Everyone’s in a romantic rush.

It seems like the guy you met this weekend at the party is your boyfriend by Monday…and a distant bad memory three weeks later (What was his name?). It may be a futile effort to try to change anyone’s behavior to something less emotionally draining and sexually tense, but we’ll have a shot at it anyway. Here goes….

So, everyone’s hormones are raging, and we are suffering from an unshakeable loneliness we feel will certainly be filled by the presence of someone who can validate us in ways we feel we cannot validate by ourselves. In other words, rather than fix ourselves, we’d rather have someone else tell us we’re cool. If we felt okay about ourselves, we’d end up in fewer, and far healthier, romantic relationships, but that may be too much work you may think. Besides, if you don’t have a romantic relationship, you must be a loser, no? Maybe we engage in romances more often to fill our complementary neuroses, rather than to enrich each other’s experience. Isn’t it really about insecurity? Being “alone” is scary, but we’re all stuck with it, and just finding someone to fill that emptiness and fear inside you is a prescription for long-term problems and regret. At some point, you might actually marry or commit to one of these individuals quite before either of you are ready. But who knows, maybe everyone needs a first marriage just to learn some stuff.

Here’s the deal. You have to be okay with yourself (or at least on the way to being so) before you are any good to anyone else. Finding someone so you can say “You complete me” is simply saying that “I am not a whole person who is capable of taking care of my own business without someone to help.” This is not an attractive offer.

So, what do you fear about being alone (alone is not lonely, by the way…and all of us are lonely sometimes…it’s just part of the human condition)—that you will have to work on yourself to become a more complete and functioning person who can make good life decisions? Is it just easier to find someone to fend off the loneliness and fear of being alone? It never really works, not for long anyway.

Seriously, you know when you are just using someone to avoid your insecurities, ostensibly to love and care for you, simply because you can’t figure out how to do these things for yourself.
We mean, really like yourself, and enjoy being with yourself. If you don’t enjoy being with yourself, what makes you think others should enjoy it? Really…if you don’t like being with yourself, how can you expect others to?

**What’s better than that is learning to love yourself.**

If you are unwilling to do the work to learn to love yourself (or at least start to do so), how can you expect someone else to love you? “I don’t love myself, but I want you to love me.” Not a very appealing offer. Ask anyone.

Now a word about being judicious, both emotionally and sexually. Sure, there are lots of interesting things to learn about both of these things, but lacking some caution usually ends up in some form of disaster. Things we regret. Sometimes really regret. There is no prescription here for how to avoid the behavior we end up wishing never happened. Alcohol is part of the equation, but we’re not going to preach on a topic that is more worn out than your jeans. If you need to escape your daily life pretty often, this should be a red flag. (We agree, taking a vacation from yourself now and then is likely not a bad idea.) What is it about your life that makes you want to escape it so often? Don’t answer, we know why…so do you. And if you don’t…sit down and think about it for ten minutes (turn off your phone). You’ll figure it out.

**Here’s what we’ve found out.** When you begin to focus your energy on your own growth…emotional, intellectual, philosophical, social, and physical, your decisions seem to become more tempered and intelligent. While it sounds like we have a bunch of answers here, we don’t. But it’s likely that you do. We suggest getting to know yourself a little better, taking a break from whatever your distractions are and just being quiet from time to time. That’s right, just be alone inside your own mind. This can be difficult at first, since so many of us are not at all reflective, and we require constant electronic stimulation. But it gets easier and more attractive as you go. If you spend a little time thinking about your relationships (both friendly and romantic), you may come up with some good decisions. You might even want to do some things on your own; you don’t need someone with you all the time, do you?

**A last bit of unsolicited advice:** If your girlfriend or boyfriend (or friends) does not ask you questions about yourself …not simply what you did today…but what you think and feel and how you perceive the world…that person is not interested in you. People who are interested in you ask you questions about yourself. This might be a good place to start thinking about your relationships.

(You are welcome.)
Resources

Philip Zimbardo: The Demise of Guys (TED Talk: 5 minutes)
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oVEHeY8sY5Q
(The problem with men. Guys, does this sound like you?)

Esther Perel: The Secret to Desire in a Long-term Relationship (TED Talk 20 minutes)
http://www.ted.com/talks/esther_perel_the_secret_to_desire_in_a_long_term_relationship.html

The Internet “Narcissism Epidemic” (Article)
The Atlantic, March 20, 2013

Amy Cuddy: Your Body Language Shapes Who You Are (TED Talk: 21 minutes)
http://www.ted.com/talks/amy_cuddy_your_body_language_shapes_who_you_are.html
(Non-verbal language. What does your body language say about you?)

Dan Gilbert: The Surprising Science of Happiness (TED Talk: 21 minutes)
http://www.ted.com/talks/dan_gilbert_asks_why_are_we_happy.html

The Power of Relationships—George James (TED Talk: 17 minutes)
http://www.georgetalks.com/ted-talk-power-of-relationships-george-james/
(Interesting discussion on relationships of all sorts)