

I Love You But I'm Not "IN" Love With You.

If you're on the receiving end of this statement—I love you but I'm not "IN" love with you—and you feel dazed, you should because you have been hit with the equivalent of a two-by-four dead smack across your head. However, the fact that you're reading this article is good news because you're probably no longer seeing stars or lights swirling around inside your head.

Shock and Anger: If your initial reaction was shock and anger, you're entitled, but you can't stay stuck in the rage or disbelief. You also don't want to get stuck on blaming your partner for being "mean" or "cruel" because if you come across like a *victim* your partner is likely to interpret your behavior as more justification for the statement even if he or she doesn't say so.

Course of Action: You're probably thinking, "So doc what the hell do I do?" That's a fair question. A couple of things to consider: First, your partner did not say this purely on impulse. There were signs that you may have missed; this doesn't mean that the statement is justified, but you have to accept that he or she didn't get to that point overnight. Second, you want to express your hurt to a trustworthy person who won't choose sides. You definitely don't want to share this painful experience with someone who is attracted to you or that you find attractive; that's adding fuel to the fire.

Questions to Ask: Once you feel clear headed there are valid questions that you can ask your partner to help you understand the state of the relationship. 1) You might ask "What was the turning point or key event that made you feel this way?" In other words you want to find out, what was the final straw that broke the camel's back? 2) You want to understand what the statement means to your partner. Don't assume that you know exactly what the statement means to your partner. Ask! What does it mean that "You love me but you're not IN love with me?" 3) State, calmly, what the statement means to you personally. If you're not able to state your point calmly, it's okay to simply say "I need time to reflect on this." 4) You can ask your partner "What does that statement means for the relationship?" Again, you don't want to assume that you know. 5) You might also want to ask your partner, "How do you think we both contributed to this?" Finally, you want to ask, "How do we move forward?"

Intervention: Depending on how well you and your partner address these questions, the two of you might be able to move forward on your own with a clearer direction. If more questions or issues arise, professional intervention might be necessary.

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