

Are You Dating Someone With Peter Pan Syndrome?

By **Aly Walansky** - June 19, 2020

Everyone has met, maybe even dated, a man who is still a child at heart. He still loves video games or wants to go out at all hours of the night. He is every kid's favorite uncle – because he's just like them.

And one more thing: he's terrible with responsibility. He's never reliable. He can't stay committed to a relationship or a job or anything because he's just not mature enough to do so.

 More Videos

00:00 / 42:06

When we're kids, all we want to do is be older...



If you recognize the description above, you may be dealing with someone who struggles with Peter Pan Syndrome.

“As a society, we are addicted to youth; anti-wrinkle creams, Botox, hair dye... our quest to be young again (or at least seem young again) knows no boundaries,” said Destin Pfaff, co-CEO of [Love And Matchmaking](#).

So what happens when this desire actually affects who we are as a person and makes it harder for us to function as adults? What happens when we not only want to look young, but act young too?

Well, this is known as Peter Pan Syndrome, which affects men in majority but can also occur in women.

“

We stop internally aging at the teen or college level and just want to have fun forever.

Destin Pfaff

“Typically, Peter Pan Syndrome is the personality of a man who is stuck with the immature desire to only experience the adventures of a Never Never Land-like life, without having to take responsibility for his actions or his future,” said Coltrane Lord, Intimacy and Relationship Expert and Author of [Love Avatar](#) and [The Kinky Vanilla Love Project](#).

Basically, people afflicted with Peter Pan Syndrome haven’t grown up. Sounds great in theory, right? Well, the reality is not as exciting as it may seem. While it could lead to fun adventures but can also trap a baby tyrant in a man’s body.

“You can recognize if your partner has Peter Pan Syndrome or he can’t take responsibilities for his own actions; is only thinking about himself and his own needs; doesn’t want to or doesn’t know how to have a deep conversation; or has a hard time being emotionally intimate,” said Lord.

Youthfulness is always a plus when looking for, or being in, a relationship. “No one ever really says they want someone who is worn out and boring,” said Rachel Federoff, co-CEO of [Love And Matchmaking](#).

However, when that zest for life becomes disproportionate, it can take an unhealthy turn and cause tremendous damage to any relationship. One of those unhealthy behaviors is Peter Pan Syndrome.

“We all remember the boy who never grew up,” said Federoff. “There are many men out there that are very much BOYS still.”

How can you tell if you are in a relationship with a Peter Pan?



One sure sign is in the workplace. “If the person you’re dating is constantly hopping from job to job (or no job), has zero **motivation** to excel in life or have a career, and would rather act like a teenager and just couch potato the day away – you may want to rethink being in that relationship,” said Federoff.

Another red flag is simply a lack of maturity. Does your partner just want to party in the club every night, popping bottles, staying out till the sun comes up, and drinking till they end up praying to the porcelain god?

“This kind of behavior is usually done in our college years,” said Federoff.

As we get older, settle down, and have different goals, real goals, and leave the all night benders behind – we become who we ‘really are’. It’s Peter Pans though, that can’t embrace this mature attitude and lifestyle change. They became who they really are in college.

“

They can be reckless with money, have difficulty committing, and place moronic labels on a relationship. Similar to a child, they won’t want to have important or serious relationship conversations. Don’t fool yourself, you already know the signs – accept them and save yourself from these evil, little man-children.

Rachel Federoff

Don’t give them the option to stay immature



Of course, no one is obligated to remain in a relationship with a Peter Pan type. However, the practicality of simply leaving a relationship is not always available. Whether it is children or feelings that are involved, it's always important to evaluate the situation and see what the best decision for you and your wellbeing is.

Remember, change comes from within. It is possible for these men to grow out of these habits, providing they show the evidence for it. In that case, here's what you can do to support them throughout the process.

The first thing you can do to help change the behavior in a Peter Pan man is to first look at what energy you exchange with him.

“

All energies compliment or polarize, so if you are offering too much of the parenting vibe, then he has no option but to stay immature.

Coltrane Lord

Just like raising kids, a few rules, boundaries and consequences are in order with a Peter Pan type.

“This type of man does not want a fence around him, it suffocates his need for freedom and play, so you must be a little bit of a savvy partner and offer him the stages of 'growing up' and celebrating him for each step of the way with adoration, acceptance, attention, and affection,” Lord said.

But as was mentioned earlier, there is no point in putting energy when the person is not willing to do the work. After all, nobody signs up for a relationship to be someone else's therapist or parental figure.

“

Healing the boy to reveal the man is the only way for his maturing. If he is worth the mentoring, you are in for a fun adventure together. If he is not capable (we all have free will), then you have to ask yourself if you want to partner with a boy or a man.

Coltrane Lord

At the end of the day, do you want to be a spouse or a parent?

So think about it, if your man stopped growing up when he was a teenager, odds are that all he's looking for is a replacement for his mother. Someone to take care of him.

“

Do you really want to be with someone that wants you to be their mom?

Destin Pfaff

Wendy grew older but Peter Pan didn't. While the possibility of change is always available, it's important to remember that you may lose yourself trying to fix someone. The best proof is changed behavior and if you fail to see any evidence of it, it's best to move on and find a more suitable partner.

More interesting articles:

- [If They're Acting Like They're Not Interested, Avoid Making These 3 Mistakes](#)
- [Is Your Fear Of Rejection Keeping You Small In Your Relationship?](#)
- [Quarantine Made Her Resent Her Husband—This Is The Inspiring Lesson She Learned](#)
- [The 5 Types of People You Need to Avoid For A Better Life](#)
- [You're Not Looking For A Partner, You're Looking For A Lost Part Of Yourself](#)

Aly Walansky

Aly Walansky is a NY-based lifestyles writer focusing on travel, food, and wellness.

