

The header features a decorative horizontal line with ornate scrollwork. On the left side, there is an illustration of a quill pen resting in an inkwell. The title "How Do I Prove My Love?" is centered within the scrollwork.

How Do I Prove My Love?

David Grantham, Ed.D., Licensed Professional Counselor, Marriage and Family Therapist

Dear Dr. Grantham:

I have been dating a wonderful man, Brandon, for about a month. We seem to be compatible in every way. There is, however, one problem. Brandon is pressuring me to be sexual even though I have told him I am not ready. When I resist, he says that it is important to show his love in this way and if I really love him I would reciprocate. He insists that love means putting your partner's needs before your own. I care about Brandon and want him to feel loved but I just don't feel ready for this.

Sandi T.

Dear Sandi:

We have two very special needs in a romantic relationship. They are to love and be loved by someone very special and to experience emotional, spiritual and physical, safety with that person. This safety takes time to establish but is the foundation for emotional connectedness and intimacy. Being sexual prematurely changes the focus of the relationship, interrupts the developmental sequence of intimacy, and hinders real emotional closeness.

It is important to take time to learn about each other through verbal expressions of love, spending time together talking and exploring new places and situations together. In healthy intimacy, deep friendship comes before physical involvement.

True love does not require that you relinquish your boundaries and do something that doesn't feel right to you. In fact, in a healthy love relationship there is mutual respect for the feelings and sensitivities of the other party. Giving in to sexual pressure as proof of love always yields disappointing results.

I encourage you to talk with Brandon further about your concerns. Hopefully he will understand and the level of your communication will deepen. If Brandon does not hear you, this may be indicative of his inability to see beyond his own needs. If this is the case now, he will probably not respect your beliefs and boundaries over time.

This is a tough situation because you obviously care about Brandon. But given the short time you have dated, being sexual when it doesn't feel right is not likely to prove your love or give you the love relationship you both are looking for.