# Mixed Messages Can Hurt

September 8, 2008 By Kate Ferguson

Sometimes, in relationships there is such a thing as being too nice. Take, for instance, breaking up. When a relationship has reached its end and cannot be salvaged, letting go is usually the best thing for both parties. Often, however, this comes very hard for some people.

Women, in particular, who try to extricate themselves from relationships with controlling, obsessive or abusive men must often consider how best to leave their partner as things can go from bad to worst, quick, fast and in a hurry.

At the risk of jeopardizing their own well being, girls are raised to be accommodating and overly concerned with hurting someone else's feelings. In turn we become women who suffer for far too long through bad or nowhere relationships. Brought up to give off mixed messages, we act disinterested to "keep a man interested." Why? Because, we've been told, no man values anything (women, too) he can get too easily, which is why we sometimes become victims of our own man-getting strategies. When you do want to get rid of him, however, sometimes he's unable to take a hint. (Maybe, he thinks, she's playing hard to get.)

Stalking, perhaps, the number one fear of women who wish to break off an unwanted relationship, is a dark side of romance. Sometimes, it's mild: annoying and persistent phone calls from a former lover. Sometimes, it's extreme: threats of bodily harm that have to be taken very seriously.

Women, advises Dr. Jeff Gardere in the September 2008 issue of Sister2Sister magazine, need to give clear messages to men they no longer want to see that "the relationship is over." Mixed signals of no kind are to be given: no phone calls when the going gets tough, no "let's be friends" and chill together sometimes, no visits to his hang-out spots alone or with a new man (translation: Oh, she just wants to make me jealous; I know she's still interested.)

So, stop worrying about how bad he's going to feel if you decide to make the break. For once, be nice to yourself and think about you first.

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