

Are we in a relationship or just dating

Meta Description (159 characters): Unsure if you're "just dating" or in a relationship? This guide clarifies the key differences, helps you identify your relationship status, and offers advice on navigating this crucial conversation. Learn the signs & how to communicate effectively.

Are We in a Relationship or Just Dating? Decoding the Relationship Status

The question, "Are we in a relationship or just dating?" plagues many individuals navigating the complexities of modern romance. The lines can be incredibly blurry, leaving one party feeling uncertain and the other perhaps unintentionally leading them on. This comprehensive guide will help you decipher the subtle nuances and equip you with the tools to have an honest, open conversation about your relationship status.

Understanding the Nuances: The terms "dating" and "relationship" are often used interchangeably, but they represent distinct stages of romantic involvement. Dating usually involves casual encounters, exploration, and a lack of explicit commitment. A relationship, on the other hand, typically implies a deeper level of emotional connection, exclusivity, and a shared future vision. While there's no universally agreed-upon definition, here are some key differences:

Feature	Dating	Relationship
Exclusivity	Usually non-exclusive; seeing others is common	Typically exclusive; only dating each other
Commitment	Low commitment; easily dissolvable	High commitment; requires effort & work
Emotional Intimacy	Moderate to low emotional investment	High emotional investment; deeper connection
Frequency of Contact	Variable; less frequent contact	More frequent contact; regular interaction
Future Plans	Little to no discussion of future plans	Discussion and planning for a shared future

Signs You're in a Relationship (Beyond the Label):

- **Consistent Communication:** Regular and meaningful communication, beyond just scheduling dates. This includes sharing thoughts, feelings, and daily life updates.
- **Emotional Intimacy:** Openness, vulnerability, and sharing personal experiences and emotions without fear of judgment.
- **Exclusivity:** A mutual understanding that you are not seeing other people.
- **Long-Term Planning:** Discussing future plans, vacations, and life goals together.
- **Meeting Each Other's Support Systems:** Introducing each other to friends and family.
- **Shared Activities:** Engaging in activities that foster a sense of shared identity and belonging.
- **Consistent Effort:** Both partners are actively investing time, effort, and emotional energy into the relationship.

Signs You're Just Dating (Beyond the Label):

- **Inconsistent Communication:** Communication is sporadic and less meaningful.
- **Limited**

Emotional Intimacy: A lack of openness and vulnerability. • **Non-Exclusivity:** Both partners may be seeing other people. • **No Future Planning:** No discussion of future plans or shared aspirations. • **Limited Interaction with Support Systems:** No to friends or family. • **Casual Encounters:** Mostly focusing on individual interests and less collaborative activities. • **Low-Effort Interactions:** Minimal investment of time, effort, or emotional energy. Benefits of Clarifying Your Relationship Status: • *Reduced Anxiety and Uncertainty:* Knowing where you stand eliminates the guesswork and emotional turmoil. • **Improved Communication:** Openly discussing your expectations establishes a foundation of trust and understanding. • **Enhanced Emotional Well-being:** Clarity fosters a sense of security and emotional stability. • *Realistic Expectations:* Understanding the nature of your relationship allows you to manage expectations and avoid misunderstandings. • **Focus on Compatibility:** Clarity helps determine if you're truly compatible and on the same page.

Relationship Stages: A Progression

Relationships typically progress through several distinct stages: • **Initial Attraction & Dating:** The initial spark, casual encounters, and exploration of compatibility. • **Exclusive Dating:** Commitment to dating only each other, but still exploring the relationship. • *Serious Relationship:* Stronger emotional connection, shared life goals, and commitment to building a future together. • *Commitment & Long-Term:* Long-term commitment, often involving marriage or cohabitation.

Communicating Your Needs and Desires

The most effective approach to resolving this uncertainty is open and honest communication. Choose a comfortable setting and express your feelings and concerns without judgment. Use "I" statements to articulate your needs and avoid blaming language. For example, instead of saying, "You're never serious about this," try "I feel insecure about the lack of clarity in our relationship." Actively listen to your partner's perspective and strive for mutual understanding.

