

SO Relationships

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SO Relationships:

Several lessons can be drawn from my years with Chameleon. I'd like to offer these points to people who are in an SO (significant other) relationship.

Relationships that aren't a match:

First, there's the question of whether or not an SO relationship is a match.

1) I was "into" Chameleon from the start. To the extent that I vowed I'd be with her if it was possible.

But she wasn't interested in me. She came back to me repeatedly over the years, but it wasn't to be with me. It was to use me.

In old-school romance novels, one person sometimes pursued another until the object of their desire realized that they'd been the right person to fall in love with all along.

It's the wrong course. You'll end up being used or, if you yourself go too far, as an annoyance to the person who you'd hoped would value you.

If you've known somebody for a while and they remain less interested in you than the other way around, it isn't something that you should ignore or try to fix.

In this case, move on.

2) When Chameleon and I were in a pretend marriage, I idealized her. This means that I thought of her a certain way, created a role for her to play, and assumed that she'd fit into it.

I didn't think enough about how Chameleon thought of me and the role that she expected me to fit into.

3) On a separate but related note, I wanted Chameleon to be the one to play the role that I'd pictured. It needed to be her.

In the other direction, I wasn't anything but a faceless piece to be used or replaced as necessary.

If your SO isn't replaceable to you, but you are to him or her, it isn't a real SO relationship.

4) We did have some things in common. But, if somebody is going to be a part of your personal life, that isn't enough.

Character matters and the most important part of that is honesty.

Toxic Relationships:

From there, we move to the question of whether or not a relationship is toxic.

5) I ignored gut feelings and red flags.

Gut feelings can be wrong, but they should be checked.

6) It's all right to ask questions.

In SO relationships, there are boundaries. People need distance in some contexts. You aren't entitled to know absolutely everything that is happening on the other side.

However, if your SO says "it's none of your business" frequently - especially if they display anger when they say it - that's a red flag.

If they say, more reflectively, "it's something that I'm dealing with", that's more of a grey area.

7) Lies are right out.

If an SO lies to you repeatedly and feels no guilt about it - the last part in particular - there is no SO relationship.

In this case, you may still need or want a relationship of some type, but the SO part is a fantasy and

one that you need to set aside.

8) I didn't have support elsewhere. I placed my hopes and future in the hands of one person. I gave away all of my power.

If validation for your life comes primarily from an SO, that may simply be a mistake on your part, one that you can rectify.

If the other person is taking advantage of that, that's a red flag.

Positive Relationships:

9) I married, later on, for love. It was a two-way street.

We both felt a bond and both took time to listen to and understand each other.

A relationship where both sides were patient and vulnerable - i.e., concerned about how the other side felt - was like night and day compared to what I'd experienced before.

We found that we understood how to comfort each other physically and verbally, as if by instinct. Yet there didn't seem to be pressure on either of us. Again, it was like night and day.

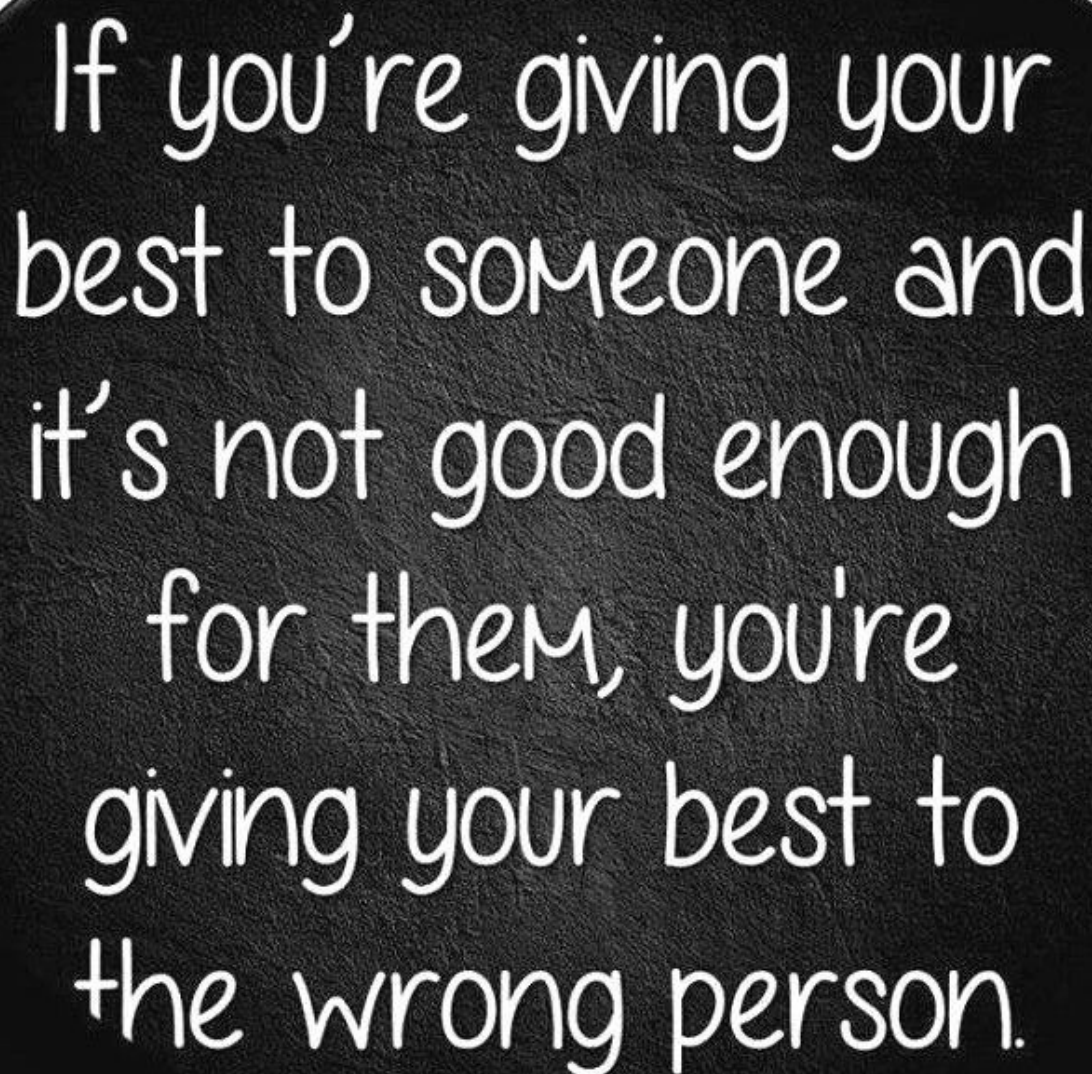
10) Turtleman, a former Minetest player in his 20s I chatted with once, had been with his SO for 7.5 years. He described the relationship this way:

"We're similar enough in temperament, a relaxed one, that there is no judgment between us. We share things with each other that we wouldn't share with anyone else, based on the understanding that the other will get it."

"There are other factors, but I think that that's the big thing."

"There is emotional intimacy there that I can't imagine having with anybody else. We'd never accuse the other of being petty, or childish, or irrational, that kind of thing."

"It helps that we share common interests in some respects, but we also share new interests with each other as well."

A blackboard with white text, framed by a thick black border. The text is written in a white, cursive font. The blackboard has a slightly textured appearance.

If you're giving your
best to someone and
it's not good enough
for them, you're
giving your best to
the wrong person.

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