



”Situationships”

by **Tamika Michelle Johnson**

The term "situationship" is so perfectly descriptive that even the first time you heard it, you likely knew exactly what it meant. That's because many of us have been in them, either as the perpetrator or the victim.

Ok, maybe the words "perpetrator" and "victim" are too harsh of words, but you get my point. I've been both, and at one time I was likely both with the same person. That's another story for another day, but regardless of your role in a situationship, it's usually pretty beneficial for one party and it absolutely sucks for the other.

Now, the definition of a situationship may vary, especially depending on your age and

generation. However, if you are 30 and older, this definition probably applies to you and we will discuss signs that indicate whether you are in a situationship and if so, how to get out of them.

A "Situationship" is an undefined romantic relationship, that is more than friends with benefits but less than a committed or exclusive relationship after dealing with a person for 6 or more months. The 2 of you communicate often, many times daily, you see one another frequently, you enjoy dates and and trips together, and may have met one another's friends and family.

Despite all of these things though, you two do not have a specific label. You've been going with the flow, enjoying each other's



company, yet the introductions are simply the other person's name or as a friend.

Going with the flow was fine initially, but now one of you wants something more defined. But why as a society are we so concerned with titles? Because titles come with specific perks and responsibilities, just like at the workplace.

Now the question is, how do you know if you are even in a "situationship?" Well, if you aren't sure, here are 5 signs that a person is in a situationship. And you only need to have one of these to be in a situationship.

5 Signs That You Are in a Situationship:

1. **Avoidance** - One or both people avoid talking about being in a relationship or labeling the relationship. This is called "Going with the Flow," which left to its

own devices leads to one of the people ultimately drowning.

2. **Holidays and Events** - Despite going out on dates or taking trips together, you don't spend holidays or other important events together.

3. **Prior Disclosure** - If a person tells you that he or she doesn't want to be in a relationship, believe them! It's oftentimes not that they don't want to be in a relationship, they just don't want to be in a relationship with you and they're letting you know upfront.

However, know that they may still recognize that you're a good or nice person or even care about you. Not wanting to hurt your feelings, they may also say things like "I'm still dealing with a past relationship" or "I'm not ready". Yet you're doing all of the relationship things, but without officially being a couple. You're a good person, but not good enough. He or she will continue to string you along until they find someone they really want to pursue.

4. **Post Break-Up** - When you break up with your partner but you're still in contact and see one another frequently you are in a situationship because you no longer have an agreed-upon obligation to each other anymore. The feelings are still there and you're familiar with each other. The only thing that has changed is that technically you two aren't obligated and going out with 6

another person is no longer a violation of the relationship, but likely painful if the other person finds out.

5. *Fear of Being Alone* - You desire and know that you deserve better than what the other person is providing, but you continue to stick around because you would be completely alone without them.

The fear of being alone can be paralyzing. It's a very real and valid feeling - but also unacceptable if you really and truly desire more from a relationship. Facing and conquering your fears is one of the most empowering things that a person can do, be it in work, family, or love.

Okay, so now you know what a situationship is, and identify with one of the above indicators.

Everyone's situationship presents differently though. If you're still unsure as to whether or not you are in one, simply trust your gut feeling. If you are unsure about your status in someone's life and that causes you some degree of uncertainty, frustration, or anxiety, then you are likely in a situationship.

With that being said, if you have determined that you or someone you know is in a situationship, there are ways to end it. Terminating a situationship will

likely result in one of two ways:

- 1) You end up in a full-blown relationship with the other person; or
- 2) You get your feelings hurt because the feelings are not reciprocated.

Either way, you have clarity and that is gold. Now you know where you stand and regardless of the outcome, you can move forward.

Don't worry though, I won't leave you hanging. If you believe that you are in a situationship, there are 3 things that you can do to get out of it.

3 Steps on How to get out of a "Situationship" if you actually want to be in a Committed Relationship:

1. *Acknowledgement* - The first step in starting or ending anything is acknowledging that there is a situation - no pun intended. Ok, well maybe a little. You would be surprised at how many people deny that they are in a situationship. They try to make excuses as to why their situation is different or an exception. One's gut will tell you even if you deny it. Regardless, you must acknowledge that you're in Situationship;

If you have to ask things like, "What are

we?"; "Are we together?"; "Where is this going?" then you're likely in a Situationship. Accept and acknowledge this fact and then you can deal with it directly.

2. **Communicate** - The single most important aspect in any relationship is communication. If you want to take your situationship to the next level, then have a serious conversation with the other person and let them know how you feel, where you stand and where you would like for this to go. Then allow the other person to express how they feel about being in an exclusive relationship with you. Do not get upset or angry, just let them be honest about their intentions, wants, and desires.

3. **Decide** - After you have your conversation, then it is time to decide what happens next. If both of you desire to be in a committed relationship, then great, do just that. However, if one person wants to be in an exclusive or more serious relationship and the other doesn't then you can cease your dealings with that other person.

Now, if you decide to continue to see that other person that has expressed that they don't want to be in a relationship with you, then know the emotional risks that come with that decision.

Whether you decide to end the situationship altogether or continue, it is strongly recommended that you start dating other people.

When you start to date other people at this point, then there are other positive outcomes that will likely result.

- 1) The other person may wake up and realize that he or she has made a big mistake, and reconsider their previous position and decide that exploring a more committed relationship is what they desire; or
- 2) You open your life to other people that may be interested in pursuing a serious relationship and possibly marriage with you.

It's a win-win! Remember, your heart can heal, you can replenish your bank account, but you can NEVER get your time back. The older you become, the more precious your time becomes. If you know that you deserve better, go pursue better!

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