Overcoming Communication Barriers

Difficulties communicating about relationship status often arise from fear of rejection, insecurity, or differing relationship styles. Overcoming these requires self-reflection, vulnerability, and empathy. Consider couples counseling if you're struggling to have this conversation productively. **Thought-Provoking Insights:** The labels "dating" and "relationship" are subjective. What one person considers a relationship, another might view as casual dating. The key is mutual understanding and shared expectations. Focusing on open communication and mutual respect will make navigating these ambiguous waters smoother and more rewarding. Ultimately, what defines your relationship is not a label, but the quality of your connection and shared experiences.

Advanced FAQs: 1. **What if my partner avoids the "relationship talk"?** This could indicate a lack of readiness for commitment, different relationship expectations, or fear of commitment. Consider if the relationship is right for you. 2. **How long should I wait before having the "relationship talk"?** There's no set timeframe. Have the conversation when you feel ready and when the relationship feels ready. 3. What if our definitions of "relationship" differ significantly? Open and honest communication about your individual needs and desires is crucial. Compromise may be needed, but if the differences are irreconcilable, the relationship may not be a good fit. 4. *How can I know if my feelings are genuine?* Reflect on your overall emotional well-being, your level of investment, and the overall quality of the connection. Genuine feelings typically involve vulnerability, trust, and a desire for long-term connection. 5. **What if we disagree on exclusivity?** This highlights a fundamental difference in relationship expectations. Honest discussion is necessary to determine if you can find a compromise or if the relationship is compatible. By understanding the nuances between dating and being in a relationship, proactively communicating your desires, and navigating potential communication barriers, you can build a strong foundation for a healthy and fulfilling romantic connection. Remember, clear communication is the key to a successful relationship, regardless of the label.

Are We In A Relationship or Just Dating? Navigating the Blurry Lines of Modern Romance

Ah, love. Or is it? In today's dating landscape, the question of "are we in a relationship or just dating?" can feel like a perpetual riddle. Gone are the days of clearly defined courtship stages. We're bombarded with dating apps, ghosting, and situationships that leave us scratching our heads, wondering if that casual coffee date has morphed into something more, or if we're still firmly in the "getting to know you" phase. It's a common and often confusing place to be, and if you're asking yourself this question, you're definitely not alone. Let's unpack this murky territory and see if we can bring some clarity to the art of modern romance. The transition from casual dating to an exclusive, committed relationship is rarely a dramatic fanfare. More often, it's a slow, subtle shift, marked by unspoken understandings and evolving behaviors. The ambiguity can be thrilling, offering freedom and low pressure, but it can also be a source of anxiety and insecurity. Understanding where you stand is crucial for both individual happiness and the potential growth of your connection.

The Evolution of Dating and Relationships

Historically, dating was often a more formal affair, with clear expectations and societal norms guiding the progression of a partnership. Courtship often led directly to engagement and marriage. Today, however, the playbook is significantly different. *

****The Rise of Casual Dating:**** With increased social freedom and a greater focus on individual experiences, casual dating has become a norm. This allows people to explore connections without immediate pressure for commitment, leading to a wider range of interactions. ****Dating Apps and Their Impact:**** The proliferation of dating apps has revolutionized how we meet people. While convenient, they can also contribute to a sense of disposability and make it harder to gauge the depth of someone's interest beyond a superficial level. ****The "Situationship" Phenomenon:**** This modern term describes a relationship that resembles a romantic partnership but lacks clear definition, commitment, or explicit agreements. It's a grey area that often leaves participants feeling confused and unfulfilled. Understanding these shifts is the first step in deciphering your own dating situation. It's about recognizing that the old rules may no longer apply, and you need to develop your own compass.

Signs You're Moving Beyond Casual Dating

So, how do you know if your connection is deepening beyond just going out? It's often in the small, consistent gestures and the subtle shifts in how you interact.

1. Increased Time and Effort Investment

When you're just dating, the time you spend together might be sporadic, often scheduled around convenience. But when a relationship starts to blossom, there's a noticeable increase in dedicated time. ****Prioritizing Each Other:**** They start to make you a priority, fitting you into their schedule even when they're busy. This isn't just about fitting you in for a quick drink; it's about carving out meaningful blocks of time. ****Planning Future Dates:**** Casual dating often involves spontaneous meetups. In a developing relationship, there's a tendency to plan things further in advance – weekend trips, concerts, or even just having dinner planned for next week. ****Introducing You to Their World:**** This is a big one. Have they introduced you to their friends? Their family? This is a significant step that indicates they see you as more than just a fleeting encounter. It shows they're integrating you into their life.

