

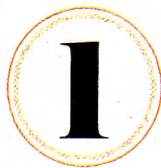
# THE love guide



## WHAT TO LEARN FROM A BREAKUP

*Instead of wallowing in sorrow  
or placing blame, use the end of  
a relationship to take a closer look  
at yourself—and your choices.*

BY DORKYS RAMOS



***“He cheated on me because I made more money than him, so I broke it off.”***

→ Although lying and cheating are never ways to respond to any situation, look at what role you played, if any, and take responsibility. If you’ve been cheated on before, what keeps drawing you to that type of person? “Typically the answer is it’s safe,” says dating coach Marni Battista, founder of Dating with Dignity. “You never really have to commit the whole way, and you can always blame him.” Or perhaps your success in the office translated to bossing him around at home. “So many women in a relationship just start nitpicking and shutting down,” she explains. “It’s not about being subservient, but about helping him feel like he can make you happy.”



***“My family and friends simply did not know what I saw in him, and after a while I couldn’t get their negative comments out of my head.”***

→ Next time Mami wants to criticize your boyfriend for not earning enough, visiting enough or whatever enough (it’s always something, right?), nip it in the bud. Let well-meaning family and friends know that their comments aren’t helpful—you need to trust your own intuition. “If your default tendency is self-doubt, you’re going to ask every single person you can and then you’re still not going to know what to do,” Battista says. On the other hand, if you’re unhappy in your relationship and people are mirroring thoughts you’re in denial about, there could be a valid reason why they’re triggering your self-doubt. “Come up with a list of five nonnegotiable deal-breakers when dating so that you have a baseline to refer to if you ever start doubting yourself.”



***“We both worked, but I felt like I was becoming too much of a housewife and he wasn’t contributing as much as I wanted around the house.”***

→ “This is the perfect example of someone who has allotted energy around caretaking, but then doesn’t have the skills to have their own needs met,” Battista says. Do you need to care for others in order to validate your self-worth? This could also signal issues with codependency. Figure out what your own needs are and ask yourself if they’re being met. “Set up boundaries for yourself and ask for help when you need it,” she says. “It’s all about communicating effectively.”



***“We weren’t sexually compatible. He wanted it all the time and would get annoyed if I just wasn’t in the mood.”***

→ Examine how you handled things. Did you lash out and fight, or did you discuss the situation together? In the future, the optimal route would be to sit with your partner and figure out where the glitch lies. “Start any confrontation with no-combat communication by acknowledging and validating



Learning how to communicate frustrations will go a long way in cutting through the tension.



the other person, stating your needs and then cocreating a solution,” Battista suggests. Your sexual incompatibility could be due to a number of reasons, so learning how to communicate your frustrations—even if a professional needs to be brought into the mix—will go a long way in cutting through the tension.