

When An Exhausting Relationship Deserves To Die – Don't Feel Guilty When Necessary Walls Go Up

BY DANIELLE DULSKY
HOWL FOR ME WOLF WOMAN

Boundary Breaches and the Timely Death of Exhausting Friendships

Howl for me, Wolf-Woman!

I am having a hard time saying “no”. I have a really good friend who’s getting on my last nerve. She’s a single mother and works full-time. She is really a great person and is a really good friend, but she asks me to help her all the time.

She has family that can help, and the father is still very much involved. I just feel sometimes that it becomes too much. I feel she isn’t considering my life and all that I have to do, and lately I’m starting to resent her for all of her requests.

I want to help her, but I want it to be healthy for me. She positions me in ways that are hard for me to say no, or to even talk to her about it. I’ve lost my boundaries and I’ve lost my voice.

Please help.

. . .

Oh, my love! Boundaries are precious borders we necessarily build around our truest currencies.

Your time and energy are two of your most precious resources, and if your friend would not expect you to give her money, then perhaps it's a wonder she feels entitled to your time and energy.

You make no mention of any conversation you've had with her about this aside from her positioning you "in ways that are hard for [you] to say no," but I will proceed assuming she has at least some idea that she is depleting you and risking your friendship with her endless requests.

You have already reached a point in this situation where you have written to me, expending even more time and energy, and I think the most important question now is this: **What is this friendship worth to you?**

Very likely, the dynamic of the relationship is now very much informed, and perhaps even sustained, by you investing your resources significantly – which, as you imply, may well be more abundant than hers at this point in your life – and her investing comparatively little. In my experience, these particular friendship dynamics do not last long; you will likely begin avoiding her out of self-preservation, she will find other sources for the support she needs, but whether the friendship is reborn again depends on the nature of its death.

If a painfully honest conversation will not remedy the situation, a conversation in which you clearly express that while a woman certainly needs and deserves a village when raising children, you are only part of that village and not the whole town, a conversation in which you tell her you believe your friendship is in danger, and a conversation in which you demand acknowledgement for your abundant support,

then I recommend a severance of ties until your voice within the context of this friendship can be reclaimed. It should not be your task alone to manage this relationship so that it's fair to you.

The heart chakra, ideally, nourishes and receives in balance. If she asks you to watch her children for an hour yet again, and you feel you cannot, in reply, consent but suggest she offer an hour of her time in exchange, then you are absolutely being unfairly depleted.

All long-term relationships, romantic and otherwise, must die and be reborn many times over if they are to continue. Perhaps let this friendship, in its current form, shrivel and fall from the vine.

Take this opportunity to use the voice you say you've lost to set your first, strong boundary.

Tell your friend you need a few weeks of space, you will reconnect with her on such-and-such date, and that you hope she will respect you enough to trust that you are well and not ask any questions.

If she cannot grant you that very simple and easily met request (I mean, she literally has to do nothing), then the relationship deserves to die, don't you think? I know that sounds harsh, and I am a bit macabre to be sure, but you should not for one goddamn second feel guilty over your very human need to put some walls up.

Do not cling to a highly dysfunctional relationship, willing it to change without shifting any variable that might actually change it; this never ends well. She's getting quite a lot out of her friendship with you, and likely has reason to value it

significantly.

Even so, there is the very real possibility that she has been more of a taker than a giver in her friendships her whole life and will not feel called toward a renewal of the friendship where the dynamic no longer serves her disproportionately; you have to ask yourself if this is a risk you are willing to take.

I recommend Anodea Judith's book [*Eastern Body, Western Mind*](#) for her discussion of boundaries, relationships, and the heart chakra, or Marshall Rosenberg's book [*Non-Violent Communication*](#) for how to meaningfully move through potential communication conflicts, but, truly, I hope you do not invest any more energy into managing this relationship.

You've done enough. Stop howling for her. Start howling for yourself, and know that I am howling with you.

All blessings,
Danielle

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You deserve a lover who wants you disheveled, with everything and all the reasons that wake you up in a haste and the demons that won't let you sleep. You deserve a lover who makes you feel safe, who can consume this world whole if he walks hand in hand with you; someone who believes that his embraces are a perfect match with your skin. You deserve a lover who wants to dance with you, who goes to paradise every time he looks into your eyes and never gets tired of studying your expressions. You deserve a lover who listens when you sing, who supports you when you feel shame and respects your freedom; who flies with you and isn't afraid to fall. You deserve a lover who takes away the lies and brings you hope, coffee, and poetry.

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