2. Emotional Intimacy and Vulnerability

Beyond the fun dates and good conversation, a deepening connection involves sharing more of yourselves. ****Open Communication:**** Are you talking about more than just the superficial? Do you share your hopes, fears, and daily struggles? This level of open communication is a hallmark of intimacy. ****Emotional Support:**** They're there for you when you're having a bad day, offering comfort and a listening ear. You, in turn, offer them the same. This mutual support system is crucial for relationship building. ****Shared Vulnerability:**** They feel comfortable being vulnerable with you, sharing parts of themselves that they might not show to others. This trust is a powerful indicator of a growing bond.

3. Integration into Each Other's Lives

This goes beyond just meeting friends and family. It's about becoming a part of each other's routines and social circles. * **Becoming "We":** You start referring to each other as "we" more often. This isn't just a linguistic shift; it reflects a change in mindset, where you see yourselves as a unit. * **Inclusion in Social Events:** You're invited to parties, gatherings, and events as their plus-one, not just as a friend of a friend. You're part of their social tapestry. * **Shared Responsibilities (Even Small Ones):** This could be as simple as picking up groceries for each other, helping with a small task, or even having a regular "date night" at home. It shows a willingness to share the load and build a shared life.

4. Defining the Connection (or Lack Thereof) * **This is where the conversation often needs to happen, but not always directly.** * **Exclusivity:** Are you both seeing other people? If you've stopped and they haven't, or vice versa, it's a clear signal that the dynamic has changed. This unspoken (or spoken) exclusivity is a cornerstone of a committed relationship. * **Future Talk:** Do you talk about the future together, even in small ways? This could be planning a vacation months down the line or discussing where you see yourselves in a year. This forward-looking conversation signifies a belief in a shared future. * **The "What Are We?" Talk:** While many try to avoid it, sometimes, the most direct path to clarity is having the "what are we?" conversation.

When in Doubt, Communicate!

The most common reason people struggle with this question is a lack of clear communication. While it can feel daunting to initiate, having an honest conversation about your feelings and expectations is vital.

The Importance of the "Talk"

The "what are we?" talk doesn't have to be a dramatic ultimatum. It can be a gentle exploration of where you both see things going. * **Timing is Key:** Choose a time when you're both relaxed and have the opportunity to talk without interruptions. Avoid bringing it up during a fight or when one of you is stressed. * **Be Honest About Your Feelings:** Express what you're feeling and what you're hoping for. Use "I" statements to focus on your perspective (e.g., "I've been enjoying spending time with you and I'm wondering where you see this going"). * **Listen Actively:** Give them the space to share their feelings and thoughts. Try to understand their perspective, even if it's not exactly what you were hoping for. * **Be Prepared for Different Outcomes:** They might be

on the same page as you, or they might not be. Be prepared to accept their feelings and make decisions based on what's best for your own well-being.

Navigating the "Just Dating" Phase Effectively

If you've assessed the situation and concluded that you're still in the "just dating" phase, that's perfectly fine! The key is to enjoy this stage and ensure you're both on the same page about expectations. * ****Set Your Own Boundaries:**** What are you comfortable with at this stage? How much time are you willing to invest? What are your expectations for communication? * ****Enjoy the Process:**** Dating is about exploring, learning, and having fun. Don't put too much pressure on yourself or the other person to define things too soon. * ****Continue Meeting New People (If You Wish):**** Unless you've had a conversation about exclusivity, it's generally acceptable to continue dating other people. This allows you to explore your options and avoid investing too heavily too soon. * ****Be Mindful of Mixed Signals:**** Pay attention to their actions and words. Are they consistently showing interest, or are there times when they seem distant?

Recognizing Red Flags and Unmet Expectations**

Sometimes, the confusion arises because one person's expectations aren't being met, or there are subtle red flags that indicate a lack of genuine interest. * ****Inconsistent Communication:**** They rarely initiate contact, respond hours or days later, or only communicate when they want something. This can be a sign that you're not a priority. * ****Lack of Effort in Planning:**** They always let you make the plans, or their suggestions are always last-minute and convenient for them. * ****Avoidance of "The Talk":**** They become defensive or change the subject whenever you try to discuss the nature of your connection. * ****Keeping You Separate:**** They never introduce you to their friends or family, and you only ever see them in private. This can be a sign they're not serious about a public relationship. If you're consistently feeling confused, anxious, or unfulfilled in your dating situation, it's a sign that something needs to change. This might involve having that crucial conversation, setting firmer boundaries, or even recognizing that this connection isn't the right fit for you.

