

How to Support a Partner Whose Ex Passed Away



By April Littleton

Dating someone who has lost a significant other can prove to be challenging. It'll be hard for them to let someone else into their heart after such a tragedy, but if you're willing to be patient and show them there's love after loss, the relationship you might be able to build will prove to be worth it. Cupid has some advice:

1. Be understanding: During the grieving period, don't take anything your significant other may say or do personally. It's natural for him/her to reminisce about his/her late partner. Be patient with your honey and give them the space they need.

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2. Time: Consider how long it's been since your honey's ex passed away. If it's a fairly recent death, expect more hardships and hurdles to overcome in your relationship versus being with someone who's had time to accept the situation and move on from it.

3. Don't be something you're not: The last thing your significant other needs is someone trying to be exactly like their former lover. Your partner fell in love with you, not a copy of what he/she lost. You need to stay guarded if you notice him/her intentionally looking for similarities between you and their ex. Let him/her know that you're not a replacement and you can't make up for the person they lost. This might be a sign that he/she isn't ready for anything serious yet.

4. Don't bring up the past: Don't bring it upon yourself to talk about your partner's deceased ex. It's not your place to discuss such a sensitive topic unless your honey wants to talk about it. In that case, let him/her start the conversation and listen to what they have to say. Put yourself in their shoes. How would you feel if the person you were currently dating kept bringing up a subject you'd like to move on from? Think about what you're going to say before you say it.

5. Be honest: You need to be upfront and honest about your feelings. If you don't feel like the relationship is progressing in the way it should be, let your partner know. Yes, you want to be there for them, but your needs and desires are important too. It takes time to get over a death of a loved one, so your significant other may not be emotionally ready for someone new in his or her life. You can give it as much time as you'd like to see if things improve, if not, stop the relationship before you end up getting hurt too.

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6. See a counselor: Dating someone whose ex has recently died will be tough and you won't be able to solve all of the complications on your own. When the relationship starts to get serious, talk with your partner about seeing a professional therapist. Your significant other might find it easier to open up to a third party about their unresolved feelings.

How did you support a partner whose ex passed away? Share your experience below.