure, says Sharmini, she might say no and you'll find out she does not like you that way. **BUT** she could just as easily say yes! So why don't you find out? If you hesitate, you might regret it when she finds someone else to love!

VERDICT:  
Raise the bet

TEXT: INAYAH ARIFFIN; IMAGES: STOCK.XCHNG; 17 EXPERT LIFE COACH SHARMINI HENSEN, LIFEWORKS (www.sharminihensen.com)

### indecisive

“My boyfriend and I broke up a few months ago, but he's still very clingy. He's nice but he can be annoying sometimes because **he doesn't know how to treat a lady**—he's not very understanding and has a temper. I told him to give me some time to **rethink our relationship** after my major exams. I don't know whether I should take him back or just tell him I like the way things are now. The problem is if I decide to stay friends, I'm **worried** I'll regret it in the future. I don't know whether I still have feelings for him. Help me!”

- JEAN

“It sounds like **you know what you want** and you are **hesitating** to make the decision,” says Sharmini. The thing is, prolonging the decision-making process isn't going to change the way you feel. If you don't know whether you still have feelings for him, chances are, you don't. You know you deserve more than he can give you at the moment. So **move forward**; he'll get the message. You can do it!

VERDICT:  
Cash in your chips

### secret admirer

“I think I have a secret admirer. We are friends, but I don't know how he feels about me. There's **not a hint or any action** on his part that shows he admires me, but when we're talking, he **doesn't dare** look me in the eyes. This is the part that I find kind of weird! One day, my friend asked him via MSN about ‘our relationship’ and he just said that he thinks of me as a really good friend. If this is the case, **why won't he look me in the eyes when we are chatting?** Is it because he knows that I admire him?”

- SERENE

He **might be shy**, or maybe he's just **not that into you**. “Our eyes are great communicators and reveal a lot about us,” says Sharmini. **Guys find it hard to express themselves**, and not looking at you could be his way of **avoiding you** and perhaps **trying not to get too close**, especially if he suspects you like him. Adds Sharmini, “If he says you are a really good friend, I am sure that's what you are to him. **Just leave it at that!**”

VERDICT:  
Fold



### GETTING BACK TOGETHER

“My boyfriend and I just broke up. I'm trying to hook up with him again because **I still love him**. He said he needs time to think about it, but says he still loves me. **Why does he need time? Is he lying when he says he loves me? What can I do to make things like they used to be?**”

- TARA

There is a **possibility** that he still loves you, but is **afraid that the same issues will return** if you rush back in. “There were problems in your relationship that caused the break-up, so step back and look at what you had with him objectively,” says Sharmini. Were you too clingy? Was he too distant? **Give yourselves time** to look at the lessons you can learn from it. Then you can come together again and **talk openly** about how you can make things better than they used to be (really!).

VERDICT:  
Draw

### drifting apart

“My best friend is a boy and he was away for three months (NS). Lately, it seems like we're drifting apart and that really **scares me** as I'm **afraid of losing him as a friend**. He has a crush on another girl and that doesn't even bother me, but when he gets close to another friend, I get scared. Is this normal? How can I cope with it?”

- LYSHIA

Sometimes, the close bonds we have with our friends fade, but this is how we learn and grow as individuals. “Best friends are special, but it's **natural for all our relationships to change**,” says Sharmini. “When we have learnt what we need from a friend, that person falls off from our lives for a moment, or forever. The good news is there are **new opportunities** for you to meet and create new friendships that will continue to enrich you.” Be excited about meeting new people!

VERDICT:  
Up the ante