Conclusion: Clarity is Key to a Happy Connection

Ultimately, the distinction between "in a relationship" and "just dating" is defined by the individuals involved. There's no universal checklist that applies to everyone. However, by paying attention to the signs, fostering open

communication, and being honest with yourself about your desires and needs, you can navigate the blurry lines of modern romance with greater confidence and clarity. Whether you're on the cusp of something serious or enjoying the freedom of casual dating, understanding where you stand is the first step towards building fulfilling and meaningful connections. Don't be afraid to ask the question, and more importantly, be open to the answer. Your romantic journey, whatever its current stage, deserves that honesty.

Are We in a Relationship or Just Dating? Navigating the Emotional Spectrum In today's fast-paced world, defining the nature of romantic involvement can feel more confusing than ever. Many people find themselves at a crossroads—caught between the excitement of a new connection and the uncertainty of whether it's deepening into something lasting. The question “Are we in a relationship or just dating?” is more common than ever, reflecting a broader cultural shift toward emotional clarity and intentional communication. At its core, the distinction between dating and being in a relationship often boils down to depth, commitment, and shared expectations. Dating typically involves a lighter, exploratory phase—where people enjoy each other's company, share experiences, and gauge compatibility without formal promises. It's often characterized by flexibility, occasional ambiguity, and a focus on mutual pleasure and fun. In contrast, a relationship carries heavier emotional weight: regular check-ins, mutual investment, shared long-term goals, and a clear understanding of what each person contributes and receives. Understanding where you stand requires honest self-reflection and open dialogue. Many individuals misinterpret casual affection or frequent visits as signs of a committed bond, only to later discover that the emotional foundation was never fully built. This disconnect can lead to disappointment, confusion, and even emotional strain when expectations differ. Conversely, some relationships begin with clear intentions but evolve gradually, blurring initial boundaries as trust and intimacy deepen over time. The key insight lies in recognizing that relationships exist on a spectrum rather than in rigid categories. What feels like “just dating” today might organically grow into a meaningful partnership, especially when both people are emotionally present and committed to growth. Application of this awareness means taking deliberate steps—having conversations about intentions, setting shared boundaries, and assessing mutual satisfaction—not just based on feelings, but on observable behaviors and consistent effort. Benefits of distinguishing clearly between dating and a relationship extend beyond emotional clarity. When people understand their current status, they can make healthier choices—avoiding premature commitments or prematurely labeling a connection that deserves more time. This awareness fosters better communication, reduces misunderstandings, and supports emotional well-being. It empowers individuals to seek relationships that align with their needs, values, and long-term vision. Looking ahead, as

societal norms continue to evolve, the lines between dating and relationship status will likely become even more fluid. Greater openness around non-monogamy, digital connection, and personal identity means that traditional labels may give way to more personalized, flexible frameworks. However, the need for emotional honesty and mutual respect will remain timeless. The future of relational dynamics will reward authenticity, patience, and the courage to define what matters most—without fear of misunderstanding. Ultimately, whether in a relationship or just dating, the most meaningful aspect is honesty—with oneself and the other person. By embracing clarity, fostering communication, and remaining open to growth, individuals can navigate this essential question with confidence, ensuring that every connection is built on a foundation of mutual understanding and respect.

Navigating the Murky Waters: Are We in a Relationship or Just Dating?

In the often-complex landscape of modern romance, one question looms larger than most: "Are we in a relationship, or are we just dating?" This seemingly simple query can be a minefield of unspoken expectations, differing perceptions, and potential heartbreak. While casual dating has become increasingly normalized, the desire for something more profound – a committed, exclusive relationship – remains deeply ingrained. Understanding where you stand, and more importantly, where your partner stands, is crucial for navigating these murky waters and fostering healthy, fulfilling connections.

