

Meet the parent's... partner!

Dating after a divorce is tough but when you have children, it's tougher! **Rhea Dhanbhora** tells you how to introduce your new partner to your kids...



>> Make it a fun and casual hangout session and don't show your new partner too much affection in front of your children

A new relationship is a challenge in itself but when you've just gotten back to the dating game after years of commitment and a tough divorce, dealing with it is even harder. And to add to it, if there are children in the picture, it can get even more complicated! Here are a few things to keep in mind when you've decided to introduce your new partner to your children...

MAKE THINGS CLEAR

Make it clear to them that he is not a replacement for their father and they shouldn't think that you're suggesting he is. Children react badly to someone if they think he is taking their father's place. Explain that your partner makes you feel good and helps you feel happy. Don't force them to like him though, let them form their own opinions.

THE INTRODUCTION

- Invite him for dinner and suggest he bring something for your kids.
- Let him spend time with them while you dress for a date — watching cartoons or playing video games.
- Introduce him as your friend first and ease the relationship in once they're comfortable with him being around.
- Explain to him that they will be on guard, so he should ease them into conversation instead of being over enthusiastic.
- In their presence, don't show your partner too much affection. Make it a casual session as your children are going to be suspicious of every move.
- Don't discipline or shout at your child in front of your new partner and never let your child do the same either.
- Be yourself. Don't make things awkward or be overly careful about

every tiny detail. Children can get easily suspicious.

JUDGING THEIR REACTION

Judge their reaction on meeting your partner before breaking the news of your relationship. Even if they like your partner and enjoy being around them, they're going to be fiercely loyal to their father and very protective of you as their mother.

If your child starts off with a bad reaction — make sure you let them know that they are extremely important to you and nothing will change that. Keep their needs at the top of your list. They'll probably come around eventually, all you need is a little patience. Give them space and time to react and don't force them to feel a particular way. Things often work out with a little patience and a lot of love.

<< DEAR GRACE, I HAVE A PROBLEM...

Dear Grace,
My boyfriend and I often hang out with a big group of his friends. Most of his friends are great and have come to be my friends over the years. However, one of the girls (she's married) insists on trying to rub me the wrong way every time we go out. She'll get drunk, start hugging my boyfriend and has even gone on to loudly profess she loves him! She's like this with many other guys from the group but they merely ignore it since she is married (!) to one of their friends. How do I handle the situation because I'm afraid the next time something happens I'm going to explode!

Dear Going to Explode,

Don't do it. You know what will happen, right? You'll explode and everyone will act like you've made a big deal about something so trivial — "She's married right?" "Don't be so possessive" "She does it to everyone" — get the picture? Either get out before she's drunk or tell your boyfriend that you don't like it and you need him to deal with it like a man! For instance, if she says, "I love you" to him, tell him to tell her "Okay, but you're going to have to fight my beautiful girlfriend for me. And she has a mean left hook!" Be cool.

Send your questions to womansworld@afternoondc.in

Gynelle Alves

<< SOS: SOLVE OUR SITUATION!
Think you can fix our readers' complicated problems? Read on...

My daughter is pregnant and due in less than a month. We are all over the moon with happiness. She is taking a three year break from work and we have spent almost every day of the last four months together...

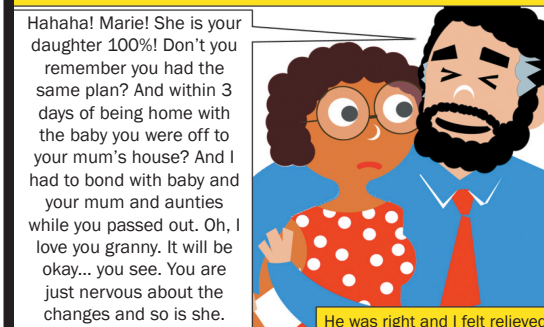
With work out of the way, this is the most time we have had together since she started school. And we have had a ball. We laugh so much! This has been a blessed time.



I had naturally assumed that she would come and spend the days with me or vice-versa. I was fully charged to be her support system...



I was a bit taken aback. This was the first I had heard of this weird 'only us three alone bonding' plan! I felt unwanted and as soon as my husband came home I blurted it out. But, he only laughed!



He was right and I felt relieved.

The next day I went over with some things she had asked for then...



It was my daughter's mother-in-law, come to live with them for three months. She's invited to stay with them, during their 'bonding' time!

"I know she is quite close to Ganpati's mum but not so close to choose her to live with them at a time like this. I feel more than a bit hurt but also worry that this arrangement will stress her out! What do I do?" — Mrs. Dias

- Ganpati may be feeling a bit left out with all the mother-daughter bonding so he may have invited his mum to include her in the joy.
- Just accept the plan and offer unconditional support. Her daughter can tell her what she wants honestly, maybe she could not with her mother-in-law.
- Mrs. Dias should talk to her daughter and find out first if it was her idea to get mum-in-law to stay. If it was not and she is not happy, Mrs. Dias could offer to put the other mother up for a month.

LAST WEEK: Nisha should pick Option B.

Send your solutions to womansworld@afternoondc.in