



EXECUTIVE TRAITS

Dear Jill,

When you've been on your own for so long relationship can be difficult. Clearly, you can fend for yourself and you've been fending for yourself. You can take care of yourself. Being an executive you're used to funding your own travels, buying things for yourself, even taking care of others. So on a material basis you really don't need a man. Yet here you are wanting marriage. Means there's something more you want. You're also used to keeping your own time. You go to the gym according to your schedule, go to the salon on your schedule... You do social calls without need of informing anyone. You don't have to give an excuse or render an explanation. So you're pretty much independent and very independent-minded.

At some level it's about emotional survival. And you're used to power. You're a high-ranking exec. You're used to giving commands and instructions. These are wonderful traits in the executive suite but they won't serve you well in a relationship. For example you can't want to give command to your boyfriend. He's not your underling in the office. Relationship is about interdependence. Especially emotional interdependence. It's what binds parties together. It's why someone who cares about you will want to know your whereabouts. And it's out of love, not desire for control. Imagine being gone for days and your boyfriend doesn't care where you are, or how long you're gone. You won't like that. So you need to modulate those executive traits and contextualize them, or you won't





have a relationship. You can't behave in a relationship as you would in the office. The contexts are different, the parties are different. You can't be dictating to your boyfriend as you do junior staff in the office. It would rub him off. You've got to modulate that aggressive executive personality. Serves you well in the office, but won't work in a relationship. The emotion required for relationship is different. In an office environment emotions are cold for instance. But a relationship demands a warm disposition. A cold steely disposition won't work. It's anti relationship.

What seems bothersome now... his constant texting, constant enquiry about your wellbeing... One day you'll covet it! There are women praying for their man to even ask after them during work hour. There are men needing that attention too. So you have something you should be rejoicing about but you're complaining. You've got to adjust emotionally. And you're pushing your man away. At some point he may just resign himself to the fact and walk out. It's like he's trying so much to create a relationship and you're rebuffing him, treating him like some sort of pesky fly. In fact, it seems you feel tempted to swat your boyfriend. You treat him like he has nothing doing. Your relationship runs the risk of not fructifying into marriage with that disposition. Yet you want marriage. You adapt in a relationship. You can't have a take me this way or leave me attitude.

There are of course those who don't believe in adjustment in relationship but such relationships are difficult. Both parties must adapt to each other if they want to have a good relationship. It's how you mesh. Parties can't be like immovable lampposts in a relationship. That will lead to separate lives in



marriage, cohabitation essentially. Drop those corporate elbows. There's no competition. Drop the defensive posture. It's accusatory in a relationship. The things that turn men off are sometimes very little things. You need to understand the male psyche. Men project in a relationship. They wonder what the future will be after marriage. It's why innocuous things can seem big.

And please drop the "I want him to fight for the relationship" ideology. That's Telemundo and life is not a soap opera. You can't treat a man badly and then blame him for not "fighting for the relationship" after he walks out. What fight! You're thinking selfishly. And you're blind to the pain you've caused. There's a lot of self-centeredness. You kind of remind me of that West African adage. The one about a child's poo poo. My father often spoke it. The child that defecates is hardly aware of the redolence but the man at the receiving end never forgets. You're the child in that adage, your boyfriend is the man at the receiving end. Which is why you're not aware of the pain you're inflicting, the hurt you're causing. You're thinking selfishly. Why should he keep taking nonsense? Why should he endure all this willfulness? One must have limits. You can't be limitless. You ought to know when to apply the brakes. You don't want this guy walking out yet you're doing everything to make him walk out. He may be getting ready to walk out based on what you told me. There's a way the male psyche works. Men have emotional limits. You ought to know there are things men can't handle.

You need a different orientation and perspective if you want to keep this relationship. When a man is continually rebuffed in a relationship, after many tries he feels he's done his best and walks out. The first thing he does is that he'll



stop calling. And you won't notice on time because of that selfish disposition. I'm sorry but I'm saying it as it is. I believe you want honesty or you wouldn't have written me. If he ever decides the price he'd have to pay to marry you is too high, he'll resign emotionally working out his move. I think you should call him and tell him you're sorry. That you appreciate his patience with you and you're going to change. Unless of course you're too proud to admit the obvious. Sometimes pride prevents us from keeping what is good for us. If you want this relationship you need humility. Humility is not capitulation it's nobility. But if you persist in your way, I doubt this relationship will persist till summer. I do hope you take my advice.

Your mentor, LA

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Lena Alden'.

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