The ambiguity surrounding relationship stages is a persistent challenge. Unlike previous generations where defined courtship rituals often led to engagement and marriage, today's dating scene is characterized by fluidity. The rise of dating apps, ghosting, and "situationships" has blurred the lines, making it harder to discern true commitment from fleeting interest. This article will delve into the subtle (and not-so-subtle) signs that differentiate a committed relationship from a more casual dating arrangement, offering insights for those seeking clarity and deeper connection.

The Ever-Evolving Definition of "Dating"

The term "dating" itself has undergone a significant evolution. Historically, dating often implied a progression towards exclusivity and long-term commitment. Today, however, "dating" can encompass a wide spectrum of interactions, from a single coffee date to multiple encounters with the same person without any formal commitment. Understanding this broadened definition is the first step in recognizing when your interactions might be transcending casual dating and moving towards something more significant.

When people are "just dating," the focus is often on mutual enjoyment, getting to know

each other, and exploring compatibility. There's typically an understanding, whether explicit or implicit, that neither party is obligated to the other in a deep emotional or logistical sense. This might involve seeing other people, maintaining a degree of independence, and having fewer shared responsibilities. The emphasis is on pleasure and exploration, rather than building a shared future.

Recognizing the Shift: Signs You're Moving Beyond Casual Dating

The transition from casual dating to a committed relationship is rarely a sudden event. It's a gradual process marked by evolving behaviors, increased emotional investment, and a shared sense of exclusivity. Paying attention to these subtle shifts can provide valuable clues about the nature of your connection. Here are some key indicators:

Increased Emotional Intimacy and Vulnerability

One of the most significant markers of a developing relationship is the willingness to share deeper emotions and personal histories. In casual dating, conversations might remain relatively superficial, focusing on shared interests or lighthearted banter. As a relationship deepens, however, individuals begin to open up about their fears, dreams, past traumas, and vulnerabilities. This emotional nakedness fosters a sense of trust and connection that goes beyond mere enjoyment.

Are you discussing your childhood, your career aspirations, or your deepest insecurities? Is your date actively listening and responding with empathy and support? These conversations are indicative of a desire for a deeper bond. It's about building a foundation of mutual understanding and emotional safety.

Exclusivity and Commitment

While not always explicitly stated at first, exclusivity is a hallmark of a committed relationship. If you and your partner are no longer actively seeking other romantic connections, it's a strong sign that you're moving beyond casual dating. This doesn't necessarily mean you've had "the talk," but rather that your actions demonstrate a clear preference for each other.

Are you both clear about not seeing other people? Have you mutually agreed to explore this connection further without other romantic entanglements? The absence of "what are we?" conversations doesn't negate the presence of exclusivity in practice. It's about a shared understanding of your romantic status with each other.

Integration into Each Other's Lives

As a relationship progresses, there's a natural inclination to integrate into each other's

lives beyond the confines of dates. This can manifest in various ways, such as meeting friends and family, spending holidays together, or even sharing aspects of your daily routines. Casual dating usually keeps a clear separation between your dating life and your existing social circles and personal commitments.

Has your partner introduced you to their closest friends? Have you met their family? Do you spend time together doing mundane things like grocery shopping or watching TV at home? These acts signify a desire to be a more integral part of each other's world, a clear indication that you're moving beyond the casual dating phase.

Future-Oriented Conversations and Planning

When you're just dating, discussions about the future are generally limited to the immediate – planning the next date or a weekend getaway. However, in a developing relationship, conversations begin to naturally drift towards longer-term plans. This could involve discussing future career goals, where you might want to live, or even hypothetical scenarios about shared experiences down the line.

Do you find yourself discussing potential vacation plans for next year? Are you talking about your individual aspirations and how they might align or complement each other? The ability to envision a shared future, even in tentative terms, is a powerful indicator of commitment. It signifies that you see each other as a potential long-term partner.

Shared Responsibilities and Support Systems

A key differentiator between casual dating and a relationship is the willingness to share responsibilities and act as a support system for each other. This doesn't necessarily mean cohabitation, but rather being there for each other during challenging times, offering practical help, and celebrating successes. Casual daters often maintain a higher degree of independence and are less likely to rely on each other for emotional or practical support.

Are you there for your partner when they're going through a tough time at work or with family? Do they offer you support when you're feeling stressed or overwhelmed? This mutual support system is a strong indicator that you're more than just dating; you're building a partnership.

