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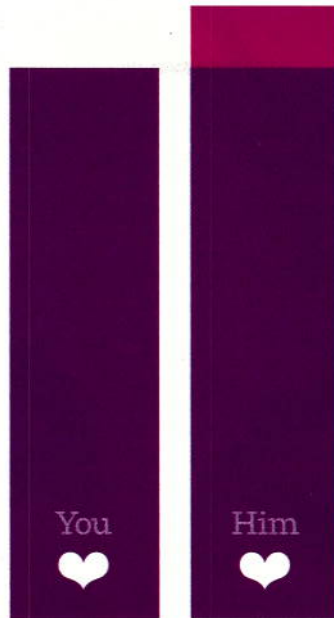
**This Much**

More  
Than You  
Love Him



Experts say a  
teeny imbalance is  
some serious  
relationship gold.

By Jessica Knoll



**R**aise your hand if this situation sounds familiar: A noncommittal d-bag has just put your heart through the shredder when you meet a new guy who thinks you're awesome...and isn't afraid to show it. He's actually pretty hot, but something about him being so obviously into you is unsexier than that pic of Steven Tyler in a Speedo. We get it. But there is a happy medium between the aloof jerk and the eager beaver, and you should definitely be on the lookout for him.

Let's be clear: We're not talking about settling. There's no point in investing energy in a guy you're *meh* about just because he thinks you're the bee's knees. But experts agree that picking a guy who digs you about 10 percent more than you dig him is smart. The number isn't scientific—there's no real way to calculate how much more one person likes the other. What it basically means is that he should like you just a little bit more, to the point where you're attracted to each other but with the scales tipping slightly in your favor.

"It's a great dynamic, especially in the early dating stages, because you get to check all the will-he-or-won't-he-call anxiety at the door," says Seth Meyers, PsyD, author of *Dr. Seth's Love Prescription*. And when you're not that worried about

whether he's into you, it's a lot easier to be yourself from the get-go, which increases the potential for things to work out. "You don't have to waste time playing games," explains Meyers, "and the relationship will be more authentic as a result."

Of course, it's a lot easier to fall for the guy who doesn't acknowledge your existence (who would do naughty, naughty things to you... and then never call you again). But while the 10 percent guy may not give you those same tinglies right off the bat, don't assume he's as straightforward as he seems.

## MR. 10% IS 100% DOABLE

A guy who likes you a bit more than you like him generally is outwardly affectionate and doesn't eff with your mind. Those are obviously good qualities, but it's easy to misinterpret that openness as neediness (ick). So while you *like* the 10 percent guy, he probably doesn't totally excite you since he doesn't come across as the strong, independent alpha type that women are hardwired to respond to.

One way to stoke the flames, suggests Diana Kirschner, PhD, author of *Sealing the Deal*, is to check him out in his element. If he's a badass soccer player, make a point of seeing him on the field being all brutish and Becks-like. Or

hang out with him and his closest buddies—your feelings may change dramatically when you see him in a situation where he's feeling extra comfortable and confident (which is hot) and you realize that he doesn't actually need you in his life but just wants you in it.

## HE'LL TAKE CONTROL WHEN YOU LEAST EXPECT IT

If you're worried you'll get bored always having the advantage in the relationship, here's something you should know: There *will* be times when you'll become the 10 percent girl for a while. "Relationships ebb and flow," says Kirschner. "Sometimes, he'll be more into you; other times, the roles will reverse." Basically, you'll never feel too comfortable.

Teresa, 27, has watched the script flip on her relationship many times over the past four years. "My boyfriend pursued me hard in the beginning, and I was on the fence about him," she says. "But things have changed, and I don't always feel like I have the upper hand." So let nature take its course, and allow a few months for the dynamic to start changing.

## HE WON'T TURN INTO AN ASS

When the balance does shift (and it turns out he's a lot sexier than your vagina originally gave him credit for), Kirschner says there's one thing you can pretty much count on not changing, and that's the way the 10 percent guy treats you. "If a guy is acting thoughtful and caring in the beginning, there's a really good chance that behavior is going to continue." ■