

One day, my hiking partner and I were tramping through the woods of Tennessee. It was a beautiful day, and even our two hour detour off trail didn't seem to bother us. Near the end of the trail, however, she turned to me and said, "I am not going to sleep with you." I was stunned, because I didn't want to sleep with her either. She's pretty, smart, we have awesome conversations, both enjoy hiking, and all that comes with sitting around a fire. Whatever she felt for me, I had made a conscious decision that since experience has taught me that people are more likely to jettison old ex'es than old friends, and I learned from Achilles' mistake that it's better to have the long life than short one with more pleasure, if I wanted to be in her life I would need to only be her friend. She is one of my favorite people, but we'd never work as a couple; being her friend isn't a friendzone consolation prize, but the best thing for us.

I've only recently realized why she yelled at me. Even though I believed all the above, I had never said anything. I used to always keep an ambiguity in some female relationships. I didn't mean to, and only now see that I did. I'm quite sure I am the last to realize it.

Just as I never set out to hike Alabama but did because each time I hiked I enjoyed it, so am I now in my romantic life. Katherine recently moved in. I don't know where this with is going or whether she may finally ask me to marry her or get tired of me using my personal life as fodder for essays. I don't know. But, instead of being scared about the future and seeing commitment as an end of something, the overall pleasure I get each day makes me willing to see where this leads. A path is formed by walking on it, and at least for now, this path I'm on has heart.

6 May 2014