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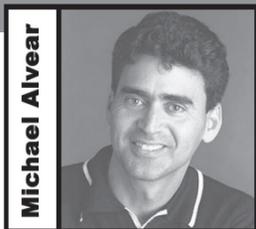
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*"This Above All... To Thine Own
Self Be True. And it must follow, as
the night the day, thou canst not
then be false to any man."*

• Shakespeare / Hamlet / I / III



Michael Alvear

To Dump or Be Dumped, That is the Question

I went out with this guy a few times and realized I just wasn't that interested. He was a decent sort, so I did the right thing and agonized over the best way of letting him down easy.

I spent days rehearsing what I was going to say, seeking advice from friends on how to do it, and of course, complaining that I couldn't ever stay interested in decent guys.

When I called the guy to break it off, the words flowed easily: "You're a wonderful guy but I think we're better off as friends."

Only the words didn't flow from my lips. They flowed from his.

He too agonized over the best way of letting me down easy. He too spent days rehearsing what he was going to say, seeking advice from friends on how to do it, and of course complaining that he couldn't stay interested in decent guys.

The bastard.

Is there anything worse than being dumped by somebody you didn't want to continue seeing in the first place?

Is there anything worse than listening to a guy you're not interested in yammer on about how hard it is to break it off with you?

If I could get my tomatoes to stew like I did on that phone call I'd serve the best spaghetti in town.

The thing is you can't do anything about it, either. You can't exactly interrupt him in mid-breakup, insisting that you lost interest first.

Although God knows that's what I was thinking.

The worst part is having to tell your friends that you got beat to the punch. "How'd the guy take it?" one friend asked.

"Surprisingly well," I said.

The male ego is a fragile thing.

A couple of months ago the same



"If the male ego is feeble, mine's in a wheelchair."

thing happened only it wasn't someone I dated; it was somebody I picked up at a bar. "How'd it go?" asked my friend, knowing the evening at the bar had been, ahem, *profitable*. "You going to see him again?" he asked.

"I don't know," I told him. "The sex was hot but I can't really see myself with him."

"There you go again," said my friend. "Always ending it before it even starts. Why don't you just give it a chance?"

Of course, my friend was right. I thought about what a great time we had talking (and shtuiping) and thought "You know, even though this guy isn't really my type, I should give him a chance."

I didn't have his number because in the late night good-byes I had simply given him mine. So I had to wait for him to call. Well, I waited all night. And waited and waited.

And waited and waited.

After a couple of weeks I remembered

a famous line from an obscure blues song: "If the phone ain't ringing, it's me."

The bastard.

When my friend asked me if I'd done the right thing and called, I said "Nah, it just didn't seem worth the trouble."

If the male ego is feeble, mine's in a wheelchair.

It's amazing how your ego and your higher self share the same shelf space. On the one hand, my desire to find a dignified way to end my "engagements" is genuine, maybe even admirable. I know what it feels like to have somebody I'm interested in suddenly stop calling without an explanation so I force myself to be honest and communicative when the chemistry goes dry on my part.

But then my ego barges in like a drunken leatherman, threatening to snap my twinkie higher self in two. "Don't give me that noble shit!" it roars. "How DARE he break it off with when I'M the one who doesn't want to date him."

And then ego goes from leather to law: It wants to argue the case, hold evidentiary hearings, assemble a jury, all to prove that you were less interested in the other guy than he was in you.

You've got to be quick on the draw these days if you want to be the first to pull the trigger on a guy you're not interested in. You think you're going to plow the dump truck through his backyard and it ends up in your living room instead.

Beware gay dating's strange beeping sounds. It's the dump truck backing up on you.

Michael Alvear lives with Zoey & Zack, his lesbian Labrador and girlie-boy Vizsla. He can be reached at MAlvear@ExpressGayNews.com

The Express Stylebook Policy

For the sake of readable newswriting, the word "gay" in *The Express* should, when relevant, be interpreted to be inclusive of gays, lesbians, bisexuals, transsexuals, transvestites, transgendered people, two-spirited people, intersexed people, men-who-have-sex-with-men, women-who-have-sex-with-women, queers, homosexuals, sexual minorities, and people who are unsure of their sexual orientation, but think they might be gay. Here is an example: "Toronto's gay-pride parade is bigger than Vancouver's."