The "The Talk": When and How to Address the Relationship Status

While actions often speak louder than words, at some point, a direct conversation about relationship status becomes necessary to avoid misunderstandings and potential heartbreak. This "talk" can be daunting, but it's essential for establishing clarity and ensuring both individuals are on the same page. Key considerations for having this

conversation include:

Timing is Crucial

There's no magic number of dates or weeks that dictates when to have "the talk." The right time is when you feel a genuine connection developing and you're ready to explore exclusivity and commitment. Rushing into it can be overwhelming, while delaying it for too long can lead to frustration and doubt. Pay attention to your gut feeling and the cues from your partner.

Be Clear and Honest About Your Intentions

When you do initiate the conversation, be clear about what you're looking for. Are you hoping for an exclusive, committed relationship? Are you interested in seeing where things go without pressure? Honesty about your desires will help your partner understand your perspective and respond accordingly. Avoid ambiguity, as this can perpetuate the very confusion you're trying to resolve.

Listen Actively to Your Partner's Perspective

This conversation is a two-way street. After expressing your feelings, give your partner ample opportunity to share theirs. Listen actively and empathetically, without interrupting or judging. Their response will provide valuable insight into their own feelings and expectations. It's possible that they are also wondering "are we in a relationship or just dating?" and may welcome the clarity.

Be Prepared for Different Outcomes

The outcome of this conversation can vary. Your partner may be on the same page and eager to define the relationship. They may need more time to process their feelings. Or, they may have a different vision for your connection. It's important to be prepared for all possibilities and to respect your partner's feelings, even if they differ from yours. If their desires don't align with yours, it's often better to know sooner rather than later.

Navigating the "Situationship" Phenomenon

In the contemporary dating landscape, the "situationship" has emerged as a particularly nebulous category, often sitting in the uncomfortable space between casual dating and a defined relationship. Situationships are characterized by emotional intimacy and romantic involvement without the commitment or exclusivity of a traditional relationship. This can be incredibly confusing and emotionally taxing.

Key hallmarks of a situationship include a lack of clear labels, inconsistent communication, and an absence of future planning. While there's a connection, it often feels precarious, leaving both individuals wondering about their true status. Addressing a

situationship often requires a direct conversation about expectations and desired outcomes. Are you looking for a defined relationship, or are you content with the ambiguity? Understanding your own needs is paramount when navigating these complex dynamics.

The Importance of Communication in Defining Your Connection

Ultimately, the most effective way to determine whether you are in a relationship or just dating is through open and honest communication. While observing behaviors and patterns can provide clues, direct dialogue is essential for establishing clarity and ensuring mutual understanding. Don't be afraid to express your needs, desires, and concerns. A healthy connection is built on a foundation of trust, respect, and clear communication, allowing both individuals to navigate the exciting journey of romance with confidence and security.

Whether you are just starting to date someone, have been seeing them for a while, or are in the midst of a confusing situationship, understanding the nuances of relationship stages and prioritizing open communication will pave the way for more fulfilling and authentic connections. The quest for clarity in modern romance is a shared journey, and by approaching it with honesty and a willingness to connect, you can build a relationship that truly resonates.

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Questions & Answers About are we in a relationship or just dating

No	Question	Answer
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1	What's the difference between 'dating' and being 'in a relationship'?	Dating is typically more casual, exploring compatibility and enjoying each other's company. A relationship implies exclusivity, commitment, and a shared future vision.
2	How do I know if we've moved beyond just dating and into a relationship?	Key indicators include exclusivity, introducing each other to friends and family, planning future activities together, and open communication about your feelings and intentions.
3	We hang out a lot and have fun, but haven't defined things. Are we dating or in a relationship?	If you haven't explicitly discussed exclusivity or commitment, you're likely still in the dating phase. It's a good time to have that conversation if you're seeking more.
4	Is it okay to be dating multiple people if we haven't defined our relationship?	Generally, yes, as long as everyone involved is aware and consenting to the open nature of the dating. Honesty and transparency are crucial.
5	What if one person thinks we're in a relationship and the other just sees it as dating?	This is a common point of confusion. Open and honest communication is key. Discuss your expectations and feelings directly to align your understanding.
6	How soon should we have the 'what are we?' talk?	There's no set timeline. It depends on your comfort levels and the progression of your connection. It's usually best to have the conversation when you both feel a deeper connection and are ready for clarity.

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