

Don't Trust Your Gut

To experience satisfaction in your relationship and to effectively manage your ROCD, you must abandon completely the belief that your emotions alone will lead you to the right partner or that they will be accurate indicators of whether you should stay or leave. Everything about MOTO values heart over head, emotion over rationality, but picking a partner and committing for life is too important a choice to leave to something as ephemeral and petulant as our feelings. Remember that our gut is a microphone for our mind, and if you are a highly attuned person with a sensitive threat response, fear messages will sound louder and more convincing than anything else you might be feeling. They will sound louder than love, louder than attraction and louder than the desire to commit. Remember that what we feel to be true is often an indicator of what we fear to be true, so no matter how many times your friends and loved ones will advise you to "trust your gut- in relationships, don't listen.

Of course, we don't need to throw away our emotions; they are valuable data points that can and should be considered when moving through the world. But they cannot be the only indication of what does or doesn't work in a relationship. This morning you might have felt sad, and now you don't. Last month you felt confident and capable; this month you are filled with doubt. No one who loves you would advise you to make any other major decision in life based off emotion alone, and yet when it comes to love we are told rationality is unromantic. We are told that it's offensive to consider partnership through a practical and balanced lens, that this cheapens it. But this is just another way MOTO tries to take the wild complexity of love and partnership and reduce it down to a single bland flavour.

If we shouldn't rely on our feelings, then what should we trust? My clients ask this question a lot, an inquiry that reflects the emphasis that has been placed on emotions as our only guideposts to good love. Emotions matter, but so do other factors that must be taken into consideration. The answer is to look for good-enough levels when evaluating your relationship. For example, do you feel good-enough happy with them? Do you feel good-enough levels of joy, attraction, and alignment? Does your partner meet your needs a good-enough number of times? Do the two of you do a good-enough job at working through conflict and re-establishing connection?

If this all sounds like I'm advocating for you to settle in your relationships, then you've heard me clearly. I am. I'm asking you to settle from an impossible standard of perfection, the very standard that has caused you all the pain you're currently experiencing, the one that fuels your ROCD. I'm asking you to settle for the truth of what healthy love and partnership can provide, and to accept what they can never and were never meant to. Settling may seem like a bad word, one that MOTO has made taboo. But the curse many of us face today is not that we settle for a bad partner, but that we never feel settled at all. We refuse to accept anything less than perfect.

Taken from: *Relationship OCD: A CBT-Based Guide to Move Beyond Obsessive Doubt, Anxiety, and Fear of Commitment in Romantic Relationships* (2022) by Sheva Rajae