

When to Go Public with Your Date

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Sometimes I think my breakups are harder on my brother-in-law than they are on me.

See, he's usually the only man at family functions. We are a sea of cackling women on the holidays, so whenever I bring a new man over to the house, he gets a little too attached to his new playmate/ally.

And when things go south with my new date, my sister's husband is left once again to shoot pool, throw darts and play Guitar Hero by himself in the basement.

Apparently he's had enough. He recently turned to me and said, "You know what? I don't want to meet any of your boyfriends anymore, unless he's 'The One.'" To which I answered, "OK... oh, and if you happen meet him, can you send him my way — cheers."

But I digress.

It gave me pause for thought: Am I going public with my boyfriends too soon? I'm sick of introducing guys to friends, family and colleagues only to have the relationship implode or fizzle out a month later.

Then, the next time I run into said friends, family and colleagues, I have to explain, "No, no I'm not with him anymore. Things didn't really work out. No, not seeing anyone else. Just taking some time me time." It's like reliving the breakup over and over again. I hate it.

Lori Yusishen, BHEc, MMFT — a Winnipeg-based registered counselor and relationship expert — says I'm not alone on that one. It sucks for a lot of people. That's why before going public with your new date, she suggests you consider the following five tips:

Check Your Motives

Before bringing that someone special out to meet anyone, ask yourself what's motivating this introduction. Are you seeking approval from loved ones? Are you dodging the family function inquisition that usually starts off with the always welcome, "When are you going to find someone nice and settle down?"

Or do you want to bring this person out because he/she is genuinely special to you and you want the most important people in your life to meet him/her. If it's the latter, then congratulations you big pile of love — you finally found someone! Now proceed to step two.

Figure out Titles

There's nothing more insulting than introducing the person you've spent the last three weeks in bed with as your "friend." Then there's the awesomely awkward introduction that includes a long pause before just dropping their name with a heavy thud. "Everyone, this is... Bob." Clunk.

Point being, you should figure out how you want to introduce someone, even if means having the dreaded "where do we stand" talk. Granted, no one wants to have to ask their lover, "So like are you my 'boyfriend'?"

or ‘booty call?’ Just need to know how to introduce you to my boss at the office party.” But as Yusishen warns, if you’re not ready to have the “talk,” then you’re probably not ready to go public with your new relationship.

Prep Your Date

Let your latest and greatest know what they’re getting into beforehand. If you’ve got a really nosy friend who asks a million questions, you might want to forewarn your new love interest. And if, for example, you have a really overbearing mother, you definitely want to let your date know before sending him/her into the firing range.

You also want to make sure that you’re quite secure in your new relationship before making that all-important introduction. If your date doesn’t know you very well, and then sees what a high maintenance handful your parents can be, that premature introduction may taint their image of you. “Apple doesn’t fall far from the tree” anyone?

Give People the Head’s Up

Let your friends and family know what the status is with your new love interest before taking him/her out. Whether it’s an über-new hookup that hasn’t even been consummated yet or a pal filling in as a rent-a-date for particular function or someone that you’ve been seeing exclusively for a month, it might make things go smoother if people know what’s what.

And when your loved ones are in the loop (relatively speaking, they don’t need to know everything), you can avoid any cringe-worthy introductions like the following:

“Mom, this is Glen.”

“Oh, is this your new boyfriend honey? I can’t keep up. She goes through them so fast.”

Or worse.

If you’ve been dating Glen for months and your dad says, “Nice to meet you... Glen, was it? Sarah, how come you never told me about Glen. You kids just meet?”

Knowledge is everything.

Be Honest With Yourself

Still not sure you want to introduce your new date to friends and family? You may be dragging your feet because deep down inside you know this person isn’t right for you. And sometimes we can only admit these truths about ourselves when we see them reflected back to us on the faces of loved ones.

And if it is a case of keeping your new date hidden because you’re just not that into him/her, then you gotta step up and do the only humane thing you can do: Cut ‘em loose. No introductions necessary.