



**Author’s Introductory Notes to Leaders:** It seems like every year around this time when Valentine’s Day approaches, young people are thinking of relationships. This is a happy thought for some, and a more depressing thought for many. It’s a good time to address relationships (which is why you’ll see several talks from me on DYM about sex and relationships from years past: [Sex Matters](#), or [What do you mean FLEE?](#))

In recent years we’ve seen an interesting trend: the celebration of “me.” It began with a message of self-empowerment but morphed into something a little more severe: it’s all about me!

We’ve seen this in the music world a lot lately (a world where Americans [listen to an average of 4.53 hours of music per day](#)), ranging from the aggressive rants of artists like Cardi B (“Lil b\*\*ch, you can’t f\*\*k with me if you wanted to...”) to the lack of good conflict resolution skills from role models like Demi Lovato (“payback is a bad b\*\*ch and baby, I’m the baddest... baby I’m sorry, I’m not sorry...”). But the curious trend is the “I don’t need anyone else” trend—I just need myself. Like in Carly Rae Jepsen’s recent popular single, *Party for One*, where she says, “Party for one. If you don’t care about me, I’ll just dance for myself.... making love to myself.”

The most prominent example of this has been Ariana Grande’s song, *Thank U, Next*: a song that surprisingly doesn’t rant about past relationships, but instead shares the lessons she learns, and more intriguingly, her secret for moving on: Ari (herself).

All she needs is Ari.

Now, please don’t misunderstand, as a father of two grown daughters, each living on their own, I’m all about my girls being strong and not letting men walk all over them. But please don’t let me or anyone mislead them that the source of their strength is from “self.”

But America loves it.

The single was released November 3, 2018, and immediately soared to the top of the Billboard Hot 100 chart where it reigned as number one for seven weeks and still resides in the top 10 now [January 2019]. The music video was released November 30, shattering records, gaining nearly 150 million views in its first ten days on YouTube. The video features references to several popular early 2000's comedy films, helping it become a viral hit. The day the song was released, Grande tweeted about the song in response to former fiancée Pete Davidson throwing shade at her on SNL (and America loves Twitter drama).

So, let's take this song everyone recognizes and use it to springboard some healthy conversation about relationships.

Enjoy!

-Jonathan McKee, author of over 20 books including [10-Minute Talks](#) and [The Teen's Guide to Social Media & Mobile Devices](#).

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**BIG IDEA:** Healthy relationships don't depend too much on others or too much on self; they completely depend on God.

### **INTRODUCTION:**

Do you know the origins of Ariana Grande's song *Thank U, Next* still in the top of the charts?

When the engagement between pop singer Ariana Grande and Saturday Night Live (SNL) comedian Pete Davidson didn't work out, SNL made a joke about it in a commercial on November 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2018. So, Ari responded where people work out their differences today: Twitter. After a few sub-Tweets and a little throwing shade, some lyrics emerged. And then literally within one day, Ariana launched a song titled *Thank U, Next* on November 3<sup>rd</sup>, [just a half hour before SNL](#) aired.

Instead of ranting about her exes in the song, Ari reminisced about past relationships, shared the lessons she learned, then shared her secret for moving on. It's after the first chorus:

*Spend more time with my friends*

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